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Aims and Scope: Formerly *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text* (1997–2005), *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840* is an online journal that is committed to foregrounding innovative Romantic-studies research into bibliography, book history, intertextuality and textual studies. To this end, we publish material in a number of formats: among them, peer-reviewed articles, reports on individual/group research projects, bibliographical checklists and biographical profiles of overlooked Romantic writers. *Romantic Textualities* also carries reviews of books that reflect the growing academic interest in the fields of book history, print culture, intertextuality and cultural materialism, as they relate to Romantic studies.

BOOK REVIEWS



Mark J. Bruhn, *Wordsworth before Coleridge: The Growth of the Poet's Philosophical Mind, 1785–1797* (London: Routledge, 2018), xvi + 179pp. ISBN 9-781-1384-8644-7; £115 (hb).

A NUMBER OF PROFOUND INTELLECTUAL CONTEXTS—Burkean politics, Lockean empiricism, Wartonian historicism and Hartleyan psychology, among them—have long proven indispensable to the study of Wordsworth's poetry. Many of these contexts seem to be incompatible with the others, but each circles back to the same set of questions. As Mark J. Bruhn puts it in his new study, '[w]here do the foundations of Wordsworth's dualism lie? Who prompted his political turns from radical republicanism and Godwinian theory? What are the sources of his "One Life" transcendentalism?' (p. 11) Such questions are crucial for understanding Wordsworth's development, from his earliest efforts in 1785 to the ambitious philosophical poetry that he first drafted in 1794. But, as Bruhn attests, critics tend to oversimplify matters by fixating on singular influences on Wordsworth or in attempting to explain away the poet's seemingly contradictory, or at least shifting, philosophical positions. More specifically, *Wordsworth before Coleridge* reconsiders the early history of Wordsworth's intellectual growth by challenging the critical consensus that the poet's most significant philosophical ideas only arose when he encountered Coleridge.

At the risk of teleology, perhaps, the book is arranged chronologically: the first and second chapters trace Wordsworth's schooling and university education, up to 1794. Chapters 3 and 4 ostensibly focus on 1794 alone, at turns addressing the break from Godwinian theory and the prominence of Dugald Stewart's poetics of interiority at that time. The fifth and final chapter, a short conclusion aside, extends the discussion to 1797. Really, the book is a revisionist study that is at its best when Bruhn fills in gaps, albeit speculatively, or overturns critical assumptions. He charts in unprecedented detail the process by which the aspiring writer came to appreciate the importance of passion within the mind-matter dualism that he was schooled in at Hawkshead and at Cambridge, for one thing. Wordsworth, moreover, was greatly affected by his reading of Stewart's recently published *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1792) in 1793/94. This reading helped Wordsworth to reject the blunt rationality of Godwin's political philosophy and Pope's philosophical poetics. Between 1795 and 1797 Wordsworth was exposed to Cambridge Platonism and English Kantianism, which mingled with his ongoing investment in Stewart's teachings. Out of this body of work came Wordsworth's sentimental notion of the 'feeling intellect', as seen most emphatically in the early drafts of *The Pedlar*


and the 1798 *Prelude*, to limit ourselves to his early career (that is, his pursuits between the ages of fifteen and twenty-eight).

Understood as a revisionist study, the book's chief target is Ernest de Selincourt who, nearly a century ago, argued that a refracted, Coleridgean philosophy informed by Hartley's empirical theory of association shaped Wordsworth's thinking, virtually to the exclusion of other systems. Kenneth R. Johnston followed his lead in *Wordsworth and The Recluse* (1984): 'Wordsworth's imagination, more absorbent than egotistical in 1797–98, soaked up the flood of ideas, interest, projects, and speculations springing from the fountainhead of Coleridge's active mind and voracious reading; 'their literary relationship in 1797–98 was a wedding of the Coleridgean ideal and the Wordsworthian real', he adds, whereby 'Wordsworth was to realize what Coleridge thought' (quoted on pp. 2–3). Suffice it to say, many critics tend to latch onto Coleridge's philosophical influence on the elder poet because in that period, 1797 to 1804 in most accounts, the documentation is fairly detailed. In truth, relatively little can be said with confidence about Wordsworth's access to specific books or tracts. Duncan Wu, the most pertinent expert on the poet's reading, dates Wordsworth's first exposure to Descartes to Coleridge's study of the philosopher in early 1801, and finds no evidence for Wordsworth's reading of Stewart at all. Bruhn instead takes a contextual approach. The absence of indisputable evidence for direct influence notwithstanding, *Wordsworth before Coleridge* documents how widely the ideas of Stewart, along with those of Cudworth and Nitsch, circulated in 1790s Britain. Wordsworth, quite simply, would have been exposed to their ideas in some fora or format, however derivative.

On occasion, Bruhn downplays his good work here, not least of all when second-guessing any claims that his study is conjectural at best. He also claims the book supplements rather than supplants alternative framings of Wordsworth's formative influences. One such study he might have in mind could be James Chandler's *Wordsworth's Second Nature* (1984), which famously made the case for the shaping role played by Burke's political writing in such works as *The Ruined Cottage* and *The Old Cumberland Beggar*. But Bruhn quietly complicates Chandler's claim that Wordsworth entirely fell in with Burkean conservatism in the 1790s. While Wordsworth recoiled from revolutionary violence, Bruhn avers, he clearly distanced himself from aristocratic governance.

Perhaps the most salient lesson offered in this new study is the importance of selecting the right manuscript—or, more accurately, signalling clearly to the reader what choice you have made. Otherwise, we risk affirming one iteration of Wordsworth's proclaimed poetics over others. Within the year or so that separates two distinct manuscript versions of *The Ruined Cottage*, MS B (from early 1798) and MS D (1799), for example, Wordsworth had lurched closer to a representation of nature more akin to what Coleridge called 'the numberless goings-on of life'. Reading that manuscript at the exclusion of the prior one would sidestep the non-biological sentiments glimpsed, however temporarily, in Wordsworth's 'one life': 'Most audible, then, when, the fleshly ear | O'er come

by grosser prelude of that strain | Forgot its functions, and slept undisturbed' (*Ruined Cottage*). (Chandler favours MS B, and David Fairer more recently, in *Organising Poetry: The Coleridge Circle, 1790–1798* [2009], MS D.) In a quiet but clear key, then, *Wordsworth before Coleridge* offers a sustained challenge to a number of assumptions held about Wordsworth's intellectual history, not least of all the outsized impact of Coleridge's philosophical thinking.

Bruhn's study is compact and dense—but it is eminently readable throughout. (The endnotes bear much of the weight of the supporting evidence, meaning the chapters themselves can tell a tightly woven story about the poet's development.) The narrative is as compelling as it is commonsensical: for more than a decade before meeting Coleridge, Wordsworth profited from a deep engagement with a range of distinct philosophical systems. Far from explaining away the poet's leap from Hartley to Kant, and the like, we ought to expand the scope of Wordsworth's philosophical poetics beyond, but without excluding, Coleridge. 

Daniel Cook

University of Dundee

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Siobhan Carroll, *An Empire of Air and Water: Uncolonizable Space in the British Imagination, 1750–1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 304pp. ISBN 978-0-8122-4678-0, £46 (hb).

IT IS NOT OFTEN THAT A PIECE OF SCHOLARSHIP is able to achieve both delightful complexity and remarkable clarity, but Siobhan Carroll's *An Empire of Air and Water: Uncolonizable Space in the British Imagination, 1750–1850* helps set that standard.

The Introduction begins with a comparison of earlier cartographic practices to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century map-making; specifically, Carroll describes a shift from geographers loosely using rumours and assumptions to fill in uncharted areas to Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville's cartographic approach of leaving the 'uncharted' areas of Africa blank (p. 1). According to Carroll, this 'blank' on the map not only served as an imperial elimination of the settlements and cultures of those regions, but also marked them as colonisable in their emptiness. However, in that emptiness lay another level of significance for explorers: the empty spaces were not just 'free' for conquest, but the blankness also signified danger of the unknown (p. 5). From this illustration, Carroll's conception of the 'atopia' emerges. Carroll defines atopias as natural regions which, despite seemingly being within the reach of scientific or

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS



Angela Aliff is an independent researcher with interests in epistemology, English reformist writing, women's writing and the digital humanities. Her doctoral thesis finds that early modern women writers justify their ideological authority using the instability in epistemic shifts within religious belief and practice. Formerly a Livingstone Online research assistant with contributions to design and user experience, Angela is now a commercial project manager and mother of an endlessly curious toddler.

Jennie Batchelor is Professor of Eighteenth-Century Studies at the University of Kent where she teaches and publishes on women's writing and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century periodicals, as well as visual and material culture. Her most recent books include *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture, 1690–1820s*, co-edited with Manushag N. Powell (EUP, 2018) and (with Alison Larkin) *Jane Austen Embroidery* (Pavilion, 2020). She is currently completing her third monograph, *The Lady's Magazine (1770–1832) and the Making of Literary History*.

Johnny Cammish is a PhD Student and Research Associate at the University of Nottingham, working on the concept of 'Literary Philanthropy' in the Romantic Period. He works on the philanthropic efforts of Joanna Baillie, James Montgomery, Elizabeth Heyrick and Henry Kirke White, particularly in relation to charitable collections of poetry, works lobbying for the abolition of slavery and chimney sweep reform, and posthumous editing of work in order to preserve legacies.

Carmen Casaliggi is Reader in English at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Her research interests include Romantic literature and art, the relationship between British and European Romanticism, and Romantic sociability culture. She has published widely on the long nineteenth century and her books include: *Ruskin in Perspective: Contemporary Essays* (Cambridge Scholars, 2007) and *Legacies of Romanticism: Literature, Culture, Aesthetics* (Routledge, 2012), both co-edited with Paul March-Russell; and *Romanticism: A Literary and Cultural History* (Routledge, 2016), with Porscha Fermanis). She is currently working on a new book-length study entitled *Romantic Networks in Europe: Transnational Encounters, 1786–1850* for EUP and she is guest editor for a special issue on 'Housing Romanticism' for the *European Romantic Review*. She was a Visiting Fellow in the Arts and Humanities Institute at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (2019–20) and is recipient of a fully funded Visiting

Fellowship awarded by the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University (2020–21).

Daniel Cook is Head of English and Associate Director of the Centre for Scottish Culture at the University of Dundee. He has published widely on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British and Irish literature, from Pope to Wordsworth. Recent books include *Reading Swift's Poetry* (2020) and *The Afterlives of Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (2015), both published by CUP.

Eric Daffron is Professor of Literature at Ramapo College of New Jersey, where he teaches gothic literature and literary theory. He has published widely on those and other topics.

Colette Davies is an AHRC M4C PhD candidate at the University of Nottingham. Her research explores novels published by the Minerva Press written by a range of neglected professional women writers. These works shed light on how women writers responded to an era of transformation in the literary marketplace and to a socially turbulent context through their works of fiction. Colette is one of two Postgraduate Representatives for the British Association for Romantic Studies and co-organised the BARS 2019 International Conference, 'Romantic Facts and Fantasies' and the BARS 2020 ECR/PGR Conference, 'Romantic Futurities'. She is a co-contributor for the 'Romantic Novel' section of the *Year's Work in English Studies* and has published blogs with *Romantic Textualities* and the British Association for Romantic Studies.

JoEllen DeLucia is Professor of English at Central Michigan University and the author of *A Feminine Enlightenment: British Women Writers and the Philosophy of Progress, 1759–1820* (EUP, 2015). Recently, she co-edited an essay collection with Juliet Shields entitled *Migration and Modernities: the State of Being Stateless, 1750–1850* (EUP, 2019). Portions of her current research project on George Robinson's media network and Romantic-era literature have appeared in *European Romantic Review* and Jennie Batchelor and Manushag Powell's *Women's Magazines and Print Culture 1690–1820s: The Long Eighteenth Century* (2018).

Michael Falk is Lecturer in Eighteenth-Century Studies at the University of Kent, and an Adjunct Fellow in Digital Humanities at Western Sydney University. His key interests include digital methods, the global aspects of Romanticism and the Enlightenment, and the literary history of the self. He has published on Maria Edgeworth, Charlotte Smith, John Clare and Charles Harpur; co-edits the Romantic Poetry section of *Year's Work in English Studies*; and has work forthcoming on the problem of Artificial Stupidity and on eighteenth-century Swiss book history. He is a keen digital humanities educator, and has run workshops on coding and other skills across the UK and Australia. He is currently at work on his monograph, *Frankenstein's Siblings*, a digital study of contingent selfhood in Romantic literature.

Peter Garside taught English Literature for more than thirty years at Cardiff University, where he became founding Director of the Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research. Subsequently, he was appointed Professor of Bibliography and Textual Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He served on the Boards of the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels and the Stirling/South Carolina Collected Edition of the Works of James Hogg, and has produced three volumes apiece for each of these scholarly editions. He was one of the general editors of the bibliographical survey *The English Novel, 1770–1829*, 2 vols (OUP, 2000), and directed the AHRC-funded *British Fiction, 1800–1829* database (2004). More recently, he has co-edited *English and British Fiction 1750–1820* (2015), Volume 2 of the Oxford History of the Novel in English; and forthcoming publications include an edition of Scott's *Shorter Poems*, along with Gillian Hughes, for the Edinburgh Edition of Walter Scott's Poetry.

Michael John Goodman is a postdoctoral researcher based at Cardiff University's Centre of Editorial and Intertextual Research. He is the director of the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*, an online open-access resource that contains over 3000 illustrations taken from Victorian editions of Shakespeare's plays. He is currently writing his first monograph, *Shakespeare in Bits and Bytes*, which explores how the digital can help students and the general public engage meaningfully with the humanities.

Hannah Doherty Hudson is an Assistant Professor of English at Suffolk University in Boston. Her publications focus on the popular print culture of the long eighteenth century, on topics ranging from magazine biography to gothic fiction. She is currently completing a book on the Minerva Press and fictional excess in the Romantic period.

Matthew C. Jones is a Lecturer in the English Department at William Paterson University of New Jersey. His research focuses on Welsh literatures and cultures of the long nineteenth century, and changing English attitudes toward Wales in state and popular literature from the later Enlightenment into the mid-Victorian era.

Joe Lines lives in Xi'an, China, where he teaches English on dual-degree programmes run by Chang'an University and University College, Dublin. His articles have appeared in *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* and *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*. He is the author of a chapter on the novel and criminal biography in the collection *Irish Literature in Transition, 1700–1780*, edited by Moyra Haslett (CUP, 2020). His first monograph, *The Rogue Narrative and Irish Fiction, 1660–1790*, will be published by Syracuse University Press in November 2020.

Aneta Lipska holds a PhD from the University of Silesia and has recently taught at the State University of Applied Sciences in Włocławek, Poland. She is the author of *The Travel Writings of Marguerite Blessington: The Most Gorgeous Lady on the Tour* (Anthem Press, 2017). Her main research interests include travel literature of the nineteenth century, Anglo-Italian literary and cultural relations, and literature didactics.

Simone Marshall is Associate Professor in English at the University of Otago, New Zealand. Her research platform, *A World Shaped by Texts*, concerns how our understanding of the world around us is directly shaped by texts: religious, scientific, literary, legal and historical. Her research programmes include race, women, medievalisms and anonymity, as well as a specific focus on Chaucer. Marshall's research programme on Chaucer and his afterlives includes attention on the continuations of *The Squire's Tale*, an examination of an edition of John Urry's 1722 Chaucer located in Auckland City Library, as well as cross-cultural comparisons between Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls* and Sufi poet Farid Ud-din Attar's *The Conference of the Birds*. Marshall's research has been featured in the media, including *The History of Anon*, a BBC Radio 4 series on the history of literary anonymity, broadcast 1–4 January 2013, as well as interviews on Radio New Zealand National in 2010 and 2013 on the 1807 Chaucer. Further details can be found at <https://simonecelinmarshall.com/>.

Kelsey Paige Mason is a PhD candidate at Ohio State University interested in nineteenth-century transatlantic literature, futurity and utopianism. She analyses nineteenth-century primary texts from ideological and repressive spaces (such as prisons and plantations), as well as from utopian communities and draws correlations between these primary texts and utopian/dystopian fiction. She is interested in how published and unpublished narratives portray the utopian impulse towards the future, including questioning which populations are excluded from future speculation. Her recent publications include 'Writing Revolution: Orwell's Not-So-Plain Style in *Animal Farm*' and 'A Lifetime Sowing the Blues: The Diary of Lucius Clark Smith, 1834–1915'.

Kurt Edward Milberger serves as Coordinating Editor in the College of Arts & Letters at Michigan State University. His work has appeared in *Jonathan Swift and Philosophy*, edited by Janelle Pötzsch (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), and in *From Enlightenment to Rebellion: Essays in Honor of Christopher Fox*, edited by James G Buickerood (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018). With Margaret Doody, he has edited Susannah Gunning's *Barford Abbey*, which is forthcoming from Broadview Press.

Amy Milka is a researcher in eighteenth-century history, literature and culture at the University of Adelaide. She is the author of several articles on law and emotions, including: (with David Lemmings) 'Narratives of Feeling and

Majesty: Mediated Emotions in the Eighteenth-Century Criminal Courtroom’, *Journal of Legal History*, 38.2 (2017), 155–78; ‘Feeling for Forgers: Character, Sympathy and Financial Crime in London during the Late Eighteenth Century’, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 42.1 (2019), 7–25; and ‘“Preferring Death”: Love, Crime, and Suicide in Eighteenth-Century England’, which is forthcoming in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* in summer 2020.

Christina Morin lectures in English literature at the University of Limerick, where she is also course director of the MA in Global Irish Studies. She is the author of *The Gothic Novel in Ireland, c. 1760–1829* (MUP, 2018), which won the prestigious Robert Rhodes prize in 2019, and *Charles Robert Maturin and the Haunting of Irish Romantic Fiction* (MUP, 2011). She has also edited, with Marguérite Corporaal, *Traveling Irishness in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2017) and, with Niall Gillespie, *Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes and Traditions* (2014), both published by Palgrave Macmillan. Current projects include a monograph on Irish writers and the Minerva Press and a 200th anniversary celebration of the publication of *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) in collaboration with Marsh’s Library, Dublin.

Elizabeth Neiman is an Associate Professor of English and also Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of Maine. Her monograph, *Minerva’s Gothics: The Politics and Poetics of Romantic Exchange, 1780–1820* (UWP, 2019) shows that popular literary conventions connect now canonical male poets to their lesser-known female colleagues, drawing them into a dynamic if unequal set of exchanges that influences all of their work. A second book project explores what Minerva and other popular women’s novels reveal when read for glimpses of the personal. Deathbed scenes are a convention in women’s Romantic-era novels, but does this make the heroine’s expression of grief impersonal, generic—her lamentations the language of cliché? Neiman is also currently writing a memoir that explores grief, love and loss, though from the distance of sister.

Lauren Nixon is a researcher in the gothic, war and gender, and was recently awarded her PhD from the University of Sheffield. She is the co-organiser of the academic collective Sheffield Gothic and the ‘Reimagining the Gothic’ project.

Megan Peiser (Choctaw Nation) is Assistant Professor of 18th-Century Literature at Oakland University, just north of Detroit, MI. She is currently completing her monograph, *The Review Periodical and British Women Novelists, 1790–1820* with accompanying database, *The Novels Reviewed Database, 1790–1820*. Peiser and her collaborator, Emily Spunaugle, are the principal investigators on *The Marguerite Hicks Project*. Peiser’s research and teaching focus on women writers, periodicals, book history and bibliography, Indigenous sovereignty, and digital humanities. She is President of the Aphra Behn Society

for Women in the Arts 1660–1830, and an executive board member for the Modern Language Association’s Bibliography and Scholarly Editing forum.

Victoria Ravenwood is an English teacher at Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys in Canterbury, Kent. She recently completed, at Canterbury Christ Church University, a Research Masters titled ‘William Lane’s “Horrid” Writers: An Exploration of Violence in the Minerva Press Gothic, 1790–1799’, which examines the trope of violence and its many manifestations in Minerva works, and aspires to continue her research into the gothic more widely at doctoral level. Her interests include the formation of the gothic genre, its efflorescence during the late eighteenth century and its enduring impact in the popular imagination and classrooms of today.

Matthew L. Reznicek is Associate Professor of Nineteenth-Century British and Irish Literature at Creighton University, where he also teaches Medical Humanities in the School of Medicine. He has published widely in the field of nineteenth-century Irish women’s writing, including *The European Metropolis: Paris and Nineteenth-Century Irish Women Novelists* (Clemson University Press/Liverpool University Press, 2017). His second monograph, *Stages of Belonging: Irish Women Writers and European Opera*, is under contract with SUNY Press.

Yael Shapira is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English Literature and Linguistics at Bar-Ilan University in Israel and the author of *Inventing the Gothic Corpse: The Thrill of Human Remains in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). Her work has appeared in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, *Narrative*, *Women’s Writing* and elsewhere. Her current research focuses on forgotten Romantic-era gothic fiction and the challenge it presents to established narratives of gothic literary history. Essays from this project are forthcoming in the first volume of CUP’s *The Cambridge History of the Gothic*, edited by Angela Wright and Dale Townshend, and *Lost Legacies: Women’s Authorship and the Early Gothic* (UWP), edited by Kathleen Hudson.

Sarah Sharp is a lecturer in Scottish Literature at the University of Aberdeen and Deputy Director of Aberdeen’s Research Institute for Irish and Scottish Studies. Her work focuses on the relationship between death and ideas of nation in nineteenth-century Scottish writing

David Snowdon completed his PhD at Newcastle University in 2008. He was Associate Lecturer at the University of Sunderland where he primarily taught on Victorian Literature. He has had academic articles published in journals such as *Romanticism on the Net*, *The Historian* and *wordsworth.org.uk*. His first book, *Writing the Prizefight: Pierce Egan’s ‘Boxiana’ World* (2013), was

awarded the prestigious British Society of Sports History Aberdare Literary Prize in 2014. He continues, in an independent capacity, to undertake further scholarly research in the field of nineteenth-century literature and maintain a Pierce Egan related website (www.pierce-egan.co.uk). His most recent book, *Give Us Tomorrow Now* (2018) focuses on 1980s' football history.

Christopher Stampone is currently an Assistant Professor of English at Bethel University in McKenzie, Tennessee, where he is developing cutting-edge literary and compositional modules for asynchronous learning. His work has recently appeared in *Studies in American Fiction*, *Studies in the Novel* and *ANQ*. He can be reached at StamponeC@BethelU.edu.

Joanna E. Taylor is Presidential Fellow in Digital Humanities at the University of Manchester. Her work intersects digital and environmental humanities via nineteenth-century literature, spatial poetics and cartographic history. She has published widely in leading literary studies, digital humanities and geographical information science journals on these topics. She is co-director of the AHRC-funded network Women in the Hills, and her next research project explores connections between women's nature writing and environmental policy. You can find her on Twitter: @JoTayl0r0.

Katherine Voyles lectured at the University of Washington, Bothell from 2010 to 2020. She holds a PhD in English from the University of California, Irvine.

Mischa Willett is author of two books of poetry as well as of essays, translations and reviews that appear in both popular and academic journals. A specialist in nineteenth-century aesthetics, he teaches English at Seattle Pacific University. More information can be found at www.mischawillett.com.

