

of queer performativity—a major area of interest in studies of early modern theatre and contemporary performance—is a serious lacuna in a book essentially about Shakespeare and authority. Ultimately, the volume may be a little like the “Shakespeare-plus-relevance” productions of plays that the volume occasionally critiques: making gestures towards a politics, but not ultimately shifting the grounds of production or discussion in a substantial way.

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Stephen Bygrave, ed. *Romantic Writings*. London: Routledge/Open University, 1996. Pp. x, 352. \$90.95, \$27.95 pb.

Romantic Writings, a textbook published by Routledge for Britain's Open University, is one of four in a series called “Approaching Literature”; the other three are *The Realist Novel* (edited by Dennis Walder), *Shakespeare, Aphra Behn and the Canon* (edited by W. R. Owens and Lizbeth Goodman), and *Literature and Gender* (edited by Lizbeth Goodman). The Preface is not explicit about how these four volumes divide up the literary field, but we may recognize in the first three a version of the familiar triad of poetry, fiction, and drama.

Stephen Bygrave, the editor of the book and author of four of its eleven chapters, is the author of a book on Kenneth Burke and articles on Coleridge and Gray; the other contributors include Amanda Gilroy, who has published on Anna Jameson and Edmund Burke; Nigel Leask, who is the author of *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (1992); and Susan Matthews, who has co-edited the Romantic listings in *The Year's Work in English Studies*. The book proper is followed by a sort of anthology, including extracts from Freud on the uncanny, René Wellek on the concept of Romanticism, Raymond Schwab on Orientalism, Stuart Curran on women poets, and from *The Corsair*; it is accompanied (for another twelve pounds) by a ninety-minute cassette of readings of poems by Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Barbauld, and Smith, and a discussion of Romanticism featuring Peter de Bolla, Paul Hamilton, and Anne K. Mellor. Without knowing more about the specific pedagogical uses to which the Open University puts the book, it is hard to assess the value of these supplements.

Bygrave's Introduction explains that the book is called *Romantic Writings* because it addresses “questions about which texts from the past are selected for attention and how they are described. . . . To have called it, say, ‘Romantic Literature’ would have begged these questions. ‘Literature’ can mean anything that is written, but it now implies a specially privileged body of writing (indeed, it can be argued that such a notion was an invention of this period)” (ix). After this promising beginning, however, the book turns out to be mostly devoted to canonical poetry. Of the Romantic writings quoted at length and/or

discussed in detail, eight are by Blake (there is a substantial section on *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*), seven are by William Wordsworth (there is a whole chapter on *The Prelude*), five are by P. B. Shelley, three are by Byron (there is a chapter on *Don Juan*), three are by Coleridge, and two are by Keats. The book's attitude towards the Romantic canon is summed up in Graham Allen's judgment that "Alastor," "The Eve of St. Agnes," and "La Belle Dame sans Merci" are "quintessentially Romantic romances, and rightfully canonical" (159). The book does also include discussions of works by Austen, Barbauld, Barrett Browning, Edgeworth, Hemans, Landon, More, Robinson, M. W. Shelley, Smith, and D. Wordsworth (mostly in the two chapters on women writers by the two female contributors, and in the excerpt from Curran), but on the whole, the selection seems more conservative (and more male) than it would be in many North American period survey courses. (It is intended to be used in conjunction with Duncan Wu's *Romanticism: An Anthology* [1994], which is not—as Anne K. Mellor and Richard Matlock point out in the Introduction to their own anthology, *British Literature 1780-1830* [1996]—very generous in its selections from women and other non-canonical writers [2]. Wu has since published a supplementary anthology, *Romantic Women Poets* [1998].) In the last chapter, Richard Allen leaves English poetry to discuss two equally canonical writers of German fiction, Kleist and Hoffmann.

Otherwise, the book does well the job one expects of a textbook, giving an introductory overview of the current state of Romantic studies. Bygrave offers "a historically based definition of Romanticism" (70), "not [as] a single thing" but as "a set of different and often competing voices . . . argu[ing] over an agenda set by political and social circumstances that were experienced in common" (23), and the book consistently places literary issues in their historical and political contexts, relating the Romantic conception of the poet to the rise of a new reading public (81-82), the frequent obscurity of Romantic allegory to the threat of government censorship (217), and the Romantic imagination to the ideological state apparatus (273). The French Revolution is given its due weight in Bygrave's reading of *The Prelude* (131-35). Leask's chapter on the colonial-imperialist context of Romantic exoticism (227-49), though it rounds up the canonical suspects ("Kubla Khan," *The Corsair*, and *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*), is otherwise one of the high points of the book; it could be usefully supplemented by a discussion of the role of slavery in the Romantic imagination, such as we find (to take a canonical example) in *Coleridge's Submerged Politics* (1994), by Patrick J. Keane. (The book is less up-to-date on Nature; and Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology* [1991] is missing from the Bibliography.) Though it's hard to be sure without a field-test, all this seems to be done at a level accessible to undergraduates.

Unfortunately, the book is disfigured by a number of substantive errors. Blake's father was not a haberdasher, as Bygrave states (44), but a

hosier—as Bygrave also states (47). “Jove” is not “the Roman name for Jupiter” (49); they are both versions of the Roman name for Zeus. “Amandus” and “Amanda” are not “both Latin for ‘loved’” (140); they are gerundives, and mean “to be loved.” There may be “no consensus on whether [‘Ozymandias’] is pronounced with the stress on the third or the fourth syllable” (52), but the metre of the sonnet’s tenth line clearly demands the third. The recipient of Walton’s letters, in *Frankenstein*, is not “Mrs Elizabeth Saville” (58), but Margaret Walton Saville, whose initials are significantly identical to her creator’s. The story of the birth of Sin does not occur in the first book of *Paradise Lost* (104), but in the second, and Milton does not describe light as “co- elemental” with heaven (124), but as “co-eternal” (3.2). The discussion of “spots of time” does not occur in the last book of *The Prelude* (121), but in the eleventh, and Wordsworth does not stress the importance of having “among least things / An under-sense of greatness” (130), but an “under-sense of greatest” (7.711). The storming of the Tuileries on 10 August 1792 was not the same event as the September Massacres (133). The Dedication to *Don Juan* can hardly have been intended to replace the Preface (167), since Byron refers to the Dedication in the Preface; Byron does not call Castlereagh both “an ‘intellectual eunuch’ and a ‘dry bob’” in the Dedication (170); he directs the second sexual insult at the other Bob, Southey, and it is not “Regency slang for *coitus interruptus*,” but for sex without an ejaculation—the point being not that Southey practises birth control, but that he, like Castlereagh, is basically impotent. Julia’s letter (*Don Juan* 1.192-97) is not “the first time any of the characters in the poem are [sic] allowed to speak for themselves at any length” (175); it is preceded by her (longer) tirade against her husband (1.145-57). Coleridge’s 1817 revisions to “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” were not his last (223), as Jack Stillinger has shown. The conditional is a mood, not a voice (232). Rousseau was not an “advocate of individual rights” (254), but the theorist of the general will. Individually, some of these mistakes are not very serious; collectively, they are not a very good example for students. They seem especially unfortunate in a book on which distance-education students have to rely.

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Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis and Michèle Foster, eds. *Unrelated Kin: Race and Gender in Women’s Personal Narratives*. New York: Routledge, 1996. Pp. xiii, 228. \$55.00, \$16.95 pb.

I think I can predict that this excellent anthology *Unrelated Kin: Race and Gender in Women’s Personal Narratives* or selected parts of it in course-work readings packages will spread widely throughout the disciplines not only of Sociology and Anthropology, but also of Women’s