

ROMANTIC TEXTUALITIES
LITERATURE AND PRINT CULTURE, 1780–1840

(previously 'Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text')



Issue 18

(Summer 2008)

Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research
Cardiff University

Romantic Textualities is available on the web @ www.cf.ac.uk/encap/romtext

ISSN 1748-0116

***Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840*, 18 (Spring 2008). Online: Internet (date accessed): <www.cf.ac.uk/encap/romtext/issues/rt18.pdf>.**

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Published by the Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research, Cardiff University.

Typeset in Adobe Garamond Pro 11 / 12.5, using Adobe InDesign CS3; images and illustrations prepared using Adobe Illustrator CS3 and Adobe PhotoShop CS3; final output rendered with Adobe Acrobat 8 Professional.

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Aims and Scope: Formerly *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text* (1997–2005), *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840* is an online journal that is committed to foregrounding innovative Romantic-studies research into bibliography, book history, intertextuality, and textual studies. To this end, we publish material in a number of formats: among them, peer-reviewed articles, reports on individual/group research projects, bibliographical checklists, and biographical profiles of overlooked Romantic writers. As of Issue 15 (Winter 2005), *Romantic Textualities* also carries reviews of books that reflect the growing academic interest in the fields of book history, print culture, intertextuality, and cultural materialism, as they relate to Romantic studies.

he produced. Apart from Hughes's ability to apply biographical detail to the understanding of some of his less accessible work, a major achievement of this book is the way in which the society of Scott, Wordsworth, and Wilson is witnessed through the lens of an outsider. The reader can feel Hogg's mortification at Wordsworth's off-the-cuff comment to De Quincey during a 'meeting of the poets' in the Lake District that he did not count Hogg amongst their number; it's possible to interpret Scott's patronage and friendship as something other than truly altruistic when he recommends that Hogg stick to poetry or refuses to contribute to projects such as *The Poetic Mirror*. Hughes's biography in fact provides a neat counterpoint to Allan's depiction of the closeted Edinburgh literary and artistic society, and Hogg's position within it. Finally, Hogg's side is presented; this book provides the context within which the full range of his work and talent can be appreciated entirely on their own merit. 

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Claire Lamont and Michael Rossington (eds), *Romanticism's Debatable Lands* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 264pp. ISBN 978-0-2305-0785-2; £45 / \$74.95 (hb).

ROMANTICISM'S DEBATABLE LANDS is a collection of essays that originated in papers delivered at the British Association of Romanticism Studies's 2005 conference on the same theme. In its introduction, the book's editors (also the conference's co-organisers) Claire Lamont and Michael Rossington explain that the term 'debatable lands' was first recorded in the sixteenth century when it denoted an area of contested ownership on 'the Anglo-Scottish border'; specifically the stretch of land in the west between the rivers Esk and Sark (p. 1). The term subsequently widened in application and 'came to be used to describe not only the Anglo-Scottish border but other disputed territories and, by metaphorical extension, disputes of other sorts, social, intellectual or artistic'. Lamont and Rossington conclude that the term 'debatable lands' is 'therefore, an appropriate concept to use to focus attention on certain aspects of writing in English in the Romantic period'. Like the BARS conference, their collection of essays proceeds on that principle.

Romanticism's Debatable Lands is divided into two parts, 'Britain and Ireland' and 'Europe and Beyond'. Three essays in the first part pay homage to the Anglo-Scottish origin of the idea of a 'debatable land': Fiona Stafford, Susan Oliver, and Janet Sorensen each explore characteristics of Anglo-Scottish border literature and print culture in the Romantic period. Mary-Ann Constantine applies the notion of a debatable land to interactions between Welsh and English writers. In the collection's second part, the geographical application of the term is widened beyond Britain. Nanora Sweet explores the incarnation of Naples

as a debatable land in the work of Stäel, Hemans, and the Shelleys; Diego Saglia fascinatingly examines the representation of borders between Islamic and Christian cultures in Constantinople, North Africa, and Spain; and Peter J. Kitson finds a source for Coleridge's 'Kublai Khan' in eighteenth-century accounts of Chinese and Tartar cultures. Elsewhere the idea of a 'debatable land' is interpreted metaphorically, developing Macaulay's description of history as 'a debateable land' between 'the Reason and the Imagination'.¹ Along these non-literal lines, Fiona Wilson examines representations of the female body as a debatable territory ravaged by hysteria; and Nigel Leask's illuminating chapter explores how James Currie's *Life of Burns* functioned as a debatable land 'between the Scottish Enlightenment and that programmatic manifesto of British Romanticism, the 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*' (p. 64).

Residing in the background to much of *Romanticism's Debatable Lands* are the concerns and rhetoric of postcolonial theory, and Homi Bhabha's *Nation and Narration* is referenced more than once. Lamont and Rossington's collection is important in that it provides a historicising genealogy to these theoretical notions, and applies them fruitfully to the complex regional dynamics and identities within a single, apparently 'united' kingdom. The debatable land of the border region—whether it is a border between England and Scotland, or England and Wales, or between Asia and Europe—becomes equatable to the 'third space' defined by Bhabha, or the region of 'transculture' identified by Mikhail N. Epstein. Epstein had described the border as a region in which 'the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences', and its characteristics might include a 'state of not-belonging (*nakhoditsia v mešte vnenakhodimosti*)' or a hybrid amalgam of the qualities of the bordering lands.²

The collection's interaction with these postcolonial concerns is immediately apparent. *Romanticism's Debatable Lands* begins with the essay 'Writing on the Borders', in which Fiona Stafford compares Romantic Anglo-Scottish border writing to modern northern Irish poetry. She finds significant continuities between the traditions and edges towards a generalised theory of border writing, though ultimately resists forming a conclusion: 'whether similarities between Border writings result from self-conscious engagement with evolving traditions or from direct experience of living in a Border region is debatable' (p. 25). Stafford identifies the experience of homelessness as one endemic to border existence, especially in Ireland. 'The man who is neither here nor there, but who remains at the interface of strangely contiguous worlds, emerged [...] as an image central to the Irish psyche', she writes (p. 23).

Romanticism's Debatable Lands reveals how 'the figure who is neither here nor there' makes an appearance in border regions far beyond Ireland. A roll call of these characters—Heike Paul has named them the 'homeless men and nameless women' of postcolonial fiction—meander beneath the spotlight of numerous essayists in the collection.³ Frequently dislocated border figures

are represented in metaphorical and literal elevation above and beyond local attachments and narrow partialities. Cian Duffy's essay on representations of Chamonix–Mont Blanc examines the figures of Romantic-period mountaineers in this light, concluding that, through their literal dislocation from sea-level solid ground, they were thought to attain 'aesthetic, moral and scientific insight denied to even the most industrious of those who remained below'. (Duffy here extends John Barrell's analysis of mid-eighteenth-century landscape poetry, in which the gentleman's literal elevation above sea-level was an expression of his 'freedom from engaging in any specific profession, trade, or occupation which might occlude his view of society as a whole'.⁴) Karen O'Brien similarly points to the beneficial consequences that European migration was considered to effect, by Robert Southey in particular, who


felt that migration and a degree of separation might be the very conditions for the renewal of the British culture of liberty, eroded in recent times by the industrial economy with its ever more thinly sliced divisions of labour [...] they might gain wholeness and autonomy through the dual process of migration and settlement. (p. 126)

This continues the paradigmatic association of location with small-mindedness, and dislocated border existence with far-seeing liberalism.

Two essays in particular offer unexpected and intriguing nuances to the cultural function and identity of the border figure. Timothy Morton's essay, which is ostensibly about 'John Clare and the Question of Place', is in fact a reflection upon the necessary but painful displacement at the heart of modern liberal ecology. The experience of psycho-geographic homelessness is essential and inevitable, Morton argues. The 'melancholia' felt when occupying the border between 'the openness of space' and 'the sureness of place' marks 'the point at which the self is separated from, and forever connected to, the mother and the body of the earth' (p. 107). He questions provocatively, 'isn't this lingering with something painful, disgusting and grief-striking, exactly what we need right now, ecologically speaking?' (p. 111) The border figure becomes an instructive encapsulation of all sorts of psychological, intellectual, linguistic, and geographical displacements, encouraging debate in the Romantic period and now.

Diego Saglia's essay on Romantic representations of the Crusades turns these paradigms—in which the borderer's experience is considered to be elevated above, or expressive of the deep truth of, mundane existence—topsy-turvy. He explores how the European frontiers where Islamic and Christian cultures met and clashed were represented on stage, not as locations of intellectual elevation, multicultural hybridity, and liberal objectivity, but as their opposite. Borders became 'compressed and heightened, and thus especially revealing, figurations of the tensions besetting the Mediterranean frontiers between Islam and Christendom' (p. 187). Border figures still retained their associations of hybridity

and ‘intercultural admixture’, but these were construed negatively. Borderers correlated to ‘the figure of the traitor or the apostate’, and became ‘a further spur to the recreation of impermeable divides’ (p. 196).

Saglia’s essay articulates the potentially threatening nature of all the debatable lands and border personas that figure in the collection. Debatable lands and their homeless inhabitants are produced by clashes between margins and centres. Their associations of hybridity and displacement present clear challenges to static notions of patriotism, the centre, and ‘home’. *Romanticism’s Debatable Lands* chooses to explore these tensions largely from the outside looking in: from the marginalised territory looking towards the frontier, or from the frontier looking to either side. The centre itself is rather marginalised. Joel Faflak’s essay explores the idea of nationhood as a ‘psychic space’ (or, à la Benedict Anderson, an ‘imagined community’), and Alex Benichmol considers Wordsworth’s construction of *The Excursion*’s secluded valley as ‘the fixed centre of a troubled World’ (p. 94), but *Romanticism’s Debatable Lands* largely omits discussion of the many debatable lands, real and metaphorical, that complicate the centre’s own identity and landscape (enclosure, for one). The collection, as a whole, charts in a fascinating and diverse manner the fraught cultural and constitutional formation of the United Kingdom, but from almost every basis other than England’s own debatable land. 

NOTES

1. Thomas Babington Macaulay, in a review essay in the *Edinburgh Review*, 47 (1828), 331.
2. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 218; Mikhail N. Epstein, *After the Future: The Paradoxes of Postmodernism and Contemporary Russian Culture*, trans. by A. M. Pogacar (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), p. 298.
3. Heike Paul, ‘Homeless Men and Nameless Women: Notes on a Postcolonial Canon’, *Wasafiri*, 23 (1996), 41–44.
4. John Barrell, *English Literature in History 1730–80: An Equal, Wide Survey* (London: Hutchinson, 1983), p. 33.

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Franz Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing, 1800–1835: Exhuming the Trade* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), xii + 213pp. ISBN 978-1-4039-9582-7; £49 / \$65 (hb).

THIS WIDE-SWEEPING STUDY SUCCEEDS in broadening our perception of the Gothic as a literary movement in the early nineteenth century, even at a time when it might seem that claims for the mode’s predominance have been overstated. As Potter repeats on three occasions, presumably by choice, ‘We need

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS



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Richard Hill completed his PhD at Edinburgh University in 2006, and is now teaching English at the University of Hawaii, Maui Community College. His thesis was entitled 'The Illustration of the Waverley Novels in Scotland: Walter Scott's Contribution to the Nineteenth-Century Illustrated Novel'. He has written articles on Scott, Hogg, and book illustration, and is currently working on the lifetime illustrations of Robert Louis Stevenson.

Wendy Hunter is in the process of completing her PhD thesis at the University of Sheffield, which has a working title of 'Literary Identity in the Work of James Hogg'. She has recently published an article on Hogg's periodical *The Spy* for the *Literary Encyclopaedia* and has contributed to a forthcoming e-book on Hogg's contributions in Chambers' *Edinburgh Journal*.

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