

Recent Studies in the Nineteenth Century

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In his unforgettably entitled memoir, *Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen*, novelist, essayist, and bookseller Larry McMurtry writes of how, when an undergraduate, he was “never especially interested in literature courses. Where literature was concerned I preferred from the first to go my own way, roving around on the great open range.”¹ Encountering a year’s worth of books in nineteenth-century studies creates a similar sense of boundless, yet illusory plenitude and freedom, especially when the grazing is as rich as it was in 2003. But as McMurtry knows well, even the largest ranges have fences, and as I tried to corral this year’s books into some semblance of order, I was again and again made aware of the organizational properties of artificially erected boundaries. In the first place, there is the need for a review article to construct its own narrative, make its own links. This is easy enough when there are, say, a handful of books that cluster around a single author (although monographs focusing on just one writer were not conspicuously in evidence this year), or when several works deal with similar topics, whether it be colonial relations or the politics of language or publishing history. But what has stood out for me this year is the number of studies that are groundbreaking in their singularity of subject matter, and where the most obvious common ground is their commitment to interdisciplinarity. And, as Maria H. Frawley puts it in her introduction to *Invalidism and Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, first quoting Toby Gefland: “Historical boundaries, problems of societies, do not respect disciplinary boundaries’ . . . it makes as

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much sense to stress that disciplinary problems do not respect historical boundaries" (p. 9). This encapsulates a double issue. First, "the nineteenth century"—unless elastically, if necessarily stretched into the catch-all term "the long nineteenth century"—is itself an unsatisfactory label with which to lasso Romanticism or Modernism, let alone the trajectories taken by philosophy, medical history, or theories of criminality. Second, many of the best of this year's books, while literature features centrally within them, can, one hopes, be read as avidly by historians of economics or labor or technology (to single out one broad, interlinked field that has produced some important work) as by literary scholars.

I

The high point of this year's roundup, for me, was encountering as many hybrid books as I did, in which nonliterary discourses were treated with a sharp ear for tone and nuance—not taken either as shadowy "background" or as self-evidently authoritative, but entering into a mutually illuminating dialogue with imaginative writing. Yet for all the innovation that may be found in interdisciplinary work this year, one of the most important books—one that will surely make a major difference to how we read—is an ambitious study that revisits a very familiar area of literary studies: characterization. Alex Woloch's *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* is in some respects conceived in a traditional comparativist mode. Framed by the *Iliad* and Aristotle at one end, and Sophocles at the other, Woloch advances his argument through an ostensibly highly selective library of texts: primarily *Pride and Prejudice*, *Great Expectations*, and *Le Père Goriot*, extending outward to *Emma*, a handful of further Charles Dickens novels, and *La Comédie Humaine* as a whole. But his intellectual scope, as he tackles what has long been "the bête noire of narratology" (p. 14)—the literary character—is vast. His approach is a formalist one: not concerned with psychoanalytic readings, even in their most muted model of patterns of readerly identification, he nonetheless is insistent that we pay careful attention to how "narratives themselves allow us to construct a story—a distributed pattern of attention—that is at odds with, or divergent from, the formed pattern of attention in the discourse" (p. 41). The gains of this mode of critical reading can be seen when we consider so-called "minor" characters, looking both at their spe-

cific descriptions (and Woloch is well aware that these can be very schematized—indeed, he is not afraid of resurrecting the Forsterian concept of the “flat” character), and at how they are “inflected into a complex narrative system” (p. 125). On occasion I could have wished Woloch less prolix, but he is never dull, and his method of reading, his insistence that we pay close attention to “character-space,” has without doubt impacted on how I have subsequently read fiction.

Another example of a turn to innovative close reading, although one which this time moves across apparently discrete disciplines in order to collapse their boundaries, is Amy M. King’s *Bloom: The Botanical Vernacular in the English Novel*. Flowers bloom; so do young girls—or, as King puts it with more precision, “Bloom is a lexicon that combines sex, social position, bodily facts, and affective life into one word, a word that leads us back to Linnaeus and the social-sexual fluidity of his taxonomic system” (p. 5). By bringing together human courtships and botanical systems, King persuasively demonstrates how writers were able to imbue fiction with sexuality, while still remaining perfectly decorous. From Emma Woodhouse to Isabel Archer, the very fact of entering a garden suddenly becomes erotically charged—as does contact with mosses, ferns, hybrid plants, or (Hetty) sorrel. George Eliot’s landscapes, indeed (as one might well expect from a novelist so closely interested in the natural sciences) are filled not just with significant vegetation, but with the problems inherent in “the epistemologies of natural history” (p. 182): species that disrupt secure categorization. The end point of King’s argument is, naturally, James Joyce’s Molly, “where the suddenly liberated, and wildly proliferated, signifier of ‘bloom’ opens up what had only been an implicit prior content” (p. 222). This is a study that not only illuminates how courtship narratives can be replete with sexual reference and yet still “respectable,” but also perfectly demonstrates how the tracing of the implications of just one highly charged word brings out the inseparability of scientific and literary cultures.

Moving from the natural to the mechanical, one sees a significant increase of interest in the topics of technology, invention, and industry, and their relation to nineteenth-century literary culture. Clare Pettitt’s *Patent Inventions: Intellectual Property and the Victorian Novel* breaks new ground in the way in which it moves among literary, manufacturing, and legal issues. It offers an extremely illuminating study of the development of ideas concerning invention and intellectual property in the nineteenth cen-

tury, and their implications for theories of the literary marketplace, authorship and readership, and individualism. Writing with a strong grasp of diverse historical contexts, Pettitt shows how the topic of invention (and related questions of production and ownership) continually surfaces in imaginative fiction, both as a theme in its own right and as a vehicle for the discussion of the inspiration and labor that goes into the making of literary texts. In both cases, the issue of ownership, once the item produced circulates in the marketplace, was pressing: both writer and inventor were faced with the problem of how far it might ever be possible to own a creative act. She examines issues concerning originality and utility, twin poles in a debate about authorship that developed around Romantic theories of individuality and Utilitarian concerns of public usefulness; considers how labor was conceptualized in a modern democracy; looks at the Great Exhibition in relation to growing anxieties about copying and mass reproduction; engages with ideas about publicity and propriety (and with issues of gender difference in this respect); and shows the interweaving—an interweaving well recognized by Dickens, for one—of patent reform and literary copyright issues. Brilliantly, when discussing the later decades of the century, Pettitt shows how debates about electricity—not an invention as such—did not center around the ownership of its power, but of its applications, and relates this to the similar shift in the debate over literary property, with originality coming to be seen to subsist in style, rather than in matter. While her literary focus is largely on fiction, Pettitt's study importantly breaks down disciplinary barriers in showing us how debates about innovation and creativity linked manufacturing and aesthetic spheres in the nineteenth century: another important demonstration of how asking interdisciplinary questions can open up our field.

Pettitt's study sits very interestingly alongside Joseph Bizup's, *Manufacturing Culture: Vindications of Early Victorian Industry*, one of several excellent volumes to appear this year in the University of Virginia Press's consistently strong Victorian Literature and Culture series. Bizup links the industrial and the aesthetic, or humanistic, not through imaginative writing in the form of fiction, but by his examination of the language that was used by early Victorian advocates of industry themselves. This language "crystallized in the second quarter of the nineteenth century around the specific and defining goals of aestheticizing automatic manufacture, on the one hand, and reconciling its processes with the productive and receptive capacities of the body, on the other"

(p. 14). Thus he looks at the humanizing terms through which the mechanical could be made acceptable, something especially problematic in the context of other accounts that sought to emphasize the damage machines could cause the human body; he considers those who, like Charles Babbage, saw abstract intellectual beauty in the machine; explores the aesthetic response to actual manufactured goods, and turns to the Great Exhibition of 1851 as a discursive site in which all these strands come together. I found his fourth chapter, which identifies the figure of the “savage” as a rhetorical link between the discourse on the factory system and the discourse on design, of particular interest, since it opens up a number of issues about the place of “savagery” in mid-Victorian theories of “civilization” and “progress”: issues that lie at the heart of attempts to understand the type of society that industrialism was producing. Our understanding of the context of the Great Exhibition, incidentally, is enhanced by Elizabeth Bonython and Anthony Burton’s *The Great Exhibitor: The Life and Work of Henry Cole*.

Following the trail of the relationship between the aesthetic and society leads one to David Wayne Thomas’s *Cultivating Victorians: Liberal Culture and the Aesthetic*. This is an ambitious book, despite its introductory caveat that it is but “a preliminary reconsideration of liberal agency, understood as a crucial feature of modern aesthetic culture” (p. ix). Thomas aligns himself with those who resist the reduction of aesthetics to ideology—as would, one hopes, all the writers of the most alert and interesting of the studies discussed here. More problematic for him is how to affirm the integrity and importance of aesthetic experience, reliant as it is on self-reflecting individuality, without also supporting, or appearing to support, much more pernicious and blinkered social tendencies: ones associated with an atomistic, as opposed to an aware and discriminating, individualism. Thomas traces this important ethical and philosophical question through three major Victorian writers on aesthetic matters: John Ruskin, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Oscar Wilde. In this company, a chapter devoted to the Victorian public and the case of the Tichborne Claimant seems somewhat surprising, but Thomas explains its presence by demonstrating how the public debate around the Claimant (an imposter who laid claim to a noble inheritance) mobilized debates about subjective agency and objective authenticity that lay at the heart of the concerns surrounding emerging tendencies in liberal culture. What happens, in other words, when one projects subjectivity onto objects, and how much autonomy

can, or should, one have in making such projections? Thomas makes some large claims for the implications of his work, and it is not always an easy read: moreover, as he himself says, the reader might best view his chapters as “semiautonomous essays in their respective contexts, efforts to understand the salience, and assess the various effects, of modern critical self-consciousness in specific historical frames” (p. 48). Overall, *Cultivating Victorians* operates less as an argument than as a stimulus to reflection about the place of, and opportunity for, individual agency in Victorian culture, and its relationship to that liberal ideal which Thomas identifies and terms “many-sidedness” (he offers an astute analysis of the Rev. Mr. Farebrother, in *Middlemarch*, in explaining the resonances, and desirability, of this quality).

On a related theme, but a more coherent read, is Lauren M. E. Goodlad’s *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State: Character and Governance in a Liberal Society*. In the opening pages, Goodlad describes herself (as so many of the authors discussed in this piece could do) as “a scholar engaged in cross-disciplinary Victorian studies, trailing, as it were, on the long coattails of the new historicism” (p. vii). Like Thomas, she eschews the narrow definition of liberalism, as signifying bourgeois economic ideologies, in favor of the more slippery ways in which the Victorians customarily understood the term. Her particular concern is to explore how liberalism situated itself in relation both to *negative* liberty (setting itself up against state interference) and to *positive* liberty, emphasizing the importance of self-betterment, of character building, and *social* betterment through collective enterprise. Goodlad’s writing is informed by Michel Foucault, but for her, his later essays on governmentality, pastorship, and liberalism are in fact much more useful to the Victorianist than earlier (and to date far more influential) work on discipline, since they “help to elucidate the century-long paradox of securing pastoral care for the building of character in a nation of allegedly self-reliant individuals and communities” (p. xiv). The core of Goodlad’s book examines specific works of Victorian fiction as they engaged with those idiosyncratic forces that went into the expansion and modernization of the British nation state: above all, she considers the middle-class engagement with the social world that we find in Dickens, Frances and Anthony Trollope, George Gissing, and H. G. Wells. But her range of reference moves far beyond fiction to engage with the work and writing of philanthropists, sanitary and administrative reformists, and self-styled pastors, as she illuminatingly shows how the fictions mobilize and appeal

to Victorian ideas about social relations, responsibility, individualism, self-improvement, charity, and embourgeoisement.

One favorite subject of philanthropic intervention is addressed in Lynn M. Alexander's thorough and knowledgeable *Women, Work, and Representation: Needlewomen in Victorian Art and Literature*. The image of the Victorian seamstress has long been acknowledged as an icon of woman's economic exploitation, an icon made the more poignant and affecting to contemporaries by the fact that sewing was an activity that, whether executed for money or not, crossed classes. Alexander's achievement is to go beyond the stereotype of the stereotype, as it were, and explore the ways in which the image of the seamstress changed across the decades: first focused on her suffering, then becoming a symbol for the working poor, and then—as a result of increasing familiarity—turned into a sentimental figure, playing on Victorian viewers' and readers' sense of the pathetic. Alexander reads visual materials—whether paintings, illustrations of fiction, or *Punch* cartoons—with the same care that she analyzes both familiar and less well-known authors of fiction (Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Tonna, Julia Kavanagh and Anne Marsh), and is convincing in her demonstration of the degree to which both novelists and artists increasingly assumed a knowledge of social issues among the consumers of their works.

These needlewomen would not, of course, have a market if it were not for an economy that was increasingly based on the desires of the individual consumer, a topic addressed by Gordon Bigelow in *Fiction, Famine, and the Rise of Economics in Victorian Britain and Ireland*, a clearly argued, if somewhat leaden work which brings the industrial novels of Dickens and Gaskell into dialogue with contemporary theories of political economy. He shows that despite their protests against “a mechanic and rigidly progressive theory of capitalism,” the grounds of their humanitarian critique “helped to solidify the central assumptions of modern, neoclassical economics: the unique integrity of the subject and the authenticity of its behavior in the market” (p. 182). This, in itself, is unlikely to cause surprise: the value of Bigelow's book lies primarily in his demonstration of his thesis through a meticulous examination of the language of economic theorists.

Work is also at the center of Morag Shiach's fine *Modernism, Labour, and Selfhood in British Literature and Culture, 1890–1930*: yet another book whose impact refuses our traditional period boundaries (except to the extent that Modernism, like Romanticism, makes a mockery of dividing up periods according to cen-

turies). Opening with a discussion of philosophical explorations of modern labor and selfhood (from John Locke and Adam Smith through to Friedrich Nietzsche, Olive Schreiner, and Sigmund Freud), Shiach moves on to consider how “our understanding of labor is inflected by technology”—through representations and utilizations of the typewriter and the washing machine (including its offspin, “dirty laundry”)—before giving two more excellent chapters, this time focused on the career of Sylvia Pankhurst and the degree to which she was able to think of her creative output as “work,” and the place of labor in D. H. Lawrence’s imaginative writings. The General Strike and its place in the imagining of human labor in the early decades of the twentieth century is the topic of the final chapter. As Shiach hopes, these readings, with their discussion of the pleasures and pressures of work; the distinctions and similarities between intellectual, creative, and manual labor; the impact of work, particularly mechanized work, on our sense of temporality; and the questions of autonomy versus collectivism which are necessarily always at stake, indeed “help us to understand more of our own conflicted and yet intense relations to the activity and the significance of human labour” (p. 14).

Over the last year, two books have appeared that concentrate on the work performed by particular senses, John Picker’s *Victorian Soundscapes* and Janice Carlisle’s *Common Scents: Comparative Encounters in High-Victorian Fiction*. Picker’s study of Victorian interest in the “subjective nature of sensation” means that he does not attempt to reconstruct a singular Victorian soundscape, but rather chooses to write “an analysis of the experiences of particular individuals listening under special cultural influences and with discernable motivations . . . for hearing as they did” (p. 14). He chooses certain discrete social and literary instances: the street noises which threatened to drown out domesticity (most famously impacting on the aurally sensitive Thomas Carlyle, who constructed a sound-proofed study); the ways in which George Eliot incorporated Hermann von Helmholtz’s studies in the physiology of hearing into the strained silences and stifled speech of *Daniel Deronda*; and the literary and cultural repercussions in Britain of the invention of the phonograph. Perhaps less successful is the way he stretches his argument from the material, physical effects of sound waves to the implications of the cacophony of the Victorian world on an author’s (often, but not always, much more metaphorical) voice. To some extent this book suffers from being a pioneering work on an important topic: its

stretch is wide, and its final impression is more one of an assemblage of independently fascinating essays than of a developed argument, though it does remind one—like the books I have already discussed—of the multifaceted impact of technology on Victorian lives.

Janice Carlisle, too, concentrates upon the cultural values enacted through and by the senses, particularly the sense of smell, and shows that these were often regarded as “second nature,” taken for granted. Yet after reading *Common Scents*, it becomes impossible to take the smells that often waft into the pages of Victorian novels for granted in any way whatsoever. Concentrating on the 1860s, Carlisle produces a pharmacopoeia of examples which do not just illustrate the importance of our making connections between developing physiological and psychological theories of perception and bodily reception, and literary representation, but which also show how associations with certain smells, during this period, were inseparable from class distinctions. What the nose registers was used to make quick discriminations when two individuals meet on the page, or when a person passes into an unfamiliar environment. This observation goes far beyond noting how, say, the heroine of Rhoda Broughton’s *Cometh Up as a Flower* objects to the “mixed flavour of pigs and of that objectionable herb called southernwood” when she goes charity visiting (quoted p. 29), since Carlisle shows that envy, as well as recoil, may be stimulated by the operations of the middle-class male olfactory organs. She ties in Victorian male melancholia to “an unacknowledged loss of direct physical contact with the product of artisanal labor” (p. 20), an interesting—and convincing—take on this undoubted fictional phenomenon. Both Carlisle’s and Picker’s books are important for their interest in how the senses register modernity, and for the broader social implications of the ways in which the outside world penetrates the bodily sensorium, whether the ear accommodates, or is jarred by, the impact of technology and of commerce; whether the nose smells the proximity of the poor or the odor that belongs to the habits of another—and often threateningly socially ascendant—class.

In Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White*, the tetchy self-styled invalid, Mr. Fairlie, constantly guards against his body being troubled by the outside world, asking that Walter Hartright go “[g]ently with the curtains, please—the slightest noise from them goes through me like a knife.” Hartright, made of stouter stuff, comments, not without mild sarcasm, as he handles a portfolio which has come from a sale, that “my nerves were not delicate

enough to detect the odour of plebeian fingers which had offended Mr Fairlie's nostrils" (chap. 6). The role and representation of the invalid is the topic of Frawley's enjoyable and thoughtful *Invalidism and Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, another study that should be commended for its confident and illuminating traversing of disciplinary boundaries. While connections between medicine and literature have been one of the areas in which important interdisciplinary work has taken place for some time, Frawley approaches her topic from the point of view of the patient, rather than of medical authorities. Indeed, as she puts it, "Signifying not simply a medical condition or exclusively a social role, invalidism might more profitably be thought of as cultural mentality" (p. 3). To elucidate the implications of this, Frawley examines fiction and poetry, hymnals and prayer books, travel accounts and tracts, and what emerges very strongly is that whereas the long-suffering near-hypochondriac, such as Mr. Fairlie, might have formed one recognizable type, invalidism—often long-drawn out—brought its own particular rewards with it. For invalids, like so many in Victorian society, were preoccupied by the idea of being *useful*, of turning their suffering to positive ends, or of utilizing the possibilities that it brought them. This might, of course, mean offering religious consolation to others, but it might also entail writing of their travels, or of their own explorations of subjective experience, or of the nature of privacy. Frawley quotes Robert Louis Stevenson as just one "among many invalids to claim that extended illness revealed 'the real knot of our identity, that central metropolis of self, of which alone we are immediately aware'" (p. 61): invalid narratives, as she demonstrates, offer insight not just into the impact of medicalization on a patient, but on Victorian practices of understanding and constructing identity and interiority. Her wide-ranging examples are not just fascinating in their own right for the light that they throw on a figure typically erased from, or obscured by, history, but also for the ways in which they enable her to show how central issues in Victorian culture may be traced, and indeed better understood, through sources that at first sight might look marginal and unpromising.

One area in which Victorian medical and psychological writings have frequently been appealed to is in understanding the composition, and above all the consumption, of sensation fiction. Caroline Levine greatly adds to our comprehension of this genre's workings—and indeed, of the plotting of Victorian fiction in general—in *The Serious Pleasures of Suspense: Victorian Realism and Narrative Doubt*. This is a book that makes one rethink

the place of “suspending—hesitating, deferring knowledge, ‘hanging fire’” (p. 162) within Victorian novels, from *Jane Eyre* through to *Dorian Gray*—indeed, not the least of its achievements is the new understanding it gives of the pleasures offered by certain canonical texts. If “suspense” has often been thought of as a structural device, particularly adapted to the needs of serial fiction, Levine shows that it has much more far reaching epistemological repercussions, arguing that Victorian writers and readers “understood suspenseful narrative as a stimulus to active speculation” (p. 2), and, as such, its structure was closely related to the ways in which scientific experimentation relied on the active potential in hypotheses, speculation, and imagining a future. Beyond this, Levine very effectively demonstrates how this mode of reading ties in completely with how Victorians regarded that vexed topic, “realism.” Moving forward from the emergence of realism as a skeptical, experimental method in Ruskin’s writing, through George Eliot’s understanding of it as “a failed attempt to replicate the world’s truths” (p. 16), to the ways in which to “James, Pater, and Wilde, realist narrative appeared remarkable, in retrospect, for a naive ingenuousness, an uncritical struggle for transparency” (p. 199), Levine’s elegant and persuasive study gives full weight to the artifices involved in “realist” narrative representation, and to the evolving recognition and exploitation of these artifices by Victorian novelists.

A further work that encourages us to look at the relationship of plotting and the self-conscious use of narrative effects to engage and startle readers is Peter K. Garrett’s *Gothic Reflections: Narrative Force in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. Like his *Victorian Multiplot Novel*, this concerns itself with how readers grapple with complex texts; how they arrive at their own lines of sense-bestowing narrative reason. Garrett takes what we might call some classic Gothic texts—first “The Turn of the Screw,” then back to Horace Walpole, Matthew Lewis, Ann Radcliffe, and Edgar Allan Poe, among others—before examining the monstrous trio, *Frankenstein*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, and *Dracula*. In conclusion, in what is to me the strongest section, Garrett looks at Gothic elements in Dickens, George Eliot, and Henry James, drawing particular attention to “their self-conscious use of plots driven by the force of destiny” (p. 141). If some of the cornerstones of his argument will cause little surprise or dissent—such as his comment that it is “part of the nature of Gothic to play with terror, though not to master it” (p. 44)—it is good to have Gothic narrative strategies traced in this way across the nineteenth century as a whole.

II

From studies that offer new insights through their methodology, whether through their encouragement of certain styles of analysis or the juxtaposing of ostensibly different disciplinary areas, I shall now pass to works that are more conventionally thematic in their approaches. The areas of bodily and family relations, whether healthy or malfunctioning, have been prominent in feminist studies this year. Julie Kipp's *Romanticism, Maternity, and the Body Politic* deals with maternity both literally and figuratively: with the politicizing of maternal bodies and the maternalizing of political bodies; with the authoring of mothers and the mothering of texts. She examines the revolution in theories of mothering that took place during this period, and then explores many of the problems inherent in the concept of maternal sympathy, something which not only frequently rendered women sacrificial victims, but which also too frequently mutated in literature into pathological obsession. Kipp offers sophisticated and nuanced readings of Gothic mothers and their frequently monstrous sympathies, of the figure of the Irish wet nurse (through Maria Edgeworth's *Ennui*), and of maternal sympathy in relation to *The Cenci*, in a densely argued demonstration of quite how socially and culturally constructed the concept of motherhood is in this period. Kipp includes a further chapter on infanticide, in which she concentrates on *The Heart of Midlothian*, arguing that child murder and mother love not only go hand in hand, but that "both become representative of the kind of dangerous sympathies Scotland fosters in her loving 'children'" (p. 18).

Infanticide also forms the topic of a wide-ranging collection edited by Jennifer Thorn, *Writing British Infanticide: Child-Murder, Gender, and Print, 1722–1859*, and of Josephine McDonagh's *Child Murder and British Culture, 1720–1900*. This emphasis must be seen as part of a wider turn in gender studies to examine the uncomfortable phenomenon of the violent woman, who reaches her popular apotheosis in the "unnatural" figure of the murdering mother, and also of the ongoing determination in feminist literary scholarship to disrupt the tracks—so well-worn as to have left deep wheel ruts—of the domestic angel and her demonic counterpart. Although not drawing on literary texts, Martin J. Wiener's *Men of Blood: Violence, Manliness, and Criminal Justice in Victorian England* also came my way, and is also a part of this ongoing debate concerning the relations of gender and violence, and the emotional (and hence sociopolitical) potency of the topic, then and now.

McDonagh's volume draws on a large number of different genres in order to examine the idea of child murder in British culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While one would expect her to look at certain central literary texts, such as Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, William Wordsworth's "The Thorn," George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Runaway Slave," and Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, these are set in a far wider context of court records, newspaper reports, fairy tales, anthropology, and Marcus's sinister, neo-Malthusian "Book of Murder." For her interest is not so much in specific instances, whether factual or literary, as in the ways in which the very idea of child murder circulated within society. Different types of murder (and she instances violent deaths, deaths from neglect, sacrificial and vengeful deaths, murders committed out of desperation, sympathetic and redemptive deaths, and the particular controversies raised by real or imagined Irish infanticide) have the potential to open up all kinds of other issues, from the conditions of the poor and the best ways of ameliorating them, to ideas about insanity, gender difference, parenting, "savagery," nationalism, and progress. Necessarily, exploring changing ideas about the nature and value of childhood occupies a central part of McDonagh's work. What impresses most of all (quite apart from the delight of witnessing her deft deployment of all kinds of fascinating circumstantial details), is the way in which she demonstrates that "child murder carries out its effects not only within a designated moment, but also over time," arguing that "one of its most significant characteristics is that it acts as a bearer of meanings from previous contexts, and functions as a mechanism of historical memory" (p. 11). This is an important study not just because of its careful tracing of the many ramifications of this emotive (and emotively deployed) theme over two centuries, but also because it offers an exemplary account of how we might go about studying the complex phenomenon of cultural transmission.

Familial relations of a very different kind form the subject matter of Angelique Richardson's *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman*, which considers the ideas concerning human selective breeding that were in circulation at the end of the nineteenth century. Developed by Charles Darwin's cousin Francis Galton in the 1860s, and drawing on theories of evolution, eugenics looked to provide solutions both for the problems of the urban poor and for the challenge of maintaining national supremacy. Richardson shows how these theories had particular resonance for a number

of intellectually and politically concerned women in the period, who firmly believed that “the women of Britain could best serve the race, the country, and their own interests through the rational selection of a reproductive partner” (p. 215). This was the view that time and again comes across in the fiction of some of the best known New Woman authors, particularly Sarah Grand and George Egerton (although, as she shows, resistance to eugenics is an important aspect of Mona Caird’s work). Richardson’s achievement is to get us to recognize this fact and its implications, as well as the part played by their writings in the late-century debates between the hereditarians and the environmentalists. This is a bravely revisionist reading, which will give considerable pause for thought to all those who have enthusiastically embraced and celebrated the progressive, profeminist aspects of the New Woman movement. One understands freshly that the resistance to romance which can be found in so many of the New Woman novelists and polemicists is less a defiant call for woman’s autonomy and self-determination than a demand for rational reproduction. Richardson exposes not just the class biases, but in some cases the antihumanitarianism of these writers.

Legislation over the lives of others, albeit nonhuman ones, forms a part of David Perkins’s *Romanticism and Animal Rights*, a work which, building on the ground well established by Keith Thomas and (for a slightly later period) Harriet Ritvo, considers interspecies activities such as hunting, pet keeping, working with animals, badger baiting and cockfights, and eating animals. His is an altogether more literary emphasis than that of his predecessors, moving between John Clare and Charles Lamb’s “Dissertation upon Roast Pig”; William Blake’s “Lamb,” and other lesser-known pieces, such as John Aikin and Letitia Barbauld’s “The Council of Quadrupeds,” viewing the colonizing process from the point of view of the wild animals. In their different ways, very many of these works contributed to sentiments that worked to form a growing body of political and polemical opposition to the abusive exploitation of animals. Whether the period saw much improvement in the actual lot of animals is far more open to question, but Perkins persuasively analyzes a number of examples which illustrate how literary attitudes certainly shifted—even if, on occasion, the ultimate object of sympathy involved was the human condition, with sympathy toward another sentient creature simply a vehicle. Ritvo, incidentally, has an excellent essay on “Ordering Creation, or Maybe Not” in a rich volume edited by

Helen Small and Trudi Tate, *Literature, Science, Psychoanalysis, 1830–1970: Essays in Honour of Gillian Beer*, a scholar who has done so much, of course, to further the importance of interdisciplinary study, especially between literature and science, while consistently and quietly emphasizing the crucial importance of our staying attuned to the *imaginative* possibilities that literary writing—and that the literary aspects of scientific writing—afford. The nineteenth century is well represented in this volume with essays by Nigel Leask (on Alexander von Humboldt and Darwin), George Levine (on Darwin and sexual selection), Helen Small, who writes on the concept of risk in Henry Buckle and Hardy, and Sally Shuttleworth (“The Psychology of Childhood in Victorian Literature and Medicine”) as well as by Ritvo’s contribution.

The natural world is also the subject of Eric G. Wilson’s *The Spiritual History of Ice: Romanticism, Science, and the Imagination*, which examines the fascination with this life-endowed, creaking, shifting, alluring form at the turn of the nineteenth century. He opens by noting the recent rise in glacial studies, and in part attributes these to the same sorts of preoccupations that were around two centuries ago: “potential connections between millennial disquiet and polar meditation suggest that ice, in its striking, extreme forms—deathly bergs and crushing floes, crevasses and calving glaciers—shares the same paradoxes as Western visions of apocalypse” (p. 2). Wilson discusses a number of examples, some familiar (the Shelleys on Mont Blanc and the Mer de Glace, the Ancient Mariner) and many less so, as he considers ice crystals, glaciers, and the poles, integrating the writings of scientists, geologists, and travelers with imaginative works in order to bring out (to use the terms in which he writes of the Antarctic) “ice as void or plenitude, annihilator of meaning and generator of significance” (p. 163). He stops short of the continuing Victorian interest in these topics, at the hands of Ruskin, John Tyndall, and others: Ruskin, certainly, with his melancholy apprehension about the significance of shrinking glaciers, would have provided an example of a concerned environmentalist helping to set up those connections between contemporary and Romantic ecological issues with which Wilson frames his study.

Returning to gender-based criticism, several books have looked at particular aspects of Victorian queer writing and society. Frederick S. Roden, in *Same-Sex Desire in Victorian Religious Culture*, considers sites where Christian—specifically Catholic—religion intersected with homoeroticism. He throws light both on the emergence of queer identities during the period and on the

role of religion—particularly its capacity to provide an empowering spiritual voice. Building on David Hilliard's classic article of 1982 on the Victorian connections between gay men and Anglo-Catholicism (which provided a potent combination of the devotional and the aesthetic), Roden extends his investigation to encompass women (Christina Rossetti, "Michael Field"), as well as Gerard Manley Hopkins, Wilde, John Gray, and a number of less familiar names. His emphasis is less on physical affection (many of his subjects, were, indeed, celibate) than on erotic energy, whether expressed as love, sublimated into friendship, or embraced as the driving force behind literary creation—as well as being directed toward divine worship. His points are well illustrated through close reading, though his overall argument is marked by a rather heavy-handed Foucauldian style.

Victorian homoerotic energy is also at the center of James Najarian's attentively argued *Victorian Keats: Manliness, Sexuality, and Desire*, in which he shows how while on the one hand, John Keats was frequently condemned throughout the nineteenth century for his sensuousness and "effeminacy," these were precisely the qualities of his verse that such writers as Hopkins, John Addington Symonds, and Walter Pater were to find particularly attractive and enabling in their constructions of—Najarian uses the term in relation to Pater—"an erotically inclusive aesthetics" (p. 159). Matt Cook's *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885–1914* is a more wide-reaching and altogether more intellectually suggestive work of cultural history, looking both at the anxieties that were voiced about male-male relationships after the passing of the Labouchère amendment and at the emergence of what might be termed a gay-rights movement during this time. His concern, in other words, is for the most part with desires that were far from sublimated: Cook maps a gay London whose occupants frequented certain bathhouses and bars, clubs, and bachelor chambers, and relished encoded references—so that, for example, Lord Henry's peregrinations in the early parts of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* take him, for those in the know, to places that would have particular resonances for those familiar with London's homoerotic haunts. Yet at the same time, this was a society living under the shadow of prosecutions and blackmail, leading to—as Cook phrases it—"parallel feelings of alienation and belonging" (p. 145): feelings which he very ably identifies in a number of the works that he discusses.

The "cultural politics of embodiment"—as Paul Youngquist terms it in *Monstrosities: Bodies and British Romanticism* (p. xxxi)

has come in for a good deal of post-Foucauldian study, and there is nothing particularly surprising in Youngquist's conclusion that bodies are culturally shaped for social ends, wherever they are represented. But his is a spirited account, well (sometimes gruesomely) illustrated; drawing on comparative anatomy and freak shows, and on authors who range from John Locke to Mary Shelley, Blake to Olaudah Equiano. What does it mean to possess beauty? To engage in "bad habits"? And how do monstrous bodies unsettle social norms, and why are they so fascinating? Youngquist's grasp of different discourses, as well as the confidence with which he investigates them, makes his answers to these questions enjoyable to read. John Gordon's *Physiology and the Literary Imagination*—stretching from the Wordsworths through Dickens, Hopkins, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Dylan Thomas, and Sylvia Plath—is ambitious in its reach, as it investigates what each of these authors had picked up from popular medical and pseudomedical science, and how these assumptions about the inner workings of bodies feed into their subjects and metaphors: it is an accumulation of examples, rather than an argument, but frequently compelling (whether dealing with Wordsworth's *actual* likely knowledge of bleeding with leeches, or the epidemic of blushing in *Dombey and Son*) in its details.

Mary Wilson Carpenter's fascinating *Imperial Bibles, Domestic Bodies: Women, Sexuality, and Religion* takes a far less well-worn route into exploring how Victorians came to hold certain opinions about bodily functions and relations, whether masturbation, menstruation, circumcision, or same-sex liaisons. Her study is another interesting example of a generic hybrid. In part, it is book history, looking at the many Family Bibles which appeared during this period, often with notes, commentaries, illustrations, and interpretive apparatus which give a real insight into how people read or were intended to read (or to jump over certain passages) in the scriptures. She shows the importance for social and literary history of paying attention to commercial religious publications, which have often been passed over in favor of more "serious" theology. "The commercial British Family Bible was both advertisement and cultural icon for what the British family wanted to be, but it is also a representation of how what that family wanted to be changed as the nation and its universe changed" (p. 5). The second part of the study, which looks in more detail at *Villette*, *Daniel Deronda*—no stranger to circumcision criticism—and Victorian schemes of the apocalypse, is not always as consistent: Carpenter sometimes strains textual metaphors for a

sexualized significance which may not always convince, and I was not sure that her employment (and interrogation) of recent psychoanalytic sexual theory necessarily added to her argument. Overall, however, this intellectually inquisitive book considerably adds to our understanding of the work of popular Christianity in Victorian England and—potentially—the colonies.

III

From the language of the body, I move to studies that treat language in a less metaphorical sense. Richard Marggraf Turley, in *The Politics of Language in Romantic Literature*, argues that “if we continue disregarding the conduits of thought linking Romantic authors to the philological debates of the day, we ignore a vital element in the production of Romantic literature” (p. 190). He is well aware of the importance of those who have pioneered this view (such as Hans Aarsleff, Olivia Smith, and Linda Dowling), but offers less emphasis on those works that elucidated theories of language as such than on showing how Wordsworth, Keats, and Percy Shelley, among others, built on their and their audiences’ knowledge of language controversies, with the underlying belief that “political reform could be achieved ‘simply’ by reforming poetic language” (p. 130). This optimism, as he demonstrates, crumbled in the following decades. Close attention to language also lies at the heart of Charles Mahoney’s *Romantics and Renegades: The Poetics of Political Reaction*. He revisits a familiar area—what he terms “the predicament and pathos of romantic writing” (p. 12), that is, its fall from revolutionary aspiration into reactionary disclaimer—in order to argue that this apostasy is less a political failure than the effect of literary language. While Mahoney is certainly well aware of the historical contexts of the writing he discusses (primarily that of Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Robert Southey, and above all of their arch poetico-political critic, William Hazlitt), his attention falls largely on Regency literary and political discourse, and, especially, on the implications of the ways in which both poetry and criticism employed a vocabulary of standing and falling. Unfortunately, it is not always easy to distinguish Mahoney’s own literal and figurative linguistic deployment of the same vocabulary: when he critiques Hazlitt for fluttering “above the verge, blind to the precipitous inclination of his own rhetorical excesses” (p. 166), he could usefully have cast an eye over his own practices.

Charles I. Armstrong's *Romantic Organicism: From Idealist Origins to Ambivalent Afterlife* is even more ambitious in its attention to formalism: it sets out the radicalization of the idea of organic unity as it is found in German idealism, and follows its influence not just in the writing of Wordsworth and Coleridge but into the more recent theoretical work of I. A. Richards, Georges Bataille, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Jacques Derrida. Yet while showing that "the organicist approach is beset with self-contradiction and insuperable aporias" (p. 186), Armstrong's own anxiously self-reflective, qualificatory prose is a poor vehicle for his advocacy of organicism, since it (and the text's problems with proofreading) display its liabilities as much as its possibilities. Both of these works show up a real problem, noticeable this year in work throughout the period: that while there is a welcome turn toward a very close reading of texts which simultaneously acknowledges the historical and philosophical contexts of their formation, critics need to bear in mind the desirability, for the reader, of an over-arching shape as clear as Wordsworth's idea of a Gothic architectonics, or Johann Gottlieb Fichte's belief in a scientific structure taking the coherent form of a building.

IV

An underlying theme in much writing this year on the Romantic period has been the connections that contemporary writers pursued between nationalism and literature. The theme of Britain's relationship to other cultures, both internal and external, is pursued more openly in a number of volumes. The last decade has witnessed the growth of what has become known as "four nations" British literary history, and a re-evaluation of the place of the Celtic in eighteenth-century and Romantic studies in particular. The collection of essays edited by Gerard Carruthers and Alan Rawes, *English Romanticism and the Celtic World*, builds on this interest, and is especially alert to the part that Celticism (seen in both positive and abusive terms) played "as a tool in the construction and expansion of the post-1745 British state" (p. 1). This volume contains many strong essays: I would single out David Punter's fascinating unpacking of the resonances of "Gwendolen," as Blake uses this proper name; Bernard Beatty on the force of "Celtic memories" in Byron's thought; Michael J. Franklin's piece on Sir William Jones, the Celtic Revival, and the Oriental Renaissance; and William Brewer on Felicia Hemans, Byronic cosmopolitanism, and the ancient Welsh bards, as essays which struck

me as particularly fresh, but such is the consistency of this volume that this selection seems somewhat invidious. J. R. Watson and Murray G. H. Pittock write informatively about internal tourism (concentrating on Wordsworth in North Wales, and the importance of Walter Scott for British tourists, respectively), and their themes foreground the movement of both people and ideas in Celtic spaces: the establishment of dialogues which characterizes the composition as well as the thematics of this volume. The best of the pieces collected together in Helen Gilbert and Anna Johnston's *In Transit: Travel, Text, Empire* (which moves from the marriage tourist trade in early early-nineteenth-century Gretna Green to contemporary eco-tourism) offer close readings of little-known texts: Claudia Brandenstein on Lady Nugent's "Grand Tour of Duty in Jamaica, 1801–1805"; Jo Robertson's examination of the fascination with corporeality—whether their own or that of natives—shown by travelers in India; and Helen Tiffin's discussion of the ways in which nineteenth-century travel writers investigated and sensationalized the headhunters of Borneo: a fascination with the exotic which she rightly connects with the contemporaneous pressures of modernity and its pressures on the individual psyche—as exemplified in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*. Anna Johnston's essay in this volume, on missionary travel narratives, brings out their role in collecting and circulating knowledge about the colonial world: as she puts it, they "were crucial to the ways in which Britons understood the peoples and places of Britain's growing dominions, particularly in relation to the Pacific" (p. 80).

Interesting writing that deals with Britain's relationships with her colonies continues to appear, including Steve Attridge's *Nationalism, Imperialism, and Identity in Late Victorian Culture: Civil and Military Worlds*; Patrick Brantlinger's *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800–1930*; Johnston's *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800–1860*, and Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee's *Crime and Empire: The Colony in Nineteenth-Century Fictions of Crime*. Attridge's book is strongly influenced by Edward Said, although not uncritically so: he is very well aware of the slippery valency of such figures as the British soldier, who may not be used consistently within popular culture to signify the nationalism and patriotism with which others would seek to invest them. Attridge writes well about the relations between civil and military society, and between class interests and class conflicts, whether in popular poetry of the Boer War or in Indian Mutiny novels, and he investigates the dichotomy encapsulated

in the subtitle to his good chapter on Rudyard Kipling's *Barrack Room Ballads*, "the soldier as hooligan or hero."

The ambivalence of another stock figure is brought out in Johnston's work, which makes it impossible to write off—were one tempted to be overinfluenced by a Dickensian take on the type—the Victorian missionary as solely a creature of misdirected overzealousness. What emerges strongly is not just how missionaries were caught between imperial and religious agendas, but also how they sought to influence the development of empire through their observations about gender, race, domesticity, and civility (she shows how they were particularly keen to "normalize" sexual relations and to ensure the establishment of nuclear families). Yet while she acknowledges that "European conceptions of racialized and sexualized orders of savagery profoundly influenced missionary practices and representations of different colonized peoples" (p. 164), she also gives some weight—I would have liked more—to how they functioned as proto-anthropologists, and shows how the traffic was not just one-way: how, for example, "British femininity might have to be rethought in the aftermath of its encounter with Indian culture" (p. 105). Johnston has drawn extensively on the archives of the large and influential London Missionary Society, but the fact that there are numerous other missionary archives, and that she has chosen to concentrate on Indian, Australian, and Polynesian missions, is indicative of the rich potential for further literary work in an area that is starting to attract a growing number of historians.

Missionaries, of course, attracted a number of native converts, who became missionary voices in their own right. Unfortunately, these are not voices with any significant role in Brantlinger's book. He gives us a detailed and inevitably depressing account of the prevalent nineteenth-century belief in the idea that primitive races were on their way toward extinction, a viewpoint increasingly supported by so-called scientific and genetic theory, and shows well how Social Darwinism was employed to enable the spread of imperialism. The belief that indigenous peoples were biologically inferior was used, as is well known, to bolster colonial domination, and Brantlinger demonstrates how such theories were also turned on "degenerate" and impoverished white peoples such as the Irish after the Famine. Although, carrying his argument through into the 1930s, he shows that while such views were central to Fascism and Nazism, the gradual renewal of aboriginal peoples in various parts of the world was starting to call such theories into question, he misses the oppor-

tunity of showing how their voices could on occasion also be heard strongly in the nineteenth century, not just bewailing their lot but engaging with emergent forms of modernity. Nonetheless, he produces a welcome amount of unfamiliar evidence in support of his survey, and the loaded metaphoric language of many of his quotations points to the amount of work that still remains to be done on the rhetorical modes in which offensive imperialist ideas were spread and endorsed.

Mukherjee offers an insightful study of the changing ways in which the discourse of crime was employed to understand, imagine, and rule India during the greater part of the nineteenth century. He draws on the ways in which crime is written about in histories and in legal studies to illuminate the fiction of the period from Scott's "The Surgeon's Daughter" to Collins's *The Moonstone*. He is especially interesting on the writing of Philip Meadows Taylor, one of the prime examples through which Mukherjee demonstrates his convincing underlying premise: that while on the one hand, Indians can be criminalized in various ways—as mutineers, Thugs, and dacoits—such insurgent tendencies may be juxtaposed with loyal and legal Indians, prime instruments for the humanizing, reformist tendencies in British rule. Yet "criminal" dissent may also be read as legitimate protest against British oppression—something that Mukherjee shrewdly links back to the ways in which criminals could appear as quasi-heroic in the Newgate fiction of the 1830s and '40s. Fictions of crime emerge as "both enabling and disabling tools of authority" (p. 190)—a generalization which, as Mukherjee shows in his conclusion, may be taken well beyond the nineteenth century.

The subject of crime lies at the center of three further interesting books: Lawrence Frank's *Victorian Detective Fiction and the Nature of Evidence: The Scientific Investigations of Poe, Dickens, and Doyle*; Simon Joyce's *Capital Offenses: Geographies of Class and Crime in Victorian London*, and Lisa Rodensky's *The Crime in Mind: Criminal Responsibility and the Victorian Novel*. Each one of these brings criminal acts into extensive dialogue with other discourses and disciplines. Frank is concerned to place the development of nineteenth-century detective fiction in the broader contexts of unearthing historical knowledge and embedded narratives in a contingent universe, looking to geologists, anthropologists, and theorists of evolution for models of "reconstructing past events from fragmentary and inadequate evidence" (p. 6). "Like the geologist or the paleontologist, the detective explains a fact or an event by placing it within a chronological series; he

then imaginatively transforms it into a chain of natural causes and effects, leading backward in time to some posited originating moment" (p. 157). While sometimes Frank's analogies themselves involve a good deal of hypothesizing, his close readings demonstrate very clearly the parallels that may be drawn between modes of narrative explanation in ostensibly very different genres.

Rodensky's book is likewise concerned with the telling of narratives, whether in novels or in courts of law. Her focus is on Victorian ideas and ideals concerning criminal responsibility—the relationship between states of minds and acts, "between elements of crime and the questions of responsibility these relations raise" (p. 7)—questions, of course, that also surfaced in the works on infanticide that I discussed earlier. She concentrates on the writings of Dickens, George Eliot, and the barrister and judge James Fitzjames Stephen, who not only was responsible for considering these issues in legal settings, but also deliberately sought to provoke discussion about the responsibilities of the novelist when it came to representing social problems. In this consistently intelligent study, I was particularly struck by the discussions of the questions raised by *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*—and by Bulstrode and Gwendolen's portrayals, more particularly—"what is the relation of a criminal state of mind to a criminal act? When does a criminal intent become a criminal act?" (p. 90). The value of this thoughtful book lies not just in adding to our understanding of the relationships between law and literature, but to debates about the developing Victorian notions of the inner self and of personal identity.

Simon Joyce's book looks more at the locations of crime than at crimes themselves, or their protagonists. He engages in "literary geography"—borrowing the phrase and to some extent method from Franco Moretti—and considers what happens when we map a criminal act (in the Newgate novel, in Dickens, in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* or *The Picture of Dorian Gray*) onto what can be known about the actual urban and social conditions pertaining to the spot where it supposedly took place. His findings, unsurprisingly, lead him to discuss the shift in literary fashions from working-class crime to crimes committed by the privileged classes. Where his argument becomes more interesting and innovative is when he considers (partly through the double lives of criminal protagonists, partly through parallel literary genres) the relationship of upper-class crime to the concomitant fascination with hard-edged naturalism, and the criminal violence in such fictional locations as Arthur Morrison's *Jago*, and analyzes the flip side of this: the

political potential—even if it only existed in Walter Besant-like fantasy—of “a new cross-class alliance of those at the top and bottom of society against the middle ground of late-Victorian liberalism” (p. 233). Another explicit disavowal of the utility of the earlier Foucault in treating of Victorian social and urban conditions, Simon Joyce offers a very helpful materialist consideration of the realities of criminal activity in Victorian London in relation to criminal fictions of the period.

V

Simon Joyce makes good use of the connections between emergent Victorian sociology and contemporary practices of cartography. Helen Groth’s *Victorian Photography and Literary Nostalgia* is an important addition to studies that examine the effect of this new visual technology on recording the material world and on literature. Nancy Armstrong and Jennifer Green-Lewis’s work has concentrated on issues of realism, authenticity, and illusion; Groth’s concern is above all with photography’s power to arrest time and with the ways in which Victorians knew that they were getting glimpses into a rapidly disappearing past. Photography, in other words, encouraged them to confront their own modernity. Moreover, she has moved away from the tendency to consider photography alongside fiction: Groth gives her attention to the literary marketplace in general and poetry in particular. She examines what it means to market literary texts such as the poetry of Wordsworth and Scott with photographic illustrations; how Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Casa Guidi Windows* may be read in terms of a sequence of photographic flashes; how Julia Margaret Cameron and Alfred Tennyson both believed that mass production stifled creativity, yet were happy to exploit its possibilities when the means of control were in their hands; and what exactly was invested in the art of photographic portraiture of authors. Groth has a strong sense of the melancholic potential of photography, something which was already well recognized by Victorian commentators, and of the way in which it frequently reflected “a need to touch, to possess, and to know both the past and present” (p. 189)—a seductive practice, and metaphor, in other words, at a time when history seemed to be moving onward relentlessly, and transport and communication often pressed “against the limits of what the mind could take in at a glance” (p. 18). Thoroughly informed by both current photographic theory and by Victorian writings on the subject, Groth’s book is very

comfortable with its interdisciplinarity: it offers further persuasive proof of the importance of considering cultural issues across generic boundaries.

Photography, in Groth's hands, has been better served than other aspects of the visual arts this year (with the notable exception of Lorraine Janzen Kooistra's work on Christina Rossetti, discussed below). Bruce Haley, in *Living Forms: Romantics and the Monumental Figure*, looks at the early-nineteenth-century literary fascination with human forms that had no accompanying verbal text mediating their impressive, daunting presence. Monuments, as Haley explains, are simultaneously signs of absence and are "dense apparitional presences" (p. 10), and he works this premise out in relation to a wide variety of examples. He is at his strongest when dealing with actual sculptures, but his terms stretch wide, including Coleridge's Shakespeare Gallery, Hazlitt's recurrent dwelling on certain portraits, and a whole range of sculptural figures that turn up in the writings of Lord Byron, Keats, Hemans, and others. While the book constitutes a useful gallery of examples of memorialized figures in Romantic writing, its dutiful style fails to bring its subject matter to life. Liana F. Piehler's *Spatial Dynamics and Female Development in Victorian Art and Novels* is a modest, careful, slightly schematic, but nonetheless useful and up-to-date assessment of the differing modes in which physical space and inner space are brought into dialogue with one another in a range of major Victorian novels. These are read alongside a judicious selection of contemporary works of art.

VI

Thematic volumes necessarily merge into studies of particular genres. While some significant work on the novel has already been noted, there are a cluster of good works dealing with poetry, too, especially in the earlier part of the century. Jon Mee's *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period* hinges on the evolving understanding of the term "enthusiasm" during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. On the one hand it shifted from signifying an excess of religious feeling to describing a generally more dangerous, fanatical, and unpredictable crowd mentality; on the other, it came to be identified with the intense feeling thought necessary for the production of successful poetry—yet which also, in its turn, could erupt into uncontrolled and excessive outbursts. This is a highly intelligent and lively argued study, giving a com-

prehensive and nuanced account of the rhetoric of enthusiasm inherited by Romantic writers from eighteenth-century authors ranging from Locke to political pamphleteers, before turning to a more detailed analysis of four key writers. As one might expect, these include Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Blake, but Anna Barbauld is also up there, and Mee valuably revises the essentialist tendency to see her primarily “as a creature of sensibility rather than someone also closely involved with the developing poetics of enthusiasm” (p. 212).

Simon Bainbridge’s *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Visions of Conflict* is a useful study of an area of Romantic studies which has received a growing amount of attention over the last few years. Although he claims that he does not set out to provide a comprehensive overview, in fact his concentration on certain key examples that show how writers saw the “mediation of the war to the public as a crucial part of their role” (p. viii), or how war impacted on their sense of their development as poets, functions as an excellent introduction to the field and to the broader issue of the relationship between imagination and history in the Romantic period. Bainbridge looks at the writings of Charlotte Smith, Coleridge, Southey, Byron, and Hemans, and is particularly convincing in showing how Scott’s metrical romances altered the ways in which war was to be presented in the century that followed: “In a period when warfare was seen to have taken on a new form, to have become ‘modern,’ Scott’s phenomenally successful tales of ‘Border chivalry’ transformed the imagining of war, presenting it as heroic, shaped by the conventions of romance, and framed by the conventions of the picturesque” (p. 120). Scott was a significant mediator between the old view of war as something under man’s control, and the post-Enlightenment apprehension that this unstoppable engine was some kind of machine run out of control; and throughout, Bainbridge brings out very well the tensions that evolve in the poetry of war during this period around the topics of individualism and impersonality.

The theme of politics and poetry is also found, albeit in a very different vein, in E. Warwick Slinn’s *Victorian Poetry as Cultural Critique: The Politics of Performative Language*. Slinn uses speech-act theory to argue for continuity between the meaning of a poetic trope and the social function of language, and does this through the close reading of five poems: Robert Browning’s “The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed’s Church”; Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s “The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point”; Arthur

Hugh Clough's "Dipsychus"; Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "Jenny"; and Augusta Webster's "A Castaway." Ostensibly, these are all poems about social issues, either focusing on specific topics—slave abuse, prostitution—or more generally addressing matters of religion, hypocrisy, social justice, and moral conscience. But rather than offering social contextualization, Slinn, concentrating on the performative implications of these texts, demands that we pay attention to those acts of self-expression through which individuals describe and construct their worlds and their selves. These readings re-affirm the interpretive open-endedness of the dramatic monologue, placing their emphasis on the poetic tools used to interrogate subjectivity. The Brownings also form the subject of Mary Sanders Pollock's *Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning: A Creative Partnership*. This is for the most part a straightforward account of their initial courtship correspondence, their creative and intellectual exchanges, their mutual physical attraction, and their professional partnership, which "allows us to hear differences, but also allows us to hear how the work of each resonated with the poetry of the other" (p. 8). The study is best when it deals with verbal analogies and borrowings, least successful when it makes its occasional dives into psychoanalytic criticism.

Returning to fiction, Pamela Regis's *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* considers this subgenre, at once highly popular but lacking in kudos, in its various manifestations from the 1740s to the 1990s. She argues that as a type, it is not dependent upon women being held in bondage (whether by their emotions or by more tangible ties), but, rather, is about women's freedom. But Regis underestimates, or underacknowledges, the ways in which Tania Modleski and Janet Radway have already argued that romance fiction promotes the ideals of affective individualism and companionate marriage, and she can only reach her conclusions through an exclusion of possibilities for satisfaction *outside* the parameters of heterosexual courtship and betrothal. Moreover, she chooses texts selectively: Trollope's take on romantic investment looks somewhat different when seen through the lens of *The Small House at Allington*, say, rather than the "first-rate courtship plot" (p. 93) concerning Lucy Robarts which is to be found within *Framley Parsonage*.

While not confined to any one genre, Ruth Robbins's clearly-written *Pater to Foster, 1873–1924* will be a very useful introduction for students of the period, particularly those who turn to it for an understanding of the persistence and transformation of

realism, or for a survey of the shifts that took place in poetic form during these years. It does, however, downplay the influence of both Continental and transatlantic literary and social forces, and even Empire is largely invoked in the context of the identity crises manifested in turn-of-the-century masculine romances.

VII

As I mentioned early on in my review, single-author studies (with the exception of biographies) have, in general, been less in evidence this year than studies that sample a range of authors: a phenomenon which illustrates the convergence of interdisciplinarity with the increasingly dominant form of Ph.D. theses (and hence of first books). Nonetheless, some significant volumes have appeared: I treat these, broadly speaking, chronologically.

Julia M. Wright's *Blake, Nationalism, and the Politics of Alienation*, while starting by acknowledging Blake's reputation as individualist, largely addresses his concern with community, especially the community of the nation. She uses such matters as Blake's interest in art as reflection of national condition, his figuration of national bards, and his defense of English language to show his alertness to the extent of textual political power, whether related to such publically legitimized arenas as parliamentary or coffee-house debate or the broader domain of popular opinion. These are intelligent close readings which build on the foundational work of David Erdman and, more recently, Mee. Morton D. Paley's *The Traveller in the Evening: The Last Works of William Blake* is devoted to the literature and art that Blake produced during the last ten years of his life—including the wood engravings for Robert John Thornton's *Virgil*; seven engravings for Dante's *Divine Comedy*; and the culmination of Blake's life-long engagement with the Bible, including the manuscript poem *The Everlasting Gospel*, his last illuminated book, *The Ghost of Abel*, and the powerful, dramatic *Illustrations of the Book of Job*. Paley's study moves between a materialist analysis of the composition, production, publication, and distribution of the works, and a detailed interpretive engagement which brings out Blake's sustained mental energy. If, as one would expect, Blake's creations never "conform to received or generally accepted views of their subjects" (p. 178) as they had been treated by other poets, illustrators, and scholars, neither are they necessarily consistent with Blake's own earlier work, notwithstanding the fact that, intellec-

tually, Blake continued in his unwillingness to accept the established Church. While his practice in the graphic arts continued to move between the illustrative and the symbolic, his individualism took some new forms. Paley brings out how visually his works are more given to dramatic oscillations between light and shade, and he also, in a supplementary note on the Visionary Heads, gives due weight to Blake's increasing imaginative sportiveness. But the value of this volume lies in its wealth of detail, both interpretive and informative, rather than in any sustained overarching argument. This year, Blake scholars will also be truly thankful for the appearance of the second edition of G. E. Bentley Jr.'s *Blake Records*, with its inclusion of new and updated material—material fronted by the debunking of “Seven Red Herrings,” including—alas—the confirmation that “There is *no* contemporary evidence to support the story of Blake and Catherine naked in the garden at Hercules Buildings” (p. xxvii).

Jane Austen has been well treated by two books concerned with her style: Bharat Tandon's *Jane Austen and the Morality of Conversation*, and D. A. Miller's *Jane Austen, or The Secret of Style*. Tandon's work is in some respects relatively conservative in its premises, arguing that, with the literary models of conversational morality, sentimental reading, and fictional didacticism open to Austen, and having a multiplicity of possible readerships, the novelist “composed a fictional style which does not depend on either sentimental congruences between text and reader, or on exemplary models,” and that her novels are as “interested in the setting of puzzles as in the quality of the solutions” (p. 54). His study's strength lies in the way in which his close and independently minded readings show how this works in practice; and in the way in which he asks some challenging formal questions: are, for example, the obvious “set pieces,” the “most prominent sequences” (p. 212), the most important ones in the novel? And what might our answer tell us both about how Austen disrupts our own readerly expectations, and about the awkwardness of critics when faced with the novel?

“Awkward” is certainly not a word that one would dream of applying to D. A. Miller's exquisite, original, meditative, and provocative volume, written in a style that is like a collision between Austen herself and the more epigrammatic modes of Roland Barthes. What, Miller debates with himself, is “Style”? Does it under-represent the person who deliberately, self-consciously deploys it—or is it the ultimate manifestation of selfhood? What relationship may there be between style on the page and the style

that an individual character expresses or in relation to which she is placed? How in this respect does free indirect discourse function? Does style have a human face? And if so, how might it be gendered? I feel uneasy extracting these questions to ponder because they suggest a rhetorically aggressive study: not so. Miller is continually provocative, but in an allusive, highly crafted—stylish—way: writing which is the product of deep immersion in Austen's fiction and its affect. A quite different sort of book is Jon Spence's biography, *Becoming Jane Austen*: a lively read, but very uneven. As one would anticipate from someone who has already published on the wills in Austen's family, he is good not just on legacies but also on economics more generally. On the other hand, the paucity of direct evidence about parts of Austen's life leads him to be far too over-reliant on the fiction, especially her early works, as offering clues to her life history; and he overspeculates both about her relationship with her cousin Eliza de Feuillide and her possible romantic attachment to the Irish lawyer Tom le Froy.

Stephen Cheeke's *Byron and Place: History, Translation, Nostalgia* is a tri-partite work which considers the importance of being literally and figuratively present in a place to the poet's self-construction. He looks at the implications of the idea of "being there" and of authority that comes from experiencing events first-hand in Byron's poetry up to 1818; his self-imposed exile in Italy and the process of translation and acculturation that was attendant upon it; and, post-1821, the poet's nostalgia for England—whether for the now-unattainable early years of the Regency or for a recent past of which he had no immediate knowledge. Drawing on both a Bachelardian poetics of space and Lefebvrian attention to the cultural critique of social space, Cheeke asks what it might mean, indeed, to have an "authentic" experience in a place—something that was to prove increasingly troublesome as the century went on (as is testified to by Clough's anxious traveler Claude in *Amours de Voyage*, quoted by Cheeke in his introduction). While he shows Byron to have been especially susceptible to "an awareness of the strangeness and power of being in places of historical fame," to the aura, or, as he put it, the "halo" of place (p. 9)—even if increasingly ambivalent, even ironic, about the functions of nostalgia and memory—one can think of a good number of nineteenth-century writers to whom the questions raised in this book will be very pertinent.

Kipp's book on Romanticism and maternity had perhaps surprisingly little to say about Mary Shelley. However, the *Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley*, edited by Esther Schor, pulls together

a lively and original collection of essays from a range of distinguished contributors. Divided into three sections, on “The Author of *Frankenstein*,” “Fictions and Myths”—which looks at her other novels and her shorter works—and “Professional Personae” (Shelley as editor, biographer, travel writer, letter writer, and cultural critic), this volume succeeds in giving both due weight to the influence and importance of her best-known novel and to the diversity and energy of her other productions, some of them as bold and experimental as *Frankenstein*. Schor’s own essay, on *Frankenstein* and film; Diane Long Hoeveler, on the impact that the text has made on feminist studies, queer theory, and disability studies; and Jay Clayton’s exploration of the Monster’s after-life in replicants and robots, are particularly good at showing how the life of this text has leapt into a number of other forms. Yet perhaps the most striking thing about this volume is the impression it succeeds in giving of Mary Shelley not as some adjunct to Percy Bysshe (indeed, Susan Wolfson’s impressive study of the editorial work she performed on her poet-husband’s writings makes it clear the degree to which she shaped the poet’s reception in the decades after his death), but as a radical and innovative thinker in her own right. Rightly, when read together, these essays bring out the major areas of debate in Mary Shelley studies—what were the limits of her liberalism and of her feminism? How far—as Timothy Morton interestingly argues—did she hold an innovative view of culture as a collective social product, and how would such a view interact with her positions on the responsibilities and burdens of the individual ego? This was one of the most stimulating and provocative collections of essays that I read, and, important as it will be to Shelley scholars, it also raises many questions important to scholars of Romanticism, and of women’s writing, more generally.

Stephen Gill’s *Cambridge Companion to Wordsworth* is also a very welcome collection of pieces from a galaxy of strong Romantic scholars, including Frances Ferguson (a fascinating essay on “Wordsworth and the Meaning of Taste”), Lucy Newlyn, Wolfson, Nicholas Roe, Paul Hamilton (who situates the poet within recent evaluations of British Romanticism), and Gill himself, who, in his piece on “The philosophic poet,” brings out how Wordsworth demands that we become philosophic readers ourselves.

Turning to biographies, this year has seen the publication of a number of lives of women and men who were themselves distinguished by their interdisciplinary interests and activities. Anne Stott’s *Hannah More: The First Victorian* is the first full-length

biography of this polymath (playwright, Evangelical, novelist, poet, political writer, and reformer) for fifty years. Drawing extensively for the first time on More's unpublished correspondence, Stott, in her thorough and very readable biography, not only makes her out to be a lively personality, but also thoughtfully explores the ambiguities involved in assessing her role as a woman in public life. While ostensibly antifeminist, she wished for women "to realize their spiritual and intellectual potential" (p. xi), and she enjoyed and utilized her celebrity to the full. "By 1800," Stott writes, "she had become one of the most influential lay people in the Mendips, and she was using this influence in an almost reckless fashion" (p. 243). Nor did More's contradictions end there. She worked for change in many microcosmic areas but did not wish to see any radical changes in the structuring of a hierarchized society; she taught working men to read but was strongly against the extension of the franchise. Stott does not just articulate her ideas well, but by showing the contexts in which they were disseminated, More becomes a means of exploring important links between publishing, politics, and religion, complementing, for example, the study of the radical publisher John Johnson by Helen Braithwaite, which I discuss later. To my mind, the most problematic aspect of Stott's biography is its subtitle, which effectively denies More (1745–1833) her place in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In seeking to define her by an era's supposed mentality, this appellation passes up the opportunity to use such a path-breaking career as More's to challenge the rigidity of period boundaries.

Stott is adept at treating some of the more awkward aspects of More's career, noting that she has received some bad press in studies of Romantic women writers and intellectuals, particularly for her cavalier patronage of Ann Yearsley, the "milkwoman" poet. She gives a balanced account of this episode, concluding that "perhaps the key lay in More's inexperience rather than her arrogance. In her dealings with Yearsley she had for the first time become a patron rather than a client" (p. 77). Yet even if Stott's tone is much more measured, she is perhaps more of an apologist for her sometimes difficult subject than Leslie Mitchell appears to be in *Bulwer Lytton: The Rise and Fall of a Victorian Man of Letters*. As Mitchell admits, Lytton could be arrogant, tended to lack a sense of humor, and, feeling perpetually undervalued, often reacted defensively: his countrymen frequently found his protestations of his importance "eccentric and self-regarding" (p. 129). Lytton's interests, and the genres in which he was produc-

tive, were extraordinarily far-reaching. A writer of political commentaries and journalism, poetry and plays, his fiction has started to receive more attention recently, partly because the diversity of its subject matter reads in itself like a catalog of successive Victorian fictional enthusiasms: the dandy novel; Newgate fiction; accounts of provincial life; medieval narratives; a couple of occult novels; and a final trio of works (*The Parisians*, *The Coming Race*, and *Kenelm Chillingly*) which offer prophetic discussions of the state of society before and after the coming of Socialism. Mitchell gives an energetic account of Lytton's life and works, although he is himself something of a conservative reader of fictional techniques. Nowhere is this more apparent than when, in the midst of his undeservedly harsh treatment of Rosina Bulwer Lytton, he remarks—as though she was crazed to hold such a view—that “Rosina saw the legal and political systems as a male plot. A woman had difficulty in making her voice heard at all. Her novels are full of digressions on this point” (p. 56).

Less jaunty and populist in its style is Nicholas Capaldi's *John Stuart Mill: A Biography*, a very welcome new intellectual life of Mill, which gives full weight not just to his philosophical and technical writing but also to his status as a public intellectual. Capaldi shows how Mill made a number of diverse fields—from ethics to epistemology—widely intelligible, and hence demonstrates the role he had in facilitating debate, whether around issues of literature, religion, or sexual politics. The highly readable biography is particularly illuminating about Mill's status within nineteenth-century theories of the place of the creative artist and the imagination, and it gives extended and thoughtful treatment to his intellectual and personal relationship with Harriet Taylor. Capaldi's conclusion, that Mill is still highly relevant today; that his “humanistic critique of the technological project and the moral-theological critique of the modern corruption of the soul are still with us” (p. 365), is both a useful summary of the central humanitarian stance of this thinker and an explanation for why his preoccupations can be seen to intersect with those of many other mid-Victorian writers.

The same might be said to be true of the subject of Bernard Bergonzi's *A Victorian Wanderer: The Life of Thomas Arnold the Younger* (like Capaldi's book, and Stott's *Hannah More*, published by Oxford University Press, who are to be congratulated on the quality of the biographies that they are currently bringing out). Tom Arnold might have been less intellectually tenacious than his father, the Rugby headmaster, or his older brother Matthew,

but he shared the latter's tendencies toward vacillation. However, while Matthew was able to let these emerge in the anguished, deliberate, and deliberating self-contradictions of his poetic persona, Tom expressed them through his peripatetic mode of living, moving from Oxford to New Zealand, Tasmania, Dublin, Oxford, and then back to Dublin. Spiritually, he moved into the Catholic Church, out of it, and back again. Continually spurred onward by financial difficulty, he was a prolific journalist (much for the Catholic bimonthly, *The Rambler*) and knew a good cross-range of Victorian literary society, from Wordsworth to Hopkins, Clough to Lewis Carroll. As colonizer, administrator, educationist, scholar (he published an edition of *Beowulf*), reviewer, and writer, Tom Arnold becomes, in Bergonzi's spirited account, simultaneously a study in what it could mean to be a younger brother in the Victorian period—particularly when one's elder sibling was spectacularly successful—and a means of coming at many of the central issues of the age from the often unexpected angle created by Tom Arnold's own unpredictable positions and temperament. Bergonzi remarks of him, in his introduction, that he had “some of the qualities of a character in a Victorian novel; not a central figure, but one of those lesser characters whom one would like to see more of” (p. 2), and, while this in itself calls to mind the unwritten trajectories lying behind the lives of those who, say, make a cameo appearance in the pages of Trollope, it also returns us to the insights of Woloch. If examining a minor character in a novel involves, as it must, “not just the specific descriptions of particular characters but also how these characters are inflected into a complex narrative system” (p. 125), then one may extend Woloch's methodology to see how biographical subjects, even if not conspicuously innovative, prominent, or scandalous in their own rights, may be used to elucidate the “larger, dynamic construction of dominant and subordinate elements within the narrative”—or social—“totality” (p. 125).

Vincent Newey, *The Scriptures of Charles Dickens: Novels of Ideology, Novels of the Self*, deals not as directly as the title suggests with Dickens's overt and sublimated religious views, but rather with exploring the familiar (though enduring) topic: how did the Victorians negotiate the idea of a meaningful life in an increasingly secular world? It offers a very full reading—full to the point of heavy-handedness—of a small clutch of Dickens's fictions (*A Christmas Carol*, *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Great Expectations*, and *Our Mutual Friend*), but insights into individual moments are subsumed into some extremely familiar observa-

tions: that “Dickens . . . reflects and puts into place, for immediate want of a better phrase, a bourgeois ideology” (p. 5), and that his dialectical imagination “puts into relief and under question its own ideological core, and insists that we perceive truth and values from various, sometimes conflicting, angles” (p. 162). Some interesting observations about Dickens’s employment of the imagery of wheels—in both an industrial and mechanized context, and in relation to “the wheel of life”—are made by Elizabeth A. Campbell in *Fortune’s Wheel: Dickens and the Iconography of Women’s Time*, although her overall attempt to link Dickens’s interest in cyclicity to a Kristevan notion of “women’s time” is less than convincing. She would have been well advised to have engaged much more fully with Victorian historiography.

Three volumes have appeared in Oxford University Press’s World’s Classics “Authors in Context” series, each of which offers students an energetic, informative, and accessible introduction to a major writer and to their social and literary milieu. Andrew Sanders’s *Charles Dickens* gives a brisk account of Dickens’s life before moving on to chapters on politics and society; The Literary Context (strong on the practices of revising, redrafting, and serialization); London and Class; Utilitarianism, Religion, and History; Science and Technology; and, by way of conclusion, an exceptionally wide-ranging chapter on the ways in which illustration and theatrical adaptation, film and television have ensured that many different versions of Dickens’s characters and preoccupations have become established within successive phases of popular culture. John Sloan’s *Oscar Wilde* is good on the social and literary milieu in which Wilde was writing, although less illuminating on the “recontextualizing” aspect—there is no mention of Albert Lewin’s 1945 *Picture of Dorian Gray*, for example, a cinematographic tour de force filmed under the moralistic shadow of Hollywood’s Hays Code. Patricia Ingham’s *Thomas Hardy* is an exceptionally lively and informative study from beginning to end: her discussion of class, of gender, and of science—among other topics—will be stimulating to those who know Hardy well, in addition to being extraordinarily useful to students encountering him for the first time.

Several other worthwhile books have appeared on Hardy this year. In *Thomas Hardy and the Survivals of Time*, Andrew Radford takes a relatively well-worn topic—Hardy’s attitudes toward history and time, especially as refracted through contemporary scientific discourse—and manages to deepen our knowledge of this context through invoking the doctrine of “survivals,” a term coined

by E. B. Tylor in *Primitive Culture* (1871). Hardy borrows this term in *The Return of the Native*: its implications reach into his “imaginative assimilation of scientific and humanistic pursuits dedicated to reconstructing the course of man’s collective past” (p. 22) as a whole. Radford’s study also engages with Hardy’s knowledge (which we can trace through his notebooks as well as his fiction) of the British amateur antiquarian and archaeological traditions, as represented in contemporary periodical literature, and this work will be interesting for those concerned with the transmission of nonspecialist forms of scientific discourse as well as Hardy scholars. T. R. Wright’s *Hardy and His Readers* is an excellent study of the relationship that Hardy had with his readers (whether publishers, critics, or individuals). He shows how the novelist’s natural tendency was to be uncompromising, refusing to bow to popular pressure. Yet—as a very helpful chapter demonstrates—from the late 1880s, writing for the *Graphic*, Hardy began consciously to address a dual audience. While some very influential work on this area has been done in the 1970s, especially by Mary Jacobus and J. T. Laird, Wright’s clear and well-researched argument allows one to see the different ways in which Hardy kept his readership in mind throughout his career. He writes well, too, about the vexed reception of *Jude*, but makes it very clear that, however the popular myth may go, the antagonism that this work received was not the motivating factor that led him to abandon writing fiction. Rather, Wright argues, Hardy undertook this “severe critique of late Victorian ideology” (p. 189) precisely *because* he knew that he was going to embark on no more full-length novels.

Alicia Carroll, *Dark Smiles: Race and Desire in George Eliot* offers a straightforward, if not at first sight particularly groundbreaking, account of the ways in which George Eliot “became deeply engaged in representations of desire which often question and subvert the *status quo* of white innocence and dark desire” (p. xv) that provided one of the most frequently encountered conventions of Victorian sexual assumptions. But more striking than her argument (albeit a well-supported one) that George Eliot often practiced a form of reverse Orientalism, privileging the Other over the English, are Carroll’s demonstrations that George Eliot frequently appropriated the stories of “Others” for her own purposes (her reading of *The Thousand and One Nights* in relation to *Daniel Deronda* is especially illuminating) and that race itself is frequently an unstable category in her writing. This, in turn, serves to show how cautious one needs to be in general-

izing about Victorian attitudes toward racial identities. Carroll's alertness to the nuances and suggestivity of George Eliot's style runs through her own well-written study, not least in her laudable alertness to the ironies of Theophrastus Such's voice.

The context of George Eliot's writing is valuably extended by Delia da Sousa Correa's *George Eliot, Music, and Victorian Culture*. The author's extensively researched and musically knowledgeable study considers the considerable importance of music to George Eliot's own life, while showing how her incorporation of musical references into her imaginative work is far from simple. Allusions to music and performance may say far more about her own art and profession as a writer than about music as such; but at the same time, her expertise and interest were such that each of her musical references assumed an equally knowledgeable audience. Correa is equally illuminating about the part that music was expected to play in women's lives (and about George Eliot's manipulation of these expectations); as an agent in creating community more generally; and about the constant interplay between music and science in her social world and in her texts. Correa writes well about the use George Eliot makes of the "highly equivocal status" (p. 7) of music during this period—at once granted considerable spiritual pre-eminence and regarded suspiciously as possessing dangerous emotive force. Whether exploring the close connections between music—both actual and metaphorical—and sexual passion in *The Mill on the Floss* or shedding new light on Klesmer and Mirah as different sorts of musicians in *Daniel Deronda*, Correa's book is an excellent example of interdisciplinary studies brought to bear on a single author. Or, one might say—and this is a mark of how this type of scholarship functions at its best—this study shows, in exemplary fashion, how unpacking the multiple aspects of one part of cultural life in the work of one particular writer can act as a focal point for a broader understanding of—in this case—the place of music in mid-Victorian culture as a whole.

There has been a recent well-merited increase of interest in Vernon Lee, and two excellent and complimentary studies on this prolific and challenging writer have appeared this year. Vineta Colby's *Vernon Lee: A Literary Biography* is a compelling read. Putting Lee into the fullest possible biographical, literary, and cultural contexts (and not glossing over the fact that she did not have the easiest of personalities), Colby wisely does not strive to make her multifaceted subject fit one mold. Rather, she seeks to explain why it is, quite, that she is so hard to pin down. "In the

end," Colby writes, "Vernon Lee fits into no single category. She was too late to be a Victorian, too early to be a Modernist. She was a nonmilitant feminist, a sexually repressed lesbian, an aesthete, a cautious socialist, a secular humanist. In short, she was protean" (p. xii). As Colby goes on to show, her intelligent mind welcomed intellectual and personal change and growth; she was passionately attached to places, to art, to music. While Lee never wrote an autobiography, her historical, philosophical, and aesthetic writing was filled with her strong personal preferences and with the impress of the texts, individuals, and settings that had influenced her. Lee experimented with different narrative forms and with various modes of subjectivity. Christa Zorn, in her *Vernon Lee: Aesthetics, History, and the Victorian Female Intellectual* likewise writes from the standpoint that Lee "can be read as a category of her own" (p. xxvii) and also points out the difficulties attendant on trying to make her output fit conventional categories. For example, she notes that, while around two-thirds of Lee's work consists of essays, "they vary so much in form, subject, and intention that the genre name becomes almost meaningless" (p. 68). Her study is much more text based—in the sense of a conventional literary study—than is Colby's and pays particular attention to the relationship of gender to Lee's thought and forms. For example, Zorn shows how Lee was both influenced by, and resisted, the ways in which the modern Paterian aesthetic sensibility evolved from a tradition of male subjectivity—and yet also could fall into what seem today like clichés, as when identifying "the unknowability of history with the unknowability of woman" (p. 167). Important additions to our understanding of the place of women in the history of aestheticism—revisionist work which owes a good deal to the recent scholarship of Talia Schaffer and Kathy Psomiades—these two studies also ensure that Lee herself emerges as a precursor for the major tendency that I have been identifying in this year's work: the way in which much of the most exciting scholarship simply refuses to fit within neat categories.

VIII

Aesthetic work of a different kind provides the focus of what was, for me, one of the most exciting studies to appear in the multifarious, burgeoning area of the History of the Book. Lorraine Janzen Kooistra's *Christina Rossetti and Illustration* offers a detailed account of the production and reception of illustrations to

Rossetti's poetry, devotional prose, and writing for children (if something as bizarre as *Speaking Likenesses* deserves that label), reaching from Rossetti's own somewhat tentative drawings to the present day. More than an account of the various strands of the fantastic, whimsical, Gothic terror, decoration, quasipornography, sentimentality, poignancy, and macabre that have variously been called upon to complement her writings ("One trademark of a classic is its extraordinary ability to mutate to accommodate changing cultural traditions" [p. 213], Kooistra writes), and more than a detailed and fascinating account of publishing trends in relation to illustrated books over the last century and a half, this well-illustrated account also is important to our understanding of Rossetti's modes of thought and composition. Kooistra brings out well the workings of her visual imagination, both in her compositions and in supervising the visual packaging of their publication, as well as showing "the very material effects" that successive illustrations to Rossetti "have had on reception and interpretation" (p. 13). While on the subject of Christina Rossetti, incidentally, one should note the excellent essay about her by Jacqueline Rose in her *On Not Being Able to Sleep: Psychoanalysis and the Modern World*. Initially appearing as a review of Jan Marsh's *Christina Rossetti: A Writer's Life* (1994), this piece gains new resonance through being placed in the context of broader speculation about the biographical treatment of women, helping to pose questions about the gender implications for studies of suffering and vulnerability.

Although not a critical study but an edition of correspondence, the volume edited by Morton N. Cohen and Edward Wakeling, *Lewis Carroll and His Illustrators: Collaborations and Correspondence, 1865–1898*, like Kooistra's work, gives a clear sense of the vision of his characters that Lewis Carroll carried in his head, and the exacting authority that he wielded—or attempted to wield—over his illustrators. The brief biographies of the illustrators included (John Tenniel, Henry Holiday, Arthur Burdett Frost, Harry Furniss, and Emily Gertrude Thomson) offer useful outlines of the histories of their publishing relationships with Lewis Carroll. *Haunted Texts: Studies in Pre-Raphaelitism*, edited by David Latham, also sheds light on the bibliocritical issues surrounding the movement. The volume pays tribute to the work of William E. Fredeman and the critical foundation that he laid for Pre-Raphaelite studies. The history of these studies is well outlined by Latham in the introductory essay, and the volume includes, among other good pieces, a provocative essay by J. Hillis

Miller, which, while ostensibly about J. A. M. Whistler's painting/Algernon Charles Swinburne's poem "Before the Mirror," is among other things a meditation on how a computer-adept person "will read literature of the past differently" (p. 140) in this new age of multimedia study.

Two books stand out for their contribution to our understanding of publishing from the point of view of the publisher rather than the author. Helen Braithwaite's *Romanticism, Publishing, and Dissent: Joseph Johnson and the Cause of Liberty* examines the importance of this major bookseller of late-eighteenth-century England, who published such authors as Joseph Priestley, William Cowper, Mary Wollstonecraft, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Erasmus Darwin. Johnson was strongly rebuked during his lifetime as a "radical" publisher; this study emphasizes that what truly drove him was a passion for ideas and debate. Believing that discussion had to be conducted without ideological partisanship, he was further motivated by a fervent wish not to be attached to, or associated with, any particular party. By looking closely at the books he was responsible for bringing out, Braithwaite demonstrates that Johnson's reputation as a *dangerous* radical was undeserved, despite some of the famous (or, for some contemporaries, notorious) volumes with which he was associated. Over and beyond this, Braithwaite's recuperation of Johnson brings out the way in which the radicalism of the period may most usefully be associated with the idea of debate, rather than sedition—whether the topic was religious or civil liberty, war with America, political representation, or the French revolution. The study offers a detailed account of a significant cross section of the intellectual community of the time, and of the intellectual center and facilitation provided by Johnson for a whole range of writers who wished "to encourage scepticism and intellectual independence and produce change by enlightening the people" (p. 58).

George J. Worth gives us a much-needed account of the rise and fall of *Macmillan's Magazine, 1859–1907*. "No Flippancy or Abuse Allowed" is his subtitle, which offers a neat summary of the ethos that Alexander Macmillan, the head of the publishing firm, sought to impose on the magazine which first appeared in 1859, and which was to form a recognized vehicle for the broad range of concerns associated with the Christian Socialist movement and with the outlook of Frederick Denison Maurice in particular. Worth is a thoughtful historian: he is aware from the start that despite the huge amount of archival material at his disposal,

there are some crucial facts about the periodical's operation that we will never know, whether because of gaps or contradictions in the material or because of what documents tend to fail to tell us about human motivations. He is straightforward in describing the gaps in his own study, too, that result from his reluctance to reproduce materials readily available elsewhere. Where he excels, to my mind, is in exploring how the *Magazine* dealt with its authors, juggling their periodical work and the related books which they also often brought out (Worth fruitfully takes Margaret Oliphant as his case study), and in investigating its long-drawn-out decline, as *Macmillan's* was increasingly unable to attract the same quality of author that it had earlier and gave off a decidedly backward-looking aura. Anya Clayworth has edited a very useful *Selected Journalism* of Oscar Wilde for Oxford World's Classics; it not only shows him responding to a range of contemporary topics—from Americans in London to cookery to Swinburne and Honoré de Balzac—in typically flippant and abusive style, but also demonstrates how his early, ephemeral pieces were the ground on which he was to establish not just stylistic maneuvers but also themes to which he would return time and again.

The collection of essays edited by Kim Wheatley, *Romantic Periodicals and Print Culture*, includes some interesting pieces, especially Lisa Niles's article on "*Blackwoods*, the *Maga* for the Single Man," as does E. J. Clery, Caroline Franklin, and Peter Garside's volume, *Authorship, Commerce, and the Public: Scenes of Writing, 1750–1850*, which contains essays touching on, among other issues, the professionalization of privacy, anonymity, marketing and feminist editing, library management, state patronage, and the growth of literary markets.

Many critical studies now give much fuller attention to the idea of an audience and to the activity of reading than used to be the case: one further example, to those already discussed, is Emily Allen's *Theater Figures: The Production of the Nineteenth-Century British Novel*, with its emphasis on actual and implied performance. This may be the reason that there has not been much recent publishing in nineteenth-century studies that has focused explicitly upon the role of the reader. I have already considered one notable exception, however—T. R. Wright's *Hardy and His Readers*—and mention should also be made of Catherine J. Golden's *Images of the Woman Reader in Victorian British and American Fiction*, which examines the recurrent figure of the woman reader in fiction and, most notably, in illustration to popular novels, on both sides of the Atlantic. Her conclusions, how-

ever, do not offer any redrawing of the established understanding of the Victorian woman reader: the heterogeneity of her practices; her hunger for texts; and the anxieties that her reading practices stimulated. It comes as no surprise to learn that “Fictional women within the pages of these Victorian British and American novels, and others standing behind them, communicate that women read for education and empowerment, as well as for gentility and socialization, all the while that critics feared fiction for its biological, medical, and moral repercussions and criticized it widely” (p. 230). However, while many of the fictional examples are familiar to those interested in these debates (*Jane Eyre*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *The Doctor’s Wife*, *Little Women*), the inclusion of discussion of illustrations of women readers usefully extends our understanding both of the re-iterative effect of stereotypes and of the ways in which the trope of the woman reader traveled transatlantically.

As with so many books this year, John Plunkett’s *Queen Victoria: First Media Monarch* is hard to fit neatly into any category, but it certainly adds considerably to our understanding of the power of the media—particularly the illustrated media—in creating the monarchy. He is not just concerned with the *formal* representations of Victoria and the ways in which the royal household became increasingly adept at recognizing the power of the media, and manipulating it accordingly, but also with the ways in which she was made over in a variety of satirical and radical periodicals, in a manner that—as Dickens, among others, recognized—sometimes had a decided sexual dimension. Plunkett writes well of the part played by the photograph in her image making—“the modernity of the camera, like that of ‘news,’ was claimed to reform the nature of the monarchy” (p. 198), and of the changing relationships between journalists and the royal family. This lively account is restricted to the first half of Victoria’s reign, partly because she then went into a protracted period of mourning and withdrawal from public life, partly because of the significance of developments in print and visual culture during this period, and partly because, “following Victoria’s creation as Empress of India in 1876, there was an imperial reinvention of the monarchy that deserves a study in its own right” (p. 10). On the strength of this volume, packed with compelling detail as well as demonstrating the growing power of the royal culture industry, one hopes that Plunkett will write it himself.

IX

Queen Victoria falls into the category of someone who is not strictly speaking a literary figure, but whose social and cultural presence is central to our understanding of the nineteenth century. On a smaller scale, the same may be said to be true of a number of figures whose letters have been published this year. Ann B. Murphy and Deirdre Raftery's *Emily Davies: Collected Letters, 1861–1875* covers the years of her greatest social and political activity. Most of these letters have not previously been published, and they throw an enormous amount of light on Davies's work in relation to women's suffrage, education, and journalism; her involvement in the Langham Place circle; her editing of *English Woman's Journal*; and the founding of Girton College. Davies was a lively, direct, and—when the occasion demanded it—rhetorically pragmatic correspondent. Likewise, *Jane Carlyle: Newly Selected Letters* (edited by Kenneth J. Fielding and David R. Sorensen, and incorporating a significant amount of new material) conveys a sense of this woman's spirited—sometimes difficult, often angry—personality, deeply engaged in events and the lives of herself and others, and endearingly irreverent and volatile. The editors' commentary which links the letters ensures that the volume reads almost as autobiography. Jane Carlyle may have remarked, *apropos* of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, that *she* “was no oyster!—nor had no grandfather as oyster within my knowledge” (p. 247), but a more serious picture of the scientist's thought is necessarily conveyed by volumes 11, 12, and 13 of *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, edited by Frederick Burkhardt et al., and covering the years 1863–65. The latest volume—Volume 6—of the *Collected Works of Florence Nightingale, Florence Nightingale on Public Health Care*, likewise shows Nightingale to have been another public figure adept at persuasive, forceful argument in her letters and short polemical pieces on the topic of responsible and effective health care, and also to have been a very effective plain communicator in such works as *Notes on Nursing for the Labouring Classes*. Her remarks on the environment of the poor, and on the effects of noise on the sick, are only some of the issues about which she writes that are likely to be of importance to cultural scholars of the period with an interest that goes beyond sanitation and the obtaining and training of nurses; moreover, the question of woman's employment—whether paid or voluntary—is necessarily an important one throughout.

X

On the topic of editions, both Oxford World's Classics and Penguin have brought out many reissues and new editions: Austen and Dickens have both been very well served in this respect, and one should also note Zachary Leader and Michael O'Neill's good edition of *Percy Bysshe Shelley: The Major Works* for World's Classics. Broadview has continued its excellent work in making long-out-of-print (as well as classic) nineteenth-century texts available in new editions which contain very useful contextual materials as well: these include Grant Allen's *The Type-Writer Girl*; Marie Corelli's *Wormwood*, and Ella Hepworth Dixon's *The Story of a Modern Woman*, as well as Solveig C. Robinson's anthology, *A Serious Occupation: Literary Criticism by Victorian Women Writers*. Marcus Wood has, in *The Poetry of Slavery: An Anglo-American Anthology, 1764–1865*, collected together a truly valuable collection of poetry relating to slavery from both Britain and the United States, many of the verses culled from obscure sources. Unfortunately the editorial material is overfull of bombast and problematic generalizations. Jerome McGann has produced an attractive edition of *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Collected Poetry and Prose* with a characteristically illuminating and stimulating introduction: this is an edition which will come into its own when the on-line *Rossetti Archive* project is fully complete.

XI

Finally, the fascination with considering how both we and our predecessors look back to, reprocess, and repossess earlier periods continues. James Najarian's consideration of *Victorian Keats* offers one example of how the later nineteenth century looked back on the writings of the Romantic period, and Joel Faflak and Julia M. Wright's collection of essays, *Nervous Reactions: Victorian Recollections of Romanticism* offers further intimations of Keats's later reception, this time at the hands of Sara Coleridge (as addressed by Joanne Wilkes). Sara Coleridge, indeed, is the topic of two other essays in this eclectic volume, which is strongest when it addresses individual instances of textual transmission. Presenting a far more sustained sense of a Romantic afterlife is Ian Reid's *Wordsworth and the Formation of English Studies*. Reid takes a very different route in tracing this poet's continuing impact from that put forward in Stephen Gill's admirable study of his iconic status in *Wordsworth and the Victo-*

rians (1998): his concern is with the various ways in which this figure has been appropriated by the literary academy and what this reveals about the changing “curricular and pedagogic structures [which] have incorporated normatively several assumptions that derive from the ethical and aesthetic postures of Romanticism” (p. 213)—the importance of “imaginative” writing; the privileging of certain genres; the imperative of paying attention to both national cultural heritage and literary expressions of selfhood; and the foregrounding of readers’ responses to texts. And, as this study shows through its interesting close examination of scholarly trends in Britain, the United States, and Australia, “[i]n many cases these assumptions have been framed in ways that have a specifically Wordsworthian character” (p. 214). Reid is himself an Australian scholar, and in addition to his insights into the role that Wordsworth has played in providing personal guidance and political inspiration to public figures outside Britain, he has a very illuminating chapter on the place of Wordsworth as poet of empire, a poet both rebelled against and reappropriated by postcolonial writers.

Reid is well aware that the contours of literary studies have changed somewhat and that the shaping voice of Wordsworth is less strong today than hitherto. But this does not mean that the influence of the long nineteenth century does not continue to be felt within cultural production. Less academic in orientation (both in terms of a focus on institutional politics and in relation to its own engaged style) is Shirley Dent and Jason Whittaker’s suggestive and provocative *Radical Blake: Influence and Afterlife from 1827*, which itself surely owes a good deal to the iconoclasm of its subject. We are given a rapidly moving account of the ways in which Blake has been seen by such writers as Yeats, Swinburne, and Bataille as a visual and visionary artist; of the place that he has played in debates about nationalism and internationalism (from Derek Jarman’s *The Last of England* to the different contexts in which “Jerusalem” is sung); and of his role in America, whether in the abolitionist movement in the early years of the republic or in the work of Allen Ginsberg. The importance of Anne Gilchrist in shaping her husband’s influential life of Blake is noted, as are other women who have worked with his texts, including Patti Smith and Angela Carter. There is an especially valuable chapter on the influence Blake has had on representations of London, whether by James Thomson or Iain Sinclair. As a study in textual transmission, this book often raises questions that it does not quite answer (although it has some interesting material

on Blake forgeries); as a resource and a testimony to Blake's long-standing radical impact, it has much to offer.

The difficulty of where to draw lines when it comes to literary periodization is brought out, too, by John Beer's subtle, beautifully written *Post-Romantic Consciousness: Dickens to Plath*, a sequel to his *Romantic Consciousness*. At once ambitious and economical, Beer takes a number of key instances and writers—Dickens's *Mystery of Edwin Drood*, the writings of F. W. H. Myers and members of the Society for Psychical Research, William James, Martin Heidegger, John Paul Sartre, Václav Havel, Virginia Woolf, Lawrence, Plath, and Ted Hughes—in order to bring out shifting attitudes toward identity, selfhood, and the negotiation of those underlying questions “raised by a world created by conscious rational organization and one which might be less amenable to mental analysis” (p. 3). This is a book that brings literature into dialogue with one of the largest of philosophical topics—“the strange game of hide and seek that Consciousness plays with Being” (p. 42)—and does so in a way that makes one turn back to reading literature re-alerted to the enormity of the underlying questions which are embedded in its imaginative constructions. Another writer to deal with the Society for Psychical Research—quite differently, albeit in another work which straddles the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries—is Alex Owen in *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*, which addresses the late-century fascination with mediums, strange spiritual encounters, and experimentation. While not dealing in a sustained way with literary issues (although Yeats's engagement with the Golden Dawn, his interest in astral journeys, and his overall fascination with the occult are considered at some length), this is a book that both helps to place much strange fin-de-siècle writing into a full context, and also explores in what ways many Victorians regarded the fin-de-siècle not so much as “fin” as representing a new beginning.

Looking forward; looking backward. The centenary of Victoria's death in 2001 provoked widespread reassessment of the life and importance of this monarch (Plunkett's study adds valuably to work by Adrienne Munich and Margaret Homans, in this respect), of the impact of her reign, and of its cultural legacy. John Kucich and Dianne F. Sadoff's collection of essays, *Victorian Afterlife: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century*, which appeared in 2000, set a high standard for this mode of reassessment, and 2003 witnessed several other texts that develop this theme. Christoph Lindner, in *Fictions of Commodity Culture: From*

the Victorian to the Postmodern, pairs nineteenth-century and late-twentieth-century texts in order to ask questions about the forms and representation of consumerism in both periods: Gaskell with Irving Welsh's *Trainspotting*; *Vanity Fair* and Martin Amis's *Money*; *The Eustace Diamonds* and the phenomenon of Madonna; and *The Secret Agent* with the rise of British punk. A final chapter examines Don DeLillo's *White Noise* to bring out what the author believes to be "the void at the very core of late twentieth-century consumer culture" (p. 167). Lindner draws extensively on some of the major commentators on the topic of consumer culture in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from Thomas Richards to Jean Baudrillard; and on some themes which have become familiar to students of commodification and the Victorian novel—department store windows; Karl Marx on commodity fetishism—with the result that some of his analysis of individual novels seems quite familiar in its emphasis. He is, moreover, a little too prone to write as though his chosen novels were originally written to fit his thesis. But the juxtaposition of texts from two centuries is intelligently done and the book as a whole functions as a stimulating way to trace the representational origins of themes which have later become culturally dominant.

One obvious way in which nineteenth-century texts experience strong but significantly transformed afterlives is through their translation to the screen. Two volumes published by Cambridge University Press, *Jane Austen on Screen* (edited by Gina Macdonald and Andrew F. Macdonald), and *Dickens on Screen* (edited by John Glavin), while focusing on the adaptations that the works of their respective authors have received, raise a number of issues that are pertinent to the many debates that center around the translation of nineteenth-century fiction into film more generally: how "purist" should one be? (and what are the dangers of lapsing into prettified costume drama?) How best to convey a distinct narrative voice—especially when, like Austen's, it is an ironic one? If a director chooses to use the medium of film for interpretive ends, rather than remaining "faithful" to the original—as Patricia Rozema does with *Mansfield Park*, say, an adaptation treated peculiarly grudgingly by Jan Fergus in her essay—is this disruption to be celebrated or regretted? How far do audience expectations and desires, translated into the profit motive, bear on the eventual product, and to what extent does the process of adaptation demand the consideration of the historical distance between original text and filmic translation? And then, again, what can one learn about the historical conditions of film expect-

tations when we watch a movie, such as David Lean's *Great Expectations* (1946), that may in many ways seem to employ out-moded cinematographic and social conventions? While both of these volumes contain a number of stimulating essays, they are far from being the companion volumes that their format would suggest. Glavin's volume is much the quirkiest of the two; it seems to expect that many of its readers will already have considerable familiarity not just with films based on Dickens's novels but with the scholarship surrounding these interpretations. Certain of these short essays stand out for their freshness and intelligence (John Bowen on the ways in which *David Copperfield's* dramatization of the formation of the subject is quasi-filmic in nature; John Jordan on *Great Expectations* on Australian television; Garrett Stewart on "Dickens, Eisenstein, Film"), but the volume as a whole lacks coherence, entertaining though much of it is.

The Macdonalds' collection, however, appears to be aimed at adoption for a class encountering these issues for the first time (as is evidenced by the study questions near the back). Opening with a discussion of the polarization that has grown up between those Austen enthusiasts who want to see the page translated as "authentically" as possible to the screen and those who look on the medium of film as offering unsurpassed opportunities for imaginative (re)interpretation, the volume offers two excellent essays by Harriet Margolis ("Janeite Culture: What Does the Name 'Jane Austen' Authorize?") and Jocelyn Harris (on "Translation, Imitation, and Intertextuality in Jane Austen on Screen") before proceeding to studies of film versions of individual novels. John Mosier's essay "Clues for the Clueless," which closes the volume, while preferring the freedom of Amy Heckerling's *Clueless* and Rozema's film to all other versions, provocatively concludes "No film has yet been made worthy of Austen" (p. 251).

Finally, two volumes stand out for their sustained examination of the Victorian period from the vantage point of the early-twenty-first century: the collection of essays edited by Christine L. Krueger, *Functions of Victorian Culture at the Present Time*, and Jay Clayton's ambitious and extremely stimulating *Charles Dickens in Cyberspace: The Afterlife of the Nineteenth Century in Postmodern Culture*. Somewhat in the mode of Kucich and Sadoff, Krueger's collection had its origins in a 2000 MLA panel, with the result that some of the essays are briefer than one would wish. Nor, moreover, are all the essays equal when it comes to relating past to present: Florence Boos's brisk catalog of nineteenth-century working class women poets does not really grapple with the

interesting question it poses: how should we read such works in today's political contexts? And Krueger's own piece, on Mary Carpenter's reform campaign on behalf of children accused of crime and the ways in which it intersected with the type of appeal made in social-problem fictions, is fascinating in its own right, but leaves too little space to explore the topic she raises in her conclusion about the ways in which contemporary legal theorists use particularistic narrative evidence. But the best essays—which include Simon Joyce's demonstration that the problems of looking back to the Victorian period are complicated by the many contradictions of the period itself; Miriam Bailin on today's marketing of "Victorian" artefacts; Ellen Bayuk Rosenman on the ways in which television and film adaptations of Victorian fiction redefine the complex critique of commodity culture within the novels themselves; and Sharon Aronofsky on Victorians on Broadway—all contribute toward the pieces in the final section (by David Barndollar and Susan Schorn, and Sue Lonoff) that ask how we can best teach the long, complex Victorian novel, given our students' reading skills and the technologies open to us.

Ronald Thomas centers his essay in Krueger's volume, "The Legacy of Victorian Spectacle," on the "overly ambitious visions" that resulted in London's Millennium Dome and their parallels to the Crystal Palace and the Great Exhibition. Jay Clayton, too, begins with this apt and tempting point of comparison in order to raise one of his book's central questions: "what is the place of the past in contemporary culture?" (p. 13). His exciting study covers a good deal of varied ground. Clayton is less interested in adaptation and transformation than in intellectual parallels—between, for example, Babbage's Difference Engine and today's highly funded programs in computer intelligence and genetic engineering; Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and cyborg theory (another version of the piece by him that appears in Schor's volume); telegraphs, Hardy's *A Laodicean*, and Friedrich A. Kittler's work on discourse networks; and an investigation of the relationship that recent fiction has maintained with Darwin's writings. But Clayton's book goes beyond the Victorian period to raise questions that are highly pertinent to all of us who are uncertain quite what labels we now bear—literary critics? cultural theorists? cultural historians? "If periods are cognitive tools," Clayton asks,

what kind of knowledge do they yield? Many critics have been tempted to answer "normative" or "dominant," but

that oversimplifies the range of their usefulness. Period concepts can reconfigure one's understanding of the past, challenging received wisdom rather than reproducing the status quo. The more complex answer is that periods yield *disciplinary* knowledge. They exist and function solely within the modern ensemble of disciplines, which are most visible in the academy and its allied sectors, such as publishing, educational services, libraries, research foundations, commercial databases, and other information industries. To label a form of knowledge as disciplinary is not to trivialize it but rather to indicate the kind of cultural work it undertakes.

(p. 142)

This passage succinctly draws together many of the issues with which this review essay has been concerned.

Yet the impact of literature does not, and must not, stay within the academy, with its pragmatic and political tendencies to herd and reherd academic studies into disciplines. This is the dominant motif that runs through many of the best studies this year. Even if they themselves are couched in ostensibly traditional academic discourse, they demonstrate, over and over again, how nineteenth-century thinkers and writers did not necessarily operate within the enclosures to which they have subsequently often been confined. And the most stimulating of these studies gesture, too, to why it would be a serious mistake to confine the impact of nineteenth-century writing to "the academy and its allied sectors." Paul Hamilton's important contribution to understanding the impact and importance of Romantic thought, *Metaromanticism: Aesthetics, Literature, Theory*, provides an admirable case in point. Many of the chapters in this volume (for example on Coleridge and William Godwin, Keats, Scott's narratives and Revolutionary historiography, and on aspects of recent Romantic criticism) have previously been published: intensely thoughtful on the language and philosophy of Romanticism, they are often challenging, if worthwhile, to read. But the volume is framed by a sustained discussion of the place of Romantic thought today and its relationship to ethical and political imperatives (even if one suspects the language in which this analysis is couched is only, in fact, going to reach those within academe). For Hamilton, such thought has implications that reach beyond the generous open-mindedness promised by open-ended relativism. His hope lies in the degree to which the multifariousness of Romantic thought,

worked through (if on occasion vehemently opposed) in many different ways during the nineteenth century, may inaugurate a new respect for difference, informed through sympathy; understanding, though not damagingly idealizing, Others; and expressing a due cynicism about one's own self-sufficiency. "From this perspective," writes Hamilton, "metaromanticism gives us a salutary political vision extending beyond the confessional state, beyond the commercial consensus of liberal democracy that succeeded it . . . This vision reaches towards a society possessing the arts of accommodating the mixed allegiances that have to remain in dialogue for the frail postcolonial civilization in which we live to survive" (p. 22).

Connecting the past to our present, in other words, goes way beyond considering how the nineteenth century is reworked by the culture industry or by tourism. It involves an investigation of the deep underlying personal, philosophical, economic, and political issues that animated and perplexed that century, and which still continue to resonate. Interdisciplinary nineteenth-century studies, by redrawing the lines through which we have become accustomed to think of the past, are uniquely positioned to help us bring out these continuities, as well as divergences, from our cultural past.

NOTE

¹ Larry McMurtry, *Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen: Reflections at Sixty and Beyond (1999)* (New York: Touchstone, 2001), p. 102.