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

crossings of British Romanticism' (p. 123).

In 'Positioning South America from HMS *Beagle*: The Navigator, the Discoverer, and the Ocean of Free Trade', Almeida turns to Charles Darwin's voyage to 'examine the discourses of freedom and commerce in relation to the *Beagle*'s hydrographic and "discovery" missions to analyze Britain's positioning of geopolitical, economic, and cultural relations across the pan-Atlantic in the early Victorian period' (p. 154). After reading the political and economic ideology of free trade alongside narratives of emancipation and liberation as a 'confluence [that] fulfilled the fantasies of humanitarian capitalism' (p. 154), Almeida analyses 'Darwin's positioning of South America as a space whose imaginative proximity can be mediated through narrative' (p. 155). She places Darwin's voyage within the 'centrality of the navy in Britain's national narrative' (p. 169) to show how the voyage of the *Beagle* 'recalibrates discourses of navigation, discovery, trade, and empire' (p. 170).

Finally, Almeida reads Thomas Carlyle, Edward Eastwick and W. H. Hudson to explore the jarring contrast of 'the symbiosis between the free market and slavery' and 'the liberationist discourse that portrayed Britain as the emancipator of the Atlantic world' (p. 197). Her focus is on extending the clash between free trade and free labour which 'is taken for granted in relation to Britain's relationship with the United States in the mid-Victorian period' (p. 196). *Reimagining the Transatlantic, 1780–1890* should be of great interest to scholars examining any of the individual authors or historical figures under consideration. It is also of great value as a practical example of transatlantic literary criticism, as Almeida expertly fulfils her goal of matching a theoretical framework to concrete literary analysis. 

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Teresa Barnard, *Anna Seward: A Constructed Life. A Critical Biography* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 208pp. ISBN 978-0-7546-6616-5; £55 / \$99.95 (hb).

ANNA SEWARD: A CONSTRUCTED LIFE is the first biography of the 'Swan of Lichfield' since Margaret Ashmun's 1931 account of the writer and her famous literary friends. However, this critical biography is more than just a long overdue study of one of the most fascinating women of letters of the eighteenth century; Teresa Barnard's biography of Seward (1742–1809) uncovers extensive archival material and manuscript sources that substantially alter our understanding of and appreciation for this extraordinary woman. As Barnard notes in her introduction, Seward had 'a confident awareness of the fascinating life she lived' and 'she decided that her correspondence would be her autobiography' (p. 1). Barnard's careful recreation of that autobiography, through a comparison of

original manuscript letters and the nineteenth-century edited versions, is one of the great strengths of this new biography. Less successful are Barnard's claims for Seward's poetic importance. Seward's writing life (and Barnard's account of it) has much to tell us about eighteenth-century letters, coterie literary practices, life-writing and the vibrant literary activity going on in provincial towns, but the poems themselves are better served in Claudia Thomas Kairoff's more recent monograph, *Anna Seward and the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

The biography consists of an introduction and six chapters, with appendices that include unpublished poems and a summary of the main bequests from Seward's 22-page last will and testament. True to Seward's own autobiographical aims, the chapters are organised around her letter collections, with two chapters dedicated to her juvenile letters (1762–68); two to letters written between 1770–80; one on her most productive writing years: "Born to write": 1780–1809; and a final chapter on Seward's carefully crafted last will and testament. Throughout the chapters, Barnard's meticulous attention to the variable contexts and contingencies of the surviving documents, and Seward's or others' role in their construction, results in a balanced and objective portrayal not just of Seward, but also of the many famous male figures in her life. Erasmus Darwin, James Boswell and Sir Walter Scott played important roles in Seward's public life as well as her posthumous reputation, and Barnard provides new perspectives and details on all of them. In Chapter 5, 'Born to write', Seward's coterie publications with Darwin, 'secret' letters with Boswell, and negotiations with male editors and publishers reveal the remarkable clarity and purpose with which Seward conducted her career and life. Though Scott comes off much the worst in the course of the book—he is depicted as an editor who 'destroyed' the 'life that Seward had attempted to construct' (p. 7)—Barnard is sensitive in her presentation of Scott's reasons for disregarding Seward's expressed wishes. Nevertheless, her documentation of his excising of material (literary, political and personal) from the letters Seward had, herself, already edited for publication, and his omission of key works, like her epic *Telemachus* (which angered her family and executors), proves him to be a less-than-faithful editor to his subject. Indeed, the afterlife of Seward's letters and works is a telling reminder of the need to revisit women's manuscript writings, but also the critical role of posthumous publication on the reputations of many women writers.

The majority of letters that Barnard makes use of, however, are those she wrote to female friends. In these letters, Seward's epistolary skill and awareness of the necessary shifts in tone and style for private or public missives provide an excellent example of the subtle codes of difference eighteenth-century writers and readers brought to bear on their letters. The adaptability of the form is also shown: letters do double duty as journal, diary or conduct book depending on their real or imagined recipients. The juvenile letters, in particular, function as the formative material for Seward's literary works and Barnard draws frequent comparisons between Seward's contemporary reading and her own literary

attempts. These early letters are didactic and sentimental; they champion the ennobling bonds of friendship; and they clearly show the influence of Richardson's *Clarissa*, Rousseau's *Julie*, Prior's 'Henry and Emma' and Pope's Eloisa, among others. In contrast, the two manuscript letter collections that Seward sent to her friends Mary Powys and Dorothy Sykes offer an example of the 'minutiae of life' and the unstudied "blots and blunders" of a busily-writing young woman' (p. 73). A restrictive word count probably hindered longer transcriptions of the many original letters quoted in the course of the biography, but a few more examples of these letters alongside the edited published ones would have greatly enhanced the picture Barnard paints.

Barnard makes an excellent case for Seward's epistolary self-construction and iconoclastic career; her biography also offers a wealth of insights for the student and scholar of eighteenth-century literary history. Seward's Lichfield literary salon is a lively counterpoint to the London-based Bluestockings; her joint poetic efforts with both male and female friends reveal the ongoing importance of manuscript circulation and collaborative composition; and her extraordinary self-determination in love and friendship offers an alternative model of how an individualistic woman could conduct her life in the eighteenth century. 

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Nina L. Dubin, *Futures and Ruins: Eighteenth-Century Paris and the Art of Hubert Robert* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010), x + 197pp. ISBN 978-1-60606-023-0; £35 (hb). ISBN 978-1-60606-1-404; £24.99 (pb).

A RELIABLE TREATMENT OF THE WORK OF 'ROBERT DES RUINES' (Hubert Robert, 1733–1808) has been wanting for many years, and Nina Dubin's *Futures and Ruins* will amply meet this need for a considerable time. It is certainly the best we have in English, and in many respects at least as good as any treatment of the artist in his native French. In a sense it prepares the way for the better integration of Hubert Robert's work into larger accounts of the fashion for ruins, the picturesque and the turmoil of the age of revolution, and if our recognition of the possibilities which open up suggest limitations in Nina Dubin's treatment of her topic, this is unfair. Interdisciplinary studies of the visual and verbal culture of the period can now for the first time be fed with a balanced account of this central though often underestimated artist, and his brands of ruinism, disaster painting and the aesthetics of urban change. The possibilities it presents are a measure of the work's contribution to knowledge and not a symptom of weakness.

The central thesis of the book is that the phase of anticipated ruinism which occupied the second half of the eighteenth century was formatted by the recent