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

humorous reputation. Haydon kept faith that the public would recognise him as a genius in his own lifetime, given time and education. When he lost that faith his debts overwhelmed him and he killed himself. Haydon's treatment in the magazines and in graphic satires raises a question that's at the heart of this book. 'Can you promote genius without debasing it?' (p. 146).

Throughout, Higgins writes in an accessible, engaging, and direct style. He thinks that genius 'is *always* socially constructed', but it is not always clear if he thinks it was *primarily* constructed in the magazines, or whether they simply took part in a discourse that was being produced through a much wider variety of discursive and material factors. He has, however, made the case very effectively that magazines were important in shaping, mediating, and popularising Romantic conceptions of genius, and that magazine writing should hold an important place, in its own right, in scholarly debates about the history, ideology and politics of genius. 

Tom Mole  
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**Mark Sandy, *Poetics of Self and Form in Keats and Shelley: Nietzschean Subjectivity and Genre* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 160pp. ISBN: 0-754-63579-1; £45/\$89.95 (hb).**


THIS BOOK USES NIETZSCHE'S WRITINGS to explore the treatment of the self as a fictional construct in the work of Keats and Shelley and, in turn, argues that both poets anticipate Nietzschean theories of subjectivity, in particular his emphasis on 'becoming' rather than 'being'. Sandy's post-structuralist approach combines theoretical sophistication with a clarity of expression that is not always to be found in this sort of criticism. A notable strength of the book is its interweaving of analysis of the poetry of Keats and Shelley, which leads to some illuminating comparisons between the two writers.

The first chapter begins with an elegantly self-reflexive account of the impact of Nietzsche on deconstructionist and New Historicist approaches to Romanticism, and goes on to consider Nietzsche's understanding of subjectivity as a succession of competing fictions. Chapter Two is the most philosophically complex, allying Keats and Shelley's prose writing on poetics and identity with Nietzsche's rejection of Kantian dualism. Sandy argues that both poets 'campaign for an aesthetic of self-revision and release of the self from such metaphysical delusion' (p. 16); the word 'campaign', here, is an example of the book's occasional tendency to make Shelley and (particularly) Keats sound more philosophically didactic than they are actually are. The following chapter looks mainly at *Alastor* and *Endymion*, examining the tension between the ideal and the real in these two poems through Nietzsche's notions of 'Apollonian individuation' and 'Dionysian universality' (p. 40). This leads into an interesting discussion

of *Lamia*, which suggests that both Lamia and Apollonius produce ‘stifling and exclusive fictions’ that collapse into Dionysian tragedy (p. 55).

In Chapter Four, Sandy investigates the self-consciousness about fictionality exhibited by a range of Shelley’s and Keats’s lyrics. There is some sensitive close reading here, but at times—for example, after an extended discussion of ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ (pp. 81–85)—Nietzsche is deployed without really adding anything to the analysis. The fifth chapter considers *Adonais* and *The Eve of St Mark* as ‘autotelic literary structures, concerned with their own cultural legacy and critical inheritance’ (p. 107), and the book ends by examining indeterminacy of meaning and identity in the *Hyperion* fragments and *The Triumph of Life*. Sandy argues, rousing, that these texts seek to ‘endow individuals with creative potentiality to attain their identities through self-invention, prefiguring Nietzsche’s belief that humanity could “overcome” itself through self-creativity’ (p. 123) and suggests that they encourage the active participation of their readers in this process.

This book is at times impressively sophisticated, but its lack of historicisation leads to some strange omissions and crude statements. For example, it’s simply not adequate to claim, without even a reference, that the Enlightenment understood ‘the self as a fixed, singular and autonomous entity’ (p. vii; see also p. 8). A number of scholars (most notably the late Roy Porter) have shown that the nature of personal identity was highly contested and debated during the eighteenth century. As described by Hume in Book One of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, the self is anything but fixed: rather, it is ‘nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement’ and therefore ‘the identity, which we ascribe to the mind of man, is only a *fictitious* one’ (my italics). And Adam Smith, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, presents personal identity in modern society as fundamentally intersubjective, theatrical, and fluid. While the comparison of Keats and Shelley with Nietzsche is an interesting and illuminating focus for this study, it seems perversely ahistorical almost entirely to ignore the intellectual context in which the two poets actually wrote—Hazlitt, for example, who had plenty of interesting things to say about the construction of selfhood and who (unlike Kant) undoubtedly influenced Keats’s conception of poetic identity, is not mentioned at all.

It’s a shame that Sandy’s approach is so one-sidedly formalist because much of his analysis is acute and suggestive. This book is a valuable comparative study of Keats and Shelley, and offers useful insights into the theoretical and critical context of current Romantic studies. But what Nietzsche might have termed the ‘genealogy’ of personal identity is considerably more complex than Sandy acknowledges. 

David Higgins  
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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS



**Janette Currie** received her PhD from the University of Stirling, where she is now Research Fellow of the AHRC-funded ‘Songs of James Hogg Project’ for the Stirling/South Carolina Research Edition of *The Collected Works of James Hogg*. Forthcoming in 2006 is James Hogg, *Contributions to Literary Annuals and Gift Books* (S/SC Research Edition). A major interest, and the subject of a previous AHRB-funded research project, is Hogg’s trans-Atlanticism — see ‘“A Man’s a Man for a’ That”: Burns, Hogg, and The Liberator’ and ‘From Altrive to Albany: James Hogg’s Transatlantic Publication’ on *STAR* (*Scotland’s Transatlantic Relations*) project at <<http://www.star.ac.uk/Archive/Publications.htm>>.

**Bianca Falbo** is Assistant Professor of English and Assistant Director of the College Writing Program at Lafayette College. Her scholarship focuses on the institutionalising of literacy practices since the turn of the nineteenth century in a range of cultural sites including school books, periodicals, editions of ‘literary’ texts, and student writing. Her articles have appeared in *Reader and Composition Studies*.

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**David Higgins** is Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Chester, and is the author of *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine: Biography, Celebrity, Politics* (2005—reviewed in this issue of *Romantic Textualities*); he has also published articles on Wordsworth and celebrity, Hazlitt and prize-fighting, and nineteenth-century constructions of ‘race’.

**Tim Killick** is Postdoctoral Research Associate on the AHRC-funded *Database of Mid-Victorian Wood-Engraved Illustrations* at Cardiff University’s Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research. He has published articles on the fiction of Allan Cunningham, James Hogg, and Mary Russell Mitford. Current projects

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**Tom Mole** is Assistant Professor of English Literature at McGill University. He has edited one volume for the Pickering & Chatto edition of *Blackwood's Magazine, 1817–1825* (forthcoming), and has published a number of articles on Byron and celebrity. He is currently preparing a monograph entitled *Byron's Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy*, to be published by Palgrave.

