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Encyclopedia of Romanticism

Culture in Britain, 1780s-1830s

Edited by
Laura Dabundo



Encyclopedia of Romanticism

First Published in 1992, this encyclopedia is designed to survey the social, cultural and intellectual climate of English Romanticism from approximately the 1780s and the French Revolution to the 1830s and the Reform Bill. Focussing on 'the spirit of the age', the book deals with the aesthetic, scientific, socioeconomic – indeed the human – environment in which the Romantics flourished. The book considers poets, playwrights and novelists; critics, editors and booksellers; painters, patrons and architects; as well as ideas, trends, fads, and conventions, the familiar and the newly discovered. The book will be of use for everyone from undergraduate English students, through to thesis-driven graduate students to teaching faculty and scholars.

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Encyclopædia of
ROMANTICISM
Culture in Britain, 1780s–1830s

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ROMANTICISM
Culture in Britain, 1780s–1830s

Laura Dabundo
Editor

Pamela Olinto, Greg Rider, Gail Roos
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LONDON & NEW YORK

For Linda Jordan Tucker

Friendship is a sheltering tree . . .

—Coleridge

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Foreword

Because the Romantic period was so learned, diverse, and intellectually aware, an encyclopedia is an especially appropriate form for representing Romanticism in England. Indeed, it was during the English Romantic period that the encyclopedia acquired the form and even the function now associated with it: an eclectic, popular, and authoritative compilation of knowledge or information.

Perhaps what is the most familiar encyclopedia, the *Britannica*, began its long evolution in 1771 as a three-volume entrepreneurial venture produced by Andrew Bell, a Scot. Although he was inspired by the French Encyclopédistes, who published 35 volumes between 1751 and 1772, he and his colleagues wanted to avoid the scandal, notoriety, censorship, and political and religious reprisals that Diderot, the editor, endured for his critical approach to ideas and institutions, a criticism so pointed and effective that some say it contributed to the French Revolution. Consequently, *Britannica*, like all encyclopedias that followed, reflected rather than shaped conventions; it was produced on largely historical principles, a conservative representation of contemporary human knowledge, including its limitations—the tendency of the *Britannica*, for example, was to mix, not always consciously, popular superstition along with actual information, providing access to the interesting misconceptions of the period.

Over the years, it became more factual, more comprehensive, and more popular, one of the most successful publishing ventures in the Western world. Spanning Wordsworth's lifetime, for example, it went through eight editions. Nor was it the only encyclopedia: the lesser but equally popular *Perthensis* was published in 12 volumes from 1796 to 1806, and the *Pantalogia* also ran to 12 volumes between 1802 and 1813. Coleridge objected to the alphabetical arrangement of encyclopedias and designed a complicated philosophical system which he believed more nearly represented the categories and relationships of human knowledge, which he explained in an essay called *On Method*. It was adapted as the Introduction to *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, which took 28 years to produce, from 1817 to 1845, so that many of the entries were outdated by the time it appeared and the system too complicated to use. It was one of the few that failed.

From the speed at which these encyclopedias appeared, their range, and their diversity, it was clear that not only was knowledge expanding but so was the reading public, the publishing industry that served it, its marketing skills, and the capacity for distribution. It was essentially the same reading public that made Scott wealthy, Byron famous, and Southey, who could write in almost any form, productive. But it was also a public that depended on encyclopedias because there was no universal system of education and the existing institutions were so poor that people graduated from universities with little education. Even in its mix of folklore and fact, the encyclopedias, appearing frequently and often updated, offered the best education there was, in the form of self-education, with bibliographic citations enabling the reader to consult the original authorities. (See also Richard Altick, *English Common Reader*, and Robert Lewis Collison, *Encyclopedias: Their History Throughout the Ages*.)

To us now, the encyclopedias produced during the Romantic period offer a rare insight into the minds of literate people during the period, their biases, assumptions, tastes,

perspectives, priorities, as well as what they knew. Similarly, this encyclopedia, assembled so resourcefully and carefully by Laura Dabundo, is as much a reflection of our age, the way it views the Romantic tradition, as it is a reflection of the English Romantic period. Topics such as Jeremy Bentham, pantomime, and geology probably would not have appeared even 20 years ago, when the primary scholarly effort was devoted to defining Romanticism and finding single unifying characteristics or ideas limited to certain major poetic figures. Fortunately, a more historically oriented criticism has required us to know more, and new historical concerns with previously forgotten events, neglected individuals, and overlooked ideas have produced more information for us from untapped sources. The contemporary approach to Romanticism recognizes that it is a far more complex movement than merely a return to nature or a revival of interest in the Middle Ages, as it was characterized, say, 30 years ago, that it contains contradictions, diversity, and fragmentation. When the information, the organization, and the topics in this encyclopedia are themselves transcended by time and taste, the work itself, I believe, will remain a monument to this period in Romantic studies.

Marilyn Gaull

*I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me . . .*
—Byron, *Childe Harold*

Preface

The *Encyclopædia of Romanticism* is designed to survey the social, cultural, and intellectual climate of English Romanticism from approximately the 1780s and the French Revolution to the mid-1830s and the First Reform Bill, Scott's death (the traditional point of closure), and Victoria's accession, all of which marked a sea change in the temper of the times.

This book focuses on what Hazlitt called "the spirit of the age," not just the esthetic but also the scientific, the socioeconomic—indeed the human—environment in which flourished, at least poetically and at least for a time, not just the six canonized male poets of Romanticism, but many other artists, thinkers, and agents of change. This book considers poets, playwrights, and novelists; critics, editors, and booksellers; painters, patrons, and architects; as well as ideas, trends, fads, and conventions, the familiar and the newly rediscovered. As an embassy of change, moreover, Romanticism in many ways prepared its own overthrow, that is, its succession by Victorian and ultimately modern times. All of this, this book attempts to chart. As the eminent critic Thomas McFarland noted in *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin*, "great poems are possible only in contexts," so this book, then, attempts to scan Romanticism's context—hence, the book's Byronic epigraph.

How to Use It

The *Encyclopædia of Romanticism* is organized alphabetically with some cross references. I kept them to a minimum for fear of drowning the content in such references. People from the period who are identified *only by last name* in articles on subjects other than themselves have their own separate entries and so are not cross referenced. For additional information, readers are directed to the Index. Also, the list of publications at the end of almost every entry constitutes works consulted by the author and is not necessarily an exhaustive bibliography or even recommended reading, which is not to say that you might not benefit from them.

Why Use It?

The *Encyclopædia of Romanticism* is for everyone from undergraduate English majors through thesis- or dissertation-driven graduate students to teaching faculty and scholars. And, as it happens, individuals from all of those levels have contributed to the making of this book, which thereby assured some awareness of their needs, expectations, or desires.

Romantic studies have typically been in the vanguard of scholarship, so that this book attempts to steer a middle course by acknowledging and profiting from the prevailing wealth in the field—the substance, for instance, of the work on the six traditionally central male poets—while reaching out to current and innovative explorations, such as the insights of feminist and new-historicist critics. Consequently, this book attempts to take the



measure of the breadth and depth of the academy's Romanticism. To that end, I have not ruthlessly edited out all opinions contrary to my own; the articles reflect the research and conclusions of their authors. I have attempted to preserve the diversity of voices in this text, both on the part of the subjects as well as of the authors, while striving to present a unified vision of the diversity of Romantic culture and Romantic studies.

What to Expect From It

While the *Encyclopedia of Romanticism* has comprehensive aspirations, there are surely other topics to be noted, especially given the grand eclecticism of the period. Several of this book's characteristics should be pointed out: Unlike encyclopedias in other fields, this book eschews the unabridged approach (and therefore the cursory or summary entry) in order to permit entries that do justice to their subjects and are not telegraphic. Less is more? In general, the controlling principle has been to hew to the perspective of literary English Romanticism. Moreover, single essays on American, French, Russian, and Spanish Romanticism appear, while the German one is supplemented by articles on German fairytales, Baron Münchhausen, the Grimm Brothers, and two pieces on aspects of German Idealism to account for the considerable influence and intersection with German culture.

Similarly, at times, the book strays to poach in other fields: Burns, Burnet, Carlyle, Cowper, Crabbe, Mitford, Montagu, Percy, and Piranesi were deemed of sufficient related interest to merit consideration. And, one of the delights in constructing the text was to include novel topics volunteered by their discoverers, such as hymnody, puns, satanism, vegetarianism, to name a few. One of Romanticism's strengths is that it is a melange. Lastly, there is occasionally an overlap among related essays, which I decided to retain when the scope, shape, and treatment of each essay rendered the content unique and that to view similar matter differently might be provocative.

In conclusion, as the now much abandoned "General Confession" in the *Book of Common Prayer* directs: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done." It is my hope that you will find what you seek, and more!

Laura Dabundo
Kennesaw State College



Acknowledgments

This volume was virtually a companion to me for several months—when a tornado threatened northern Georgia, I gathered up the two-foot pile of manuscript and headed for the basement. However, it has been not only a companion but also the kind of good friend that, while certainly taxing and recalcitrant at times, has introduced me to many of the “joint labourers” whom Wordsworth sought. That is to say, more pedestrianly, I am grateful to my contributors, from seven countries, who have written learned, wonderful, exciting entries on all aspects of Romanticism. How vigorous and vital Romanticism is! Their efforts are a tribute to the comradeship of Romantic studies. I am thankful, as well, for the sage counsel on topics, contributors, scope, content, and focus from the Advisory Board, especially Marilyn Gaull, who reviewed the entire manuscript critically and carefully. Thanks, too, goes to Gary Kuris, my ever-encouraging, ever-supportive editor at Garland. I am appreciative, as well, of the efforts of Kevin Bradley at Garland.

Closer to home, I would like to acknowledge the support, both institutional and personal, from George H. Beggs, Dean of the School of Arts and Behavioral Sciences, and Robert W. Hill, Chair of the Department of English, both at Kennesaw State College. I am most appreciative of the diligent and fruitful labors of my editorial assistants in Georgia: Gail Roos, Pamela Olinto, Greg Rider, Debra Taylor, Maggie Riley, and Cathy Anderson. I could not have done this work in terms of sheer mass or volume without the secretarial aid of the English Department’s splendid, indispensable Shirley Dean and the industrious and invaluable Lori Krise. And I am glad to recognize my indebtedness to Linda Jordan Tucker, whose friendship has been a bulwark throughout this project as the dedication implies, but who has also been actively involved in it and has provided sound ideas, much assistance, and welcome energy.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

You are all true friends—

*Joy lift your spirits, joy attune your voice;
To you may all things live, from pole to pole,
Their life the eddying of your living soul!*

...

*Friends devoutest of my choice,
Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice!*

—Coleridge



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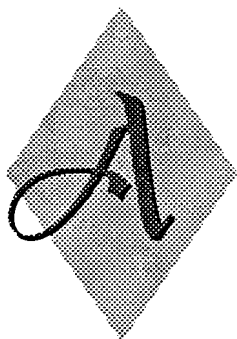
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Ackermann, Rudolph

(1754–1834)

Rudolph Ackermann was born at Stolberg in Saxony and educated at Scheeberg. He learned coach building and harness making from his father before moving, first, to Paris and then to London, where for 10 years he worked designing coaches. In 1795, he married an Englishwoman and opened a print shop on the Strand.

Instrumental in establishing lithography as a fine art in England, in 1817, Ackermann set up his Lithographic Press in London. Its first important production was a facsimile of the 1808 Munich volume of illustrations from Albrecht Durer's 1515 Prayer Book. Partial to lithography, he later popularized aquatint by using it to interpret the work of the artists who drew for his books. In fact, the decline of aquatint in book illustration may be dated from his death in 1834. Among the artists with whom Ackermann collaborated were Nash, Prout, Pugin, and Rowlandson.

Ackermann's *Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions and Politics* (1809–28) contains 1,500 colorplates of costumes, furniture, London shops, and

carriages, as well as papers from such sources as the Royal Society and Natural History Society; it is an excellent guide to the appearance of Regency life. From 1809 until 1811, Ackermann's periodical *Poetical Magazine* was sustained by the lengthy parody *The Schoolmaster's Tour*, thereafter published as *Dr. Syntax's Tour in search of the Picturesque* (1812), written by William Combe and illustrated by Rowlandson. Ackermann's *The Forget-Me-Not*, published from 1823 onward, set the fashion for annuals, a periodical, normally designed as a gift, including samples of literature, art, fashion, and noncontroversial topical subjects representative of contemporary life. His other publications include the *The Microcosm of London* (three volumes) (1808–10); *The History of . . . Westminster* (two volumes) (1812); *A History of the University of Oxford* (two volumes) (1814); *A History of the University of Cambridge* (two volumes) (1815); *The Colleges of Winchester, Eton, Westminster, &c.* (1816). (See also also Publishing, Topographical and Travel Prints.)

Martin P. McNamee

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Aikin, Lucy

(1781–1864)

Famous as the niece of Anna Laetitia Barbauld and as the editor of her aunt's poetry, Lucy Aikin, like Barbauld, enjoyed an education that included fluency in French, Italian, and Latin, and wrote books for children. Aikin was the daughter of John Aikin, who, with Barbauld, compiled a popular collection of essays for family reading, *Evenings at Home* (1792). Lucy wrote a handbook on letter writing, *Juvenile Correspondence* (1811), and edited a popular anthology of short verse, *Poetry for Children* (1801). The anthology draws mainly on the poetry of the Enlightenment, which also influenced Aikin's own poetry, notably her *Epistles on Women* (1810), a history of women, written in Neoclassical heroic couplets. As the title of her poem suggests, Aikin was more of a feminist than her famous aunt, and where Barbauld argued that girls should be educated to be good wives and mothers, Aikin held that it was necessary to augment the prose of their lives with poetry.

But during her career, Aikin turned from poetry to prose. First trying fiction in 1814, with a novel of sensibility (*Lorimer, A Tale*), she soon turned to history. *Memoirs of the Court of Queen Elizabeth* (1818) anecdotally combines biography, domestic history, and remarks on the manners and literature of the period (though Shakespeare receives only a single mention in the index, he is far surpassed there by the courtier Raleigh and Sidney). This book was so successful that she followed it with *Memoirs of the Court of James I* (1822) and *Memoirs of*

Charles I (1833). She also wrote biographies of her father (1823) and of Joseph Addison (1843), and biographical sketches of Barbauld, and of Baillie, and Elizabeth Benger, the latter two among her many scholarly and literary friends.

John Anderson

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American Romanticism

(1820–60)

American Romanticism, like English Romanticism, characterized not only literature and art, but also influenced an entire culture. In America as in Britain, Romanticism left its mark on the political scene, human suffrage (in the forms of abolitionist and feminist movements), the labor movement, religion (Unitarianism and Universalism), and experiments in communal living (Brook Farm).

In terms of literature, the Romantic period was America's first great creative flowering. The three major literary figures of the previous or Federalist age—William Cullen Bryant, James Fenimore Cooper, and Washington Irving—continued to be influential. The new writers of distinction who emerged during the period were novelists Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Harriet Beecher Stowe; poets Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Walt Whitman, and John Greenleaf Whittier; essayist poets Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Henry David Thoreau; poet critics James Russell Lowell and Edgar Allan Poe, and novelist essayist William Gilmore Simms.

In American literature, the Romantic

movement was characterized by sentimentalism, the celebration of nature and the simple life, primitivism and the concept of the noble savage, political liberalism, humanitarianism, individualism, idealization of the common person, self-inquiry, interest in the picturesque past, interest in exotic locales, medievalism, antiquarianism, the Gothic romance, the world of mystery, melancholy, native legend, the historical romance, and technical innovation. The most clearly defined Romantic literary movement in American literature was Transcendentalism, centered at Concord, Massachusetts (c. 1836–60).

The New England Transcendentalists (i.e., Bronson Alcott, Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Thoreau) carried the literary expression of religious and philosophic ideas to a high level in essays and on the lecture platform. Until 1850, the American novel, especially in the hands of Cooper and Simms, continued to be patterned after the model of Scott. During the 1850s, however, Hawthorne and Melville produced their great symbolic novels and Stowe developed her effective propaganda novels. The writing of the short story was further developed by Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, and Simms throughout the period, advancing beyond Irving's initial cultivation of the form in America.

The basis for a realistic literature in the language of the common people was initially established in the humorous writings of Josh Billings, George W. Harris, A.B. Longstreet, Artemus Ward, and the early Mark Twain, although the literature did not, at this time, receive the critical attention it was later to enjoy.

These writers found literary outlets in contemporary periodicals. Three important periodicals, the *Southern Review*, the *Southern Literary Messenger*, and the *Southern Quarterly Review*, advanced a movement toward

Southern literary independence. In the North, the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, *Democratic Review*, and the *North American Review* (perhaps the most influential of all) were followed by *Harper's Magazine*, in 1850, and the *Atlantic Monthly*, in 1857. Throughout the period, essays and stories appeared in annuals and gift-books, which were profitably marketed.

In the American theater of the day, the imitation of English "spectacle" drama, the "star" system, and Romantic tragedy modeled on Shakespeare dominated the stage. The most successful native dramatists were N.P. Willis, R.M. Bird, and George Henry Boker, whose *Francesca da Rimini* displayed the most notable literary talent. Both *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Rip Van Winkle* were very successfully produced for the stage. (See also Theater.)

The Romantic characteristics that appeared in the literature of the period were also evident in other arts. The impulses that created the Gothic Romance also created the architectural movement of the Gothic Revival, which was based on medieval styles and designs that carried the eye above the form itself and sought to engender imaginative associations. In painting, these Romantic qualities brought about the change from the severe portraiture of the 18th century to the work of the Hudson River School artists, who sought to portray the wonder and grandeur of the national landscape. American music echoed European Romanticism in the works of such composers as Edward MacDowell.

After the passing of the period, many of its Romantic characteristics continued to be evident until the end of the century. While the later local-color movement eventually gave rise to realism, it also maintained the Romantic's interest in exotic places and unusual customs. Sentimentalism was a significant element in the stories

of Bret Harte, and exoticism in those of G.W. Cable and Lafcadio Hearn. Even Twain, for the most part a realistic author, moved from the accurate representation of contemporary scenes to historical romancing and idealized depictions of youth. Lesser writers like Lew Wallace continued to present Romantic ideas to the general public. Minor poets like Nelson Aldrich, G.H. Boker, E.C. Stedman, R.H. Stoddard, and Bayard Taylor imitated earlier Romantic poets and relied on ameliorated Romantic conventions. The echoes of the period persisted until the early 20th century, when the remnants of this Romantic tradition encountered modern psychology, as seen in the works of numerous American writers during the 1920s and beyond.

The new nation that emerged after the Civil War required and received a literature less idealistic, exalted, and consciously artistic and more practical and direct. The works of the American Romantic period were produced at an earlier time when the American dream was viewed with greater optimism and enthusiasm.

Kenneth McNamee

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Ancients, The

The "Ancients" were a group of artists who, with Palmer as the leading figure, gathered around the poet/artist Blake during his last years. The wood engravings Blake made to illustrate the first Eclogue in Thornton's *Virgil* enormously influenced the artistic outlook of these young men, as did, especially, his line-engraved *Illustrations of the Book of Job* (1826) and his relief etchings for *Songs of Innocence and Experience*

(1789, 1794). Apart from these, they understood little of Blake's mind and were especially baffled by his prophetic writings. But they did appreciate his lyric poems and valued him personally. One of the Ancients claimed that talking with Blake was like talking to the Prophet Isaiah, and the young men would kiss the bell-pull of his poor home in Fountain Court, Strand, London, before ringing.

The Ancients assembled in London, but also visited Palmer at his rural retreat at Shoreham in Kent. There, with "Poetry and Sentiment" as their motto, they lived on simple fare, such as bread and apples (with occasional green tea for a treat), bathed each morning in the River Darent, walked in the countryside, particularly during thunderstorms, and recited poetry. They carried campstools during their walks, which the villagers thought were some kind of astronomical instrument. The villagers dubbed the Ancients "extollagers" (derived perhaps from "ecstasy" and "astrology").

Despite their eccentric behavior, the artists in the group were serious workers, and some produced convincing evocations of the pastoral.

Their formal association lasted about six years, after which they separated, some to marry and raise families. They continued to meet monthly to discuss their work, and to sing, play the piano and violin, and recite poetry.

In addition to Palmer, the Ancients were Edward Calvert, Francis Oliver Finch, John Giles, George Richmond, Welby Sherman, the brothers Frederick and Arthur Tatham, and Henry Walter.

Edward Calvert (1799–1883) was enamored of the sea and ships from an early age and joined the Navy, spending many of his off-duty hours in drawing. Some of his early work has a jewel-like brilliance comparable to the best miniatures in illumi-

nated manuscripts. Such is the tiny *Primitive City* (1822), similar to much of the work of the Ancients which is visualized on a small scale.

Once settled in London and attending the Royal Academy schools, Calvert quickly became a highly skilled engraver. Between 1827 and 1831, he made exquisite wood engravings, line engravings, and pen lithographs. None is much larger than a visiting card. In one work, *The Chamber Idyll*, he depicts the initial bliss of a bucolic honeymoon, combining in it his classical learning, what he derived from the work of his fellow Ancients and from Blake's *Virgil* wood engravings, and a very refined technique. Thereafter, he painted somewhat dreamy oil and watercolor evocations of classic landscapes and legends. As he grew older, he became a recluse and developed impenetrable theories about color and music.

Francis Oliver Finch (1802–62) studied painting under John Varley (1778–1842), a friend of Blake, and possibly attended Fuseli's lectures. Finch's work is influenced to a small extent by Blake and by the Ancients, but above all it is dominated by the vision of Claude Lorrain, expressed in a watercolor technique reminiscent of Varley. Finch was a devout Swedenborgian, and he believed firmly that to paint well, the artist must purify his spirit.

George Richmond (1809–96) was the youngest of the Ancients. For a few years, he shared their intense vision, which is evident in works such as the tempera *Abel the Shepherd* (1825), the engravings *The Shepherd* and *The Fatal Bellman* (both 1827), a miniature portrait of Palmer (1829), and the mixed media *The Eve of Separation* (1830). The influence of Blake is apparent, as is the influence of the German Nazarenes (i.e., painters of religious subjects similar to the British Pre-Raphaelites).

In 1831, following his elopement, Richmond concentrated on portraiture. Although he became a fashionable portrait painter and a rich man, he was unhappy in his work, relieving some of his frustration by painting landscapes in oil and watercolor. Richmond was elected a Royal Academician in 1866.

Frederick (1805–78) and *Arthur Tatham* (1809–74) were sons of the architect Charles Heathcote Tatham. Arthur was later an eminent clergyman.

Frederick was a sculptor and painter, especially of miniatures. A controversial figure, he employed Catherine Blake as a housekeeper after her husband's death. After her death in 1831, he claimed that she had bequeathed to him Blake's plates, drawings, and prints in her possession before she died. Blake's sister was unsuccessful in getting them from him. It is claimed, though never proven, that Tatham destroyed much of this material on religious grounds.

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Androgyny

European Romanticism was marked by the pervasive desire to trace the progress of humanity through universal history back

to the primal Adam, who, as a representation of cosmic wholeness, was an androgyne. Much Romantic post-Kantian philosophy and literature can be read as versions of Neoplatonic metaphysics. Recalling Plato's mythic ideal of art and beauty, the androgyne is an absolute or a composite, traditionally assigned classical and male attributes. (See also Classicism, Neoplatonism.)

In Romanticism, however, the term "androgyne" is often conflated with "hermaphrodite," a word with suggestions of mutability and the 19th-century preoccupation with the problem of evil, a Judeo-Christian view of the rupture of primitive unity as a result of the Fall. (See also Satanism.) Thus, the Romantic view of woman was both that of the "other" (i.e., a desired object of both beauty and corruption) and that of a more sentimental configuration as emotional, empathic, and nurturing.

English Romantic literature has often been described as a literature of movement—an individual life journey as personal exile or a journey in search of the unknown point of origin, toward apocalyptic reintegration. Although Coleridge was much more familiar with Continental philosophical discussions of human consciousness than were Wordsworth, Shelley, and Blake, their common themes reflect a shared post-Revolutionary body of intellectual materials, especially biblical interpretations of Protestant visionaries influenced by Neoplatonism.

Androgyny is thus a highly ambiguous and contested concept in the intellectual and artistic discourse of English Romanticism. Coleridge's often-quoted assertion that "a great mind must be androgynous," as well as his many inquiries into the (en)gendering of the imagination, illustrates the association made in Romantic thought

between the feminine and the nonrational and the desire for unity of masculine reason with feminine intuition, the myth of reconciliation of the symmetrical binaries, and a utopian ideal of wholeness.

The androgyne is conceived as a female type in Romantic literature and art (i.e., as a figure of horror in Coleridge's *Christabel*). Most often, however, it is an expression of the male Romantic ego. Shelley defines the feminine in his *Essay on Love* as "a miniature as it were of our entire self, yet deprived of all that we condemn or despise, the ideal prototype of everything excellent or lovely that we are capable of conceiving as belonging to the nature of man." According to Anne K. Mellor, the image of the desired woman as elusive yet necessary recurs again and again in Shelley's poetry, in his veiled maidens of *Alastor* and *The Witch of Atlas*, in the fleeting glimpses of Intellectual Beauty, as Asia in *Prometheus Unbound* and as Cythna in *The Revolt of Islam*—as a female form of her dead lover.

For Blake, the imagination is male, and the female is an emanation of the Zoas, faculties or powers of the integral mind, the human form divine as male. He writes at the end of his long poem *Jerusalem* that "Sexes must vanish and cease." Since feeling is inscribed as female in Romanticism, Keats's negative capability, Shelley's notion of sympathy in *A Defence of Poetry* and Wordsworth's "spontaneous overflow" described in his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* might all be taken to reflect feminine qualities in a masculine mind.

Byron is often cited by Freudians as an exemplar of Romantic narcissism or ego-projection. In his dramatic poem, *Manfred*, the title character describes his sister as an idealized version of himself. (Freudians think also of the sibling relationship of Dorothy and William Wordsworth: Dorothy's journals as William's poetic re-

source and William's poetic assertion that Dorothy had given him eyes and ears.) This notion of fusion or assimilation is extended throughout English Romanticism to appropriation also of maternal characteristics and functions. In the novel *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, Victor Frankenstein seizes the maternal role through rationality and science (and against nature) to create a child as monster.

The idea of androgyny illuminates other Romantic obsessions, such as the cult of youth and the return to nature in the quest for ultimate wholeness. Literary examples include Wordsworth's pantheism and fascination with memory's mystical powers ("emotion recollected in tranquility" in *The Prelude*, *Tintern Abbey*, and the elegaic Lucy poems; Coleridge's narcotic dream of utopian Xanadu and his sense of art as "the mediatrix between, and reconciler of, nature and man"; Keats's self-destructiveness and "consciousness of genius" in his odes; Shelley's idealism and Promethean sublimities; and Byron's *Don Juan* as a wickedly androgynous physicality).

Similarly, androgyny permeates the English Romantic visual arts: George Stubbs's natural violence; Constable's "pure appreciation of natural effect," Turner's visionary landscapes, and Fuseli's Gothic sensibility; John Martin's grandeur; and Blake's prophetic "inner-eye" images. The myth of the bisexual androgyne as a feminine male was central to the Romantic paradigm of artistic genius.

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Antiquarianism

Despite Blake's injunction in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* to "Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead," the Romantics were at least as fascinated as their Neoclassical predecessors with the distant past. The Hellenic Revival, fostered by several decades of archaeological discovery and by the contemporary struggle for Greek independence, prolonged, with some change in emphasis, the 18th-century interest in the classical world. At the same time, two centuries of antiquarian exploration of Britain's Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, and medieval-Christian past, plus the collection of living remnants of the past preserved in folk literature, provided the Romantics with a rich source of material very much in keeping with Rousseauistic primitivism and imaginative, antirationalist spontaneity. Romantic Hellenism was an important expression of the spirit of the age, particularly its love of beauty and freedom, but without antiquarianism, the character and content of that age might have developed radically differently. (See also Classicism, Decorative Arts, Elgin Marbles, Hellenism, Rosetta Stone.)

Antiquarianism existed at least from the time of Henry VIII, when John Leland, as official government antiquary, gathered documents vital to preserving the British

cultural heritage. That task was continued by public and private collectors during the Age of Elizabeth and beyond and was encouraged by the growing scholarly interest at Cambridge and Oxford in the language, literature, and history of the Old and Middle English periods. Not even the political turmoil of the 17th century, including the iconoclastic excesses of Cromwellian Puritanism, could entirely extinguish Britain's interest in the pre-Reformation past. Indeed, in 1655, during the Protectorate itself, William Dugdale began publication of his *Monasticon Anglicanum*, a work that became important to 18th-century imitators of medieval design. Following Cromwell's death, and perhaps in reaction to his iconoclasm, the antiquarian desire to retrieve and preserve the native past fully reasserted itself through intense study of such subjects as ancient architecture, genealogy, and local history. By 1707, the reestablishment of the London Society of Antiquaries led to a proliferation of such groups throughout the kingdom.

Antiquarian study remained a popular avocation throughout the 18th century, but its influence began expanding from the realm of pure scholarship to the realm of pure imagination. This phenomenon is frequently illustrated through discussions of the impact of Gothic architecture and interior design on Horace Walpole's creation of the first Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). (See also Gothicism.) Even before Gothic Revivalist elements came to dominate British architecture, Inigo Jones, John Vanbrugh, and Christopher Wren occasionally designed structures in the Gothic mode; Gothic ruins became fashionable additions to English gardens; and Batty Langley published in 1742 and 1747, two works compendiously illustrating Gothic architectural style. Beginning in the late 1740s, Walpole, in an eccentric manifesta-

tion of this burgeoning medievalism, gothitized his mansion, Strawberry Hill, and, during his second decade of immersion in this Gothic world of his own creation, had a bizarre dream in which he saw a giant armored hand at the top of a staircase. In a fever of composition following this dream, he produced the novelistic progenitor of the works of such writers as Lewis, Maturin, Radcliffe, and Mary Shelley. Underscoring the antiquarian associations of *The Castle of Otranto* is the claim by Walpole's invented translator that the book "was found in the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England." A similar claim of discovery, and thus of authenticity, was made by other 18th-century creators of imitation antiquities.

Walpole's fascination with the sublimity of the Middle Ages, clearly anticipating the similar fascination of the Romantics, is echoed by, among others, Richard Hurd in *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762) and Thomas Warton in *The History of English Poetry* (1774–81), both of whom were steeped in antiquarian knowledge. Antiquarianism also produced the interest in a largely misperceived Druidism, which was later to pervade Romantic prose and poetry, particularly the works of Blake. In *Stonehenge, A Temple Restored to the British Druids* (1740), William Stukely, who had been a central figure in reestablishing the Society of Antiquaries, argued that the Druids were lineal descendants of Abraham and that their poetry echoed the religious truths of the patriarchs, an assumption that would evolve into the Romantic association of the powers of the Druidic bards with the powers of the Old Testament prophets. Thomas Gray's *The Bard*, printed in 1757 by Walpole's Strawberry Hill Press, is a pre-Romantic example of such a poetry of prophetic utterance. Further ennobling the Druids and encouraging their use in

literature were *The Origin of Language and Nations* (1764) by Rowland Jones and *The Way to Things by Words* (1766) by John Cleland; both traced the beginnings of human language to Druidical Celtic.

This discussion of Celtic and Medievalist antiquarianism would not be complete without mentioning the two most famous literary frauds of the 18th century: Macpherson's Ossianic poems and the Rowley poems of Chatterton. In *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, Collected in the Highlands of Scotland* . . . (1760), Macpherson presented a refreshingly impassioned collection of works purportedly by the blind third-century poet Ossian. When the volume produced a sensation, Macpherson followed up his triumph with *Fingal* in 1762 and *Temora* in 1763. Despite a justified scholarly skepticism about the authenticity of the Ossianic poems, Macpherson's efforts captured the imagination of a reading public grown weary of the rational and the orderly in literature and helped to establish, through the persona of Ossian, the theory of natural genius espoused in William Duff's *Essay on Original Genius* (1767) and elsewhere.

This theory gave impetus to the careers of Burns, Clare, and many less worthy "primitives" and became an article of faith among the Romantics. It had as a corollary that great minds are too often cruelly neglected, an assertion illustrated by the life of Chatterton. An extraordinary linguistic prodigy, Chatterton capitalized on contemporary antiquarian interests and on his own antiquarian knowledge to produce, at a very youthful age, a set of forged mediaevalsque poems attributed to the cleric Thomas Rowley. Unfortunately, following the Macpherson controversy, publishers were more resistant to the acceptance of "authentic" antiquities, Chatterton's various attempts to earn his

way as a writer failed, and he committed suicide in 1770 while still in his teens. As a result, painters and poets of the next several decades used him as a symbol of victimized genius.

Received oppositely from the Rowley poems was Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). It was neither the first nor the most scholarly of ballad collections but certainly the most influential of all antiquarian publications. Volumes of collected ballads had been appearing at least since the first quarter of the 18th century, and before century's end, Joseph Ritson and others would introduce a scholarly rigor into the collecting process far superior to Percy's own. Nevertheless, it was Percy whose volume was read and frequently reprinted, who helped to inspire the Continental collecting and theorizing efforts of Johann Gottfried Herder and folk ballad imitations of Gottfried August Bürger, and who most directly prepared the way for the *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

Despite the pervasive Romantic debt to the antiquarian movement, benefiting most from Percy in particular and from antiquarianism in general, was Scott, the greatest of all antiquarian Romantics. Scott's career as a poet began in 1796 with the publication of *William and Helen* and *The Wild Huntsman*, both translations of ballads by Bürger. Scott's contributions to Matthew Gregory Lewis's *Tales of Wonder* (1801), a work inspired by Percy-influenced Germanic balladry, sustained his literary ambitions, and his own ballad collection, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1803), confirmed him as a significant man of letters. There then followed the learned and heavily footnoted poems and novels which manifested the full literary power of antiquarianism and thereby made Scott the most popular British writer before Charles Dickens.

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Architecture

The early 18th century was marked by the rise of Neoclassicism, which was adopted as the “proper” architectural style all over Europe. It corresponded to the development of rationalism in philosophy, regularity in music and poetry, the elevation of the Greek and Latin classics as models in literature, and the general tendency toward clear rules and principles in all arts. Classical architecture was the most rational and the most clearly defined of all styles. Later, however, as individualism and pastoralism crept into classical designs, new, more clearly English styles emerged. One architect who marked this transition was Robert Adam (1728–92). He had a long list of country houses to his credit, including Syon House, Middlesex (1761–69), and Saltram House, Devon (1768–69). Unlike his predecessors, he did not have rigid, doctrinaire principles but rather a strong desire to please with designs that created spatial drama and complexity and expressed movement, variety, and gaiety.

The effects that had been achieved in compositional techniques in the country by Adam and others were transported to an urban setting in London through the

Regency style. Its great achievement was not so much in the sphere of individual buildings as in a new concept of town planning; its greatest exponent was Nash, who laid out a great complex of parks, streets, terraces, squares, and churches in London’s West End, from Regent’s Park to St. James’s Park. The whole Nash scheme combined a classical elegance with a Romantic quality: formal architecture in an informal setting. Both parks had informal glades, sloping lawns, and rich foliage patterns around a winding lake, reminiscent of the great landscape architect Lancelot (“Capability”) Brown (1715–83) in such settings as Blenheim Palace.

Another influential English architect of this time was Sir John Soane (1753–1837), designer of the Bank of England (1788–1808). His Hellenic Romanticism was extremely individualistic as well as delicate and austere. He founded no school, but was influential with succeeding generations because he adopted a position between Classical and Gothic, jostling fragments of both in his house and museum in Lincoln’s Inn Fields (1812–13).

By 1830, Hellenic purity—crystallized in the design by Robert Smirke (1780–1867) for the British Museum (begun in 1823)—gave way to Gothic elaboration, an expression of the Romantic style that was coming to pervade the arts and literature. Classical and Gothic architecture share a nostalgia for antiquity, but through the influence of the English Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the sense of dream was heightened. Good design (e.g., proportion, scale, symmetry, and harmony) was no longer enough. Charm, novelty, and escape were what was required. Early examples of such fancy include Walpole’s Gothic mansion at Strawberry Hill (remodeled in 1750) and James Wyatt’s Fonthill Abbey (begun in 1796). The rea-

sons for their existence were literary rather than architectural—an evocation of the *jeu d'esprit* of an age in which humanity acquired a new perspective on society and itself. (See also Decorative Arts.)

The Gothic style is the clearest representation of Romanticism's contribution to architecture. Adam, Nash, and Soane all produced Gothic buildings when circumstances warranted (Nash had a Gothic "department" in his office and even built himself a castle in the Isle of Wight). These early structures were expressions of folly and eccentricity—two qualities easy to come by if the patron was rich and extravagant. By the beginning of the 19th century, however, the choice of architectural style acquired more serious overtones; behind the fantasy of the Gothic imagination there lay a profound dissatisfaction with the state of society, following the outbreak of war and collapse of revolutionary fervor. The result, in artistic terms, was an attitude of longing, antagonism, and a desire to escape. The architectural reaction was the Gothic Revival. (See also Gothicism.)

For the architects already mentioned, styles were inextricably linked to fashion and class taste. The general appeal of the Gothic, however, clearly reflected changing sentiments within English society as a whole. Along with the escapist tendency, brought about by pessimism, came extravagance and conspicuous waste, founded on a new prosperity and a rising middle class. The increased wealth of 19th-century Britain allowed and encouraged the building not only of Gothic fantasy houses and churches but also of Gothic railway stations, town halls, and even sewage works. If it may be suggested that architecture is a more communal art than literature or painting (i.e., depending on a relationship between the user and creator that is much

closer than in other arts), then the extent of Gothicism in all levels of society points to the mood of English society at the time.

The Revival was almost wholly an English phenomenon. It carried such weight that in 1834, when most of the Palace of Westminster was destroyed by fire, it was decreed that it should be rebuilt in a "national style," which at that time was perceived as either Elizabethan or Gothic. The adoption of a Gothic design, the brain child of Sir Charles Barry (1795–1860) and Augustus Pugin (1812–52), marked this style's preeminence in the public mind.

Pugin, because of his extraordinary genius, energy, and vision, may be called the orchestrator of the Gothic Revival. A convert to Roman Catholicism, he took his work very seriously and held up Gothic as an exemplar of true Christian faith. His work on the Houses of Parliament (begun in 1836), which extended to designing such minutiae as Gothic inkwells and coat hooks, influenced not only style, but also materials and color. Although fanciful, his work was also solid and durable. He always bore in mind not only the decoration of the building but also its functionality and (almost without exception) its cost. His abandonment of the 18th-century Neoclassical principles of proportion and symmetry in favor of structural expression affected the whole nature of architecture and design. Pugin's receptivity to technological advances and his use of new materials (e.g., iron and encaustic tiling) influenced the creations of his ecclesiastical and secular successors and, literally, changed the face of England. (See also Domestic Architecture; Revett, Nicholas.)

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Associationism

While the notion of the association of ideas goes back at least to Aristotle (e.g., *De Anima* and *De Memoria*), British associationism or associational psychology received its chief impetus in the early 18th century. John Locke coined the phrase "association of ideas" in an interpolated chapter of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1700). It was from the physician-theologian David Hartley (1705–59), however, that associationism received its fullest and most systematic treatment. In the influential *Observations on Man* (1749), Hartley proposed to account for all mental phenomena by reducing them to an association of basic units of sensation. In doing this, he hoped to explain not only the workings of the mind, but also the genesis of moral sentiments, thereby showing the agreement between natural and revealed religion. The theological dimension of Hartley's project was central, though sometimes forgotten by later commentators. In 1775, the chemist Priestley published a condensed version of *Observations* as *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind*, deleting the discussion of moral and religious knowledge. It was especially these moral and

religious implications that profoundly influenced the early Romantics, including Wordsworth, Hazlitt, and Coleridge, who mentioned Hartley twice in his poem *Religious Musings* (1794) and even named his first son David Hartley in honor of the philosopher.

Hartley started with the Lockean model of the mind, a blank slate to be filled by sensations (see Empiricism). Each sensation produces a simple idea, and what one recognizes as thoughts are complexes of simple ideas. Unlike Locke, however, Hartley was more fully cognizant of the mind's relation to human physiology and thus was a pioneer in psychophysiology. Thereby borrowing Newton's theory that repeated vibrations deposit minute vibrations in an object, Hartley argued that each mental impression generates both a simple idea in the mind and deposits a parallel trace vibration along the nerves of the brain. Further, impressions that occur in frequent or intense conjunction with each other form complex ideas. Sensation *A* is associated with sensation *B*, forming the complex idea (*A*B*) with a parallel set of vibrations. If the association (*A*B*) is strong enough, a subsequent sensation *A* will, through the action of the deposited trace vibrations (*A*B*), raise the associated sensation *B*, even though the object or quality that originally produced *B* is absent.

To some degree, Hartley's philosophical psychology anticipated the theory of conditioned reflexes in Pavlov's physiological psychology. Indeed, experimental psychology on the Continent was an outgrowth of associationism. Hartley, however, insisted on the distinction between mind and brain function, preferring a spiritual conception of mind. Further, he saw the mind playing an active role in the arrangement of complex ideas to raise associated ideas and sensations. By this mechanism, Hartley

proposed to demonstrate how the production of ideas could produce physical effects, thereby accounting for all mental/physical phenomena, including understanding, affection, memory, and imagination as well as voluntary and involuntary actions.

Later associationists simplified Hartley's model, anticipating a more strictly physiological conception of mind. Hartley had distinguished two types of association: (1) "contiguous" or "simultaneous," in which ideas occurring together are associated; and (2) "successive," in which ideas that follow each other are associated. By contrast, the Utilitarian James Mill (1773–1836) argued that all association could be reduced to contiguity alone. Further, in the *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind* (1829), Mill reduced Hartley's conception of mind to a passive mechanical process in which the mind exercised no creative function.

Associationist concepts in aesthetics can be found as early as Joseph Addison. Several concepts of Hartley's associationism, however, had especially important ramifications for the Romantics. If all ideas can be resolved into their hierarchy of associated components, all knowledge can be shown to have a common ground. That being the case, Hartley contended, there is a fundamental harmony deriving from the common basis for all knowledge between knowledge based on revelation and knowledge based on experience. The divine order in the world can be established empirically. Moreover, each unique individual experience can be coordinated by association into an integrated whole. Both notions support Wordsworth's conception of the poet and poetic knowledge, suggesting the mechanism for the intimations of immortality. This is evident not only in the *Prelude* and related poems, but in the 1800 preface to *Lyrical Ballads*.

Hartley's model also suggested how an

aesthetic fiction created by a poet has the power to evoke real sensations in its audience. There is some resemblance to Coleridge's "esemplastic power," though Hartley had criticized the suggestion of the Earl of Shaftesbury and Mark Akenside that human creativity was an imitation of divine creation. Human creativity, Hartley suggested, is necessarily limited and imperfect next to God's perfection. He conceived of art as strictly imitation and not the product of creativity, per se, but rather the reorganization of associated ideas into complex thoughts, a notion closer to Coleridge's conception of fancy than imagination. While Coleridge eventually became disenchanted with associationism, especially in its mechanical psychology, he never entirely rejected it, devoting the fifth and sixth chapters of the *Biographia Literaria* (1817) to it.

While later associationists focused on the physical implications of Hartley's theory of mind, which provided a groundwork for experimental psychology, Hartley and the Romantics who were influenced by him looked to the moral and theological dimensions. For them, associationism was not merely a theory of mind that showed the relationship between body and brain but a bridge between the limited and subjective realm of individual experience and a universal divine order. It validated the intimations of an immanent God. Moreover, for the Romantics, memory was a crucial element in the functioning of the mind and in its creative expressions. Memory was seen as both personal and collective, and associationism validated memory as a creative faculty.

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Austen, Jane (1775–1817)

Jane Austen is the Romantic era's greatest novelist. The six novels produced by the unmarried daughter of a country clergyman have been widely read and critically acclaimed since their publication. Austen situates fiction within the familiar world of the drawing room and the ballroom of the rural gentry of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, wherein society was orthodox and manners and morals were highly conventional. Austen's wit and satire are directed against the artificial, the ostentatious, and the mean-spirited members of this society. The customary plots of the novels arise from the subject of court-

ship and marriage, in which the mercenary, the proud, and the unprudent are most often the objects of ridicule. Early in her career, Austen was fond of burlesque, ridiculing the unrealistic characters and exaggerated plots of the sentimental and Gothic novels of the period. Her later novels are marked by realistic detail and psychological depth with highly individualized and memorable characters. She is renowned for the simplicity, precision, and grace of her writing style.

The six major novels that secured her literary reputation since the mid-19th century are *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, and *Persuasion*. In addition, a collection of *Juvenilia* (1787–93), unfinished works and fragments of novels—*Lady Susan* (1793–94), *The Watsons* (1804–05), and *Sanditon* (1817)—the *Plan of a Novel* (1816), opinions of *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* (1815–16), verses, and prayers were collected and published as *Minor Works* in 1954.

Austen was born on 16 December 1775 to the Rev. George Austen, rector of Steventon parsonage, and Cassandra Leigh Austen. She was the seventh child in a family of eight children, six of whom were brothers. The Rev. Austen educated his young children at home and took in pupils to supplement his church income. Considered a fine scholar, he was educated at Oxford, although his family was of the lower levels of rural English society. Cassandra Leigh was from a more eminent family than her husband's. She was reputed to be witty and generally good-humored, although subject to hypochondria. Austen's brothers James (1765–1819) and Henry (1771–1850) were educated at home and at Oxford, and much of her education must have come from them. James would take orders and inherit his father's position at Steventon rectory, while Henry worked

in banking in London, married his widowed cousin Eliza de Feuillide, and eventually took orders in the church as well. Francis (1774–1865) and Charles (1779–1852) went into the Navy and rose to the rank of Admiral. The second son George (1766–1838) was mentally ill and lived away from the family. Edward (1767–1852), the third born, was adopted by childless cousin Thomas Knight and inherited his Godmersham estate in Kent, taking the name Knight. Austen's only sister, Cassandra (1773–1845), was her lifelong companion and neither sister ever married.

Besides learning from their father and brothers, Jane and Cassandra had some formal training outside the home: a one-year tutorial, about 1782, with Mrs. Cawley at Oxford and Southampton, and several years at the Abbey School at Reading. After 1785, both she and Cassandra returned home to read in the family's extensive library under the guidance of their father and brothers. Jane read extensively in Shakespeare and the 18th-century novelists, Sterne, Smollett, and Goldsmith and especially her favorites, Richardson and Fielding. She was well acquainted with the works of Johnson and the late 18th-century poets Cowper and Crabbe. She avidly attended the theater when visiting her brother Henry in London, and the family was known to produce amateur theatricals at the parsonage. Austen was well read in English history and very knowledgeable of current events of the day. She subscribed to a lending library that supplied current fiction.

Austen's writing career began in the late 1780s and can be divided into three periods. The first is the Steventon period from 1775 to 1801. During this time, she composed what is collected as *juvenilia*, mostly satirical parodies, including *The History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the*

death of Charles the 1st (1791), *Love and Freindship* [sic] (1790), *Catherine* (1792), and *Lesley Castle* (1792). These were collected in three manuscript notebooks, containing 27 items, which afforded much amusement for the Austen family. The *juvenilia* provides early evidence of Austen's wit and her keen sense of artistic judgment in the burlesque of sentimental and Gothic fiction. She composed *Lady Susan* around 1794, using the epistolary form that would be her mode of discourse for *Elinor and Marianne* (1795) and, it is believed, *First Impressions* (1796–97). The latter was offered for publication in 1797 but was rejected. *Susan* was written in the same year and was later revised into *Northanger Abbey*.

The second phase of Austen's writing career is from 1801 to 1809. During this time, which is characterized by the lack of original works, Austen prepared *Susan* for publication and wrote the fragment *The Watsons* (1803–04). Because of her father's illness, the family moved to Bath in 1801, where she felt uprooted and unhappy. Her father died in 1805, and since James Austen had succeeded him at Steventon rectory, the sisters Jane and Cassandra and their mother were left without a home. Their residence in Southampton from 1806 to 1809 was crowded and noisy, provided little solitude or opportunity for writing. Not surprisingly, Austen would depict Bath and the naval seaport of Portsmouth unfavorably in her novels.

The final period is Chawton, 1809 to 1817, which was Austen's most productive. Her brother Edward Knight had succeeded his benefactor to the estate at Godmersham, and upon the death of Edward's wife, he offered a cottage in his possession in the village of Chawton to his mother and sisters. The return to the rural countryside renewed Austen's writing and publication. She successfully retrieved the

manuscript of *Susan*, which had been retained by publisher Richard Crosby since 1803. She transformed the epistolary *Elinor and Marianne* into the direct narrative of *Sense and Sensibility*, which was published anonymously in 1811. The novel, through its two protagonists, points out the dangers of "sensibility," of excessive emotion and fervor.

Also during this period, *First Impressions* was "lop't and crop't," as Austen would describe it, and transformed into *Pride and Prejudice*, which was published in 1813. Considered her most popular novel, *Pride and Prejudice* is the story of Elizabeth Bennet, one of five daughters, who prides herself on her discernment but who is blinded by prejudice. She receives a second offer of marriage from the handsome and wealthy Mr. Darcy after she learns to understand herself and to value good judgment. The novel is characterized by its wit, gaiety, and light tone.

While revisions of *Pride and Prejudice* were under way, the composition of *Mansfield Park* was begun. Unlike the "light, bright, and sparkling" tone of *Pride and Prejudice*, this novel is marked by an emphasis on order, restraint, and conservatism. The sole *bildungsroman* in Austen's canon, *Mansfield Park*, is the Cinderella story of Fanny Price, who grows up in the home of her rich and privileged cousins, only to win the heart of the second son through her moral virtue. The novel was published in 1814.

With a heroine Austen believed "no one but myself would much like," *Emma* appeared in 1815. This novel, with its lively and witty heroine, is less serious than the novel that precedes it. Emma has fortune, cleverness, and beauty but suffers from her interference in the lives of those less fortunate. Stylistically, it is considered Austen's masterpiece for complexity and effect. *Emma* was favorably noted by Scott,

and its author received an invitation from the Prince Regent to tour his library and the permission to dedicate the novel to him.

The writing of her last completed novel, *Persuasion*, which would appear in 1818, was undertaken while Austen was becoming seriously ill. This work, marked by an autumnal tone, returns to the story of a marriage proposal rejected, but here the heroine, Anne Elliot, receives no second offer until eight years later. The mature heroine speaks about loss and endurance in a way not found in the earlier novels.

During this time, perhaps because she was aware of the limited time left to her, Austen wrote a preface to *Catherine* (or *Susan*), which would be published after her death as *Northanger Abbey*. In 1817, she began *Sanditon*. Set in a seaside resort, this unfinished fragment reflects a new direction in Austen's writing. Highly satirical, like much of the *juvenilia*, it shows Austen's understanding of the new Romantic literature of the period. Likewise, *Sanditon* reflects the poor state of Austen's health with its preoccupation with hypochondria and sickness.

Austen gave up work on *Sanditon* when she became too ill to write. Her last days were spent under a doctor's care in Winchester, where she died on July 18, 1817. Her death has been attributed to Addison's disease. She was buried in Winchester Cathedral. Her brother Henry published *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* in 1818, revealing in a "Biographical Notice" the identity of the novelist.

Although she lived and wrote in the same period as the great Romantic poets, aspects of Austen's work seem closer to the late 18th century writers. Her valuing of restraint, propriety, order, and tradition is regarded as a Neoclassical virtue that marks her affinity with Richardson, Fielding, and Johnson.

Stylistically, a feature of her novels that can be considered "Romantic" is her individuation of character, an effort to understand human nature in its variety and richness, not as an abstraction or as a universal. Her characters exhibit a depth of feeling and imagination uncharacteristic of the writings of the earlier century. Finally, her depiction of the transforming quality of time is an inherent feature of Romantic poetry. Her novels make sophisticated use of varied modes of speech and thought presentation, indicating an awareness of how varied perceptions are the means to knowing one's self and one's world.

A recent critical concern has been with her feminism. Writing in a time of intense interest in feminist thought, Austen could hardly have failed to understand the relevant issues of the controversy. The problem of female education is raised as early as *Northanger Abbey*, in which the young Catherine is faulted for her dependence on Gothic novels for her vision of reality. Property laws and marriage rights figure prominently in Austen's works, such as in *Pride and Prejudice*, in which Elizabeth and her friend debate the differences between prudent and mercenary marriages. Austen must have understood fully the predicament of the young woman without property or marriage protection. More essentially, Austen argues in her fiction for the education of women in moral values and reasoning ability, placing her in the tradition of rational feminism. While separating herself publicly from the feminist movement of the time, Austen in her writings gives ample evidence of her concern for the fate of the ordinary woman, not the idealized or highly privileged one in her society.

The issue of Austen's conservative politics has also recently surfaced. While early critics thought of Austen as politically neu-

tral or unaware, at least as revealed by her novels, later studies have branded her a Tory conservative, the object of propaganda for reactionary ideas, and even a propagandist herself for the same ideas. More recent scholarship has focused on her awareness of political issues of the time and on the originality of her works and ideas, even calling her "subversive" of the values of her society. She is now being seen as a spokeswoman for the range of classes within society, instead of as a bonded member of the gentry class and the upper realms of the ruling society. By claiming that the "personal is the political," current scholars have found in her fiction the basis for their contention that Austen was actively aware of the political ideas and movements of her time, and that her response to them was progressive and innovative.

The standard text of the novels, including minor works, fragments, and *juvenilia*, is the R.W. Chapman edition in six volumes, published from 1923 to 1954. (*See also* Novel.)

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Autobiography and Confession

While the popularity of biographical and autobiographical writings was established in the 18th century, the forms these biographical texts assumed was elaborated during the Romantic period. James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791) and Johnson's *Prefaces Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets* (1779–81), popularly known as the "Lives of the English Poets," announce an increasing interest in the individual self, and the creative self in particular. The Romantic writers' preoccupation with themselves as individuals, and as artists in particular, yields an enormous amount of autobiographical and confessional writing. In 1804, Coleridge referred to Wordsworth's *Prelude* as a "divine self-biography," and the OED even attributes the first use of the word "autobiography" in 1805 to the Romantic writer Southey.

Many generic definitions associate autobiography with prose, a categorization that becomes a problem in the Romantic period in which much poetry can be considered autobiographical. The prominence of the author's self and the consciousness of relating this reflective self to the surroundings are touchstones for Romantic autobiographical writing.

From the mid-18th century, the emphasis in English literature falls on the individual, the private self as opposed to the public self. The ideas of Locke, Hume, and

Kant contributed to the late 18th-century idea of the self. The presentation of the Romantic self, with its emphasis on memory and imagination, is largely defined by the importance of empirical experience, the perception of consciousness as function rather than substance, and the necessity for a moral self that is subjectively contingent. Within the text, the evocation of the processes of memory and imagination triggers the presentation of a selection of events that the author perceives to be meaningful in the portrayal of his or her life. The events are often considered turning points in the author's development, such as Wordsworth's "spots of time" in his verse autobiography, *The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind* (1805, 1850). Childhood figures prominently in Romantic autobiographies, and the quest that Romantic autobiographies portray often focuses on the attempts to recapture innocence in artistic maturity.

"Autobiography" proper can be distinguished from autobiographical writings. Autobiography can be defined as a text that the author consciously presents to an audience as a version of her or his life story. Autobiography is retrospective; it imposes an order on a selection of elements from the author's life. Autobiographies are inevitably influenced by the author's position in and perception of her or his life at the moment of writing, and by the author's stand toward the audience, and they are often self-fulfilling prophecies, highlighting events that are favorable for the author's reputation. Autobiographies are usually continuous and continually being tinkered with. Unlike biographies, they are "unfinished" by not covering the death of the subject so that they are then published posthumously.

"Autobiographical" writings differ from autobiographies proper in that they do not

necessarily have a public audience in mind at the time of writing. Diaries (intimate day-by-day accounts), journals (less intimate, more selective than diaries), letters, memoirs, essays, travel literature, and poems can all be considered autobiographical. Much autobiographical writing in the Romantic period is confessional, focusing on the probing, mind-searching, and often self-justifying activity of the subject itself. The tradition of confessional writing in Europe goes back to Augustine's *Confessions* (fifth century) in which Augustine confesses his sins (*confessio peccati*) to a God in whom he has complete faith (*confessio laudis*). The Romantic confession is secularized and in many ways a justification of individual behavior to an unsympathetic audience; Rousseau's *Confessions* (1764–70) is a famous example. Many English Romantic poems are confessional; they present an often unconventional poetic speaker in thinly disguised autobiographical frame.

While not many male Romantic authors wrote prose autobiographies, many women produced autobiographies to justify their actions in a male-dominated world. Their narrative accounts can be related to the development of the novel after 1750. Examples include Ann Sheldon's *Authentic and Interesting Memoirs* (1787); Elizabeth Sarah Gooch's *Life* (1792); Mary E. Bowes Strathmore's *The Confessions of the Countess of Strathmore* (1793); Margaret Leeson's *Memoirs* (1797); Arabella Euston's *Lover's Looking Glass* (1800?); Maria "Perdita" Darby Robinson's *Memoirs* (1801); *The Life, Voyages, and Surprising Adventures of Mary Jane Meadows* (1802); Phebe Phillips's (alias Maria Maitland's) *The Woman of the Town* (1810); and Eliza Bradley's *An Authentic Narrative* (1820).

In the widest sense, all writing can be seen as autobiographical, but the following list gives a taste of what was going on in the

Romantic period: Wordsworth's *The Prelude* (probably the most famous example in poetry); Byron's *Childe Harold* (1809–17) and *Don Juan* (1818–22); Coleridge's conversation poems: *The Eolian Harp* (1795), *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison* (1797), *Frost at Midnight* (1798), *The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem* (1798), *Dejection* (1802), and *To William Wordsworth* (1807); Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* (1798) and the *Intimations Ode* (1802–04).

Among the diary and autobiography writers are Frances Burney's *Diary and Letters* (1842–46); Benjamin Robert Haydon, who produced *Autobiography* (1853) and 26 diary volumes; and Hunt (*Autobiography*, 1850). Many Romantics were indefatigable letter writers. Keats's letters, in which he situates himself among the English poets, are among the most instructive. Byron's letters and journals, the correspondence of Montagu, Coleridge, Dorothy and William Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, all provide autobiographical glances.

Many women celebrate the men in their environment by deprecating their own talents. Their journals, however, indirectly portray strong and artistic personalities. Examples include Hester Lynch Thrale Piozzi's *Autobiography, Letters, and Literary Remains* (1861); Dorothy Wordsworth's *Alfoxden Journal* (1798) and *Grasmere Journals* (1800–03); Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Journals* (1814–44); and Mary Russell Mitford's *Recollections of a Literary Life* (1852).

Among the confessions are Hazlitt's dark *Liber Amoris* (1823) and De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1822) and *Autobiographic Sketches* (1853). Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) can be classified among Gothic fiction. The increasingly popular periodical press also attracted autobiographical writing: Hazlitt's *Table Talk* es-

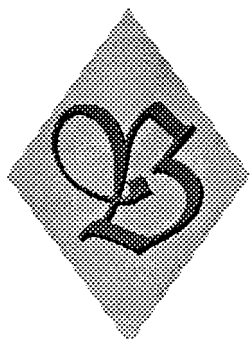
says (1821–22) and Charles Lamb's *Essays of Elia* (1823, 1833) first appeared in *London Magazine*. Among the literary criticism of the period, Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (1817), although sparse in its personal revelations, unfolds the growth of a critic's mind.

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Baillie, Joanna (1762–1851)

In 1798, when Joanna Baillie anonymously published the first volume of a series of dramas—later titled *Plays on the Passions*—she inspired a revival of poetic drama in England that would stretch into the Victorian era. In over 25 plays, Baillie conveys her intense preoccupation with the psychological crises that occur in her characters' private lives, a focus not unlike Wordsworth's in the *Lyrical Ballads*, published the same year as Baillie's first group of dramas. Her concern with her protagonists' domestic, or "closeted," experiences and her practice of publishing plays prior to their production established the pattern for much of Romantic verse drama. With the exception of critic Jeffrey (until his 1811 review), the major Romantic writers praised Baillie as an innovative and moving poet, and in the first half of the 19th century, a stream of artists honored her achievement with visits to her residence in Hampstead Heath. From the time of their first meeting in 1806, Scott was Baillie's most ardent reader and friend.

Baillie was born a premature twin (the sibling died) in Bothwell, Scotland. Athlet-

ics consumed her energies as a young girl until she was sent to a Glasgow boarding school in 1772, where she excelled in mathematics, acting, and music. Six years later, her minister father died, leaving his wife and three children dependent for survival on the generosity of male relations. The famous anatomist William Hunter (Baillie's maternal uncle) provided for the family; at his death in 1783 he left Baillie's brother, Matthew, a physician, money, the use of his London house, the school of anatomy he founded, and a museum. This is how Baillie became an urban resident, living in London or its outskirts until her death in 1851, with brief excursions to Edinburgh, Wales, and Switzerland. Throughout her life she shared a home with her mother (who died in 1806) and her sister (who lived to be 100).

Although in the prefaces to her plays she follows the convention of apologizing for her limited education and lack of literary sophistication, Baillie had in fact a serious commitment to scholarship and creative writing. Her unmarried status, her supportive family, and the intellectual climate of her Hampstead home suggest a dedication to literary criticism and dramatic writing that resulted in Baillie's steady



outpouring of publishable work for 50 years.

In 1790, Baillie published a volume of poems, *Fugitive Verses*, and her first play, *Arnold*, which does not survive. In 1798, she published the first volume of the plays on the passions with a lengthy introductory essay explaining her dramatic concerns. In this essay, Baillie proposes to have written dramas that chart the emotional and physical manifestations of such "passions" as love, hate, anger, and envy. She claims to be less interested in the public behavior of men and women—on battlefields, in the street, in political forums—than in those moments of intense feeling visible only to one intimate with a hero's or heroine's domestic life. Because of her concentration on character psychology and her blank verse format, Baillie was often compared to Shakespeare by contemporary reviewers.

Baillie's second and third collections of plays on the passions appeared in 1802 and 1812, with a volume called *Miscellaneous Plays* published in 1804. The drama, *The Family Legend*, with a prologue and epilogue by Scott and Henry Mackenzie, was published in 1810 and, through Scott's influence, performed at the Edinburgh Theatre.

In 1821, Baillie published a book celebrating in rhymed couplets the lives of famous persons in whom she had an abiding interest, among them William Wallace and Lady Griselda Baillie (*Metrical Legends of Exalted Characters*). Two years later, she edited a volume of poems whose contributors are testimony to her literary reputation. Besides Scott's political drama, *Mac Duff's Cross*, the volume contains sonnets by Wordsworth and poems by Campbell, Hemans, Catherine Fanshawe, and Barbauld and Southey's *The Cataract of Lodore*. The impressive list of subscribers to

the volume (included in the text) also attests to Baillie's literary popularity.

Two plays, *The Martyr* and *The Bride*, appeared in 1826, and 10 years later Baillie had enough new material to issue three more volumes of drama. Numerous Scottish songs and a religious essay, "A View of the General Tenor of the New Testament Regarding the Nature and Dignity of Jesus Christ," comprise her complete works, which were collected and published shortly before her death.

During Baillie's lifetime, at least five of her plays were produced, some of them several times at different theaters: *De Montfort*; *Constantine Paleologus* (performed as the melodrama *Constantine and Valeria* at the Surrey Theatre); *The Family Legend*; *The Separation*; and *Henriquez*. And while initially meeting with an indifferent reception for the most part, Baillie's plays were rewarded with first-rate productions at theaters such as Drury Lane and Covent Garden and acted by the greatest actors of the period, Sarah Siddons, John Philip Kemble, and Edmund Kean. At the instigation of the Chief Justice of Ceylon, both *The Bride* and *The Martyr* were translated into Cingalese.

Baillie's writing, especially her theory of theater, influenced Romantic critics, playwrights, and other writers, such as Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Maria Edgeworth. (See also *Mental Theater*, *Theater*.)

Catherine Burroughs

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Ballad

The ballad is a narrative or dramatic poem composed in quatrains and often accompanied by music. The most common ballad stanza contains unrhymed iambic tetrameter in lines one and three and rhymed iambic trimeter in lines two and four, but the pattern is highly variable. The ballad emphasizes action over setting and characterization, and concentrates on the climactic moments of an event, often of a sensational or emotionally potent nature, rather than on the gradual development of plot. Despite its frequent sensationalism, the ballad usually creates an impression of terse, almost incantatory impersonality. Its capacity to deal, in unadorned simplicity, with the most powerful moments of human life, both real and wondrously imaginary, strongly appealed to the Romantic poets, who imitated the form in many of their most important works.

The ballad originated in preliterate cultures as oral folk poetry. This origin helps to explain some of the form's characteristics, particularly its prosodic regularity and its use of repetitive lines and phrases, devices that evolved, in part, to assist the memory of the ballad's oral performer. The existence of multiple versions of most folk ballads is another result of their oral, and thus communal, composition; a single individual must have been responsible for the introduction of a particular story into ballad lore, but without the authority of print to fix the form of the tale, it inevitably altered with each creative retelling, until particular performances were finally collected and published, sometimes with additional "improvements," by amateur antiquaries or professional folklorists. Even a

cursory examination of Francis James Child's standard British ballad collection, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, amply suggests how diversely the same ballad tale could be rendered. The ballad referred to in the opening lines of Coleridge's *Dejection: An Ode*, *Sir Patrick Spens*, for example, is given in 18 full or fragmentary variants.

Folk ballads were sometimes inspired by events of great historical importance and sometimes by the Christian and chivalric traditions. More often, however, they reflected the primitive superstitions, regional legendry, and dramatic local events (e.g., murders, family betrayals, and sexual infidelities) that shaped so much of the imaginative life of the common people. Thus a continuing tradition of folk-ballad performance, supplemented by the popularity of the printed broadside ballad, maintained a literary repository of wonder and passion, from the tender to the tempestuous, in a world given over more and more, publicly at least, to empirical reason. If anything, the broadside ballad, originating in the 16th century and flourishing well into the 19th, intensified the nonrational element in the ballad's popular appeal. Sometimes based on traditional communal ballad material but often composed by single authors to fit the tastes of the purchasing public, these ballads were frequently as topical as modern newspaper stories and as sensational as contemporary scandal sheets, with elements of the supernatural frequently included.

In addition to the living traditions of folk-ballad recitation and broadside-ballad publication, antiquarians and collectors published anthologies containing ballads and other folk poetry. These encouraged the fascination with the ballad form, present to some extent during the 17th century and increasingly evident during the 18th. Samuel Pepys, adding to the collection of

John Selden, gathered approximately 1,800 broadside ballads, now among the holdings of Cambridge University, and a series of collectors beginning with Robert Harley accumulated the 1,300 or so broadside ballads of the British Museum's Roxburghe Collection. *A Collection of Old Ballads* (1723–25) and Allan Ramsay's *The Tea-Table Miscellany* (1723–37) and *The Ever Green* (1724) contain important ballad materials and reflect the taste for the ballad's simplicity and purity of expression enunciated by Joseph Addison in 1711 in "The 'Chevy Chase' Papers."

Interest in the ballad intensified during the 18th century's final decades and continued unabated into the first decades of the 19th. David Herd's *The Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs and Ballads* appeared in 1769, with a second edition in 1776, and other products of Herd's collecting efforts circulated in manuscript. James Johnson's *The Scots Musical Museum*, completed with extensive editorial assistance from Burns, was published in six volumes from 1787 to 1803. Joseph Ritson produced several volumes in the century's last decade, which helped to introduce greater scholarly rigor into ballad collecting and publishing. Toward century's end, too, Mrs. Brown of Falkland worked with several collectors, including William Tytler, Alexander Fraser Tytler, and Robert Jamieson, to preserve both the words and the music of the many ballads she had mastered. Finally, during the Romantic period north-country collections were published: Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–03), Jamieson's *Popular Ballads and Songs from Tradition* (1806), and George R. Kinloch's *Ancient Scottish Ballads* (1827).

Initiating this period of intense interest in the ballad and certainly the single most important event in the ballad revival was the appearance in 1765 of Percy's *Reliques*

of *Ancient English Poetry: Consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, and Other Pieces of our Earlier Poets (Chiefly of the Lyric Kind), Together with Some Few of a Later Date*. Despite the somewhat miscellaneous nature of his collection, a characteristic of a number of the anthologies, and despite his frequent lack of scholarly fidelity to his sources, Percy captured the imagination of the reading public as no previous compiler of balladshad, and much of the later influence of the ballad is attributable, directly or indirectly, to the *Reliques*. In addition to encouraging the ongoing collecting and publishing efforts, the *Reliques* draw Continental, particularly German, attention to the ballad, with certain odd consequences for British literature.

Inspired at least in part by Percy, the *Sturm und Drang* theorist Johann Gottfried von Herder called for a renewal and purification of the German folk tradition, one outcome of which was the writing of several ballads by Gottfried August Bürger. The most important of these, *Lenore*, appeared in the *Göttinger Musenalmanach* for 1774 and was an immediate success. It told the story of a young woman who curses God when her lover fails to return from the wars and who is then carried off to her grave in punishment by the lover's risen corpse. The ballad is a lengthened and intensified offshoot of the supernatural folk ballad, more specifically the revenant ballad, which had long existed both in Britain and on the Continent. The fact that it was a contemporary poem rather than collected from folk sources contributed to the development of the art and Gothic ballad.

The earliest known English translation of *Lenore* was completed by William Taylor of Norwich by 1790 but was circulated only in manuscript for the next several years. Among the first to see it—and certainly the first to be influenced by it—was

John Aikin, later the editor of the *Monthly Magazine*, whose poem *Arthur and Matilda* is loosely based on the Taylor translation. Aikin's sister and Taylor's former teacher, Anna Barbauld, was also shown Taylor's translation at an early date, and an often repeated story concerns her spirited reading of the poem before a group of Edinburgh intellectuals at the home of Dugald Stewart during the summer of 1794. After hearing one of Stewart's guests quote two particularly striking lines of the translation, Scott, who had recently begun studying German, obtained a copy of Bürger's works and undertook his own translation. That poem, along with his translation of another of Bürger's horror ballads, *Der Wilde Jäger*, became his first publication when it appeared in the fall of 1796.

The success of *Lenore* inspired many young British writers, particularly Southey, Lewis, and Scott. In emulation of Bürger, Southey produced several horror ballads between 1796 and the turn of the century, including *Mary, the Maid of the Inn*, *Donica, Rudiger*, *Lord William*, *Jaspar*, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, *Bishop Bruno*, *The Pious Painter*, *Cornelius Agrippa*, *The Old Woman of Berkeley*, and *God's Judgment on a Wicked Bishop*. Eight of Southey's ballads appear in Lewis's anthology of Gothic poetry, *Tales of Wonder* (1801), as do approximately a score of Lewis's own, among them *Alonzo the Brave* and a series of elementary spirit ballads translated from or written in imitation of Continental originals. The last poems, including *The Erl-King*, *The Erl-King's Daughter*, *The Water-King*, and *The Cloud-King*, are an early manifestation of that invasion of lamias, vampires, and other bogies which so strongly influenced the literature of the next several decades. Another elementary spirit ballad, *The Fire-King*, was written by Scott at Lewis's request. In addition, *Tales of Wonder* contains Scott's *Glenfinlas*, *The*

Eve of St. John, *Frederick and Alice*, and *The Wild Huntsman*, making him the third most represented of the collection's many contributors.

An artistically more important manifestation than *Tales of Wonder* is Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. It was originally intended, not coincidentally, for publication in Aikin's *Monthly Magazine*, where Taylor's translation of *Lenore* first appeared. Its appearance instead in Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* achieved one of the important purposes of that epoch-making volume: to explore the poetic power of the supernatural. That power, obvious to both poets not only from immediately contemporary ballads but perhaps even more importantly from many of the poems of Percy's *Reliques*, was one of the reasons for the two poets' attraction to the ballad form. Finally, the ballad's unadorned artlessness, so unlike the artificiality and linguistic contrivance of much of 18th-century verse, provided a model for renovating poetic style and affirmed Wordsworth's theories about poetic diction.

During the Romantic period, then, the ballad supplied forms and subjects for imitation and lessons in plain style. The ballad form could be expanded into the almost epic power of *The Ancient Mariner* and, more faithfully imitated, could produce quieter masterworks like Scott's *Proud Maisie* and Keats's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. Indirectly, its strains of superstition and wonder, even when the ballad form was not used, contributed much to that sense of the marvelous pervading such poems as Coleridge's *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan* and Keats's *Lamia* and *The Eve of St. Agnes*. On the other hand, its fascination with the passion and agony of mundane human existence encouraged such works as Wordsworth's *The Thorn*, *Ruth*, and *The Ruined Cottage*. Finally, its simplicity registered a shift in literary sen-

sibility from an admiration of elaborate artifice to a quest for the natural. (*See also* Poetry.)

Robert O'Connor

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Ballantyne, James

(1772–1833)

James Ballantyne was one of Scott's closest friends and the printer of nearly all of his voluminous works. The finances of his Ballantyne Press were tied up with Scott's own resources and the connection contributed to Scott's bankruptcy in 1826. The degree to which Ballantyne was to blame has long been debated.

Ballantyne and Scott became friends in 1783, when both were children at the Kelso

grammar school. According to an often repeated anecdote, Scott would finish his lessons and whisper, "Come, slink over beside me, Jamie, and I'll tell you a story." Ballantyne's delight in his friend's tales lasted throughout his life. In young adulthood, the two drifted apart. Ballantyne studied law and set up practice in Edinburgh, with little success. He moved back to his hometown of Kelso in 1795. Never fully committed to a career in law, Ballantyne soon drifted into other jobs on the side, including selling insurance. In 1796, he became editor of a weekly newspaper, *The Kelso Mail*, the political stance of which was conservative and antidemocratic. In the course of his work with the paper, he became expert in printing techniques.

In 1799, Scott visited Kelso, and the old friends met again. Scott casually mentioned that Ballantyne ought to seek out printing work from publishers during the periods between issues of the newspaper. Proud of his abilities and anxious to show them off to his friend, Ballantyne printed a dozen copies of some short ballads of Scott's under the title *An Apology for Tales of Terror*. Delighted with the quality of the printing, Scott engaged Ballantyne in 1802 to print what was to be an epochal work, his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. From then on, the relationship of author and printer was never interrupted, and Ballantyne soon moved to Edinburgh and set up a greatly expanded printing office.

This relationship became more complicated when Scott became a partner in the Ballantyne business (which by 1805 included Ballantyne's brother John). Scott's motives in the partnership remain unclear. Although helping out his childhood friend and having more control over the printing of his own work were likely motives, Scott was a silent partner who used his enor-



mous literary prestige to drum up business for the Ballantyne Press, without letting it be known that it was his business also.

The amount of business—and the amount of profit—was huge; in fact, the Waverley novels alone could easily have made a printer's fortune. But Ballantyne was not a careful businessman; his brother John was even less so; and Scott himself was so wrapped up in purchasing land and glamorously outfitting his estate of Abbotsford that he frequently used the firm as a sort of bank, acquiring cash by taking out notes against the printing business. Constable, Scott's publisher, was likewise consumed by debt, some of it owing to, some of it owing from, Ballantyne and Company. The irresponsibility could not go on forever, and, as part of the general financial crises of the period, Constable's bankruptcy in 1826 brought down Scott and Ballantyne too. (Publishing houses across Britain were also failing.)

When Lockhart, Scott's son-in-law, published his extensive biography of Scott in 1837–38, he placed most of the blame for the ruin on Ballantyne. Ballantyne's son and the trustees of his estate printed a pamphlet defending the printer; Lockhart responded with his own pamphlet, and the Ballantynes issued an angry reply. This conflict was fought out in public in 1838 to 1839, five years after Scott and Ballantyne, who had remained friends until the end, were dead.

Ballantyne's importance to Scott went beyond friendship; he often criticized early drafts of Scott's novels. Many of his suggestions were adopted; even Lockhart credits Ballantyne for fine descriptive touches in some of Scott's novels. Ballantyne was among the few from whom Scott would take such criticism, which in itself is one measure of their closeness. His dubious bookkeeping skills no doubt contributed

to his financial ruin and to that of his friend, but his intelligence, fervor, and pride in the work that came from his press make him one of 19th-century Edinburgh's most interesting and likeable figures. (See also Publishing.)

Raymond N. Mackenzie

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Barbauld, Anna Laetitia

(1743–1825)

Anna Barbauld, unlike many of her contemporary female poets, has never been entirely forgotten. Her lasting reputation is partly due to her famous and talented acquaintances. They included Priestley (a frequent subject of her verse), Wordsworth, Coleridge (who directed his publisher to send Barbauld a prepublication copy of the just-printed *Lyrical Ballads*), and Scott, as well as her brother John Aikin (with whom she wrote in 1792 to 1795 the six volumes of *Evenings at Home* for children) and such important literary women as Hannah More, Joanna Baillie, and Elizabeth Montagu. Partly, her lasting fame is the result of her work as an editor: she published a six-volume *Correspondence of Samuel Richardson* (1804) and a 50-volume *Edition, with Essay and Lives, of the British Novelists* (1810), among others. Finally, she has been remembered for her most famous book, *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781), which may have been either a target of

satire or an object of admiring emulation of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. The great popularity of these hymns, the hybrid form of which is particularly interesting in light of the subsequent popularity of similar experiments in prose poetry, led the book to be translated into French, German, and Italian.

Her education was unusual for a girl of the time. Her father, the Nonconformist minister John Aikin, taught her English literature, French, Italian, and, then, with reported reluctance, Latin and Greek. She became an outstanding educator in her turn. She married a Dissenting minister named Rochemont Barbauld in 1774, and together they established a boys' school in Palgrave, Suffolk, which they ran successfully for 11 years. Though she edited a selection of English literature specifically for girls—*The Female Speaker* (1811)—she held that girls should be educated with a view to their becoming wives and mothers. This conservative view of education is not characteristic of her overall politics: she wrote in support of the principles of the French Revolution in such works as *Civic Sermons to the People* (1792) and *Sins of the Government, Sins of the Nation* (1793), and, again, promoting the abolition of slavery in *Epistle to William Wilberforce* (1791). Her belief in activism is apparent in her poem *The First Fire*, in which she varied the form of the greater Romantic lyric by using the ending of the poem to call the reader to direct social action. Her most controversial political work was a desponding prediction of the collapse of British civilization. This poem, published as a pamphlet and titled *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*, was so harshly criticized that Barbauld published nothing more during her lifetime. Her niece, the poet Lucy Aikin, edited her *Works* in two volumes in 1825, the year of Barbauld's

death, adding a posthumous third volume in the following year.

John Anderson

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Beaumont, Sir George Howland (1753–1827)

Sir George Howland Beaumont is best known for founding the National Gallery of Art and for his generous patronage of poets and artists. He was born in 1753 at Great Dunmow, Essex, into a family that belonged to one of the oldest branches of the British nobility. Following the death of his father in 1762, he became Viscount Beaumont. At age 11, Sir George entered Eton, where he was apparently happy despite the harsh conditions that existed in public schools. Inclined to corpulence as a child, he became a swimmer, spending hours in the water in the belief that it would reduce his weight. Though the classical curriculum of Eton had changed little since the time of Henry VIII, Beaumont was expected to learn Shakespeare and Milton as well as Addison and Pope—all writers for whom he developed a lasting enthusiasm. His taste for art was aroused by his tutor, Alexander Cozens, a gifted drawing teacher who was famous for his studies of clouds. At Oxford, Beaumont continued to pursue his interest in painting, taking les-

sons to perfect his talents. After leaving the university, he married Margaret Willes, an aristocratic young woman who shared his love of literature and art. He took his bride on a honeymoon tour of the Lake District largely because of the Cumberland's reputation as "painter's country." From 1784 to 1787 he and his wife journeyed across Europe, visiting the galleries of Paris and Rome to view the works of his idols, Claude and Raphael.

In time, Beaumont became a respectable amateur landscape painter, but following the expectations of those of his class he decided to enter politics and bought a seat in parliament after his return to England. Neither his temperament nor his talent prepared him for the role of statesman, however, and his Tory prejudices were out of step with the reform tendencies of the time. Therefore, he left political life for good in 1798 and returned to the old family manor at Coleorton Hall, which he had refinished and landscaped by George Dance, a fashionable architect. He spent the next 10 years involved in rebuilding this country house, which would contain his growing collection of works by some of Europe's Old Masters as well as pictures by himself and contemporary artists like Gilpin, Hearne, Girtin, and Wilson. Although his own artistic taste first tended toward the Neoclassic—he knew Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds personally—it is his enthusiasm for the work of Romantic poets and painters for which he is recognized. Though Beaumont was not as progressive in his thinking about art as about literature, he encouraged the young John Constable and Wilkie; even the petulant Haydon was for a time a protégé until quarreling with Beaumont over the gigantic scale of Haydon's pictures.

Among the poets who enjoyed the patronage of Beaumont were Coleridge and Wordsworth. Both were ardent republicans at the time they received the support and friendship of this wealthy Tory who abhorred their revolutionary politics but admired their nature poetry and recognized the genius of both. Beaumont provided Coleridge a house in Keswick so he could profit from close contact with Wordsworth. During this time a warm friendship developed between Lady Beaumont and Dorothy Wordsworth that is revealed in their correspondence. Moreover, it was one of Sir George's paintings, "Peele Castle in a Storm," a typically Gothic painting of a ruined tower on a crag against a dark sky with a small boat in a heavy sea in the distance, that inspired one of Wordsworth's finest poems, *Elegiac Stanzas*. All the details were chosen to arouse the sense of the sublime through a fearful scene. Its subject had a personal meaning to Wordsworth, who had lost his brother John in a shipwreck off the coast of Weymouth in 1805.

The crowning achievement of Beaumont's life, however, was the founding of the National Gallery in 1826, which would house his own fine art collection and any future collections acquired by the nation. He died in 1827, having been a generous patron during his lifetime to poets and painters, and through his charitable behest, he provided a gift to lovers of the arts for posterity.

Hallman B. Bryant

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Beckford, William

(1760–1844)

Now best known as the author of the Oriental tale *Vathek*, in his lifetime, William Beckford was notorious in England for reasons unconnected to literary achievement. Beckford's father was a successful businessman and twice Lord Mayor of London; his mother was of noble descent. Raised in such a prominent family, Beckford was intended, by his overindulgent yet autocratic parents, to become influential in British politics and empire building. Despite the best private education money could buy—at various times the eight-year-old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was Beckford's piano teacher and Sir William Chambers, architect to the King, his drawing and architecture instructor—he was destined to disappoint his family.

Beckford spent much of his life repudiating the mores and sensibilities of the privileged class into which he had been born, often doing so with an ostentation that was publicly offensive. From his youth, he indulged a deep fascination with Oriental (i.e., Middle Eastern) culture and literature, perhaps as much for the imaginative release and escape from an overwhelming maternal presence as for intrinsic aesthetic attractions. The result of this lifelong interest was his popular short novel *Vathek*. Beckford's considerable (and, later in his life, much reduced) wealth enabled him to travel extensively, which led to further literary publication in *Italy; with Sketches of Spain and Portugal* (1834) and *Recollections of an Excursion to the Monasteries of Alcobaça and Batalha* (1835). Well-known as a collector of fine art, he built one of the most famous private houses in England, the neo-Gothic mansion Fonthill Abbey, where he could display his collection. Designed by the prominent architect James Wyatt and un-

finished after 26 years of sporadic construction, Fonthill Abbey was popularized by some of the most respected literary and visual artists of the period. They were attracted by the mansion's great central tower, which repeatedly collapsed; the elaborately landscaped grounds (designed by Beckford); and the luxurious but often artificial appointments.

Behind this deserved recognition, however, lies Beckford's scandalous notoriety as a pederast. His bisexuality was recognized by Beckford's family when he was age 19, shortly after his encounter with the 11-year-old William ("Kitty") Courtenay (later ninth Earl of Devon), with whom Beckford remained fascinated, even obsessed, for years. To divert public attention, Beckford was married to Lady Margaret Gordon in 1783; they had two daughters before her death three years later. But only a year after the marriage, Beckford was publicly accused of sodomy by Courtenay's uncle, Baron Loughborough, a Chief Justice and long-time political nemesis of the Beckfords. Formal charges were never brought, and much of the evidence suggests that Loughborough maliciously fabricated the episode, but the infamy attached to Beckford as a result, rendered him virtually *persona non grata* in the circles of Britain's elite for the rest of his life.

This notoriety, however, cannot eclipse Beckford's contribution to English literature. In addition to the works already mentioned, Beckford authored obscure works, the most important of which are a satire on contemporary artistic practice (*Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters* [1790]), two satires on novel writing (*Modern Novel Writing* [1796] and *Azemias* [1797]), and the early travel book *Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents*, published in 1783 but withheld from distribution, perhaps because of a subjectivity and sentimental-

ity that Beckford's family found inappropriate. Of greatest consequence is *Vathek* (and three associated tales, unpublished by Beckford, collectively known as *The Episodes of Vathek*). Begun in 1782, *Vathek* was composed in French; Beckford shortly thereafter commissioned his friend Samuel Henley to translate the work into English and add explanatory notes. Impatient with Beckford's delays, Henley published an unauthorized and anonymous translation in 1786; outraged, Beckford rushed a French edition into print in 1787, following it with a more polished revision the next year.

The fantastic tale of a sybaritic Oriental potentate who pursues a Faustian pact with the devil, *Vathek* is the culmination of an Oriental tradition in English letters that goes back through Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759) to the translation into English of *The Thousand and One Nights* (1707–12). Beckford's work crowns this tradition because it rises above the imitative didacticism of most Neoclassical "Oriental" tales to capture a sense of wonder and of the exotic that approach more nearly than any of its predecessors a recognizably Oriental atmosphere. *Vathek* offers a world of demons and angels, grotesque characters, beautiful maidens, and outrageous evil and powerful magic. Renouncing Mohammed in favor of the satanic Eblis, Vathek, encouraged by his wicked mother, commits sundry crimes and atrocities on his journey to the Hall of Eblis. He there expects to acquire wisdom and the treasure of the pre-Adamite sultans but finds instead that he and his beloved Nouronihar are condemned to eternal despair.

Like its author, *Vathek* bridges two literary periods. In its moralistic ending, the work constitutes a fairly conventional warning against hubris, and this, along with

Beckford's concrete sense of imagery, aligns the work with Neoclassical sensibilities. But *Vathek* also influenced the Romantic writers. Vathek himself is both a murderous tyrant and a buffoon; the resulting tension produces a moral ambiguity that, in conjunction with the work's self-conscious irony and powerful emotionalism, foreshadows such writers as Byron (an avowed admirer of *Vathek*). While not achieving the Promethean heights of Romantic introspection (which some of Beckford's other works approached), the novel does trace an individual's quest to fulfill an unquenchable desire against a background of shifting moral landmarks. Perhaps these proto-modern elements, as much as any historical value, account for the continued life of this curious and fascinating work. (See also Gothicism, Novel, Satire.)

Jack G. Voller

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Beddoes, Thomas Lovell
(1803–49)

Thomas Lovell Beddoes was one of the most gifted poets active in the two decades between Shelley's death and the rise of Tennyson as a major poet. Born into a family with serious intellectual, scientific, and literary preoccupations, he took a precocious interest in literature as a student at Charterhouse School, reading widely in Elizabethan literature and writing *Scaroni*, or *The Mysterious Cave*, a short Gothic romance.

After distinguishing himself at Charterhouse, Beddoes left to attend Oxford in 1820. At Oxford, Beddoes continued to immerse himself in Elizabethan poetry and drama, and in 1821, at age 18, he published a volume of poetry entitled *The Improvisatore*. This volume contains, along with several experimental short poems, three Gothic stories in verse dealing with madness, demon lovers, horrid death, and ghostly murderers. Despite the extravagant and conventional Gothicism of this work, it shows the youthful Beddoes already in command of a facile and occasionally striking power of poetic expression.

In the following year, 1822, Beddoes published a work of much greater significance, his pseudo-Jacobean drama, *The Brides' Tragedy*. Writing out of his deep study of Webster, Tourneur, and Beaumont and Fletcher, Beddoes produced, if not a great theatrical play, at least a poetic drama of considerable interest. The plot of *The Brides' Tragedy* revolves around the love, murder, emotional conflict, and revenge typical of revenge tragedy, but Beddoes' dramatic blank verse and the psychological insight of his best scenes represent a significant advance over *The Improvisatore*. Moreover, in the lyrics of *The Brides' Tragedy*, Beddoes achieves some of the concentration,

prosodic brilliance, and metaphoric originality that later characterize the great lyrics in his masterpiece, *Death's Jest-Book*. *The Brides' Tragedy* was a critical success, gaining favorable reviews from Darley, Wilson, and B.W. Procter ("Barry Cornwall").

Between 1822 and 1825, Beddoes became friends with Thomas F. Kelsall, who would later be his devoted literary executor; made several literary acquaintances in London, including Mary Shelley; and continued to devote himself to poetic composition. From this period his most important poems are *Lines Written in a Blank leaf of the Prometheus Bound*, a splendid tribute to Shelley; *Pygmalion*, a Keatsian narrative poem concerning artistic creation; and a fragmentary but haunting poem, *Lines Written at Geneva*. Also during this period Beddoes's fascination with Elizabethan drama continued, and he attempted to write at least four more plays in Renaissance style: *The Last Man* (1823), *Love's Arrow Poisoned* (1823), *The Second Brother* (1824), and *Torriamond* (1824). Although only fragments, they are at their best powerful. The extraordinary single act of *Torriamond* looks forward to *Death's Jest-Book* and contains one of Beddoes's finest lyrics, "How Many Times Do I Love Thee, Dear."

In 1825, Beddoes left England to study medicine at Göttingen. This began a wandering career during which he studied medicine at Würzburg, became involved in radical German politics, was deported for his political activities, escaped to Strasbourg, and settled in Switzerland, returning only infrequently to England. He committed suicide at age 45 in 1849.

Although Beddoes published nothing of literary importance between 1825 and 1849, he was throughout these years working on his one great work, *Death's Jest-Book*, which was finally published by Kelsall in 1850. This remarkable play is a sprawling, 4,000-

line extravaganza in which Beddoes's knowledge of Jacobean tragedy, his intense preoccupation with death, his lyric genius, his verbal virtuosity, and his apocalyptic but crepuscular Romanticism all find intense expression. In dramatic structure and plot, Beddoes's work is hopelessly flawed, while his characters, with the notable exception of Isbrand (villain, jester, and revenger), are totally unconvincing. The blank verse, the dramatic prose, and, especially, the lyrics of the play, however, attain a metaphoric power and a sheer verbal vitality that raise this strange work to greatness.

It is finally the lyrics of *Death's Jest-Book* that are Beddoes's best work. These lyrics display a delicacy of form, a voluptuous horror, an imagistic compactness and suggestiveness, and, occasionally, a grotesque comic power that are absolutely unique. Among the best of the individual lyrics are the ghostly "Sibylla's Dirge"; the subtle "The Swallow Leaves Her Nest" (which deals with Beddoes's favorite theme of the intrusion of the dead upon the living); "If Thou Wilt Ease Thine Heart" (a delicate lyric of sadness and regret); and "A Cypress Bough and a Rose-Wreath Sweet" (which combines deathly horror and sensuous expectation in Beddoes's best manner). Among Beddoes's lyrics in the grotesque and comic style, Isbrand's songs, including "The Oviparous Tailor," are important, especially by demonstrating that Beddoes's essentially lyric gift can contribute to dramatic effect. Despite his narrow range and macabre obsessions, Beddoes is an important Romantic poet. Few figures between 1820 and 1840 so clearly suggest the fortunes and the adversities of the late Romantic imagination.

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Bell, Andrew (1753–1832)

A Scottish cleric and educator, Andrew Bell devised the Madras system of mutual instruction among students. In 1811, he helped to form the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church and served as its first superintendent.

Bell was born in St. Andrews into a family of modest means but some education. Sent to school at age 4, he apparently suffered under the discipline of a rigid master. Later, having studied mathematics and natural philosophy at St. Andrews University, he traveled to the United States, where he tutored the children of a Virginia planter. Through private trading in tobacco, he also began to acquire wealth.

After returning to England in 1781, Bell was ordained in the Anglican church. His first church assignment was in Leith, but in 1787 he went to India and soon acquired several simultaneous appointments to army chaplainships. Since these positions paid well but carried with them few responsibilities, he was able also to become superintendent of the Madras Male Orphan Asylum. This institution had been estab-

lished by the East India Company to provide education for the sons of military men, but its poorly paid teachers displayed little dedication, and most students made slow progress. Faced with such problems, Bell assigned an able student the task of teaching the alphabet to other boys. This 8-year-old tutor assisted his fellow students in drawing letters in the sand. From this simple beginning, Bell's scheme of mutual instruction soon expanded to include most other subjects. Also, Bell disapproved of corporal punishments and stressed the need to teach reading and writing together. His plan for such simultaneous instruction was later termed ILTO, a name composed of what were thought the simplest letters of the alphabet and thus intended to sum up the idea that instruction should always proceed from basic to more complex matters.

In 1796, poor health motivated Bell to return to England. The following year he published an account of his work in India entitled *An Experiment in Education Made at the Male Asylum of Madras; Suggesting a System by Which a School or Family May Teach Itself under the Superintendence of the Master or Parent*. Bell's innovations received relatively little attention until 1803 when Lancaster, a Quaker teacher in Southwark, published a description of his own successful use of student tutors. At first Bell commended Lancaster for his original contributions to the system of mutual instruction, but soon the two became embroiled in a religious controversy. Supporters of the Church of England were suspicious of Lancaster and sided with Bell. On the other hand, many who wished to make education nonsectarian backed Lancaster. In a popular caricature of the day, the two combatants were labeled "Bel and the Dragon."

Stimulated by this controversy over whether the established church should control education, Bell worked to organize

schools throughout England under the general supervision of parish clergy. When efforts to pass a national education bill failed, Bell was instrumental in forming the private Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor. Bell was encouraged by many prominent literary figures, including Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey (who, along with his son Charles, wrote a detailed account of Bell's life). In 1816, Bell traveled on the Continent to promote his views on education, but his impact abroad was minimal.

In his later years, Bell received numerous church appointments. He became master of Sherburn Hospital in Durham (1809), canon of Hereford Cathedral (1818), and prebend of Westminster (1819). He continued to write extensively on education, but these later works added little to his ideas stated originally in *Experiment*. Bell hoped that his friends Southey and Wordsworth would collect and edit his works, but they did not. On his death in 1832 Bell left large bequests to St. Andrews University and several other institutions for use in promoting his educational theories. (See also Education.)

Albert E. Wilhelm

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Bennett, Agnes Maria

(1750?–1808)

The novelist Agnes Maria Bennett was one of the more colorful literary figures of



the Romantic period. Though immensely popular in her own day, she is now one of the most obscure of her time. During the 20-year span of her literary career, she produced eight known novels, including *Anna, or the Memoirs of a Welch Heiress, Interspersed with Anecdotes of a Nabob* (1785), *Juvenile Indiscretions* (1786), *Agnes de Courci, A Domestic Tale* (1789), *Ellen, Countess of Castel Howel* (1794), *The Beggar Girl and her Benefactors* (1797), *De Valcourt* (1800), *Vicissitudes Abroad, or The Ghost of My Father* (1806), and *Faith and Fiction, or Shining Lights in a Dark Generation* (published posthumously in 1816). These works are now available only in the collections of major libraries.

Little is known of Bennett's early life. Her name is listed by the Minerva Press as "Anna," but other contemporary sources and the Library of Congress call her "Agnes." She was probably born in 1750 in Merthyr Thydfil, Glamorganshire, and she grew up in Bristol. Her father, David Evans, was a Custom House officer. Married young and widowed by the early 1780s, she supported her young family by working as a slop-seller, in a chandlery, as a workhouse superintendent, and, later, as housekeeper to Admiral Sir Thomas Pye at his Tooting, Surrey, estate. After he died in 1785, Bennett inherited his townhouse on Suffolk Street and her son Thomas Pye Bennett, married Pye's daughter, Mary, in 1787.

Bennett began writing, while supplementing her literary income by training her daughter, Harriet Esten, for the stage, and managing her career. But in 1793, a legal struggle with John Jackson and Stephen Kemble over the managership of the Edinburgh Theatre Royal ended their stage careers. Bennett's claim was supported by the Duke of Hamilton, who held the patent, but her case was weakened by a suit brought by James Esten against the

Duke for "criminal intercourse" with his wife. Bennett and Harriet fled to London. Bennett's huge financial investment in the theater was not recovered by Kemble's settlement of a 200-pound annuity, and not until Hamilton died in 1799, leaving his personal property and pictures to Harriet in trust for her daughter by him, did their financial difficulties end. In the interim, Bennett returned to writing. *Ellen* appeared in 1794, with a preface describing its author's poor health and spirits resulting from the Kemble affair.

Bennett's later novels maintained her popularity, and her literary celebrity continued unabated until her death at Brighton in 1808. The arrival of her funeral procession at The Horns, Kennington Common, London, was met by a large crowd of friend, relatives, and admirers of her fiction.

During her life, Bennett was one of the most popular writers associated with William Lane's Minerva Press, and in addition to enormous sales, her works were widely distributed through its circulating library. However, the Press was far from being perceived as a fountainhead of great literature, a fact to which Bennett makes ironic reference in several of her novels. Although such critics as Coleridge praised her, she wrote her books to please the public taste, and she wrote at length to increase their price. Moreover, her style is marred by occasional slips in grammar and in her use of French and by inconsistencies in the naming of characters.

On the other hand, she had read Swift and Rabelais with evident enjoyment, and her novels are highly comic. Her style is loose and paratactically linked, giving her prose fluidity and a fast pace. She uses traditional plot motifs (Cinderella in *Anna* and *The Beggar Girl*; Patient Griselda in *Ellen*) and engages in such 18th-century artifices as mistaken identities, genteel

foundlings, and type names. In this sense, her works are reminiscent of Fielding, to whom her obituarist compared her. But the ironic tone of her narration and her epigrammatic dismissal of evil or foolish characters prefigure Austen, while her democratic sentiments and mingling of moneyed and impoverished, rural and urban characters provide antecedents for the early Dickens. Though neither outstandingly powerful nor strikingly original, her work remains highly readable. Her novels may be valued as a bridge between the comic romance of the 18th century and the novel of manners and social novel of the 19th.

Miranda J. Burgess

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Bentham, Jeremy (1748–1832)

An odd man with numerous personal quirks, Jeremy Bentham nonetheless influenced his age and after. He ranked

among the two dozen men whom Hazlitt selected to represent the spirit of the age, and John Stuart Mill named Bentham and Coleridge the "two great seminal minds of England." Certainly Bentham's philosophy of utilitarianism was a touchstone for Romanticism and a wellspring for Victorianism.

Born in 1748 to a family whose prosperity had been achieved in trade, Bentham spent a solitary, sober, and studious childhood in London, under the tutelage of his father, who was determined to shape the child into a miniature adult. Jeremiah Bentham sought to dictate every aspect of his son's education and development in his determination to groom his son to be not only a pillar of successful Anglican and establishment authority but also Lord Chancellor. The elder Bentham sent his firstborn son, at age 12, to Oxford, where he earned his M.A. three years later, succeeded by training at the bar.

While outwardly conforming and industriously applying himself, young Bentham was tacitly and secretly building resistance. An independent income allowed him to abandon his legal career after his first case and devote himself to his own reflections and studies, aiming at not the acme of English law, but its complete overhaul. Never married, Bentham turned his back on and cast off his grim upbringing, becoming increasingly independent and radical, even youthful and eccentric with age. He gave amusing personal names to his walking stick, his teapot, and the rooms of his house. On his cat, in deference to its advanced and settled age, he bestowed the title the Reverend Sir John Langborn.

But beyond exemplifying stereotypical Romantic idiosyncrasy, Bentham's gifts lay in philosophy. He was determined to prove through his voluminous works—many of which were published outside of England

first and not available in his homeland until after his death—that improving the human condition could not be realized without first accepting that humanity was driven by two precepts: pleasure and pain. He abandoned the impersonal and intangible ethics of his father's catholic Anglicanism for a much more pragmatic and personal approach. Any object or idea must be judged by its "utility," by which he meant how much pleasure it would cause or how much pain it would prevent. (See also Utilitarianism.) In his moral scheme, pleasure was a virtue; pain, a vice. He postulated that an individual will do whatever is necessary to increase pleasure and decrease pain, both of which, he believed, were measurable in a calculus of hedonism. Bentham went to great lengths to quantify pain and pleasure, which he labeled as either simple or complex. A complex motive included both pain and pleasure. He codified 12 areas of simple pleasure and 12 of simple pain. From these concepts, government, he said, was necessary to ensure that the most good was brought to the most people. It would be able to accomplish this by a series of rewards and punishments, which he set forth in *Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), the major document of his beliefs published during his lifetime. He was determined to establish that the punishment must fit the crime, a revolutionary idea in an age when the law administered hanging as the cost of many relatively minor offenses.

In *Panopticon* (1791), Bentham laid out his designs for the ideal prison, a model adopted by Quakers in Philadelphia in the early 1800s (and later one of the two places in America Dickens most wanted to visit): it would resemble a cartwheel of cells with spokes radiating from a central observation tower. Bentham advocated this prototype for schools and hospitals, as well, and

devoted 20 years and much capital to constructing it, although his efforts failed.

Besides penal reform, his utilitarianism had numerous other positive contributions to reform and to the efforts of humanitarianism. (See also Humanitarianism.) He championed the rights of children, animals, the insane, religious minorities, and slaves and argued that the problems of unwed mothers, failed suicides, and homosexuals were personal and not matters for prosecution. Although many of his goals were enacted in the first Reform Bill of 1832, Bentham died the night before its passage.

Skeptical of symbols, incredulous of an afterlife, he died into a symbolic eternity: he gave his body to science, to the University College of London he had helped to found; it now permanently displays his fully dressed skeleton—the "auto-icon"—set off by his signature straw hat and Dapple, the walking stick. Although a stuffed head is in place, his skull lies at his feet.

Jo Ann Ferguson

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Berkeley's Idealism

The idealism, or more properly "immaterialism," of Bishop George Berkeley (1685–1763), signifies the denial of the existence of material substance. Positing that "Existence is *percipi* or *percipere*," Berkeley believed that existence can be validated only through the act of perceiving or being perceived.

As an 18th-century British philosopher, Berkeley wrote in response to both rationalism and Lockean empiricism. Establishing the foundation for immaterialism in his first major treatise, *An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision* (1709), Berkeley rejected the rationalist belief in abstract shape and dimension, asserting, instead, that objects of perception exist in the mind and that humans derive their ideas of magnitude and distance through the association of the different senses. Then, in his next major works, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (Part I, 1710) and *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* (1713), Berkeley developed his argument for immaterialism, primarily a response to Locke's *Essay Concerning Understanding* (1690). According to Locke, knowledge results from the perception not of things themselves but of the ideas of things which mediate between external reality and the mind. Accepting Locke's position, then, according to Berkeley, means there can be no actual knowledge of material reality: one can know only the ideas but have no means of verifying the existence of those objects they are supposed to represent.

In the *Principles*, Berkeley delineates his philosophy of immaterialism by first refuting Locke's belief in abstract ideas. Identifying language as the source of the error, Berkeley directs the reader to look beyond the words to discover the truth of falsity of concepts. He then develops his essential

belief that "existence is to perceive or to be perceived." Asserting three sources of knowledge—(1) ideas imprinted on the senses; (2) ideas perceived through the emotions or reason; and (3) ideas formed through the operation of memory and imagination—he concludes that external bodies are not necessary for producing ideas.

Having refuted the existence of matter, Berkeley then defends his theory against possible objections by positing the existence of God. To the question of whether something exists if no one is present to perceive it, he responds that the omnipresent God perceives all. (See also Common-sense Philosophy; German Idealism, Influence of.)

Sheila A. Spector

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Betham, Mary Matilda (1776–1852)

Mary Matilda Betham, a talented poet and portrait artist, published four books of poetry and a biographical dictionary of



women. She was one of 14 children of Mary Damant and the Rev. William Betham, headmaster at Stonham Aspel, Suffolk, and author of *The Baronetage of England*. The family encouraged Betham to develop her literary and artistic abilities, and her close friend Lady Charlotte Bedingfield gave her constant support and advice.

Like many clergymen's daughters, Betham depended for her education on her father's library. Her first book, *Elegies* (1797), opens with the Druidic ballad "Arthur & Albina," and includes several short poems translated from Italian, which Betham studied in Cambridge in 1796 under the tutelage of Agostino Isola. This early work brought her accolades from Coleridge, who wrote *To Matilda Betham from a Stranger* (1802).

In 1804, after six years of research, Betham published the 774-page *Biographical Dictionary of the Celebrated Women of Every Age and Country*, a more concise reference work than Mary Hays's six-volume *Female Biography* (1803). Both writers intended their books for young women, but only Hays states a definite feminist aim. Among Betham's wide-ranging choice of subjects are Bowanny from East India, Cleopatra, Mrs. Godwin, the Arabian heroine Khaula, Mary Magdalene, and Madame Roland.

As a poet, Betham was a gifted metrist and excelled in psychological realism. Her strongest collection, *Poems* (1808), contains several convincing characterizations. In *The Daughter*, she describes not only a young wife mourning her dead father, but also the reaction of the husband. Her frequent use of a poem within a poem adds dramatic interest. In *Fragment*, for example, a pilgrim visits the home of a tyrannical chief and overhears the chief's abused wife sing to her child. The singsong effect of the triplets accentuates the wife's pathetic

struggle for survival, and Betham skillfully and poignantly gives a voice to the victim of abuse.

Betham's book-length *The Lay of Marie* (1816), written in couplets, is an imaginative story about the medieval minstrel Marie de France, which illuminates the hardships and success of a woman who pursued a poetic vocation. Betham had found a poetic foremother, and she capitalized on recent interest in English editions of Marie de France's work. She added a scholarly appendix, as Southey advised, increasing the antiquarian value of the work.

Occasional pieces for friends dominate her final collection, *Vignettes: In Verse* (1818), which closes with a moving elegy for her brother Edward, who died in an East Indiaman shipwreck. Betham's poetry is carefully composed and written with Neo-classical decorum rather than with the sentimental excess of many of her contemporaries. Her chief forms are lyrics (often melancholic in tone), ballads, and historical narratives. In the 1820s, illness and financial constraints impeded her career, but by 1830 Betham again became active in London literary circles and regularly studied in the British Museum.

She continued painting, having previously exhibited at the Royal Academy and earlier made miniature portraits of the Coleridges and Southseys. A lifelong friend of Charles and Mary Lamb and George Dyer, she wrote bridal verses for Lamb's adopted daughter Emma Isola, who married Edward Moxon in 1833, and read regularly to Dyer from the onset of his blindness to his death in 1841. She was an energetic correspondent with her young niece and future biographer Matilda Barbara Betham-Edwards (1837–1919), and in 1848, when she was age 72, she wrote verses celebrating old age.

Deborah Kennedy

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Betty, William Henry West
(1791–1874)

As "the Young Roscius," William Henry West Betty enjoyed a brief but phenomenal success on the late Georgian stage. Before that he had spent his childhood in Ireland, where his mother taught him declamation after he showed early promise in the dramatic set pieces of the time; he also developed a remarkable memory for blank verse lines.

Betty first entered a theater at Belfast in 1801, when he saw Mrs. Siddons play *Elvira*. He then declared that he must be an actor or die. Two years later, at age 11, he triumphed in Aaron Hill's *Zara* in Belfast, went on to a succession of other roles (including *Romeo*) and then took Dublin by storm, playing his first *Hamlet* at the Crow Street theater. In 1804, he appeared in Glasgow and Edinburgh: in the latter city several critics claimed that he outshone Kemble, the then reigning monarch of tragedy. An engagement in Birmingham led him toward London, and in December 1804, when barely age 13, he created a furor at Covent Garden. Moving on to Drury Lane, he caused scenes of mass hysteria with Home's *Douglas* and other stock plays of the time. Pitt adjourned the House of Commons so that members could witness his *Hamlet*. In London and the provinces during 1805, Betty earned a

fortune which was to keep him in comfort for the rest of his long life.

Betty's vogue passed quickly, and his last appearance as a boy actor was at Bath in 1808. In later years, he returned to the stage several times, but with only moderate success at best, and in 1824 he retired completely. He was an agreeable man, and modest, having no illusions about the shallowness of the mistaken cult of infant prodigies and ideas about the child as a channel for natural genius, which had carried him to what might now be called star status for a couple of years in his boyhood. (See also Theater.)

William Ruddick

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Bewick, Thomas
(1753–1828)

Preeminent among wood engravers and illustrators, Thomas Bewick worked most of his life in Newcastle upon Tyne and established a school of engraving there. Attracted by birds and beasts, Bewick was a naturalist from boyhood and through his own observations became acquainted with the character of domestic and wild animals. He drew from nature, often making engravings from his own watercolors.

His celebrity as both illustrator and engraver rests essentially on the detailed accuracy of two natural history books. The first, *A General History of Quadrupeds* (1790), introduced the most distinctive feature of his work—tiny scenes of rural life and miniatures of animals usually set in precisely drawn backgrounds suggestive of their habitats. These "little whimsies," or "tale-

pieces," as he punningly called them, depict both the animals' and birds' temperaments as well as their physical appearances. In addition, his work is marked by energy, an unsentimental view of nature, a love of the small and exquisite, and a wry, sometimes scatological, humor. The two-volume *A History of British Birds* (*Land Birds* and *Water Birds*) was published in 1797 and 1804. In these books' vignettes, particularly in the backgrounds, his technical mastery and artistry reach their peak. Among his other important works are *The Select Fables* (1784) and *The Chillingham Bull* (1798).

Bewick was born at Cherryburn, Northumberland. Although lacking formal artistic training, in 1777, he entered into a partnership with Ralph Beilby (1744–1817), to whom he had been apprenticed at age 14. Beilby was a general engraver; Bewick took over the wood-engraving side of the business. His delicate cutting skills exploited wood's expressive possibilities and raised its use as an engraving medium from the level of a cheap, popular reproductive art to one that could compete with copper. Wood seemed appropriate for conveying his own affection for nature; by both designing and engraving on wood, his very handling of the medium expressed himself.

Bewick refined the white-line method, which involves working the end grain, as distinct from wood planed along the grain, with such metal engraver's tools as a graver or burin instead of knives. He adapted his technical skill to demonstrate a remarkable tonal range of textures and foliage. This was done not through cross hatching but through varying the width of parallel lines and by lowering parts of the block to receive less pressure and print grey (e.g., the breast of a bird). Bewick termed this distinctive quality "color"; this combination

of tone and texture, together with his fine sense of design and keen eye, has made him outstanding among English graphic artists.

Though with less artistic talent, a number of pupils and followers continued Bewick's white-line technique. Among these were his younger brother John Bewick, first an apprentice and then a member of the partnership with Beilby; his son Robert Eliot Bewick, also part of the firm; Robert Johnson, a draftsman and accomplished watercolorist; and Luke Clennell. For the rest of his life Bewick replaced old cuts and added tailpieces to *British Birds*. Audubon, the American bird artist, gives an account in *Ornithological Biography* (1831) of his working on one in 1827. The *Memoir*, begun in 1822 though not published until 34 years after his death, communicates Bewick's minute observations and sociable, down-to-earth character.

D.C. Woodcox

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Bible, The, and Biblical Criticism

Perhaps the greatest literary influence, besides Milton, on the writers and the writings of the Romantic period is the Bible. Wordsworth called the biblical writings "the grand store-house of the imagination" while Blake referred to the Scriptures as "the Great Code of Art."

Two forces operated in the Romantic period to elevate the Bible to such a place of veneration. First, by the early to mid-19th century, especially in England, the access of the lower and middle classes to novels and other popular writings created a new reading class, thus enabling "common readers," for the first time, to read and to interpret the Bible for themselves. In such a context, the Bible became a revolutionary and a political document, expressing in a kind of universal language the freedom of individuals in a divinely created natural order. Second, the consequence of the Romantic reaction against the language and the stylistic devices—derived largely from Greek epic and lyric poetry—of Neoclassical poetry was an emphasis on ordinary diction and natural style, both of which were infused, especially in the eyes of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Blake, with the style and structure of biblical language.

In addition to the feeling among Romantic poets that the language of the Scriptures was universal and could be used to express the feelings of the New Jerusalem—a paradigmatic poetic design of human history.

Henry L. Carrington, Jr.

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine ran from 1817 through 1967—the kind of long and prestigious life that makes a periodical an institution. But during the Romantic era, *Blackwood's* was known primarily for its free-swinging criticism, controversy, and satire; few then would have predicted such a long and respectable future for the magazine.

It was founded in 1817 by William Blackwood (1776–1834). He had appren-

ticed with printers and publishers in Edinburgh and London, and in 1804 set up his own bookselling business. In 1808, he began publishing; his first project was a bibliographic catalogue of the books in his shop, a catalogue so well done that it still is sometimes cited as a bibliographic standard. The catalogue caught the attention of the rising London publisher, Murray, and Murray made Blackwood his Edinburgh agent in 1811. The connection lasted for only eight years, but it greatly helped Blackwood establish himself in the highly competitive world of Scottish publishing. Since Murray was the publisher of the Tory *Quarterly Review*, his alliance with Blackwood set Blackwood up firmly in opposition to Constable, the great Edinburgh Whig publisher. Writers who could not abide Constable's politics began to gather around Blackwood's establishment. (*See also* Journalism.)

No doubt the presence and daily conversation with the best and brightest of Edinburgh's young conservative intellectuals gave Blackwood the idea that there was material here for a periodical—a periodical more current and more dynamic than the *Quarterly*, one that would provide a proper forum for the kinds of views he heard daily from his young visitors. He was also convinced that the tone of such a periodical need not be solemn or pedantic, as the *Quarterly's* so often was. Finally, in April 1817, he brought out the first issue, then titled *The Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*.

Blackwood engaged James Pringle and Thomas Cleghorn as editors, but after the first issue he began to see that he had made a mistake. Pringle and Cleghorn, naturally enough, insisted on control of the magazine independent from the publisher, but they used their independence to produce a timid publication that made almost no impression on the reading public. Worse yet,

in ensuing issues, they began to print articles with distinctly Whig overtones.

Blackwood became increasingly unhappy and shared his dissatisfaction with Wilson and Lockhart, two young men who began in 1817 to frequent his office. They in turn gave their opinions about how a magazine ought to be run. Blackwood fired Cleghorn and Pringle and turned the reins over to Wilson and Lockhart.

Their first issue—renamed *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*—appeared in October 1817. It gave Blackwood all the dynamism he could have hoped for and then some. The chief piece in that issue was a scandalous satire called "Translation from an Ancient Chaldee Manuscript." James Hogg had concocted the idea, and he, Wilson, and Lockhart jointly wrote it. Purporting to be a recently discovered manuscript from biblical times, the piece satirized contemporary Edinburgh figures under only thinly veiled disguises; everyone from Constable and Scott to the young authors themselves figured in the plot. Many were outraged, some threatened lawsuits, but nearly everyone in Edinburgh read it.

The lead article in that first issue also caused a great stir. Titled "The Cockney School of Poetry," the article (unsigned but primarily written by Lockhart) heaped abuse on what it saw as immoral tendencies in some contemporary writers, chief among them Hunt and Keats. Hunt in particular was outraged, and began legal proceedings against the magazine several times over the next few years, though none ever came to trial. The article, abusive and unfair as it was, nonetheless immediately established *Blackwood's* as an entity to be reckoned with on the literary scene. Blackwood himself could not have been happier with his choice of Wilson and Lockhart. Those two, with Hogg, loosely shared editorial control of the new magazine, with

Blackwood himself having veto power (though he rarely exercised it).

The magazine was, then, a collective enterprise though it bore one man's name. It acquired the nickname "Maga," which was sometimes also used as a synonym for the group of authors and editors: to be admitted to Maga was like being a member of a select club. But not a small club, for Blackwood himself was indefatigable in seeking out new writers for his periodical. He was remarkably persuasive, managing to talk Coleridge into submitting a number of articles beginning in 1819, even though Coleridge had been vilified in *Blackwood's* a number of times. Blackwood also managed to maintain good relations with Wordsworth although the magazine had mauled his work on occasion, and Wordsworth contributed a number of sonnets to the magazine. Blackwood also encouraged the young De Quincey, and many of his finest essays first appeared in *Blackwood's*. The roster of writers who contributed to Maga, during the Romantic era and after, is long and distinguished.

One of the most important features in the magazine, and certainly one of the most popular, was a column entitled "Noctes Ambrosianae" (i.e., nights at Ambrose's tavern). Originally a collectively written piece, it soon evolved into Wilson's alone; his pen name for the column was Christopher North. The Noctes were set up as loose, rambling dialogues among the semifictional denizens at Ambrose's. One of the chief characters was the Ettrick Shepherd—based on Hogg, but soon taking on a life of its own, turning Hogg into a nearly mythical figure. (Neither Hogg or his wife always liked what Wilson was doing and frequently complained about it.) The column became one of Blackwood's most beloved features, and it was later reprinted in four volumes by Wilson's son.

The tone of the *Noctes* could vary dramatically, and so the column served as a kind of pressure release; as *Maga* became more established, the rough-and-tumble tone of its first issues became smoother; but off-the-cuff jests, attacks, and satires could always find a place in the *Noctes*. However, the main body of the magazine was soon devoted to more serious (and more conventional) criticism and essays. In 1822, Hogg, never fully a member of the inner circle of *Maga* even though the Ettrick Shepherd was virtually synonymous with it, submitted a rough satire, and Blackwood turned it down on the grounds of seriousness and sobriety, which it now celebrated. *Blackwood's* was well on its way to becoming a Scottish institution. Over the next century, it published many important writers, such as Galt, Landor, George Henry Lewes, Margaret Oliphant, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, and Joseph Conrad (*Lord Jim* first appeared in *Blackwood's*). But its origins were in the rough world of Scottish reviewing during the Romantic era, and during those years *Maga* had its greatest historical importance.

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Blake, William

(1757–1827)

A self-styled poet-prophet for whom the Bible was “the Great Code of Art,” William Blake was largely ignored until after his death; during his lifetime, he was known primarily as an engraver and painter. Blake

never achieved more than moderate fame in these vocations: his personal eccentricity, political and theological radicalism, and refusal to exhaust his talent on popular commissions such as miniature painting kept his art relatively obscure. But obscurity could not suppress Blake’s visionary genius. He wrote, and frequently illuminated, an assortment of poetic forms, from simple lyrics to a prophetic epic designed to rival Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Among his major poetic works are *The Book of Thel* (1789); *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790–93); *America, a Prophecy* (1793); *Europe, a Prophecy* (1794); *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789–94); *The Book of Urizen* (1794); *The Four Zoas* (1797–1805); *Milton* (1804–08); and *Jerusalem* (1804–20). Like the poetry of Wordsworth and Shelley, these works celebrate the power of the transforming imagination. But they finally frustrate a clear association with any literary period, shaping a myth that is uniquely Blake’s.

Blake was one of seven children born to a London hosier and his wife, and though (at his own request) he was never formally educated, his parents did what they could to nurture his creativity, although James Blake, an Anglican (though perhaps a Dissenting one), held his son’s visions in contempt, almost beating the boy on one occasion when he claimed to have seen angels in the treetops on Peckham Rye. But the father recognized William’s artistic potential and sent him, at age 10, to Henry Pars’s drawing school in the Strand. At age 14, Blake was apprenticed to James Basire, engraver to London’s Society of Antiquaries. As part of his apprenticeship, Blake made drawings of the Gothic statuary in Westminster Abbey, developing a tenacious affection for Gothic form that weathered his growing disillusionment with orthodox Christianity.

When Blake left Basire in 1779 as a journeyman engraver, he enrolled briefly in the Royal Academy of Art, where he hoped to master the techniques of painting. He soon discovered that the Academy's emphasis on life drawing and admiration for the masters of chiaroscuro were at odds with his linear and stylized method of drawing. Although several of his history paintings were included in the Academy's 1780 exhibition, Blake abandoned his Academy training and returned to engraving, taking commissions from friends, such as the sculptor Flaxman. In 1782, he married Catherine Boucher, the illiterate daughter of a Battersea market-gardener, and briefly shared the ownership of a printshop with his friend James Parker. By 1785, he had left the partnership and launched his career as an engraver in earnest.

His apprenticeship as a poet, however, had just begun: between 1783 and 1795, Blake experimented with a variety of verse forms, searching for a poetic medium that would sustain and nourish a dissident imagination. Initially he turned to pastoral, celebrating the visionary power of innocence to transform a world corrupted by hypocrisy and self-interest. (Such innocence was incarnated, for Blake, in his younger brother Robert, who died in 1787 but continued a visionary dialogue with Blake until his death.) As he began to appreciate better the problematic nature of human experience, Blake assumed the voice of a prophet, inspired to wrestle with the enigma of evil in works as disparate as *Songs of Experience* and the Lambeth prophecies. By 1795, he had discovered the prophetic epic, a form that would accommodate his apocalyptic vision in his longest and most formidable poems: *The Four Zoas*, *Milton*, and *Jerusalem*.

Blake's earliest poetic attempts, begun when he was only age 11, were published

in 1783 as *Poetical Sketches*. Although the lyrics in this collection are the most conventional of Blake's works, they reflect his radical humanism. Four of the poems, for instance, personify the seasons of the year—a pastoral convention accordant with 18th-century canons of taste. But Blake's personifications are not abstract or didactic; they interact freely with the "piper," Blake's persona, as if to suggest that nature is humanized by poetic perception.

The French Revolution intensified Blake's radicalism and infused his art with the themes of liberty and enslavement; 1789 was one of his most prolific years as a poet. In that year, although it was never printed, Blake completed the text and illustrations of his first prophetic book *Tiriel*, whose title character anticipates Blake's most famous mythical oppressor, Urizen. He may also have begun his unengraved poem *The French Revolution*, which transformed the historical events in revolutionary Paris between 17 June and 15 July 1789 into a visionary apocalypse. (Blake's employer, the publisher Johnson, prepared a page-proof of the first book of *The French Revolution* in 1791, but either Blake or he withdrew the poem before it could be published, fearing, perhaps, reprisals from the English government.) Most significantly, Blake wrote and illuminated *Songs of Innocence*; composed several of the *Songs of Experience* he was to publish in conjunction with *Songs of Innocence* in 1794; and began to compose and etch plates for his first illuminated poetic narrative, *The Book of Thel*.

Although the *Songs of Innocence* appears to have been written for children, it avoids the naive dogmatism so common to 18th-century children's literature. The volume's title, in fact, belies the poetry's preoccupation with "Experience" as well as "Innocence." In Blake's evolving myth, these are