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

## REVIEWS



Hermione de Almeida and George H. Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance: British Romantic Art and the Prospect of India* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), xv + 336 pp. ISBN: 0-7546-3681-x; £75 / \$144.95 (hb).

THIS FASCINATING EXPLORATION by Hermione de Almeida and George H. Gilpin continues a strong series of studies, 'British Art and Visual Culture since 1750: New Readings', which attempts to unpack the social history, consumption, and display of British visual culture. This valuable addition, *Indian Renaissance*, gallantly strives to redress balances and bring the Indian sub-continent back from the periphery of British cultural concerns. The book's narrative attempts to highlight British Art's relation to imperial history in the context of British artists travelling to India during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with unbridled fascination and wonder, eventually bringing home impressions of an India which informed the imaginations and curiosities of the Romantic Movement.

A wonderful image has been chosen for the front cover: William Hodges's painting 'Tomb and Distant View of the Rajmahal Hills' from 1781. This contemplative, almost infinite, vista depicts the Ganges at its broadest, as an immense and tranquil riverbed. The delicate oils distil a complex scene of mountain peaks, fertile green plains and tiny palm trees down to its bare essence. The authors position images such as this in terms of being firstly a naïve product of innocence and delight in the face of exciting, new subjects and inspirations, and later as appropriated tools in fulfilling Victorian imperial agendas and concerns of patronage.

Central to the opening chapter is the figure of Tipu Sultan, ruler of Mysore, who bravely represented a lone, final stand against British expansion in south-central India, but was eventually defeated in 1799. One of the more curious spoils of this battle was 'Tipu's Tiger', a large wood sculpture-cum-mechanical toy depicting a Bengal tiger ravaging an English gentleman, which now resides on permanent display in the Victoria and Albert Museum. (See [http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/asia/object\\_stories/Tippoo's\\_tiger/index.html](http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/asia/object_stories/Tippoo's_tiger/index.html) for further details.) The object had been the Sultan's favourite joke display for visitors to the Mysore court, but here in the opening chapter this curious contraption is used to explore the figure of the tiger as metaphor for Indian military might, mysterious exoticism, and alien ferocity. The symbolism of extreme violence—

and savage sexual violence—was not lost on the propaganda machine of British colonial expansion, with the potency of the dark, menacing tiger soon being appropriated by the image of the British Lion. Just as ‘Tipu’s Tiger’ had gorged on the Englishman who had ventured into his forest domain, so too would British soldiers and East India Company men capture an India ‘ready and waiting’ to be taken.

Mention is made of William Blake’s illuminated poem, ‘The Tyger’, which was composed very soon after Tipu’s mechanical toy arrived in London to be ceremoniously displayed at East India House in Leadenhall Street. Later however, owing to lurid tales of Tipu’s atrocities involving tigers and Englishmen, the model’s notoriety created such demand that the government decided to re-house Tipu’s Tiger as the centrepiece of the newly created East India Museum. Londoners and European visitors all flocked to see the remarkable exhibit.


One of the notable strengths of the book is the detailed study in Part Two given to Tilly Kettle, the first professional painter to travel and work in the sub-continent with East India Company approval. The authors’ proposed ‘Indian Renaissance’ of British Romantic Art begins with an eighteenth-century British public expecting to be treated to images of India that satisfy pre-conceived notions of a strange and exotic land, built by English translations of works such as ‘Arabian Nights’. Kettle’s early work as a commercial, theatrical portraitist is presented here as the perfect grounding for a new career spent depicting India as a theatre of scenes, and as a manifestation of endless well-established fantasies of oriental narratives. The authors make the crucial point that Kettle’s first images that were shipped home marked the beginning of the prospect of India as an aesthetic concept and popular subject in Europe. Kettle’s images sated a British appetite of expectations, founded largely on rumour, concerning the spectacular wealth, explicit eroticism, and alien local customs of the new British locations in India. The chapter indicates that Kettle gave London cultural circles their first detailed and striking representations of an India that was both an imagined land and a real, lucrative entity.

A wonderfully poetic chapter entitled ‘Hodges’ Indian Sublime’ explores the Indian paintings of William Hodges (who was sent to India by the Governor-General, Warren Hastings) in connection to Edmund Burke’s theories on the visual Sublime. By examining the context of Hodges’ meditative, brooding landscapes the authors reveal influences from Burke’s references to the sublime as ‘an experience of transcendent terror aroused by something vast, rough, angular, dark and gloomy’.

The artist perhaps most well-known for popularising this supposed ‘Indian Renaissance’ within British Romantic art is Thomas Daniell, to whom an entire section of the book is dedicated. Having arrived in India at a time of turmoil and transition, soon after Burke’s testimonies had led to the impeachment of Governor-General Hastings, Daniell immediately set to work becoming the ‘Piranesi of British Calcutta’ by painstakingly producing a series of twelve aq-

uatints entitled 'Views of Calcutta' in 1786. This effort took two years, and was highly commended by many of the leading artistic figures of the time, including William Hodges, who praised Daniell for depicting an exciting spectacle of flourishing street life and fascinating diversity which could be compared to eighteenth-century London. To quote Hodges: 'the mixture of European and Asiatic manners, which may be observed in Calcutta [...] forms a sight perhaps more novel and extraordinary than any city in the world can present to a stranger.'

Towards the end of the book, and examination is made of Blake's self-appointed task as an Ezekiel-style prophet, condemning war and advising of the dangers of empire. Blake is shown to have drawn heavily upon images of India by artists such as Daniell in an attempt to find visual metaphors to contribute to his personal crusade against imperial rule; these works perhaps culminating in his epic masterpiece, *Jerusalem. The Emanation of the Giant Albion*.

De Almeida and Gilpin's book is a thoroughly researched, exhaustive inquiry into the connections between an imperial history and the related visual culture of recording these new lands and subsequent dissemination of images. The ability of the book to link political and social concerns with a unique visual aesthetic makes it a valuable addition to the study of this period of cultural history. 

Abraham Thomas  
*Victoria and Albert Museum*

**Gavin Edwards, *Narrative Order, 1789–1819: Life and Story in an Age of Revolution* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), viii + 207. ISBN 1-4039-9211-8; £47 / \$69.95 (hb).**

THIS INFORMATIVE AND OFTEN DENSELY ARGUED WORK brings together three main components in exploring a range of texts spanning Samuel Johnson's *Life of Savage* (1744) to Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), with a concentration on the revolutionary years of the later eighteenth century. On the first front, it charts a situation where the concept of orderly narrative, involving a sequential movement from endings to beginnings, came under a variety of pressures, with a resultant shift from third-person accounts and the exhibition of 'character' to the first person and a prioritisation of 'self'—in broad terms from biography to autobiography. An integral part of the argument here is a connection between narrative and the idea of contract, an area which is also seen as becoming increasingly problematical.

Along with this, the book shows a sophisticated awareness of the complex semantics of a range of keywords in the literature of the period, their multiple and/or shifting meanings, and of how certain words came under pressure

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS



**Peter Garside** is Professor of Bibliography and Textual Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He has recently co-edited an edition of James Hogg's *The Forest Minstrel* (EUP, 2006), and has just completed work on an edition of Walter Scott's *Waverley* for the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels.

**Wendy Hunter** is in the process of completing her PhD thesis at the University of Sheffield, which has a working title of 'Literary Identity in the Work of James Hogg'. She has recently published an article on Hogg's periodical *The Spy* for the *Literary Encyclopaedia* and has contributed to a forthcoming e-book on Hogg's contributions in Chambers' *Edinburgh Journal*.

**Anne MacCarthy** is Senior Lecturer in English Literature in the English Department at the University of Santiago di Compostela, Spain. She has published book-length studies on Edward Walsh, James Clarence Mangan, and the development of Irish literature during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as heading a research project on the influence of nineteenth-century Irish literature on the work of James Joyce.

**David Stewart** (BA Stirling, MPhil Glasgow) is a second-year PhD student at the University of Glasgow. His thesis focuses on the periodical culture of the 1810s and '20s, particularly literary magazines such as *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, the *London Magazine*, the *New Monthly Magazine*, and Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*, *Reflector*, and *Indicator* papers, as well as the intersections between print culture, commercialism, and the aesthetic.

**Abraham Thomas** is Curator of Designs at the Victoria & Albert Museum. In 2006, he co-curated the V&A's 'Alternating Currents' season on Islamic architecture, and 'On The Threshold', an exhibition in the Architecture Exhibition Gallery looking at contemporary housing. During 2007, he will be curating a display entitled 'Full Tilt', looking at the fashion photography and graphic design at *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue* magazines in the 1940s/1950s, which opens in August in the V&A's 20th-Century Gallery.

**Lisa M. Wilson** is Assistant Professor in the Department of English and Communication at the State University of New York College at Potsdam. Her research focuses on issues of authorship, gender, and print culture in the British Romantic period and she has published on Matthew ‘Monk’ Lewis, Charlotte Dacre, and Mary Robinson. She is currently working on a book manuscript, *Marketing Authorship in an ‘Age of Personality’, 1780–1850*. This article forms part of her new study on Romantic-period satirical novels, which began as part of a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar directed by Stephen Behrendt at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

**Maximilaan van Woudenberg** (BA McMaster, PhD Alberta) is Professor of Communications at the Sheridan Institute of Technology in Oakville, Canada, where he teaches Literature and Digital Storytelling. He has published several articles on Coleridge’s activities at the University of Göttingen and is currently preparing a monograph entitled *Coleridge and the Continental University*.

