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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.

John Gardner, *Poetry and Popular Protest: Peterloo, Cato Street and the Queen Caroline Controversy* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), xix + 272pp. ISBN 978-0-7546-6166-5; £50 (hb).

IN THE SECOND CHAPTER OF HIS FASCINATING AND AMBITIOUS STUDY, John Gardner reproduces a piece of advice given by Thomas Carlyle to veteran radical and survivor of Peterloo, Samuel Bamford: 'I own I had much rather see a sensible man, like you, put down your real thoughts and convictions in Prose, than occupy yourself with fancies and imaginations such as are usually dealt with in verse' (p. 24). Carlyle handed out this suitably Protestant piece of wisdom in 1849, when it seemed, at least to Carlyle, that the question of what poetry could and couldn't do was settled. Prose was for 'real thoughts'; poetry for 'fancies'. Scrutinising the tumultuous years of popular protest from 1819 to 182—from Peterloo, through the Cato Street Conspiracy, to the Queen Caroline affair—and the unique poetry this brief period produced, Gardner begs to differ. His book is powered by the conviction that 'literature can turn an event towards its own political ends [...] In short, poetry can do work' (p. 2).

Such work was, according to Gardner, best accomplished by the heterogeneous and often disreputable radical press, neatly embodied in William Hone, popular publisher and writer of satirical verse. Collaborating with caricaturist and illustrator George Cruikshank, Hone proved an innovative and gleeful virtuoso of mixed-media production. Works like *The Political House that Jack Built*, a savagely satirical depiction of the Peterloo massacre, were enlivened with Cruikshank's characteristically grotesque illustrations to 'aid the comprehension of the semi-literate' (p. 162). Even better, Hone's response to the Queen Caroline affair, *The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder*, included a unique souvenir—an illustrated ladder, issued free with each poem sold—'a children's toy with a very adult theme, telling the story of the marriage of George and Caroline in a way that perhaps even children could understand' (p. 162). The popularity and mobility of Hone's work meant that his accounts of these scandals dominated the public sphere. So much so that, whether on purpose or by accident, Hone comes through as the book's hero; Byron, Shelley and Lamb (the book's canonical poets) seem flat-footed by contrast.

Starting with the Peterloo Massacre, Gardner takes us through the Cato Street conspiracy and the Queen Caroline affair, viewing 'these three events as parts of one attempt to gain representation and universal suffrage [...] inseparably linked to each other and the poetry they inspired' (p. 2). Each section begins with a contextual précis, before taking in various poetic and artistic responses to the event under examination. As Gardner explains, 'focusing on poetry that responds to these events' reveals connections 'between canonical and non-canonical poets, such as Shelley and Bamford, Byron and Hone, and the writers of anonymous squibs' (p. 3). Such connections are a key concern of the book, challenging received notions of popularity, significance and canonicity.


The first section begins with Samuel Bamford, whose later disavowal of poetry in his autobiography belies the furious lines he wrote as both eye-witness and victim of Peterloo. Next is William Hone's *The Political House that Jack Built*, by far the most popular publication dealing with the massacre, and a work that, Gardner argues, strongly influenced Shelley. *The Mask of Anarchy*, the final text of the section, is Shelley's best attempt at abandoning 'the role of Romantic "author" [...] to speak rather in the anonymous voice of the broadside balladeer' (p. 7).

In part two, Gardner provides new archival evidence of the Government's active role in the Cato Street conspiracy. The State's connivance was enough to provoke Charles Lamb into print. Two sonnets, 'The Three Graves' and 'Sonnet to Matthew Wood', published in *The Champion*, show that outrage over the spy system took in a broad section of the public. Finally, Gardner reads Byron's tragedy *Marino Faliero* as a work irresistibly and uncomfortably intertwined with Cato Street.

The final section retells the complex events surrounding the Queen Caroline controversy. With reference to a variety of works by Hone, Byron, Cruikshank and various anonymous balladeers, Gardner presents the Caroline affair as one that forged 'an uneasy and unlikely alliance' between 'reformers, radicals, revolutionaries and royalists' (p. 155). Gardner concludes with an exhaustive reading of Shelley's underrated *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, arguing that Shelley's bridging of high Greek tragedy with Grub Street vulgarity is an attempt to channel and unify the energies of this alliance for revolutionary ends—a project quickly scuttled by government censorship.

While Gardner's fluency with his material, both familiar and new, is exhilarating, the book itself is often let down by a dearth of hard data and an insufficiently theorised notion of the Popular. Given his interest in popular print culture and the 'work' poetry can do, Gardner often neglects questions of audience and transmission—a deficiency easily remedied by reference to William St Clair's exhaustive *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (2004). It seems strange that the book didn't find its way into Gardner's bibliography, particularly since St Clair pays special attention to Shelley. *The Mask of Anarchy* certainly deals with radical issues, and strikes a number of revolutionary poses, but doesn't make it into print until 1832, cautiously edited by an older, wearier and warier Leigh Hunt. Gardner registers the 'irony that none of Shelley's most urgently topical poems [...] were published at the time when they were written' (p. 100).

So whom, then, did Shelley reach? How did the poem spread its message? What *work* did it do? And, given that Shelley, as Gardner is at pains to point out, borrowed most of the poem's imagery and diction from Hone, wouldn't our time be better spent with him? Such questions are mitigated, in part, by Gardner's deliberate eschewing of 'binary definitions' for a broader, more fluid conception of the popular (p. 4). But while this allows Gardner to avoid the more mechanical and determinist sort of Marxism, his study gains agility at

the cost of coherence and incision. As it is, the book is enjoyably provocative and suitably suggestive, but not wholly satisfying in its conclusions. 

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Evan Gottlieb and Juliet Shields (eds), *Representing Place in British Literature and Culture, 1660–1830: From Local to Global* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), x + 221pp. ISBN 978-1-4094-1930-3; £60 (hb).

HOW MIGHT IT BE POSSIBLE, ask Evan Gottlieb and Juliet Shields in the introduction to *Representing Place in British Literature and Culture*, to ‘tell the whole story’ of the intersections of local, regional, national and transnational communities in Britain? This collection of essays was published in March 2013. On the twenty-first of the same month, the Scottish Independence Referendum Bill proposed to ask voters a related but somewhat starker question about the nature of British nationhood. The debates which have since been raised by politicians and media provide plenty of evidence that the problems considered by this volume—of national and local identity, tradition, migration, cosmopolitanism, the perceived dominance of the metropolis—not only are still relevant but are still shaped as much by culture and representation as politics and economics.

Gottlieb and Shields aim to resist the well-known ‘rise of the nation’ narrative of much eighteenth-century British cultural history, in which the nation–state opposes and subdues alternative forms of community. Yet, as Dafydd Moore’s responsive coda warns, it is not enough to simply replace the ‘imagined nation’ with another naïvely conceived ‘imagined region’ (p. 189). The contributions to this collection, instead, work from the assumption that a sense of place is not natural but constructed and reshaped by representation in text. Specifically, as might be expected from a new title in the series ‘British Literature in Context in the Long Eighteenth Century’, this book is interested in the workings of place in written text: mostly poetry, prose and novels, with an opening diversion into Restoration drama. Despite the ‘and Culture’ in its title, the collection’s focus remains very closely on the literary throughout—a category which is defined refreshingly broadly, and within which is produced a detailed, nuanced survey of the role of authorial tradition and reading practice. Nevertheless, given the widely understood centrality to ideas of nation, locality and globe of, for example, landscape art (acknowledged briefly by JoEllen DeLucia), topographical drawings and maps, music and song, and especially metropolitan, local and internationally touring theatres, the need for future complementary projects in other disciplines seems clear.

Eighteenth-century Britishness was, of course, continually defined against foreignness, most often against the vanities, vices and sophistication of the French. A sense of the nation also, though, emerged in terms of local mythologies