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**Neoclassical Satire and the
Romantic School 1780 – 1830**

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Power above powers, O heavenly Eloquence,
That with the strong reign of commanding words,
Dost manage, guide, and master th' eminence
Of men's affections, more than all their swords;
Shall we not offer to thy excellence
The richest treasure that our wit affords?

Samuel Daniel, *Musophilus: containing a general defence of learning* (1599)

Rouse up, O young men of the new age! Set up your foreheads
against the ignorant hirelings! For we have hirelings in the camp,
the court and the university, who would, if they could, for ever
depress mental and prolong corporeal war.

William Blake, *Milton* (MS 1800 – 1804)

Contents

Preliminary	9
Introduction	17
I. The Classical Tradition and the Poetics of Satire	49
II. Tory Periodicals and Anti-Jacobin Satire	95
III. William Gifford against the Della-Cruscan Poets and the Non-Classical Stage	111
IV. Lord Byron in Defence of the Classical Tradition	159
V. The Function of Criticism	179
VI. Arguments in the Debate against the Romantic School	197
VII. The Romantic School	377
VIII. Neoclassicism, Romantic Disillusionism, Victorianism, and after	385
Select Bibliography	411
Index	423

Preliminary

This book is based on the theoretical models and comparative studies developed between 2006 and 2010 by the interdisciplinary research group *Streitkultur – The Art of Arguing* at the Centre for the Classical Tradition at the University of Bonn. The group was comprised of scholars in the fields of literary and cultural studies, social studies, classical studies, medieval studies, Renaissance studies, theology, philosophy, law, history, and the fine arts, who investigated forms, spheres, and functions of public dispute in Western traditions of arguing. These were exemplified in specific times, situations, and genres from ancient Greece to the Romantic Period, encompassing further reference to Victorianism, Decadence, Modernism, and Postmodernism. In doing so, the group collaborated with smaller research groups in various departments at various universities, including my senior seminar on Romanticism and Neoclassicism at the University of Bonn's Department of English, American, and Celtic Studies (IAAK). It also corresponded with other Centres for the Classical Tradition and specialists in the field at universities all over the world and convened a major international congress as well as a number of separate minor congresses of the ten collaborating disciplines and internal interdisciplinary workshops.

The group took for granted that the decisive element of the Western cultural tradition, which has established the coherence of occidental cultures in all their diversity over thousands of years even until now, is its double root in pagan antiquity and Christianity.

In accordance with the proceedings from the group's individual research, workshops, and international congresses convened in Bonn, the Classical Tradition is here understood as both the process and the result of the tradition of the cultural heritage of Greek and Latin classical and late antiquity, including its Christian forms. Christianity grew from a controversy with and adaptation of the pagan tradition of classical antiquity. The pagan and Judaeo-Christian double heritage of antiquity was thus combined, transmitted, and transformed in the occidental societies and cultures which succeeded the breakdown of the West Roman Empire.

The Classical Tradition is, however, not a fixed and definable body of transmitted texts. From ancient Greece to postmodern Europe, the Classical Tradition has been highly selective, controversial, and protean. The images of classical Greek and Latin as well as of Christian antiquity have changed considerably throughout the centuries, chiefly because various authors across the ages focussed on aspects relevant to their own contemporary issues. In Augustan England and France, for instance, the Classical Tradition was largely understood as the heritage of the literature of the age of Emperor Augustus, with Dryden and Boileau updating the poetics of Horace and seeing Greek literature, Homer as well as Plato, overcome by superior Latin culture and refinement. The *querelle des anciens et des modernes* in France and England was a debate centred around the relative value of ancient authors weighed against their modern successors and updaters of the Classical Tradition. The *anciens* made it easy for the later Romantics to argue polemically that the Classical Tradition was a mummified corpse without vitality and modern relevance. And the Neoclassicists of the Romantic Period would respond that the Classical Tradition was not the picking up of the ashes, but the keeping alive of the embers.

Examples that demonstrate the constructed and changing notion of the Classical Tradition throughout the centuries are legion. The Enlightenment's estimation of Plato was generally low, opposed to what its philosophers understood as the less speculative Aristotle and the more practically minded Sophists, Plato's adversaries. Revolutionary France upheld the preference for Rome, not least for its Roman republican myth and ideology, whereas post-revolutionary Britain, to mark its opposition to France during the Twenty Years' War and after, shifted its sympathy from Rome to Greece, with a renewed dispute over the relative merits of Athens and Sparta. Simultaneously, a dispute over the Classical Tradition of Greece was conducted among the Romantics, who had begun to undermine the hegemony of the Classical Tradition and to mix it with national and regional traditions and myths, over the relative merits of Plato (Positive Romanticism) and Pyrrho (Negative Romanticism). Moreover, the Radicals of the Hampstead and Marlow circles selected the liberal, pagan, erotic tradition of Greece, as we see in the case of John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley, whereas their Tory adversaries selected the patriotic, patrician, military, ascetic tradition of Greece, as we see in the case of the later Wordsworth. In the view of the Liberals and Radicals, most of them Romantics, the *ancien régime* was no less mummified a corpse than the rule- and reason-bound Classical Tradition itself, whereas, in fact, Metternich and Carlyle strove dynamically to adapt the *ancien régime* to the needs of their time. The Liberals and Radicals saw Plato and Greek democracy less as a specific product of the Classical Tradition than as one of many manifestations of the universal and ubiquitous human anamnesis of unquenchable liberty, expressed in myths all over the world and at all times. Thus,

the Classical Tradition was reinvented for every time and purpose.¹ In musical composition, for instance, Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner either reconstructed or rewrote Christoph Willibald Gluck's classical operas in polemical response to Jacques Offenbach, to suit their own very dissimilar "modern" constructions of the "shifting terrain" of Greece.² Classical antiquity was a quarry, which various authors in various ages and for various reasons mined for resources, reassembling them to suit their needs. The Classical Tradition and the culture of public debate, which has remained the foremost characteristic of Western civilization from Greece and Rome throughout the history of Western civilization, has itself remained a matter of dispute on all levels.³

As an ontological category, the problematic nature of public dispute has also been a subject of philosophical reflection ever since classical antiquity when Heraclitus distinguished between destructive and productive dispute, also manifested in the ancient myth of the double goddess Eris. Jacob Burckhardt defined *das Agonale* as a conscious and declared principle of ancient Greek life. As a central medium of decision-making and finding one's own position, the public exchange of arguments is documented at the beginning of Homer's *Iliad*, in the violent (and ultimately destructive) verbal dispute conducted in two pairs of speeches between the Greek leaders Agamemnon and Achilles. The result of this unwise dispute between army commanders, who insult and debase each other in public, was the Trojan War. Other disputes in other public spheres were naturally less inclined to verbal or physical injury, such as symposia and collations, or, later, disputations of a theological, scholastic, or academic nature, along with the competitions between poets and artists. But all ritualized disputes within the frame of reference of the Classical Tradition were aware of the existence of a limit of tolerability, the historically shifting borderline between productive and destructive dispute on a field defined by the extremes of *peitho* (persuasion) and *bia* (violence). Thus, *parrhesis* (honesty of speech), indispensable in constructive dispute, was restricted by rules and laws protecting the honour of the adversary or the heads of state and religion, as early as in ancient Greek comedy or by the *lex contra famosos libellos* of Emperor Augustus. Public face and dignity demanded respect, in order to prevent the potentially dangerous degeneration of a dispute as exemplified in the *Iliad*.

In his ground-breaking treatise "On Liberty" (1859), John Stuart Mill iden-

1 Marilyn Butler, *Myth and Mythmaking in the Shelley Circle*, in: *English Literary History*, 49 (1982), 50–72.

2 Simon Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, Fiction, and the Proclamation of Modernity*, Princeton NJ and Oxford 2011, 87–124.

3 This study follows the theoretical model of Gerhard A. Hauser, *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres*, Columbia SC 1999, rather than Jürgen Habermas's assumption of the existence of one sole public sphere.

tified individuality, diversity of opinions, and public dispute as the major legacy of the Classical Tradition from ancient Greece, which sharply distinguishes European cultures from such collectivist cultures as the Chinese, where public opinion is decreed and supervised from above. Mill defined all “public opinion”, including what is today called “political correctness”, as the bane of the European democratic heritage of Greece. Nobody is infallible, and the suppression of individual ideas and opinions is naturally inimical to the finding of truths. Europe’s identity and progress lies in its freedom of speech and in its culture of public contention, not in fossilizing collectivist and totalitarian tendencies of “making all people alike, all governing their thoughts and conduct by the same maxims and rules”.⁴ Mill’s warning has proved prophetic:

The modern *régime* of public opinion is, in an unorganized form, what the Chinese educational and political systems are in an organized; and unless individuality shall be able successfully to assert itself against this yoke, Europe, notwithstanding its noble antecedents and its professed Christianity, will tend to become another China.⁵

John Stuart Mill, son of the Romantic Period Radical Utilitarian James Mill, was keenly aware of the limits of freedom of speech and opinion. In his moderate Utilitarian philosophy, they end where the happiness and liberty of others are threatened, as in calls for censorship, persecution of heretics and minorities, or armed physical aggression.

The Romantic Period in Britain was especially sensitive to this heritage of the Classical Tradition. With their experience of the war of ideas derailed from constructive conflict into the political chaos and bloodshed of the Gordon Riots, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, and the consequent repression of free speech by government legislation and espionage in Britain, English literati were not only involved in the debates of their age. They also reflected how a return from chaos to a constructive culture of dispute could be brought about. Radicals though they were, the literati and artists that assembled and discussed political justice and true art in Joseph Johnson’s bookshop in London at the time of the reformist London Corresponding Society (1792–1799) agreed on the need for a peaceful change in politics as well as art and poetics. William Godwin and his wife Mary Wollstonecraft advocated reform through independent Enlightenment reason, both in their philosophical prose and in their fictions, showing the disastrous effects of violence as inevitably leading to further bloodshed. William Godwin’s insight into the evil effects of violence, which would of necessity produce new hatred and carnage, is brilliant, though history has ever contradicted the feasibility of his rational millenarianism, most of all in his own lifetime:

⁴ Mill, *On Liberty*, 1869, in: *Collected Works*, ed. J.M. Robson, Toronto 1981–1891, XVIII. 274.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Here a thousand ill passions are generated. The perpetrators, and the witnesses of murders, become obdurate, unrelenting, and inhuman. Those who sustain the loss of relations and of friends by a catastrophe of this sort, are filled with indignation and revenge. Distrust is propagated from man to man, and the dearest ties of human society are dissolved. It is impossible to devise a temper, more inauspicious to the cultivation of justice, and the diffusion of benevolence.⁶

The Godwins' son-in-law, Percy Bysshe Shelley, would endorse the same view in his mythological drama *Prometheus Unbound* (MS 1818–1819, 1820), where the *ancien régime* and its errors collapse with the disappearance of hatred and revenge.

However, there were other Radical views of physical violence and war, anticipating the opposition of later moral-force and physical-force Chartists. Though he was an advocate of reform through free imagination in diametrical opposition to the Godwins, Blake shared the Godwins' conviction of the need for peaceful change, at least to the extent of its feasibility. In his visionary epic *Jerusalem, Emanation of the Giant Albion* (1804–1820), Blake's Gnostic Christ, a rebel against his father Urizen-Zeus-Jehovah, admonishes fallen Albion (Universal Man) to drop his destructive wars – a result of his sinful Selfhood – and to return to the Divine Family of Love, where wars are constructive conflicts of the spirit:

“Albion, our wars are wars of life, & wounds of love,
With intellectual spears, & long winged arrows of thought.
Mutual in one another's love and wrath all-renewing
We live as One Man; for contracting our infinite senses
We behold multitude; or expanding, we behold as one,
As One Man all the Universal Family [...]”⁷

But here, Blake's mythopoetic imagination expressed a mere preference, provided that man had a choice. Blake would not exclude the need for and benefits of victory on the battlefield altogether. While Blake's Christ and Los are peaceful saviours, Blake's Satan, Orc, and Fuzon are rebels given to violent change, but their bloodshed would be an instrument in the dialectical evolution of history. In Blake's Gnostic reading of the Eucharist, fallen man is the grape crushed by the *ancien régime* in the wine-presses of love (spiritual conflict) or war (physical conflict), both of which would yield the wine of the millennium after “the vineyards of red France.” The fire and blood of revolution would be the antithesis to the thesis of the *ancien régime*, ensuring the downfall of kings and priests and the arrival of the necessary Edenic millennium. Or, in the more secular words of Karl Marx, violent revolution would be the antithesis to the

6 William Godwin, *An Enquiry concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on Morals and Happiness*, 1793, 4th edition London 1842, I. 130.

7 Blake, *Jerusalem, Emanation of the Giant Albion*, 1804–1820, 34. 15–19, in: *Complete Poems*, ed. W.H. Stevenson, 1971 and 1989, 3rd edition London 2007, 729.

thesis of feudal society and by necessity produce the synthesis of classless society as the pre-decreed end of history.

In counter-distinction to the Godwins and Shelley, Blake formulated peaceful conflict with the weapons of rhetoric as preferable to physical warfare, but not as the only way to overcome error and create a better world. Here, the visionary was more of a realist than the rational philosopher. Blake's mythical narratives teem with descriptions of the outbreak of physical violence, because fire alone can melt the Urizenic ice. Forgiveness as advocated by his saviour Christ and re-integrative art as practised by his saviour Los would not always work, as fallen man is a potentially greedy and aggressive creature. There arose situations which required physical self-defence, personal as well as national. Blake had a shaping experience with the soldier John Scolfield in Felpham in 1803, possibly an *agent provocateur* of the government whom he violently chased from his premises. Blake's ensuing trial for high treason in Chichester made him keenly aware of the limitations of fallen human nature. Passions could run out of control, and then man would overstep the red line between peaceful and violent conflict. As Sigmund Freud put it later in his brilliant treatise *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (1930), there is no solution for every life problem, and naturally aggressive man would perversely destroy his own culture again and again.

The continuity of the Classical Tradition in the Romantic Period becomes evident in its arsenal of weapons – its denigrations and argumentative strategies – which had already been complete in classical antiquity.

The categories of polemical denigration of the adversary have remained the same from the literature of ancient Greece and Rome to the literature of the Romantic Period and beyond. The denigrations that the Neoclassicists of the Romantic Period put forward against their Romantic adversaries comprised:

- 1) Metaphysics: The adversary is of the party of the devil and chaos.
- 2) Chain of Being: The adversary is a mere animal of the lowest order (wolf, toad, serpent, carrion kite).
- 3) Status: The adversary belongs to a lower class or group, to the subordinate sex, or comes from a lower profession (slave, Jew, homosexual, orphan, woman, handicraftsman).
- 4) Education: The adversary is childish, ignorant, pampered, undisciplined, erratic, contradictory, and deficient in classical languages, schooling, philosophy, elegance, expressiveness or even interest.
- 5) Entourage: The adversary keeps low or bad company and writes for the uneducated populace.
- 6) Health of body: The adversary deviates from the norm of the creation as a suffering patient or cripple, or is too effeminate or pampered to perform great deeds.

- 7) Health of mind: The adversary lacks self-control or self-knowledge or mental vigour (erraticism, confusion, mania, excess, sexual deviation, masturbation, stupidity).
- 8) Ethics: The adversary practises and propagates private and public immorality against the laws of God and nature.
- 9) Respectability: The adversary is guilty of perjury, faithlessness, heresy, high treason, or demagoguery.
- 10) Integrity: The adversary's conduct of life contradicts his public teaching.
- 11) Constancy: The adversary is fickle, unreliable, or a turncoat.
- 12) Courage: The adversary is a coward or wimp.
- 13) Inventiveness: The adversary is a mere imitator, epigone, plagiarist, or *bricoleur*.
- 14) Honesty: The adversary is a mere liar, impostor, or quack.
- 15) Posthumous fame: The adversary will be stored in the cultural memory of mankind as a monster, clown, bungler, charlatan, ignoramus, philosphaster, poetaster, or producer of excrement from mouth or anus.
- 16) Success: The adversary's works are little read or will soon be consigned to oblivion.

But, as in classical antiquity, these polemical denigrations could be turned both ways. Imagination has recently been redefined as a means of articulating resistance in times of crisis rather than a faculty of truth, i. e. the driving force in the art of arguing.⁸ A low origin, a female sex, the lack of a formal education, and even the devil's party, for instance, could be turned from a stigma to a qualification. So could a Promethean challenge of traditional morality and the traditional rules of art. In the case of one's own group or in-group, the person and opinion in question were courageous, ingenious, original, natural, innovative, and noble. In the case of the inimical group or out-group, the person and opinion in question were ruthless, heretical, unnatural, traitorous, strained, effect-catching, and ignoble. Even identical designations like "primitive" and "romantic" could involve praise or blame.

The argumentative strategies of the Romantic Period had also been fully developed in classical antiquity and handed down over centuries of occidental public dispute and discourse. Most strategies persisted without interruption, such as the turning of the adversary's argumentative weapon against the adversary himself (David and Goliath). The inimical frontline could be weakened by setting one adversary against the other (*divide et impera*). An adversary's name or the names of his cause and fictitious characters could be converted or played upon so as to make

8 John Whale, *Imagination under Pressure, 1789–1832: Aesthetics, Politics and Utility*, Cambridge 2000, 11.

them both appear ridiculous, as in wartime parleying (Arasmus, John Murrain, Kotzebuism, sternbaldisieren). The inimical frontline could be given dysphemistic names; and the adversaries could adopt these names in order to neutralize the disparagements and to proudly confess their own cause (Puritans, Romantics, Spasmodists, Whigs, Tories, Decadents). A real or fictitious story could be told to the effect of proving the adversary's views wrong or impracticable. A mock obsequy or epitaph could be read or written on a living adversary. And it could be suggested that the adversary's success in literature was due to hype, boosting or "puffing" by corrupt critics, rather than to any intrinsic quality.

The arsenal of weapons and strategies, however, changed over the centuries, with the continuous inventions and reinventions of the Classical Tradition in the context of cultural changes. Some strategies could disappear for centuries to be rediscovered and reapplied. Pastiche of de-contextualized quotations from the adversary with the satirical aim of an adversary's self-parody as in *The Frogs* by Aristophanes, for instance, disappeared and returned in Renaissance invectives and comedies as well as in anti-Romantic satires. The court culture of the seventeenth century increasingly stigmatized verbal insults and sexual obscenities, frequent in Menippean satires, pamphlets, invectives, and pasquils from classical antiquity to the Renaissance. From the early eighteenth century the social status of male and female authors increasingly changed, as they became professional authors independent of aristocratic patronage and forced their way into elite that had been restricted to male members of the peerage and clergy. These fluctuations make it increasingly difficult to assign certain argumentative strategies and genres to certain social groups. The Classical Tradition had its changes and transformations with the advent of new social structures and new media like the periodical press and television, into which it penetrated with astonishing adaptability and vitality. New genres like the essay and the book review legitimized and nourished themselves from the Classical Tradition, as when the negative book review was classified as a modern prose satire. With the decline of Greek and Latin, Classics in Translation has established itself as a successful academic course of studies. Debating clubs and moderated present-day talk-shows for the masses still show structures and ceremonies of ancient symposia. The Classical Tradition with its public *ars disputandi* has been increasingly challenged since the Romantic Period, but it has never died (and hopefully never will die) out. "Classical Reception" is an ongoing event, which "has emerged in recent years as a new and thriving area of research in Classics".⁹

9 Jonathan Sachs's review of Simon Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity*, in: *TLS*, 5680 (10 February 2012), 8, and Charles Martindale's Letter to the Editor, *ibid.* 5681 (17 February 2012), 6.

Introduction

Epochs and periods in historiography are, we have learned from postmodern and poststructuralist theory, mere constructions, or at least half-constructions, serving to render time manageable and comprehensible by dividing it into parcels, *Zeitabschnitte*. Man is a pattern-building animal, incapable of dealing with vast heaps of chaos unless structured by some kind of superimposed order, so that the worst order is better than no order at all. Thus, time and history are dealt with like libraries, ordered in various systems according to various criteria *post rem*, because there is little or no natural order *in rebus*. And, for whatever philosophers of language have affirmed to the contrary, man's perception and designation of things is differential and negative in nature, proceeding by contrasts. Here, Ferdinand de Saussure adopted the philosophy of John Stuart Mill, who taught that

[...] we only know anything, by knowing it as distinguished from something else; that all consciousness is of difference; that two objects are the smallest number required to constitute consciousness; that a thing is only seen to be what it is, by contrast with what it is not.¹

Movements in the history of ideas and art frequently receive their designation through the opposition of their adversaries. A most notorious example in the Romantic Period was the Tory branding of all the diverse advocates of reform as "Jacobins", raising fears of a spill-over of the radical excesses from revolutionary France,² just as the Elizabethan Anglicans had disparaged all the diverse Protestant dissenters as "Puritans", raising fears of a spill-over of the religious turmoil and threats to state authority from the whole Continent. Traditionalists are irritated by various dissenting and innovative voices and cultural practices, which contradict their own convictions and challenge their established he-

1 Mill, *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, 1865, chapter II, in: *Collected Works*, IX. 4.

2 Carl B. Cone, *The English Jacobins: Reformers in the Late Eighteenth Century*, Piscataway NJ 2010, *passim*.

gemony as well as their established power discourses. So they react by constructing a homogeneous frontline of opponents to the detriment of distinction and detail. Thus, in order to strike the greatest possible number of dissidents and innovators with one blow, various opponents of diverse persuasions without any feeling of group identity are summarized under the same banner. Thus critics of Romanticism interpreted Goethe's Faust as a Byronic hero and unequivocally ranked Goethe with the Romantics, – a misunderstanding of the Weimar Classicist still prevalent in Britain today.³ An “in-group” united by threat to its superiority or survival thus constructs an “out-group”, by way of exclusion. Identity construction works necessarily through more or less fierce conflicts, which can be constructive or destructive processes of civilization according to their respect for or disregard of the historically changing limits of peaceful debate. In their “play theories”, Friedrich Schiller, William Butler Yeats, and Johan Huizinga have made us aware of the role of playfulness and ritual in permissible conflict.⁴ In 1820, when Thomas Love Peacock pitted the Radical Utilitarian view of literature against his friend Percy Shelley, he did it with playful bantering, made more pointed as he himself read and wrote Romantic literature. When, in the following year, Shelley answered Peacock in what came to be the most comprehensive poetic of Positive Platonic Romanticism, he took care not to offend his benefactor and not to break off the precious friendship with his antagonist. The opponents stuck to the rules of the game valid in their time. Where the traditional playful ritual of fencing or debate is broken, however, play derails into verbal injury which can easily lapse into physical warfare. The adversary becomes an enemy, the pleasure of conflict degenerates into destructive hatred. Armed attacks, duels with fatal weapons, street ambushes, or horse-whippings (depending on the adversary's social status) seek to inflict maximum harm to the adversary's reputation and health, after ritualized fencing or debate had intended to reform the opponent with minimal damage. Time and again throughout the history of conflict, which is the history of civilization, opponents broke the ritual of civilized debate by erupting into physical violence. In the heat of their conflict with their adversaries, the most cultivated and erudite authors could give in to their *Unbehagen in der Kultur* and relapse into primitive manslaughter, as did Ben Jonson in the War of the Theatres, in which Shakespeare participated peacefully.⁵ And the controversy between Alexander Pope

3 From its foundation in 1817, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine with its Tory and Neoclassical bias thus disparaged Goethe's Faust (1808–1832) as a sensational Byronic-Spasmodic celebration of literary and moral libertinage.

4 Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1795); Yeats, *Among School Children* (1928); and Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (1938).

5 Sigmund Freud, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, (1930), and Alfred Harbage, *The Rival Traditions*, (1952).

and Ambrose Philips in the 1710s over the relative merit of their pastorals ended in both authors arming themselves: Philips kept a horsewhip to chastise Pope, whom he considered socially inferior, and the diminutive hunchback Pope kept a short sword behind his back to defend himself, which made him look like (and caused him to be ridiculed as) an aggressive insect.

Whether the rules of the art of arguing are observed or broken in the heat of debate, the construction of out-groups by in-groups necessarily leads to umbrella terms in the “labelling” of each other on both sides. Even scholars of ensuing generations cannot do without them, although they must remain aware of their erasure of factual distinctions. Thus, the various Renaissance “Humanists” were driven into a sense of identity by their traditionalist opponents, the medieval “Scholastics”. And so were the various “Romantics” of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century identified as an out-group by their traditionalist opponents, the “Augustans” or “Neoclassicist”, who flatly denied them knowledge of or at least respect for the Classical Tradition of Greece and Rome. Scholars have complained of the misleading vagueness of the umbrella terms “Humanist” and “Romantic” ever since which, nevertheless, they cannot avoid using themselves.

Whether we classify the decades around 1800 in terms of epochs of time and call them The Romantic Period, or whether we classify them in terms of movements in the history of ideas and forms and label them The Romantic Movement, we inevitably and unavoidably give rise to the false impression of the unity of the epoch. There is no epoch or period that has a unity. Every period has its currents, counter-current, and undercurrents, a polyphony rather than symphony of jarring voices, a chaos of cultural representations. Even those currents and movements have no unity that contemporaries or later scholars did not construct: Romanticism was a construction by the enemies of the heterogeneous group of authors we call the Romantics, Preromanticism a construction by later literary historians in search of a term to designate the various forms of emancipation from Augustan rule and reason. Hence, Poststructuralism and Deconstructionism have endeavoured to overcome the traditional Classical-Romantic divide as well as the related period divide and canon divide.⁶ Our habitual periodization and characterization of the decades between ca 1780 and ca 1830 as “Romantic” has determined our canon, selecting Romantic literature to the detriment of Neoclassical literature. Scholars have only recently begun to remember that Britain was the leading counter-revolutionary power in Europe; and anti-Romantic Neoclassicism was the aesthetic of the *ancien régime*. We read the canonical male Romantic poets: William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Robert Southey, John Keats, and Percy Shelley – and of

6 L.J. Swingle, *Classic and Romantic*, in: *Modern Language Quarterly*, 44 (1983), 80–91.

late some female Romantic poets, Mary Robinson, Mary Tighe, Dorothy Wordsworth, Amelia Opie, Felicia Dorothea Hemans, and Letitia Elizabeth Landon, ordered in generations and selected in anthologies. However, we read very little of the anti-Romantic and persistently Neoclassical literature of the Romantic Period, except for the novels of Jane Austen and Thomas Love Peacock, along with a selection of the poems of Pope's disciple – and Austen's favourite – George Crabbe. In the case of the much anthologized and canonized Lord Byron, we classify him as a Romantic and tend to forget that he was a Romantic Disillusionist who resorted to Neoclassical rules and conventions when satirizing the Romantic Neoplatonism of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats.

Thus, we get the wrong impression of a succession of major movements, as if Augustan Neoclassicism ended with Samuel Johnson (and a few later epigones) and Romanticism began with William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (and a few Preromantic forerunners). Recent research on the survival of satire in the Romantic Period, however, has reminded us how vital Augustan Neoclassicism remained throughout the Romantic Period, and how confidently and successfully it attacked Romanticism in excellent works of literature. Britain's government was Tory from 1770 (North) to 1830 (Wellington), France and the French Revolution were widely regarded as Britain's enemy and, in Tory eyes, Romanticism and Jacobinism appeared identical. The Romantics were closely watched by secret police and government spies, constantly under suspicion of disaffection and high treason. Even those Romantics of the middle generation born in the 1770s who, like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and Opie, lost the revolutionary ardour and millenary faith of their youth, turning to conservative Tories and church-bound Christians, never quite lost their traitorous reputations. They remained under heavy attack, as testified by Thomas De Quincey, who first visited Coleridge in 1807 and remembered the situation in 1834. In 1807, Wordsworth and Coleridge had "a long warfare to accomplish of contumely and ridicule before they could rise into their present estimation".⁷

The opposition of Tory-aligned (and also more reason-oriented Whig-aligned, or even Radical) literati was enormous, the quality of their literary output excellent. William Gifford and George Canning had a wider readership and certainly enjoyed more government support than Wordsworth and Coleridge. Other mighty opponents were Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Eaton Stannard Barrett, John Hookham Frere, Jane Austen, Maria Edgeworth, and the Radical Whigs Thomas Love Peacock and Walter Savage Landor, the latter strong sup-

7 De Quincey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in: *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (1834–35), in: *Works*, ed. Grevel Lindop, Pickering Masters, 22 vols., London 2000–2003, X. 287. All textual references are to this edition, unless otherwise indicated.

porters of Greek, Latin, and the Classical Tradition. Romanticism was a corrective counter-movement to the Industrial Revolution and the modern materialist spirit of profit, the age of chivalry and imagination was pitted against “this calculating age”,⁸ so that the anti-Romantics could easily deride notions of romantic love and fictions of Gothic castles as non-realistic and non-classical imaginative escapism. Richard Brinsley Sheridan’s and the elder George Colman’s anti-sentimental laughing comedies ridicule female readers of sentimental fiction, characterizing them in their works by giving them the telling names of Lydia Languish (1775) and Polly Honeycombe (1777).⁹ George Crabbe’s verse tales feature young, simple-minded, ignorant, and pampered women like Belinda Waters who long for imaginative distresses and make fools of themselves by parading long lists of long-forgotten sentimental and Gothic novels, in contrast to the real distresses of women like old, blind Ellen Orford in *The Borough* (1810):

But not like them has she [Ellen Orford] been laid
 In ruined castle, sore dismayed;
 Where naughty man and ghostly sprite
 Fill’d her pure mind with awe and dread,
 Stalked round the room, put out the light,
 And shook the curtains round the bed.
 No cruel uncle kept her land,
 No tyrant father forc’d her hand;
 She had no vixen virgin-aunt
 [...]¹⁰

In 1813, Eaton Stannard Barrett published a quixotic romance entitled *The Heroine, or, The Adventures of Cherubina*, featuring a foolish and ridiculous heroine of sensibility, who mistakes Covent Garden Theatre for a Gothic castle and is disappointed to find no cowed monks in Westminster Abbey. Barrett, later one of the mordant reviewers of the aesthetically and politically conservative *Quarterly Review*, aimed his satirical barbs at the whole range of non-classical fiction from Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Laurence Sterne to Frances Burney and Ann Radcliffe.¹¹ Peacock’s satirical novel *Melincourt* (1817) contains a dialogue between Mr Forester-Shelley, the romantic idealist, and Mr Fax-Malthus, the Utilitarian realist, debating romantic marriages of love and senti-

8 Peacock, *Melincourt*, chapter 1, in *Novels*, ed. David Garnett, London 1948, 103.

9 Edith Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror: A Study of the Gothic Romance*, chapter 9 *Satires on the Novel of Terror*, London 1921, New York NY 1963, 129.

10 Crabbe, *The Borough, The Poor of the Borough, Ellen Orford*, XX, in: *Poetical Works*, ed. Norma Dalrymple-Champneys – Arthur Pollard, Oxford 1988, I. 543. Quoted in Birkhead, 143.

11 Birkhead, 133–137.

ment versus marriages of interest and convenience. This dialogue, again, provides a frame for an intradiegetic tale, the history of Desmond, exposing the almost tragic failure of improvident and idealistic dreamers in a calculating age, had they not accidentally profited from the charity of the rich, kind-hearted Anthelia Melincourt. “The world of reality is not the world of romance”.¹² In William Godwin’s, Thomas Robert Malthus’s, James Mill’s, and Peacock’s Radical and Utilitarian views, virtue alone was not happiness below, and happiness was not to be found in poverty in a happy family circle with numerous children and animals, but was linked to means of subsistence and political justice. And Peacock’s Mr Paperstamp-Wordsworth of Mainchance Villa is unmasked as the calculating niggard that Wordsworth really was, discrediting his Romantic ideals by imagining him on the lookout for “a very good match for his daughter”.¹³ Wordsworth the Stamp Distributor had deserted his early poetic principles of independence and become a capitalist on government pay, like Southey, which appeared an even graver offense than his political “apostasy”.¹⁴ Hence Paperstamp-Wordsworth’s stanzas join in with a common song of five argumentative eccentrics, hilariously confessing his hypocrisy and double standard:

By my own poetic laws, I’m a dealer in applause
 For those who don’t deserve it, but I will buy, buy, buy:
 So round the court I linger, and thus I get a finger,
 A finger, finger, finger in the CHRISTMAS PIE. [...]

 And while you thrive by ranting, I’ll try my luck at canting,
 And scribble verse and prose all so dry, dry, dry:
 And Mystic’s patent smoke public intellect shall choke,
 And we’ll all have a finger in the CHRISTMAS PIE.¹⁵

Peacock’s Melincourt is a picturesque castle ruin without and a modern dwelling within; its rich owner, the romantically credulous Anthelia Melincourt with her dreams of romantic love, is in reality courted by calculating suitors in scenes modelled on the suitors of Penelope in Homer’s *Odyssey*.¹⁶ Austen’s Northanger Abbey is a picturesque castle in the mind of the romantic Catherine Morland with her infantile dreams of Gothic novels, and a modern dwelling in reality. In both cases, the inward reality discredits the outward appearance in Romantic perspective. Thus, Peacock and Austen used the same satirical technique of unmasking their adversaries’ ideals as lies or will-o’-the-wisps, but with the

12 Peacock, Melincourt, chapter 12, 166.

13 Ibid. chapter 39, 309.

14 Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School: Keats Shelley, Hunt and their Circle*, Cambridge 1998, 194.

15 Peacock, Melincourt, chapter 39, 322.

16 Ibid. chapter 8, 146.

obvious difference that Peacock made demonstrative use of and even paraded his classical learning. The male anti-Romantics had a school and university education in the classics which enabled them to read and write Greek and Latin; the female anti-Romantics, a minority, may or may not have acquired knowledge of the classics in private and never paraded any classical learning. Both groups, however, were self-confessed Augustans and Neoclassicists who knew the Classical Tradition as cultivated in the eighteenth century: Dryden, Pope, and Johnson as heirs and continuators of the Classical Tradition of Homer, Lucian, Virgil, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal via Erasmus, Scaliger, Heinsius, and Casaubon. Throughout the eighteenth century, they had denigrated everything that deviated from that Classical Tradition's (or rather from their selective image of the Classical Tradition's) rational standards or *règles de la raison*. These they derided as "romantic" or "romanesque" or "gothic", and thus generated an anti-Neoclassical and anti-Enlightenment movement which later twentieth-century scholars were to call Preromantic,¹⁷ in spite of Preromanticism's diversity and heterogeneity first synthesized in the work of Blake. In her verse epistle entitled "Sensibility" (1782), the Bluestocking poet Hannah More consoled Mrs Frances Boscawen for the death of her famous husband by celebrating the joys as well as pangs of a controlled sensibility and condemning those Augustan rationalists who dismissed all sensibility with the usual dysphemism "romantic",

Who call romantic every finer thought
Conceived by pity, or by friendship wrought.¹⁸

This is a typical instance of eighteenth-century group formation by exclusion and inclusion as analysed previously. An advocate of sensibility addresses other representatives of sensibility by excluding advocates of reason, or, otherwise expressed, a dissenting Preromantic defines her group over against that of the established mainstream rationalists and Neoclassicists. Gender is here referred to as one, though not the only, criterion of group distinction. Chaos calls for order, to the detriment of detail. The increasing chaos of voices during the eighteenth century, particularly during and after the time of the French Revolution, became a subject for caricature, expressing the age's call for the formation of clear-cut, though terribly simplified schools and frontlines.¹⁹ A bad order has ever proved better than no order at all.

17 First introduced as a French term, "préromantisme", in 1923. For further details see my article Preromanticism in the forthcoming fourth edition of *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*.

18 More, *Sacred Dramas* [...]. To which is added, *Sensibility, a Poem*, 1782, lines 157–158, in Duncan Wu (ed.), *Romantic Women Poets: An Anthology*, Oxford 1997, 28.

19 C. Williams, *The Genius of the Times*, plate for *Town Talk*, 1 December 1812. Reproduced in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, ed. Graeme Stones, London: Pickering & Chatto 1999, II. n.p.

Thus, the old critical practice of group exclusion by satirical denigration and group inclusion by defiant appropriation and containment gained both ground and controversial impetus over the turn of the century. A contributor to the Tory *Critical Review*, for example, found Coleridge's 1800 translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* culpably careless, typical of a "distinct school" in poetry that produced "hasty effusions", neglecting the Neoclassical virtues of maturity and clarity. In his polemic, he did not allow Coleridge the benefit of the doubt that his occasional designation of his poems as "effusions" might not be an admission of haste and Romantic spontaneous overflow, *Herzensergüsse*, but a version of the classical commonplace of *mea parvitas*:

Mr. Coleridge is the founder of a distinct school in poetry. [...] it were well if Mr. Coleridge would teach his pupils, both by precept and example, the art of blotting – would instruct them that hasty effusions require the file, that carelessness is not ease, and that obscurity is no instance constitutes the true sublime.²⁰

"The phrase 'School of Poetry', like the phrase 'School of Painting', has of late come much into vogue", wrote a reviewer of the Tory *Literary Gazette*, in an unfavourable review of Leigh Hunt's collection of poems entitled *Foliage* (1818), and argued against short-lived fashionable innovations.²¹ He must also have remembered Hunt's "Young Poets" article, published in the *Examiner* on 1 December 1816, with its presentation of three avant-garde writers, Percy Shelley, John Hamilton Reynolds, and John Keats, who promised to extinguish the prevalent "French school" by restoring the love of nature that ennobled "the finer times of the English Muse".²² The reviewer was intrigued by the fact that Hunt's "Preface" celebrated the "downfall of the French school of poetry", combined with an attack against traditional aristocratic power and patronage, much in the line of John Keats.²³ In fact, Hunt published *Foliage* in response to his Cockney-bashing detractors in the new Toryistic *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, celebrating everything that his Neoclassical critics had attacked and thus giving the heterogeneous group of the young Romantics, counts and cockneys with their tangled lives and considerable disagreements within the group, a sense of identity.²⁴ Inimical attacks strengthened their bonds in spite of all strains put upon them.²⁵ Hunt's imagery of verdant spring following upon the frost of winter, with its revolutionary implications, and his sneering about an

20 *Critical Review*, 30 (October 1800), in: Coleridge: The Critical Heritage, ed. J.R. de J. Jackson, London 1970 – 1991, I. 64 – 65.

21 *Literary Gazette*, 63 (April 1818), 210.

22 [Leigh Hunt] in: *Examiner*, 466 (1 December 1816), 761 – 762.

23 Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, Oxford 1997, 1998, 19.

24 Daisy Hays, *Young Romantics*, New York NY 2010, 140 – 165.

25 Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School*, 189.

outdated coterie of gentlemen dictating an old fashion, explains the conservative reviewer's defence of the old school of poetry:

The downfall of the French school of poetry has of late been increasing in rapidity; its cold and artificial compositions have given way like so many fantastic figures of snow; and imagination breathes again in a more green and genial time. An attachment to the school undoubtedly survives in some quarters [...]

This has undoubtedly been owing, in the first instance, to the political convulsions of the world, which shook up the minds of men [...]

The notions about poetry can no longer be controlled, like the fashions, by a coterie of town gentlemen.²⁶

Hazlitt's defence of the new versus the old "French school of poetry" followed Hunt's line of argument, linking the French Revolution and Romanticism as joint reactions against a political and aesthetic establishment that had grown stale. In 1818, his satire was aimed at William Wordsworth, "the present poet-laureat and author of the *Lyrical Ballads*", whose conversion to Toryism had betrayed his cause, at least in politics:

Our poetical literature had, towards the close of the last century, degenerated into the most trite, insipid, and mechanical of all things, in the hands of the followers of Pope and the old French school of poetry. It wanted something to stir it up, and it found that something in the principles and events of the French revolution [...] The change in the belles-lettres was complete, and to many persons as startling, as the change in politics, with which it went hand in hand. There was a mighty ferment in the heads of statesmen and poets [...] all was to be natural and new. Nothing that was established was to be tolerated. [...] rhyme was looked upon as a relic of the feudal system, and regular metre was abolished along with regular government.²⁷

What united the Romantic revolutionaries, Romantic liberals, and (later) Romantic conservatives, Platonists and Pyrrhonists, was their formation of a violently opposed literary avant-garde, – a fact that justifies the controversial concept of "Romanticism" in literary scholarship notwithstanding Romanticism's bewildering variety, and even contradictory nature.²⁸ In times of change or even upheaval, conservatives fear new schools of thought as they can threaten their established power in church and state. Around the turn of the century, the Jena and Berlin groups of young German Romantics found themselves welded together by a mighty traditionalist opposition, so that August Wilhelm Schlegel

26 Leigh Hunt, *Literary Criticism*, ed. L.H. Houtchens – C.W. Houtchens, New York NY 1956, 129–130.

27 Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Poets, On the Living Poets*, 1818, quoted and analyzed by Susan J. Wolfson, *The New Poetries*, in: *The New Cambridge History of English Literature, English Romantic Literature*, ed. James Chandler, Cambridge 2009, 410.

28 Stephen Prickett (ed.), *European Romanticism: A Reader*, General Introduction, London 2010, 13–16.

found himself obliged to include a critique of the Enlightenment and of Neoclassicism in his Berlin lectures (1801 – 1804). This was preparative to his construction, defence, and propagation of a new “Romantic school” under heavy inimical attack, – a modernist group formation with a modernist anti-classical programme heralding a new age:

Mehrere meiner Freunde und ich selbst haben den Anfang einer neuen Zeit auf mancherlei Art, in Gedichten und in Prosa, im Ernst und im Scherz verkündigt [...] Das entsetzliche, gar nicht aufgehörende Geschrei dawider von allen Seiten scheint doch zu verraten, daß die Gegner unsre Behauptung nicht für so ungereimt halten als sie vorgeben, daß sie doch vielleicht heimlich fürchten, im ruhigen Besitz der Nichtigkeit durch jene verhaßten Anmutungen gestört zu werden.²⁹

When Leigh Hunt tentatively proclaimed the formation of a group of new writers in his above-mentioned 1816 *Examiner* review of the “Young Poets” Keats, Shelley, and Reynolds, the poet Cornelius Webb, a member of his Hampstead circle, supported him. Webb’s poem attests to a dawning awareness of a positively conceived Romantic School, possibly under the influence of the Schlegel brothers:

Our talk shall be (a theme we never tire on)
Of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron,
(Our England’s Dante) – Wordsworth – HUNT, and KEATS,
The Muses’ son of Promise; and of what feats
He yet may do.³⁰

The Neoclassicist and Tory John Gibson Lockhart, who saw the social and aesthetic heterogeneity of that newly constituted Hampstead group beside the threat of its avant-garde movement, quoted Webb’s poem as an epigraph to the first of his Cockney-School-bashing essays in an 1817 number of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*.³¹ His strategy was that of *divide et impera*. He isolated the capitalized London-born and London-bred poets such as Leigh Hunt and John Keats from the others such as Wordsworth and Byron, and drove a wedge between them by praising the one against the other group before concentrating his attacks on what he viciously dubbed the “Cockney School” with its associations of dark medievalism, lack of reason, indecent eroticism, provincial limitation, and low vulgarity. In his view, Coleridge, not London-born but London-bred in the same pauper school as Hunt, was “a greater Quack still” with his nebulous philosophy, meaning a greater quack than the “apothecary” Keats.³² Another

29 A.W. Schlegel, Vorlesungen über schöne Literatur und Kunst, MSS Berlin 1801 – 1804, in: Kritische Ausgabe der Vorlesungen, ed. Ernst Behler, Paderborn 1989, I. 538.

30 *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (October 1817), 38.

31 Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School*, 16 – 37.

32 *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (October 1817), 40.

attack came from the *Anti-Gallican Monitor* which ridiculed Hunt's politically left group as a revolutionary, and hence a criminal "school of poetry" bearing the same characteristics of Robin Hood medievalism and medieval ignorance of the Classical Tradition, combined with the arrogance of original genius. "There are sundry *Genii* yclep'd – Leigh Hunt, John Keats, John Reynolds, Percy Shelley, and I believe [...] at the heart of this desperate gang – Mr Hunt, the high Priest of Oppolo [sic, Cockney for Apollo] *nemcon*. in the Chair".³³ Such literally reactionary perspectives, however, strengthened the avant-garde group's sense of identity and fuelled its production of poetry in and for the group, producing a body of texts defining itself, from William Hazlitt's and Leigh Hunt's *The Round Table* (1817) to Hunt's *Foliage* (1818).³⁴ In the Romantic Period, new schools were usually constructed from an inimical conservative point of view and dubbed with a dysphemistic meaning of the given name: William Maginn's "romantic school of poetry" (against Coleridge and Hazlitt as literary theorists and critics)³⁵; George Canning's "NEW SCHOOL [...] of Jacobinical Poets" (against Erasmus Darwin, Thomas Beddoes, Schiller, Goethe); Francis Jeffrey's provincial "Lake School" (against Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, who had withdrawn from London literary salons to the country and created an artefact of primitive provincial diction in "open violation of the established laws of poetry");³⁶ Byron's "Suburban School" (against Keats and the Hunt circle);³⁷ Robert Southey's "Satanic School" (against the younger Romantic Radicals such as Byron, Shelley, and Keats); John Gibson Lockhart's "Moping School" (against Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges and his young followers in love with Collins, Coleridge, and themselves);³⁸ Lockhart's and John Wilson's "Cockney School" (against the Romantics of humble origin without any formal university education in the classics such as Leigh Hunt, William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, and John Keats); the *Monthly Review*'s "hyperbolically tremendous school" (against Coleridge and German Gothic *Schauerromantik*);³⁹ Thomas James Mathias's "Sans-Souci school" against Voltairean free-thought and blasphemy from France and Prussia);⁴⁰ or *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine's* "Gormandizing

33 *Anti-Gallican Monitor*, 8 June 1817. Reprinted from Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School*, 22.

34 *Ibid.* 15. Cf. Cicero's opposition to Catullus and the young "neoterici".

35 [Maginn], *Gallery of Literary Characters*, No 38, in: *Fraser's Magazine*, 8 (1833), 64.

36 [Jeffrey], *Review of Wordsworth's Poems in Two Volumes*, in: *Edinburgh Review*, October 1807, in: *Wordsworth: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Robert Woof, London 2001-, I. 201.

37 Byron, *Letter to John Murray*, 4 August 1821, in: *Letters and Journals*, ed. L.A. Marchand, London 1973–1981, VIII. 166.

38 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 17 (October 1825), 506–507. Also see D. Higgins, *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine*, London 2007, 23–24.

39 *Monthly Review*, 1819, in: *Coleridge: The Critical Heritage*, I. 400.

40 T.J. Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature, 1794–1797*, 16th edition London 1812, 76.

School of Oratory” (against the extemporizing sentimentality of the agitator John Lawless and other Irish “traitors, now hanged or expatriated”).⁴¹

Another motive for the construction of schools from an inimical point, kindred to fear of change or upheaval, was fear of stagnation or restoration, as numerous Romantics gave up their original revolutionary commitments. Heinrich Heine’s “Romantische Schule”, for instance, ridiculed those Romantic Platonists who, though former republicans, had betrayed their ideals and come to support the *ancien régime* (Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck, Hegel).⁴² The derogatory nature of these denominations becomes even clearer when we consider *Blackwood’s* self-parodic construction of a wide range of non-existent schools and their facetious names, as when *Blackwood’s* dubbed all poets that wrote for a patron and a good living the “Leg of Mutton School”:⁴³

It is the fashion of the present day to arrange poets into schools; and we have the Lake School, the Cockney School, the School of Pope, the Ballad School, and a dozen others [...] ⁴⁴

In an article entitled “The Sable School of Poetry”, an item of his popular burlesque *Warreniana* (1824) which included “shoe-blackening” parodies of self-promoting Romantic poets, William Frederick Deacon parodied *Blackwood’s* “school of ...” articles by way of the periodical’s typical self-irony.⁴⁵ With a reference to pugilism, the satire targeted *Blackwood’s* marketing strategies and culture of rough conservative argument through character assassination and blackening of reputations, which the *Maga’s* editors were well aware of.

Another hitherto unidentified contributor to *Blackwood’s* had a satirical letter published in the periodical in which a Dissenter and Romantic makes a fool of himself in the manner of Swift’s prose satires. The eccentric speaker pretends to act under the influence of religious enthusiasm and poetic inspiration, pleads in favour of open-air composition and country solitude and individualism, affirming that it is “the duty of every person of genius to form an entirely new school of his own”. Elaborating on the usual parallel of Dissenters and Romantics with their common preference for variety over unity, he founds the “new school of Jumpers and Shakers”.⁴⁶ Conservative critics would oppose the many new heterodox and sectarian schools, later summarized under the term “Ro-

41 *Noctes Ambrosianae*, XII, in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 14 (October 1823), 497–498.

42 Heine, *Die romantische Schule*, Hamburg 1836.

43 *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 9 (June 1821), 346. For useful comments see Nicholas Mason et al. (eds), *Blackwood’s Magazine, 1817–1825: Selections from the Maga’s Infancy, Pickering Masters*, 6 vols., London 2006, here VI. 55–56.

44 *Ibid.*

45 *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, IV. 92–101.

46 *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (1818), 555–556.

matic”, to the one established true school with its one established true creed, the Classical Tradition.⁴⁷ There must be an authoritative poetic like an authoritative bible, they argued, and every poet could not possibly be his own Aristotle. There exists a striking parallel between the debate on the “old and new faith” in the Reformation and Renaissance Period on the one hand and the debate on the “old and new school” in the Romantic Period on the other, when antagonists accused each other of new sectarianism on the one side and outdated tradition on the other.⁴⁸ Thus Lockhart, in the first of his Cockney-bashing papers in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, declared Leigh Hunt with his low origin, erotic indecency, and lack of a classical education disqualified “for becoming the founder of a respectable sect in poetry”.⁴⁹ Thus, Francis Jeffrey’s scathing review of Robert Southey’s oriental verse epic *Thalaba* (1801), in the first number of his newly-founded *Edinburgh Review* (1802), ridiculed the bigoted heresy and sectarianism of the Lake Poets:

The author who is now before us, belongs to a *sect* of poets, that has established itself in this country [...] The peculiar doctrines of this sect, it would not, perhaps, be very easy to explain; but, that they are *dissenters* from the established systems in poetry and criticism, is admitted, and proved indeed, by the whole tenor of their compositions.⁵⁰

Jeffrey’s assessment of Southey coincided with that of an anonymous reviewer of Southey’s edition of *Specimens of the Later English Poets* (1807) in the *Universal Magazine*. This reviewer puts into even sharper relief the Neoclassical doctrine that the rules of reason and good taste are universally the same and can alone convey literary longevity beyond the passing glare of mere ephemeral innovation and fashion:

Mr. Southey has [...] aspired to be the founder of a new school of poetry, and he has succeeded as all attempts at eccentricity, all perversions of genius, all violations of common sense, will ever succeed; by attracting the notice, the imitation, the applause of weak and giddy minds, and by exciting in men of sound judgment and pure taste, ridicule and contempt.⁵¹

Jeffrey and this anonymous reviewer were late Enlightenment Augustans, who stood up in defence of the one true catholic school of Neoclassicism that the

47 See also Kevin Gilmartin, Romanticism and Religious Modernity: From Natural Supernaturalism to Literary Sectarianism, in: *The New Cambridge History of English Literature, English Romantic Literature*, 621–647.

48 Uwe Baumann, Der Kampf um den rechten Glauben und um die Scheidung des Königs in der Literatur und Kultur der Frühen Tudorzeit, in: *Streitkultur: Okzidentale Traditionen des Streitens in Literatur, Geschichte und Kunst*, ed. Uwe Baumann/Arnold Becker/Astrid Steiner-Weber, *Super Alta Perennis*, Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2008, 131–146.

49 Z [Lockhart] in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (October 1817), 39.

50 [Francis Jeffrey] in: *Edinburgh Review*, 1 (1802), 63–64.

51 *Universal Magazine*, 8 (July 1807), 32.

Romantics had abandoned in favour of different national, regional, and personal standards of taste. Lady Anne Hamilton held the same conviction, from a Tory point of view. She was the faithful friend of the Prince of Wales's (and later King George the Fourth's) unfortunate wife Caroline of Brunswick, a cultivated woman of letters and Neoclassical critic who published all her works anonymously, assuming the mask of a male speaker. To publish sharp-witted political and satirical texts under her name, and to address "the classical reader" and "the learned reader" in the tradition of the *Anti-Jacobin* and William Gifford, would have given the lie to her Toryism and its official concept of the role of women. Hamilton's *Epics of the Ton* (1807), a verse satire written in heroic couplets, indicted new schools in poetry and, in general, all modish efforts in all fields of life including politics and fashion. Written under the impression of the quick fame and quick oblivion of the Preromantic Della Crusicans, her work teems with attacks against the Romantic poets, above all Wordsworth, Scott, and Southey. Significantly, she opposed the immortal fame of William Pitt after his demise against the expected oblivion of these Romantic poets with their lyrical revival.⁵² Southey, she observed in a footnote, had better train himself in the "old school" of the immortal Dryden instead of joining the "new school" with its quick mass production and risking the fate of Dryden's forgotten contemporary Sir Richard Blackmore:

This man, the Blackmore of the age, if we look at the number of his epics, might become its Dryden, if his fancy were chastened by judgment, and his taste cleansed from the maggots of the new school.⁵³

In Neoclassically-minded reviews of Romantic poets, Southey was often ironically marked out as a worthy successor to Blackmore, the ridiculous name that the earlier Augustans had mentioned whenever they had lashed quick and careless literary production. As "founder of a new school of poetry" specialized in experiments of spontaneous overflow, Southey had followed the example of Blackmore rather than that of the "old school" of polished and finished quality. *Multa non multum* is the classical argument:

Homer, Virgil, Tasso, Milton, were content with giving one epic to the world, and that the result of many years' painful labour and frequent revision; but Mr. Southey boldly comes forward with them as fast as they can be written.⁵⁴

A reviewer of the Scottish Gothic poet Anne Bannerman's *Tales of Superstition and Chivalry* (1800, 1802) in the conservative *British Critic* (launched in 1793 by

52 [Hamilton], *The Epics of the Ton, or, The Glories of the Great World*, 2nd ed. London 1807, 127–141.

53 *Ibid.* 9.

54 *Universal Magazine*, 8 (July 1807), 33.

two Anglican clergymen in support of King and Church) acknowledged the author's talent, but chided her uniform fixation on what he called "Tales of Wonder". Bannerman's "fancy perverted to the purpose of raising only horror" estranged those readers who "have not learned to accommodate their taste to a transient fashion".⁵⁵ And a reviewer of Coleridge's rejected tragicomedy *Zapolya* (1817), possibly the arch-conservative George Croly, found fault with Coleridge's remaining but outmoded new-school puerilities, metaphysical absurdities, and lyrical songs. What he thought especially "silly" is, paradoxically, the only quotation from *Zapolya* that has remained in the cultural memory, Glycine's beautiful lyric "A sunny shaft did I behold".⁵⁶ In all these pronouncements against Romantic writing, any deviation from the Classical Tradition is castigated as ephemeral fashion in a time of quickly changing fashions, the age of Beau Brummell.

More liberal critics, however, would gratefully acknowledge the heterogeneity of schools in a turbulent time of innovation and experiment as well as of the lyrical revival. This was the judgment of a reviewer of Wordsworth's *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807) in the *Eclectic Review*, a long-lived monthly with a telling name indicating welcome of diversity:

IN this age of poetical experiment, Mr. Wordsworth has distinguished himself, by his "Lyrical Ballads", as one of the boldest and most fortunate adventurers in the field of innovation.⁵⁷

Minds set on reform like the reviewers of the *Monthly Repository*, the official organ of the Unitarians, did not welcome Wordsworth's turn to established Anglican conservatism. They found fault with the later Wordsworth's tameness and search for respectability, which no longer rebelled against the tyranny and abuses of the establishment. "In truth, since Wordsworth changed his politics, his writings have lost much of their charm".⁵⁸ And they were upset about his steady rise from early derision in the Romantic Period to later fame in the Victorian Age, as it was favourably attested by Wordsworth's former adversary John Wilson (alias Christopher North) in an 1843 number of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. By then and in Tory eyes, the political and aesthetic heretic from the true school had become Jeffrey rather than Wordsworth himself:

As day is partitioned between light and darkness, so has the public taste as to Wordsworth been divided between his reverers and the followers of the Jeffrey heresy. After a lengthened winter, Wordsworth's glory is now in the long summer days; all

55 *British Critic*, 21 (January 1803), 78.

56 *Literary Gazette*, 43 (15 November 1817), 307–308, in: Coleridge: *The Critical Heritage*, II. 302–303.

57 *Eclectic Review*, 4 (1808), 35.

58 *Monthly Repository*, 17 (1822), 361.

good judgments that lay torpid have been awakened, and the light prevails against the darkness.⁵⁹

What scholars have come to designate as the later “Victorian Wordsworth” struck the dissenting advocates of variety, diversity, and innovation in poetry and politics as cowardly opportunism. Just as in the case of “Victorian Coleridge” constructed by his daughter Sara and her husband, Coleridge’s nephew Henry Nelson Coleridge, Wordsworth was tailored to the Victorian Age by means of selection, suppression, and rewriting.⁶⁰ The reputation of every canonical author both during his lifetime and posthumously is the sum of his intrinsic literary quality and of his social construction, proceeding from a productive culture of contention.

In the Victorian Period, anti-Romantic critics continued to label the innovative and experimental authors of the Romantic tradition as belonging to various dissenting and heretical schools instead of one “Romantic school”. So did the Scottish Tory William Edmonstoune Aytoun when, in a spoof review contributed to *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* in 1854, he assigned a number of young British poets like Philip James Bailey, Sydney Dobell, and Alexander Smith to the “Spasmodic School” (as he dubbed it) of the Byron succession. In his view, they were as immoral as to endear the Faustian Byronic-Romantic-Spasmodic hero to the public. Those Spasmodists nourished scepticism, fed mere wonder and curiosity, and counteracted their poets’ duty to teach and educate their readers. Aytoun here used a derogatory epithet applied to non-classical poetry by Thomas Carlyle and Charles Kingsley, and mocked them in a burlesque review of (with long quotations from) a non-existent Spasmodic tragedy by a non-existent author of the name of T. Percy Jones, entitled *Firmilian, or, The Student of Badajoz*. This preceded the publication of Aytoun’s complete and extremely successful parody, *Firmilian: A Spasmodic Tragedy* (1854).⁶¹ With the protagonist’s telling name denoting excess of colour (“vermilion”) and superstition (“familiar”), this parody of the Spasmodists was a classical protest against extravagance and a plea for sanity.⁶² Significantly, Aytoun was on the staff of and a regular contributor to *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, whereas his chief opponent George Gilfillan, champion of the Ro-

59 [Edward Quillinan], *Imaginary Conversation between Mr Walter Savage Landor and the Editor of Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* [John Wilson], in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 53 (April 1843), 530.

60 Alan D. Vardy, *Constructing Coleridge*, Basingstoke 2010, *passim*.

61 [Aytoun] in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 75 (May 1854), 533–551. Also see Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *The Victorian Temper*, chapter 2 *The Spasmodic School*, Cambridge MA and London 1952, 41–65, and Mark Allen Weinstein, *William Edmonstoune Aytoun and the Spasmodic Controversy*, New Haven CT 1968, 119–124 and 124–152.

62 Weinstein, 124–125.

mantics and critical supporter of the Spasmodists, was a Whig associated with *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*. In an article in the Tory *Fraser's Magazine* of the previous year, Charles Kingsley had compared the spasmodically exalted innovator Smith and the regularly classical traditionalist Pope to the detriment of the innovator.⁶³ And five years later, in a review of the poems of Byron's successor Thomas Lovell Beddoes contributed to the *North British Review*, Gerald Massey defined the Spasmodists much as mainstream Victorian poets and critics characterized the Romantics: literary inheritors of the turmoil of the French Revolution.⁶⁴ In his view, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Dobell were unfortunate deviators from what is common and healthy, cultivating "the involution of thinking rather than the evolution of thought", taking "a wilful delight in remote and involved thinking, abrupt and jerking mental movements" as well as "love of astonishing and of exciting popular wonder", which will degrade a writer.⁶⁵ Massey's Victorian return to the values of the Classical Tradition is evident: general nature, rational lucidity, self-control, and moral education of the reader. As a son of a poor canal boatman without regular schooling and as a Christian Socialist poet, however, Massey described these values in terms of very practical Victorian needs and never mentioned Horace or Virgil. Romanticism with its claim to spontaneity, inspiration, and youthful innovation and with its tendency to introspection and confession survived throughout the Victorian Period, as a counter-voice and counter-movement to the Victorian Post-Enlightenment cult of "artisan" poetry, form, reason, progress, and the Classical Tradition. It prepared the Neoromanticism of the Decadence and Fin de Siècle with its frank substitution of artificiality for naturalness and with its new construction of a pagan and amoral Classical Tradition for the justification of Algernon Charles Swinburne's, Walter Pater's, and Oscar Wilde's anti-bourgeois life styles.

Experiment, "romanticism" as continuous innovation of "classicism" in the sense of Stendhal and Walter Pater,⁶⁶ implies the faculty of writing in diverse ways, old and new. Byron was not the only Proteus of the Romantic Period who could write both Neoclassical and Romantic styles – so could the Preromantic Robert Burns, who also wrote Augustan heroic couplets in formulaic English Augustan diction; so could Percy Shelley; so could the Neoclassicists Thomas Campbell and Samuel Rogers, Thomas Love Peacock and Walter Savage Landor, John Wilson and David Macbeth Moir, who were all fascinated by Romanticism,

63 [Charles Kingsley] in: *Fraser's Magazine*, 48 (October 1853), 452–466.

64 [Massey] in: *North British Review*, 28 (February 1858), 236–237.

65 *Ibid.* 239–240.

66 Stendhal, *Qu'est-ce que le romantisme*, MS ca 1820, 1854, and Pater, *Romanticism*, 1876. See René Wellek, *Concepts of Criticism, The Concept of Romanticism*, New Haven and London, 1963, 143–144.

notwithstanding their championship of the Augustan Classical Tradition. In the words of one of his editors, Landor stood “spanning with his works the gap between the days when literature was written by learned men for learned men and the days now come when literature is written by anybody for everybody else”.⁶⁷ Like Byron and Shelley, Landor wrote both erudite Latinized and popular plain English texts, alternatively arguing against one or the other. The Scotsmen Wilson and Moir were Tory collaborators of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, to which they contributed mordant parodies of Romantic poems as well as serious Romantic poems in various strains, graveyard poetry in the style of Young and Blair, landscape poetry in the style of Wordsworth, and elegiacally disillusionist poetry in the style of Byron. Even staunch Victorians and Tory supporters of the Classical Tradition, Aytoun and Macaulay, wrote balladry in the tradition of Walter Scott.⁶⁸ Conservative critics and reviewers, however, tended to summarize all these “schools”, “moods”, and “sects” under the banner of “the new school”, forcing the most various poets into one inimical phalanx, and, by consequence, into a slowly growing feeling of identity and an ultimate designation of “the Romantic school”. The satirical reviewer of Coleridge’s *Christabel and Other Poems* (1816) in the *Scourge and Satirist*, we shall see, meant to chastise and reform these Romantic poets, to make them desert their experiments, to submit to professional criticism, and to resume the long Classical Tradition ready at hand. In a year of high political unrest and the Spa Field Riots, his choice of the word “club” for “school” contributed to the usual socio-political undertone of such reviews, implying the reproach of Jacobinism, conspiracy, and high treason.⁶⁹

The Romantic poets in “the club”, however, cultivated many and even contrary expressions, or, as Moir called them, “Moods of the Mind”.⁷⁰ Many authors of the Romantic Period would alternately write in the Neoclassical School as well as in a Romantic School, just as many early seventeenth-century poets had written verse both in the Baroque “School of Donne” and in the Neoclassical “School of Jonson”. The inimical frontline formations of opposite schools merely served the purpose of controversy, thus gaining a more precise profile. The same had happened during and after the fourth century AD, when the most various syncretistic creeds mixed from ancient Greek and Roman with Asian and Judaeo-Christian ideas had come into conflict with each other, bringing about the habitual, though simplified, Pagan-Christian divide, – heuristic rather than

67 Charles G. Crump in the Introduction to his six-volume edition of Landor’s *Imaginary Conversations*, London 1891, I. XXVI.

68 Weinstein, *The Spasmodic Controversy*, 43 – 59.

69 Coleridge: *The Critical Heritage*, II. 268 – 278.

70 [Moir], *Moods of the Mind*, in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 7 (April 1820), 45 – 47. See the commentary in *Selections from the Maga’s Infancy*, I. 141.

precise and differentiated like the later Classical-Romantic divide. The same applies to the heuristic Whig-Tory divide, especially at a time when there were no party systems with organizational structures and programmes and when incisive historical events such as the American and French Revolutions changed divergent ideas, in many minds of different people with various tempers, on what was to be reformed or conserved.⁷¹

These objections notwithstanding, such divides are indispensable, in the heat of current controversy as well as from the cool distance of later historiography. The above-mentioned pattern-building animal man cannot do without subsumptions if he would not lose his orientation in a chaos of disordered details. The ranks of the adversary have to be made clear, even if, in reality, they are not so, just as in physical warfare. Thomas De Quincey, for instance, knew that the gathering of the Wordsworths, Coleridge, and Southey in their Lake District “colony” was due to accidents and family connections, and that their denomination as “the *Lake School*” was due to their hostile critics, who sought “to find in their writings all the agreements and common characteristics which their blunder had presumed”.⁷² After the death of John Keats and in view of taunting Tory obituaries on that “Cockney poet”, Keats’s competitor Bryan Waller Procter alias Barry Cornwall remembered how they had both been promoted by Leigh Hunt and stood up in defence of Keats’s poetry, the more easily so as Cornwall had garnered the public plaudit and Keats the public blame for Romantic poems written on similar subjects.⁷³ In atonement for a troubled competitive relationship, it was Barry Cornwall who wrote the laudatory review of Keats’s poetry in Robert Morehead’s Whig *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* when Keats’s career was in the doldrums, suggesting a common school over against hostile traditionalist critics.⁷⁴ Gifford’s identification of “the *Della Cruscan School*” worked on the same principle of defining one’s own position against a constructed hostile battle line, which included many names of poets who did not contribute to *The Florence Miscellany* (1785) and gave the “English Della Cruscan School” their group consciousness.⁷⁵ Edward Jerningham had a point when, in his counter-satire, he reproached Gifford with using “Della Crusca” as an all-inclusive term for all his enemies in poetry:

71 Kevin Gilmartin, *Writing against Revolution: Literary Conservatism in Britain, 1790–1832*, Cambridge 2007, passim, and Pascal Fischer, *Literarische Entwürfe des Konservativismus 1790–1805*, Paderborn 2010, 9–31.

72 De Quincey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in: *Works*, X, 311.

73 Richard Marggraf Turley, *In the Temple of Fame*, in: *TLS*, 5501 (5 September 2008), 13–15.

74 [Cornwall] in: *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany*, 7 (1820), 107–110, 313–316. For the attribution see Turley, *Bright Stars: John Keats, “Barry Cornwall” and Romantic Literary Culture*, Liverpool 2009, 67–68.

75 W.N. Hargreaves-Maudsley, *The English Della Cruscan and Their Time 1783–1828*, The Hague 1967, 29.

Yet to degrade all other Bards he pants,
 Frets, bounces, bullies, rages, rhymes, and rants!
 Does any poet wound his jealous eyes,
 The maniac 'Crusca, Della Crusca' cries.⁷⁶

In his Neoclassical (as opposed to his Romantic) moods, especially on the occasions of the numerous contemporary attacks against the didactic and regular poetry of Alexander Pope, Byron supported the cause of the Augustan Classical Tradition, Neoclassicism, and Toryism. Refusing “to sacrifice what I firmly believe in as the Christianity of English Poetry – the Poetry of Pope”,⁷⁷ he would pour scorn on the many “schools” of his time subsuming the many poets (and especially female poets) of his time, from Wordsworth and Southey to Hunt and Hazlitt. That multiplicity of new, worthless, modern, heretical and sectarian “schools” replaced the one and true Classical Tradition, like iconoclastic youths despising all traditions for the sake of self-assertive rebellion:

But the Edinburgh Reviewers, and the Lakers – and Hunt and his school, and every body else with their School, and even Moore – without a School – and dilettanti lecturers at Institutions – and elderly Gentlemen who translate and imitate – and young ladies who listen and repeat – Baronets who draw indifferent frontispieces for bad poets, and noblemen who let them dine with them – in the Country, the small body of the wits and the great body of the Blues – have latterly united in a depreciation of which their fathers would have been as much ashamed as their Children will be. [...] A paper of the Connoisseur says that “It is observed by the French that a Cat, a Priest, and an old woman are sufficient to constitute a religious sect in England.”⁷⁸

In Germany, where the opposition of “classical” and “romantic” took its rise, all the various manifestations or “schools” of Romanticism were soon summarized under one “school”. Thus August Graf von Platen, in many respects akin to Byron as a Romantic Disillusionist and as a victim of social ostracism and as an elitist nobleman in favour of liberty and equal rights, increasingly advocated the cause of the Classical Tradition against the various Positive Romantics, whom he pressed into a common inimical frontline and labelled “neue Schule”. As a young student of law in Würzburg und Erlangen, he had read Byron alongside with the *Anthologia Graeca*, picking from each what he needed: the homosexual Greek verses, the bisexual Neoclassical Byron.⁷⁹ In rigid classical German hexameters composed in October 1817, Platen impugned both the insensitive popular taste

76 Jerningham, Lines on the “Baviad” and “The Pursuits of Literature”, 1797, 1806, lines 13 – 16, in: British Satire 1785 – 1840, ed. John Strachan et al., London: Pickering & Chatto 2003, IV. 121.

77 Byron, Some Observations upon an Article in Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine, 15 March 1820, in: Complete Miscellaneous Prose, ed. Andrew Nicholson, Oxford 1991, 106.

78 Ibid. 106 – 7.

79 Peter Bumm, August Graf von Platen: Eine Biographie, Paderborn 1990, 194 – 201.

and the religious superstition of the vulgar, pleading classical sound against noise, classical form against chaos, classical sense against piety, classical knowledge against ignorance, classical myth against fairy-tale, classical polish and rule against vulgarity of dialects, classicism against medievalism, elitism against popularity, and cosmopolitanism against nationalism:

Tadelt ihr mich, daß ich noch die homerischen Götter beschwöre?
 Daß ich zu griechischer Form flüchtete, tadelt ihr mich?
 Leider gelang mir's nie, euch selbst zu verstehn und das Eure,
 Nicht den andächtigen Sinn, nicht das Geklingel des Schalls.
 Möge der Pöbel sich freun an der Trommel der Janitscharen;
 Aber ein feineres Ohr huldige feinerem Klang!
 Laßt das Volk sich erbaun am anachoretischen Wahnsinn,
 Wollt ihr Märchen, so zieht frömmigen sinnige vor!
 Deutsche rühmt ihr zu sein und verachtet die fremden Gebilde;
 Doch wer anders als ihr habt uns die Sprache verletzt!⁸⁰

In later aphorisms in provocative hexameters, Platen opposed the exclusive literature and art of the Classical Tradition against populist Romantic degeneration, a school of beauty versus a school of deformity:

Häßliches gibt es und Schönes allein; der Begriff der Romantik
 Sollte beschönigen bloß Häßliches, aber umsonst!⁸¹
 Gotische Kunst ist nichts, als völlig entartete Griechheit
 Durch das moderne Geschlecht weitergebildete Kunst.⁸²

And, in his drama *Die verhängnisvolle Gabel* (1826), he parodied the Gothic German *Schicksalstragödie* of the type of Franz Grillparzer's first published play, *Die Ahnfrau* (1817), which, in his view, exploited the noble classical tragedy of fate for cheap marketable thrills and merely sensational stage effects.

In fact, such constructions of "schools" allowed critics to attack their enemies *en bloc*.⁸³ Leigh Hunt, critic, journalist, and a strong defender of Romantic and liberal principles against Neoclassicism and Toryism, was the powerful centre of a literary and political group (though not an institutionalized club) of young men who discovered their common views under the brunt of inimical satires and reviews. It was "a group so ambitious and effective that conservative forces could not let it go unchallenged".⁸⁴ Members were the Romantic poets John Keats, Percy Shelley, Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, Samuel Rogers, and John Hamilton

80 Platen, *An die neue Schule*, 1817, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Max Koch – Erich Petzet, Historisch-kritische Ausgabe, 12 vols., Leipzig 1910, VI. 196–197.

81 Platen, *Epigramme*, 1827, IV. 174.

82 *Ibid.* IV. 214.

83 *Romanticism: An Anthology*, headnote to John Gibson Lockhart, ed. Duncan Wu, 3rd edition, Oxford 2006, 1323–24.

84 Anthony Holden, *The Wit in the Dungeon: A Life of Leigh Hunt*, London 2005, 127.

Reynolds. At a time when green was again the colour of reform, refuge in the green of a London suburb signalled “popular culture” versus “high culture” or “polite culture”, rebellion, sexual licentiousness, admiration for the social rebel Robin Hood and for the adulterer Paolo in Hunt’s *Story of Rimini* (1816), whom Hunt represented as a victim of the sexual politics of the *ancien régime*.⁸⁵

The polemical distinction between “high culture” and “popular culture”, so named in the nineteenth century, became politically virulent in the Romantic Period. It reanimated a conflict that had already erupted in the War of the Theatres, at the time of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, and that was to be continued in the Victorian Period when Matthew Arnold (following Ernest Renan) distinguished between an ennobling “high culture” and a debasing “ordinary popular literature”.⁸⁶ The Stuart Court of the Restoration had suppressed popular culture for its revolutionary potential, as experienced in the Civil Wars and in the Commonwealth. The ordinary people’s call for equality and rebellion against aristocratic privileges at the time of the French Revolution resumed the old conflict, establishing a sharp frontline between classical literature for the educated in Greek and Latin (and supporters of the *ancien régime*) and non-classical literature for the uneducated in Greek and Latin (and enemies of the *ancien régime*). As always, this group formation levelled necessary distinctions and served the interest of polemical argument rather than historical truth. The old established “school” with its “polite culture” excluded the “new schools” with their “popular culture” and stigmatized them as conducive to chaos and atheism.

Keats and Shelley first met under Hunt’s roof in Hampstead in 1816, and, in his brother John’s very liberal weekly *Examiner*, Leigh Hunt presented Keats to the literary world, giving him the final encouragement to become a poet. In the wake of Preromantic circles of sympathizing friends and their cult of sensibility, the Hampstead coterie was a community of writers, editors, dilettantes, and friends, who published, read and reviewed each other’s works. This circle included, among others, Keats, Percy and Mary Shelley, John Hamilton Reynolds, Cornelius Webb, Horace Smith, P.G. Patmore, Charles Cowden Clarke and wife Mary Novello, Hazlitt, the brothers Charles and James Ollier, Thomas Barnes, Charles Lamb, and Barry Cornwall.⁸⁷ Now, however, in contrast to earlier Preromantic circles, the community formed a bulwark against hostile Tory and Neoclassical adversaries; little wonder the contentious Leigh Hunt saw this group as “a new school of poetry” opposed to the Classical Tradition, a view

85 Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, 116–133.

86 Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, London 1869, *passim*.

87 Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School*, 21, and Turley, *Bright Stars*, 92.

which he maintained and sharpened to the end of his life in 1859.⁸⁸ On the other hand and quite unlike the Neoclassicists, the Romantics were too strong individualists to allow themselves to be easily summarized under one school. There was a long feud between members of the Hunt circle and the Lake Poets, as in the satirical reviews of Coleridge's poetry and plays by Thomas Barnes, the later Liberal editor of the *Times*, who found Coleridge "deformed by sentimentalities, and whines, and infant lisplings."⁸⁹ Robert Southey, for instance, wrote a review of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) in which he found fault with Wordsworth's waste of genius on trite subjects and Coleridge's "Dutch attempt at German sublimity".⁹⁰ Although William Wordsworth and Thomas De Quincey were his friends, Charles Lamb turned against their predilection for the sublime and horrible, defending his own prosaic, domestic, and urban preference. His Elia-essay "Witches and Other Night-Fears" (1821), with its anti-Enlightenment justification of dreams and superstitions as eternal "archetypes", did not lead him to an awareness of a common Romantic School.⁹¹ In a scathingly satirical assessment of *Prometheus Unbound*, William Hazlitt attacked Percy Shelley as a "philosophic fanatic" with a diseased brain, for his volatile Platonic fantasies and lack of "any thing solid or any thing lasting".⁹² Percy Shelley found fault with his friend Keats's "narrow and wretched taste", meaning his leafy and sensuous style hid rather than adorned the energy and beauty of his Neoplatonic thought.⁹³ By implication, Shelley here argued with Pope against a fellow Romantic at the height of the Pope and Bowles controversy. Keats identified his benefactor and literary ally Leigh Hunt with his favourite adversary Wordsworth for the narrowness of Hunt's "modern" perspective and for having "a palpable design upon us", whereby Keats polemically gave preference to the wider view of the "ancients".⁹⁴ His friend John Hamilton Reynolds, to whom Keats wrote these words, contributed a satirical skit to the *London*

88 Holden, chapter 5 A New School of Poetry, 91 – 120.

89 [Barnes] in: *Examiner*, 266 (31 January 1813), in: Coleridge: The Critical Heritage, I. 122.

90 [Southey] in: *Critical Review*, 24 (October 1798), quoted from: Duncan Wu (ed.), *Romanticism: An Anthology*, 731.

91 Charles Lamb, *Elia: Essays which have appeared under that signature in the London Magazine, Witches and Other Night-Fears*, London 1823, in: *Works*, ed. William MacDonald, 12 vols., London 1903, I. 129 – 138.

92 Hazlitt, *Table Talk, On Paradox and Commonplace*, 1822, in: Rosa Karl, *Paradoxe Paradiesschöpfung: Untersuchung zu einer Ethik und Rhetorik des Un-Vernünftigen in den Texten Percy Bysshe Shelleys*, Trier: WVT 2011, 217 – 218.

93 P.B. Shelley, *Letter to Byron*, May 1821, in: *Complete Works*, ed. R. Ingpen – W.E. Peck, London and New York NY 1965, X. 265. See also Mark J. Bruhn, *Keats's Wretched Taste*, in: *Romantic Voices, Romantic Poetics*, ed. Christoph Bode – Katharina Rennhak, Trier 2005, 151 – 166.

94 Keats, *Letter to John Hamilton Reynolds*, 3 February 1818, in: *Letters*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, Cambridge MA 1958, I. 224.

Magazine, “The Literary Police Office, Bow Street”, in which, in the style of a police report, he facetiously charged the Lake Poets with crimes such as theft of a pony or idling about the suburbs of town. Wordsworth is here ironically acquitted for unsoundness of mind, thus implicitly attacked with the same favourite argument that Neoclassicists advanced against the Romantic poets, madness in social isolation:

Yesterday the magistrates [...] were employed the whole day in hearing the charges preferred against literary offenders. [...] WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, a pedlar by trade, that hawks about shoe-laces and philosophy, was put to the bar, charged with stealing a poney, value 40 s. from a Mrs. Foy, of Westmoreland; but as no one was near him at the time, and as he was *beside himself*, the charge could not be brought home.⁹⁵

Hunt, again, saw Wordsworth as an egoist depraved by “low-fettered tastes and solitary morbidities”, living apart from human “sociality”, meaning such sympathizing social circles as Hunt’s own at Hampstead.⁹⁶ Nor would the Hunt brothers recognize Blake as one of their school, in spite of Blake’s Romantic view of the redemptive imagination and his opposition to a rigid Classical Tradition. Robert Hunt’s strictures on Blake’s imaginative illustrations and his airy-fairy visions in the *Examiner* (1809) led to Blake’s defamation of Robert Hunt as the destructive Giant Hand, the eldest of the twelve Sons of Albion and the Reasoning Spectre, in *Jerusalem* (1804–1820).⁹⁷ Robert Hunt’s review discloses his narrow concept of the “new school”. The same blindness concerning kinship appears from Leigh Hunt’s and William Hazlitt’s attacks on Wordsworth⁹⁸ with his “cant of humanity”, “a person who founded a school of poetry on sheer humanity, on idiot boys and mad mothers”.⁹⁹ Significantly, Napoleon’s admirer William Hazlitt here took exception at Wordsworth’s combination of “Jacobin poetry” with “anti-Jacobin politics”, ranking politics before aesthetics. Blake, again, opposed the bold visionary nature of Dante’s medieval poetry to the cold Augustan regularity of Horace, Dryden, and Pope – a Romantic commonplace which gave some degree of unity to what a favourable contemporary critic, Robert Morehead, Whig co-editor of the *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary*

95 [Reynolds] in: *London Magazine*, 7 (February 1823), 157–158.

96 Hunt’s note 10 to his verse satire *The Feast of the Poets*, 1814, in: *Selected Writings*, ed. Greg Kucich, John Strachan et al, *The Pickering Masters*, London 2003, V. 71.

97 *Blake: The Critical Heritage*, ed. G.E. Bentley, London 1975, 119–125.

98 *Wordsworth: The Critical Heritage*, I. 651–54, 366–81, 879–81.

99 [Hazlitt] in: *Examiner*, 469 (22 December 1816), in: *Complete Works*, ed. P.P. Howe, London 1930–34, VII. 144. Not contained in Hazlitt, *Selected Writings*, ed. Duncan Wu, 9 volumes, *Pickering Masters*, London 1998. This more recent edition is referred to for material not included in Howe’s edition as well as for its excellent annotations of selected texts. Newly discovered or newly attributed works are quoted from: Hazlitt, *New Writings*, ed. Duncan Wu, 2 volumes, Oxford 2007.

Miscellany, called the “modern school” of poetry. Morehead’s suspicion that, by 1818, the Romantics did not yet know the fact of their common school was justified:

[...] the modern school of poetry which has arisen in this country within the last thirty years, comes closer to the manner of Dante than any other; and this very remarkable poet actually combines many of the leading traits of the most eminent of our distinguished contemporaries. They do not know it, and probably never thought of it, but he is really at the head of their school.¹⁰⁰

The “Romantic School”, originally constructed from an outer, hostile perspective finally came to be identified under that name, although its heterogeneity and dissensions were considerable, neither synthesized nor reconciled in the work of any poet, and although the usefulness of the term “Romantic” to denote the national and individual diversity of the Romantics was and still is matter for endless debate.

Inimical perspective, like epideictic rhetoric, necessarily contorts facts through simplification, establishing a unified enemy frontline useful in physical as well as mental warfare. However, it also serves to strengthen the cause of various hitherto separate adversaries in giving them a sense of unity and identity. Thus, it counteracts the old eristic maxim of *divide et impera*. The Romantic Period was well aware of this contortion of perspective – witness James Sayers’s print entitled *Mr Burke’s Pair of Spectacles for Shortsighted Politicians* (1791), featuring a gigantic pair of spectacles through which Edmund Burke’s conservative *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) united the Radical Charles James Fox and the Liberal Richard Brinsley Sheridan with Thomas Paine and Richard Price as common traitorous allies of “Atheists, Demagogues, the Mob”.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, Sayers was of Pitt’s rather than Fox’s party, which gives his analytical perception special weight. In fact, the various revolutionary critics of the English Crown, Government, and Church were just as disunited and disjointed as the Romantic poets, so that what was later summarized under the banner of the Radical press (Henry White’s *Independent Whig*, Thomas Jonathan Wooler’s *Black Dwarf*, Leigh and John Hunt’s *Examiner*, William Cobbett’s *Political Register*, and many others) actually abused each other as often as they did the government.¹⁰² The political and aesthetic establishment, much more homogeneous and powerful than their scattered adversaries, eventually welded them together in their own and history’s perception

100 [Morehead], On the Poetical Character of Dante, in: *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany*, 82 (1818), 226.

101 Thomas Pfau, *Paranoia Historicized*, in: Stephen C. Behrendt (ed.), *Romanticism, Radicalism, and the Press*, Detroit MI 1997, 50–51.

102 Paul Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern: World Society 1815–1830*, London 1991, 367.

and would even see them in one group with literary progressive yet politically neutral periodicals such as John Scott's *London Magazine*.

There existed an earlier analogue in the Protestant Dissenters or Non-conformists, whose cult of individuality, sensibility, and variety contributed to the formation of Romanticism, and to whom the Established Anglican Church provided a feeling of identity notwithstanding their enormous variety and even contrariety of denominational beliefs. Tolerance of all kinds of religious and aesthetic dissent vanished in the Romantic Period due to the French Revolution, so that Dissenters and Romantics came under the same pressure and even suspicions of high treason.¹⁰³ The Dissenter and Preromantic Anna Letitia Barbauld showed, in a pamphlet, how the dysphemistic stigma of dissent could be turned into a virtue, in the interest of the formation and designation of a new heterogeneous group:

You have refused us [the repeal of the Corporation Act and Test Act], and by so doing, you keep us under the eyes of the public, in the interesting point of view of men who suffer under a deprivation of their rights. You have set a mark of separation upon us, and it is not in our power to take it off, but it is in our power to determine whether it shall be a disgraceful stigma or an honourable distinction.¹⁰⁴

John Keats, whose lifelong republican sympathies were fostered in John Clarke's Dissenting Enfield School, founded by the Baptist minister and republican John Collett Ryland, held similar sympathies in favour of variety and liberty as opposed to uniformity and rule.¹⁰⁵ Dissent, Romanticism, and "Jacobinism" often went hand in hand.

Hence, Anglicans and Neoclassicists made use of the same argument of mental disease and madness against Dissenters, Radicals, and Romantics: erratic individualists breaking away from the healthy norm of rule and reason. Alexander Watson, Town Clerk of Port Glasgow, thus wrote a third-rate "Hudibrastic satire" in the tradition of Samuel Butler against all those spiritually quixotic nonconformists and mystics in religion, politics, and literature. It was published in 1794 and, together with the *Anti-Leveller* (1793), may be regarded as a precursor of the far superior *Anti-Jacobin*:

So opposite are these to reason,
They turn the brain that them much gaze on;
And each the other contradicts,

103 William McCarthy, *Anna Letitia Barbauld*, Baltimore MD 2008, 8–16.

104 Barbauld, *An Address to the Opposers of the Corporation and Test Acts, 1790*, quoted from: Daniel E. White, *Early Romanticism and Religious Dissent*, Cambridge 2006, 11. The Corporation and Test Acts from the reign of King Charles II, which excluded both Protestant and Catholic Dissenters from public offices, were not repealed until 1828.

105 Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, 27–50.

And of such folly gross convicts,
 They only serve to clog the mind
 With mystic notions undefin'd;
 Chimeras mankind to enslave,
 And him of's judgment to bereave;
 Mere bugbears, frights, nonentities,
 A craz'd mind's propensities,
 Which, on the brain, in fancy, play,
 By night, and on the mind by day.¹⁰⁶

This explains why the English Preromantics with their literature of aesthetic dissent were among the first to use the term “romantic” in a positive sense, when they justified the beautiful fantasies, irregularities, and obscurities of Ariosto, Spenser, and Shakespeare, thus laying the foundation for the later Classical-Romantic divide.¹⁰⁷ In his lectures of 1812, Coleridge, according to the testimony of Henry Crabb Robinson, followed this classification of poetry into “the ancient and the romantic”, meaning neoclassical and modern, with an implicit self-identification.¹⁰⁸ A convert from Anglicanism to Dissent in his Radical years, Coleridge himself was under constant Neoclassical attack as a mystic with a brain confused by opium and German Romantic philosophy, a quixotic deviant from the Classical Tradition. In his contrastive classification, Coleridge seems to have referred to a debate carried on in Germany, to which Byron referred in the postscript of his – rejected – dedication of *Marino Faliero* (MS 1820) to Goethe and which he thought unfortunate because he himself wrote in both styles: “I perceive that in Germany as well as in Italy there is a great struggle about what they call *Classical and Romantic* terms which were not subjects of Classification in England – at least when I left it four or five years ago”.¹⁰⁹ This was the contrastive terminology prepared by Thomas Warton in his *History of English Poetry* (1774) and August Wilhelm Schlegel in his Viennese *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur* (1809–1811), where Schlegel opposed the Classical and Neoclassical poetry of perfection to the Romantic poetry of infinite desire.¹¹⁰ In the late 1790s, August Wilhelm’s brother Friedrich’s circle in Berlin had been the first group to adopt for itself the originally dysphemistic epithet

106 Alexander Watson, *Anti-Jacobin: A Hudibrastic Poem in Twenty-One Cantos*, Edinburgh 1794, 3. Also note the ensuing ridicule of solitary walks in nightly churchyards and superstitious visions of ghosts, creatures of overheated brains, *ibid.* 7–8.

107 Rolf Lessenich, *Aspects of English Preromanticism*, Cologne and Vienna 1989, 223–251.

108 H.C. Robinson, *Diary*, 19 May 1812, in: *Diaries, Reminiscences, and Correspondence*, ed. Thomas Sadler, London and New York NY 1872, I. 200.

109 Byron, *Dedication to Baron Goethe*, 14 October 1820, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, ed. J.J. McGann, Oxford 1980–1993, IV. 546. Quoted in the OED.

110 René Wellek, *Concepts of Criticism, The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History*, New Haven and London 1963, 135–137.

“Romantic”.¹¹¹ Between 1813 and 1822, the debates of Classical versus Romantic, Pagan versus Christian, liberal versus conservative were hotly contested in England, under the indirect influence of German contemporaries such as the Schlegel brothers. Their espousal of Post-Revolutionary medievalism and conservatism, however, discredited them and their mediators in the eye of most English Whigs, Thomas Love Peacock and James Mackintosh among them.¹¹² Then, the chief mediators of German philosophy and literary theory were Madame de Staël and Coleridge. Madame de Staël, who knew both August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel, propagated the contrastive concept of Romantic versus Classical in her three-volume *De l’Allemagne* (1813)¹¹³ and its English translation published by John Murray later in the same year, which sold 2250 copies. The work, with its many distortions due to its polemical strategy against Napoleon as traitor to the French Revolution, popularized the model of an English Romantic opposed to a French Classical School and thus falsely summarized the Weimar Classicists under her propaganda term “Romantic”. Staël’s errors and distortions are still widespread and well-nigh ineradicable in the English-speaking world. Her anti-Napoleonic siding with the Romantic School had a political rather than aesthetic basis, a frequent constellation in the eristic literature of the period:¹¹⁴

Le nom de *romantique* a été introduit nouvellement en Allemagne pour désigner la poésie dont les chants des troubadours ont été l’origine, celle qui est née de la chevalerie et du christianisme.¹¹⁵

La nation française, la plus cultivée des nations latines, penche vers la poésie classique imitée des Grecs et des Romains. La nation anglaise, la plus illustre des nations germaniques, aime la poésie romantique et chevaleresque, et se glorifie des chefs-d’œuvre qu’elle possède en ce genre.¹¹⁶

James Mackintosh, “the Whig Cicero”, a well-known and controversial politician from the circle of Holland House and a firm opponent both of French revolutionary violence and Napoleonic imperialism, became Madame de Staël’s first critic in the *Edinburgh Review* (October 1813). His long article presented the theories of *De l’Allemagne* in detail, praising the distinction between Classical

111 Marilyn Butler, *Peacock Displayed: A Satirist in his Context*, London 1979, 109.

112 *Ibid.* 110–113.

113 Staël, *De l’Allemagne*, volume I, chapter 15 De la poésie classique et de la poésie romantique, London 1813, I. 284–91.

114 Napoleon ordered the 1810 Paris edition of *De l’Allemagne* to be pulped. For the ideological distortions and enormous influence of the work on European Romanticism see J.C. Isbell, *The Birth of European Romanticism. Truth and Propaganda in Staël’s De l’Allemagne*, Cambridge 1994.

115 Staël, *De l’Allemagne*, I. 284.

116 *Ibid.* I. 285.

and Romantic Europe as “most ingenious”, exhibiting “in the liveliest form the distinction between different systems of literature and manners”.¹¹⁷ A few months later William Taylor of Norwich, a well-known Whig literary critic and Germanist who had translated many *Sturm- und Drang*-texts into English, published another favourable review of *De l’Allemagne* in the *Liberal Monthly Review* (1814). There, he confirmed the existence of two opposite schools and characterized the Romantic School by its native traditions and originality in contrast with the Classical Tradition as well as its appeal to the emotions rather than classical reason:

The eleventh [chapter] divides European poetry into two schools, the classical, and the romantic. The first originates in the imitation of the antients; the second, in the progressive amelioration of our native efforts to celebrate our own religion and our own exploits. Mad. de Staël truly remarks that all the more interesting poems of modern Europe belong to this autochthonous growth. Neither tragedies nor odes, nor epopeas, imitated from the antients, have any very strong hold of our feelings.¹¹⁸

But neither Wordsworth in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) nor Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria* (1817) nor Percy Shelley in his *Defence of Poetry* (MS 1821) use the term “Romantic school” to denote any unity of aesthetic concepts. And in an early article on Schiller (1831), Thomas Carlyle still felt happy not to be involved in the continental controversy between Romanticism and Classicism, as it then raged in Victor Hugo’s France, where the Neoclassical literary establishment (including the Académie Française) waged war against the new heresy of “le romantisme”. The Academy’s Perpetual Secretary, Louis-Simon Auger, accused the Romantics of cultural high treason to France in a fierce speech delivered on 24 April 1824; the poet Émile Deschamps, editor of the pro-Romantic journal *La Muse Française*, answered by bringing the most various modern writers under the banner of Romanticism: Byron, Chateaubriand, de Staël, Schiller, Joseph de Maistre, Goethe, Thomas Moore, Walter Scott, Félicité de Lammenais, and Vincenzo Monti.¹¹⁹ This list of revolutionary, liberal, sceptical, and conservative anti-classical authors is grotesque in its heterogeneity and shows the problematic nature of constructing a Romantic School. It is, however, also a typical instance of culturally necessary group formation. Under the constant attacks of their Neoclassical enemies, the European Romantics discovered their common traits, though later in the movement, and continued the Preromantic practice of converting the derogatory term “romantic” (associating mental derangement and formal disproportion) into a positive term of

117 [Mackintosh] in: *Edinburgh Review*, 22 (October 1813), 206.

118 [Taylor] in: *Monthly Review*, or, *Literary Journal*, 73 (1814), 364. At Palgrave, Suffolk, William Taylor had been a pupil of Anna Letitia Barbauld.

119 Paul Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern*, 147.

self-identification, just as the later nineteenth-century Decadents assumed the derogatory term “decadent” originally meant to fight and crush them. The best-known example is Théophile Gautier’s *Histoire du romantisme* (MS 1872), where the old poet, looking back across four decades, remembered how “l’école romantique”¹²⁰ was forged in the famous *Hernani* battle of 1830, when young poets contemptuous of established French Neoclassicism staged a riotous theatre scandal, violently promoting Victor Hugo’s anti-classical drama against “les vieux poncifs gréco-romains”.¹²¹ The imagery of bugle-call, war, victory, and veteran soldiers as well as the comparison with political rebellion, both against the established classical rules of art and the established laws of the *anciens régimes* suppressing national literatures and national states, are striking:

De ceux qui, répondant au cor d’Hernani, s’engagèrent à sa suite dans l’âpre montagne du Romantisme et en défendirent si vaillamment les défilés contre les attaques des classiques, il ne survit qu’un petit nombre [...] Nous avons eu l’honneur d’être enrôlés dans ces jeunes bandes qui combattaient pour l’idéal, la poésie et la liberté de l’art [...] ¹²²
Dans l’armée Romantique comme dans l’armée d’Italie, tout le monde était jeune.¹²³

Later literary historians took up the terms, as, in Germany, Rudolf Haym’s standard work *Die romantische Schule* (1870) gave a positive spin on the title of Heinrich Heine’s prose polemic *Die romantische Schule* (1836). Such retrospective group identification falls under what Jerome John McGann calls “The Romantic Ideology”, meaning Meyer Howard Abrams’s constructed view of the Romantics’ constructed view or self-fashioning¹²⁴ – but such constructions are unavoidable in the writing of literary history. And, if there is no identity in nationally and individually heterogeneous movements, there is at least a family likeness, whatever the objections of radical constructivists. Just as the members of a family may share certain common features without being identical, so the works of the Romantic Movement in Britain as well as in all Europe bear a common imprint, yet still remain quite distinctive. The poetry of Wordsworth differs from that of Blake or of Lamartine or of Eichendorff; each belongs to the Romantic family and at the same time each is highly individual. Such examples could easily be multiplied from every kind of European Romantic literature to illustrate the interplay of unity and diversity, which is also characteristic of occidental European culture itself.¹²⁵

120 Gautier, *Histoire du romantisme*, MS 1872, 1874, Paris 1884, 31.

121 *Ibid.* 2.

122 *Ibid.* 1.

123 *Ibid.* 11. The reference is to the Italian *Risorgimento* against Austrian rule after the Congress of Vienna.

124 J.J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology*, Chicago 1983.

125 Lilian R. Furst, *Romanticism, The Critical Idiom*, London 1969, 1976, 64. Both in this and in her comparative study *Romanticism in Perspective*, London 1972, Furst offers a first-rate introduction to the problem and a convincing reconciliation of the opposing views of

The deconstructionist insistence on diversity and the poststructuralist demolition of the literary canon have led to a new type of anthology, as in McGann's seminal *New Oxford Book of Romantic Period Verse* (1993), selecting texts according to periods instead of movements and thus drawing attention to the diversity of a period's literary production and to the fertility of its consequent *Streitkultur*.

Arthur Oncken Lovejoy (*On the Discrimination of Romanticisms* 1924) and René Wellek (*The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History* 1949).

I. The Classical Tradition and the Poetics of Satire

The “long eighteenth century” in England is a period construction from 1660 (the year of the restoration of King Charles II) to 1830 (the year of the Duke of Wellington’s resignation of office as Tory Prime Minister unwilling to accept Whig parliamentary reform).¹ Throughout that period (and most intensely at its beginning and its end), the aristocracy was defending its position of privilege, political and cultural leadership, against the democratic claims of the populace. In this long conflict, the aristocratic Neoclassicism of the Augustans remained vital and combative, though many literary historians see it in a state of gradual decline due to the growing cultural importance of the more popular Preromantic and Romantic Movements. With its elitist status and standards of “noble” beauty, the Classical Tradition transported a “high culture” that supported the aristocracy in times of popular insurrection, be it in the period of the English Civil Wars or in the period of the French Revolution. This conflict becomes evident from the traditional iconography of the body. In the cultural imagination, the “classical body” was individual, raised on a pedestal for admiration, standing for the aristocracy and its “high culture”, as opposed to the “grotesque body” with its deformations and protuberances – composite, part of a throng, a many-headed monster, and signifying the forever unquiet and carnivalistic populace or giddy multitude with its “low culture”, which the aristocracy had to contain and regulate.² The conflict between the two often played out in one and the same author, male or female. Lord Byron, we shall see, was divided in his

1 The Cambridge History of English Literature 1660–1780, ed. John Richetti, in: The New Cambridge History of English Literature, Cambridge 2005. Cf. the earlier New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, vol. II (1660–1800), Cambridge 1971, and the Aberdeen History of Scottish Literature, vol. II (1660–1800), Aberdeen 1987. For the more radical extension of this periodization see Francis O’Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688–1832*, London 1997.

2 See Peter Stallybrass – Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, London 1986, 21–22, and Andrew Radford – Mark Sandy (eds.), *Romantic Echoes in the Victorian Era*, Aldershot 2008, 71–72.

loyalty. As an aristocrat and Tory, he was a Neoclassicist who flaunted his physical beauty and mental superiority. As a Radical Whig, he was a Romantic who broke rules and enjoyed the grotesque and carnivalesque, deriding Britain's obsolete aristocracy. Thus, the Augustan Classical Tradition, its aesthetics and its iconography, survived in the Romantic Period as a strong counter-voice to Romanticism. After all, it stood in sorer need of self-defence against rising popular "low culture" and "new schools" than ever before – with classical satire its most adequate traditional weapon in the conflict. Horace, Persius, and Juvenal as well as Dryden, Pope, Swift, and Johnson, the Augustan satirists of the Classical Tradition, were also the models of the elitist anti-Romantic satire of the Romantic Period.

When, in the Restoration Period, the King and his Court returned from their long exile in France, they imported François de Malherbe's French Neoclassicism, thus revitalizing England's own early aristocratic and elitist Neoclassicism. This grew with Ben Jonson and his Cavalier poets as well as with Inigo Jones's Palladian architecture in the first half of seventeenth century, and had been stifled only temporarily by Cromwell, the Puritans, and the people's party in the years 1642 – 1600.³

Neoclassicism was an aesthetic of rule and reason which defined itself, first against the old Baroque, later against the new Romanticism. For all their differences as aesthetics of artificiality and of naturalness respectively, Baroque and Romanticism had in common what was incompatible with Neoclassicism: the cult of originality and diversity, the precedence of variety over unity, the disdain of rules and reason, esotericism and exoticism, mysticism and obscurity, fantasy and exuberance.

Neoclassicism was to aesthetics what the Enlightenment was to theology, philosophy, and politics. The rules of Horace were seen as a "system" of rules of reason, discovered by the first Augustans in classical antiquity after the first dark ages of ignorance and barbarity, then again lost in "the dark middle ages", then fully rediscovered by the self-styled second Augustans of the seventeenth century. King Louis XIV of France and King Charles II of England posed as Emperor Augustus,⁴ an imagery of light and enlightenment was opposed to an imagery of darkness, from "le siècle des lumières" to "le roi soleil". The only major difference was that English self-fashioning against France gave more prominence to liberty. Restoration Neoclassicism would, from the start, refuse to obey rules that were the dictates of absolutism, Louis XIV in politics and Malherbe or Boileau in

3 J.W.H. Atkins, *English Literary Criticism: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, London 1951, 1959, 1 – 32.

4 Thomas Sprat, *History of the Royal Society*, frontispiece, 1668, ed. J.I. Cope – H.W. Jones, St Louis and London 1959 and 1966.

aesthetics, yet would willingly obey those rules that were the dictates of reason, common sense, the “light of nature”.⁵ This peculiarity of English Neoclassicism, it has been shown in many studies on the eighteenth-century history of ideas and taste, produced a liberal Neoclassicism which widened into what we now call Preromanticism.⁶ The Preromantic cult of sensibility and preference for lyrical to didactic poetry weakened the prominent position of Neoclassical satire, but never stamped it out. And when, in 1782, Blake’s and Cowper’s friend William Hayley defended the Italian epic poets of the sixteenth century against “the slaves of system”, he knew that the phalanx of his Neoclassical adversaries was still strong and bellicose – and so that phalanx continued to be far into the nineteenth century.⁷ Even Preromantic poets themselves could be savage satirists along with their Romantic heirs, Leigh Hunt or Lord Byron. James Beattie, a strong Scottish advocate of sensibility and Preromantic poet, wrote a Popean mock-heroic epic entitled *The Grottesquiad*, a satire on drunkenness, which, however, was never published and has been recently rediscovered in Scott’s Abbotsford Library.⁸ As Beattie was a theologian and professor of moral philosophy at Aberdeen, the moralist’s indignation prevailed over the poet’s compassionate sensibility.

What recommended John Dryden as poet laureate and member of the Royal Society, in spite of his earlier allegiance to Cromwell, were the rational panegyrics and satires which he had turned to after his early admiration for Donne’s “metaphysical” baroque. Panegyric and satire were didactic genres, the former teaching mankind from positive example (*laus et extensio*), the latter from negative example (*vituperatio et diminutio*), as *exemplum sequendum* and *exemplum horrendum* respectively. In his Oxford lectures on poetry, originally read in Latin, Joseph Trapp stressed the fact that Latin satire was a sermon in verse. In the satires of Horace, Persius, and Juvenal he found “many Directions, as well as Incitements to Virtue”⁹, thus connecting *ars vituperandi* and *ars concionandi*. Both were based on enlightened eighteenth-century optimism, a more or less confident conviction that the world could be improved by literature.¹⁰ Thomas James Mathias, a Neoclassical Tory satirist of the Romantic Period who called Gifford “the most *correct* poetical writer I have read since the days of Pope”,¹¹ even recommended and defended satire as universally valid

5 Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1711, lines 713–714, in: *Poems*, ed. John Butt, London 1963, 167.

6 Furst, *Romanticism*, and Lessenich, *Aspects of English Preromanticism*, *passim*.

7 Hayley, *An Essay on Epic Poetry*, London 1782, line 173, 53.

8 Rhona Brown, *Gravely Wounded in the Battle of Bottle*, in: *TLS*, 5645 (10 June 2011), 15.

9 Trapp, *Lectures on Poetry*, London 1742, 223–24.

10 Arthur Pollard, *Satire, The Critical Idiom*, London 1970, 1–5, and Rolf Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory in Eighteenth-Century England 1660–1800*, Cologne and Vienna 1972, 208–236.

11 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature, 1794–1797*, ed. cit. 143.

philosophy in verse, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, indispensable for the maintenance of all advanced human civilization:

[...] the philosopher himself is a satirist, speaking to the world at large, without a specific reference to any nation. The satirist (in the common acceptance of the word) is a writer in poetry or in prose, who addresses himself to a peculiar part of the world, and generally to his own countrymen, calling them to a view of their faults, their follies, or their vices, which are destructive of society, of government, of good manners, or of good literature.¹²

This explanatory footnote repeats what the verse satire itself says about its rational mission for the benefit and education of mankind. The rules of good literature as well as the rules of good morality, civilized aesthetics and civilized ethics, are due to philosophical reason and the Classical Tradition. The regular and polished heroic couplets of Mathias's *Pursuits of Literature* (1794–1797), composed on the model of Dryden and Pope, are a celebration and defence of the Enlightenment that was under heavy attack in the Romantic Period:

As from a diamod globe, with rays condense,
 'Tis SATIRE gives the strongest light to sense,
 To thought compression, vigour to the soul,
 To language bounds, to fancy due control,
 To truth the splendour of her awful face,
 To learning dignity, to virtue grace,
 To conscience stings, beneath the cap or crown,
 To vice that terror she will feel, and own.¹³

Rational, enlightened poetry was conceived as objective, didactic poetry serving the purpose of teaching general truths in a delightful way. It was compared to a bitter pill made palatable by a sweet sugar coating, modernizing and illustrating Horace's "delectare" as a means towards the end of "prodesse". There was no room for lyrical poetry in the later Romantic sense of subjective sensibility, personal confession, and the *mise-en-scène* of beautiful souls. Thus, in the hierarchy of the rules of reason, the rule of general nature came second, after the rule of perspicuity. The most frequently quoted formulation of that rule is Samuel Johnson's in *Rasselas* (1759),¹⁴ where the poet Imlac illustrates the task of a poet from the description of a tulip: not to count the varying streaks of a tulip, to describe "not the individual, but the species".¹⁵ Dryden and his younger

12 Ibid. 106–7.

13 Ibid. 288.

14 John Dryden (1631–1700) dominated the first, Alexander Pope (1688–1744) the second, Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) the third, and William Gifford (1756–1826) the fourth phase of English Neoclassicism.

15 Johnson, *Rasselas*, 1759, in: *Shorter Novels of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Philip Henderson, Everyman's Library, London 1930 and 1963, 22.

cousin Jonathan Swift formulated this rule with special regard to panegyric and satire, Swift in his facetious dialogic “Verses on the Death of Dr Swift” (1731), a panegyric on himself disguised as an obituary or epitaph:

“PERHAPS I may allow the Dean
Had too much Satyr in his Vein;
[...]
Yet, Malice never was his Aim;
He lash’d the Vice but spar’d the Name.”¹⁶

Indirectly, however, Pope admitted his personal grudge when he argued that, often enough, general chastisement of vice was ineffective, and that, as in criminal proceedings or in his *Dunciad* (1728–1742), exemplary deterrent punishment must be carried out on individuals identified with their names:

People have ceas’d to be ashamed of it when so many are joined with them; and ’tis only by hunting one or two from the Herd that any Examples can be made. [...] if some are hung up, or pillory’d, it may prevent others.¹⁷

The Classical Tradition’s metamorphosis of satire shows the change of paradigm that took place in Neoclassicism.¹⁸ Satire and panegyric were now conceived as didactic works of literature in poetry or prose. Enlightened poets acting as *praeceptores populi* had to teach mankind by designing exemplary human types (not individuals) and assessing them by standards of rational thought and action. Even traditional panegyrics like the epicedium and the obituary, including the *oraison funèbre*, had to serve the purpose of teaching mankind from example, to the detriment of the literary expression of personal heart-felt grief for the deceased. Dryden’s epicedia and Bossuet’s funeral sermons are outstanding examples. The difference in *genus orationis* and *genus dicendi* was that panegyric and satire aimed at more rhetorical passion, replacing the calm tone of the *genus deliberativum* of such didactic poems as Dryden’s *Religio Laici* (1682) by the elevated style of the epideictic *genus demonstrativum*, or, otherwise expressed, substituting the sublime for the beautiful.¹⁹ Satire sought to vanquish an adversary not amenable to calm rational conviction, to wound and bring him down on the battlefield, to render him incapable of carrying on fighting for what

16 Swift, *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*, lines 459–64, in: *Poetical Works*, ed. Herbert Davis, Oxford Standard Authors, London 1967, 512.

17 Pope, *Letter to John Arbuthnot*, 2 August 1734, in: *Correspondence*, ed. George Sherburn, Oxford 1956, 423. See Charlotte Sussman, *Eighteenth-Century English Literature*, Cambridge 2012, 47–48.

18 For the typology and history of satire before Augustan Neoclassicism see John Peter, *Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature*, Oxford 1956, *passim*.

19 Bibliography and materials for the category “didactic and satirical” in: *The Cambridge History of English Literature 1660–1780*, 187–196.

the satirist considered an unworthy, even condemnable cause. This may serve to explain why the strict rationalist Thomas Hobbes regarded laughter as a totally amoral manifestation of superiority, a relic of the primitive war of everybody against everybody.²⁰ Nevertheless, satire was the core of his work, indispensable in rationalism and the Classical Tradition to which Hobbes was committed as a literary author in prose and verse; satire taught philosophy *ex negativo*.²¹ On the basis of a less sombre anthropology, the strict rationalist Shaftesbury was so much opposed to both satire and eulogy (as unreasonable aggression and unreasonable flattery) that he valued satirists as mere buffoons and butchers in ill mood, who yielded to the murderous instincts of man:

I KNOW not whether it be from this killing Disposition remark'd in us, that our *Satyrists* prove such very Slaughter-men.²²

Shaftesbury's later Preromantic interpreters connected this ban with his ideal of the elegant "virtuoso" and their own ideal of sentimental education, and forbade their "men and women of feeling" all scathing and hurting satire as inhumane. However, on the whole, Neoclassicists approved of satire as indispensable in the art and practice of arguing.²³

Beside the general rules valid for all literary genres the Neoclassical system also "discovered, not devised" special rules for each genre, including satire. Here the old, personal, rude, and obscene pasquil of the Classical and Renaissance tradition repeatedly threatened to break through. This explains the great number of norm-setting Neoclassical *artes poeticae* from John Dryden's *Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* (1693) to William Gifford's "Essay on the Roman Satirists" (1806, 1817), prefixed to those outstanding Neoclassical poets' and satirists' commented verse translations of Juvenal and Persius into English.

After his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), the *Discourse concerning Satire* was Dryden's second combination of the history of a literary genre with a general Neoclassical *ars poetica*, containing a rule-oriented critique of works from classical antiquity to the new Augustans. As might be expected from the higher education of the son of a country gentleman – Westminster School and Trinity

20 Hobbes, Peloponnesian War, 1629, 1634, in: English Works, ed. William Molesworth, London 1839–1845, III. 62.

21 Conal Condren, Hobbes, the Scriblerians and the History of Philosophy, London 2011.

22 Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, Characteristics, Advice to an Author, 1711, in: Complete Works, Standard Edition, ed. Wolfgang Benda et al., Stuttgart 1981, I. 1. 186.

23 Hobbes versus the Neoclassical theory of satire's moral wholesomeness is discussed in Edward Bulwer-Lytton's novel Pelham, 1828, in: Novels and Romances in Ten Volumes, London 1863, I. 139–140. In his role as commenting author, Bulwer-Lytton stresses the moral end of his satire on political electioneering and canvassing, *ibid.* I. 96.

College Cambridge – Dryden was proficient in both Greek and Latin and expert in the Classical Tradition. He not only read, but also wrote literary texts in Greek and Latin, and he studied the works of Renaissance classical scholars such as Julius Caesar Scaliger and Isaac Casaubon. Casaubon had corrected the old error that “satire” was derived from “satyr play” and provided the correct etymology of the word, “satura lanx” or “dish plentifully stored with all variety of fruits and grains”.²⁴ From this Dryden derived the rule of arrangement as a special rule for satire. As in the nature of the universe stars are grouped around a leading star, so, in artistic *imitatio naturae*, all kinds of fruit in a full bowl had to be grouped around a central fruit. Applied to the “satura lanx” of satire this meant that all kinds of vices had to be arranged around a central vice which a good concentrated satire had to target.²⁵ Both divine hierarchy and rational calculation of maximum effect in the war against vices, follies, and their typical representatives demanded such a strictly ordered economy and strategy. Divine reason, which had created a rationally analysable *nature machine* designed “according to number, weight, and measure”,²⁶ had created man in God’s own image. It had endowed man with a portion of that divine mathematical reason (man’s “light of nature” not totally corrupted by the Fall), asked him to apply that reason both in aesthetics and ethics, to discover the rules and norms of beauty and deformity as well as virtue and vice, and to repel all that deviated from that divine *natura naturata*. This produced a varied and often complex imagery illustrating the function of nature’s guard, the satirist. The satirist was compared to a soldier in a just war of defence, who “carries fire and sword into the territories of the enemy; and undertakes to punish, as well as repel, the aggression”.²⁷ The satirist was, moreover, compared to a teacher, both *praeceptores populi* expected to punish their pupils with real or “satirical lashes” respectively if milder admonition failed, and to an executioner cutting off the rotten limbs of the “body politic” in order to preserve its health. Such imagery was commonplace in centuries when both corporal and capital punishment were thought indispensable both for correction and deterrence, and when the rod was even used in a belated form of exorcism to cure madmen and madwomen in bedlams.²⁸ A cartoon appeared in December 1790, possibly by Frederick George Byron, entitled *Don Dismallo Running the Literary Gauntlet*, which featured Edmund Burke as a fool flogged

24 Wolfgang Weiß, *Swift und die Satire des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Munich 1992, 115.

25 Dryden, *Discourse concerning Satire*, 1693, in: *Works*, ed. H. T. Swedenberg et al., California Edition, 20 vols., Berkeley and Los Angeles 1956–1989, IV. 36–36, 79–80.

26 *Ecclesiasticus* 1, 9. Here, as usual in English (as distinct from French) Neoclassicism, Enlightenment theologians and philosophers argued both “from reason and Scripture.”

27 *British Critic*, 22 (1803), 261. This quotation is from a review in defence of Gifford, which satirized the strictures on Gifford’s translation of Juvenal (1802) in *Critical Review*.

28 Heinz Schott – Rainer Tölle, *Geschichte der Psychiatrie*, Munich 2006, 49–50, 242.

by his literary adversaries, six of which are named: Helen Maria Williams, Richard Price, Anna Letitia Barbauld, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, John Horne Tooke, and Catherine Macaulay.²⁹ In a lengthy prose invective against the *Critical Review*'s mordant attacks on his translation of Juvenal (1802), in which he castigated the anonymous reviewer in his role as a satirist-pedagogue psychiatrist inflicting corporal punishment, William Gifford extended this punitive imagery. The satirist-hangman should publicly expose the rotting carcasses of exemplary evildoers on gibbets, for their deterrent effect:

It is not for the true interests of literature, that obtrusive and malicious blockheads should be forgotten: – they should be gibbeted for the scorn of wise men and the terror of fools. This has always been my opinion; and I rejoice when a name, whose impotence would not have preserved its rancour from oblivion for a day, is snatched from the gulf, and hung aloft *in terrorem*.³⁰

Anti-Jacobin books, pamphlets, and periodicals encouraged Gifford's satirical cruelty with reference to such contemporary public legal practices. Thus the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, or, Monthly Political and Literary Censor* (1798–1821), a sequel to the short-lived but far more witty *Anti-Jacobin* (1797–1798), printed a laudatory review of Gifford's *Epistle to Peter Pindar* encouraging Gifford to persist in his cruel punitive torture of the hitherto unreformed, stubborn, old evildoer – his rival as a popular but politically uncommitted satirist – for the cathartic benefit of all who see the public spectacle staged on the scaffold:

[...] the hoary miscreant is dragged backwards from his den, and stretched upon the rack [...] every torture that he endures should be described, every groan that he utters should echo [...] he should be the terror of the wicked.³¹

The nature of Gifford's and his anonymous partisan's comparison and the virulence of his diatribe laid bare a problem that all Enlightenment theorists of literary as well as legal punishment from John Dryden to Jeremy Bentham were necessarily confronted with: the relationship between reformation and destruction, or education and revenge. In the Romantic Period, Pope's admirer and follower Charles Caleb Colton clearly identified the problem in his formal verse satire *Hypocrisy* (1812), without, however, offering a solution. On the one hand, Colton echoed the conviction of his age that evildoers whom corporal punishment failed to reform had to be executed:

29 David Duff, Burke and Paine: Contrasts, in: *The Cambridge Companion to British Literature of the French Revolution in the 1790s*, ed. Pamela Clemit, Cambridge 2011, 51–55.

30 Gifford, *An Examination of the Strictures of the Critical Reviewers on the Translation of Juvenal*, London, 1803, 28.

31 *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 7 (1801), 54.

I grant the monstrous vices of the land,
 The *great axe* rather than the pen, demand,
 And well deserve, to *thin* their horrid list,
 An *Executioner* – *Their Satirist!*³²

On the other hand, he frankly admitted that chastisement inflicted wounds which no healing art could cure, resulting in the culprit's or patient's social or physical death. Pope's notorious satire on "Timon", Colton admitted, left his adversary, the Whig Lord Chandos, wounded and bleeding to death instead of convinced and reformed.

Hence Pope at Timon's taste and Villa laughed,
 Then disavowed the *Mark*, but owned the *Shaft*;
 With aukward zeal, that more inflamed the part,
 Labour'd in vain t' extract th' envenomed dart;
 Then mean concessions made, that nought retrieved,
 And wrote apologies that none believed.³³

At a time during which the indispensability and salutary effect of corporal punishment – and of an adversary's physical defeat on the battlefield or physical destruction on the scaffold – were still held as firm beliefs, very few critics sought to ban satire as a genre. Shaftesbury general critique of the ill mood and inelegant butchery of satire did not risk the conclusion of the genre's general dispensability, as evident in his estimation of Horace, and very few satirists found a solution in mildly punitive satires that avoided the risk of destruction. Jane Austen and Jane Taylor were such exceptions.³⁴ It would be wrong, however, to assume a basic gender difference between cruel male and mild female satirists – witness the satires of Mary Robinson. Recent criticism has proved such preconceived theories to be false, and has in fact gone on to show how male and female poets actually cooperated in constructing their identities and fame as poets.³⁵ The mild Radical Charles Lamb, for instance, was one of those few good-natured and good-humoured satirists who, in an age of hot disputes and social upheavals, preferred Horace to Juvenal and Persius. In his Romantic *Elia*-essay on "The South-Sea House" (1823), the Cockney and poor lower-class son marked capitalism and the *ancien régime* as hopelessly outdated and virtually dead. His Radical satire, however, was launched without a single bitter or direct attack. Lamb's lovably Shandean eccentric persona with the punning and telling name

32 Colton, *Hypocrisy: A Satire in Three Books*, Tiverton 1812, 74.

33 Colton, *Hypocrisy*, 91.

34 Rolf Lessenich, *Kulturelle Veränderungen und unvermeidbare Verletzungen der Grenzen des tolerablen Streits zwischen Klassizismus und Romantik 1660–1830*, in: *Streitkultur*, 325–326.

35 Beth Lau (ed.), *Fellow Romantics: Male and Female British Writers, 1790–1835*, Farnham and Burlington VT 2009, *passim*.

of Elia, “a liar” hovering between truth and fiction, remembers his experience from forty years ago, when he was a clerk in the decaying South-Sea House in Threadneedle Street. All characters, originals like himself, are by now dead – but even then they were figuratively half-dead – bachelors living monastic lifestyles, yearning for the past instead of planning a future. They dreamed of the heyday of the South Sea craze in the early eighteenth century, lived in a fiction of affluence and splendour, paraded a no longer existent importance, invented family pedigrees connecting them with the courts of dead kings and queens from Charles II to George II, and wore outmoded clothes and cultivated antiquated manners as if they were feudal lords. They were all too keen to ignore the fact that the South Sea Bubble of 1720 had been a “tremendous HOAX” another forty years ago.³⁶ There is no possibility of resurrection from the dead. The allegory connecting this dead past to the dead past of the *ancien régime* must have been evident to every reader at the time after the Congress of Vienna, especially in the 1820s, when the old aristocracy sought to restore its old splendour while society, customs, and fashions rapidly changed. But no conservative and classically educated reader could possibly have taken offence at this mild, modern, un-classical satire, which cultivated sensibility rather than inflicting wounds. This is also the case in Lamb’s satire on male-directed female reading, when his persona, the bachelor Elia, portrays his old spinster kinswoman and housekeeper Bridget as a result of that very shallow reading that was recommended in order to not let women become intelligent and uninterested in child-bearing.³⁷ Also, Lamb’s essays “The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers” and “A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis” update the Classical-Tradition “*laus stultitiae*” type of harsh Menippean satire with a “gentle hand”.³⁸ In contrast to Wordsworth, whose high seriousness and “mental bombast” Coleridge blamed directly and Lamb indirectly, Lamb was philosophic without being systematic or obtrusive; witness his letter to Wordsworth in response to Wordsworth’s gift of the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1800, dated 30 January 1801. Lamb avoided overt teaching and moralizing, which made him akin to Keats’s beauty-oriented Romanticism and Keats’s criticism of Wordsworth.³⁹ The wandering mind and verbose wit and good nature of his Elia, a descendant from Sterne’s Tristram Shandy rather than Juvenal or Persius, are too lovable to read him as an enemy of God, Church, and King.

In the Classical Tradition of Neoclassicism, by contrast, the satirist’s pen was

36 Charles Lamb, Elia, *The South-Sea House*, 1823, in: Works, I. 3.

37 Ibid., Mackery End, in Hertfordshire, 175.

38 Ibid. 174.

39 Richard Haven, *The Romantic Art of Charles Lamb*, in: *English Literary History*, 30 (1963), 137 – 146, and Donald R. Reiman, *Thematic Unity in Lamb’s Familiar Essays*, in: *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 64 (1965), 470 – 478.

seen as an effective weapon or cruel rod in public controversy, wielded to inflict – in the sense of public ridicule – deep wounds, and was much feared by the contemporaries it was aimed at. Having a brilliant and popular satirist arrested for libel could result in raising the popularity of the satirist or even deepening the ridiculousness of the satirized. When Byron's friend Thomas Moore, a brilliant entertainer and much-read satirist in the London society of his time, published *The Twopenny Post-Bag* (1813) and *The Fudge Family in Paris* (1818), the Prince Regent George and the Prime Minister Castlereagh, derided on all levels for lack of competence, intelligence, rhetoric, learning, respect, courage, manliness, and wit, were – sensibly – well advised not to have Moore arrested. Instead, William Hone and other Radical opponents to the Treaty of Vienna and the restoration of the *anciens régimes* in Europe were brought to trial. It might be safer to have an accomplished satirist ambushed, beaten, horsewhipped, or murdered by a hired gang in a dark alley than to have him publicly tried for libel or high treason. Before the reading public as judge, the satirist might win the case even if he lost it before a court. Brutal assault and battery, let alone homicide, on the other hand, would transgress the limit of permissible conflict. Then the culture of constructive debate would relapse into the destructive Hobbesian primitive state of war, and the good would be replaced by the bad Eris.

In a logical extension of the image cluster of terrible warrior, terrible executioner, and terrible pedagogue, the satirist was also compared to a physician. *Medici populi* were expected to treat their patients with bitter pills or even painful amputations if milder therapies failed. These comparisons were commonplace in times when politics, education, and medicine all relied on and, it was thought, naturally entailed acts of cruelty, taking the loss of health or lives into the bargain as a necessary evil.⁴⁰ Homoeopathy and mesmerism were alternative medicines and sentimental education was alternative pedagogy in the wake of Romanticism's cult of sensibility, traditionally disqualified as quackery with the argument that effective medicine, like effective pedagogy, was necessarily and inherently cruel and risky. In his Neoclassical satire on Positive Romanticism, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), Lord Byron fashioned William Gifford and himself as true doctors of the age among a throng of innovative charlatans with their useless modern medicine, while (like Dryden) he indirectly admitted motives of personal revenge:

40 James Sambrook, *Poetry 1660 – 1740*, in: *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. H.B. Nisbet – Claude Rawson, Cambridge 1989 – 2001, IV. 89 – 90.

A caustic is here offered, as it is to be feared nothing short of actual cautery can recover the numerous patients afflicted with the present prevalent and distressing *rabies* for rhyming.⁴¹

Follies had to be cured by a milder (Horatian) punishment, vices by a harsher (Juvenalian) chastisement – another commonplace in the poetics of satire from John Dryden to George Canning. The last number of the *Anti-Jacobin* (1798) contained an *ars satirica* in heroic couplets,⁴² in which Canning called upon the satirists of his “degenerate age” to continue lashing the age’s heavy vices in Juvenal’s vitriolic way, whereas milder punishment had sufficed for correcting more venial vices or mere follies in less degenerate earlier decades. This apology of fierceness with regard to an allegedly better past is another tactic commonplace in the art of arguing, because Canning posed – just as Pope had – as an incorrupt outsider surrounded by a few incorrupt friends in a corrupt age:⁴³

Yet, venial vices, in a milder age,
 Could rouse the warmth of Pope’s satiric rage:
 The doating miser, and the lavish heir,
 The follies, and the foibles of the fair,⁴⁴
 [...]
 With keen poetic glance direct the blow,
 And empty all thy quiver on the foe: –
 No pause – no rest – till weltering on the ground
 Thy poisonous hydra lies, and pierc’d with many a wound.⁴⁵

William Gifford, the most highly esteemed and best feared satirist of the Romantic Period, the Dryden and Pope of his age, was publicly admonished again and again, exhorted to quit his new interests as editor and translator and to return to his providential calling as the best doctor of his sick age. Thus Canning admonished his editor in the last number of Gifford’s own *Anti-Jacobin*, with a view to Gifford’s after-fame,

Think then, will pleaded indolence excuse
 The tame secession of thy languid Muse?⁴⁶

41 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, Preface, 1819, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, I, 229.

42 Reprinted by Alfred Howard as first text in his anthology *The Beauties of Canning*, London 1827, under the title *New Morality*, as well as in *The British Satirist*, Glasgow 1826.

43 William Kupersmith, *English Versions of Roman Satire in the Earlier Eighteenth Century*, Newark OH 2007, passim. Also see Michael Silk’s review in: *TLS*, 5514 (5 December 2008), 11.

44 [Canning], *New Morality*, in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 36 (19 July 1798), lines 15 – 18, in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, I, 269. Note the reference to the catharsis of Neoclassical comedy.

45 *Ibid.* lines 39 – 42, I, 270. Note the combined imagery of physical warfare (where peaceful arguments fail).

46 *Ibid.* 36 (19 July 1798), lines 29 – 34, I, 270.

And, eleven years later, Byron still joined the chorus when, pleading *mea parvitas*, he styled the satirist Gifford the regular physician and himself the vicarious country-practitioner, whose lesser satirical skill was urgently needed to help cure the age's spreading malady of ignorant and low Romantic scribbling:

No one can wish more than the Author, that some known and able Writer had undertaken their [the new Romantic poetasters'] exposure, but Mr. GIFFORD has devoted himself to Massinger, and in the absence of the regular physician, a country practitioner, may in cases of absolute necessity, be allowed to prescribe his nostrum to prevent the extension of so deplorable an epidemic, provided there be no quackery in his treatment of the malady.⁴⁷

The text of the satire repeats Canning's appeal to Gifford almost verbatim, after calling upon still-living poets of the Classical Tradition, Thomas Campbell and Samuel Rogers, to "Restore Apollo on his vacant throne"⁴⁸ when "deserted Poetry" weeps over the graves of William Cowper (pious poet of the *Olney Hymns*) and Robert Burns. This frequently positive Neoclassical assessment of the Pre-romantic primitivists Cowper and Burns as poets of natural simplicity could only work on the assumption of their honesty and health, renouncing accusations of sick affected simplicity or sick immoral excesses:

'Why slumbers GIFFORD?' once was asked in vain:
 Why slumbers GIFFORD? let us ask again.
 Are there no follies for his pen to purge?
 Are there no fools whose backs demand the scourge?
 Are there no sins for Satire's Bard to greet?
 Stalks not gigantic Vice in every street?
 [...]
 Arouse thee, GIFFORD! be thy promise claimed,
 Make bad be better, or at least ashamed.⁴⁹

In the same early satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, Byron jumped from exemplary Neoclassical satirists such as Dryden and Pope to exemplary Neoclassical comic playwrights such as Congreve and Otway.⁵⁰ Notwithstanding Byron's own doubts about man's capability of improvement, which he shared with the Restoration Earl of Rochester long before him and with the Romantic Disillusionist Heinrich Heine shortly after him, this was fully in unison with traditional Neoclassical poetics, which stressed the kinship of satire and comedy. Horace had already found precedents for *satura* in Aristophanic Old Comedy.⁵¹

47 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, Preface, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, I. 228–229.

48 *Ibid.* line 807, I. 254.

49 *Ibid.* lines 819–30, I. 255.

50 *Ibid.* lines 109–16, I. 232.

51 Horace, *Satires*, I. 4.

Both satire and comedy were public genres that combined authorial posing with the interest of the public wellbeing, whereas libels were (as a rule) not meant for publication, except sometimes as casual broadsheets or pasquils. Their buffoonery served the writer's spleen more than the reader's improvement, as seen in Keats's casual and obscene poem of a gadfly. The insect that had stung him, Keats wrote, should rather sting boring Tory politicians such as Lord Dundee and Nicholas Vansittart into better oratory as well as boring Tory poets such as Robert Southey and Lord Lonsdale's protégé Wordsworth into better verse.⁵² Coleridge was hardly less rude in his private marginalia to the authors' books with whom he disagreed.⁵³ Another instance of such private libels not meant for publication are Byron's ill-natured lines on the caustic and vitriolic Samuel Rogers, whose Augustan poetry he publicly admired, but whose slighting remarks behind his back he resented. Byron found his revenge by secretly placing libels under the cushion that Rogers sat on, much as Rochester had played his "Satire upon King Charles II" (MS ca 1673) into the lascivious king's hands. Both poems were meant for personal reading, not for publication. Here, the fun poked at the notorious cadaverous ugliness of "the bard, the beau, and banker" Rogers aims at hardly any other catharsis than the simple cleansing of Byron's ill mood and anger at Rogers's slighting remarks, or Byron's envy of Rogers's wealth and power. Ridicule of bodily deformities, however, followed an old practice and was even legitimate in satire as long as it pointed to general deformities of character or art. This, however, is obviously not the case in Byron's vicious personal libel on Rogers:

Nose and chin would shame a knocker;
 Wrinkles that would puzzle Cocker;
 Mouth which marks the envious Scornor
 With a Scorpion in each Corner
 Curling its quick tail to sting you
 In the place that most may wring you;
 Eyes of leadlike hue, and gummy;
 Carcass picked out from some Mummy,
 Bowels (but they were forgotten
 Save the Liver and that's rotten),
 Skin all sallow, flesh all sodden,
 Form the Devil would fright G-d in;
 Is't a Corpse stuck up for show?
 Galvanised at times to go?
 With the Scripture in Connection

52 John Keats, Journal 17–21 July 1818, Letter to Tom Keats, in: Letters, II. 335.

53 Coleridge, *Collected Works*, Bollingen Edition, ed. Kathleen Coburn et al., London and Princeton NJ 1969–2002, XII. I–VI, passim.

New proof of the resurrection?
Vampire, Ghost, or Ghoul [...] ⁵⁴

The most famous instance of public libelling in the Romantic Period, however, was the “Chaldee Manuscript”, a literary scandal designed and intended to justify and promote *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* (1817). In this allegorical prose invective modelled on Dryden’s allegorical verse satire *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681 – 1683), James Hogg, John Gibson Lockhart, and John Wilson created the authenticity fiction of a (pseudo-)biblical manuscript. In the allegory, Edinburgh readers could easily identify the “villains” Archibald Campbell and Francis Jeffrey (of the rival *Edinburgh Review*), James Cleghorn and Thomas Pringle (William Blackwood’s first authors dismissed for their Whiggism), as well as the “heroes”, Blackwood’s aggressive new Tory contributors Lockhart, Wilson, Hogg etc, the bankrupt Walter Scott, and many others. Where Dryden’s biblical allegory, however, could plead that its satire lashed types rather than individuals, the authors of the “Chaldee Manuscript” sought no such excuse. Their biblical subtext abused a holy prophecy for what they implicitly admitted as “profit”, in the economic rather than biblical sense of the word, which was a double offence coming from the pen of Tory authors. They as well as their adversaries, Archibald Campbell and Francis Jeffrey, dismissed all those who were too tame to be “profitable”. ⁵⁵ Their aim was scandal for the sake of promoting their new aggressive and witty magazine on the market, not the improvement of mankind through correction. They took the risk of lawsuits and even assault and battery, with Lockhart and Wilson temporarily escaping to the Lake District for safety. Retrospectively, they felt ashamed of their having overstepped the limits of permissible conflict and cleared their record, as did Hogg in the last of his four autobiographies:

I do not know what wicked genius put it into my head, but it was then, in an evil hour [...] that I wrote the “Chaldee Manuscript,” and transmitted it to Mr. Blackwood [...] ⁵⁶

As honourable satirists Byron, Hogg, Lockhart, and Wilson saw their place in the Classical Tradition of Juvenal, Persius, Horace, Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Goldsmith, Crabbe, and Gifford. And Gifford himself, we shall see, defended himself against all reproaches of personal attacks in his late Augustan verse satires against violations of Neoclassical rules both in the poetry and the drama of the

54 Byron, Question and Answer, MS 1818, in: Complete Poetical Works, IV. 165. Not meant for publication.

55 [Hogg et. al.], Translation from an Ancient Chaldee Manuscript, chapter III, verses 8, 24, 37, in: Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine, 2 (October 1817), 93–95.

56 Hogg, *Altrive Tales, Memoir*, 1832, quoted from: Alan Lang Strout, James Hogg’s Chaldee Manuscript, in: PMLA, 65 (1950), 706.

Romantic Period. Public literary genres like satire and drama should neither admit nor permit private invectives.

When we compare Dryden's writings on satire with his writings on drama, we find comedy running parallel to satire in the didactic cruelty of its comic catharsis meant for the general public good. Most poetics of Neoclassical comedy, by William Congreve, John Dennis, Oliver Goldsmith, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, confirm this observation, whereas Shaftesbury and a minority of critics, who preferred Horace to Juvenal, distinguished the urbane good-will of comedy from the aggressive ill-will of satire and thus anticipated George Meredith's lecture "The Idea of Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit" (1877).⁵⁷ Most critics, however, saw Neoclassical comedy as stage satire, with a comic catharsis to the effect that deviants from rational norms were mercilessly exposed to the laughter of distanced readers or spectators, who, nevertheless, recognized their own follies and vices exposed to ridicule on the stage so that they might correct their lives for fear of a similar chastisement in actual life.⁵⁸ The same applied to the "comic epic poem in prose", a genre of the novel which the comic dramatist Henry Fielding created with *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *Tom Jones* (1749) according to the rules of Neoclassical comedy, thus closing a gap in the Classical Tradition of the system of Neoclassical literary genres.⁵⁹ It was in this update of the Classical Tradition that Jane Austen wrote the anti-Romantic satires of her anti-Jacobin and Neoclassical novels, as her Gothic-novel parody *Northanger Abbey* (MS 1798 – 1803, published 1818) or her mildly mocking exposure of Captain Benwick's love of Romantic literature in *Persuasion* (MS 1815 – 1816, published 1818).⁶⁰ And it was this concept of comic catharsis in satire and comedy which made the then well-known and much-dreaded satirist George Daniel of Islington, in his Popean *Modern Dunciad* (1814), ridicule the Romantics, including the Della Cruscan and the Gothic authors, hoping to cure them from their literary follies and vices and let them either quit or return to the Classical Tradition:

And folly, dragg'd before the public view,
Blush'd to behold her image drawn so true.⁶¹

57 Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp, *Die Kunst der Kritik: Zum Zusammenhang von Ethik und Ästhetik bei Shaftesbury*, Munich 2000, 176 – 181.

58 The Neoclassical concept of comedy as stage satire, as opposed to sentimental comedy with its renunciation of invective and punishment by laughter, is best presented by Oliver Goldsmith, *A Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy*, London, 1773.

59 Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, Preface, London 1742. For the satirical novel (of comical or Menippean tradition) see Charles A. Knight, *The Literature of Satire*, Cambridge 2004, 203 – 232.

60 Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, Oxford 1975 and 1987, and Claire Harman, *Partiality and Prejudice*, in: *TLS*, 5470 (1 February 2008), 14 – 15.

61 Daniel, *The Modern Dunciad*, London 1814, 75. The satire was modelled on Persius and Gifford, with a dialogue of two interlocutors, P[oet] and F[riend].

Then, Daniel argued, Romantic and Della Cruscan and other literature dissenting from the Classical Tradition was in a state of decline, thanks to the unflagging efforts of satirists exposing its irrationality to ridicule:

[...] scarce thrice a year
 MATILDA's woeful Madrigals appear;
 LEWIS no more the tender maid affrights
 With incantations, ravishments, and sprights:
 CRUSCA (to GIFFORD thanks!) is fairly fled,
 And COTTLE's Epics sleep among the dead;
 E'en WALCOTE's impious blasphemies are o'er,
 And ANDREWS' Prologues are the vogue no more.⁶²

It is remarkable that, for all their differences in political outlook, both Tory and Whig satirists referred to the same reason or common sense as “la chose du monde la mieux partagée”⁶³ in all their satirical writings, be they prose satires or formal verse satires, laughing comedies or comic novels. They fought each other in the name of that very reason with the same Juvenalian “saeva indignatio” that the Tory Jonathan Swift ordered for his epitaph in Dublin's St Patrick's Cathedral: “Ubi saeva indignatio cor lacerare nequit”.⁶⁴ The “saeva indignatio” of the acrimonious quarrel of the two parties explains why Dryden preferred Juvenal to both Persius and Horace.⁶⁵ Such *paragone*, or ranking according to preferences, was usual in literature as well as art. Much as Dryden had ranked the English dramatists of “the last age” according to the Neoclassical rules of drama, 1. Ben Jonson, 2. Beaumont & Fletcher, 3. Shakespeare,⁶⁶ so Dryden ranked the satirists of “Augustan” antiquity according to the Neoclassical rules of satire: 1. the bitter Juvenal, 2. the frivolous Horace, 3. the obscure Persius. A century later, William Gifford would find his own age more diseased by revolution and torn by party animosities than Dryden's, and hence he would prefer the earnestness of the obscure Persius to the playfulness of the clear Horace while leaving Juvenal's first place uncontested:

62 Ibid. 8–9. The references are to the Della Cruscan sentimental poet Hannah Cowley, the Gothic novelist and dramatist Gregory Matthew Lewis, the Radical printer and translator of primitivist verse Amos Cottle, William Gifford's adversary John Wolcot alias Peter Pindar, and the Della Cruscan dramatist Miles Peter Andrews.

63 René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*, 1637, in: *Œuvres et lettres*, ed. André Bridoux, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Paris 1953, 126. Also see Mary Claire Randolph, *The Structural Design of the Formal Verse Satire*, in: *Satura: Ein Kompendium moderner Studien zur Satire*, ed. Bernhard Fabian, Olms Studien, Hildesheim and New York NY 1975, 277–293, and Howard Weinbrot, *Alexander Pope and the Traditions of Formal Verse Satire*, Princeton 1982.

64 Irvin Ehrenpreis, *Swift. The Man, His Works, and the Age*, 3 vols., London 1962–1983.

65 Ronald Paulson, *Drydens and the Energies of Satire*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to John Dryden*, ed. Steven N. Zwicker, Cambridge 2004, 53–56.

66 Dryden, *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 1668, in: *Works*, XVII. 55–58.

To raise a laugh at vice, however, (supposing it feasible,) is not the legitimate office of Satire, which is to hold up the vicious, as objects of reprobation and scorn, for the example of others, who may be deterred by their sufferings. [...] to laugh at the vicious is to encourage them [...]⁶⁷

Moreover, Gifford found Dryden's verse translation of Juvenal outdated, not least for its coarseness. Politeness and polish, Gifford argued, had progressed during the eighteenth century and demanded a new translation for a finer Augustan taste.⁶⁸ Moreover, in the age of the French Revolution, a Tory saw popular argot, cant, slang, and other vulgar expressions in literature as the ordinary people's conspiracy against the cultural establishment and power of the aristocracy. The dynamic transformation of the Classical Tradition in adaptation to the cultural requirements of Restoration and Romantic England respectively appears in Dryden's as well as Gifford's Augustan theories of satire. Dryden's self-appointment in rank above Juvenal, as a modern Augustan, expressed his loyalty to the cause of the Moderns in the *querelle des anciens et des modernes*, a controversy about cultural and literary issues which, in contrast to the controversy in state ideology and *Realpolitik*, produced more Horatian "ludibrium" than Juvenalian "saeva indignatio." Gifford, by contrast, wrote at a time when the foundations of the state were shaken and a Tory would blame the ignorant masses for the disturbance of a divinely ordained order as well as a divinely decreed taste. In Gifford's as, later, in Carlyle's view, democracy and popular culture produced unnatural chaos. Gifford hence despised Horace's bantering aristocratic self-sufficiency and admired Persius for his aggressive first satire on what he called the "purblind town", "coarser scales [of judgment]", "itching fools" and "maudlin audience".⁶⁹ The same applied to Gifford's partisan Thomas James Mathias, whose *Pursuits of Literature* (1794–1797) came under heavy attack from the literary avant-garde. In a pamphlet against Mathias's satire with its "dead weight of quotations", William Burdon reanimated the old *querelle des anciens et des modernes* of Dryden's time by comparing the new English-Augustan Mathias with the old Roman-Augustan satirists and beating his adversary with his own weapons. Here, in conjunction with a number of Greek and Latin errors that Burdon identified, Mathias appeared as a modern epigone that had disrupted rather than continued the Classical Tradition:

Since our author has chosen to institute a comparison between him and the greatest masters of Satire, I also will go on with comparing them with him, and with each other,

67 Gifford, *The Satires of Juvenal Translated, An Essay on the Roman Satirists*, London 1806, 1817, I. XXI.

68 Gifford, *An Examination of the Strictures of the Critical Reviewers on the Translation of Juvenal*, London 1803, 17–18, 37.

69 Gifford, *The Satires of Juvenal Translated*, II. 11, 14, 16.

and vindicate the illustrious Romans from the unmerited degradation of being lowered to an equality with their modern imitators.⁷⁰

More than a century earlier, Dryden's literary polemics had contributed to the formation of Gifford's Tory party. Dryden fought with Juvenal's grim determination in the war of satires between the old Cavaliers and the old Puritans, a particularly fertile controversy to which Tories and Whigs owed both their profiles and their names.⁷¹ This controversy took place during the Exclusion Crisis of 1679–1681, when Cromwell's successors tried to exclude King Charles II's younger brother, the Roman Catholic James, Duke of York (later King James II), from the succession to the throne of England, favouring an electoral monarchy. Their offence against the time-honoured Christological theology of kingship recalled the beheading of King Charles I on 30 January 1649, an act which Cromwell and the Puritans carried out to demonstratively deny the king's alleged divine and immortal part. The Puritans' successors, who wanted a demythologized and elected monarch by the grace of the people such as Oliver Cromwell, insulted the successors of the Cavaliers as "Tories", naming them after an Irish Roman Catholic gang of robbers. The Cavaliers' successors, who wanted a hereditary monarch by the grace of God and adhered to the state theology of The King's Two Bodies, insulted the Puritans' successors by labelling them as "Whigs", naming them after a Scottish Presbyterian gang of robbers. Later, long after 1681, the originally abusive names became technical terms through appropriation or containment, – a frequently used strategy of occidental eristic culture.

In his major verse satires, John Dryden firmly advocated the cause of the Tories as corresponding to the norm of reason and maligned the cause of the Whigs with "saeva indignatio", insulting them as knaves, blockheads, conspirators, and traitors against their God and their King. Such major satires were *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681–1682), *The Medal* (1682), and *Mac Flecknoe* (1682). Dryden propounded his principles in his preface to his verse translations of Juvenal and Persius, "A Discourse concerning the Origin and Progress of Satire" (1693). He taught that both the rule of general nature and the *lex contra famosos libellos* passed by Emperor Augustus forbade all personal invectives against individuals as "libels" or "lampoons" and only permitted "satires" as polemics against types of vice and folly. Satire was legal, libel was and remained a criminal offence, witness the sentencing of the brothers Leigh and John Hunt to a

70 Burdon, *An Examination of the Merits and Tendency of the Oursuits of Literature*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1799, 76–77. At the time of Burdon's pamphlet, Mathias's *Pursuits of Literature* had already seen its eighth edition.

71 Ronald Paulson, *Dryden and the Energies of Satire*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to John Dryden*, ed. Steven N. Zwicker, Cambridge 2004, 53–56.

two years' imprisonment and a heavy fine for "seditious libel" against the Prince Regent in 1813,⁷² or witness the common practice of hyphenating names so as to neutralize or generalize them (Dryden's "Sh----ll" for Thomas Shadwell, Thomas Moore's "C----h" for Viscount Castlereagh").⁷³ Libel also was and remained a literary offence, so disreputable that indicting a satirist as libeller became a serious slur upon his art of writing. In the very personal conflict between the satirists William Gifford and John Wolcot alias Peter Pindar, the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* championed Gifford with the argument that (the politically uncommitted) Pindar was a mere lampooner striking at a man and not at cause, a culprit who followed the inverted maxim *dicere de personis, parcere vitiis*:

THE maxim of ancient Satyrists was *dicere de vitiis, parcere personis*, a literal adherence to which, as we have elsewhere observed, we think by no means adapted to check the vicious spirit of modern times.⁷⁴

In "Imaginary Conversation between Mr Walter Savage Landor and the Editor of Blackwood's Magazine" (1843), Wordsworth's apologist and son-in-law Edward Quillinan still used this distinction for his attack on Landor, who had blamed Wordsworth for simple diction, verbosity, egotism, and plagiarism in the second of his imaginary conversations between the classical scholar Richard Porson and the Romantic poet Robert Southey (1842). Quillinan's Landor submits a third imaginary conversation between Porson and Southey as a "satire" on Wordsworth, but North effectively exposes it as a "scurrilous lampoon" and an "atrabilious effusion" motivated by an inferior writer's envy, malice, aggressiveness, and ridiculous arrogance.⁷⁵ Quillinan's Christopher North (John Wilson), Editor of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, will publish the "gossiping trash" of the author of *Imaginary Conversations* (from 1824) to allow him to make a fool of himself.⁷⁶ This was indeed a permissible satirical strategy. Targeting Landor's incoherent talk North provokes Landor so as to make him appear guilty of all the Neoclassical faults for which he had blamed Wordsworth, and which he had himself committed in his Oriental verse tale *Gebir* (1798). As a satirical doctor of men and manners, North diagnoses Landor's gibberish (satirically derived from *Gebir*), rebellion, chaos, anachronism, obscurity, spontaneous overflow, verbosity, jumpiness, ignorance combined with arrogance, lack of true literary and artistic interest, and a shaky command of the Classical

72 Examiner, 221 (22 March 1812).

73 Gary Dyer, *Intercepted Letters, Men of Information*, in: Steven E. Jones (ed.), *The Satiric Eye: Forms of Satire in the Romantic Period*, Basingstoke and London 2003, 160.

74 *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 4 (1799), 321.

75 [Quillinan] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 53 (April 1843), 528–529.

76 *Ibid.* 536.

Tradition restricted to an odd cento of commonplaces, quotations, and etymologies. Beyond and above a mere personal libelling revenge for Landor's "obloquy on the venerated author of the *Excursion*",⁷⁷ Quillinan's satire exposes the Classical Tradition as having become eclectic even with classical scholars.

The contrastive classification of satires and libels split the tradition of Classical and Renaissance polemic into "bienséant" (decorous) and "malséant" (indecorous). The Neoclassical understanding of the rule of decorum, which constituted one of many seventeenth-century "dissociations" as identified by T.S. Eliot,⁷⁸ was often blatantly violated by the Augustan satirists from Dryden to Johnson, though with decreasing tendency from 1660 to 1780. Satire was expected to improve mankind, in contrast to libel and lampoon, personal denigrations which were denied the status of literary works as they were designed to merely irritate individuals and destroy their reputations.⁷⁹ Theorists of satire from Dryden to Johnson insisted on that distinction, convinced that it corresponded to the borderline between moral duty and immorality.⁸⁰ This corresponded to theorists of physical warfare, who insisted on a *jus naturale* which sharply distinguished legal from illegal actions in military combat. In the practice of both bellicose and intellectual warfare, however, hatred of the enemy and love of victory proved stronger than *jus naturale*. In Dryden's satirical practice, as in the satirical practice of his Whig opponent Thomas Shadwell, the distinction between legal satire and illegal libel was blurred. Tradition suggested the destruction of a "wrong cause" by the destruction of the reputation its best advocates, an aim best achieved by making individuals lose faces.⁸¹ Menippean satire, explicitly called "alterum saturate genus" by Quintilian, was the literary equivalent to caricature and especially prone to personal abuse with its burlesque transgression of the boundary of comic realism and probability, from Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* to Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* and Pope's *Dunciad*.⁸² Such invectives and pasquils still remained within a pre-war domain of quarrel, avoiding bodily harm to or assassination of the adversary, not least for the reason that the murder of his reputation was more effective and the loss of his honour irreparable. This motive may be paradoxically drawn from Dryden's very argument against libel and lampoon:

77 Ibid. 519.

78 Term coined by T.S. Eliot in his seminal Preface to Grierson's anthology of Metaphysical Poetry (1921).

79 Weiß, *Swift und die Satire des 18. Jahrhunderts*, 124.

80 Ian Jack, *Augustan Satire: Intention and Idiom in English Poetry 1660–1750*, Oxford 1952, 43.

81 Johann N. Schmidt, *Satire: Swift und Pope*, Stuttgart 1977, 16.

82 This parallel in eighteenth-century thought is explained in Henry Fielding, Joseph Andrews, Preface, 1742. Fielding, like Hogarth, created both comic and burlesque works of art.

We have no moral right on the reputation of other men. 'Tis taking from them what we cannot restore to them.⁸³

A reputation destroyed was as irreparable as a life destroyed. But in the practice of duelling, the limit to the physical destruction of the enemy (provided his social status allowed this kind of chivalrous satisfaction) or to the social destruction of the enemy in a street ambushade or a horse-whipping (if his social status did not allow a duel) was also blurred.

The French pre-Enlightenment philosopher Pierre Bayle confirmed Dryden's ban on the destruction of reputations, in an article with the significant title "Dissertation sur les libelles diffamatoires" in volume four of his seminal *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697–1702). But he went beyond Dryden in assuming that Emperor Augustus had passed his *lex contra famosos libellos* not so much in order to prevent cases of lèse-majesté, but primarily out of the typically Roman respect for historical truth. A writer of satire should neither sully his adversaries personally like a vengeful monster nor mangle them like an unauthorized executioner. Bayle's imagery of legal punishment, we have seen, was commonplace:

Ce n'est pas assez que de comparer ces indignes Ecrivains à des Harpyes, qui salissent tout ce qu'elles touchent: on peut dire que ce sont des bourreaux qui tordent le cou, les bras, & les jambes aux Faits Historiques [...]⁸⁴

This principle was commonplace through the whole eighteenth century and remained widely accepted in the Romantic Period. Without acknowledging his source in detail, Coleridge translated it from one of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's critical letters. He did not mind the "asperity" of the "damnatory style" and "sarcasm" in critical reviews, provided that the reviewer was solely motivated by quality control, not by either a personal grudge against an author or by a national or party spirit.⁸⁵ Otherwise, Coleridge agreed with Lessing, the negative reviewer degraded himself into "a gossip, backbiter, and pasquillant".⁸⁶ Coleridge added a few lines of his own, a piece of ironic Augustan satire on libellers:

No private grudge they need, no personal spite:
The *viva sectio* is its own delight!
All enmity, all envy, they disclaim,
Disinterested thieves of our good name:
Cool, sober murderers of their neighbour's fame!⁸⁷

83 Dryden, Discourse concerning Satire, in: Works, IV. 59. Cf. C.R. Kopf, Libel and Satire in the Eighteenth Century, in: Eighteenth-Century Studies, 8 (1974–1975), 153–168.

84 Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, 1697–1702, 6th edition Basle 1741, IV. 584.

85 Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 1817, chapter 21, in: Collected Works, VII. II. 108–111.

86 Ibid. VII. II. 109.

87 Ibid.

Ever since the rise of the periodical review in the early eighteenth century, the professional reviewer was understood to be a judge of literary quality, approving or condemning a book publication or theatre performance according to written or unwritten laws, after a balanced consideration of all the merits of the work. The Romantic Period Neoclassicist Edward Copleston quite correctly interpreted the periodical review's customary anonymity as an expression of a judge's impartiality, devoid of personal biases or motives:

There is a mysterious authority in the plural *we*, which no single name, whatever may be its reputation, can acquire [...]

[...] your strictures, your praises, and your dogmas will command universal attention, and will be received [...] as the judgments of a tribunal who decide only on mature deliberation, and who protect the interests of literature with unceasing vigilance.⁸⁸

Copleston did not object to satire in a critic's judgment, provided that it was based on objective criteria and not on political bias, personal grudge, or a misplaced desire to display a firework of rhetoric for vanity or commercial success. His *Advice to a Young Author* (1807) was, in fact, a pamphlet against the *Edinburgh Review's* penchant towards saucy, witty, devastating reviewing, to be discussed later. A year later, 1808–1809, Copleston experienced that polemical penchant in a series of the *Edinburgh's* scathing reviews indicting the traditional teaching of the classics in universities, Copleston's Oxford in particular, provoking his *Reply to the Calumnies of the Edinburgh Review against Oxford* (1810). The theory and practice of satire clashed in all literary genres and kinds of text. In practice, the borderline between satire and libel had always been blurred, because Bayle's criterion of truth and Dryden's criterion of general moral standards, along with Lessing's, Coleridge's, and Copleston's criterion of altruistic quality control could easily be used to destroy a personal enemy's or political adversary's reputation. This excuse also applied to scoffing obsequies or elegies, written to counteract forgiveness in the sense of *de mortuis nil nisi bene*. Pardon after death might lead to toleration in life. This is what the *Edinburgh Review* meant when it justified the acerbity of its above-quoted critique of an outdated university education in the classics, and of Thomas Taylor's learned but "useless" and "dead" academic five-volume translation of Plato (1804) in particular. The spirit of reform must necessarily commit the "crime" of preserving antiquity for the established *ancien régime* authority of antiquity alone:

De mortuis nil nisi bonum, is a maxim, we know, in repute; [...] Instigated, however, by that propensity, with which we are so hostilely charged, of questioning the pretensions of things *established*, we have committed the crime of *lèse-antiquité* in challenging the authority of this hitherto unchallenged precept. We have been daring enough, for our

88 Copleston, *Advice to a Young Reviewer*, Oxford 1807, 1.

own use at least, to embrace the principle of reform. Instead of the maxim, ‘De mortuis nil nisi bonum,’ *the wisdom of ancestors*, we have substituted the *new* maxim, ‘Benefaction to the living, rather than superstition toward the dead.’⁸⁹

When Swift polemicized the demise of the Duke of Marlborough in 1722, he did much the same (and with the same implicit justification) as the *Mercure François* a hundred years earlier, when, in 1622, it abused the deceased Huguenot Daniel Chamier with scatological vulgarity, dancing on the grave of an adversary killed by a bullet. Lord Byron continued this tradition of prurient parodic epitaphs in his pre-emptive verses on the death of Foreign Secretary Viscount Castlereagh, who committed suicide in 1822:

Posterity will ne'er survey
A Nobler Grave than this:
Here lie the bones of Castlereagh:
Stop traveller, [and piss!]⁹⁰

Samuel Johnson's “unfavourable bias” against Swift, whose writings Johnson thought “first ridiculous and at last detestable”, was not least motivated by his aversion to Swift's personal and crude invectives, incompatible with the accepted theory of useful satire based on truth:⁹¹

All truth is valuable, and satirical criticism may be considered as useful when it rectifies error and improves judgement: he that refines the publick taste is a publick benefactor.⁹²

The gap between the theory and the practice of Augustan satire was wider than in the case of other literary genres. To teach and improve the adversary, renouncing all verbal and physical injury and destruction, was the new programme of the new Augustans, constantly threatened and violated by the time-honoured Classical and Renaissance tradition of harsh literary invective. Satirical practice deviating from the poetics and theory of satire, however, exposed the new Augustans to imputations of personal interest, cruelty, and uncontrolled passions, especially from the quarters of more sentimentally inclined theorists of satire. William Boscawen, for instance, influenced by his aunt Frances Boscawen and her Bluestocking sentimentalism, quoted Samuel Johnson on the usefulness and didactic altruism of “SATIRICAL criticism” and attacked Dryden for having

89 Edinburgh Review, 14 (April 1809), 187–188.

90 Byron, Epitaph, MS 1820, in: Complete Poetical Works, IV. 279.

91 James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson, 1791, ed. George Birbeck Hill, Oxford 1887, IV. 61.

92 Samuel Johnson, Lives of the English Poets, Life of Pope, 1779–1781, ed. George Birbeck Hill, Oxford 1905, III. 242.

written uncontrolled libels. Here again, Neoclassicism is beaten with its own weapons:

But Dryden's vig'rous Muse, as int'rest sways,
 Now stings by satire, and now soothes by praise;
 Now hastes some rival poet to oppose,
 Now hurls her vengeance on a Monarch's foes.
 Ill-fated Bard!⁹³

In the light of the plentiful sources it is astonishing that earlier historians of literature tended to construct a libeller Rochester as opposed to a satirist Dryden. One reason was that John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, had always been suspected of having ordered the Rose Alley ambush on Dryden, assault and battery as an act of revenge for Dryden's supposed collaboration in John Sheffield's, the Earl of Mulgrave's, anonymously published *Essay on Satire* (1680), which had criticized Rochester's poetry as outmoded and unpolished.⁹⁴ Moreover, Rochester was generally seen as a Pyrrhonist, sceptical about the possibility of improving man and hence as a "misanthropic satirist" aiming "to wound, to punish, to destroy",⁹⁵ – a misconception of Rochester as well as Swift. Another reason was that Rochester, a well-known heir to the early Neoclassical School of Ben Jonson ("tribe of Ben") with its de-theologization of erotic verse, cultivated the tradition not only of Anacreon, but of all Classical and Renaissance literary obscenity and pornography as well as the Renaissance pasquils. Such "prurient and indecent tone [...] which old Dekker might have applauded", was falling out of fashion and became a major stigma in the Victorian Period.⁹⁶ It violated the rule of decorum as understood by the Neoclassical Augustans, implied in Mulgrave's critique of Rochester. Courtly elegance and courtly vulgarity – an old compound which had still characterized the Medieval and Tudor courts – were slowly divorced in the course of the above-mentioned dissociations of the Restoration period, so that obscenity came to be stigmatized as indecorous and classified with the uneducated *οχλος* or *vulgus*, as contradicting the courtly and rational ideals of polish and elegance. Abusively playing on the adversary's name ("Err-smus" or "Ara-smus") or calling him names from the

93 William Boscawen, *The Progress of Satire: An Essay in Verse*, lines 123 – 127, London 1798, 9 – 11.

94 Mulgrave repeated his criticism of Rochester, though without mentioning Rochester's name, in the satirical passage of his verse *Essay upon Poetry* (1682), lines 131 – 56, in *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. J.E. Spingarn, Oxford, 1908 and 1957, II. 290. For the background of this affair and the dispute between Dryden and Rochester also see Vivian de Sola Pinto, *Enthusiast in Wit: A Portrait of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester 1647 – 1680*, London 1962, 181 – 184.

95 Gilbert Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, Princeton 1962, 13 – 14.

96 [Aytoun] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 75 (May 1854), 548.

lower animal world (“Eras-mus” or “Er-asinus”) and identifying his works with excrement (“shit” or “fart” or “vomit”), a time-honoured permissible pamphleteering practice exercised and tolerated by litigants on both sides, gradually ran out of fashion and toleration. The limits of permissible conflict in both libel and satire changed. What had been customary gradually became an act of shameful self-disqualification or a cause for lawsuits, duels, horse-whippings, or ambushes. Rochester (1647–80), a younger contemporary of Dryden (1631–1700), was a peer who showed his anti-Puritan Cavalier mentality by parading his libertine conduct, but took to the Whig party when de-theologizing *The King’s Two Bodies* and reducing King Charles II to his Body Private or even Body Bestial.⁹⁷ Rochester’s satirical practice, which followed the tradition of Renaissance pasquils, became even more offensive and outmoded with the progress of Preromanticism’s cult of sensibility and fraternity in the eighteenth century.⁹⁸ Bourgeois criticism had judged Rochester by extra-literary standards of respectability and made him a cipher for obscenity and pornography, a libertine in life and literature, to whom numerous anonymous pasquils were attributed without any serious author identification. Moreover, offence had been taken at the fact that, in his *Satire against Mankind* (1680), he had assumed the philosophical stance of Pyrrhonism, Hedonism, and Hobbesianism by preferring attainable lust to non-attainable knowledge. Rochester’s *Satire against Mankind* contains a dialogue, in the tradition of the classical *ars disputandi*, between the speaker and a theologian in which the theologian is convicted of his own worst deadly sin, pride, “radix malorum est superbia”. It was in sinful pride that Adam and Eve destroyed man’s happiness by the seeking of knowledge in the pleasures of paradise, and it has ever been in sinful pride that speculative theology and epistemological philosophy followed Adam and Eve’s false lead:

His wisdom did his happiness destroy,
Aiming to know that world he should enjoy.⁹⁹

A reading of Rochester’s invectives in the light of the Classical and Renaissance Tradition shows that, for all their libertine thought and pornographic diction, they neither exclude the positive ethic of the Hobbesian social contract nor confine themselves to personal libel. They could be didactic even when they retreated from public to private blame, so that the addressee was the only person expected to laugh at and be cured of his vice or folly. A splendid example,

97 Annette Pankraz, *The Culture of the King’s Three Bodies*, in: Dryden and the World of Neoclassicism, ed. Wolfgang Götschacher – Holger Klein, Tübingen 2001, 257–272.

98 P.K. Elkin, *The Augustan Defence of Satire*, Oxford 1973, and Weiß, *Swift und die Satire des 18. Jahrhunderts*, 125–126.

99 Rochester, *A Satire against Mankind*, 1680, lines 33–34, in: *Works*, ed. Harold Love, Oxford 1999, 58.

mentioned above, is Rochester's "Satire upon King Charles II" (MS ca 1673), which targets the promiscuousness of King Charles II and his mistresses.¹⁰⁰ The traditional theology of The King's Two Bodies, which saw the king's divine nature complemented by a mortal and fallible nature in need of advice and admonition, demanded that the king should have advisers and critics to educate and correct him. Thus, in his role of *poeta laureatus* and *praeceptor regis*, even the Tory satirist Dryden publicly reproached King Charles II with his extramarital escapades and illegitimate children, which led to political troubles culminating in the threat of a second civil war.¹⁰¹ Whig satirists were naturally more facetious, complementing the king's two bodies by (or rather reducing it to) a third, his body bestial, so that all readers knew who was meant, though King Charles II was not named. Conversely, Rochester deals with King Charles, together with that King's overstrained sexual organs and bestial sexual practices, in a most vulgar vocabulary, but simultaneously raises his "flying" to the level of general truth and validity. A letter dated January 1674, reporting that the libertine courtier Rochester accidentally made his libertine king and companion read this satire in a confounding of manuscripts and then hastily moved away from court for a time to escape the king's first anger, suggests a very conscious plan of private, not public reprimand. This suspicion is supported by the genre title of the short, 34 lines pasquil, "a satire", written in Dryden's heroic couplets, a title that appears in at least two of the five preserved manuscripts. The satire begins in the mock-heroic way of Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe*, ironically praising the reprimanded vices as virtues, both the king's easy intemperance and the women's easy seducibility in a noble Christian land:

In the Isle of Brittain long since famous growne
For breeding the best C-ts in Christendome,
Not long since Reign'd (oh may he long survive)
The easiest King and best bred Man alive.¹⁰²

Once it was the king who ruled his kingdom, now the kingdom is ruled by the king's mistresses. The king loves his people, especially his mistresses, so that the king's sceptre and the king's phallus have become identical. Then, the speaker's "saeva indignatio" quits this distanced irony in favour of a direct rebuke of vice exemplified from King Charles and his younger brother James. To the hedonist Rochester, erotic pleasure is not a vice as such, but unreasonable folly when excessively practised by a king. A king who allows his court fool and mistress to rule his realm with a fool's licence is a greater fool than his court fool:

100 Marianne Thormählen, Rochester. The Poems in Context, Cambridge 1993, 295–303.

101 Rolf Lessenich, Tory versus Whig: Dryden's Mythical Concept of Kingship, in: Dryden and the World of Neoclassicism, 243–56.

102 Rochester, Satire upon King Charles II, A1–4, in: Works, 85.

Peace was his Aime, his genteness was such
 And Love, he lov'd, for he lov'd Fucking much,
 Nor was his high desire above his Strength:
 His Scepter and his Prick were of a length,
 And she may sway the one who plays with t' other,
 Which makes him little wiser then his Brother.¹⁰³

Moreover, a king who believes that his power-hungry and gold-greedy mistresses truly love him is an even greater fool, especially when his mistresses (like the actress Nell Gwynn) are for hours busy reviving the love potency of the tired king's phallus with proven techniques. The bragging fool of love is just as repellent as the bragging fool of war, a ridiculous caricature of the courtly virtues of gallantry in love and bravery in war. Charles II is the ridiculous love-gull and *amans gloriosus* of Britain as Louis XIV is the ridiculous sabre-rattler and *miles gloriosus* of France. Both are satirically exposed to their own laughter on a private comic stage, for the purpose of cathartic amendment:

This to evince wou'd be too long to tell yee
 The painful Tricks of the laborious Nelly,
 Implying Hands, Arms, Fingers, Mouth, and Thighs
 To raise the Limb which shee each Night enjoys.
 I hate all Monarchs and the Thrones that they sitt on,
 From the Hector of France to th' Cully of greate Brittain.¹⁰⁴

The indignant speaker's and satirist's didactic message claims general validity: Whoever wields the king's phallus wields the king's sceptre. A few years later Dryden raised the same reproach in *Absalom and Achitophel*, though on the public stage and in the hidden way of biblical allegory, in Achitophel-Shaftesbury's sly conspiratorial address to Absalom-Monmouth. The King, Achitophel argues, would have his happiness forced upon him like his mistresses, in spite of the hypocritical denial by both, and the King would love to be physically arrested by Absalom in the King's own interest. The parallel of the pleasing rape of king and mistress transports the second message of Achitophel's speech, a general truth which Dryden taught King Charles II. It provides a striking public parallel to Rochester's private message, with the difference of a less obscene diction:

"If so, by force he wishes to be gained,
 Like women's lechery, to seem constrained.
 Doubt not, but when he most affects the frown,
 Commit a pleasing rape upon the crown.

103 Ibid. A8–13, 85–86.

104 Ibid. A29–34, 86.

Secure his person, to secure your cause:
They who possess the prince, possess the laws.¹⁰⁵

In the practice – as opposed to the theory – of Neoclassical satire, the borderline between satire and lampoon remained porous, from Dryden and Rochester in the Augustan Age to William Gifford and John Wolcot in the Romantic Period. Satire, like lampoon, is savage and vitriolic by nature, scapegoating rather than including individuals as well as groups, a fact that some satirists especially of the Romantic Period (including Jane Austen and Jane Taylor) were keenly aware of and tried to counteract.¹⁰⁶ The practice of Restoration lampoon even allows the reconstruction of a poetics of Restoration lampoon, which betrays its close affinity to the practice of literary satire.¹⁰⁷ After Dryden's and Mulgrave's criticism of Rochester, Rochester's time-honoured and vulgar Renaissance-type invective ran out of fashion. In the course of the dissociations which developed during the four decades of the Restoration, Dryden's theory of satire with its stress on the rule of decorum (interpreted as forbidding obscenity and vulgarity) increasingly dominated and domesticated the practice of satire, without however extracting its sting and bite. Pope's late apocalyptic vision, in his second *Dunciad* (1743), that Augustan wit and light of reason were about to die, was not borne out by literary history. Both Tories and Whigs continued the tradition, exemplified by the verse satires of Charles Churchill and the fiercely Wilkesite miscellany *The New Foundling Hospital for Wit* (1768–1773) with its invectives and parodies,¹⁰⁸ or the equally fierce and anonymous Wilkesite "Junius Letters" (1769–1772) with their very personal abuse of Tory politicians and King George III. Richard Brinsley Sheridan's burlesque stage satire *The Critic* (1779), with its double polemic against Preromantic breaking of the Neoclassical rules (probability, decorum, the unities) as well as against the market manipulation of literature by corrupt critics, affirmed the satirist's and comic playwright's right to ridicule vices and follies. Sheridan's prologue, however, found fault with "A style too flippant for a well-bred Muse" still practised "In those gay days of wickedness and wit" when George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, wrote his *Rehearsal* (1672) against John Dryden,¹⁰⁹ Sheridan's domesticated and bowdlerized source. With a similar aim in mind, Sheridan rewrote Vanbrugh's old-type comedy *The Relapse* (1696) as *A Trip to Scarborough* (1777), maintaining

105 Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, I. 471–76, in: *Works*, II. 19.

106 Stuart Curran, *Jane Taylor's Satire on Satire*, in: Jones (ed.), *The Satiric Eye*, 139–150.

107 Harold Love, *English Clandestine Satire 1660–1702*, Oxford 2004, 218–247.

108 Claude Rawson's review of Donald W. Nichol's new three-volume edition (Pickering and Chatto) in: *TLS*, 5442 (20 July 2007), 3–7.

109 R.B. Sheridan, *The Critic, or, A Tragedy Rehearsed*, Prologue, 16, 7, 1779, in: *Plays and Poems*, ed. R.C. Rhodes, Oxford 1928, II. 191.

Neoclassical laughing comedy against fashionable Preromantic sentimental comedy, but omitting Vanbrugh's outdated Restoration bawdy.

With these modifications, Neoclassical satire survived and remained strong throughout the Romantic Period 1780–1830, in spite of the Preromantic and Romantic cult of integrative sensibility and universal fraternity which was basically opposed to attacking and hurting one's fellow creatures. The Romantic Period and even the Romantic poets themselves could not do without satire.¹¹⁰ After Pope and Johnson, with the old order and the church increasingly threatened by the egalitarian ideology of revolutionary and romantic thought, culminating in the French Revolution, we can observe an increase of bitter, serious, Juvenalian satires defending the classical as well as the state tradition of the *ancien régime*, and a renewed penchant towards libel and lampoon.¹¹¹ As in the Age of Dryden, when Whiggism and Nonconformity threatened the old order, the Classical Tradition adapted itself to modern eristic needs and resumed its Juvenalian satiric bitterness in order to defend itself against a new (and much more violent and radical) system of values.¹¹² Considering his own period, De Quincey repeated that it had already been commonplace in the Augustan era to believe that “the passion of enormous and bloody indignation made Juvenal a poet”.¹¹³ But, notwithstanding traditionalist arguments for the need of strictest didactic earnestness and severest punishment, the time-honoured use of vulgarity, obscenity, and pornography in personal invectives had died out with Rochester and Swift and was no longer tolerated in respectable genres, for aesthetic, legal, and political reasons. As we shall see, however, they survived in popular stage plays such as farce, ballad opera, and “burletta” (an umbrella term meaning all kinds of non-serious and non-classical popular drama mixing genre as well as speech and song).¹¹⁴ And they also survived in the often ribald political caricatures of James Gillray, James Sayers, Thomas Rowlandson, and George Cruikshank, which partook of the nature of burlesque and farce. In 1818, the anonymous posthumous editor of Gillray's caricatures, a staunch Tory and Royalist opposed to the unthinking multitude as well as to Napoleon, noted the close relationship between caricature and satire. He saw William Hogarth's exposure of the South Sea Bubble as “the commencement of this satirical species

110 Steven E. Jones, *Forms of Satire in the Romantic Period*, in: Jones (ed.) *The Satiric Eye*, 1–9.

111 Gary Dyer, *British Satire and the Politics of Style 1789–1832*, Cambridge 1997, 39–66.

112 Hence, Dyer discovers a Tory preference for the bitterer Juvenalian and a Whig preference for the more playful Horatian satire.

113 De Quincey, *Anecdotes – Juvenal*, in: *Posthumous Works*, ed. A.H. Japp, London 1891–93, I. 85.

114 Burwick (ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Romantic Literature, Farce*, New York NY and Oxford 2011, I. 179.

of engraving”,¹¹⁵ regarding it as a truly English art in the defence of English liberty against Continental tyranny:

Yes, John Bull ever enjoyed a broad grin. He loves pantomime, farce, satire, and, above all, caricature [...] The *wit* of painting is of English invention; it was preceded by literary satire, and satire grew out of liberty, which is Johnny’s delight. He lives for liberty, and will die for liberty.¹¹⁶

The Tory and Neoclassical editor’s inclusion of Gillray’s most prurient caricatures can be easily accounted for, as he referred to popular dramatic genres such as pantomime and farce. In contrast to satire, caricature was a low-reputed popular genre, which exempted it from the observance of rules. But its rise in popularity made it an extremely effective vehicle for political and social satire, so that Charles James Fox admitted that “Sayers’s caricatures had done him more mischief than the debates in Parliament or the works of the press”.¹¹⁷ Though ultimately in the pay of George Canning and the Tories (from 1797), Gillray remained a loose cannon and did not hesitate to rudely satirize the ambition of Pitt or the follies of the Royal Family.¹¹⁸ Typical examples are Gillray’s suppressed undated caricatures of the time’s hotly disputed topics, exemplified by a scene of naked-bottom mass floggings, “Westminster School”, and another of English Orientalist luxury and sexuality, “A Sale of English Beauties in the East Indies” (1786), featuring flagellant birches as well as literary pornography.¹¹⁹ The scatology of Gillray’s caricature entitled “The French Invasion, or, John Bull Bombarding the Bum-Boats” (1793), depicted Britain in the shape of King George III venting her excrement on the invading French fleet. It shows how old-fashioned Rochesterian and Swiftian rudeness and vulgarity, by then stigmatized in respectable literature, survived in burlesque and caricature.

Nevertheless, sexual orientations and practices remained favourite targets of satire, an Achilles’s heel in the destruction of the enemy, as in Swift’s denigration of the “moderns” Richard Bentley and William Wotton as a pair of effeminate homosexual lovers both pierced and killed from behind by a “a lance of wondrous length”,¹²⁰ or Pope’s indignant attacks on Lord Hervey’s homosexual ef-

115 The Caricatures of Gillray; with Historical and Political Illustrations, and Compendious Biographical Anecdotes and Notices, London 1818, 26.

116 Ibid. 1.

117 L.H. Cust – E.A. Smith, James Sayers, in: ODNB (online version).

118 Ronald Paulson, Representations of Revolution (1789 – 1820), New Haven and London 1983, 168 – 211, and Marilyn Butler, Romantics, Rebels, Reactionaries, Oxford 1981, 53 – 56.

119 Tim Fulford, “Getting and Spending”: The Orientalization of Satire in Romantic London, in: Jones (ed.), The Satiric Eye, 17 – 18.

120 Swift, The Battle of the Books, 1704, ed. Angus Ross – David Woolley, The World’s Classics, Oxford 1986, 124.

feminacy.¹²¹ Not much had changed since the anonymous satirical invective *Corona Regia* (1615), written in the Low Countries and published in Latin, violently attacked King James I of England for his well-known homosexual inclinations, representing him as unmanly in his nature, illegitimate in his obscure descent, and hence unqualified for kingship.¹²² Examples to be explored are John Wolcot's indictment of William Gifford for acting as Tory pander to members of the peerage, or the Tory George Ellis's suggestion of an excessive alcohol orgy with a homosexual love affair between the reconciled Radical politicians Charles James Fox and John Horne Tooke celebrated in a plebeian pub song posing as egalitarian Romantic poetry, entitled "Acme and Septimius, or, The Happy Union".¹²³ What had changed was Rochester's old-fashioned vulgarity of diction. In the historical and critical introduction to his translation of Juvenal (1802), Gifford declared that he made Juvenal speak "as he would have spoken if he had lived among us", preserving his indignation but leaving out all offensive indecencies:

[...] refined with the age, he [Juvenal] would have fulminated against impurity in terms, to which, though delicacy might disavow them, manly decency might listen without offence.¹²⁴

Höfische Kultur, post-Restoration courtly breeding and manners, forbade the rudeness of Juvenal as well as that of Luther's or Erasmus's invectives against each other. Thus, John Gifford's *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* praised William Gifford's satire for his discretion in updating the Classical Tradition, combining severe satirical chastisement with a new dimension of the rule of decorum. The imagery of an armed medieval knight protecting a virtuous virgin in distress illustrated the modern requirements in the art of arguing:

Proceed, great poet! Scourge a vicious age,
Drive vice and folly from the world's wide stage,
'Gainst impious ribaldry thy faulchion wield,
And o'er each timid virtue spread thy shield!
Be this thy satire's character and praise;
The strength of JUVENAL, in purer lays!¹²⁵

121 Pope, An Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot, 1735, lines 305–33. Pope's Sporus, with reference to Suetonius, Nero, 28. 1.

122 *Corona Regia*, ed. Tyler Fyotek – Winfried Schleiner, Paris 2010.

123 [Ellis] in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 13 (5 February 1798). Underscoring the Tory's support of the Classical Tradition and the suggestion of homosexuality, the poem is modelled on Catullus, Poems, 45. I follow Graeme Stones's attributions of the Anti-Jacobin papers in his anthology *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, I. LXI – LXVII.

124 Gifford, *The Satires of Juvenal Translated, An Essay on the Roman Satirists*, London, 1802, LXIII.

125 *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 6 (1800), 475.

In the same year of the same Tory periodical, William Drummond's translation of Persius (1797) received similar praise. A translator who could update the Classical Tradition by adapting famous ancient works to modern aesthetic requirements was no less a great author than the writer of the original:

He who can make an ancient poet speak modern language, as if that language were the poet's own, ought, doubtless, to share the fame of his original.¹²⁶

When Gifford's adversary Leigh Hunt, Romantic poet, critic, and journalist, published his verse satire *The Feast of the Poets* (1814), in which he fought Gifford and other contemporary Neoclassicists with their own satirical weapons, his device of Apollo's descent to give English poets both a banquet and a piece of his critical mind was taken from old-style Restoration satires by Rochester and other Restoration rakes and wits. But Hunt, like Gifford, insisted on the modern requirement of decorum and polish at least in a respectable literary genre like satire, in spite of his advocacy of the ordinary people and popular culture:

They [Suckling's, Rochester's, and Sheffield's satires] are for the most part vulgar and poor, with that strange affectation of slovenliness, which the lower species of satire, in those times, appears to have mistaken for a vigorous negligence or gallant undress.¹²⁷

Accordingly, Hunt's satire is pungent in denying Gifford the rank of a true poet and imagining the miniature-sized Gifford having the door shown by Apollo. And yet Hunt avoids the old-style indecent coarseness:

'My visit just now is to poets alone,
And not to small critics, however well known'.
So saying he rang, to leave nothing in doubt,
And the sour little gentleman bless'd himself out.¹²⁸

Byron, in *Don Juan* (1819–24), did not avoid coarseness and obscenity, and his Tory critics resented that provocation more than his witty blasphemies and brilliantly formulated scepticism. John Gibson Lockhart, for instance, defending *Don Juan* on the ground of its intellectual brilliance of diction against the moral strictures of William Maginn in a later number of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* from the same year (1823), agreed that Byron's coarseness belonged to an earlier age. To Lockhart, this stagnation, or rather step backwards in the Classical Tradition, was not acceptable and served to ruin Byron's reputation as an outstanding modern poet:

126 Ibid. 6 (1800), 274. Here, as in twentieth-century translation theory, the translator is not subordinate, but co-author of his translated text.

127 Hunt, *The Feast of the Poets*, Preface, in: *Selected Writings*, V. 32.

128 Ibid. lines 158–161, V. 36.

[...] he has practised in this age something of the licence of our grandfathers. In doing so, he has acted egregiously amiss. The things were bad, nobody can doubt that, and we had got rid of them; and it did not become a man of Byron's genius to try to make his age retrograde in anything, least of all in such things as these.¹²⁹

The rule of decorum did not, however, apply to the less respectable informal or burlesque satires including Menippean satires, let alone libels and pasquils, in which the old rudeness of invective survived. The “Noctes Ambrosianae”, a series of 71 facetious dialogues on the model of ancient symposia which appeared in the Tory *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* from 1822 to 1835, John Wilson, John Gibson Lockhart, and William Maginn (all advocates of the Classical Tradition with the exception of the arch-Jacobite James Hogg) made ample use of the old scatological obscenity of satire, as in their poetical polemic against “the Cockney school of poetry” in their first number.¹³⁰ A retrospective 72nd fictitious dialogue was added decades later, in 1899, when the real actors were all dead. There Christopher North (John Wilson) composes a merry, convivial song celebrating the series' Menippean joy in the satirical artillery of an exuberant Rabelaisian firework of wit and words, “delectare” equivalent to “prodesse”:

A thousand moons have waxed and waned,
 And fourscore years have rolled,
 Since *Maga* first o'er mortals reigned
 With Ebony [William Blackwood] the bold.
 An ill-starred day was that, I ween,
 For dunce, and knave, and fool;
 What drivelling clique durst even squeak
 Beneath her righteous rule?
 [...]
 She soon took up for Church and King
 Her parable with zest,
 And to th' unequal fight did bring
 Invective, reason, jest.¹³¹

At a time when cities were growing at an immense rate, with a concomitant immense loss of individuality, natural health, and social connections in an anonymous mass, *Blackwood's* shameless Cockney bashing was part of the periodical's anti-London discourse. In the debate on the ideal metropolis, Edinburgh should be presented as the better capital of Britain, because it was not only urban, but had remained urbane with traditional social life and customs still

129 [Lockhart] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 14 (September 1823), 283.

130 Also see Mark Parker, *Literary Magazines and British Romanticism*, chapter 3 *The Burial of Romanticism*, Cambridge 2000, 106–134.

131 *Noctes Ambrosianae*, LXXII, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 165 (Februar 1899), 169. Title modelled on Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*.

intact. In “Noctes Ambrosianae”, the Edinburgh Tories meant to show Edinburgh’s combination of high or polite culture, conviviality, and modern economy, as opposed to London’s alleged debasement to vulgarity, noise, and revolution of the stupid masses. And that vulgarity had to be exposed in the most shameless, even scatological, way.

Denigrating a personally identified adversary’s literary production as oral or anal excrement had a long history, from Aristophanes’s *Frogs* via Ben Jonson’s *Poetaster* via Swift’s *Battle of the Books* to *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*. In the Classical Tradition, Aristophanes and Swift were apologetically named as rude models of personal satire, thus in “Noctes Ambrosianae”.¹³² The real reason for this relapse into coarseness and character assassination of an adversary was, however self-ironically admitted, the demand of the market: the sprightly aggressiveness of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* sold much better than the ponderousness of the *Quarterly Review*. *Blackwood’s* staff knew very well that they were guilty of the same non-classical profit orientation and prostitution to the masses for which they blamed the Romantics. Mass culture guaranteed mass profit, and profit came before ideology. Wilson, the chief author of “Noctes Ambrosianae”, was one of the most popular and prolific writers of his age, a chameleon, ventriloquist, and master of Romantic irony.¹³³ He shared this carnivalistic gift with his favourite enemy, Francis Jeffrey of the *Edinburgh Review*, who gave a specimen of this Menippean gift of mimicry on the occasion of a visit to Thomas and Jane Carlyle’s home in Craigenputtoch in 1830.¹³⁴ This may help to explain both the *Edinburgh’s* and *Blackwood’s* various discordant voices and love of internal dispute. Wilson’s Socratic abstention from dogmatism alternated with his old-style slashing and character assassination, which had by now become a liability. Notwithstanding the tragic death of Keats and the suicide of Harriet Shelley-Westbrook, Morgan Odoherty (the hard-drinking Irish soldier-poet created by Lockhart’s Scottish associate and war veteran Thomas Hamilton on the model of William Maginn) gives the Editor (Lockhart) a fudge poem by one “Fudgiolo”, a pseudo-Italian grotesque which diagnoses Hunt’s and Keats’s works as anal excrement, rhyming “Examinero” (Hunt’s periodical *Examiner*) on “Glystero” (a clyster, an enema), “Both vehicles of dirt”.¹³⁵ Simultaneously, the libel, which calls Hunt a great “Giacasso” (jackass), identifies the defunct

132 Noctes Ambrosianae, III, in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 11 (May 1822), 612.

133 Robert Morrison, *Blackwood’s Berserker: John Wilson and the Language of Extremity*, in: *Romanticism on the Net*, 20 (November 2000).

134 Carlyle, *Reminiscences*, 1881, ed. Kenneth Joshua Fielding – Ian Campbell, Oxford World’s Classics, Oxford 1997, 368.

135 Noctes Ambrosianae, I, in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 11 (March 1822), 363. The fictionalized interlocutors of that comical Socratic symposium in Ambrose’s Tavern in Edinburgh were modelled on real men, but provided personae for various authors.

Keats's *Endymion* as "Ipecacuanha" (an emetic), ridiculing the reproach that a Tory review of *Endymion* had caused Keats's premature death in Rome:

Signor Le Hunto, gloria di Cocagna
 Chi scrive il poema della Rimini
 Che tutta apparenza ha, per Gemini,
 D'esser cantato sopra la montagna
 Di bel Ludgato, o nella campagna
 D'Amsted, o sulle marge Serpentimini
 Com' esta Don Giovanni d'Endymini
 Il gran poeta d'Ipecacuanha?
 Tu sei il Re del Cocknio Parnasso
 Ed egli il herede apparente,
 Tu sei un gran Giacasso ciertamente,
 Ed egli ciertamente gran Giacasso!
 Tu sei il Signor del Examinero
 Ed egli soave Signor del Glystero.¹³⁶

Nor did German grotesques and libels renounce rude excremental and sexual insults, not even by advocates of the Classical Tradition and its rule of decorum, witnessed in the unsavoury Immermann-Platen and Heine-Platen controversies. In his burlesque Aristophanean dramatic satire *Der romantische Ödipus* (1827), Platen featured Karl Immermann as the Romantic Nimmermann, a primitivistically country-enamoured bad German imitator of Shakespeare, a Romantic who read Sophocles's *King Oedipus* on a heath, in the company of sheep. Platen's Nimmermann shits Sophocles out for want of solid health and replaces him by a self-parodying Romantic tragedy that breaks all the Neoclassical rules.¹³⁷ Classical decorum is replaced by Romantic license and by the Romantic aesthetic of effect, "Dekorationsveränderung und sonstige Freischützskaskadenfeuerwerkmaschinerie".¹³⁸ Simultaneously, Platen derided the Jew Heine for his mutilated penis, and Heine derided the homosexual Platen for his inviting bottom as well as for vomiting bad verses. Personal hatred would neither let them see their kinship as Negative Romantics nor credit each other with health and the classical art of well-wrought poetry instead of extempore effusions, as in Heine's *Spottvers* on Platen and Romantic Orientalism:

Von den Früchten, die sie aus dem Gartenhain von Schiras stehlen,
 Essen sie zu viel, die Armen, und vomieren dann Ghaselen.¹³⁹

136 Ibid.

137 Platen, *Der romantische Ödipus*, 1827, act I, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, X. 94.

138 Ibid. X. 94–95.

139 Heine, *Reisebilder: Die Nordsee*, 1827, in: *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. Klaus Briegleb, Munich 1975–1976, II. 242.

And in a prose satire on the Romantic Platonism of August Wilhelm Schlegel and his supposed Viennese disciples, the brothers Heinrich and Matthäus von Collin, written on the model of the sixteenth-century *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, Franz Grillparzer called each of his two adversaries Collin (the brothers Heinrich and Matthäus von Collin) “Kodallin”, *Afterdramatiker*. This suggested, in the manner of Swift, that the brothers produced their dramas (as well as the faulty style of their German letters) like excrements from their backsides.¹⁴⁰ When arguing against Romantic Platonism, Romantic Disillusionists like Byron, Heine, and Grillparzer would not hesitate temporarily to assume a Neoclassical position combined with the pre-Neoclassical coarseness of Renaissance pasquils. Sceptics doubting an intrinsic world order and world destiny stood in need of firmly established classical form and classical scansion to give firm Parnassian shape to chaos. Hence they tended to rail against the formal experiments and prosodic spontaneities and “natural rhythms” of the Platonic Romantics as symptoms of artistic incapacity.

Thomas Carlyle and the Victorians assigned such coarseness to the eighteenth century, which they saw as having degraded noble reason by licentious faithlessness and scepticism. Carlyle regretted the survival of a small number of “Pasquils, mere ribald libels on Humanity”, which were, however, “at times worth reading”.¹⁴¹ In France, Paul Verlaine collected his personal and vulgar polemical poems under the title of “Invectives” (posth. 1896), to be printed after his death by his publisher Léon Vanier, though with prefaces that excused these amusements of his bile (invectives against writers, politicians, judges, journalists and the spirit of the Third Republic) as sloppily written and unworthy of his real Muse:

Je me tairai par grandeur
Et mon fiel fier qui s’amuse
Récuse à ce titre de Muse
Cette épouse sans pudeur.¹⁴²

A more fundamental difference between pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary English Neoclassicism, however, consisted in the change of the focus of the Classical Tradition from Rome to Greece. Before the French Revolution, both French and English (as distinct from German) Neoclassicism had concentrated on Augustan Rome, due to founding myths of Britain and France which con-

140 Grillparzer, *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, 1809, in: *Werke*, Tempel-Klassiker, ed. Paul Stapf, Berlin and Darmstadt 1965, II. 225 – 227.

141 Carlyle, *Count Cagliostro*, 1855, in: *Works*, Centenary Edition, ed. H.D. Traill, London 1898 – 1905, XXVIII. 250.

142 Verlaine, *Invectives*, 1896, II *Post-Scriptum au prologue*, 17 – 20, in: *Œuvres poétiques complètes*, ed. Y.-G. Le Dantec, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Paris 1962, 900.

nected the genealogies of both countries with Greece's enemy Troy, the legendary founding city of Rome. However, the French Revolutionaries declared the Roman Republic as their model, and Napoleon fashioned himself and his French empire on the model of the Roman Empire. As a consequence, French Neoclassicism remained faithful to Augustan Rome, in contrast to English Neoclassicism. The British Tories, naturally inclined to Neoclassicism, began to look back to Greece rather than Rome. The British Whigs, inclined to dissenting varieties of Neoclassicism or to Preromanticism, found more liberty in Greece and the spirit of the Socratic dialogue than in the piety of Aeneas and the virtue of a Roman citizen. In the debates of the pre-revolutionary eighteenth century, Whigs and Dissenters had seen themselves in a cultural vicinity to Athens, tracing its greatness to liberty and religious variety. James Thomson's myth-making didactic poem *Liberty* (1735–1736) and William Collins's Pindaric "Ode to Liberty" (1746) gave expression to the Whig concept of the progress of liberty, imagined as a goddess, from Athens to Britain, in a kind of *translatio imperii*.¹⁴³ In a secularized version of Calvinist doctrine, the Whigs saw free trade and economic success as outward signs of that liberty, ancient Greece's and modern Britain's historical mission. Warrington on the Mersey, the seat of an outstanding Dissenting Academy, was dubbed "the Athens of the North".¹⁴⁴ Tories and Anglicans, by contrast, reminded their Whig and Dissenting adversaries of the fall of Athens in the Peloponnesian War, holding up victorious Sparta as a corrective to Athenian liberty with regard to military strength and religious uniformity. In the more debate-intensive revolutionary period and after the experience of Napoleon's tyranny, Leigh Hunt's masque *The Descent of Liberty* (1815) followed the lead of Thomson and Collins, introducing the character of Eunomus, a benign and wise old father banished under the reign of past tyranny, an allegory of the Athenian ideal of a wise and just law or *ενομία* protecting Athenian liberty. The few Radical Whigs that advocated Neoclassicism against Romanticism, John Horne Tooke and Thomas Love Peacock, became excellent Greek scholars.¹⁴⁵ The standing Tory joke which persisted well into the nineteenth century, that the self-styled Athenians knew neither Greek nor refined manners because of their ignorance of the Classical Tradition, served a purely polemical self-definition by way of self-inclusion in – and exclusion of the adversary from – the common classical ideal now located in ancient Greece.

The neo-Greek rebuilding of Covent Garden after the disastrous fire of 1808, followed by the Old Price riots of 1809, was another instance of British Neo-

143 William Levine, Collins, Thomson, and the Whig Progress of Liberty, in: *Studies in English Literature*, 34 (1994), 553–577.

144 Daniel E. White, *Early Romanticism and Religious Dissent*, 26 and 33.

145 Marilyn Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 24 and 39. Also see Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition*, Oxford, New York NY, and London 1949, 355–436.

classical reorientation from ancient Rome to ancient Greece. With the enlargement or rebuilding of London's foremost patent theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, in the years 1792 – 1812, and raised prices unaffordable to the multitude, the Classical Tradition entered the lists against local and popular cultural traditions – and lost its cause, at least in the Romantic Period. The theatre's managers, Richard Brinsley Sheridan and John Philip Kemble, had the new Covent Garden portico copied from the Temple of Minerva on the Acropolis and the panels adorned with figures of Aeschylus, Aristophanes, and Menander. This parade of the royal patent theatre's "legitimacy", together with increased prices and tiers of boxes for private use that excluded less affluent spectators, led to popular protests, which made many conservatives fear a French Revolution in Britain. Patent theatre prices had to be radically reduced, low-class entertainment had to be readmitted, high-class and respectable middle-class spectators rubbed cheeks with riotous low-class spectators and prostitutes and were repelled by "the interruption of dancing, mimicry, and show" that Charles Lamb enjoyed and that the anonymous traditionalist "Dramaticus" as well as Prince Pückler-Muskau pilloried.¹⁴⁶ The plea of "Dramaticus" was for a return to the good old time of fifty years ago, when "men of letters and research" and "people of quiet manners" had their quality plays, and the churlish "lovers of processions and pantomimes" had their noisy shows.¹⁴⁷ He lamented the swamping of the patent theatres, once run by a David Garrick and a John Rich, by democratic managements keeping democratic mobs in good humour by novelties, sensations, noise, and glare:

Our theatrical amusements are now chiefly composed of pieces which require an endless succession of new scenes and decorations, and the constant employment of supernumeraries in almost every department of the theatre.¹⁴⁸

According to Pückler-Muskau's testimony, the Italian Opera was the only venue where high-class and respectable middle-class spectators could be sure of being among themselves, without being harassed by unruly mob behaviour. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that, with the strong support of Queen Victoria, high-class and low-class theatres again became strictly separate. The populace and their Radical champions understood Covent Garden's and Drury Lane's enlarged rebuilding from 1792 to 1812 as an exclusion of the ordinary people from cultural life by a recourse to the Classical Tradition, a function of the patent theatres in support of the *ancien régime*, in order to deprive the unruly

146 "Dramaticus", An Impartial View of the Stage from the Days of Garrick and Rich to the Present Period, London 1816, 21. See also Clifford Leech – Lois Potter (eds.), The Revels History of Drama in English, London 1975 – 1978, VI. 11 and 23.

147 "Dramaticus", *ibid.* 21.

148 *Ibid.* 5.

mass of their natural rights and to segregate them in London's ill-reputed but burgeoning "illegitimate" theatres.¹⁴⁹ After the Congress of Vienna, recourse to the Classical Tradition and an elitist theatre was resumed. In the romantically personal and digressive "Topic of the Month" essays of the Radical *Monthly Magazine* which he edited for a year (1824–1825), John Thelwall had to defend the popular Punch and Judy shows against Parliamentary calls for banning all puppet shows as entertainment for the poor in London's streets.¹⁵⁰ He wanted Burke's "swinish multitude" to have their simple culture respected and legalized, in the theatre as well as in the street. The populace, and especially the poor, were his hope for the future of a democratic Britain throughout his long life (1764–1834), and it was in their simple diction that he published his *Poems Written in Close Confinement in the Tower and Newgate upon a Charge of Treason* (1795), which influenced Wordsworth's and Coleridge's aesthetically revolutionary *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). These poems in praise of virtue, simplicity, and equality contained satirical polemics against oppression and luxury, a combination of vices that characterized the elitist Neoclassical arts supporting the "tyranny" and subjecting the people of the *ancien régime*. The use of lyrical poems such as sonnets (reintroduced in the Preromantic sonnet revival) for polemical purposes distinguishes Romantic counter-satires from Neoclassical satires and shows the Romantic poets' need of self-defence:

Decked with the gaudy zone
Of Pomp, and usher'd with lascivious arts
Of glossing Luxury, thy fraudulent smile
Ensnares the dazzled senses, till our hearts
Sink, palsied, in degenerate lethargy.¹⁵¹

Thelwall's Wordsworthian praise of simplicity was also a praise of popular versus elitist, polite, and aristocratic court culture.¹⁵² It is in the wake of Tory politics against such British low-class culture and its constructed associations with the French Revolution and its Roman republicanism that we see the conservative admiration for and defence of Greece against eighteenth-century Augustan Latinity in the Romantic Period and the ensuing Victorian Age. Greek literature had already been brought to prominence when English Preromanticism had gone in search of a more "primitive" classical poetry, before the refinements of Augustan Latinity, and Homer and Pindar had begun to supersede

149 Jane Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London, 1770–1840*, Cambridge 2000, 62–69.

150 Michael Scrivener, *John Thelwall and the Press*, in: Behrendt (ed.), *Romanticism, Radicalism, and the Press*, 133.

151 Thelwall, *Poems Written in Close Confinement in the Tower and Newgate upon a Charge of Treason*, Sonnet II To Tyranny, lines 6–10, London 1795, 2.

152 Judith Thompson, *John Thelwall in the Wordsworth Circle: The Silenced Partner*, Basingstoke 2012.

Virgil and Horace.¹⁵³ The preference of Greek to Roman culture had thus increasingly been extolled. Moreover, the rabble was traditionally Roman rather than Greek to British eyes, witness Shakespeare's and other English dramatists' Roman plays, and Tories perceived the French Revolution as the disastrous work of the Paris mob. In 1796, Thelwall gave a course of twenty-two lectures in Norwich on the subject of "Classical History, and particularly the Laws and Revolutions of Rome". Both the Tory distrust and the Radical admiration of Rome were due to the French Republic of 1789–1799 retaining the *ancien régime's* Rome-centred Neoclassical creed in spite of its kinship with the Romantic programme of undermining the establishment of rule and reason. Just two years before the predictable end of the German-Roman Empire in 1806, Napoleon had himself crowned Roman Emperor by the Pope, in December 1804. And, after Napoleon's defeat and the Congress of Vienna, the Bourbons also continued to support Rome-centred Neoclassicism against what they perceived as a Romantic Confederation in favour of Shakespeare against French literature and language.¹⁵⁴ This British view of the kinship between Rome and France was supported by the unforgotten fact that the once famous Della Cruscan poets, with their sympathy for the ideals of the later French Revolution, had originated in Italy, loved Rome, and pleaded for the liberation of Italy on the basis of a Radical ideology. As usual, political arguments influenced and outweighed aesthetic arguments on both sides of the Channel. Under such inimical pressure, British Neoclassicism shifted its centre from Rome to Athens, so that the study of the Greek language and culture outweighed Latin. Ancient Greece thus replaced ancient Rome as a dominant cultural exemplar in Britain, a change of paradigm also visible in the lives and works of the Romantic poets, Keats, Leigh Hunt, Byron, and the two Shelleys.¹⁵⁵ In his "Preface" to *Foliage* (1818), where he praised the innovators of English poetry (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb) against the outdated "French school", Hunt diagnosed the "gross mistake" of the old school in having followed Latin Augustan models such as the stiff, fusty Horace rather than "the elementary inspiration of Greece".¹⁵⁶ Reginald Heber, a minor Romantic poet and the reviewer of Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* (1813) for the Tory *Quarterly Review*, expressed his gratitude to the author for introducing more readers to Johann Joachim Winckelmann, understood as the eighteenth-century advocate of elegant Grecian versus tyrannical Roman and French art and

153 Rolf Lessenich, *Aspects of English Preromanticism*, 134–144, and Kurt Schlüter, *Polyhymnia: Demokratische Heldenverehrung nach antikem Vorbild in Jugendgedichten von S.T. Coleridge*, Freiburg im Breisgau 2011, 13.

154 René Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism, 1750–1950*, New Haven CT and London 1955–1991, II. 216.

155 Jonathan Cutmore (ed.), *Conservatism and the Quarterly Review*, London 2007, 88.

156 Leigh Hunt, *Literary Criticism*, ed. cit. 130.

literature. Thus Winckelmann's Hellenism had provided a counterbalance to the worst excrescences of the "new German school" and inspired all Europe with

[...] a taste for Grecian beauty which the world did not possess before, and by calling the attention of mankind to the original models of elegance, instead of their French and Roman copies, shook in one material bulwark the strength of that literary Babylon which the rest of Europe had till then admired with unsuspecting credulity.¹⁵⁷

A comparison of classical articles in the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review* yields the astonishing result that, in both duelling periodicals, the emphasis of reviews shifted to a preponderance of Greek over Latin topics.¹⁵⁸ About the same time, new inventions were given quickly accepted Greek names: Philippe Jacques de Louthembourg's Eidophusikon (1781), Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon prison design (1791), Robert Barker's Panorama (1793), Paul Philipsthal's Phantasmagoria (1801), Thomas Girtin's Eidometropolis (1802), Sir Eoin Cussen's kaleidoscope (1814), Jacques Daguerre's Diorama (1823), and the vast Panoramic View of London (seen from the top of the dome of St Paul's Cathedral) designed by Thomas Hornor for Decimus Burton's Colosseum, built in Regent's Park, close to Daguerre's Diorama, in the style of Doric classicism (1829–1875). These were places and designs of commercial, popular mass entertainment.¹⁵⁹ In general, the multiplicity of Greek neologisms in ordinary speech was observed in tandem with a rising importance of Greek in the Whig campaign for the education of the ordinary people in new institutions. William Thomas Moncrieff's comic poem "The March of Intellect" pokes fun at this development, which was to feed the Victorian Working Men's College and the Mechanics' Institutes movements, as the prolific melodrama writer and author of *Tom and Jerry* (1821) was engaged in the advancement of popular culture against the elitist claim of the Classical Tradition:

So much does intellect increase
 In manners systematic, -
 Our *kitchens* smell of classic *Greece*,
 Our *garrets* are all *attic*!¹⁶⁰

Three years after Heber's *Quarterly* review of *De l'Allemagne*, in 1816, British Romantic Hellenism was reinforced by the arrival of the Elgin Marbles in Lon-

157 [Heber] in: *Quarterly Review*, 10 (January 1814), 379.

158 Jonathan Cutmore (ed.), *Conservatism and the Quarterly Review*, 103.

159 For virtual realities and their wide popular appeal in Romantic Period London see Peter Otto, *Multiplying Worlds: Romanticism, Modernity, and the Emergence of Virtual Reality*, Oxford 2011, *passim*; for the London Colosseum in particular pp. 266–296.

160 Moncrieff, *The March of Intellect: A Comic Poem*, 1830, lines 137–140, in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, I. 243.

don. Mingling “Grecian grandeur with the rude Wasting of old time”,¹⁶¹ this purchase of the Parthenon frieze by the Scottish Lord Elgin set up in the British Museum would give Britain a sense of identity firmly embedded in the Classical Tradition, yet clearly distinct from France and Rome. After the defeat of Napoleon, there arose an awareness of fame and glory which linked itself to Pericles and the defeat of the Persians by the Greeks in the construction of a fictitious past, which lasted well into the Victorian Age with its numerous Greek Histories.¹⁶² The Romantic poets’ Philhellenism and Panhellenism, however, gave this cultural exemplar a special political turn that their Tory adversaries could not share. The Tory answer was the polemical reproach of ignorance of the Greece-centred Classical Tradition.

The fallacy of this all-inclusive reproach lies in the fact that the Romantics were deeply divided over the Classical Tradition of Greece, as witnessed in the controversy between the Radical Cockney Keats and the later Tory Wordsworth. Even if the Romantics read their Greek classics in translations, it was a matter of selection rather than ignorance. The Hampstead circle, the Marlow circle, and notably Keats in *Endymion* and its “Hymn to Pan” (1818), selected the liberal and pagan tradition of Greece, termed revolutionary or Cockney Neoclassicism. Later Wordsworth, by contrast, concentrated on the patriotic and warlike tradition applicable to Christian Europe in the Age of Napoleon and dismissed Keats’s “Hymn to Pan” as “a Very pretty piece of Paganism”.¹⁶³

Regency Neoclassicism conspicuously superseded traditional Roman by incorporating strong, explicit Greek elements, such as friezes representing scenes from Greek tragedies, either stone without or decorated wallpaper ones within a building. On the occasion of his visit to the new Covent Garden Theatre in 1809, Leigh Hunt reported the conspicuous Grecian style of the interior as well as exterior of the building in the critical theatre column of his *Examiner*.¹⁶⁴ The arch Tory John Wilson Croker, who first coined the term “Conservative” for his party, founded the Athenaeum, London’s most exclusive club, in 1824. It was designed by Decimus Burton with a Greek portico and a replica of the Parthenon frieze that Lord Elgin had brought to the British Museum in 1816, built in Pall Mall on the corner of Waterloo Place, a symbol of Britain’s victory over France. Such prominent Greek elements distinguished English Regency style from French Empire style, which was dominated by the art model of the Roman Empire.

161 John Keats, On Seeing the Elgin Marbles, 1817, in: Poems, ed. Miriam Allott, Longman Annotated English Poets, London 1970, lines 12–13.

162 Following William Mitford’s five-volume History of Greece (1794–1810). Marc Fehlmann, As Greek As It Gets: British Attempts to Recreate the Parthenon, in: Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice, 11 (2007), 353–377.

163 Nicholas Roe, John Keats and the Culture of Dissent, 60–87.

164 [Leigh Hunt] in: Examiner, 91 (24 September 1809), 618–620.

Though generally no lovers of Percy Shelley's political and neo-pagan poetry, the Victorians fully agreed with Shelley's estimation of Greece above Rome in the preface to his lyrical drama *Hellas* (1822), which foreshadowed Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay":¹⁶⁵

We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece. But for Greece – Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess.¹⁶⁶

Queen Victoria continued this Romantic Period support of the Greek strain of an elitist Classical Tradition in Britain, and her simultaneous stemming of the tide of Romantic low-class culture proved temporarily successful. She disliked her Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, but admired him for his classical learning and studies of Homer, from whom he tried to derive the principles of his politics. Though the standard of Greek studies at Oxford had risen and begun to supersede that of Latin during Victoria's reign, Gladstone was eager to enforce even higher examination requirements at his ancient university.¹⁶⁷ Queen Victoria was delighted when, in 1862, the throne of Greece was offered to the philhellenic aristocrat Edward Bulwer-Lytton, who had studied Greek at Cambridge, written a celebrated history of the rise and fall of Athens (1837),¹⁶⁸ and paraded his classical learning in his novels; and she was not amused when he declined. At public school level, Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby (later Regius Professor of History at Oxford), moved away from Latin to Greek by introducing more and more Greek authors and Greek history into the curriculum. And when Hippolyte Taine visited England some twenty years after Thomas Arnold's death (1842), for his *Histoire de la littérature anglaise* (1864), he observed that English schoolboys were inferior to their French counterparts in their knowledge of Latin, but remarkably superior in Greek.¹⁶⁹ At the lowest level of education, Victorian alphabet books for schoolboys exemplified the letter W by the fate of Wandering Willie, next to an exemplification of the letter X by reference to and recommendation of the reading of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*.¹⁷⁰ It was in the context of this Victorian re-evaluation and rereading of the Classical Tradition that Thomas Babington Macaulay found fault with Samuel Johnson's preference for Rome and Latin and vindicated the clearly comprehensible and practically useful

165 Tennyson, Locksley Hall, 1842, line 184, in: Poems, ed. Christopher Ricks, Longman's Annotated English Poets, London 1969, 699.

166 P.B. Shelley, *Hellas*, Preface, 1822, in: Poetical Works, 447.

167 Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, Oxford 1980, 201.

168 Bulwer-Lytton, *Athens: Its Rise and Fall*, London 1837. See also Simon Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity*, 193–202.

169 *Ibid.* 61–62.

170 TLS, 5614 (5 November 2010), 3.

Greek philosophers (Aristotle) and orators (Demosthenes).¹⁷¹ And the fame of Walter Savage Landor's erudite *Imaginary Conversations* (1824–1829 and 1853) among the educated classes in Victorian Britain was largely due to Landor's fictitious dialogues of famous Greeks as well as to his prose style, which recreated the serene atmosphere then associated with the literature of ancient Greece.¹⁷² Landor, like Peacock and other Greek scholars of the Romantic Period and after, wrote Attic Greek without the later Byzantine accents, to demonstrate his very British recourse to the source of liberty and democracy. It is small wonder that, in the Victorian Age, gentlemen were expected to learn Greek, and that Greek replaced Latin in nourishing social snobbery. George Eliot's novels bear ample witness to this fact.¹⁷³ When she wrote *Middlemarch* (1871–1872), Gladstone was Prime Minister. In the novel, the elderly pedant Casaubon's abortive plans to write a "Key to All Mythologies" may well have been her satirical comment on the reputation that many mediocre Victorian scholars sought in emulating the quality of Gladstone's *Studies of Homer and the Homeric Age* (1858).¹⁷⁴

171 Macaulay, *Miscellaneous Essays, On the Athenian Orators*, 1824, in: *Lays of Ancient Rome and Miscellaneous Essays*, ed. G.M. Trevelyan, Everyman's Library, London 1910, 1968, 311–323.

172 Geoffrey Carnall, *Walter Savage Landor*, in: ODNB (online version).

173 Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, 63.

174 *Ibid.* 128.

II. Tory Periodicals and Anti-Jacobin Satire

After 1702, when London's first daily newspaper was founded, an explosion of periodicals took place, in spite of a "stamp duty" introduced in order to restrict readership and democracy of information. The fear was justified, as literati and journalists came to assume the leading social position previously occupied by aristocrats and divines. The sheer number of duels issued or actually fought in the Romantic Period shows how literati and journalists thought each other worthy of a social practice hitherto claimed by the traditional upper classes, which would formerly have had a literary satirist horsewhipped or beaten up in a street ambushade. Coleridge, Leigh Hunt, Keats, and Hazlitt, as well as Lockhart, John Wilson, James Hogg, and John Scott all at one time or another received, issued, or threatened to issue a challenge to duel.¹

By 1800, well over 250 newspapers existed, meaning daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly periodicals, some of which contained book reviews.² Besides the generally acknowledged leading review periodicals of the Romantic Period, the Whig *Edinburgh Review* and the Tory *Quarterly Review*, at least sixty other periodicals carried reviews between 1802 (the year of the foundation of the *Edinburgh Review*) and 1824 (the year of Byron's death and the decline of Romanticism).³ Moreover, influential British periodicals such as the two quarterlies cited above were reprinted in America, alongside domestic ones, as American readers depended upon them for literary intelligence and opinion.⁴ Donald Reiman's meritorious edition of contemporary reviews of Romantic literature conveys a good impression of the great number of periodicals as well as

1 Richard Cronin, *Duelling and the Culture of British Romantic Literature*, in: *Die Kunst des Streitens*, ed. Marc Laureys – Roswitha Simons, Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2010, 419 – 434.

2 William Christie, *Essays, Newspapers, and Magazines*, in: Nicholas Roe (ed.), *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*, Oxford 2005, 427.

3 John Olin Hayden, *The Romantic Reviewers 1802 – 1824*, London 1969, 39.

4 Peter X. Accardo, *Byron in America*, *Harvard Library Bulletin*, Cambridge MA 1998, vol. 9, no. 2, 6.

of their history, editorship, and various political loyalties on a broad scale from anti-Jacobin to Jacobin.⁵ After 1800, the periodical press became the most lucrative and a highly respected prestigious literary medium, so that the young prose-writer Thomas Babington Macaulay could, like the young poet Byron, wake up one morning and find himself famous, after the publication of his essay on Milton in the *Edinburgh Review* (1825).⁶ In 1823, Hazlitt could say that “the only authors that, as a class, are not starving, are the periodical essayists”.⁷ In *Blackwood Edinburgh Magazine’s* facetiously satirical “Noctes Ambrosianae”, the Editor (Lockhart) slanted the multiplicity of ephemeral “magazines” printing and reviewing an ephemeral multiplicity of authors and books. In his polemical perspective, they were mostly mechanically produced low quality products posing as “works of genius” and would be forgotten by posterity, when that “very stirring, productive, active age” would be over:

[...] Steam-Boats and Magazines are all the go at present. They’ve got a Magazine in Brighton – another at Newcastle, for the colliers – another at Dundee – and, I believe, five or six about Paisley and Glasgow.⁸

As might be expected during such a period of wild growth, numerous periodicals were extremely short-lived, either because they had little to say like the *Liverpool Academic* (twenty-two issues in 1816) or because they were persecuted by censorship like John and Leigh Hunt’s *Reflector* (four issues in 1810) and *Liberal* (three issues in 1823). As the stormy events during the foundation of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* (1817) show, competition was rough and ruthless. The first editors of *Blackwood’s*, the Whigs Thomas Pringle and James Cleghorn, who had discussed their project venture with the Tory James Hogg before presenting it to the Tory publisher William Blackwood, soon fell into disfavour with Blackwood, who replaced them with the Tories John Gibson Lockhart and John Wilson. Lockhart and Wilson, in their turn, joined Hogg in reviling Pringle and Cleghorn for boredom and lameness in their invective “Chaldee Manuscript” in the first year of *Blackwood’s*, in October 1817. Their real intention, as we have seen, was to push literary competitors and political adversaries out of their public positions and give their new witty and aggressive monthly maximum publicity through a well-planned public scandal – to qualify it as a rival of the equally witty and aggressive *Edinburgh Review*.⁹ In the “Chaldee Manuscript”, the adversaries preparing for battle (Blackwood and Constable) find that

5 Donald H. Reiman (ed.), *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers*, parts A-C, 9 vols., New York NY and London 1972, headnotes.

6 John Clive, *Thomas Babington Macaulay*, London 1973, 75.

7 Hazlitt, *The Periodical Press*, in: *Complete Works*, XVI. 221.

8 *Noctes Ambrosianae*, I, in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 11 (March 1822), 364.

9 See TLS, 5524 (13 February 2009), 6.

backward-oriented allies (contributors to their periodicals) such as historians and palaeontologists with their confused academic disputes do not advance their cause. Among them is the antiquarian and naturalist John Graham Dalyell, satirically portrayed as a misshapen hairy ape and his own best object for study, a “beast [...] altogether unprofitable”,¹⁰ – a personal libel for which Dalyell (unsuccessfully) brought legal action for damages against Blackwood, who had taken the risk. In contradistinction to the debilitating backward orientation of such historical scholars, Blackwood engages an army of aggressive animals of prey: a leopard (John Wilson), a lynx (Arthur Mower), a scorpion (J.G. Lockhart), a wild boar (James Hogg), a griffin (Thomas McCrie), a black eagle (the metaphysician Sir William Hamilton), a stork (John Wilson’s brother James), a hyena (John Riddell). Some of these animal names would stick as nicknames to their satirical authors. Political, literary, personal, and market-based competition remained decisive factors of governing periodical production and quality assessment, especially in the case of literary magazines. *Blackwood’s*, for instance, always obeyed the demands of the market, whatever their editors’ and contributors’ esteem of Horace and parade of the Classical Tradition ruled to the contrary. With a view to the changing market, *Blackwood’s* soon reduced its literary production in favour of reviews post 1830, but later resumed its original “magazine” publication of literature such as poetry, satires, serialized novels, and short stories when Aytoun, with his penchant for Victorian poetry and anti-Romantic parody, became its regular contributor.

Slating book reviews and polemical essays in periodicals, as in loose pamphlets, were considered to be prose satires, provided they aspired to literary quality and aimed to provide general cures of literary vices and follies instead of libelling and destroying the reputation of individual enemies. As editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, Francis Jeffrey called upon his reviewers to exercise “the wholesome discipline of derision” for curing literature of all deviations from the rational norm.¹¹ The *Satirist* (1807–1814) and the *Scourge* (1811–1816) were London monthlies that published wittily satirical book reviews for the improvement of literature in the Classical Tradition,¹² including a polemic against the infantile “Mother Bunch” nature of Wordsworth’s *Poems* of 1807, “composed on a system of his own [...] of course altogether unknown to Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden”.¹³ Oppositional periodicals satirized the al-

10 [Hogg et. al.], Translation from an Ancient Chaldee Manuscript, chapter III, verses 36–40, in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (October 1817), 94–95.

11 *Edinburgh Review*, 9 (October 1806), 147. See also Stephen E. Jones, Satire, in: N. Roe (ed.), *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*, 390–394, and William Christie, *The Edinburgh Review in the Literary Culture of Romantic Britain*, London 2009, 131–132.

12 Donald H. Reiman (ed.), *The Romantics Reviewed*, A II. 845 and 864.

13 *The Satirist*, 1 (1807), 188–191.

leged stagnation of Augustan poets of the Romantic Period in what they called the worn and outdated commonplaces of the Classical Tradition. The Tory and Neoclassicist William Gifford and the Radical Whig and Romantic William Hazlitt, chief advocates for their respective aesthetic and political causes, agreed on the satirical character and literary quality of their excoriating reviews. In his satirical prose *Letter to William Gifford* (1819), Hazlitt admitted the satirical nature of his essays, as his “Essay on the Ignorance of the Learned” (1818), in which he had attacked the learned and mechanical pedantry of a classical education:

You reproach me with the cynical turn of many of my Essays, which are in fact prose-satires; but when you say I hate every thing but washerwomen [...]¹⁴

The familiar essay “On Washerwomen”, published in the *Examiner* in 1816 and much ridiculed by conservative critics, was, in fact, by Leigh Hunt, and sought to complement Wordsworth’s rural primitivism with a Londoner’s metropolitan primitivism. However Hazlitt’s foible for young, uneducated women was notorious and lent itself to discrediting all Romantic interest in simplicity and women’s liberation. Hazlitt’s “Essay on the Ignorance of the Learned” had first appeared in the Whig publisher Archibald Constable’s *Edinburgh Review*. The advent and outbreak of the French Revolution and its Radical programme of abolishing princes, feudalism, hierarchy, and social as well as male prerogatives had increased political polarization, not least in the press. Preromantic medievalism, which had supported the cause of individual liberty and free imagination, had now become an ideal of the conservatives, who dreamed of a divinely decreed, firmly established, male dominated feudal order and a benevolent aristocracy supported by a firm belief in one hierarchic Catholic Church that permeated all domains of human life. The post-revolutionary medievalism and male neo-feudalism of Friedrich Schlegel’s Viennese lectures dedicated to Metternich, *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur* (1815),¹⁵ and of Coleridge’s two *Lay Sermons* (1816–1817) as well as *Biographia Literaria* (1817) were violently lambasted in the Whig and Radical Press, by other Romantics who, like Hazlitt, remained liberals. Political differences invariably ranged above aesthetic accord. Most periodicals espoused either the conservative or the liberal cause, moderate or radical, so that Peacock’s unfortunate Desmond had reason to complain of “the paragraph-mongers of prostituted journals, the hireling

14 Hazlitt, *Letter to William Gifford*, 1819, in: *Complete Works*, IX. 30. For details see the annotations in Hazlitt, *Selected Writings*, ed. Duncan Wu, V. 449–464. For the satirical nature of Hazlitt’s negative reviews see Burwick (ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Romantic Literature, Satire, Prose*, III. 1173.

15 Translated by the Tory John Gibson Lockhart.

compounders of party praise and censure, under the name of periodical criticism".¹⁶

The Scottish Enlightenment *Edinburgh Review*, founded in 1802 for the purpose of literary quality control, was a Whig partisan paper, and Francis Jeffrey, its editor, was well aware of his own implication in the disastrous mixture of political and aesthetic criteria of judgment as well as in the mass culture he sought to counteract. As a lawyer and judge choosing a Latin legal epigraph for his periodical, "Judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur", he had to be impartial in court while being partial in journalism. A judge acquitting the guilty is a bad judge, as the Latin epigraph says, but a periodical editor not catering to the taste of his readers is also a bad periodical editor. In fact, the *Edinburgh Review* was the first periodical to employ thoroughly professional and authoritative specialized critics for its essays on the one hand, while on the other those critics were chosen to follow both the periodical's satirical poignancy expected by its readers and its combative Whig principles laid down by the editor.¹⁷ The *Edinburgh Review's* literary and political partiality in its witty, saucy, and slashing reviews (as of Wordsworth's poems) successfully aimed at a wide readership hungry for scandal but went so far in its satirical mode that it disgusted others, especially the Romantic poets and, later, the founders of the *Quarterly Review*. Numerous inimical pamphlets appeared that identified the *Edinburgh Review's* and Judge Jeffrey's double standard of quality control and profit orientation. In 1807, Edward Copleston's *Advice to a Young Reviewer, with a Specimen of the Art* and John Ring's *The Beauties of the Edinburgh Review, alias the Stinkpot of Literature* struck the same chord, the former with fine irony, the latter with bitter invective. A reviewer should speak as an impartial judge, the Oxford classical scholar Copleston argued, not aim at rhetorical effects like a partial counsel in a cross-examination.¹⁸ In his view, the critic Jeffrey is not a judge, but a counsel parading all his marketable rhetorical brilliance. Hence, the speaker of Copleston's pamphlet ironically recommends the role of a critic with that of a partial counsel, illustrated by a specimen of a rhetorically effective but atrocious unjust review of Milton as a poetaster:

[...] in the art of Reviewing I would lay it down as a fundamental position, which you must never lose sight of, and which must be the main spring of all your criticism – *Write what will sell*.¹⁹

16 Peacock, Melincourt, 1817, chapter 13, in *Novels*, 177.

17 William Christie, *The Edinburgh Review in the Literary Culture of Romantic Britain*, 15 – 38.

18 Copleston, *Advice to a Young Reviewer*, Oxford 1807, 4. Bishop, neo-Latin poet, and Professor of Poetry at Oxford, Copleston was a staunch defender of the traditional system of university education and much admired by John Henry Newman.

19 *Ibid.* 2.

John Ring, famous surgeon, poet, elegant classical scholar, and victim of one of Jeffrey's wittily slashing reviews, accused Jeffrey of prostituting the values of the Classical Tradition that he sought to defend to the very masses whose bad taste and craze for novelty, show, and scandal he combated. Ring's invective pamphlet with its scatological Swifitean title raved against Jeffrey and his reviewers, "despicable scribblers, who get their daily bread by calumny and detraction" as well as by "misrepresentations [...] seasoned with scurrility and low wit".²⁰ Ring's opposition of the classically educated judicious few to the ignorant multitude echoes the *Anti-Jacobin's* opposition of the classical to the jacobinical reader, and is reminiscent of Walter Savage Landor's imaginary conversation between Epictetus and Seneca, with Epictetus opposing Seneca's false concept of philosophy as a mere device upon which to hang rhetoric in order to play tricks before the people. When Landor's Epictetus attacking Seneca compares mere rhetoricians with dancing dogs, whose "motions are for the rabble",²¹ he says much the same as Ring attacking Jeffrey:

The Beauties of the Edinburgh Review are the theme of every tongue; it is however now generally agreed, that its chief beauties are calumny and detraction. [...] Those who are most likely to be captivated by such a performance are the multitude, who read rather for amusement than instruction; and it is of little consequence to mercenary scribblers, whether they please or displease the judicious few, provided they please the multitude.²²

Lady Anne Hamilton's *Epics of the Ton* (1807) confirmed Copleston's and Ring's views by making a clear distinction between the poet, who may write panegyrics or satires, and the critic, who must be an impartial judge. But, writing a poem in panegyric praise of Pitt and satirical disdain of Wordsworth, Hamilton cannot be the impartial judge that Jeffrey should be in his critical reviews:

The poet has spoken the language of panegyric: Be it the task of the critic to speak impartial truth.²³

In the same year – 1807 –, Robert Southey declined Jeffrey's invitation to contribute reviews because he would not wound a man "in his feelings and injure him in his fame and fortune".²⁴ Many of Jeffrey's reviewers were also of the legal profession. The lawyer Walter Scott, as a Tory with sympathies for the Whig Scottish Enlightenment, admired Jeffrey's efforts to control quality, yet found

20 Ring, *The Beauties of the Edinburgh Review*, alias *The Stinkpot of Literature*, London 1807, 69.

21 Landor, *Imaginary Conversations*, 1824, ed. cit. II. 96.

22 Ring, *The Beauties of the Edinburgh Review*, 1–2.

23 [Hamilton], *The Epics of the Ton*, 1807, 127.

24 Jonathan Cutmore, *Contributors to the Quarterly Review*, London 2008, 6.

fault with his political bias.²⁵ As a favourite reviewer of the Tory *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, which supported him for political reasons, Scott must have been aware of his own involvement in what he found fault with. Anyhow, *Blackwood's* "Noctes Ambrosianae" freely admitted what they called their own "shameful violation of truth", criticizing their own editorship in "this great matter-of-fact age and country", in which all old ideals must yield to the new Whig materialist ideals of lucre, gain, and sales figures.²⁶ This indicates the fact that the practice and art of arguing was not only exercised between various duelling periodicals of various political commitments, but frequently in controversial discussions within one periodical, for a philosophical purpose or simply for amusement. It also indicates that periodicals, especially brilliant literary periodicals, did not only address their consensual Tory or Whig or Radical readership, but also interested readers from other political camps. James Mill's broad allegation that the Tory and Whig press concurred in prostituting themselves by flattering instead of educating their respective clientele was only partially true and could easily be turned against him and his Radical Utilitarian *Westminster Review*, founded in the year of Byron's death.²⁷ The Classical Tradition's patrimony of the symposium with its wine-supported cult of convivial, honest, and free speech was still vitally alive.

Periodicals that tried to abstain from political commitment to concentrate on publishing or reviewing literature were soon driven by their adversaries into one or other political camp. John Scott's *London Magazine*, founded in 1820 on the model of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, had no strong political commitment when it promoted the Romantic authors, Wordsworth, De Quincey, and the "Cockney School". It advocated reform, but opposed the violence that shook London in context with the divorce bill brought by George IV against his returned Queen Caroline in 1820 and the Queen's subsequent death in 1821. But *Blackwood's* rhetorically savage attacks drove Scott into sympathy with the Radical Whigs, and into a duel with a *Blackwood's* "Mohawk", which cost his life only one year after the establishment of the brilliant but short-lived *London Magazine* (1820–1829). The Scotsman John Wilson, co-editor of the Tory *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, and the Scotsman Francis Jeffrey, editor of the Whig *Edinburgh Review*, both standing in the tradition of the Scottish Enlightenment, had more in common than they could admit as neighbouring competitors in the same city. Wilson therefore paraded his contempt of Jeffrey by proposing to name his geese or other stupid pets after his various adversaries

25 Kenneth Curry, Sir Walter Scott's *Edinburgh Annual Register*, Knoxville TN 1977, 136, 139.

26 Christopher North [John Wilson], *Noctes Ambrosianae*, XII, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 14 (October 1823), 489.

27 George L. Nesbitt, *Benthamite Reviewing: The First Twelve Years of The Westminster Review 1824–1836*, New York NY 1934, 66–95.

from the *Edinburgh Review*, in the way that Byron and (later) Robert Browning would do away with their negative reviewers as *quantités négligeables*. This was just a mischievous inversion of the anglophonic custom of giving sons the names of favourite philosophers or politicians or poets, Berkeley Coleridge and Hartley Coleridge, John Wilson Moir and William Blackwood Moir:

But if I had pond-pets, I'm more wise, I should call 'em
 After such folks as Macintosh, Brougham, Smith, and Hallam –
 Not forgetting one smart little cackler – to be
 (When its wings were well clipt) yclep't JEFFREY by ME.²⁸

It would be a mistake to tacitly concur with a number of earlier studies which found that, in the Romantic Period, Tory periodicals such as the *Quarterly Review* (from 1809) and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (from 1817) were homogeneously conservative, anti-Romantic, and Neoclassical, and that Whig periodicals such as the *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* (from 1773) and the *Edinburgh Review* (from 1802) became or were homogeneously liberal, in favour of “new schools”, and anti-Neoclassical. There was little editorial direction to the contents of numerous general magazines, for they aimed at entertaining a wide variety of literary readers, not at shaping the opinion of a particular ideological group.²⁹ Political commitment, if it was the periodical programme at all, could change and vary in intensity. Leigh and John Hunt's *Examiner* (from 1808) lost much of its original Whig impetus after their editors' imprisonment for libel against the Prince Regent (1813–15), and William Cobbett's *Political Register* (from 1804) turned from support of the government to advocacy of parliamentary and other reforms. Contributors, especially reviewers, often transgressed the boundaries of a periodical's political commitment, because journals wished to present themselves as forums of open debate and reviewers were often reluctant to admit the infection of their aesthetic judgments by their political persuasions, party loyalties, and regional pride. For someone fixed on the aesthetic Neoclassical-Romantic paradigm, it may be confusing to hear Walter Scott's son-in-law, the Scottish Tory Lockhart, denigrate Keats, Shelley, Lamb, and Hunt while praising Burns and Joanna Baillie, even raising Wordsworth above the rank of Pope.³⁰ Both editors and reviewers of later periodicals would insist on their independence. Thus, it is necessary to understand any single review or essay in the light of the contributor's identity,

28 [Wilson], Stanzas Dedicatory, lines 37–40, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 10 (August 1821), IV.

29 Donald H. Reiman (ed.), *The Romantics Reviewed*, A II. 501.

30 Z [Lockhart] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 3 (August 1818), 519–24.

provided that it can be established, and his or her intentions, insofar as they can be discerned.³¹

The earlier Tory weeklies of the Romantic Period, the *Anti-Jacobin* (1797–78) and the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* (1798–1821), published in unusually turbulent times of war and dangerous revolution, had still been homogeneous in their political and literary partisanship, unequivocally maintaining the old order and the old school of poetry. They were pro-Anglican, anti-Nonconformist, opposed to “schism” and “democratic ruin”.³² They identified “Jacobin” periodicals such as the *Monthly Review* and Nonconformist sentimental authors such as Hannah More as their declared adversaries, listing both “useful” and “mendacious” publications. Each number of the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, for instance, was preceded by an epigraph denoting conservatism and adherence to the Classical Tradition: “Magna est veritas et praevalebit”. In 1801, Josiah Hard attacked the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* with its own weapons, indicting its alleged “irreligiousness, profaneness, indelicacy, virulence, and vulgarity”, and its “depravity of taste, and defiance of decorum”.³³ In spite of Hard’s obvious misunderstandings of parody and quotations, his summary pamphlet attests to the homogeneity of the Tory periodical’s articles.

The important change towards more polyphony and an internal art of arguing in periodical culture came in 1802, with Francis Jeffrey’s foundation of the *Edinburgh Review*.³⁴ A Whig lawyer standing in the liberal common-sense tradition of the Scottish Enlightenment (Francis Hucheson, David Hume, Lord Kames, Adam Smith, Thomas Reid, Archibald Alison, Dugald Stewart), Jeffrey despaired of a legal appointment in Edinburgh under Tory rule. Deciding to stay in Edinburgh and to fight for Scottish as well as Irish cultural identity within a framework of British integration, variety in unity, he went into his journalistic enterprise, and won. His editorial policy consisted in replacing the London monthly reviews with an Edinburgh quarterly review, carefully selecting the books to review according to his readers’ literary and political interests from a Whig perspective.³⁵ Divergent opinions were allowed. Quarterly reviewers, including Jeffrey himself, Henry Brougham, Francis Homer, Sydney Smith, and others, had time for careful reading and selection. Reviews were long and careful, solid in scholarship and elegant in style. They were, in fact, argumentative essays and often very polemical prose satires. Jeffrey’s biographer and close friend

31 Barton Swaim, *Review of Higgins, Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine*, in: *TLS*, 5403 (20 October 2006), 27.

32 *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 6 (1800), 350.

33 Hard, *Imposture Exposed*, Cambridge 1801, titlepage and 9.

34 William Christie, *The Edinburgh Review in the Literary Culture of Romantic Britain*, 15–38.

35 Derek Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh 1788–1802*, London 1978, *passim*.

Henry Cockburn bore witness to the immense and rising popularity of the *Edinburgh Review*, from its first issue in October 1802.³⁶ At that time when the social classes, in the modern sense, had emerged and formed their separate cultures, the reading public had also expanded and cut across those social classes as well as through the now polarized political parties. There were different reading audiences rather than one sole audience.³⁷ This divisive social development naturally led to a periodical culture produced and shaped by controversy, updating the *ars disputandi* of the Classical Tradition in modern essayistic prose.

The *Quarterly Review*, founded in London in 1809 by John Murray and edited by William Gifford, was a Tory and government-supported rival to the *Edinburgh Review*, much as the *New Monthly Magazine* was founded in 1814 as an anti-Jacobin counterweight to the Radical *Monthly Magazine* of 1796. Politically, the *Quarterly Review* opposed the *Edinburgh Review's* advocacy of British retreat from the Napoleonic Wars on the Iberian Peninsula, and later became increasingly Tory and High Church.³⁸ William Wordsworth's sponsor William Lowther, Lord Lonsdale, was also a sponsor of the *Quarterly Review*, which explains the periodical's mild treatment of the former Radical and later political convert Wordsworth. The *Quarterly Review* copied both Jeffrey's format and successful editorial policy. This guaranteed the *Quarterly Review's* success in the market, which was soon equal to that of the *Edinburgh Review*. Good though some of the late eighteenth-century monthly periodicals and reviews had been – the liberal *Monthly Review* (1749–1845) and the rival Tory *Critical Review* (1756–1817) – none had been so influential in shaping the reading taste as well as the political opinion of its readership by public Romantic Period controversy as Jeffrey's *Edinburgh Review* and Murray's *Quarterly Review*, and, later *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, the extremely popular “Maga”, was founded by William Blackwood in 1817 as a Tory rival to Jeffrey's *Edinburgh Review* and as a Scottish monthly periodical supporting the cause of the English *Quarterly Review*. In *Blackwood's eyes*, the *Edinburgh Review* and its editor, Francis Jeffrey, were proto-Jacobin and traitorous heirs of the sceptical *philosophes* of the French Enlightenment.³⁹ John Gibson Lockhart and Thomas Carlyle, for instance, regarded Francis Jeffrey as the Scottish Voltaire, notwith-

36 Massimiliano Demata – Duncan Wu (eds), *British Romanticism and the Edinburgh Review. Bicentenary Essays*, Introduction, London 2002, 2.

37 Jon P. Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences 1790–1832*, Madison 1987, passim.

38 Jonathan Cutmore (ed.), *Conservatism and the Quarterly Review*, passim.

39 William Christie, *The Edinburgh Review in the Literary Culture of Romantic Britain*, 147–154, 181–185.

standing the antagonists' mutual respect and even friendship. In Lockhart's *Peter's Letter to His Kinsfolk* (1819) and Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1833 – 1834), Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh Review* appear literally or implicitly as undermining the foundations of state and church by spreading doubt among the population as well as among the intellectuals. If the *Edinburgh* was post-Enlightenment, *Blackwood's* was pre-Victorian. *Blackwood's* was a monthly, which combined the advantages of quick reaction to events with solid scholarship and sheer delight in the art of arguing. As such, it came to top the two quarterlies' popularity, with the steady growth of the reading public and its antagonism of Tories and Whigs, Neoclassicists and Romantics. 1817 was the year of a crowd's attack on the Prince Regent's carriage in London (in January), the Tory government's suspension of Habeas Corpus, and the trials of the Radical publisher and satirist William Hone for libel and high treason. It was year of hot debates in all literary genres and the exploding popularity of the periodical press. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* tried to overcome the erudite ponderousness of the *Quarterly Review* by recapturing the brilliant liveliness and combative spirit of the *Anti-Jacobin*, and succeeded. Its contributors and partisans were nicknamed "The Mohawks" for the savagery of their attacks, including actions beyond the line of tolerable and productive conflict, – witness the "Mohawk" Jonathan Christie's fatal duel with John Scott, editor of the *London Magazine*, in 1821.⁴⁰ Walter Scott, one of the most distinguished of the *Edinburgh Review's* early contributors, soon estranged by Jeffrey's rationalist diatribes against Wordsworth and his own early Romantic poetry, turned Tory with Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, and contributed both to the *Quarterly Review* (from 1809) and to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (from 1818). Both periodicals strongly supported him as well as the Lakers, their advocacy of the Classical Tradition notwithstanding. Scott's son-in-law John Gibson Lockhart, a champion of the Classical Tradition, was *Blackwood's* most controversial early contributor, self-nicknamed "The Scorpion" in the "Chaldee Manuscript", and editor of the *Quarterly Review* from 1825 to 1853. As usual, socio-political allegiances prevailed over aesthetic kinship, long preventing the Romantic poets from perceiving their common aesthetic ground, their family likeness, finding their identity as a literary group. The differentiation of social classes and the widened intersecting reading public, together with the polarization of party controversies, had rendered the formation and awareness of common "schools" much more difficult than it had been in the times of Dryden, Addison, Pope, and Johnson.

The explosion in the number of periodicals was a subject of major concern, especially in the eyes of the advocates of Neoclassicism and the Classical Tradition, who complained of a loss of quality in favour of popular mass production.

40 Demata – Wu (eds), *British Romanticism and the Edinburgh Review*, 6.

To them, Romantic literature appeared as transient, superficial, vulgar, ignorant, and uneducated – backward rather than forward orientated, “light and easy books which command attention without the labour of application, and amuse the idleness of fancy without disturbing the sleep of understanding”.⁴¹ In 1818, Thomas Love Peacock wrote these lines in “An Essay on Fashionable Literature”, an unpublished attack on Coleridge’s *Christabel and Other Poems* (1816), probably with another unfavourable review open before him. There, Peacock complained of the radical change in politically dominated periodical culture:

To any one who will compare the Reviews and Magazines of the present day with those of thirty years ago, it must be obvious that there is a much greater diffusion of general talent through them all, and more instances of great individual talent in the present than at the former period [...] calculated for shew in general society, to produce a brilliant impression on the passing hour of literature [...].⁴²

Peacock’s simultaneously published *Nightmare Abbey* (1818) features a fashionable reader of fashionable Romantic literature, Mr Listless, who orders mass-produced new novels, new poems, and new popular reviews, because, as his telling name suggests, he has neither intellect nor application – no interest at all – to continue his education by studying the classics and their modern tradition. But, according to the Neoclassicist Peacock, classical education and the Classical Tradition have always been a life-long and never-ending cultural *continuum*. Listless’s confession could be read as a parody of a Romantic *journal intime*:

“I hope you do not suspect me of being studious. I have finished my education. But there are some fashionable books that one must read, because they are ingredients of the talk of the day [...].”⁴³

Furthermore, in Peacock’s first satirical novel, *Headlong Hall* (1816), four periodical editors, essayists, and poets, Mr Gall, Mr Treacle, Mr Nightshade, and Mr Mac Laurel suspect all non-readers of their reviews of being enemies to literature in general. There is a secret understanding between poets in need of a boost and critics flattered or bribed to support them. Objective quality control is replaced by personal allegiance, personal enmity, or private gain. The objections to modern review culture are largely Peacock’s own: mass culture, replacement of selective book reading by mass review reading, corruption of criticism, dissemination of superficial knowledge, misleading of the judgment, partial opinions, and party purposes.⁴⁴ In these objections, the satirist Peacock resembled the satirist Swift a century earlier and provides another instance of the

41 Peacock, *An Essay on Fashionable Literature*, MS 1818, in: *Works*, Halliford Edition, ed. H.F.B. Brett-Smith – C.E. Jones, London 1924–34, VIII. 263.

42 *Ibid.* VIII. 266–267.

43 Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, chapter 5, in: *Novels*, 376.

44 Peacock, *Headlong Hall*, chapter 5, in: *Novels*, 29–30.

continuity of Augustan culture as a counter-voice to Romanticism in the Romantic Period.

Peacock's satire implies the reproach that, in the mass review culture of his time, objective quality control is replaced by a corrupt boosting of books. A related attack is advanced in the Menippean inferno scenes of Caroline Lamb's *Ada Reis* (1823). Authors, physicians, and apothecaries are in hell because their medicine is useless or even harmful, due to profit orientation rather than professional altruism. Authors (like Byron), whose conduct of life discredits their literary messages as the vicious life of preachers discredits their sermons, hate each other, yet praise each other in expectation of being artificially "puffed up" or given a boost in return.⁴⁵ It is the same argument that we have seen advanced against the Romantic poets in the anonymous review of Coleridge's *Christabel* volume in *The Scourge and Satirist* (1816).⁴⁶ Thus, again, a tacit complicity between publishers, authors, and reviewers is suggested, which subverted the business of honest classical criticism. Publishers of periodicals and books such as Henry Colburn, founder of the *New Monthly Magazine* (1814) and the *Literary Gazette* (1817), promoted their own book publications (mostly novels) in their periodical reviews. "Prince Paramount of Putters and Quacks" was *Fraser's Magazine's* satirical nickname for Colburn, also the chief publisher and chief promoter of his house's fashionable but short-lived "silver fork novels".⁴⁷ It was not until later distinguished editors and reviewers (Thomas Campbell, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Thomas Noon Talfourd) took over that Colburn's commercial criticism was reduced in favour of more aesthetic criteria of value. In fact, there were even worse abuses. In that time of anonymous reviewing, authors sometimes wrote positive reviews of their own publications and sent them to periodicals that printed letters to their editors. When the *Scots Magazine* of 1739 was merged into the Whig *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* (1817–1826) and edited by Archibald Constable, it printed a laudatory review of Hazlitt that was probably written by Hazlitt himself.⁴⁸

All in all, the formative debate over Romanticism must also be carefully studied in the essays and book reviews of the time's numerous periodicals, chiefly the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Quarterly Review*, and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. But an increasing number of local and provincial periodicals, such as the *Westmorland Advertiser and Kendal Chronicle* in the Lake District, also existed and contained poetry columns. These printed numerous poems by numerous minor poets of both sexes, so that, for instance, Isabella Lickbarrow's

45 Caroline Lamb, *Ada Reis*, III. 73–74.

46 *The Scourge and Satirist*, 12 (1816), 60.

47 *Fraser's Magazine*, 1 (1830), 320.

48 *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany*, 2nd series 1 (November 1817), 352–361. See Reiman (ed.), *The Romantics Reviewed*, C II. 809.

and other female or male poets' works cannot be published in new critical editions and subjected to new studies until all those disparate pieces have been discovered and collected.⁴⁹

In that formative debate, the lists of the names of adversaries were far from a fixed canon. The "Romantic School" and its authors, as constructed in later literary history, had not yet come into the minds of authors and literary critics, who were still blinded by the gun smoke and turmoil of the hot theological, philosophical, socio-political, and aesthetic debates of the Romantic Period concerning the French Revolution and Napoleon. In the Whig *Edinburgh Review*, Francis Jeffrey with his predilection for the eighteenth-century Augustans and their diction headed a campaign against the primitivism of the "Lake School", Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, but recognized the genius of Keats. In the Tory *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, John Gibson Lockhart and John Wilson collaborated with James Hogg and did much to support Wordsworth, Scott, De Quincey, Galt, and Byron, but opposed the "Cockney School" of Hunt, Keats, and Hazlitt. They were in two minds about Byron, just as the chameleon Byron was in two minds about Neoclassicism and Romanticism. They did not trust their co-editor Hogg with reviews as they knew his Romantic bias, but printed many of his songs in their "Noctes Ambrosianae" and thus promoted his self-fashioning as successor to Robert Burns, Scotland's cultural idol.⁵⁰ As a friend of Keats, a Radical, and a Neoplatonist, Shelley could be placed in the enemy line of Cockneys and fraudulent visionaries, although he was the son of a peer from Field Place, West Sussex, educated in the Classical Tradition at Eton and Oxford. On the other hand, he could be praised for his diction and versification because he had learned the classical laws of scansion. Some critics among the inner circle of *Blackwood's* contributors, John Wilson and David Macbeth Moir, had strong Romantic leanings and wrote sentimental landscape or graveyard poems notwithstanding their championship of the Classical Tradition, and Thomas Doubleday was even a Whig writing in a Tory paper. What matters for our investigation of the Classical Tradition versus Romanticism in the Romantic Period are not the names of poets in an established canon that was still in the making, but the ever selective and ever changing ways of seeing them as well as the complex arguments advanced for or against them.

Whereas Jeffrey's *Edinburgh Review* would judge all works by one standard and set of rules, coming to one well-balanced verdict, Lockhart's *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* made it its policy to contrast various reviews in a discussion, making the

49 Duncan Wu (ed.), *Romantic Women Poets*, 471–473.

50 See the commentary to *The Stirling/South Carolina Research Edition of the Works of James Hogg*, ed. Thomas C. Richardson, vol. 23 *Contributions to Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Edinburgh 2008.

reader the arbiter. Its commitment was to performance rather than representation and objectivity.⁵¹ William Maginn, through the persona of Morgan Odoherty, described this as “doing all that ever these folks could do in one Number, and then undoing it in the next, – puffing, deriding, sneering, jeering, prosing, piping, and so forth”.⁵² This reviewing technique was a conscious update of the symposium of the Classical Tradition, with its all-male cast, its conviviality, its abundance of food and drink, its cult of wit and dispute, its open-endedness, and its penchant for riddles and games. In doing so, *Blackwood's* above-mentioned “Noctes Ambrosianae” presented the magazine’s reviewing technique as a theatrical performance and a fictitious dress, allowing the readers a peep into the green room before the actors assume their roles. In the Classical Tradition of Theophrastus and Addison and eighteenth-century coffee-house conversation, the “Noctes” featured a number of original characters, some fictitious like Morgan Odoherty, others real like Byron and De Quincey. But, at a time of anonymous reviewing, all characters and all situations were strongly fictionalized for the literary magazine’s polemical purposes and impersonated by several contributors, although readers would associate certain names with certain well-known individual authors.⁵³ Their undecided disputes over authors, which disconcerted many other editors of literary reviews like John Scott, again shows the fluctuating attitudes of Neoclassical critics towards the poets later called Romantics. While Morgan Odoherty, for instance, heartily condemned Byron’s works, Timothy Tickler (Lockhart’s alibi created by himself on the model of Wilson’s well-known brother-in-law Robert Sym and also impersonated by other *Blackwood* contributors) took a more permissive, elastic stance and saw various Romantic moods as various reactions to an age of revolutionary turmoil and cultural upheaval. Byron, Tickler (Lockhart) explained, reacted with a “spirit of scorn of that which is old”, Scott, on the contrary, with a “high heroic spirit of veneration for that which has been”, and Wordsworth with an escape and plunge “into the quiet, serene ocean-depths of solitary wisdom”. The advocate of the Classical Tradition nevertheless admitted his understanding of and sympathy with the Romantics, reinforced as he could write both in Neoclassical and Romantic styles:

“This [...] is the Age of Revolution. It is an age in which the earth rocks to and fro upon its foundations – in which recourse is had to the elements of all things – in which thrones, and dominations, and principles, and powers, and opinions, and creeds, are all alike subject to the sifting of the wind of Intellect, and the tossing and lashing of the wars of Passion.”⁵⁴

51 Mark Parker, *Literary Magazines and British Romanticism*, 135.

52 *Noctes Ambrosianae*, IV, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 12 (July 1822), 105.

53 See Mark Parker’s introduction to *Selections from the Maga’s Infancy*, III. VII – XXXVI.

54 *Noctes Ambrosianae*, XV, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 15 (June 1824), 714.

III. William Gifford against the Della-Cruscan Poets and the Non-Classical Stage

The Augustans generally disparaged modern Italy as an impoverished and benighted land of decay, the mere ruins of a glorious classical antiquity, as in Joseph Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705). Around the middle of the eighteenth century, the tide began to turn with a new Preromantic interest in Italy, the sensibility of its oppressed inhabitants, the soothing mildness of its sun-drenched weather, and the beauties of its various picturesque or sublime landscapes.¹ Simultaneously, the Alps were no longer seen as a mere irregular obstacle or divine punishment for the Fall of man, but an enjoyable and terrible scenery in itself, inviting the British traveller to a paradise of dreams, nature and art.

In the early 1780s, a small group of young English dilettantes with literary ambitions, affluent enough to afford a long Grand Tour, met in Florence, where they associated with well-known Englishmen and sought the company of then famous Italian poets and dramatists. The first was Robert Merry, whom Lorenzo Pignotti introduced to a literary group called the "Oziosi" or "Idlers", because they affected leisurely as opposed to strained writing. They were – later – joined by Bertie Greatheed and William Parsons. Their Italian correspondents, friends, or partial poetical collaborators in and around Florence, Lorenzo Pignotti, Angelo d'Elci, Marco Lastri, Ippolito Pindemonte (then residing in Verona), Giuseppe Parini (then residing in Milan), and Vittorio Alfieri (then residing in Pisa) were invariably anglophile and liberty-oriented, the first to talk of Italy's "national spirit" and "risorgimento". Some had recently been translated into English or were members of Florence's time-honoured Accademia della Crusca, united by a Romantic nationalist opposition to the Grand Duke Leopold (afterwards Emperor Leopold II) and Austrian rule in Italy.² The first collection of

1 R. Marshall, *Italy in English Literature 1755 – 1815. Origins of the Romantic Interest in Italy*, New York NY 1971, 12 – 91.

2 B. Moloney, *The Della Cruscan Poets, the Florence Miscellany and the Leopoldine Reforms*, in: *Modern Language Review*, 60 (1965), 48 – 57.

verse, edited by Merry and Allan Ramsay, the son of the Preromantic Scottish poet, was of indifferent quality and badly printed, *The Arno Miscellany being a Collection of Fugitive Pieces Written by the Members of a Society Called the OZIOSI at Florence* (Florence 1784). This self-fashioning as leisurely and easy writers of natural verse, “fugitive pieces” was markedly anti-Augustan, as both the English and Italian poets were no less hard-working than Horace, Dryden, or Pope. They polished and refined their lines, but with the conscious aim of giving them an air of spontaneity and originality, anticipating the young Byron’s *Hours of Idleness* (1807). Although one model of the English contributions was the poetry of John Milton (in opposition to Alexander Pope) and the Preromantic poetry of Thomas Gray, *The Arno Miscellany* incurred the ridicule of Horace Walpole. Walpole’s correspondent, Sir Horace Mann, was British envoy at Florence, constantly embarrassed by another famous member of Florence’s large British colony, Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender.³ Quality improved considerably when, in June 1785, Mrs Piozzi, formerly Mrs Thrale, arrived in Florence, accompanied by her new husband. After her conventional and loveless marriage of rank and riches to the wealthy brewer Henry Thrale, who had died in 1781, she had entered on a romantic marriage of love and sentiment with the gifted musician and Italian Roman Catholic Gabriele Piozzi. This marriage, contrary to all feudal conventions, had estranged her from London society, and from her suitor Samuel Johnson in particular. Now, Mr and Mrs Piozzi were on their three years’ honeymoon visit to France, Germany, and chiefly to that “Paradise of exiles, Italy”,⁴ giving the social scandal time to subside. One of the most cultured and accomplished women of her time,⁵ Mrs Thrale had been a well-known figure in London literary circles as well as those on the continent. She had hosted many men and women of letters as well as artists at her husband’s gorgeous home Streatham Park in South London – the “Streatham Worthies”, including Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, David Garrick, Edmund Burke, James Beattie, Joshua Reynolds, Charles and Frances Burney, Elizabeth Montagu and her rival salon of Bluestockings. Quite competent and experienced to fill the position of literary hostess, Mrs Piozzi now (1784–86) proved to be a source of encouragement and renewed inspiration to Merry, Parsons, and Greatheed. In their view, Mrs Piozzi’s temporary Florentine home at Meghitt’s Hotel, like her permanent Streatham home, stood in the best French tradition of the literary salon, although the elderly Mrs Piozzi herself seems to have regarded the en-

3 W.N. Hargreaves-Maudsley, *The English Della Cruscan and Their Time*, The Hague 1967, 62–95. This short history of the Della Cruscan movement is mainly based on Hargreaves-Maudsley.

4 Shelley, Julian and Maddalo, MS 1818, line 57, in: *Complete Works*, III. 180.

5 John Mark Longacre, *The Della Cruscan and William Gifford*, PhD thesis, Philadelphia 1924, 16.

thusiastic young poets with some amused condescension typical of traditional Augustan views of immature poets and modern Italy.⁶ In the wake of *The Arno Miscellany*, during fits of enthusiasm and with considerable rapidity, the group produced what may be called sentimental, enthusiastic as well as topographical poetry in the spirit of English Preromanticism: James Thomson, John Dyer, Edward Young, Thomas Gray, William Collins, William Mason, Joseph and Thomas Warton, Thomas Percy, James Macpherson, Letitia Barbauld, Hannah More, Charlotte Smith. In free experimental versification, the coterie expressed love of old Florence, enthusiasm for Italian stories and ballads, and a keen interest in Italian landscape and art.⁷ It foreshadowed the Romantic view of Italy as the land of rebirth from ruin and oppression (Renaissance and Risorgimento), romantic love (Romeo and Juliet), as well as sun-drenched picturesque and sublime scenes inviting the observer to harmony and visionary dreams: Shelley's and Keats's sunny paradise and land of sensations, Edward Bulwer-Lytton's "Land of Dreams", and Letitia Landon's "vision half divine Of myriad flowers lit up with summer shine".⁸ Though inspired by personal experience of Italy rather than Italian literature, it pitted the medieval poets Dante and Petrarch, together with Milton, against Dryden and Pope, a commonplace of English Romantic literary criticism. Written in less than two months, it assumed the attitude of light drawing-room verse spontaneously composed in a holiday spirit. Parsons's second verse epistle "To the Marquis Ippolito Pindemonte" and "Ode to Variety" with their attitude of revolt and conscious search for new themes and forms, later published in *A Poetical Tour* (1787), are typical examples of that anti-Augustan programme:

O Goddess! To my raptur'd breast
 Some portion of thy power impart,
 As through thy tangled paths I range
 And taste the dear delights of change,
 In numbers wildly free,
 And uncontroul'd like thee,
 To hail thine influence o'er this votive heart.⁹

6 Thraliana: The Diary of Hester Lynch Piozzi, formerly Mrs Thrale, ed. Katherine C. Balderston, 2nd edition Oxford 1951, II. 643 – 644.

7 Rolf Lessenich, Italy as a Romantic Location in the Poetry of the Original Della Cruscan, in: Christoph Bode – Jacqueline Labbe (eds.), *Romantic Localities: Europe Writes Place*, London 2010, 157 – 167.

8 C.P. Brand, *Italy and the English Romantics*, Cambridge 1957, 165 – 173.

9 Parsons, *Ode o Variety*, in: *A Poetical Tour in the Years 1784, 1785, and 1786*, London 1787, 1. Also see E.F. Bostetter, *The Original Della Cruscan and the Florence Miscellany*, in: *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 19 (1956), 285.

Merry continued this Preromantic campaign against what his “SATIRIC SCOURGE” identified as French “AFFECTATION” in a separately published poem entitled “Diversity” (1788).¹⁰ In this mythopoetic vision, he celebrated the virtue of variety or diversity in wildly changing metres, justified by a long speech of “The vivifying Maid, Extatic Poetry” with her “VARYING PASSION”.¹¹ In his short preface, Merry turned against the regular ode of the ancient Greeks as no longer pertaining to the customs and manners of his own time and country and argued in favour of the irregular ode, “employed with peculiar success by the best writers in the best languages”.¹²

Mythopoetic like Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats after them, Merry, Parsons, and the other Della Crusicans posed as Romantic visionaries inspired by beautiful works of nature and art, disdainful of Augustan poetry of rule and reason which had debilitated the free imagination and deserted the boldness of Milton for the coldness of Boileau and Pope. The Muse had fled Britain and taken refuge in Tuscany, there freshly to inspire its British votaries:

Yet now the Muses cease to smile
On ALBION'S once illumin'd isle.
The fire that glowed in MILTON's page
Is quench'd in this benighted age.¹³

Parsons, the chief contributor, undertook the task of publication, selecting the best of the coterie's poetry and producing the beautiful volume entitled *The Florence Miscellany* (Florence 1785). Both the poetological programme and the fact that individual poems were sent to London periodicals for pre-publication give the lie to the attitude of easily written holiday verse.¹⁴ The collaboration of the Anglo-Italian group was short and intense. The Piozzis left Florence a few days before the publication of the miscellany in September 1785. Even before the first English poets from the group had arrived back in London, the miscellany had fallen into the hands of the editor of the *European Magazine* (1782 – 1826), who, from February 1786, had begun to publish poems from it at an average of three a month. The *London Chronicle* and the *Gentleman's Magazine* followed in 1786 and 1787 respectively, the latter reprinting Mrs Piozzi's Preface. On their return 1786 – 87, Merry, Greatheed, Parsons, and Mrs Piozzi felt far too flattered to be annoyed at the pirated printing. Now, they considered themselves poets of

10 Merry, *Diversity: A Poem*, London 1788, 27.

11 *Ibid.* 13.

12 *Ibid.* Preface, VIII.

13 Parsons, To the Marquis Ippolito Pindemonte, in: *A Poetical Tour*, 39.

14 The *Florence Miscellany*, 162, and Parsons, *A Poetical Tour*, Advertisement, 1 – 2, where the reprinting of sloppily printed poems contradicts the pretence of hastily written “effusions of momentary impressions”.

the first rank, with the Radical Jacobin Merry assuming the role of leader, and soon found a crowd of imitators who sent their poems to the press. Merry was the link between the two groups of Della Cruscan, the small original group that wrote in Florence (1785) and the large group that flourished in England (1787–89).¹⁵ Merry had assumed the pen-name of Della Crusca, in sympathy with his Italian collaborators and in reaction to the closing of the Accademia della Crusca for its liberal Risorgimento sympathies by the Austrian Grand Duke in 1783, a few months after Merry's arrival in Florence. Radical, abolitionist, and later apologist for the French Revolution against Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Merry exposed the numerous poets of the movement to Tory suspicions of sentimental sympathy with egalitarianism and opposition to the *ancien régime*. Writing mostly under assumed and self-protective pen-names, many of them unidentified, they paraded primitivism and originality, cult of the feeling heart, solitary wandering and visionary myth-making, love for all fellow creatures including animals and flowers, abolitionism and egalitarianism, enthusiasm for landscape and nature, leisurely writing and the spontaneous overflow of feelings, universality of the poetic instinct and literary democracy, national cultures, and neglect of the Classical Tradition. From 1 January 1787, Edward Topham, with the collaboration of Charles Este and Miles Peter Andrews, started his new periodical *The World*, an early boulevard paper aiming at a large readership chiefly interested in sensational gossip and scandal.¹⁶ He approached Merry, his former comrade in the army, for poetical contributions and gave him a boost with a half column on 21 May 1787. Subsequently, *The World* became the chief publishing organ for the immense quantity of popular Preromantic verse from what William Gifford and the Tory press identified and ridiculed as "the Della Cruscan school". In 1788, John Bell published Topham's edition *The Poetry of the World* in two volumes, following the controversial practice of anthologizing poems previously published separately in a periodical – and, in 1791, James Ridgway published a third and fourth volume. A second edition of the first two volumes was published under a new title, *The British Album* (1790), containing a few new poems and reprinted in Dublin (1790), London (1790) and even Boston (1793), so that the whole Della Cruscan controversy found its literary echo in America with writers for and against Della Cruscanism.¹⁷

In addition to their popular poetry, some Della Cruscan even encouraged each other to write plays and have them produced in the London patent theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Encouragement came from the Kemble family

15 Moloney, *The Della Cruscan Poets*, 48.

16 Charles Harold Gray, *Theatrical Criticism in London to 1795*, New York NY 1931, 259.

17 R.B. Clark, *William Gifford*, New York NY 1930 and 1967, 39.

and from Topham's lover, the actress Mary Wells, and also from Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who, though a Neoclassicist himself, belonged to a Whig clique that supported the Prince of Wales against his increasingly demented father King George III. An amicable Whig circle had formed itself, a self-fashioned family of brothers and sisters of equal rights and mutual support, anticipating the happy circles in Godwin's novels and Wordsworth's poems as well as the Hunt circle in Hampstead with its joint projects, poems addressed to each other, and benevolent mutual reviews.

The exchange of devoted friendship poems and tender platonic love poems in various periodicals, published under pen-names, contributed to the group's Preromantic, quite anti-Augustan cult of sentiment and universal brotherhood. Mrs Piozzi herself had proposed the programme in her Preface to *The Florence Miscellany* (1785). The poems, which had imbibed from Italian sunshine "the warmth of mutual Benevolence", were written "to divert ourselves, and to say kind things to each other", "to keep Tenderness alive, and preserve Friendship from decay":

[...] we collected them that our reciprocal expressions of kindness might not be lost; and we printed them because we had no reason to be ashamed of our mutual partiality.¹⁸

The most popular exchange of tender platonic love poems was between Robert Merry ("Della Crusca") and Mrs Hannah Cowley ("Anna Matilda"), which came to an abrupt end when the two poets met and the younger Robert Merry discovered his adored Mrs Cowley to be an elderly woman of forty-six. The story became known and a standing joke for the Neoclassicists. It also provided William Gifford with additional ammunition to bring Della Cruscanism down in his two best-known anti-Romantic verse satires, *The Baviad* (1791) and *The Maeviad* (1795), affirming Augustanism and the Classical Tradition with reference to Virgil's sarcastic dictum on the reputedly worst poets of antiquity: "Qui Bavium not odit, amet tua carmina, Maevi".¹⁹ In Gifford's view, hastily and leisurely written verse, flights of imagination without control by reason, pure fantasy far removed from reality, and excessive enthusiasm were doomed to end in such bathos, exposing its own ridiculousness. *The Maeviad* contained a passage, commonplace in homiletic and critical literature (St Augustine, Dryden) and therefore not to be taken for biographical fact, where the speaker accused himself of having been a sinner against his present doctrine. As a youth, he pretended to have been infected with the mass epidemic and written sentimental Della Cruscan mass nonsense. But Phoebus Apollo had appeared to him

18 The Florence Miscellany, 5–6.

19 Virgil, Eclogues, III. 90.

in a dream and made him burn every scrap of verse together with whole British Albums, to become one of “the few alone, whom I inspire”:²⁰

“Yet mayst thou arrogate the humble praise
Of reason’s bard, if, in thy future lays,
Plain sense and truth (and surely these are thine),
Correct thy wanderings, and thy flights confine.”²¹

In his preface to *The Maeviad*, Gifford gave a short introduction to what he derogatorily called “the Della Cuscan School”. Men ignorant of the Classical Tradition had centred round a woman who had left Johnson and England, and female ease replaced manly work and application in poetry, an art which (according to Horace) allowed no mediocrity. The result, to Gifford, was unnatural diction, incomprehensible imagery, waste of words, lack of well-defined ideas – faults which he found both in the Della Cruscan’s verse and in their plays. The irony in Gifford’s account is devastating:

In 1785, a few English of both sexes, whom chance had brought together at Florence, took a fancy to while away their time in scribbling [...]. In this, there was not much harm, nor indeed much good: but as folly is progressive, they soon wrought themselves into an opinion that [...] they were unwilling that their inimitable productions should be confined to the little circle which produced them; they therefore transmitted them hither [...] and sent them to the press.²²

Gifford quoted from Juvenal’s second satire, which had compared abuses to a spreading disease and the satirist to a physician, whose duty it is to protect the public. Ridicule is bitter medicine for the patient, as in the foolish and gullible Merry’s disappointment at the sight of the real Mrs Cowley. Thus, Gifford’s epideictic rhetoric placed itself in the Classical Tradition:

-----contagio labem

Hanc dedit in plures, sicut grex totus in agris

Unius scabie cadit, et porrigine porci.

While the epidemic malady was raging from fool to fool, Della Crusca [Robert Merry] came over, and immediately announced himself by a sonnet to Love. Anna Matilda [Hannah Cowley] wrote an incomparable piece of nonsense in praise of it; and the two ‘great luminaries of the age’, as Mr [John] Bell properly calls them, fell desperately in love with each other. [...] – The fever turned to a frenzy: Laura Maria [Mary Robinson], Carlos [anonymous], Orlando [anonymous], Adelaide [Hester Lynch Piozzi], and a

20 Gifford, *The Maeviad*, 1810, line 164, in: *British Satire 1785 – 1840*, IV. 48.

21 *Ibid.* lines 167 – 70, IV. 48.

22 Gifford, *The Baviad*, Preface, 1810, in: *British Satire 1785 – 1840*, IV. 3. This preface was originally prefixed to *The Maeviad* (London 1795). Important variants are here quoted from the original editions in the British Library.

thousand nameless names caught the infection; and from one end of the kingdom to the other, all was nonsense and Della Crusca.²³

Desertion of the rule of decorum in the shameless sentimental sexualisation of poetic discourse had, Gifford suggested, contributed to unleash the violence and sentimental turmoil of the French Revolution.²⁴ Again, the poetological argument is advanced in support of a socio-political cause, marking one's own position as healthy and branding the adversary's position as diseased or even a mass epidemic.

Critical praise of *The Baviad*, in Tory periodicals as well as separate pamphlets and poems, was lavish, in Britain as well as in America. An American admirer of Gifford, for instance, William Clifton, wrote a eulogy in the manner of Pope, printed in an American edition of *The Baviad and Maeviad*, in which he praised Gifford for continuing the Classical Tradition in a time when it threatened to be swamped by ignorant and dull mass production:

While wearing fast away is every trace
Of Grecian Vigour and of Roman Grace,
With fond delight we yet one bard behold,
As Horace polish'd, and as Persius bold,
Reclaim the Art, assert the Muse divine,
And drive obtrusive Dulness from the shrine.²⁵

Della Cruscan and sentimentalist reactions to *The Baviad* were as violent and acrimonious as Tory and Neoclassical praise of it was lavish. Publicly derided and ostracized as an out-group, the sentimentalists occasionally gave up their cult of the feeling heart and resorted to the same satirical weapons and insults as their Augustan antagonists. As usual with the later Romantics, a war of self-defence could be excused as a just war. After all, Augustanism was still vitally alive and Augustan literature still widely read. In loose pamphlets and satirical poems, many of them sonnets in the wake of the Preromantic sonnet revival, Della Cruscans as well as their admirers and publishers turned the rod against Gifford. The abusive names they called Gifford ("monster of turpitude", "demon of darkness") reveal their reproach of lack of sensibility just as Gifford's choice of abusive names ("fools", "idiots") reveals his reproach of lack of reason. In a sonnet entitled "To the Execrable Baviad", the Della Cruscan publisher John Bell correctly diagnosed Gifford's intention to destroy the cult of sentiment, to pierce with his satirical dart

23 Ibid. IV. 4–5. The Latin quotation is from Juvenal, Satires, II. 78–80.

24 Jacqueline Labbe, *The Romantic Paradox: Love, Violence and the Uses of Romance*, New York NY and Basingstoke 2000, 39–66.

25 Introductory lines to the 1799 Philadelphia reprint of the 1797 *Baviad and Maeviad*; quoted from: Clark, William Gifford, 58.

The fine-spun nerve of each full-bosom'd mind,
And rock in apathy – the sensitive heart.²⁶

At a time of increasing commercialization of the “most disreputable book trade”, John Bell stood for market-orientation and boosting well-selling low quality works, whereas William Strahan’s son Andrew observed the traditional practices of the trade, preserving as much as possible of the high standards of his father, a friend of Samuel Johnson.²⁷ This debate between printers and booksellers provided conservative Neoclassicists with welcome arguments and satirical strategies from the modernized armoury of the Classical Tradition in their battle against what they called the “low quality” and “prostitute vulgarity” of Romanticism.

In his second satire, *The Maeviad* (1795), Gifford, like a true elitist Augustan, jibed at the poor quality of the angry reactions from the stupid crowd, who poured upon him “Reams of outrageous sonnets, thick as snow”.²⁸ In his extensive notes, Gifford even quoted two examples as *exempla horrenda* characterized by drivelling stupidity and doggerel, worthy of inclusion in an ironic anthology of famous authors who criticized the *Baviad* and *Maeviad*: “Insignium virorum aliquot testimonia [...]”.²⁹ Again, we see Preromantics and Romantics alike use genres of the lyrical revival instead of formal satires as vehicles of attack in self-defence. The sonnet, revived by the Preromantics after a century of Augustan neglect or scorn, was closely connected with Romantic confession and Radical subversion. Wordsworth defended it as the genre in which “Shakspeare unlocked his heart”,³⁰ and the Radical John Thelwall used it to convey his praise of simplicity and equality as well as condemnation of national pride and wars in his above-quoted poems written in confinement during the 1793 trials for high treason.³¹

Nor were satirical poetry and prose the only forms of Romantic reaction to *The Baviad*. As in the age of Dryden, *the lex contra famosos libellos* allowed a lawsuit for libel to be brought against personal insulters, a practice often invoked, but seldom successfully as defendants could easily argue their interest in the general welfare of the state (in politics and letters) and come up with similarly acrimonious satires on the part of their opponents. The Della Cruscan John

26 Bell, To the Execrable Baviad, lines 3–4, quoted from: Longacre, *The Della Cruscans and William Gifford*, 55.

27 Thomas F. Bonnell, *The Most Disreputable Trade*, Oxford 2008, reviewed by James Raven in: *TLS*, 5520 (16 January 2009), 23.

28 Gifford, *The Maeviad*, 1810, line 270, in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, IV. 55.

29 *Ibid.* IV. 55–57.

30 Wordsworth, *Scorn not the Sonnet*, line 3, 1827, in: *Poetical Works*, ed. T. Hutchinson, rev. E. de Selincourt, Oxford Standard Authors, 1936, 1971, 206.

31 Thelwall, *Poems Written in Close Confinement*, London 1795.

Williams, alias Anthony Pasquin, thus initiated legal proceedings against Robert Faulder, the publisher of *The Baviad*. However, the high-profile lawsuit, which attracted much popular attention, failed.³² Nevertheless, Gifford was at pains to defend his two anti-Preromantic satires on the double ground of Augustan legality and Augustan aesthetics by hypocritically affirming, with Dryden and Swift, that he lashed vices while sparing names:

[...] my satire was wholly levelled at the poetry of the Cruscan school. I reviled no man's person, I traduced no man's character, nor was it, till I was wantonly defamed by such as I had never injured, that I added a single name or circumstance to those first introduced.³³

A later and more indirect Neoclassical critic of Della Cruscanism was John Wolcot, alias Peter Pindar. Non-committal in party politics, Wolcot satirized vices rather than parties, and, unlike William Gifford's, his satires were popular rather than learned and embedded in the Classical Tradition.³⁴ Unfortunately for him, he incorrectly believed that the savage attack launched against him in the new Tory *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* (1798 – 1821), one denouncing him as “the profligate reviler of his sovereign and impious blasphemer of God”, came from the pen of the satirist William Gifford instead of the periodical's editor John Gifford. In the same periodical, a reviewer compared the rather irregular satires of Wolcot “with the satires of Horace, Juvenal, Swift, Pope, &c.”, and found them doomed to oblivion by time, due to their popular or low-culture character in the tradition of Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* (1663 – 1680).³⁵ The *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, edited by John Richards Green, alias John Gifford, had succeeded the *Anti-Jacobin* (1797 – 98), co-edited by William Gifford, and the identities of the two editors, who had no family connections, were easily conflated. The old pseudonymous family name Gifford signaled continuity of the traditionalist cause, the new pseudonymous Christian name John signaled change in a more ponderous, serious, academic periodical. Wolcot, whom rage prevented from understanding this message of the pseudonym John Gifford, publicly threatened to horsewhip the innocent William Gifford, who retaliated with his last major verse satire, *An Epistle to Peter Pindar* (1800), a savage piece of character assassination. As a consequence, the infuriated elderly Wolcot assaulted the younger William Gifford with a cudgel in a London bookshop, was put to flight,

32 Document edited by John Strachan *ibid.* IV. 275–94. The affair gave rise to Gifford's extension of his Preface to *The Baviad* (1800), IV. 5–7.

33 Gifford, *An Examination of the Strictures of the Critical Reviewers on the Translation of Juvenal*, London 1803, 14.

34 Klaus Finger, *Volkstümliche Satire der Industriellen Revolution: Peter Pindar*, Frankfurt/Main and New York NY 1984.

35 *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 2 (1799), 59.

and took his revenge by including William Gifford in a few lines and a long footnote of his own last major verse satire, *Out at Last!* (1801). Driven into the Whig camp by the satire of his Tory enemy, the formerly uncommitted Wolcot hailed the fall of William Pitt and his political as well as poetical supporters. In the long footnote, Wolcot indicted Gifford both for being Pitt's bulldog and for acting the role of mass pander to his aristocratic benefactor Lord Grosvenor, the father of Gifford's Greek and Latin pupil Lord Belgrave. Again, when passions ran high, hatred of the enemy and the desire to destroy him both morally and physically proved stronger than all natural law and aesthetic rules of general didactic satire, and stronger than all senses of truth and reason. In such cases, productive eristic culture ran out of control and became destructive. Wolcot, who had enjoyed a liberal education and was proficient in Greek and Latin in spite of his preference for popular culture, turned the chief Tory and Neoclassical argument against Gifford and Canning themselves by doubting their knowledge of the classical languages and the Classical Tradition. Prime Minister Pitt's programmatic speech in Wolcot's satire proposes the hiring of the cheapest and most ignorant corrupt poetasters, Canning, Earl Grosvenor's protégé and former shoemaker Gifford, and their creature Lord Belgrave:

'For any borough will I bring my man in:
 The poorest wretch that crawls I'll raise,
 To yield his incense-pot of praise,
 From Greek-mouth's Belgrave to lame-Latin Canning.
 [...]
 Ev'n Gr-v-r's cobbler shall come forth,
 And hammer to the world my worth –³⁶

Using the same strategy of combating the enemy with his own weapons, Wolcot's long footnote on "Grosvenor's cobbler" equates the charge of procuring whores with the charge of writing in a bombastic style – flashy and trashy whore's ornament rather than innocent and sublime classical simplicity, the production of a poetaster of low origin and ignorantly vulgar taste rather than a sound classical education. Thus, Wolcot charged Gifford with the same shortcomings of which Gifford had accused the Della Cruscan in *The Baviad* and *The Maeviad*:

As for Mr. Gifford's rhimes, they will appear extraordinary to such readers (and they are not a few) as prefer bombast to sublimity. Bombast is the idol of the vulgar – To such, the Attic simplicity appears arrant insipidity – the vulgar eye is sooner fascinated by the stiff, staring cabbage-rose brocade of the harlot, than the modest and snowy robe of innocence. [...] awkward and obscure inversions, with a verbose pomposity, form the leading features of almost every couplet.³⁷

36 Wolcot, *Out at Last!* (1801), lines 63–74, in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, IV. 111.

37 *Ibid.* IV. 112–113.

In spite of all its short lifespan and all its shortcomings, Della Cruscanism was an enormously influential movement and had more than an indirect bearing on the further development of Romanticism.³⁸ It popularized both the Preromantic mood and poetry which had previously only been associated with a limited number of elitist academic scholars and university men. It popularized the practice of repackaging individual poems published in periodicals in volumes such as *The Florence Miscellany* and *The World*, thus claiming literary status for occasional fugitive lyrics.³⁹ Gifford was not just flogging a dead horse when he published his satires in 1791 and 1795. Della Cruscanism has been shown to have provided a link between the earlier Preromantics, whom it emulated, and the later English Romantic poets from Blake to Keats.⁴⁰ Parodies of Della Cruscan poetry continued to appear together with and even after Gifford's frequently revised and reprinted satires, Robert Southey's "Amatory Poems of Abel Shufflebottom" (1799) and the Smith brothers' "Drury Lane Dirge by Laura Matilda" in their *Rejected Addresses* (1812) chiefly among them.⁴¹ Robert Southey's and Leigh Hunt's assessments of the Della Cruscans, though taken from the opposite angle, were no better than Gifford's, although Hunt avoided the classical imagery of a spreading disease and the art of healing. The Della Cruscan cult of sensibility revealed itself as a palpable construction, artificial rather than natural, and thus offended Hunt's Romantic demand for true and spontaneous lyrical *Bekenntnisdichtung*:

The *Baviad and Maeviad* – so called from two bad poets mentioned by Virgil – was a satire, imitated from Persius, on a set of fantastic writers who had made their appearance under the title of Della Cruscans. The coterie originated in the meeting of some of them at Florence, the seat of the famous Della Cruscan Academy. Mr Merry, their leader, who was a member of that academy, and who wrote under its signature, gave occasion to the name. They first published a collection of poems, called *The Florence Miscellany*, and then sent verses to the London newspapers, which occasioned an overflow of contributions in the like taste. The taste was as bad as can be imagined; full of floweriness, conceits and affectation; and, in attempting to escape from commonplace, it evaporated into nonsense.⁴²

When Gifford chided the whole group of "fools" the "Della Cruscan School", he took aim at Merry's Radicalism. Thus, Gifford had both a political and an

38 Longacre, *The Della Cruscans and William Gifford*, 63.

39 Gamer, "Bell's Poetics": *The Baviad, the Della Cruscans, and the Book of The World*, in: Jones (ed.), *The Satiric Eye*, 48.

40 Bostetter, *The Original Della Cruscans and the Florence Miscellany*, 277 – 300.

41 *Romantic Parodies 1797 – 1831*, ed. D.A. Kent – D.R. Ewen, Rutherford NJ 1992, 39 – 40. Laura Matilda is a fictitious generic name, conflating Anna Matilda (Hannah Cowley) and Laura Maria (Mary Robinson).

42 Hunt, *Autobiography*, 1850, ed. J.E. Morpurgo, London 1948, 217.

aesthetic reason for fighting that group of “fools”, who did not contain their effusions within their private circle, but instead proceeded to make them public, thus disseminating a false but popular sentimental taste supporting false and dangerous political ideas. Merry’s public exchange of poems with female poets such as Hannah Cowley (“Anna Matilda”) and Mary Robinson (“Laura Maria”) also fuelled Gifford’s opposition to egalitarianism in politics and poetry. One significant difference between Gifford and Hunt is that the latter’s motive for opposing the Della Cruscan was private and confined to taste, whereas the former’s was public in the sense of it being the satirist’s duty to protect the health of the *res publica*. Based on the model of the first satire of Persius, Gifford’s *Baviad* introduced two interlocutors, the rationalist P (against the Della Cruscan) and a sentimentalist friend F (in favour of the Della Cruscan). When interlocutor F[riend] asks the satirist P[ersius-Gifford] to desist and not make himself powerful enemies, P’s reply is one commonplace in the Classical Tradition from Lucilius and Persius to Pope and Swift – the total intolerability of major vices and follies:

It must not, cannot be; for I was born,
To brand obtrusive ignorance with scorn;
On bloated pedantry to pour my rage,
And hiss preposterous fustian from the stage.
Lo, DELLA CRUSCA! [...] ⁴³

From the point of view of literary quality, Neoclassicists and Romantics agreed that the Della Cruscan were a very ephemeral group of epigones, minor poets and dramatists. But around 1790 the Della Cruscan were the fashion of the day, had found both a highly successful market-oriented publisher to boost them in John Bell, and a short-lived boulevard periodical to print their poetic effusions almost daily, Edward Topham’s and Charles Este’s *The World and Fashionable Advertiser* (1787–92), a paper ill reputed for its tendency to scandal and gossip and for denigrating the dignity of the peerage. As a legitimate target for Neoclassical satire, Della Cruscanism was a target very easy to hit. Hunt was probably right that, for poetic quality, it would have been consigned to oblivion without Gifford’s two scathing verse satires, and scholarly studies of Preromanticism seldom mention it, if at all.⁴⁴ Public dispute, in whatever genre it is performed, may have the contrary effect to what it intends: giving a boost to what might otherwise have passed unnoticed, as numerous Romantic works found a greater readership through adverse Neoclassical criticism. *Viel Feind viel Ehr’*: authors, like duellists, were often on the lookout for public adversaries and were sorely

43 Gifford, *The Baviad*, 8th edition 1810, lines 35–39, in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, IV. 12.

44 P. van Tieghem, *Le preromantisme*, Paris 1924–1947; R. Lessenich, *Aspects of English Preromanticism*; and M. Brown, *Preromanticism*, Stanford 1991.

disappointed when these would not enter the lists.⁴⁵ Without the Neoclassicists' massive campaign, the many and various male and female poets in and around the original Florentine nucleus would have been forgotten sooner. Gifford added to their short-lived popularity when he gave them a public group identity under the dysphemistic designation of "the Della Cruscan School" thus implicitly declaring them worthy of critical attention in challenging them to a satirical duel. Scorning them as an Egyptian plague, a big swarm of locusts, or their works as misbegotten monsters, "abortions of the Muse", was meant to counteract this implicit admission of their *Satisfaktionsfähigkeit*:

The mischief in its progress to arrest,
And exorcise the soil of such a pest.⁴⁶

The Della Cruscan group included anonymous authors of both sexes who usually wrote under varying *noms de plume*: Thomas Adney ("Yenda"), Miles Andrews, Hannah Cowley ("Anna Matilda"), Charlotte Byrne née King alias Charlotte Dacre ("Rosa Matilda"), Bertie Greateed ("Arno", "Rueben"), Edward Jer-ningham ("Benedict"), Robert Merry ("Della Crusca", "Rinaldo"), William Parsons, Hester Lynch Piozzi ("Adelaide"), Samuel Jackson Pratt ("Courtney Melmoth"), Mary Robinson ("Laura Maria", "Laura", "Julia", "Oberon"), Robert Stott ("Hafiz"), Thomas Vaughan ("Edwin"), Miss Vaughan ("Cesario"), John Williams ("Anthony Pasquin").⁴⁷ As in the case of Charlotte Byrne's two pseudonyms, these *noms de plume* manifested their authors' kinship with the sentimental as well as the Gothic counter-movements to Neoclassicism and the Enlightenment.⁴⁸ In that crucial chapter of his later retrospective autobiography entitled "Literary Warfare", in which Hunt assented to Gifford's negative assessment of the Della Cruscans, he nevertheless stressed his conviction as a representative of Romantic sensibility that Gifford's satirical treatment of those poetasters was unnecessarily cruel to fellow creatures, and that no chastisement or execution would have been necessary to bring about their poetry's deserved oblivion:

It was impossible that such absurdities could have had any lasting effect on the public taste. They would have died of inanition.⁴⁹

45 Richard Cronin, *Duelling and the Culture of British Romantic Literature*, in: *Die Kunst des Streitens*, 432.

46 Gifford, *The Maeviad*, 1795, lines 267 – 269, in: *British Satire 1785 – 1840*, IV, 55.

47 For short biographies see *British Satire 1785 – 1840*, IV, XXVII – XXXVII.

48 Kim Ian Michasiw's appendix to her edition of Charlotte Dacre's Gothic novel *Zofloya, or, the Moor* (1806), *Oxford World's Classics*, Oxford 2000, 2008, 267 – 271.

49 Hunt, *Autobiography*, 218.

Long before Hazlitt's imputation of unnecessary cruelty in view of venial faults in *The Spirit of the Age* (1825),⁵⁰ Romantic critics had blamed Gifford's two satires against the Della Cruscan for "breaking butterflies upon wheels" with a meaningful reference to a famous line in Alexander Pope's *Epistle to Arbuthnot* (1735),⁵¹ thus blaming their arch-enemy Gifford for having offended against his own Popean poetics. And Gifford felt obliged to defend himself in the preface to his second satire, *The Maeviad*, affirming the satirist's general duty to protect literature from the threat of being swamped by the false taste and ignorance of the vulgar, no longer a cultural group to be marginalized and taken lightly:

I hear that I am now breaking butterflies upon wheels! There was a time (it was when the Baviad first appeared) that these butterflies were Eagles, and their obscure and desultory flights, the object of universal envy and admiration.⁵²

In his typical eristic imagery, Gifford affirmed that he "had done the state some service", that he was "once more called into the lists by the reappearance of some of the scattered enemy", and that his second satire opened a new frontline in the war, attacking the non-classical abuses of the English stage.⁵³ But he failed to invalidate the criticism of more sentimental theorists of satire such as Frances Boscawen's nephew William, who blamed both Gifford and Mathias for having abused satire, using it to vent personal resentment and ill nature in the tradition of Dryden. Here again, the butterfly broken upon a wheel becomes an ephemeral insect, *quantité négligeable*, an unworthy foe in battle or duel in a feudal state's traditional scale of values:

[...] see, resentment sparkling in his eyes,
To crush thy foes indignant G—d rise!
Thy foes, the fluttering insect of an hour;
Fly from his rage, or bow beneath his power.
Yet why, victorious champion, why abuse
The cheap and easy conquest of thy Muse?⁵⁴

50 Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, Mr Gifford, in: *Complete Works*, XI. 125: His attacks on Mrs. Robinson were unmanly, and even those on Mr. Merry and the Della-Cruscan School were much more ferocious than the occasion warranted. A little affectation and quaintness of style did not merit such severity of castigation.

51 Pope, *An Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, 1753, line 308, in: *Poems*, 608.

52 Gifford, *The Maeviad*, Preface, London, 1795, XIV – XV.

53 Gifford, *The Maeviad*, (later) Preface, 1810, in: *British Satire 1785 – 1840*, IV. 32 – 33. The first quotation is Gifford's reference to General Othello's reminder of his military campaigns and victories in Shakespeare, *Othello*, V / 2, 339.

54 William Boscawen, *The Progress of Satire*, lines 211 – 216, 1798, 17. Boscawen translated and commented Horace's *Odes*, *Epodes*, and *Carmen seculare* (1793), followed by Horace's *Satires*, *Epistles*, and *Art of Poetry* (1797). Mathias found fault with Boscawen's translations.

In Gifford's eyes Della Cruscan sensibility was as spurious as all Romantic visions and Romantic inspiration, a mere make-believe of true feeling: affectation instead of affection. But Della Cruscanism struck Britain at the height of the fame of the actress Sarah Siddons, had a special appeal to women associated with the stage, and thus advanced the cause of the "new school of poetry".⁵⁵ In *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), where he echoed most of Gifford's arguments, Byron called upon contemporary poets to be affecting rather than affected. With typical Byronic paradox, his list of names included poets trained and writing in the Classical Tradition, William Gifford and William Sotheby, in the same breath as Hector Macneill, who was renowned for his simple Scottish songs in the style of Burns, to whose antithetically-mixed nature and honest self-presentation Byron felt akin.⁵⁶ There was no Della Cruscan affectation in Macneill's poetry. There is still hope for "deserted Poesy" on her native British Isles, as the few will survive the many:

Yet still some genuine sons 'tis hers to boast,
Who least affecting, still affect the most;
Feel as they write, and write but as they feel –
Bear witness GIFFORD, SOTHEBY, MACNEILL.⁵⁷

Opposing durable quality against short-lived marketable – due to its being cheap – quantity was an argument that the anti-Romantics of the Romantic period had inherited from the eighteenth-century Augustans. We have already seen this in the case of the scathing reviews of the mass-produced epics of Sir Richard Blackmore as opposed to the quality of Dryden. Goldsmith's *Chinese Letters* (1762), a new kind of Enlightenment satire established by Giovanni Paolo Marana and a great eighteenth-century literary fashion spawning numerous novels of letters written by exotic visitors to Europe, had featured a modern bookseller always on the lookout for something new, to the detriment of old publications which he pulps every year:

"Others may pretend to direct the vulgar, but that is not my way; I always let the vulgar direct me; wherever popular clamour arises, I always echo the million."⁵⁸

55 Judith Pascoe, *Romantic Theatricality*, Ithaca and London 1997, 68–94.

56 L.A. Marchand, *Byron: A Portrait*, London 1971, 157–158

57 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1809, lines 815–18, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, I, 254–255. Byron esteemed Sotheby as a successful translator of Homer and Virgil. His later satirical caricature of Sotheby as "Botherby", in *Beppo* (1818) and *The Blues* (1823), was inspired by his suspicion that Sotheby had written a negative review of one of his works, and refers to Sotheby's failure as a dramatist. Moreover, Richard Mant had blamed Sotheby for embellishing Virgil's naturally graceful lines, *The Simpliciad*, London 1808, 9, lines 44–45.

58 Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, letter 51, 1762, in: *Collected Works*, ed. Arthur Friedman, Oxford 1966, II, 214.

Furthermore, eighteenth-century critics of Bluestocking writing had imputed that corruption of the booksellers to well-selling female literature in particular. With Gifford's attacks on Della Cruscanism it became a stock argument against the Romantics that their production was easily written and, essentially, female mass literature, marketable stuff for ephemeral annual gift-books and poetry-albums, without strenuous application of the eternally valid rules of poetry, and vapid noisy nonsense produced in violation of Pope's rule that "The *Sound* must seem an *Echo* to the *Sense*".⁵⁹ To Gifford, true verse of the Classical Tradition was both rational and rare,

[...] the mellow fruit of toil intense,
Inspir'd by genius, and inform'd by sense;

whereas Romantic mass production like "Greatheed's idiot line" and "Laura's vapid song" appeared

Begotten without thought, born without pains,
The ropy drivell of rheumatic brains.⁶⁰

And in his *Pursuits of Literature* (1794–1797), Gifford's champion Mathias chimed in by quoting Boileau's Horace-inspired lines against literary mediocrity and vulgar mass production, providing another instance of the continuity of the Neoclassical aesthetic in the Romantic Period, in Britain as well as in France and Germany:

*Soyez plutôt maçon, si c'est vote talent,
Ouvrier estimé dans un art nécessaire,
Qu'écrivain du commun, et poète vulgaire.*⁶¹

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, notoriously opposed to what it branded as Byron's and Shelley's mass production for the populace, extended Gifford's arguments against the Della Cruscans to the "Cockney poets". They all served short-lived modish tastes, whereas the poets whom they sought to replace, Dryden and Pope, survived together with the Classical Tradition. As one of *Blackwood's* most disputatious reviewers, William Maginn did not mention the fact that the Della Cruscans postulated a return back to Milton's English boldness, and so he claimed the lastingly famous Milton for his own party, as would most Neoclassicists:

59 Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1711, line 365, in: *Poems*, 155.

60 Gifford, *The Baviad*, 1810, lines 274–75, 278–79, in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, IV. 25.

61 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, ed. cit. 290, from Boileau, *Art poétique*, 1674, IV. 26–28.

The taste prevailed for a time; the more rational part of the public, always a minority, laughed and were silent; the million were in raptures. [...] Milton and Dryden and Pope [...] were a formal and stiff-skirted generation [...]⁶²

As usual, this standard argument that Gifford and the Tory press advanced against the Romantics was polemical rather than balanced. The Romantics themselves bitterly complained of literary mass production in their new age of mass printing and mass reading. Annual gift-books and poetry-albums sold and paid their authors extremely well and thus threatened Wordsworth's, Coleridge's, and Southey's income from literary quality production.⁶³ Together with Paris-based Galignani's cheap editions, gift-books and poetry-albums further cheapened the price of their volumes of poetry and their royalties in Britain. This ensured that the Romantics themselves were obliged, sometimes reluctantly, to contribute light verse to such ephemeral publications. Poetry as a mass commodity of modern mass culture was incompatible with Romantic poetics and theories of exceptional genius, so that Coleridge's attacks on the mere "trade" of poetry, in *Biographia Literaria* (1817), were no less aggressive than Gifford's:

Of all trades, literature at present demands the least talent or information; and, of all modes of literature, the manufacturing of poems.⁶⁴

And Mary Robinson built up a double front of attack against traditionalist critiques of "the modern novel-mill". In fashionable Bath, fashionable people pretending to a higher taste and education derided the novel for being a mass-produced popular genre not worth of integration into the literary canon, the kind of low estimation that Henry Fielding had already tried to counteract in the preface to his novel *Joseph Andrews* (1742). In her novel *Walsingham* (1797), Robinson's titular hero defends the modern novel of quality with Romantic arguments, referring to the author's own prose fiction, while he shares the fashionable denigration of mass-produced cheap novels.⁶⁵

Romantic claims to natural originality and spontaneity, along with Romantic notions and proclamations that every man was a potential poet due to his divine origin left a flank open for their Neoclassical adversaries to attack, and Neoclassicists duly accused the Romantics of complicity in or even causation of modern mass production. Gifford's political and aesthetic partisan Richard Mant supported this charge in *The Simpliciad* (1808), a satire which the Tory

62 [William Maginn] in: Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 10 (December 1821), 696.

63 Low, *The Literary Protégées of the Lake Poets*, 9 – 13.

64 Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 1817, in *Collected Works*, VII. I. 38.

65 Deirdre Lynch, *Transformations of the Novel – 1*, in *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. James Chandler, Cambridge 2009, p. 451.

British Critic hailed as “a new Baviad”.⁶⁶ Wordsworth’s and Coleridge’s poems, as manifested in Wordsworth’s *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807), are seen in a line with Della Cruscan two-volume mass publications, *The Poetry of the World* (1788) and *The British Album* (1790), mere anthologies of loose occasional and fugitive pieces rather than a laboured and homogeneous work of art.⁶⁷ The seminal title of the Radical bookseller John Almon’s *Asylum for Fugitive Pieces in Prose and Verse* (1785–1789) indicated the modern anti-classical and anti-feudal fashion. Mant’s ironic address to Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey makes this point through the Romantics’ own favourite garden imagery, accusing them for wild, uncultivated growth as opposed to traditional, careful gardening in artistically laid-out *parterres*:

ALLOW me to dedicate to you the following Anthology; for it is in fact little more than a collection of flowers, unless I adopt the language of one of your triumvirate, and call them weeds, gathered from certain volumes of miscellaneous poetry.

[...] I lament the degradation of your genius, and deprecate the propagation of your perverted taste.⁶⁸

The threatening triumph of Romantic quantity over Neoclassical quality formed part of Gifford’s apology for the ferociousness of his satire and the need of his courage in the combat against the enemy. Whereas interlocutor F warns against too much intrepidity and recommends wise cowardly silence, P (Persius-Gifford) fashions himself both as a brave soldier morally obliged to combat a vicious enemy and a brave physician morally obliged to combat a spreading disease – the rampant, demented, mass scribbling as symptomatic of the mad, chaotic disloyalty that infected revolutionary France. This he dubbed “metromania”, a craze and mass epidemic of the maniacal rabble for writing poetry in metres.⁶⁹

And may not I – now this pernicious pest,
This metromania, creeps thro’ every breast;
Now fools and children void their brains by loads,
And itching grandams spawl lascivious odes;
Now lords and dukes, curs’d with a sickly taste,
While Burns’ pure healthful nurture runs to waste,
Lick up the spittle of the bed-rid muse,
And riot on the sweeping of the stews;
Say, may not I expose -⁷⁰

66 *British Critic*, 33 (Februar 1809), 180, in: Nicola Trott, *Wordsworth and the Parodic School of Criticism*, in: Jones (ed.), *The Satiric Eye*, 73.

67 Gamer, “Bell’s Poetics”, in: Jones (ed.), *The Satiric Eye*, 36–43.

68 [Mant], *The Simpliciad: A Satirico-Didactic Poem. Containing Hints for the Scholars of the New School*, suggested by Horace’s *Art of Poetry*, London 1808, III–VI.

69 Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, 20.

70 Gifford, *The Baviad*, lines 312–319, ed. cit. IV. 27–28. Note Gifford’s *argumentum ad ho-*

Thomas James Mathias, Gifford's partisan and author of *The Pursuits of Literature* (1794–1797), the long, ponderous, and heavily annotated anti-Romantic satire in dialogue on the model of *The Baviad*, made democratic literary mass production the major aim of his bitter Tory and Neoclassical attacks. To Mathias, the times had so deteriorated that poetasters (Bavius and Maeuius) and poets (Virgil) were ranked on the same level:

[...] now the meanest bard,
Bavius, or Maro, finds the same regard.⁷¹

Mathias's plea was for a return to the old school and its quality control which, he believed, insured the deservedly bad posthumous fame or total oblivion of literary bunglers and heretics of the new schools, including the Della Cruscans. He invariably combined his diatribe against democratic mass culture, especially books written by women as potential *tricoteuses*, with attacks against all instigators of and sympathizers with the French Revolution. The populace and women, uneducated in the classics, are denied the capacity for clear reasoning in complicated matters such as politics, philosophy, religion, and literature:

Our peasantry now read the *Rights of Man* on mountains, and moors, and by the way side; and shepherds make the analogy between their occupation and that of their governours: happy indeed, had they been taught to make no other comparison. Our *unsexed* female writers now instruct, or confuse, us and themselves in the labyrinth of politics, or turn us wild with Gallic frenzy.⁷²

The contrastive vocabulary of classical elitist reasoning versus popular mass roaring, order versus chaos, health versus disease, defines the Neoclassical and Tory stance of Mathias's satire. In the tradition of a favourite eristic technique of classical satire, universally accepted values are contrasted against universally despised and ridiculed defects, ranting and bawling in poetry as *phénomènes de rejet*:

Let Wakefield rant, and pallid Thelwall bawl,
Lords of misrule, in anarchy's wild hall.⁷³

More than a quarter of a century later, in Lockhart's and Wilson's diatribes against the "Cockney poets" in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (from 1817), Gifford's and Mathias's arguments and imagery were still both valid and in active

minem concerning Robert Burns, whose alleged uniqueness and health he opposes to mass production and sickness.

71 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, 16th edition, four dialogues complete in one volume, London 1812, 64.

72 Ibid. 212. The references are to Thomas Paine and Richard Polwhele.

73 Ibid. 111. The references are to the Radical authors Gilbert Wakefield and John Thelwall. Wakefield was a special annoyance to Mathias, as a Greek and Latin scholar shouting with the populace.

use, including Gifford's diagnosis of mass "metromania", polemically quoted in its French form associating the French Revolution:

Of all the manias of this mad age, the most incurable, as well as the most common, seems to be no other than *Metromanie*. The just celebrity of Robert Burns and Miss Baillie has had the melancholy effect of turning the heads of we know not how many farm-servants and unmarried ladies; our very footmen compose tragedies, and there is scarcely a superannuated governess in the island that does not leave a roll of lyrics behind her in her bandbox.⁷⁴

In *Blackwood's* "Noctes Ambrosianae", Lockhart and Wilson renewed their aggression against the "Cockney poets", when the Editor repeats Samuel Johnson's estimate that novels are literature for the irrational vulgar, ranking below drama. The public appear as "a common herd of barbarians", mass consumers of mass-produced literature, deficient of poetological ideas and philosophical aesthetics, ignorant of Horace, "merely capable of strong sensations, but of nothing which requires knowledge, taste, or judgment".⁷⁵

Between Gifford and Lockhart, Byron had taken up Gifford's *argumentum ad hominem* that honesty and truth to nature were Neoclassical virtues which could be found even in a few primitivist poets, whose simple verse was not the result of pretended spontaneity, such as Cowper, Burns, and Macneill. According to Gifford and Byron, honesty and truth to nature were also preserved in some few late Augustan poets who still adhered to the values of rule, judgment, moderation, and balance, though they were infected by the Romantic interest in boors and village life. Such was the satirist and realist verse narrator George Crabbe, master of the mock-heroic style and author of *The Village* (1783) and *The Parish Register* (1807), "Pope in fustian", much admired by Jane Austen (who thought she could see herself as Mrs Crabbe and included Crabbe's works and names in *Mansfield Park*).⁷⁶ Byron's equation of imaginative Romantic invention with mere lies implies an attack on Romantic aesthetics on epistemological and ethical grounds, which made him praise Crabbe against Wordsworth and Coleridge:

There be, who say in these enlightened days,
That splendid lies are all the poet's praise;
That strained Invention, ever on the wing,
Alone impels the modern Bard to sing:
'Tis true, that all who rhyme, nay, all who write,

74 [Lockhart] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 3 (August 1818), 519.

75 *Noctes Ambrosianae*, I, *ibid.* 11 (1822), 368.

76 The novel's heroine Fanny Price, who reads Crabbe's *Tales* (1812), takes her name and faithful character from Crabbe's *The Parish Register* (1807). Also see Peter Knox-Shaw, *Jane Austen and the Enlightenment*, Cambridge 2004, 181.

Shrink from that fatal word to Genius – Trite;
 Yet Truth sometimes will lend her noblest fires,
 And decorate the verse herself inspires:
 This fact in Virtue’s name let CRABBE attest,
 Though Nature’s sternest Painter, yet her best.⁷⁷

In fact, Crabbe had followed Samuel Johnson in rejecting unadapted imitations of Arcadian pastorals of the Classical Tradition and called up Virgil’s first eclogue as witness that the pastoral poetry of an age should refer to realities and expose abuses of its own time.⁷⁸ Brought up in Aldeburgh, a run-down “deserted village” on the “frowning coast” of Suffolk, Arcadian pastorals struck Crabbe as not true to nature, at least not to the realities of his own time which demanded an updating and modernizing of the Classical Tradition. Like Oliver Goldsmith’s *Deserted Village* (1770), Crabbe’s *Village* took a critical Tory look at the results of the Whig Agrarian Revolution, the exodus of the old lords and tenants and national wealth produced by the advance of mercantilism. Thus, Crabbe replaced all the bucolic *loci amoeni* of Arcadia, which he evoked with his boy’s grammar-school knowledge of the Greek and Latin originals, by counter-visions of decay due to neglect of agriculture in favour of commerce: hungry and despairing peasants, ragged children, bleak old age, drunkenness and crime caused by poverty, barren soils, withered ears, thorns, and the wild tare. Crabbe never expected any improvement of the lives of the lower classes from Whig politics, including the later Reform Bill (1832). The Tory didacticism of Burke’s, Johnson’s, and Goldsmith’s admirer Crabbe is supplemented by satirical portraits of vicious characters of his place and time: an arrogant country doctor and a careless country priest, who think of nothing but their own ease and profit.⁷⁹ Hence, Crabbe’s poetry is profoundly Augustan and unsentimental. So are the wood engravings of Crabbe’s contemporary, the artist Thomas Bewick, whose scenes of rural life expose the misery rather than idyll of country life, together with man’s misfortunes and follies.⁸⁰

William Cowper’s case was quite different. *The Task* (1785) deserted its initial mock-heroic praise of low life to take a typically sentimental and Preromantic look at country life: “God made the country, and man made the town”.⁸¹ Thus, Cowper’s work profoundly inspired Wordsworth. But Cowper’s blank verse,

77 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1819, lines 849–858, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, I. 256.

78 Crabbe, *The Village*, I. 15–20, in: *Poetical Works*, I. 157.

79 *Ibid.* I. 262–295 and I. 296–317, ed. cit. I. 164–166.

80 Nigel Tattersfield (ed.), *Thomas Bewick: The Complete Illustrative Work*, 3 vols., London 2011.

81 Cowper, *The Task*, book I *The Sofa*, line 749, in: *Poetical Works*, ed. H.S. Milford, Oxford Standard Authors, London 1934, 145.

though freer than Crabbe's heroic couplets, was still cultivated and philosophical Augustan poetry, so that Gifford's admirer Richard Mant could praise it together with Crabbe's poetry. A poor and paltry subject such as a sofa and a village, Mant argued, tended to debase a poet's thoughts and style, just as a peasant's field is hard to purge from weeds. Only true bards, Crabbe and Cowper, could succeed where false bards, Wordsworth and Coleridge and Southey, lapsed into triteness:

Not but the bard can wave his wizard wand,
And turn a desert into fairy land,
Of village spoils a manly trophy raise,
And crown a Sofa with a Georgic's praise.⁸²

Gifford's, Mant's, and Byron's admission of exceptions to the rule did not apply to the Della Cruscan, all of whom they dumped unanimously in the fatal category of mass production by poetasters. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809) contains a whole passage in which Byron repeated almost all Gifford's strictures against what he also chided the "Della Cruscan School". By 1809, Byron found that the Della Cruscan movement was a spent force and was dead, but Della Cruscan vices such as incorrect metaphors, irrational obscurity, excessive emotionalism, and Romantic democratic mass production in papers had infected posterity:

Though Crusca's bards no more our journals fill,
Some stragglers skirmish round the columns still,
Last in the howling host which once was Bell's,
Matilda snivels yet, and Hafiz yells,
And Merry's metaphors appear anew,
Chained to the signature of O. P. Q.⁸³

Nevertheless, "Della Cruscan" remained a term of abuse for decades to come, designating sensational mass production for the uneducated masses.

Gifford's criticism of Della Cruscan and other non-classical drama was largely based on the same faults that he identified in Della Cruscan poetry.⁸⁴ In *The Maeviad* (1795), Gifford shifted the stress of his criticism to the contemporary stage, after he had already launched occasional attacks at Della Cruscan plays in *The Baviad* (1791). Countering reproaches of inadequate severity, he claimed to have modelled his second satire on Horace's tenth satire, in which Horace justified his critique of Lucilius. But Horace, who could smile at folly and vice alike,

82 [Mant], *The Simpliciad*, 1818, lines 119–122, 33. Mant's footnote: "See the Poems of the Rev. George Crabbe, especially *The Village* and *The Parish Register*."

83 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, lines 759–764, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, I, 253. The satirical reference is to the anonymity of Della Cruscan poems under invented pseudonyms or invented initials.

84 Longacre, *The Della Cruscan and William Gifford*, 61.

ranked last in Gifford's ranking of the Latin satirists. So Gifford inverted Horace's stricture on Lucilius, whom Horace credited with good taste but found defective of any sense of rhyme. Rhyme, Gifford ironically conceded, was Merry's only poetical quality, as Merry lacked both taste and sense.⁸⁵ Moreover, Gifford used Horace's satire as a mere starting point for his second war on the vanquished Della Cruscans, for "the re-appearance of some of the scattered enemy".⁸⁶ In a long note added later, Gifford reminded his readers of the lasting, even increasing popularity of non-classical drama on the stage, and of the *Anti-Jacobin's* meritorious parody of German *Sturm und Drang* drama in "The Rov-ers" (1798):⁸⁷

The force of English folly, indeed, could go no farther, and so far I was right: – but the auxiliary supplies of Germany were at hand, and the taste, vitiated by the lively non-sense of O'Keefe and Co. was destined to be utterly destroyed by successive importations of the heavy, lumbering, monotonous stupidity of Kotzebue and Schiller.⁸⁸

In Gifford's judgment, the subversive aesthetic of John O'Keefe's and Mary Robinson's farces, John Mason's sentimental plays, John St John's sentimental domestic tragedies, and Thomas Morton's sentimental comedies inflicted enormous damage to good taste and sense by their appeal to the crowds. The farce in particular, one of Hazlitt's favourite dramatic genres, flouted rules and propriety and questioned old norms by its rebellious energies.⁸⁹ Neoclassical critics branded it as causing "serious injury to the public stage".⁹⁰ It was the weapon of women and the oppressed, showing the tyranny of bodies and fashions.⁹¹ By consequence, such unruly non-classical genres undermined the foundations of the old order of church and state. Both negative qualifications brought them under the derogatory heading of "Della Cruscan". Such non-classical drama, as the highly popular plays of William Thomas Moncrieff three decades later, tended to mix comedy and tragedy, realism and supernaturalism, mimetic and meontic representation, horror and sentiment, pantomime and song, the documentary and the fantastic, in a way that delighted large audiences, but shocked the Neoclassical critic as violating the rule of dramatic decorum.⁹² Gifford's Augustan argument against such plays repeated William Hogarth's criticism in his print *A Just View of the English Stage* (1724), where Hogarth had pilloried the vulgar sensationalism with which the three managers of the Theatre

85 Gifford, *The Maeviad*, 1810, lines 1–2, in: *British Satirists 1785–1840*, IV. 35.

86 *Ibid.*, Preface, IV. 33.

87 To be discussed below.

88 Gifford, *The Maeviad*, Notes, IV. 34.

89 Burwick (ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Romantic Literature*, Farce, I. 454.

90 *Ibid.* I. 456.

91 Betsy Bolton, *Women, Nationalism, and the Romantic Stage*, Cambridge 2001, *passim*.

92 Frederick Burwick, *Romantic Drama: Acting and Reacting*, Cambridge 2009, 56–79.

Royal Drury Lane waged their war of competition on John Rich's Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre. Drawing crowds with non-classical farces, sensational show effects, songs, and ballads meant a desertion from serious and regular theatrical art. Hogarth's satirical print features a motley mixture of disconnected characters and scenes in Newgate, including the escape of the criminal ballad-hero Jack Hall through the privy with toilet paper reading *Hamlet* and *The Way of the World*. Four years later, and still in the decade of the heyday of *Applebee's Journal* and Daniel Defoe's Newgate novels, John Gay's and John Christopher Pepusch's *Beggar's Opera* (1728) in Rich's theatre owed its enormous success to its mixed audience. There were the sophisticated spectators who understood and enjoyed the parody on the Italian opera as well as the satire on Robert Walpole on the one hand, and the more simple-minded and noisy spectators who sought to be entertained by farcical fun and popular balladry on the other. Farce, burlesque, and ballad opera thrived in the wake of Rich's success, witness for instance Henry Fielding's *Tom Thumb* (1730) and Henry Carey's *Chrononhotonthologos* (1734) with its "Namby Pamby", both similar mixtures of sophisticated satire and rude farce.⁹³ Carey's pseudo-Greek title itself reads like a parody of the Classical Tradition, a childish word formation of "chronos", "logos", and "hottentot". Carey's ironic appeal, in his invective on Ambrose Phillips (baby articulation "Namby Pamby"), to be popular and childish instead of classical and mature characterized the dilemma of theatre managers and dramatists of his time, torn between the demands of artistic quality and economic success, between the elitist Classical Tradition and popular culture. This conflict was to continue and shape dramatic production throughout the Romantic Period:

All ye Poets of the Age!
 All ye Witlings of the Stage!
 Learn your jingles to reform!
 Crop your numbers and Conform!
 Let your little Verses flow
 Gently, Sweetly, Row by Row:
 Let the verse the Subject fit;
 Little Subject, Little Wit.⁹⁴

In the decades following the Stage Licensing Act of 1737, which Carey and Fielding had provoked with their successful farcical invectives against Sir Robert Walpole, only two London patent theatres monopolized the market: Drury Lane

93 For Fielding's eleven ballad operas, written for the Little Theatre Haymarket and for the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, see Edgar V. Roberts, *The Songs and Tunes in Henry Fielding's Ballad Operas*, in: Kenneth Richards – Peter Thomson (eds.), *The Eighteenth-Century Stage*, London 1972, 29–49.

94 Carey, *Namby Pamby*, 1729, in: Victor C. Clinton-Baddeley, *The Burlesque Tradition in the English Theatre after 1660*, London 1952, 1973, 9.

and Covent Garden (the latter built by Rich from the proceeds of the *Beggar's Opera* in 1732). In other major English cities such as York, Birmingham, and Manchester, too, only a few theatres were granted a royal patent. These "legitimate" theatres were solely licensed to stage "serious" performances of "spoken" five-act plays, which had little or no singing or dancing, depending entirely on acting.

In a reaction against Neoclassical attacks on their alleged Della Cruscan self-prostitution to the populace, the Romantic poets had programmes of serious reforms of the theatre that paralleled Edmund Kean's serious reform of acting. Non-classical historical dramas as counterparts to Walter Scott's historical novel, such as Keats's *Otho the Great* (MS 1819) and Coleridge's translation of the first part of Schiller's *Wallenstein* (1800), were among their efforts. Ambitious literary quality documented through acceptance of their plays by a legitimate theatre would have been an effective argument against the reproach of Della Cruscanism. John Kemble and his sister Sarah Siddons, who promoted the plays of the original Della Cruscan and accompanied Parsons and Greatheed to Paris after the Peace of Amiens (1802), could not prevent Greatheed's sentimental tragedy *The Regent* (1788) from failing at Drury Lane.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the play was printed in England (1788) and in Germany in a German translation entitled *Der Statthalter* (1790). The prologue's appeal to the tears of the ladies confirmed Gifford's hatred of Whiggish Della Cruscanism as well the play's Gothic anti-classical pose with its announcement of new literary techniques and choice of a new medieval hero:

YOUR ears, accustom'd late to Grecian lyre,
 To Spartan virtue, and to patriot fire,
 Some change of *instrument* may now approve;
 New modulations may new passions move:
 And here's a stranger now behind the scene,
 Who plays upon the *Spanish mandolin*:
 A Spanish tale he sings of gothic ages,
 Such as you'd hunt for in black letter pages.⁹⁶

Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Percy Shelley sent serious blank-verse tragedies to the legitimate London theatres but were refused, chiefly for political reasons, although their tragedies were set in remote times or countries to avoid censorship: *The Borderers* (MS 1796–1797), *Osorio* (MS 1796–1797), *Otho the Great* (MS 1819), *The Cenci* (MS 1819). Wordsworth's *Borderers* and Coleridge's *Osorio* were dramatic imitations of Alexander Fraser Tytler's translation of

95 Greatheed, *An Englishman in Paris: Journal*, MS 1803, Introduction, ed. J.P.T. Bury – J.C. Barry, London 1953.

96 [Greatheed], *The Regent, Prologue*, London 1788, V.

Schiller's *Die Räuber* (1792), on which the two authors worked simultaneously yet independently following their first meeting in 1797. Tytler's translation of Schiller's revolutionary tragedy had no chance of being licensed by the Examiner of Plays.⁹⁷ Coleridge's pro-*ancien-régime* tragicomedy *Zapolya* (1817), originally planned as a Hungarian historical drama and submitted to Drury Lane, was rejected for reasons of poor stageability and, possibly, avoidance of turmoil. The non-elitist audiences, who had conquered Covent Garden and Drury Lane, might well have booed the noble aristocrat Raab Kiuprili's anti-democratic speeches. Other Romantics, such as some dramatists of the Hunt circle in Hampstead, had recourse to earlier, pre-Neoclassical types of drama such as court masques, pastorals, and mythological plays, which they could rewrite to their left-wing avant-garde purposes celebrating liberty, free love, the ordinary people, and the fall of tyranny and capitalism. Even after the end of the Baroque era, a thin tradition of these dramas existed throughout the eighteenth century. Their requirement of sumptuous stage machinery and sensational stage effects, which could now be more easily and cheaply realized with the illusionist techniques of Louthembourg, served the popular audience's taste while also proclaiming its political rights. Such works included Hunt's *Descent of Liberty* (1815), Horace Smith's *Amarynthus* (1821), Mary Shelley's *Midas* and *Prosperpine* (MSS 1820), and Percy Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1820). Far from retreating into closet drama, these Romantic poets were experimenting with new forms and methods of bringing a serious type of Romantic drama on the stage, but were also without hope of performance or even publication, again chiefly for political reasons.⁹⁸ They could not compete with the less objectionable, but also less demanding, popular melodrama, monodrama, burletta, extravaganza, and pantomime. It is a remarkable fact that the Romantic reviewers of drama (Charles Lamb, Hunt, and Hazlitt) were so successful, whereas the Romantic writers and serious theorists of drama (Percy Shelley, Coleridge, and Byron) had their plays rejected or saw them fail on the stage. Apart from politically incorrect sentimental plays as by Kotzebue and Schiller that pleased the masses, the only Romantic drama to enjoy popular success on the stage was Gothic drama; witnessed in the Gothic plays of Matthew Gregory Lewis, Coleridge, and Charles Robert Maturin. But they were too sensational to be serious in the Neoclassical understanding of dramatic decorum and open to ferocious traditionalist criticism for their freedom of form and sexual content, hybrid mixture of tragedy and comedy, cult of ruins, medievalism, and supernatural machinery. Romantic melodrama was the descendant of rescue opera and the dramatic equivalent of

97 Frederick Burwick, *Playing to the Crowd: London Popular Theatre, 1780–1830*, New York NY and Basingstoke, 2011, 103.

98 Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School*, 123–145.

romance, the former a new and the latter a revived genre, distinguished by the marvellous and the improbable in plot as well as in delineation of stock characters, – all offences against the Neoclassical rules of probability and decorum. A critic of the *Theatrical Inquisitor* noted in 1818:

Such are romance readers, such are the admirers of melodrama. A world which is different from our own, characters claiming little affinity with humanity, striking, marvellous, and improbable incidents, and combinations, these are the leading features common to both.⁹⁹

From *The Castle of Otranto* (1765), the Gothic genres were self-parodic in their well-calculated exaggerations; distancing laughter at scenes of horror reconciled the marvellous and irrational to the Age of Reason. With his classical education in Westminster School and Cambridge, Lewis had a special penchant for distancing Gothic self-parody as evident in his tale of the Bleeding Nun in *The Monk* (1796) and from the fake ghost scenes as well as absurd ghost stories and farcical ghost fears in *The Castle Spectre* (1797). In a brilliant piece of self-satire combined with satire on the audience, Lewis knew and admitted that the enormous success of his *Castle Spectre*, a horrible Gothic melodrama with a protective female ghost pilloried in the *Analytical Review*,¹⁰⁰ was owing to his catering to the expectations of the tasteless multitude. For that matter, his argument might have been from the pen of his bitter adversary William Gifford:

That his Play must succeed, may the Bard safely boast,
Who opens the piece by a Song for a Ghost;
But in popular plaudits unbounded he revels,
If he follows the Song with a Dance by two Devils...
Give us Lightning and Thunder, Flames, Daggers and Rage;
With events that ne'er happened, except on the Stage.¹⁰¹

Richard Cumberland, though a writer of dramas of sensibility opposed to the Classical Tradition, regretted the enlarged rebuilding of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, which led to their managers staging the same popular sensationalism as the “illegitimate” theatres. Like many serious dramatists, he yearned for a return to what he idealized as the polished Augustan high-culture days of Garrick. His plays required the fine acting of tender feelings and passions, traditional histrionic art suddenly rendered impracticable by over-dimensional theatrical spaces and noise:

⁹⁹ Anon., On Melo-Drama, in: *Theatrical Inquisitor*, 12 (1818), 160. See also Walter Göbel, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Heidelberg 1993, 49–56.

¹⁰⁰ *Analytical Review*, 28 (August 1798) 179–191.

¹⁰¹ Lewis, Epilogue to Thomas Holcroft, *Knave nor Not?* (1798), in: Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 1660–1900*, Cambridge 1927, 1952–1959, III. 99.

Since the stages of Drury Lane and Covent Garden have been so enlarged in their dimensions to be henceforward theatres for spectators rather than playhouses for hearers, it is hardly to be wondered at if their managers and directors encourage those representations, to which their structure is best adapted. [...] There can be nothing very gratifying in watching the movements of an actor's lips, when we cannot hear the words that proceed from them.¹⁰²

What Cumberland imagined the good old days of Garrick to have been, were not actually times that were necessarily inclined to Neoclassical plays and Neoclassical acting. Dr. Johnson's disciple Garrick had already vehemently, and unsuccessfully, opposed popular taste and audience misbehaviour in the then smaller Drury Lane Theatre. But, as a manager, he had been forced to yield to the nature of the market, where ballad operas and farces were simply far more in demand than Dryden or Shakespeare. The idiosyncratic liberties, impromptus, pranks, and slapstick imposed on actors to please the audiences of a Shakespeare drama, of which Ludwig Tieck's complained during his visit to London in 1817, could be traced back far into the previous century.¹⁰³ There was little or no awareness of the fact that the actors and audiences of Shakespeare's age had behaved in much the same way. "Sing-song" disgusted Garrick as much as slapstick farce and sentimental plays, and he made no secret of this in his satirical prologues and epilogues to the plays he had been obliged to admit for profit. This had undermined his health, so that, from 1763 to 1765, he and his wife had left England for an extended Grand Tour on the Continent. A fictitious satirical *Dialogue in the Shades* (1776) in the manner of Lucian's dialogues of the dead, between two famous deceased actresses of the time, attests to Garrick's anger and suffering:

[Margaret] Woffington. And is this all the entertainment the town has had for nine years?

[Susannah] Cibber. No, they have been mostly amused with comic operas, consisting of very indifferent poetry put to old tunes, without character, and scarce any sentiment.

[Margaret] Woffington. Astonishing!

[Susannah] Cibber. And more so, when you consider that these harmonious pieces would fill houses, when Garrick and myself, in Shakespeare's best plays, could scarce pay expenses. This indeed, was the principal reason of the Manager's going abroad, and I think he would not have done wrong if he had never acted till the vicious taste of the town had been entirely corrected.¹⁰⁴

With the popular taste of such audiences and ever enlarged stages after Garrick's death, serious spoken drama had little chance in the Romantic Period unless

102 Memoirs of Richard Cumberland Written by Himself, London 1807, II. 384. See also Jeffrey N. Cox (ed.), *Seven Gothic Dramas 1789–1825*, Introduction, Athens OH 1992, 8–9.

103 Burwick, *Playing to the Crowd*, 104.

104 Quoted from: Cecil Price, *Theatre in the Age of Garrick*, Oxford 1973, 112.

performed by such “electrifying” actors as Edmund Kean. Joanna Baillie, for instance, suffered from the fact that her “plays on the passions” were read as closet dramas because neither of the two gigantic London patent theatres, nor the sensation-oriented London “illegitimate” theatres, were suited to the fine acting that her psychological plays required. Even her *De Monfort* (1798) was only moderately successful on the stage (Drury Lane 1800), despite massive Gothic scenery and acting by John Philip Kemble and Sarah Siddons, and became known as a play to read rather than act.¹⁰⁵ William Godwin’s four tragedies – *St Dunstan* (1790), *Antonio* (1800), *Abbas King of Persia* (1801), and *Faulkener* (1807) – were either outright failures or left unfinished for lack of encouragement by theatre managers and actors.¹⁰⁶ Then, the sensational drama had virtually driven both heroic and sentimental tragedy from the stage, so that tragedies had become closet dramas and remained so until the advent of Henrik Ibsen, Ibsenism, and Bovarism in Britain in the later nineteenth century.¹⁰⁷ William Gifford’s editions of Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline dramatic works from 1805 to his death in 1826, with a special emphasis on the early Neoclassicist Ben Jonson, must be understood in the context of his fight against Della Cruscan and sensational popular culture on the stage of his time. This included Gifford’s campaign against female dramatists, as there were more than ninety women writings dramas between 1789 and 1823.¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, Joanna Baillie enjoyed great respect and fame as an author. The anonymous contributor to *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* of an article entitled “Celebrated Female Writers”, who admired Gifford but did not share his conservative anti-feminism, was William Harness, Byron’s beloved Harrow schoolmate who, as a theologian, opposed Byron’s *Cain*. A mild conservative, Harness admired literary women such as Mary Russell Mitford and Catherine Maria Fanshawe, and he praised Joanna Baillie as a modernizer of the Classical Tradition, although her dramas were unfit for the stage. At a time when Neoclassical poets had become “imitators of imitations – the third pressing of an exhausted wine-press – the ninth and dwindled farrow of the school of Pope and Addison”, Harness argued, Baillie arose to revitalize classical poetry in closet dramas. Even William Gifford never pigeonholed Baillie with Della Cruscan drama, probably out of silent respect. Furthermore, Harness even went one step

105 Catherine B. Burroughs, *Closet Stages: Joanna Baillie and the Theater Theory of British Romantic Women Writers*, Philadelphia 1997, 103.

106 David O’Shaughnessy, *William Godwin and the Theatre*, London 2010, passim.

107 Victor C. Clinton-Baddeley, *The Burlesque Tradition in the English Theatre after 1660*, 79.

108 Ellen Donkin, *Getting into the Act: Women Playwrights in London, 1776–1829*, London 1995, passim, and Julie Carlson, *Theatre, Performance and Urban Spectacle*, in: *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. James Chandler, Cambridge 2009, 495.

beyond Gifford by praising Baillie as having brought about a change that liberated English poetry both from Romanticism and Della Cruscanism,

[...] while the insect tribe of the *soi-disant* della Cruscan school [...] endeavoured to moan and insinuate themselves into celebrity, by an absurd pretension to *Italianism*, which caricatured refinement, and surpassed Keats in folly, and Shelley in obscurity, and was not inferior to Leigh Hunt himself in vulgarity and affectation.¹⁰⁹

The sum total of this, quite unlike reforms of poetry, was that neither Neo-classical nor Romantic calls for a reform of stage drama were successful. Neither Gifford nor Baillie nor Byron, a member of the sub-committee of management for Drury Lane and who tried to have *De Monfort* restaged in 1815, could change the realities of the theatre of their time. It has been correctly observed that, in general, the plays produced in the Romantic Period had the least pretensions to literary merit, while those deserving the respect of people of refined taste were as a rule shut out from the theatres.¹¹⁰

As a consequence of the much-debated Stage Licensing Act that remained in force 1737–1843, non-patent “illegitimate theatres” had sprung up in and around London and in other major English cities, staging popular and less serious melodramatic productions with music, acrobatic stunts, and pantomime. The Burletta Licence of 1752 forced them to the development of popular dramatic forms differing from the serious spoken drama reserved for the patent theatres. Their machinery was elaborate; their visual effects were sensational and flashy, drawing large riotous crowds. They paralleled the spreading boulevard theatres of Paris, such as the *Gaité* and the *Ambigu-Comique* on the Boulevard du Temple, bearing witness to the European-wide rise of popular against elitist culture. Texts of all new stage plays and all additions to old stage plays spoken or sung, including “tragedy, comedy, farce, opera, burletta, interlude, melodrama, pantomime or other entertainment of the stage or any part thereof”,¹¹¹ had to be submitted to the Lord Chamberlain’s Examiner of Plays. Theatrical managers and dramatists, however, soon discovered gaps in the hastily made law of 1737: stage directions could be withheld as being neither spoken nor sung, actors could ad-lib subversive or indecent texts, and the royal censors did not take their job too seriously as long as their income from licensing a certain number of submitted plays continued to be sufficient. From 1737 to 1824, when the bigoted George Colman the Younger became Examiner of Plays and strictly censored all the liberties that he had previously allowed himself in his own sensational plays, there was little friction between the stage managers and the theatres. Until 1824, neither side thought it necessary to insist that the strict

109 [Harness] in: Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine, 16 (August 1824), 163.

110 George Sherburn in: Albert C. Baugh, A Literary History of England, London 1948, 1266.

111 Section 23 of the Act.

letter of the law was obeyed.¹¹² Pantomime, for example, with its poses of grief or disgust or rebellion in face of “things as they are” contained a much greater subversive potential than spoken drama, a fact which the Examiners of Plays knew all too well from their own visits to the theatres. The Radical comic playwright Thomas Holcroft’s introduction of noble wronged heroes, who had no power of speech and expressed themselves through pantomime alone, heightened the audience’s sense of the persecuting *ancien régime’s* injustice. Holcroft’s deaf-mute Theodore (or Julio as he is discovered to be) in *Deaf and Dumb* (1801) and Francisco (his tongue mutilated by a villain hired by his brother Count Romaldi) in *A Tale of Mystery* (1802) served this purpose. Moreover, the loss of speech symbolized the *ancien régime’s* suppression of free opinion through censorship. Robert Merry, co-author of *The Picture of Paris taken in July 1790*, had to submit dialogue to the censor, but not the more dangerous silent pantomime as apparent in the stage directions of the play’s printed version.¹¹³ Obviously, William Gifford had political, aesthetic, and economic reasons to oppose such popular plays and brand them as Della Cruscan. In what has been described as the birth of a consumer society,¹¹⁴ Classical Tradition satirists and royal censors were equally instrumental in undermining the traditional power elites. Other means of circumventing the provisions of the Stage Licensing Act and politicizing illegitimate plays were easily found. The burletta, for instance, was a protean entertainment, with dramatic action that could be developed so far as to make it almost indistinguishable from legitimate drama. With the French Revolution and the French wars of 1793–1815, these illegitimate theatres with their *mises-en-scène* of physical peril, visual spectacle, and ideological confrontation rapidly multiplied in the provinces as well as the major cities, catering to the population of their local areas including working-class audiences.¹¹⁵ Audiences were by no means socially homogeneous, and they differed considerably with the location of their theatres.¹¹⁶ Some illegitimate theatres were built close to the Royal patent theatres to draw away their playgoers, as in the case of the Lyceum and the Adelphi; others were built in working class areas in the East End, in Lambeth, in

112 L.W. Conolly, *The Censorship of English Drama 1737–1824*, San Marino CA 1976, 24.

113 David Worrall, *Theatric Revolution: Drama, Censorship and Romantic Period Subcultures 1773–1832*, Oxford 2006, 27.

114 Neil McKendrick – John Brewer – J.H. Plumb (eds.), *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*, London 1982, *passim*.

115 Iain McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776–182*, Oxford 1999, 224–225, and Jane Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London*, 10. In contrast to Moody’s study Frederick Burwick, *Playing to the Crowd*, explores the different local audiences in detail.

116 Burwick (ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Romantic Literature, Theatre Audience*, III. 1382–1387.

Whitechapel, or in Southwark, catering to the local entertainment and taste of the ever-rebellious working classes, in the words of a Royalist, “the low traffickers of Rosemary Lane, or the miserable populace of Saltpetre Bank”.¹¹⁷ At a time when factions in theatre audiences clashed over the singing of the loyalist “God save the King” or the revolutionary “Ça ira”, the British government was keen to not allow too many illegitimate theatres to exist – this was the case of the Royalty Theatre in Tower Hamlets and the reason for its suppression. Because theatre censorship allowed no direct attacks upon the *ancien régime*, the crowds frequenting the illegitimate theatres were treated to plays that dealt with rebellions and their heroes in other times and countries: Robin Hood, Wilhelm Tell, Tommaso Aniello Masaniello.¹¹⁸ The political dimension of theatre types and theatre going became apparent in the visit of the rebellious Whig-aligned Queen Caroline, the discarded consort of King George IV, to the Royal Coburg Theatre in 1820, an illegitimate theatre demonstratively built and named with the subscription of their equally rebellious Whig-aligned daughter Princess Charlotte and her husband Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld.¹¹⁹ Equally, when the Royalty Theatre in lower-class East London burned down in 1826, it was demonstratively rebuilt and renamed the Royal Brunswick, in memory of Queen Caroline (of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel), whose heart King George IV had broken and whose death in 1821 had caused mass mourning and even revolt.¹²⁰ The whole political and critical establishment of Royalists and Neoclassicist, Thomas Holcroft complained in the preface to one of his plays, was inimical to contemporary popular drama “as the means of gaining admission among the lower class increase”:

And it is piteous, most piteous, that, not only the learned, but, the political world should treat the stage with neglect; nay, with contempt [...] ¹²¹

The Lord Chamberlain’s Examiners of Plays, John Larpent (1788 – 1824) and his successor George Colman the Younger (1824 – 1836), as well as local magistrates without the jurisdiction of London, were expected to counteract the proliferation of popular theatrical culture in their licensing practice.¹²² Soldiers and sailors were inveterate playgoers, lower-class and working-class playgoers

117 David Worrall, *Theatric Revolution*, 70. The wording recalls the Latin “*misera plebs et profanum vulgus*”.

118 Frederick Burwick, *Masaniello on the London Stage*, in: Frederick Burwick – Paul Douglass (eds.), *Dante and Italy in British Romanticism*, New York NY and Basingstoke 2011, 161 – 182.

119 *Ibid.* 196 – 217.

120 Phyllis Hartnoll (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to the Theatre*, Oxford 1951, 1967, 815.

121 Holcroft, *Seduction*, Preface, 1787, in: *Novels and Selected Plays*, ed. W.M. Verhoeven et al., Pickering Masters, London 2007, V. 69.

122 Worrall, *Theatric Revolution*, 69 – 102.

strongly favoured burletta and melodrama, genres not built upon the Classical Tradition and not representing the interest of the *ancien régime*. High-culture opposition against melodrama, including the popular melodramatic villains of the Newgate novels of William Harrison Ainsworth, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and Charles Dickens, lasted well into the Victorian Period and exhibited the anxieties of the elite about the power of popular culture at the dawn of the modern age.¹²³

Popular melodrama reveals the wide-spread anxieties held by the masses, their loss of orientation in an age of rising doubt. The increasing popularity of the melodrama and its counterpart, the romance (as opposed to the novel), is due to the fact that, like Neogothic architecture, it invented a better past. Melodramas, such as Lewis's *Castle Spectre* (1797), provided spectators and readers with faith and metaphysical security; linear plots with prophecies and flashbacks suggesting a pre-established order of the world; highly emotional occurrences and scenes such as those on a deathbed, fratricide, madness for stricken consciences, prayers with uplifted hands, curses, and anagnorises; the restoration of all order temporarily disturbed by villains disrupting sanctified patrimonial linearity; contrastive characterizations of black villains and white heroes set in contrastive semanticized spaces and arranged in fixed *tableaux vivants*; the contrite conversions or dramatic *similia similibus* deaths of those villains; purposeful suffering ending in the triumph of virtue, law, and order; improbable sensational events including the unexplained or explained supernatural and suggesting divine providential interference rather than contingencies; and stock characters and plots with little individualization or psychology. There were no ambiguities or split sympathies, no doubts about a clear world order and world aim, and there was no religious scepticism or biblical criticism. Light would appear and be victorious in the deepest darkness, as in the Bible and in Bulwer-Lytton's romance *Night and Morning* (1841).¹²⁴ This was what the masses wanted to see and read, and this elicited the scorn of the intellectuals as it contradicted the Neoclassical laws of probability and decorum, even when popular Victorian melodrama rid itself of the revolutionary implications of popular Gothic melodrama.

Gothic drama, like the thriving Gothic novel and Neogothic architecture, also invented a better past of faith and ultimate security, just as British and French antiquarian book collectors of the Romantic Period were hunting for medieval manuscripts and incunabula, multiplying their market prices.¹²⁵ From its beginning in the mid eighteenth century, however, the Gothic had a revolutionary

123 Juliet John, *Dickens's Villains: Melodrama, Character, Popular Culture*, Oxford 2001, 123.

124 See Walter Göbel, *Edward Bulwer-Lytton*, 122–134.

125 Kristian Jensen, *Revolution and the Antiquarian Book: Reshaping the Past, 1780–1815*, Cambridge 2011, *passim*.

undercurrent that exposed it to the aggression and satire of Romantic Period Tories, both in architecture and literature. Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill had rebelled against his father, the Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole. George Soane's Gothic novel *The Eve of San Marco* (1812), which features a tyrannical father, had caused his father, the famous Neoclassical architect Sir John Soane, to build the Monk's Parlour in his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, as a parody of Neogothic mansions.¹²⁶ William Beckford's Fonthill Abbey cultivated the spirit of moral revolution and housed black masses. And, in the wake of Romanticism's exploration of the unconscious, the Gothic novel and drama revealed man's inclination to crime and cruelty hidden underneath a surface of respectability. Gothic drama and Victorian melodrama parted company, but non-elitist Victorian theatres continued to stage Gothic dramas and to keep the spectators aware of its age's moral hypocrisy, double standards, and continuous threats by man's antithetically-mixed nature of virtue and vice, to the dismay of upper-class Tory and Neoclassical critics.

The popular illegitimate theatres of the Romantic Period, which staged Gothic melodramas, were leased by performers or built by popular subscription rather than relying on aristocratic Maecenases. This democratization of culture rendered them suspicious to the crown and aristocracy, which wanted to maintain the Restoration monopoly of *Hoftheater* together with their patronage of the arts and their other traditional prerogatives. Furthermore, the illegitimate theatres' specialization in scurrilous genres of foreign growth, melodrama and pantomime, and their political engagement made them increasingly vulnerable to reproaches of high treason. In short, the illegitimate theatres changed the character of the theatrical city. There were also popular forms of drama and dramatic venues even below the illegitimate theatres, penny gaffs, giving clandestine performances to poor and illiterate audiences ranging from several hundred to a thousand people.¹²⁷ This multiplication of the medium theatre and theatricalized spaces paralleled the multiplication of the medium print, and thus attacks on popular mass production and mass consumption of literature extended to the theatre. The popularity and economic success of the illegitimate London theatre scene including the Sadler's Wells Theatre of 1753, the Royalty Theatre of 1783 in East London's docklands, Philip Astley's Amphitheatre of 1770 and his former equestrian Charles Hughes's Royal Circus of 1782 (two rival London circuses for horsemanship and drama, the latter rebuilt and renamed the Surrey Theatre in 1806), Charles Dibdin's experimental one-man Sans Souci

126 Nicole Reynolds, *Building Romanticism: Literature and Architecture in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Ann Arbor MI 2010.

127 Julie Carlson, *Theatre, Performance and Urban Spectacle*, in: *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. James Chandler, 502–503.

Theatre of 1791, the Sans Pareil Theatre of 1806 renamed the Adelphi Theatre in 1819, the Olympic Theatre of 1805, the Royal Coburg Theatre of 1818 later called the Old Vic, the Minor Theatre (visited by Keats in 1818), the Lyceum later named the English Opera House of 1794 (hosting Madame Tussaud's waxworks for the first time as well as sensational pre-cinematic phantasmagoria shows), Astley's Amphitheatre of 1780 (formerly a canvas-covered horseshow arena) and many others were one reason behind *Blackwood's* ferocious attacks on the "Cockney School". Even the two legitimate theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, had to please their mixed audience by adding some lighter fare to the mainpiece or five-act play, a short vulgar farce or musical entertainment. Thus, Inchbald's *Lovers' Vows*, her famous adaptation of Kotzebue's *Das Kind der Liebe*, was followed by Charles Smith's *A Day at Rome* (Covent Garden 1798), and Baillie's *De Monfort* by John Cartwright Cross's one-act musical drama *The Purse* (Drury Lane 1800).¹²⁸ In 1785, Robert Burns's friend Francis Grose published *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, in contradistinction to Samuel Johnson's Neoclassically normative *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), in which he recorded the slang and cant of Wapping and Newgate because it was finding its "way into our political and theatrical compositions".¹²⁹ This freedom of speech as of thought which "gives a force and poignancy to the expressions of our common people", Grose argued, was a sign of a free country and "not to be found under arbitrary governments", which suppressed such a conspiracy against their cultural norms.¹³⁰ And the theatre was the first respectable venue in Britain where popular culture made itself felt and began its victory. In 1809, George Andrewes published his *Dictionary of the Slang and Cant Languages*, a work that heavily influenced Pierce Egan's popular one-shilling monthly *Life in London* (1821–1828) and its various stage versions for the illegitimate Olympic, Adelphi, and Astley's written by Moncrieff, Charles Dibdin and Egan himself that sparked off the *Tom and Jerry* craze. The journal's instalments were illustrated by the brothers Isaac Robert and George Cruikshank, later illustrator of the popular culture novelist Charles Dickens, famous for his unmerciful satires at classical learning. The numerous imitations of Egan's *Life in London* included the anonymous *Real Life in London* (1821) and *Life in Paris* (1821). Lower class London types and rogues with their vulgar Cockney and vulgar manners began to become the favourites of literature and the stage, not yet domesticated by moralizing comments. In 1823, Egan produced a new edition of Grose's old Dictionary, called "Egan's Grose", enriched

128 Paul Baines et al. (eds.), *Five Romantic Plays 1768–1821*, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford 2000, XXXIV–XXXV.

129 Grose, *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, Preface, London 1785, II.

130 *Ibid.* I.

by Regency sporting slang now threatening to be made socially acceptable. The rise of popular culture on all levels was a major factor in the atmosphere of instability which characterized Regency London.¹³¹ In the preface to his *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785), which claimed equality of rank with cultivated speech in the first word of its title, Grose had already fashioned himself as the lexicographer of an egalitarian reform of language:

The many vulgar allusions and cant expressions that so frequently occur in our common conversation and periodical publications, make a work of this kind extremely useful, if not absolutely necessary [...] ¹³²

Under this broad threat, *Blackwood's* insisted on the old distinction between elitist theatres for cultivated tastes and popular theatres catering to the illiterate tastes of the vulgar with slang, cant, sensational illusion shows, and cheap melodramas and low pantomimes and vulgar burlettas with vulgar Cockney songs often set in the London underworld.¹³³ But things had changed; theatres had approached coffeehouses in their democratic mixture of high and low as well as in their political and aesthetic debates.¹³⁴ London appeared as a new-type of "cosmopolis", a melting plot of ranks and professions, a demi-monde of political refugees and egalitarian freemasons and Radical charlatans of the type of Philippe Jacques de Louthembourg and Count Cagliostro, where legitimate and illegitimate merged, and where elitist dramatists and actors such as Richard Brinsley Sheridan and John Philip Kemble thrived on the same indiscriminate crowd as the Sadler's Wells pantomime and clown Joseph Grimaldi.¹³⁵ Grimaldi's renown was such that the legitimate theatres invited him and his non-classical plays to fill their auditoriums, and one of his greatest triumphs, as villain and clown successively, was in *Harlequin and Mother Goose* (Covent Garden 1806) by the actor and playwright Charles Dibdin's son Thomas, a play whose very title signalled the replacement of old literary culture by modern popular entertainment.¹³⁶ To the dismay of old-school Neoclassicists like William Gifford and Thomas James Mathias, who foamed and jibed at such "puerilities", there arose a plebeian public sphere of drama as part of popular culture, and even subculture, a "mob rule" quite separate from and opposed to high or polite culture.¹³⁷ Only

131 Simon During, Regency London, in: *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. James Chandler, 335 – 354.

132 Grose, *ibid.* II.

133 David Worrall, *The Politics of Romantic Theatricality 1787 – 1832*, Basingstoke 2007, 135 – 165.

134 *Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age*, 490.

135 See the cartoon entitled *The Monster Melodrama* (1807), reproduced in Moody, 56.

136 Andrew McConnell Stott, *The Pantomime Life of Joseph Grimaldi*, Edinburgh 2009, 157 – 184.

137 Worrall, *The Politics of Romantic Theatricality*, 7, 206.

three years after the outbreak of the French Revolution, Richard Tickell's prologue to Joseph Richardson's *The Fugitive* (1792) compared the old time, when serious critics with an old-school classical education sat in the pit, to the new time, when the pit, like the galleries and boxes, was held by "chequer'd crowds" and their "mingled tastes":

Not as of old, when, train'd to frown and fret,
In murky state the surly synod met.
Vain of half-learning and of foreign rules,
Vamp'd from the jargon of the antient schools.¹³⁸

In John Galt's serialized epistolary novel *The Ayrshire Legatees* (1820), Andrew Pringle has reason to assume that his conservative correspondent, the Reverend Charles Snodgrass, dislikes Pringle's fondness for sights and shows as potentially revolutionary:

I have all my life been strangely susceptible of pleasing impressions from public spectacles where great crowds are assembled. This, perhaps you will say, is but another way of confessing that, like the common vulgar, I am fond of sights and shows.¹³⁹

There was a politically and aesthetically suspicious complicity between noisy audiences and noisy performances at a time when the Royal Coburg Theatre's backstage had a gigantic mirror that reflected the audience. English Romantic Period drama was successful only when it contained loudly applauded sensational stage effects that the Neoclassical rule of decorum forbade. Pierce Egan saw theatres on a level with bare-knuckle boxing, which was in fact performed on stage, along with scenes of fire-swallowing and sensational illusions, which, to Neoclassical eyes, fitted the market place rather than the theatre. Coleridge's tragedy *Remorse*, a new version of his rejected *Osorio* (MS Nether Stowey 1797), for instance, was successfully staged at Drury Lane in 1813. It was his only play to yield him any monetary profit, due to spectacularly staged scenes of illusion such as the one in the third act, in which Alvar, disguised as a Moorish sorcerer, causes smouldering incense to blaze with a bright phosphorous flash illuminating his painting, hung above an altar, of his attempted assassination by his villainous younger brother Ordonio, the *Osorio* of the first version. Like the play in the play in *Hamlet*, the painting in *Remorse* is intended to cathartically bring about the repentance and detection of a murderer. Thomas Barnes pinpointed this scene as Coleridge's debt to German drama and concession to "a mixed multitude".¹⁴⁰ It was the sort of stage trickery in a theatre that had been extended

138 Quoted from: *The Revels History of Drama in English*, VI. 6.

139 [Galt] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 7 (August 1820), 468.

140 [Barnes] in: *Examiner*, 266 (31 January 1813), in: Coleridge: *The Critical Heritage*, I. 122.

several times that many in the audience paid their money to see.¹⁴¹ Coleridge's commentary on the stage version of *Remorse*, in which he expressed his joy over actors and mechanics clustering round a recital during a rehearsal in the green room, is telling. It shows that, as a true Romantic, he would have preferred to have the play performed to a mixed audience, even a small one in a small theatre where his poetry could be heard and appreciated.¹⁴² In a prologue that he wrote for the stage version, Coleridge's friend Charles Lamb defended this concession to the popular against Neoclassical critics, arguing that Shakespeare and Garrick themselves would have been glad to stage plays in such modern theatres. Due to traditionalist critiques in various periodicals, which found this provocative prologue "abominable", it was later withdrawn:¹⁴³

THERE are, I am told, who sharply criticize
 Our modern theatres' unwieldy size.
 [...]
 Those scenic helps, denied to Shakespeare's page,
 Our Author owes to a more liberal age.
 Nor pomp nor circumstance are wanting here;
 [...]¹⁴⁴

Nevertheless, traditionalists upheld the old standards, distinguishing between true quality literature, which stood the test of criticism by the old rules, and mere mass-produced popular entertainment, which mixed genres as much as its audience was mixed. The melodrama has been described as a trans-European border-crossing genre, moving between comedy and tragedy, legitimate and illegitimate theatre, revolutionary gestures spreading Romantic or Radical ideologies and reactionary closures affirming Hegel's "ordinary morality".¹⁴⁵ Thus, it violated both Tory and Neoclassical ideals of educated Augustan Britishness. Standing in the tradition of Samuel Johnson, the *Critical Review* thus questioned the literary merit of the melodrama that first introduced the French term "mélodrame", though not the genre itself, into English. This was Thomas Holcroft's *A Tale of Mystery* (1802), an adaptation of Guilbert de Pixérécourt's *Cœlina ou l'enfant du mystère* (1801), produced at Covent Garden Theatre with enormous success:

141 Frederick Burwick, *Illusion and the Drama*, University Park PA 1991, 267–268.

142 Coleridge, *Collected Works*, III. II. 110–111. Quoted in: Reeve Parker, *Romantic Tragedies: The Dark Employments of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley*, Cambridge 2011, 145.

143 Coleridge, *Collected Works*, III. II. 1051–1052.

144 Charles Lamb, Prologue to Coleridge, *Remorse*, in: Coleridge, *Collected Works*, III. II. 1070–1072.

145 Jeffrey N. Cox, *British Romantic Drama in a European Context*, in: *British and European Romanticisms*, ed. Christoph Bode – Sebastian Domsch, Trier 2007, 125.

It will not be expected, it cannot indeed be expected by the author [Holcroft] himself, that this drama should receive much commendation when judged before a literary tribunal [...] As a mixture of farce and pantomime, it is admirably calculated for amusement during representation; but in the closet, if it be 'weighed in the balance, it will be found wanting.'¹⁴⁶

Pixerécourt ended his funny tragic melodrama with a merry song followed by a mute *tableau vivant* converted into a *tableau grotesque*.¹⁴⁷ Holcroft introduced a horrid scene of murderous slander and intrigue by a dance "of the gay, comic, and grotesque kind, with droll attitudes, gesticulations, and bounds", before freezing his scene into a similar mute *tableau grotesque* "forming a picture".¹⁴⁸ In such *tableaux vivants* typical of pantomime and melodrama, the serious political theme of muteness was simultaneously used for comic effects. And James Robinson Planché, in his "romantic melodrama" *The Vampire* (Lyceum Theatre 1820) based on motifs from John Polidori's Gothic tale *The Vampire* (MS 1816, 1819) as adapted to the French stage by the Romantic poet Charles Nodier, mixed broad comedy and merry songs into a ridiculously wild and improbable plot of bloodshed, graves, lust, vengeance, and debated filial and religious duty. A father's perversely elicited oath enjoining him not to reveal the identity of the vampire Lord Ruthven, who is about to marry and kill his daughter, resumes the criticism of censorship intended to conceal the crimes of a blood-sucking aristocracy. Planché also ended his popular play with a fixed and mute "general picture" at the fall of the curtain.¹⁴⁹

Hazlitt, who liked to watch such blood-dripping low-culture melodramas with their funny pranks and antics, although he was aware of their poor literary quality, did so for reasons of revolutionary sympathy with the populace. Leigh Hunt, a theatre critic in sympathy with the populace yet with a primary focus on quality, poured scorn on what he called "the new burlesque melodrama" by Thomas Dibdin in particular; not for their authors' alleged ignorance of the Classical Tradition, however, but for their literary incompetence in general (especially their incompetence in the mock-heroic genre). He interpreted the audience's laughter as scorn, although the laughter was rather a reaction consciously elicited by the melodrama's mixture of exaggerated horror and broad farce.¹⁵⁰ A "romantic" melodrama or *Singoper* could be publicly and successfully advertised as "rum-antic".

In a way, the conflict of these rival traditions, elitist and popular, duplicated

146 Critical Review, 36 (December 1802), 477.

147 Pixerécourt, *Coelina ou l'enfant du mystère*, 1800, ed. Norma Perry, Exeter 1972, 77.

148 Holcroft, *A Tale of Mystery*, in: *Novels and Selected Plays*, ed. W.M. Verhoeven, London 2007, V. 413.

149 J.R. Planché, *Plays*, ed. Donald Roy, Cambridge 1986, 68.

150 [Leigh Hunt] in: *Examiner*, 15 (10 April 1808), 234–235.

the conflict of the rival traditions of the theatres in the age of Shakespeare.¹⁵¹ Equestrian circuses such as Astley's and the Royal Circus, converted into theatres, reanimated the animal-baiting rings in Shakespeare's Southwark such as the amphitheatre Bear Garden Playhouse close to the Rose and Globe. Furthermore, the behaviour of actors and spectators was much the same in Elizabethan as in Romantic theatres. The popular audience was undisciplined – eating food, consuming alcohol, loudly commenting or interfering with the action on the stage, and shedding tears or roaring with laughter in view of sentimental or Gothic scenes. Crime, horror, bloodshed, and tragedy could be alternately great thrill or great fun. A recent study of the drama of the Romantic Period focusses on the bifurcation of Romantic theatre histrionics, when actors alternately identified themselves with and jumped out of their roles, with the full approbation of their audiences.¹⁵² In his parodic satire *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (MS ca 1607), Francis Beaumont had ridiculed such non-classical popular response as the childish behaviour of amphitheatre playgoers, making his point in favour of the more elitist and erudite audiences of hall theatres. Ralph's parents, the low-class grocer citizens, watch their son's mock-heroic performance with constant changes of participation in and distance from the action on the stage, typical of children in a puppet show rather than of classically educated adults.

The enormous success of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in Michael Novosielski's generously and aristocratically rebuilt King's (originally Vanbrugh's Queen's) Theatre, Haymarket, in 1817, was not least due to the conflict it produced between aristocratic Mozartians and Cockney Mozartians. Italy, Italian, and the incipient Risorgimento had been becoming increasingly popular with English republicans, as the Della Cruscan fashion had shown. Mozart's Radical sympathies, as visible from his portraits of corrupt aristocrats and their lovable servants, and his non-classical mixture of tragedy and comedy in his "opera giocosa", caused an overflow of middle- and lower-class spectators in the pit. They despised and hooted Don Giovanni, the typical reckless aristocrat of Radical propaganda, and applauded the low characters, Don Giovanni's victims: Leporello, Masetto, Zerlina.¹⁵³ As later in Victor Hugo's censored drama *Le roi s'amuse* (1832) and its musical version by another Romantic rebel, Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto* (1851), the low characters are also superior in intelligence and inventiveness, implicitly questioning the justification of the feudal distinction between high and low, privileged mediocrity and unprivileged brilliance. In

151 Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions*, New York NY 1952, passim.

152 Burwick, *Romantic Drama*, passim.

153 Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *Cockney Mozart: The Hunt Circle, the King's Theatre, and Don Giovanni*, in: *Studies in Romanticism*, 44 (2005), 367–397.

1817, the King's Theatre thus presented a spectacle of class chaos and intermingling that shocked the box subscribers.¹⁵⁴ The plot and the aesthetic content of Mozart's operas were well understood to support the longed-for democratic order.¹⁵⁵ All this happened much to the dismay of the Tories at the time when John Nash added Greek colonnades to the building, signalling exclusion of the crowd as well as the maintenance of the elitist Classical Tradition. In the wake of this contentious theatrical success in a patent theatre, low Don Giovanni burlettas were acted in the non-patent theatres. This was when Byron started writing his comic popular epic *Don Juan*, a satire directed against the Classical Tradition and Neoclassical rules and models, later printed in popular chapbook editions. To conservative eyes, *Tom and Jerry* burlettas and *Don Giovanni* burlettas, noisily acted to the acclaim of reeking masses, depraved the taste hitherto dominated by the social elites with their education in the Greek and Roman classics. After 1820, the market value of drama fell to almost nothing, so that playwrights could no longer live on their plays unless they had a regular position with a theatre.¹⁵⁶ When, upon the death of King George III in 1820, the patent theatres were closed for mourning, Hazlitt felt that his visit to the Coburg and the Adelphi was a kind of holiday, aware of the fact that his age had begun classifying culture as high or low, and that cultural choice was a matter of hot debate in which he took part.¹⁵⁷

It was not historically correct, but polemically effective retrospectively to associate Robert Merry and the Della Cruscan with that low and subversive popular stage of the sprouting burletta houses, which Hazlitt enjoyed and defended against the Neoclassicist "Janus" in *The London Magazine* of June 1820. After all, Merry's verse tragedy *Lorenzo* (1791) had enjoyed considerable success in Covent Garden, but was scathingly reviewed for its author's notorious Radical persuasions rather than any literary demerits, whereas his popular comic opera *The Magician No Conjuror* (1792) had failed in the same theatre.

Over a decade before the Della Cruscan and decades before Hazlitt, popular culture had already asserted its right by challenging the cultural hegemony of the Classical Tradition. The Society of Artists split into a polite-culture group, which joined the Royal Academy in its founding year 1768, and a popular-culture group inclined towards Wilkes and reform, which opened an exhibition hall in the Strand in 1772, the Lyceum. It exhibited masses of paintings, prints, circus shows, curiosities and magic, Madame Tussaud's waxworks, and other popular entertainments, before becoming one of London's illegitimate theatres, gas-lit in

154 Ibid. 368.

155 Ibid. 384.

156 *The Revels History of Drama in English*, VI. 50.

157 Jane Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London*, 174 – 177.

1817, staging Planché's *Vampyre* (1820) and his collaborator Carl Maria von Weber's popular Romantic opera *Der Freischütz* (1824) with flashy stage effects and enormous financial success. In fact, Planché, born in 1796 and brought up without a classical education, became Britain's most prolific author (and musical composer) of illegitimate dramatic genres including melodrama, pantomime, extravaganza or sumptuous *variété*, burletta, farce, and comedy. On the Lyceum's opening in 1772, an operatic ode in a strange non-classical mixture of styles was performed by soloists and a chorus, with the final chorus praising modern popular art as challenging the elitist high culture of Athens and Rome. The Lyceum's Wilkesite and later Radical bias, along with the ode's religious vocabulary, gave this challenge a special edge. It defended the artists against the imputation of polluting the classical taste by popular culture, asserting the latter's artistic quality rivalling that of the Classical Tradition:

CHORUS

Behold! The Arts around us bloom,
And this Muse-devoted Dome
Rivals the works of Athens, and of Rome!¹⁵⁸

Pantomime in ballad opera, melodrama, and burletta could contain a much more forceful appeal to the emotions than texts spoken or sung, as was apparent from the abolitionist pantomimes *Harlequin Mungo* (Royalty Theatre 1787) and *Furibond* (Drury Lane Theatre 1807). In 1817, Leigh Hunt, a frequenter and critic of theatrical performances, observed that pantomime was the stage genre with the broadest appeal to audiences that were tired of classical tragedy and comedy, and the best medium of dramatic satire.¹⁵⁹ Together with melodrama, long not taken seriously by Romantic Period scholarship, pantomime had an enormous revolutionary potential in raising sympathy with the weak and oppressed.¹⁶⁰ Patent theatres, too, staged long-running pantomimes and melodramas for profit, and actors crossed between the playhouses, regardless of Neoclassical critical strictures. After the Old Price riots of 1809, Covent Garden staged equestrian dramatic shows with Astley's horses as well as dramatic dog shows, popular melodramas such as *Blue-Beard* and *The Caravan*.¹⁶¹ The numerous legal complaints that patent theatres brought against non-patent theatres bear witness to the fact that serious, high-culture, spoken drama was on the economic

158 Quoted and contextualized in Simon During, "The Temple Lives": The Lyceum and Romantic Show Business, in: *Romantic Metropolis*, ed. James Chandler – Kevin Gilmartin, Cambridge 2005, 213.

159 [Leigh Hunt] in: *Examiner*, 474 (26 January 1817), in: *Selected Writings*, II. 84 – 86.

160 M. Heys – A. Nikolopoulou (eds.), *Melodrama: The Cultural Emergence of a Genre*, New York NY 1996, *passim*.

161 *The Revels History of Drama in English*, VI. 31 – 32.

decline, often running for only a few nights, and that the craze was firmly for popular plays. Thus, traditionalist opposition to the illegitimate theatre of the early nineteenth century merely took up and continued the arguments advanced in satires against late eighteenth-century Della Cruscan drama.

With reference to the foundations of the feudal state, conservatives saw the damage that vulgar low-class demands caused to good aesthetic taste, exacerbated by the Jacobin tendencies of many plays. The mixture of classical genres, paraded on the play bills of the illegitimate theatres, mirrored the critique of the old *Ständestaat*, a message well understood by Tory reviewers.¹⁶² Melodrama in particular mixed all genres and modes and classes: song, opera, violence, romance, realism, sentiment, low comedy, patriotism, rebellion, and domesticity. Looking back two or three decades, Tory reviewers interpreted this merging of genres as a Radical link between such diverse plays as William Bates's pantomimes, Thomas Holcroft's melodramas, Robert Merry's spoken political dramas, and the spoken revolutionary dramas of Kotzebue, Schiller, and the young Goethe. Apart from the Tory suggestion of a lack of English patriotism and desertion to the literature of another country,¹⁶³ Gifford's standard argument was, of course, that the popularity of such non-classical plays aroused the riotous and ignorant masses, the agents of the French Revolution. Among these, Gifford singled out women for special scorn whom he denounced as often drunk, easily moved to tears, stupidly applauding popular nonsense "between a hiccup and a sigh",¹⁶⁴ supported by hired *claqueurs*. By contrast, Gifford demanded loyalty to the crown and church, classical education, truth to nature and nature dressed to advantage by invisible art (in the sense of Pope) as well as observance of the rules of reason. These were, in the first place, lucidity, probability, and the *règle des trois unités* as a special rule for Neoclassical drama:

JUDGES of truth and sense, yet more demand
That art to nature lend a helping hand!
That fables well devised, be simply told,
Correct if new, yet probable if old.¹⁶⁵

Again, the first criterion of excellence is reason, common sense, and the first criterion of deformity of reason is nonsense, vanity, vacuity, mere rhetorical froth, declamatory or musical noise. The former Gifford attributed to the social and cultural elite, the latter to the ignorant multitude. The fancy of readers and

162 Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London*, 49.

163 As in the Anti-Jacobin's opposition to the novels of Ann Radcliffe, whose sensibility was stigmatized as "rather German than English"; see Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation in the 1790s*, Cambridge 2000, 19.

164 Gifford, *The Maeviad*, in: *British Satire 1785 – 1840*, IV, 35.

165 *Ibid.* lines 45 – 48, IV, 38.

playgoers must not be amused by confounding the senses, as he saw in Robert Merry's tragedy *Lorenzo* (1791), the abortion or deformed child born of the brain of an impotent poet not kissed by the Muse:

Then let your style be brief, your meaning clear,
Nor like LORENZO, tire the labouring ear
With a wild waste of words; sound without sense,
And all the florid glare of impotence.¹⁶⁶

A return to classical models is also recommended for comedy, where the comic catharsis must be brought about by rational judgment and punishment of follies and vices: merciless exposure to ridicule, not by positive sentimental paragons of virtue. Gifford's appeal to the Neoclassical comic dramatists of the "old school", to the spirit of the deceased John Burgoyne and of the still living Richard Brinsley Sheridan, to revive Latin Terence and Greek Menander with their "laughing comedies" is based on reason and the rules set down by Horace. And, as usual, the political overtone is not missing, in Gifford's admonition to the Whig Sheridan not to chase for political power instead of cultivating literary traditionalism:

Burgoyne, perhaps, unchill'd by creeping age,
May yet arise, and vindicate the stage;
The reign of nature and of sense restore,
And be – whatever Terence was before.
And you, too, whole Menander! Who combine,
With his pure language, and his flowing line,
The soul of Comedy; may steal an hour
From the fond chace of still-escaping power,
The poet and the sage again unite,
And sweetly blend instruction with delight.¹⁶⁷

Gifford's ally George Daniel of Islington struck the same chord in his *Modern Dunciad* (1814), indicting the British love of German plays as traitorous, unpatriotic, and sickly, and interpreting modern dramatic mass production for the multitude with their lack of Augustan wit and humour as fermenting revolt in the ignorant, rude, and riotous populace. The noisy farces of Charles Dibdin, John Poole, and John Hamilton Reynolds appear as unworthy of the Classical Tradition as the fashionable sentimental comedies of Richard Cumberland, which Goldsmith had reviled as "bastard" plays:

166 Ibid. lines 73 – 76, IV. 39 – 40.

167 Ibid. lines 233 – 42, IV. 54.

Would wit and humour please the swinish crowd,
While DIBDIN, POOLE, and REYNOLDS croak so loud?¹⁶⁸

Byron, again, echoed Gifford's and Daniel's criticism of non-classical drama in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809). Like them, he felt a need to have recourse to the Tory argument of a lack of English nationalism and thus appealed to the still living English successors of David Garrick in comedy and Thomas Otway in tragedy to reform "the degradation of our vaunted stage":

Abjure the mummery of German schools,
Leave new Pizarros to translating fools;
Give as thy last memorial to the age,
One classic drama, and reform the stage.¹⁶⁹

George Colman the Younger, Richard Cumberland, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan (the adaptor of Kotzebue's *Pizarro* for popular stage success) are called upon not to follow the dictates of the market and the profit of fashion, to shun sentimental comedies and farces that had blunted the comic playwrights' wit of diction and replaced laughter by tears or low buffoonery. This recommendation also applied to sentimental tragedies in the wake of fashionable German *Sturm und Drang* plays, which had replaced classical with exotic heroes, probability by spectres, sleeping beauties, and wild sensationalism. The causal diagnosis of the Romantic degeneration of the Neoclassical stage is much the same as with other genres. Corrupt and incompetent critics, whose reviews no longer control and guarantee literary quality, allow dramatists to cater to the taste of the vulgar, so that the theatre has become trite and boring – even the vulgar must keep themselves awake by applauding:

[...] poor John Bull, bewildered with the scene
Stares, wondering what the devil it can mean;
But as some hands applaud, a venal few!
Rather than sleep, why John applauds it too.¹⁷⁰

This was only two years after the critic Lady Anne Hamilton had lambasted the Whig Sheridan as a dramatist of short-lived fame, because he had written a "maudlin farce, mere vehicle for song" and "a German tragedy to please the mob":

168 Daniel, *The Modern Dunciad*, London 1814, 75.

169 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1809, lines 582–585, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, I. 247. The reference is to August von Kotzebue's drama *Die Spanier in Peru* (1796), translated for the English stage under the title *Pizarro*. Gifford had already attacked it in *The Maeviad* and reprimanded R.B. Sheridan as the translator. Also cf. Daniel, *The Modern Dunciad*, 1814, 87–88.

170 *Ibid.* lines 604–607, I. 248.

Doom'd after years misspent to make a show,
And catch the multitude however low.¹⁷¹

When the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, burned down in 1809, was rebuilt and reopened in 1812, Byron won the public competition for the inaugural address. This led to the Romantic Period's most successful collection of parodies, *Rejected Addresses* (1812), by the brothers James and Horace Smith. It contained twenty-one parodied addresses in the styles of poets both dead and living, including Byron, who enjoyed the parody, while Charles Lamb detested it for being sneering. The Smith brothers' "malicious pleasantry", as they called it in their "Preface", satirized the theatre's previous adoption of Romantic melodramas and popular shows, which had estranged Kemble and Mrs Siddons. The volume of parodies was intended to counteract a continuation of this tendency, to bring the theatre back to a serious level. In the elegiac style and stanza of the two first cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), just published, the speaker of "Cui Bono?", educated in the Classical Tradition, parades his world-weariness by lamenting the reproduction of life's vanity and tragedy in the theatre, the evanescence of dramatic catharsis, and the shortness of comic relief in popular stage trickery. With a dig at Byron's frequent chameleon-like changes of standpoint, the parody's erratic, unreliable, and ennui-plagued speaker even depreciates the serious and noble Classical Tradition for national insularity and popular appeal to the Smithfield muses and the rabble of Bartholomew Fair, "pacing Grub-street on an jaded hack":¹⁷²

Knock down the muses, wit and sense destroy,
Clear our new stage from reason's dull alloy,
Charm hobbling age, and tickle capering youth,
With cleaver, marrow bone, and Tonbridge toy;
While, vibrating in unbelieving tooth,
Harps twang in Drury's walls, and make her boards a booth.
[...]
Hence, pedant Nature! with thy Grecian rules,
Centaur (not fabulous) those rules efface,
Back, sister muses, to your native schools.¹⁷³

Horace Smith confessed his Romantic view and admiration of ancient Greece when he joined Leigh Hunt's circle in Hampstead and wrote a serious Romantic drama in his subversive pastoral *Amarynthus* (1821), unleashing the genre's

171 [Hamilton], *The Epics of the Ton*, 211.

172 James Smith – Horace Smith, *Rejected Addresses, or, The New Theatrum Poetarum, Cui Bono?*, 1812, 9. 4, in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, II. 81.

173 *Ibid.* 7. 4–9 and 11. 1–3.

latent eroticism by elevating sexual love over chaste restraint.¹⁷⁴ Like the Shelleys, he wanted to serve liberty, the people, and break the Neoclassical rules of drama without debasing himself to popular Della Cruscanism. His standard of quality was *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), not Merry's *The Magician No Conjuror* (1792) or Holcroft's *A Tale of Mystery* (1802).

Whether referring to fashionable non-classical poetry or to fashionable non-classical drama written by and for the masses, "Della Crusca" soon became a short-lived synonym for bad, untaught, easy, and popular taste in all Romantic literary genres. In 1801, a Tory reviewer found Godwin's Gothic historical novel *St Leon* (1799) "a pretty imitation of the figurative language so much admired by the Monthly Reviewers", with reference to the florid Della Cruscan style.¹⁷⁵ But, two decades later, by the time Horace Smith and the Shelleys wrote their Romantic plays, the abusive term was falling into oblivion like the generally disparaged movement itself. Neither Neoclassicists nor Romantics would stand up in its defence. Nevertheless, Della Cruscanism and the popular illegitimate theatre culture were harbingers of what a magisterial study has identified as the chief symptom of the Modern, "The Coming of the *Demos*", involving the challenge of the elitist Classical Tradition's claim to cultural hegemony by popular culture, mass media, mass literacy, modern democracy, modern languages, science, and technology.¹⁷⁶ And, in an essay of 1830, the Whig historian and literary critic Thomas Babington Macaulay recognized Merry as the forerunner of the reformers of English poetry from "the monotony of the correct school".¹⁷⁷

174 Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School*, 132–139.

175 *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 7 (1801), 436.

176 Paul Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern*, 904–1000.

177 Macaulay, *Literary and Historical Essay Contributed to the Edinburgh Review*, London 1843, 1932, 176. See Corinna Russell's article in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

IV. Lord Byron in Defence of the Classical Tradition

In the selective perspective of the Augustans as well as of the Romantic Disillusionists, Plato stood apart from what they understood to be the enlightened and realist nature of the Classical Tradition. This view was yet to shape the anti-Romantic criticism of T.S. Eliot, when he branded Romanticism (including the new Romanticism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century) as chaotic and maintained that “the classicist, or adult mind, is thoroughly realist, without illusions, without day-dreams, without hope, without bitterness, and with an abundant resignation”.¹ Plato bore the stigma of visionary derangement and crazed escapism from worldly realities and was the father of all Positive Romantic thought, including the belief in a return of this fallen and fragmented world to its origin, the holistic and paradisiacal world beyond. As late as 1833 and in the new Toryist *Fraser’s Magazine*, William Maginn still jeered at Plato, Coleridge, Hazlitt, and the “romantic school of poetry”:

‘The noticeable man [Coleridge] with large grey eyes’ – the worthy old Platonist – the founder of the romantic school of poetry. [...] There was not an observation – not a line, in all Hazlitt’s critical works [...], that did not emanate directly from our old friend the Platonist.²

Lord Byron was the chief exponent of Romantic Disillusionism, also called Romantic Scepticism or Negative Romanticism, which doubted Platonic or Positive Romanticism’s fundamentalist belief in a final synthesis of personal and historical dialectics, a terrestrial millennium or a world beyond. Love and war, the two great epic themes and human passions, lead to disaster instead of eternal life and eternal fame. Antithesis is ever the end of man’s “fall” from thesis, and saving synthesis or resurrection a mere construction of man’s wishful thinking. Instead of the personal and historical progress in Neoplatonic dialectical philosophy, which Schelling illustrated by the circuitous journey of Ulysses, re-

1 T.S. Eliot in: *Criterion*, 2 (1924), 232. See also Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism*, IV. 203.
2 [Maginn], *Gallery of Literary Characters*. No 38, in: *Fraser’s Magazine*, 8 (1833), 64.

newed “falls” follow renewed theses, in an absurd circle of repeated vain hopes and repeated disappointments. When, in the first canto of *Don Juan* (1819–24), the titular hero falls in love with Donna Julia, the beautiful young wife of old Don Alfonso, all Platonic philosophy of love and the passions is satirized as contrary to daily human experience. Byron provides the antithesis to Plato’s thesis, and Don Juan has his first experience of the fall from dreams to reality in a satirical comic epic. Instead of a metaphysically motivated sublime union of souls, he experiences a very trite union of bodies due to irresistible physical impulses. Satire on Plato and Positive Romanticism is combined with a parody on the style and doctrine of Wordsworth, deflating highfalutin ideals and romantic expectations with the classical “art of sinking”, which Pope had dubbed “bathos” in opposition to “pathos”:

Young Juan wander’d by the glassy brooks
 Thinking unutterable things, he threw
 Himself at length within the leafy nooks
 Where the wild branch of the cork forest grew.
 There poets find materials for their books,
 And every now and then we read them through,
 So that their plan and prosody are eligible,
 Unless, like Wordsworth, they prove unintelligible.

He, Juan (and not Wordsworth), so pursued
 His self-communion with his own high soul
 Until his mighty heart, in its great mood,
 Had mitigated part, though not the whole
 Of its disease; he did the best he could
 With things not very subject to control
 And turn’d, without perceiving his condition,
 Like Coleridge, into a metaphysician.³

[...] he thought of earthquakes, and of wars,
 How many miles the moon might have in girth,
 Of air balloons and of the many bars
 To perfect knowledge of the boundless skies;
 And then he thought of Donna Julia’s eyes.⁴

Such instances of bathetic deflation of Platonic or Positive Romantic visions are frequently combined with explicit or implicit satire on Plato, whose name Byron disrespectfully rhymed with “potato”:

3 Byron, *Don Juan*, 1. 90–91.

4 *Ibid.* 1. 92, 4–8.

Oh Plato! Plato! you have paved the way,
 With your confounded fantasies, to more
 Immoral conduct by the fancied sway
 Your system feigns o'er the controlless core
 Of human hearts, than all the long array
 Of poets and romancers: – You're a bore,
 A charlatan, a coxcomb – and have been
 At best, no better than a go-between.⁵

Don Juan combined the tradition of the Renaissance comic epic (Luigi Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore* and Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quijote*) with the tradition of classical satire. Even from the very first stanza in Renaissance *ottava rima*, Byron adapted his epic purpose and style to his own time by inverting Virgil's "arma virumque cano" to "arma virumque careo". Modern times have no real and lasting heroes, but a quick succession of fake and ephemeral heroes built up by changing party interests in obsolescent newspapers:

I WANT a hero: an uncommon want,
 When every year and month sends forth a new one,
 Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,
 The age discovers he is not the true one.⁶

As manifested in John Gibson Lockhart's review in *Blackwell's Edinburgh Magazine* and his subsequent pamphlet "John Bull's Letter to Byron" (1821), the Tory reviewers welcomed *Don Juan* as a shift from sentimental Romantic "humbug", "that at present very saleable article", back to common sense and the Classical Tradition's cult of satire and laughter.⁷ For that, readers and enlightened reviewers would almost forgive Byron's irreverent pranks and vicious calumny of the nature of man, which William Blackwood and William Maginn nevertheless found revolting.⁸

Byron's numerous references to classical commonplaces, classical rules, and classical authors of epic poetry not only ostentatiously display his learning, but are also strictly functional. His narrator's numerous meta-narrative reflections on the modern art of writing an epic poem satirizes Platonism as contrary to everyday experience, man's natural weakness of will and mind in his lack of artistic control, in accordance with modern sceptical anthropology. The narrator knows the rules of epic writing, quotes them, acknowledges them, and promises to observe them. But all his assurances to write a regular epic in the

5 Ibid. 1. 116. 1–8.

6 Ibid. 1. 1. 1–4.

7 Lockhart, *John Bull's Letter to Lord Byron*, 1821, ed. Alan Lang Strout, Norman OK 1947. Cf. Byron: *The Critical Heritage*, ed. Andrew Rutherford, London 1970, 159–205.

8 Byron: *The Critical Heritage*, 164 and 254.

style of Virgil and of Homer with strict regard to Aristotle's rules⁹ are broken as soon as they are given. He even promises to "out-Horace" Horace himself by not plunging *in medias res* and not allowing himself any digression. But, ironically, his meta-narrative reflections are themselves the worst of digressions, so that he cannot help lapsing into that universally stigmatized *vitium epicum* any more than Laurence Sterne's narrator Tristram Shandy:

The regularity of my design
 Forbids all wandering as the worst of sinning,
 And therefore I shall open with a line
 (Although it cost me half an hour in spinning)
 Narrating somewhat of Don Juan's father,
 And also of his mother, if you'd rather.¹⁰

Byron was a great admirer of William Gifford's satires and the Classical Tradition, and of Gifford's argument that the Classical Tradition must not only be learned and copied in an antiquary way, but developed and adapted to modern times and needs. This might seem something of a paradox in view of the fact that, in politics, Gifford was a staunch Tory, Byron a Radical Whig. It might seem even more paradoxical considering Byron's current popular classification with the Romantic School. But the Romantic Disillusionists (Byron in England as well as Heine in Germany or Leopardi in Italy) violently opposed the Platonic fundamentalism of the Positive Romantics, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Keats, Shelley. In this literary dispute within the Romantic School, as we see it today, Byron joined forces with Gifford and the Classical Tradition of satire. Moreover, Byron's regard for Gifford was strengthened by gratitude and sympathy with another crippled victim of social ostracism forced to affirm his status in society, Byron suffering ridicule for his lame foot, Gifford for his miniature size.¹¹ Thus, we have a Janus-faced and antithetically-minded Byron, Neoclassical in satire, as in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809) through *Don Juan* (1819–24), and Romantic in complaint, as in *Hours of Idleness* (1807) through *The Island* (1823). In *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, the young lord educated in Harrow and Cambridge picked up the Augustan heroic couplet to side with the Classical Tradition, praising Dryden, Pope, and Gifford for their one source of inspiration as opposed to the "new schools of poetry". They postulate novel inventions yet, like Galvani and the other numerous charlatans of his time, produce nothing except swollen bursting bubbles. The passage is formulated on the *ubi sunt*-commonplace of the happy past, although, as we have seen, the Janus-faced

9 Byron, *Don Juan*, l. 200. 7 and l. 201. 2.

10 *Ibid.* l. 7. 3–8.

11 Heinrich Hartmann, *Lord Byrons Stellung zu den Klassizisten seiner Zeit*, PhD thesis, Münster 1932.

Byron does not conceal his Romantic admiration for honest simple poets such as Cowper, Burns, and Macneill, especially as he felt Burns's "antithetical mind"¹² to be akin to his own:

Then, in this happy Isle, a POPE's pure strain
Sought the rapt soul to charm, nor sought in vain;
A polished nation's praise aspired to claim,
And rais'd the people's, as the poet's fame.¹³

Taking up George Canning's attack against the "NEW SCHOOL" of poetry in the first number of the *Anti-Jacobin* (20 November 1797),¹⁴ Byron opposed the homogeneity and quality of the Classical Tradition (as he then saw it) to the heterogeneity and mere scribbling quantity of Romantic poetry in "these degenerate days",¹⁵ when ignorant poets (such as Lamb, Scott, Southey, Pye) seek the praise of ignorant critics (such as Francis Jeffrey, editor of the Whig *Edinburgh Review*) as well as profit from mass-printing publishers. Byron's polemic against Romantic poetics becomes apparent from his intertextual reference to Pope's Neoclassical demand for a balancing control of the imagination by reason, "T'is more to guide and spur the Muse's steed, Restrain his fury than provoke his speed":¹⁶

Behold! In various throngs the scribbling crew,
For notice eager, pass in long review:
Each spurs his jaded Pegasus apace,
And Rhyme and Blank maintain an equal race;
Sonnets on sonnets crowd, and ode on ode;
And Tales of Terror jostle on the road.¹⁷

Gothic terror, supernatural machinery, the mixture of high and low as well as the noble and vicious, the use of magic and superstition as well as minstrels and wizards are exemplified from the early Romantic Walter Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) and *Marmion* (1808), combined with Horatian reproaches of writing for lucre:

Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain!
And sadly gaze on Gold they cannot gain!

12 Byron, *Journal*, 13 December 1813, in: *Letters and Journals*, III. 239. Also see L.A. Marchand, *Byron: A Portrait*, London 1971, 157–158.

13 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1819, lines 109–12, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, I. 232.

14 Canning here polemically opposed the "NEW SCHOOL" of "the *Jacobin* poet" to "the Poet of other times", meaning revolutionary Romantic poetry versus the time-honoured Classical Tradition.

15 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, line 97, ed. cit. I. 232.

16 Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1711, lines 84–85, in: *Poems*, 146.

17 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, lines 143–148, ed. cit. I. 233.

Such be their meed, such still the just reward
 Of prostituted Muse, and hiring bard!
 For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,
 And bid a long, 'good night to Marmion'.¹⁸

Here, Byron may have remembered Lady Anne Hamilton's recent indictment of Scott's economic greed and speed rather than quality production in writing "lays of our ancient minstrels".¹⁹ Byron himself, however, was to write his many Oriental Tales in the succession of Scott's verse romances with the intention of pushing him from the market – a plan in which Byron succeeded.

Byron's polemic against Romantic graveyard poetry and Gothic necrophilia is extended from Scott to Matthew Gregory Lewis, author of *The Monk* (1796) and *The Castle Spectre* (1797), opposing the classical love of Apollonian light and health to the Romantic love of Dionysian night and sensationalism, including Lewis's scenes of sexual violence which ignore the rule of decorum. The temporary Neoclassicist and Tory Byron then forgot his friendship with Lewis, with whom he shared inherited wealth, a high social rank, a public school and university education, fascination with the Gothic, and a parlour socialist's Radical Whiggism:

Oh! Wonder-working LEWIS! Monk, or Bard,
 Who fain would'st make Parnassus a church-yard!
 Lo! Wreaths of yew, not laurel, bind thy brow,
 Thy Muse a Sprite, Apollo's sexton thou.
 [...] ²⁰

From the first epigraph of his first satire and running throughout the satire itself, Byron ridiculed Wordsworth's and Coleridge's Romantic cult of fraternity, simplicity, and childhood, with special reference to Coleridge's conversation poem "Frost at Midnight" (1798):

Let simple WORDSWORTH chime his childish verse,
 And brother COLERIDGE lull the babe at nurse.²¹

"Brother Coleridge" may have been inspired by the conservative divine Richard Mant's satire on the "NEW ANTI-CLASSICAL SCHOOL" in defence of the "old and classical School of Poetry", a poem with political undertones. In his early *Edinburgh Review* attacks on the "new school", Mant's model, Francis Jeffrey, had already spoken of a "sect of poets", "dissenters from the established systems of poetry and criticism", with works marked by a "splenetic and idle discontent

18 Ibid. lines 179 – 184, ed. cit. I. 234 – 235.

19 [Hamilton], *The Epics of the Ton*, 1807, 11.

20 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, lines 265 – 283, ed. cit. I. 237.

21 Ibid. lines 917 – 918.

with the existing institutions of society”.²² The close relationship between Romanticism in literature and Dissent in religion as well as politics needs no further elaboration. Dissenters from Horace’s rational rules of poetry were also dissenters from Burke’s rational feudal order of state and church, so that Wordsworth’s and Coleridge’s sentimental egalitarian love of animals in their poetry corresponded to their egalitarian love of *fraternité* in their politics. Coleridge’s nickname “brother donkey” not only indicted his Romantic return-to-nature primitivism and Romantic world-spirit dissent, but also implied a socio-political reproach:

Poets with brother donkey in the dell
 Of mild equality who fain would dwell
 With brother lark or brother robin fly,
 And flutter with half-brother butterfly;
 To woodland shades with liberty repair,
 And scorn with pious sneer the House of Pray’r.²³

To an anti-Jacobin of the 1790s, the Radical Coleridge was, more or less, in a line with the Radical Richard Payne Knight, author of a Preromantic didactic poem entitled *The Progress of Civil Society* (1796), in which Knight advocated a return to the primitive state of man: egalitarianism and original sensibility. Knight argued that climatic conditions in combination with priestly and monarchical impostures, so that “man his equal as a master own’d”,²⁴ have destroyed man’s natural goodness and sociability. Furthermore, Knight appeared to advocate primitive and free phallic practices instead of Christian asceticism. Canning’s parody of Knight’s poem in the *Anti-Jacobin*, through the mouth of his erratic Jacobin speaker Mr Higgins of St Mary Axe (i. e. William Godwin), fixes on Captain James Cook’s alleged experience of free love in nature, free learning from nature, healthy and moderate nutrition, vegetarianism, and childish innocence on his voyages to the South Sea, which recommend the abolition of Europe’s most sacred, most agreeable, or at least most habitual cultural practices. The Jacobin speaker reveals himself as a reviler of high civilization and classical learning and a traitor to God and King instead of the “friend of humanity” he pretends to be. He does not mention the fact well known to informed Britons that, in 1779, Captain Cook was murdered by Knight’s benevolent primitive islanders, while, in one of his nonsensically childish footnotes, Higgins

22 Nicola Trott, Wordsworth and the Parodic School of Criticism, in: Jones (ed.), *The Satiric Eye*, 71.

23 [Mant], *The Simpliciad*, London 1808, 15 – 16, lines 102 – 107. Cf. Mant’s satirical footnotes 8 and 9.

24 Knight, *The Progress of Civil Society*, London 1796, 39.

regrets the improbability that “Britain may ever become a small island in the South Seas” such as Otaheite (Tahiti):

Learn hence, each nymph, whose free aspiring mind
Europe’s cold laws, and colder customs bind -
O! learn, what Nature’s genial laws decree -
What Otaheite is, let Britain be!²⁵

In *Die romantische Schule* (1836), Byron’s admirer Heine ridiculed the cult of the child and the use of childish verse in the poetry of Ludwig Uhland, Ludwig Tieck, and other Romantics, who were implicitly accused of ignorance of the Classical Tradition as it survived in contemporary Neoclassicism. Heine’s erroneous sorting of the “dark Romantic” Tieck with the Romantic Platonists and the Roman Catholic Schlegels resulted from his general aversion to Romantic primitivism and medievalism, suggesting that neglect of classical studies was a hallmark of the whole Romantic School:

[...] er [Tieck] hatte von den Volksbüchern und Gedichten des Mittelalters so viel eingeschluckt, daß er fast wieder ein Kind wurde und zu jener lallenden Einfalt herablühte, die Frau v. Staël so viele Mühe hatte zu bewundern.²⁶
Den klassischen Studien soll er immer fremd geblieben sein, als ein echter Romantiker [...]²⁷

Similarly, Byron suggested ignorance of the classics as the main reason for Southey’s, Wordsworth’s, and Coleridge’s (the Lake Poets’) primitivism, choice of mad, childish, savage, or oriental heroes, neglect of classical metres in favour of ballad or folk song metres, and ignorant violation of the classical rules of clarity, distinction, and decorum, mixing up poetry with prose and choosing styles (*genera dicendi*) unsuited to their infantile subjects. Non-classical here becomes synonymous with unreasonable and insane, and Romantic poets synonymous with dunces and asses, purveyors of childish nonsense rhymes to the mad populace of the French Revolution:

With eagle pinions soaring to the skies,
Behold the ballad-monger SOUTHEY rise!
[...]
Immortal Hero! All thy foes o’ercome,
For ever reign – the rival of Tom Thumb!
Since startled Metre fled before thy face,

25 [Canning] in: Anti-Jacobin, 21 (2 April 1798), in: Parodies of the Romantic Age, I. 152.

26 Heine, *Die romantische Schule*, 1836, in: *Sämtliche Schriften*, III. 376.

27 *Ibid.* III. 429. Heine here compares Tieck’s reason to a sleeping husband, who does not correct his wife, meaning his wild imagination, from running riot and riding through the air to haunt the romantic magic forest (III. 428). Thus, he assumes a rational Neoclassical position as formulated by Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1711, lines 82–83.

Well wert thou doom'd the last of all thy race!
 Well might triumphant Genii bear thee hence,
 Illustrious conqueror of common sense!²⁸

[...]

Next comes the dull disciple of thy school,
 That mild apostate from poetic rule,
 The simple WORDSWORTH, framer of a lay
 As soft as evening in his favourite May.

[...]

Who, both by precept and example, shows
 That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose,
 Convincing all, by demonstration plain,
 Poetic souls delight in prose insane;
 And Christmas stories tortured into rhyme
 Contain the essence of the true sublime.²⁹

[...]

Shall gentle COLERIDGE pass unnoticed here
 To turgid ode and tumid stanza dear?
 Though themes of innocence amuse him best,
 Yet still obscurity's a welcome guest.
 If inspiration should her aid refuse,
 To him who takes a Pixy for a Muse,
 Yet none in lofty numbers can surpass
 The bard who soars to elegize an ass.
 So well the subject suits his noble mind,
 He brays the Laureat of the long-ear'd kind.³⁰

English Bards and Scotch Reviewers was Byron's modern *Dunciad*, a satire which he twinned with a didactic poem entitled *Hints from Horace* (MS 1811), his update of Horace's *Epistula ad Pisones*. *Hints from Horace* was conceived as a modern verse imitation which combined positive literary doctrine with satire and modern sceptical anthropology. Following Gifford's example, Byron printed the paraphrased passages from Horace's classical model in his notes, both in order to show his anti-Romantic adoption of the Classical Tradition and to demonstrate his nineteenth-century continuation of it. The Romantic cult of originality is discredited *expressis verbis*, the Neoclassical cult of imitation is recommended with Horace's own call for the evolution (not static and slavish imitation) of the great Greek and Latin models:

28 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, lines 201 – 220. The “immortal hero” is Thalaba, the titular Arab hero of Southey's *Oriental verse romance* of 1801.

29 *Ibid.* lines 235 – 246.

30 *Ibid.* lines 255 – 264.

Yet copy not too closely, but record,
 More justly, thought for thought, than word for word:
 Nor trace your prototype through narrow ways,
 But only follow where he merits praise.³¹

A recent study of Neoclassical theories of literary translation in England and France has confirmed the Neoclassicists' endeavour to keep the dead alive through *prosopopoeia* and to make their works fertile for the translators' own time by modernizing the vocabulary and giving the thoughts of their old originals a modern topicality.³² A dead author's soul should be saved, at the expense of fidelity to dead letters, just as St Augustine enjoined it in a frequently quoted formulation. In Dryden's words, a translator or imitator should not be a gravedigger unearthing a *caput mortuum*.³³

That *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* was understood as a modernization of the Classical Tradition of satire appears from various favourable reviews in such Tory journals as the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *British Critic*. The satire was the first work of Byron printed in America and remained one of his best-known works there. The title page of that first edition (Philadelphia 1811) quoted relevant passages from the two reviews, placing Byron as an autochthonous rather than merely imitating author in the tradition of Pope and Gifford.³⁴

The plea from Byron's admirer Heine for a return from Romantic medievalism – and neglect of classical antiquity – back to the earthbound and rational Classical Tradition was equally modified by a simultaneous plea for modernization. Aware that literary culture had changed from the times of Homer and Horace, with a new reading public and economic book market as well as new historical and social experiences, Heine polemically, but falsely, deprecated French Neoclassicism as "Aftergriechentum".³⁵ He advocated, for instance, a Shakespearean mixture of the sublime and the grotesque which, in the same year, echoed Hugo's *Préface de Cromwell* (1827), but was grounded on the modern experience of history rather than on Hugo's intended destruction of all rules of government and literature:

[...] nach dem Abgang der Helden kommen die Clowns und Graziosos mit ihren Narrenkolben und Pritschen, nach den blutigen Revolutionsszenen und Kaiseraktionen kommen wieder herangewatschelt die dicken Bourbonen mit ihren alten abgestandenen Späßchen und zartlegitimen Bonmots, und graziöse hüpf't herbei die alte

31 Byron, Hints from Horace, MS 1811, MS 1820, publ. posth. 1832, lines 185 – 188, in: Complete Poetical Works,

32 Julie Candler Hayes, Translation, Subjectivity and Culture in France and England, 1600 – 1800, Princeton CA 2009, 1 – 27.

33 Ibid. 93.

34 Peter X. Accardo, Byron in America to 1830, 6 – 7.

35 Heine, Die romantische Schule, 1836, in: Sämtliche Schriften, III. 373.

Noblesse mit ihrem verhungerten Lächeln, und hintendrein wallen die frommen Kapuzen mit Lichtern, Kreuzen und Kirchenfahnen.³⁶

To Byron and Heine, both heirs to the Augustans as liberal English Neoclassicists, this constant updating and modernizing of the Classical Tradition was *de rigueur*. They regarded the Classical Tradition as a dynamic cultural relay race from Greek and Roman antiquity to their own days. Byron programmatically and explicitly updated Horace and Pope, just as Gifford and Mathias had updated Persius, Juvenal, and Dryden, and just as Persius had updated and adapted Lucilius to the time of the Emperor Nero in the first century A.D. The Neoclassicist Mathias, for instance, drew attention to the useful modern practice of supplementing satires with explanatory or satirical footnotes, “which were denied to the ancients, which Dryden rejected, and which Pope practically adopted”.³⁷ And Crabbe, we have seen, followed Horace’s and Virgil’s plea for modern relevance, satirizing mere imitators of Arcadian pastorals. They were blind to the nature and reality of their own age of Whig reforms, neglected agriculture and deserted villages:

No, cast by Fortune on a frowning coast,
Which neither groves nor happy vallies boast;
Where other cares than those the Muse relates,
And other shepherds dwell with other mates;
By such examples taught, I paint the cot,
As truth will paint it, and as bards will not.³⁸

Blackwood’s “Noctes Ambrosianae”, again, posed as a modern Scottish Tory update of the Greek symposium, quoting Phocylides of Miletus on philosophical conviviality in the original Greek, accompanied by a topical comic translation marking the dialogues’ anti-Romantic and anti-Whig satire. When Odoherty (Maginn) repeatedly designates *Blackwood’s* as a “classical work”, he means the periodical’s modernization and functionalization of the Classical Tradition. This was announced by an epigraph to each of sixty-six of the seventy-one “Noctes”, beginning with number six when, on William Blackwood’s instigation, the future Tory editors took over from the original Whig editors, Thomas Pringle and James Cleghorn. The Gargantuan excess of food and drink in the “Noctes” was a modern, topical, politically Tory counter-demonstration against the Romantic and Radical demand for healthy and moderate nutrition including vegeta-

36 Heine, *Ideen: Das Buch Le Grand*, 1827, ed. cit. II. 282.

37 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, 1794–1797, 107.

38 Crabbe, *The Village*, 1783, I. 49–54, in: *Poetical Works*, I. 158.

rianism in order not to harm fellow creatures and to provide enough for all people, including the poor and illiterate:³⁹

XPH Δ'EN ΣΥΜΠΟΣΙΩ ΚΥΛΙΚΩΝ ΠΕΡΙΝΙΣΣΟΜΕΝΑΩΝ
 ΗΔΕΑ ΚΩΤΙΛΛΟΝΤΑ ΚΑΘΗΜΕΝΟΝ ΟΙΝΟΠΙΟΤΑΖΕΙΝ.

This is a distich by wise old Phocylides,

An ancient who wrote crabbed Greek in no silly days;

*Meaning, "TIS RIGHT FOR GOOD WINEBIBBING PEOPLE,
 NOT TO LET THE JUG PACE ROUND THE BOARD LIKE A CRIPPLE;
 BUT GAILY TO CHAT WHILE DISCUSSING THEIR TIPPLE."*

An excellent rule of the hearty old cock 'tis –

And a very fit motto to put to our Noctes.⁴⁰

On the right margin of this quotation, the heritage of the Classical Tradition is marked by a parallel annotation, "PHOC[YLIDES] ap[ud] Ath[enaeos]" above and "C[HRISTOPHER] N[ORTH] ap[ud] Ambr[osium]" below, though mainly highlighting the obvious difference between the old and the new.

The polemical Romantic imputation that the Augustan Neoclassicists preserved the Classical Tradition like an antiquarian mummy and taught poetry as a mere mechanical art by simple application of the rules was just as baseless as the polemical Neoclassical imputation that the Romantics were totally ignorant of the Classical Tradition. In *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Thomas Doubleday, for instance, argued in favour of the Classical Tradition that there is no making a whistle of a pig's tail, and that "schools" and their laws "have served only to breed rhyming pedants and coxcombs"⁴¹. And Lockhart defended Byron's *Don Juan* on the ground of its ingenious brilliance, as opposed to the mere technical perfection of Byron's model John Hookham Frere.⁴² In the confusion of hot debates, polemics, like wars, seek to construct clear-cut frontlines of uniform standards and names, *Feindbilder*, to the detriment of distinction and detail. It is only after the battle that the complex facts and manifold intersections can be recognized.

After Byron's death in 1824, Byron's Neoclassicism was set in much sharper relief against the Romantics than the sources bear out, making him an advocate of the ancients in a belated *querelle des anciens et des modernes*. In Benjamin Disraeli's Byronic novel *Venetia* (1837), Plantagenet Cadurcis (freely modelled on Byron) maintains against Marmion Herbert (freely modelled on Percy

39 See the Radical texts reprinted in Timothy Morton (ed.), *Radical Food: The Culture and Politics of Eating and Drinking 1790–1820*, 3 volumes, London and New York NY 2000.

40 Noctes Ambrosianae, VI, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 12 (December 1822), 695.

41 [Doubleday], *How Far is Poetry an Art*, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 11 (February 1822), 153–158.

42 [Lockhart] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 14 (September 1823), 283.

Shelley) that no modern author, not even Shakespeare or Milton, could equal the Greeks, and that Pope was still the relatively best of modern poets:

“The Greeks excelled in every species of poetry. In some we do not even attempt to rival them. [...] And who is Shakespeare? [...] He appears to me to have been an inspired adapter for the theatres, which were then not as good as barns. [...] For my part, I abhor your irregular geniuses, and I love to listen to the little nightingale of Twickenham.”⁴³

In his Neoclassical moods, here fictitiously represented with exaggeration, Byron subscribed to Horace’s doctrine that a poet must join talent with proficiency in the art and profession of poetry, highly gifted and a well-trained “artisan” poet in a traditional *métier* rather than a divinely inspired prophet-poet, and applied Horace’s derision of mere poses of genius (uncut hairs and unwashed bodies) to the Lake Poets’ *mise en scène* of Romantic primitivism. Like Thomas Love Peacock, Désiré Nisard, and numerous Neoclassical enemies of Romanticism, Byron used the standard argument that Romantic literature is a childish and savage “littérature facile” that lacks art, “loose rambling [...] verse which any one may write, *stans pede in uno*, at the rate of two hundred lines in an hour”.⁴⁴ The speaker’s advice to all potential admirers and disciples of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey is caustically ironic:

With little rhyme, less reason, if you please,
The name of Poet may be got with ease,
[...]
Write but like Wordsworth, – live beside a lake
And keep your bushy locks a year from Blake,
Then print your book, once more return to Town,
And boys shall hunt your Bardship up and down.⁴⁵

Among the Lake Poets, Robert Southey, poet laureate from 1813, was Byron’s favourite enemy and target for satire. It was from Southey that Byron invariably illustrated the unreasonableness of any violation of the rule of stylistic decorum and the justness of Pope’s satiric prose tract *Περὶ Βαθουῶς*, or, *The Art of Falling* (1711). William Lisle Bowles and other Preromantics and Romantics were occasionally mentioned as transgressors of the rule, but Southey appears as its chief offender in his verse tales and *Thalaba* (1801), *Madoc* (1805), and *The Curse of Kehama* (1810). Southey’s choice of primitive and oriental (instead of refined and classical) subjects and heroes was another violation of a Neoclassical

43 Disraeli, *Venetia*, 1837, in: book 6, chapter 8, in: *The Bradenham Edition of the Novels and Tales of Benjamin Disraeli*, ed. Philip Guedalla, London 1926–1927, VII. 457–458.

44 Peacock, *The Four Ages of Poetry*, 1820, in: *Works*, VIII. 13; Désiré Nisard, *Manifeste contre la littérature facile*, Paris 1858.

45 Byron, *Hints from Horace*, lines 469–476. Benjamin Blake, fashionable barber and perfumer in the Strand, corresponds to Julius Caesar’s barber Licinus in Horace.

rule which the Neoclassical Byron targeted, although, in his Romantic moods, Byron himself wrote popular oriental tales which made him famous all over Europe. Like Gifford, Byron poured ridicule on the Romantic poet's alleged lack of classical education and address to a similarly ignorant and plebeian audience:

Beware – for Godsake don't begin like B[owle]s!
 'Awake a louder and a loftier strain',
 And pray, what follows from his boiling brain?
 He sinks to Southey's level in a trice,
 Whose epic mountains never fail in mice!⁴⁶
 [...]
 And, harkee, Southey! pray – but don't be vex –
 Burn all your last three works – and half the next.
 But why this vain advice? once published, books
 Can never be recall'd – from pastry cooks.
 Though 'Madoc', with 'Pucelle', instead of punk,
 May travel back to Quito – on a trunk!⁴⁷

In this respect, Byron's judgment of Southey's fantastic verse tales coincided with Peacock's, who let no opportunity to denigrate his arch-adversary in aesthetics as well as politics slip away. Peacock's *Paper Money Lyrics*, written during the financial crises of 1825–1826 to expose the evils of paper currency, parodied Southey's *Thalaba* in order to vilify him as a government poet, whose printed works had as little substance as bank notes without gold reserves. People wake up from insubstantial dreams and find that their savings have flown by night – just as Southey will come to see that his fantastic poetry cannot last. Peacock's "Prooemium of an Epic which will shortly appear in quarto, under the title of Fly-by-Night, by R- S- , Esq., Poet Laureate" (1837), derides the dreamy insubstantiality of Southey's Romantic verse tales in Southey's own style:

Come listen to my lay,
 And ye shall say,
 That never tale of errant knight,
 Or captive damsel bright,
 Demon, or elf, or goblin sprite,
 Fierce crusade, or feudal fight,
 Or cloistral phantom all in white,
 Or castle on accessless height,
 Upreared by necromantic might,
 Was half so full of rare delight,
 As this whereof I now prolong,

46 Ibid. lines 192–196.

47 Ibid. lines 617–622.

The memory in immortal song –
The wild and wondrous tale of Fly-by-Night.⁴⁸

The personal and libelling nature of Byron's and Peacock's attacks, which ultimately fall back upon the libellers themselves for similar violations of the Neo-classical rules, was itself an offence against the rules of satire, though, as has been shown above, these attacks were not inconsistent with Classical, Renaissance, and Augustan practice. However, Byron frankly admitted what Hunt and Hazlitt urged against Neoclassical satire, personal instead of didactic motives of aggression as with his most famous Augustan predecessors, Dryden, Pope, and Swift:

Satiric rhyme first sprang from selfish spleen,
You doubt – see Dryden, Pope, St. Patrick's Dean.⁴⁹

These lines must be read in context with Byron's modernization of satire, in the sense of the new anthropology of Romantic Disillusionism, including sceptical doubt about man's homogeneous nature, controllability of passions, and the sense and aim of his life. On the one hand, the satirist is called upon to teach and educate mankind; on the other, the satirist knows about his own evil passions and mankind's indocility, and writes satires "for the very reason that he should not".⁵⁰ A recent publication correctly argues that personal hatred (not correction of vices and follies) was the main force in the formation of Byron's satire, quite contrary to the concept of satire (not libel) in the Classical Tradition.⁵¹ While he admitted that the dramatic poet should teach mankind, Byron simultaneously doubted the effect of such a literary doctrine written to convey a bitter pill in a sweet sugar coating. Experience with Jeremy Collier's influential prose polemic against *The Immorality of the English Stage* (1698) and the subsequent moralization of Restoration comedy brought forth no progress in English morals:

And spite of Puritans and Collier's curse,
Plays make mankind no better, and no worse.⁵²

Thus, Byron adapted Horace's lines on the life of man from childhood to old age into a satire against mankind, in the wake of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, and

48 Peacock, *Fly-by-Night*, 1837, in Southey: *The Critical Heritage*, ed. Lionel Madden, London 1972, 330.

49 Byron, *Hints from Horace*, lines 114a-b (lines cancelled in MS). Also see Lessenich, *Lord Byron and the Nature of Man*, Cologne and Vienna 1978, 104.

50 Following E.A. Poe's formulation in *Tales, The Imp of the Perverse*, 1845, in: *Collected Works*, ed. T.O. Mabbott, Cambridge, MA, 1969–1978, III. 1220.

51 Peter Cochran, *Byron and Bob*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 2010, *passim* (on Byron's hatred of Robert Southey).

52 Byron, *Hints from Horace*, lines 367–368.

in anticipation of his own satiric verse epic *Don Juan*. In Byron's view, everyday experience and the study of nature for poetical mimesis enjoined by Neoclassicists such as Dryden and Pope did not confirm Pope's pious construction of homogeneous, though erring and sinning, man as the crown of creation in an ordered universe which was planned by a benevolent God. Experience instead yielded the image of an antithetically-mixed man at odds with himself and his senseless world, incapable of self-control and progress, cultivating ever-destroyed illusions, hunting ever-evanescent phantoms, and forever turning in absurd circles until his death without hope of resurrection. The anthropology both of Enlightenment optimism and of Romantic Platonism is aggressively and satirically replaced by that of Romantic Disillusionism:

[...] study Nature's page,
 And sketch the striking traits of every age;
 While varying man and varying years unfold,
 Life's little tale, so oft so vainly told,
 Observe his simple childhood's dawning days,
 His pranks, his prate, his playmates, and his plays;
 Till time at length the mannish tyro weens,
 And prurient vice outstrips his tardy teens!
 [...]
 Crazed, querulous, forsaken, half forgot,
 Expires unwept – is buried: let him rot!⁵³

The arguments recurred some ten years later in Byron's contributions to the Pope and Bowles controversy⁵⁴ on the literary qualities of Alexander Pope, still under the influence of Gifford's *Baviad* (1791) and *Maeviad* (1795). Bowles's ten-volume edition of *The Works of Alexander Pope* (1806), with Strictures on Pope's poetry, brought him into conflict with Thomas Campbell, to whom Bowles replied in *The Invariable Principles of Poetry* (1819). In the wake of his former Winchester headmaster and detractor of Pope, the Preromantic Joseph Warton, and against Pope's definition of art as nature to advantage dressed,⁵⁵ Bowles claimed nature to be ever superior to works of art. Articles both in the *Quarterly Review* (in favour of Pope) and the *Edinburgh Review* (against Pope) and a number of pamphlets took up the quarrel, of which Murray sent Byron copies to Ravenna. Byron, again in his Neoclassical mood, promised to enter the lists in favour of Pope, and did so in his long *Letter to John Murray Esq.* [*Editor of*

53 Ibid. 215 – 260.

54 A chronological list of publications in the controversy is provided by Jacob Johan van Rennes in Bowles, Byron and the Pope-Controversy, Amsterdam 1927, 166 – 68, and Andrew Nicholson in: Lord Byron: The Complete Miscellaneous Prose, 408 – 410.

55 Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1711, line 297.

The Quarterly Review] dated Ravenna, 7 February 1821.⁵⁶ Byron's name had significantly been introduced by both parties, and Byron resumed Gifford's argument that sentimental poetry was mere show and imposture. Nor was this diagnosis new, because, in the late eighteenth-century debate about Neoclassical laughing and Preromantic sentimental comedy, the Neoclassicists Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan had already represented men and women of feeling as sentimental impostors. Byron seized the opportunity to extend his old reproach from Bowles's sentimental poetry and sentimental moralizing about Pope's alleged amours to English society as a whole, so that his Neoclassicism was again modified and modernized by his Romantic Disillusionism:

The truth is that in these days the grand "primum mobile" of England is *Cant* – Cant political – Cant poetical – Cant religious – Cant moral – but always *Cant* – multiplied through all the varieties of life.⁵⁷

The elitist spirit of aristocracy that informed Byron's attack on Bowles naturally provoked John Thelwall, then editor of the reformist weekly paper *The Champion*, which had traditionally favoured Leigh Hunt and the Cockney School. Thelwall found Bowles to be closer to simplicity, nature, and the natural moral sense than the stiff Pope.⁵⁸ The imputation of Pope's defender Octavius Graham Gilchrist that Bowles wrote his maudlin poetry in a state of drunkenness, his mind confused by "hot white-wine Negus", provided Byron with another set-up for, ironically, downgrading Bowles (and indeed all Romantic poetry). This, again, explains Byron's slighting remarks about the "Lakers" and the "Cockney School", who had launched attacks on Pope's rationality and perfection.⁵⁹ Not being sufficiently educated and polished, they belonged to the day's "crowd of Schools and upstarts", the "poetical populace"⁶⁰ or rabble, who, in the blind confusion of their overheated minds, tries to ostracize Pope as they stormed the Bastille and exterminated the aristocrats. Nevertheless, Byron was forced to admit that, in his Romantic poetry, he had been and still was "amongst the builders of this Babel attended by a confusion of tongues", erecting a "grotesque edifice" inadequately and unfittingly "by the side of a Grecian temple of the purest Architecture".⁶¹ This same self-reproach is to be found in an earlier letter, written before the controversy, in which Byron disavowed the many sectarian

56 The first edition of the long Letter was published in London in 1821, the second and third edition in Paris in 1821.

57 Byron, Letter to John Murray, 7 February 1821, in: Complete Miscellaneous Prose, ed. A. Nicholson, Oxford 1991, 128.

58 Michael Scrivener, John Thelwall and the Press, in Behrendt (ed.), Romanticism, Radicalism, and the Press, 127.

59 Byron, Letter to John Murray, 7 February 1821, *ibid.* 156.

60 *Ibid.* 148 – 149.

61 *Ibid.* 148.

schools of his time as comprising the heterogeneous mass of deranged modern poets united by their enmity to Pope:

These three personages Southey – Wordsworth, and Coleridge had all of them a very natural antipathy to Pope [...] But they have been joined in it by those who have joined them in nothing else, -By the Edinburgh Reviewers, by the whole heterogeneous Mass of living English Poets – excepting Crabbe, Rogers, Gifford and Campbell [...] and by me, – who have shamefully deviated in practice – but have ever loved and honoured Pope’s Poetry with my whole soul, and hope to do so till my dying day.⁶²

Byron’s imputation of the Lake Poets with insanity, drug and alcohol addiction, and psychopathy had already appeared in the first canto of his satire *Don Juan* (1819):

Thou shalt believe in Milton, Dryden, Pope;
Thou shalt not set up Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey;
Because the first is crazed beyond all hope,
The second drunk, the third so quaint and mouthy.⁶³

Byron’s polemical method follows the old tradition of selecting facts to suit an argument. Rogers and Campbell were poets who wrote in both schools, like Byron himself, and who could mix Augustan didacticism and Augustan heroic couplets with Preromantic sensibility (nostalgia for childhood and simplicity, feeling versus slavery and colonial occupation). Byron always selected those works and aspects that fitted his respective position, as seen when he repeatedly held up Rogers’s *The Pleasures of Memory* (1792), which preceded Campbell’s *The Pleasures of Hope* (1799), as an embodiment of Popean elegance carried into the Romantic Period versus Lake School childishness.⁶⁴ And, when Byron praised the line of succession of Pope, Goldsmith, Johnson, Rogers, Campbell, and Crabbe (“the first of living poets”)⁶⁵ he would not mention Johnson’s dark depressiveness, or Goldsmith’s addiction to alcohol, or Crabbe’s addiction to drugs, or the fact that his non-Augustan narrative poem *Lara* had been printed together with Rogers’s similarly non-Augustan narrative poem *Jacqueline* (1814) and that both feature erratic characters. Wherever and whenever Byron sided with the Classical Tradition and the Neoclassicists, they are described in terms of purity, health, symmetry, and perfection. By contrast, Romanticism and the Romantics are then associated with madness, confusion, disease, grotesqueness, and lack of rational control. Hence Byron quoted the final couplet of

62 Byron, Some Observations upon an Article in Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine, 15 March 1820, in: Complete Miscellaneous Prose, 106.

63 Byron, *Don Juan*, 1819–24, I. 205. 1–4, in: Complete Poetical Works, V. 74. Also see van Rennes, Bowles, Byron and the Pope Controversy, 53–56.

64 Marchand (ed.), Byron’s Letters and Journals, II. 286.

65 Byron, Some Observations, ed. cit. 105.

Pope's *First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace*, to characterize the madness of the soon forgotten new Romantic literature, of which he had also been guilty. May all that trash written by the vulgar crowd of new poets

Line trunks – clothe spice – or fluttering in a row
Befringe the rails of Bedlam – or Soho —⁶⁶

As was to be expected, Hazlitt entered the lists on the side of Bowles, against Byron and the *Quarterly*, taking “his Lordship” to task for condescending arrogance and schoolboy naughtiness in throwing dirt at simple poets who, unlike “his Lordship” himself, had a feeling for nature.⁶⁷

Even before they first met in the house of the publisher John Murray in 1811, Byron regarded Gifford as the greatest satirist and critic of the age. Throughout Byron's critical pronouncements, Gifford was always prized as the rational, earthbound, Horatian opponent to Neoplatonic Romantic ideas of the universality of the poetic instinct, which the proudly elitist Lord and Neoclassicist decried as destroying rare poetic quality. Horace was the god, Plato the devil of the Classical Tradition as understood by the Augustans. Byron polemically but falsely argued that, in his time, only a few true Augustan poets remained in search of the golden fleece on a sea of small fry such as Crabbe, Campbell, and Rogers, whom Byron called “the last Argonaut of Classic English poetry – and the Nestor of our inferior race of living poets”.⁶⁸ In fact, he knew better. Horace was thus polemically pitted against Neoplatonic Romanticism, the one true school against the “legion” of schismatic new schools with their masses of epigones and their unclean spirits, which would inevitably lead to a steady decline of the art of poetry as well as modern civilization in general:

Now of *all* the new Schools – I say *all* for “like Legion they are many” – has there appeared a single scholar who has not made his master ashamed of him? unless it be Sotheby who has imitated every body and not unfrequently surpassed his models?⁶⁹

66 Rennes 149. Pope's lines are from Epistle II. 418 – 419.

67 [Hazlitt] in: London Magazine, June 1821, reprinted in van Rennes, 145 – 165.

68 Byron, Letter to John Murray, 7 February 1821, in: Complete Miscellaneous Prose, 121.

69 Byron, Some Observations upon an Article in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 15 March 1820, in: Complete Miscellaneous Prose, 117. Byron's polemical biblical reference is to the λεγεται of men possessed by unclean spirits in Mark 5, 9.

V. The Function of Criticism

Neoclassical treatises on satire insisted on the legitimacy and necessity of criticism as literary satire. Quality stood in need of control. Boileau, for example, defended his satire on contemporary authors with recourse to both the Classical Tradition from Lucilius to Juvenal and the *consensus omnium* of general supreme reason, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*:

Tant il est vrai que le droit de blâmer les auteurs est un droit ancien, passé en coutume parmi tous les satiriques, et souffert dans tous les siècles.¹

Criticism and satire or eulogy served the same purpose of keeping the Classical Tradition alive as the major and superior tradition of all European literature. In his *Essay on Criticism* (1711) published in the same year as Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, Pope had stressed the vicinity of poetry and criticism insofar as both poets and critics had to be born and trained experts in the art of writing, the poet as producing *belles lettres* and the critic as his judge controlling and guaranteeing the standard of the work produced. Both talents were elitist, no qualification of the vulgar or multitude:

'Tis hard to say, if greater Want of Skill,
Appear in *Writing* or in *Judging* ill;
[...]
In *Poets* as true *Genius* is but rare,
True *Taste* as seldom is the *Critick's* Share;
Both must alike from Heav'n derive their Light,
These *born* to Judge, as well as those to Write.²

It was a generally acknowledged rule in Neoclassical criticism that the poet should avoid flatterers and rather insist on true critics' honest judgments, parrhesis, to control the quality of his works. As late as in his *Imaginary Conversations* (1824 – 1829 and 1853), the Neoclassicist Landor made Marcus Tullius

1 Boileau, *Discours sur la satire*, 1668, in: *Œuvres de Boileau*, ed. M. Amar, Paris 1821, I. 48.

2 Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1711, lines 1 – 14, in: *Poems*, 144.

Cicero his spokesman to help push this behaviour to the extreme, so that a writer should arm his enemies rather than his friends against himself:

I myself would arm my adversaries, and teach them how to fight me.³

In literature, great men suffer more from their little friends than from their potent enemies.⁴

The above-mentioned Neoclassical critic of Coleridge's Shakespearean drama *Zapolya* (1817), possibly George Croly, introduced his review by general reflections on the educational benefits of critical chastisement, thus establishing a link between caustic reviews and satires. Human as well as all animate and inanimate nature is observed to obey the same natural law that the rod should not be spared to increase the quality:

A walnut-tree the more it is beaten produces the more fruit, and a spaniel mends its manners materially upon castigation; the appearance of the present publication, so speedily after his *Biographia Literaria*, and *Sibylline leaves*, shews us that Mr Coleridge resembles the walnut-tree, for he fructifies as it were in requital of the belabouring of the critics: as we proceed we shall discover that he also resembles our canine exemplar, and improves unto the lash.⁵

Here, in the Romantic Period, literary quality control was accompanied by (and was largely inseparable from) political surveillance.⁶

From the rise of the book review in late seventeenth-century periodicals, however, an abuse of criticism for marketing purposes rather than for quality control had been evident and had been a cause for constant complaints. Oliver Goldsmith's *Chinese Letters* (1762), for instance, pinpointed that abuse in connection with his above-mentioned critique of merely profit-oriented booksellers. Goldsmith's Lien Chi Altangi tells his correspondent Fum Hoam about "answerers of books who take upon them to watch the Republic of Letters and distribute reputation by the sheet", in the pay of "some mercenary bookseller".⁷ And Richard Brinsley Sheridan's last comedy, *The Critic* (1779), was a stage satire that indicted the marketing of plays, indeed of all literature, by incompetent and corrupt critics, the ever praising Dangle and the ever condemning Sneer. Where such market interests dominate quality, so that the public's own sound judgment is usurped by professional critics and salesmen, everything may pass for quality, especially on the British stage. In Sheridan's satirical comedy, even the parodically anti-classical tragedy *The Spanish Ar-*

3 Landor, *Imaginary Conversations*, 1824, ed. cit. II. 59.

4 *Ibid.* II. 64.

5 *Literary Gazette*, 43 (15 November 1817), 307.

6 Kevin Gilmartin, *Writing against Revolution: Literary Conservatism in Britain, 1790–1832*, chapter 3 *Reviewing Subversion: The Function of Criticism at the Present Crisis*, 76–149.

7 Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, letter 13, 1762, in: *Collected Works*, ed. cit. II. 60.

mada by the self-made and self-puffed dramatist and critic with the telling name of Puff, an enterprising promoter of all kinds of literary wares, has a chance to succeed as a serious play. Here, everything is done rapidly and carelessly for quick profit, ephemeral newspaper praise, and with a glance to short-lived topicality and effect (in this case Spain's recent declaration of war to Britain). The art of hype or puffing as explained and practised by Puff replaces the art of literature and criticism. Puff's *ars inflandi* imitates and usurps Horace's *ars poetica* and Quintilian's *ars oratoria* as well as John Dennis's and David Hume's *ars critica*, in a comical analysis of contemporary practices of commercial criticism:

Yes, Sir – PUFFING is of various sorts – the principal are, The PUFF DIRECT – the PUFF PRELIMINARY – the PUFF COLLATERAL – the PUFF COLLUSIVE, and the PUFF OBLIQUE, or PUFF BY IMPLICATION.⁸

A Peter Puff is also the main character in James Gillray's undated cartoon "The Lottery Office Keeper's Prayer".⁹ In his greed for undeserved profit, this seemingly respectable "adventurer" trusts fortune and manipulation ("the inestimable Talent of poetical Puff making") more than honest quality both in shares and literature.

Later, at the time of the French Revolution, literary criticism became eminently political, ranking party loyalty over both market interest and artistic quality. The taste of what the Tory and Neoclassicist Edmund Burke used to chide as "the swinish multitude" of "opposition pigs" was seen as supporting the Radical cause. Gillray's rude caricature entitled "Pig's Meat, or, The Swine Flogged Out of the Farm Yard" (1798) alluded both to politics and aesthetics. The rivalry of a rising low-culture to dwindling high-culture art and literature had to be prevented by the Tory government, and Gillray's caricature, a low-reputed popular genre, implied a sideswipe at the feudal cultural arrogance of William Pitt and William Dundas, in whose pay he then worked.

Thus, Romantic poets hounded by Neoclassical critics, Tory or Whig, found a well-elaborated satirical literature to disparage professional literary criticism and book reviews in general. Conforming to the laws of the modern market and to political interest, selling well-advertised and politically loyal trash for a good price, was a killer argument used by both parties. Romantic poets and critics could easily refute the allegation of selling mass-produced and effect-mongering Grub Street books to the ignorant vulgar masses by pointing out how the Government promoted publications in its favour. In the satirical *Fudge Family in Paris* (1818), Thomas Moore's staunch turncoat Tory Phil Fudge is asked by his

8 R.B. Sheridan, *The Critic*, I/2, 1779, in: *Plays and Poems*, II. 210.

9 *BM Satires* 9803.

patron Castlereagh to write *Travels in France* in the Tory interest, against the ideals of French Revolution. So, Phil Fudge first hastens to Paternoster Row to arrange a title page, a book format, advertisements, and reviews before he has wasted a single thought on the book's content.¹⁰ Thus, Romantic authors could argue that the frequently poor market success of their poetry was due to negative critical reviews written in the pay of conservative politicians and booksellers.¹¹

Though he was a typical Enlightenment philosopher who insisted on clear rational distinctions, Shaftesbury had already joined the trend of his time in using "criticism" and "satire" as synonyms.¹² Satire was then understood as criticism with a vengeance. It was meant less to convince than to overthrow. It could shoot down a dangerous adversary too fixed in his views to be convinced and converted, making him unfit to fight. William Gifford's decision to give up writing Juvenalian satires and turn to mere literary criticism, though often in peppered satirical articles, as editor of the *Quarterly Review*, was much regretted by many of his political and literary allies. "Gifford sleeps" then became a standard complaint, because his verse satires proved more effective than his prose reviews. Pope's champion Charles Caleb Colton struck the right chord when he called upon Gifford to reawaken to his natural calling of formal verse satirist and to enter the lists against modern Romantic Grub Street writings, just as Pope had successfully done of yore. As usual with Romantic Period Neo-classicists, Colton saw the debasement of poetry to mass production and mercenary considerations as a disease of his own time, the symptoms of which were an expanding readership with an uncultivated sentimental taste and an expanding book publication and trade obeying the laws of the general market. Sales figures counted more than quality. In a traditionalist perspective in which literary excellence was the incidental accomplishment of a gentleman, commercial publication passed for a vulgar lapse of taste; and the establishment of a new honourable literary field of professional authorship in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries would take a long time.¹³ The then successful sentimentalist and primitivist poets Amos Cottle and William Hayley were favourite targets for such traditionalist attacks, both closely connected with the flourishing but ill-reputed mass trade of mass book-printing:

10 Moore, *The Fudge Family in Paris*, 1818, in: *British Satire 1785 – 1840*, V. 128.

11 Printed books of Romantic verse such as William Wordsworth's *Poems in Two Volumes of 1807* sold extremely ill, a butt of ridicule. For a contemporary book collector or reader of contemporary poetry, it would have been easier to find volumes of poetry written by Romantic women poets.

12 Schmidt-Haberkamp, *Die Kunst der Kritik*, 179.

13 Geoffrey Turnovsky, *The Literary Market*, Philadelphia 2009, passim; reviewed by David Coward in: *TLS*, 5597, 9 July 2010, 3.

But Amos Cottle writes, while Gifford sleeps,
 And every muse o'er Hayley's *triumphs* weeps;
 They write, and what they write, more strange, is sold,
 And *lead* is purchased at the price of gold!¹⁴
 High rolls th' o'erwhelming tide of copious song!
 Printers drive Critics, Critics Bards along!¹⁵

In the Romantic Period, satirists of Romanticism made it a habit to remind reviewers of the classical ideal of the incorruptible critic and of his duty to preserve the Classical Tradition. Colton affirmed the indispensability of criticism for quality control while lashing the modern abuses of criticism that served mere commercial purposes:

Give me the critic formed in ancient School,
 No placeman's pensioner, no party's tool,
 No hireling, doomed, by venal printers fed,
 To scribble scandal for his daily bread.¹⁶

And he echoed Pope's *Essay on Criticism* when he compared servile, corruptible modern critics to the medieval barbarians and monks that had destroyed the heritage of Rome and initiated the "dark Middle Ages":

'Tis well their wants these hireling pens divide,
 And make them fight, like Swiss, on either side;
 Else might these mercenaries, kept in pay
 By Booksellers, in night *blot* out the day,
 Thus a *third* "Deluge learning might o'errun,"
 And *Critics* end what Goths and Monks begun.¹⁷

The numerous complaints about bribable critics in the eighteenth century – from Dryden to Goldsmith – notwithstanding, the Neoclassicists of the Romantic Period cultivated the common notion that in "those good old times" satirists were still incorruptible and severely chastised the host of Grub Street scribblers, keeping them at bay and exposed to public scorn. On the model of Persius and Gifford, George Daniel of Islington's interlocutor P begins his polemic on the same classical formula as Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*:

There was a time when CHURCHILL, bold and coarse,
 Gave Wit its point, and Satire all its force;
 When POPE, immortal Sat'rist! Made his prey

14 Colton, *Hypocrisy: A Satire in Three Books*, 1812, 45.

15 *Ibid.* 47. The slighting reference to mass production and mass sales is to Hayley's enormously successful didactic poem *The Triumphs of Temper* (1781), written for the instruction and sentimental education of women.

16 *Ibid.* 6.

17 *Ibid.* 28. Reference to Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1711, lines 691–692, in: *Poems*, 166.

The HERVEYs and the GILDONs of the day;
 Dragg'd into light th' abandon'd scribbling crew,
 And boldly scourg'd them in the public view:
 But now so cheap is praise [...] ¹⁸

As usual, P's interlocutor F calls the enraged satirist to employ moderation, pleading that, thanks to Gifford, Della Cruscanism, Gothicism, and other dissenting literatures are on the decline.¹⁹ But P continues harping on modern admiration for literary mass producers like Byron, Southey, and Scott, due to corrupt critics who puff such nonsense and corrupt authors who write against their own principles. The divergence of theory and practice, doctrine and literary creation, as frequently observable in the case of Byron, was a traditional argument for the universal validity of theological, philosophical, and artistic creeds and programmes that increasingly fell into disregard:

Not BYRON stands acquitted of the crime,
 A promise made in prose, he breaks in rhyme.
 [...]
 Does SOUTHEY pause, or paper-staining SCOTT
One moment respite grant, a page to blot? ²⁰

Satire, Daniel argues through his mouthpiece P, is indispensable at all times and in all places in controlling morals and quality as well as the freedom of art (in the sense of maintaining independence from money-givers), so that corruption of authors and satirists and critics shakes the foundations both of the traditional state and the traditional Republic of Letters. The cosmopolitan Republic of Letters admitted all classically educated intellectuals regardless of their nationality or opinion before the Romantic Period split it up, replacing it with closed national and philosophical circles. But its members were gladiators in their controversial debates, the more so as their Republic of Letters was increasingly threatened.²¹ Daniel's evocation of fools and knaves recalls Swift and the Augustan tradition of satire:

And shall the muse, freeborn, to none a slave;
 Unbrib'd, unbought, by any fool or knave,
 A votary oft at freedom's holy shrine,
 Check the just warmth of her satiric line? ²²

18 Daniel, *The Modern Dunciad*, 1814, 5.

19 *Ibid.* 8–9.

20 *Ibid.* 46.

21 Charles Nisard, *Les gladiateurs de la république des lettres aux XVe, XVIe et XVIIe siècles*, Paris 1860.

22 Daniel, *The Modern Dunciad*, 96.

A devastatingly satirical review of Coleridge's *Christabel and Other Poems* (1816) in the *Scourge and Satirist* condensed all Neoclassical strictures on the Romantics. The new school that had revolutionized the universally valid criteria of literary excellence and called legitimate professional criticism by rule into question appeared as a closed Jacobin club, a French national circle of traitorous Britons, whose members boosted each other's productions. As participants in that conspiracy, the anonymous reviewer names Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey in the same breath as Byron and Campbell, irrespective of the contentions between these poets and of the Lake Poets' conversion to Toryism. They had continued to write low-quality Romantic poetry, even as Tories, and rejected criticism except by congenial poets, undermining a divinely decreed and rationally approved order of things, doing so because they would not submit to professional critical quality control. Once more, an allegedly homogeneous Romantic School is polemically constituted by one of its adversaries:

Within the last few years, a conspiracy has been formed to revolutionize the whole system of English poetry; to undermine the foundations of taste and common sense, and to establish a general confederation against the authority of legitimate criticism. A system of extensive and reciprocal puffing has promoted the object of the club, and Byron, Coleridge, Campbell, Southey, Scott, and Wordsworth, have manfully supported the reputation of themselves and of each other.²³

It might have been concluded that in an æra of highly polished civilization, with so many models of established excellence in their view, [...] endowed with no mean portion of the genius which inspired the early masters of the art, they would have endeavoured to excel them in the graces of composition [...] But with a degree of perverseness almost unaccountable, they voluntarily relinquish the advantages they might so easily and yet so nobly obtain over their predecessors, and adopt a process the very reverse which would be taught by reason or by nature.²⁴

The very officiousness, however, and austerity of criticism, should be regarded by such men as Mr. Coleridge as the strongest stimulus to the cultivation of poetical taste and to the most strenuous mental exertion.²⁵

Madame de Staël, something of a champion of the literature of the allegedly dark Middle Ages despised by Pope and his followers, described Neoclassical poetry as elitist, due to strict critical quality control by application to the rules of reason and to the models of classical antiquity. Romantic poetry, by contrast, she described as popular, both written and read by the ordinary people.²⁶ Her attitude to critical quality control was typically ambiguous, if not negative, as was her attitude to French Neoclassicism and the Classical Tradition. Moreover, the

23 *Scourge and Satirist*, 12 (July 1816), 60, in Coleridge: The Critical Heritage, II. 268.

24 *Ibid.* 62, ed. cit. II. 270.

25 *Ibid.* 69, ed. cit. II. 276.

26 Staël, *De l'Allemagne*, London 1813, I. 289–290.

mutual unflattering criticism of elitist poets striving to ameliorate their productions by rational analysis contradicted the Preromantic and Romantic ideal of universal love and brotherhood, which aimed at overcoming both the feudal order and the system of rules. Romantic circles and groups hence tended to only accept such criticism as was written by the Romantic poets themselves, by Hazlitt or Lamb or Coleridge, an artistic personal union that was quite contrary to Pope's strict separation of "These *born to Judge*" and "those to Write".²⁷ One of the most radical and influential Romantic pronouncements against learning and judging art by academic classical rules was Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder and Ludwig Tieck's novel with the significant title *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1797), in which art is divinely inspired devotion, sympathetic imagination, piety, and vision of eternal truth, and in which modern critics are denounced as "Theoristen", "Systematiker", and "Afterweise", true art's worst enemies: "Mit wie unendlich vielen unnützen Worten haben sich nicht die überklugen Schriftsteller neuerer Zeiten bei der Materie von den *Idealen* in den bildenden Künsten versündigt!"²⁸ Here, art enthusiasm is a religious mystery not to be rationally explained by profane mechanical teachers and critics of art. In the same year, the young revolutionary Friedrich Schlegel expressed the same concept in terms of citizenship and equal rights. Criticism by mere rule, which is not itself art, has no *droit de citoyen* in the republic of art, an idea later appropriated by Oscar Wilde in *The Critic as Artist* (1890), in his new Decadent and Neoromantic reconstruction of the Classical Tradition:

Poesie kann nur durch Poesie kritisiert werden. Ein Kunsturteil, welches nicht selbst ein Kunstwerk ist, entweder im Stoff, als Darstellung des notwendigen Eindrucks in seinem Werden, oder durch eine schöne Form und einen im Geist der alten römischen Satire liberalen Ton, hat gar kein Bürgerrecht im Reiche der Kunst.²⁹

In his poetry and prose on picturesque landscape gardening and painting, the Radical Romantic Richard Payne Knight expressed his profound disdain of uninspired academic criticism by rule instead of artistic sensibility. Though devoid of a metaphysical or religious argumentation, his malediction can be read as a secularized version of curses or bans pronounced on heretics in religious creeds:

27 Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1711, line14, in: *Poems*, 144.

28 Wackenroder – Tieck, *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*, 1797, ed. Martin Bollacher, Reclams Universal Bibliothek, Stuttgart, 1955, 2005, 7–8. The novel's titular hero and first person narrator, an old pious monk opposing dogmas and systems and advocating a world religion, is himself an artist and thus qualified to judge artists, painters as well as musical composers.

29 Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Fragmente, Lyceums-Fragmente*, 1797, in: *Werke in zwei Bänden*, I. 183. See also Walter Benjamin, *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik*, 1920, ed. Hermann Schweppenhäuser, Frankfurt 1973 63–64.

Curse the pedantic jargon, that defines
 Beauty's unbounded forms to given lines!
 With scorn eternal mark the cautious fool,
 Who dares not judge till he consults his rule!³⁰

In the first of Landor's two imaginary conversations between the Richard Porson and Robert Southey (1823), Southey defends Wordsworth against Porson's charges of neglect of the Classical Tradition. Southey affirms that modern literature could no longer follow ancient authorities, and that the standards of criticism could not be defined by exact rules:

Southey. [...] you, Mr Porson, who have turned over all the volumes of all the commentators, will inform me whether I am right or wrong in asserting that no critic hath yet appeared, who hath been able to fix or to discern the exact degrees of excellence above a certain point.³¹

Proclaimed Romantic disdain of professional criticism by rule in favour of proclaimed originality was a hallmark of much Romantic writing and painting, so that Shelley made a bold statement in pronouncing that good poetry and good criticism could never coexist at the same time. Hence, he blamed the Augustans for their invention of the periodical book review:

[...] I have written fearlessly. It is the misfortune of this age that its writers, too thoughtless of immortality, are exquisitely sensible to temporary praise or blame. They write with the fear of Reviews before their eyes. This system of criticism sprang up in the torpid interval when Poetry was not. Poetry, and the art which professes to regulate and limit its powers, cannot subsist together.³²

Ralph Waldo Emerson expressed much the same conviction in his Neoplatonic definition of poetic genius, when he compared the verse produced by a true visionary poet to spores shaken down from the gills of an agaric, "a fearless, sleepless, deathless progeny" and "a fearless, vivacious, deathless offspring" pursued by large but lame swarms of censures, noxious insects without wings that will ultimately fall and perish. Like Percy Shelley's fallen leaves, these spores are scattered and quickened to a new birth by the wind of inspiration. Criticism, by contrast, which is not itself poetry like the critical writings of Coleridge or Hazlitt, cannot survive for lack of wings:

The songs, thus flying immortal from their mortal parent, are pursued by clamorous flights of censures, which swarm in far greater numbers, and threaten to devour them;

30 Knight, *The Landscape*, I. 79–82, London 1794, 6.

31 Landor, *Imaginary Conversations*, 1824, ed. cit. III. 193.

32 P.B. Shelley, *The Revolt of Islam*, Preface, in *Poetical Works*, 35.

but these last are not winged. At the end of a very short leap they fall plump down, and rot, having received from the souls out of which they came no beautiful wings.³³

Romantic circles of friendship, formed against official *ancien régime* institutions, supported these negative views of official professional criticism by rule, although social reality rarely bore out the social ideal. Gautier, looking back on the *petit cénacle* of young French Romantic artists who had gathered around Pétrus Borel, remembered how poets, painters, sculptors, engravers, and architects were “unis par la plus tendre amitié”.³⁴ In the wake of Preromantic sentimentalism, Mrs Piozzi proclaimed her and her fellow poets’ abstention from public criticism, never to harm “the brethren” and “the kind”, and Robert Merry concluded *The Florence Miscellany* (1785) with a desultory address “To the Critics”- an ironic dedication in intentionally hobbling verse to mark the poet’s contempt of criticism. Gifford’s satire against Della Cruscan sensibility targeted such anti-classical disdain of public criticism as irrational and irresponsible.³⁵ In Gifford’s eyes, lack of quality control could not help but produce mediocrity, and Mary Robinson, whom Gifford associated with the Della Cruscans, could easily assume a Neoclassical position for argument’s sake and turn Gifford’s weapon against the mediocre Gifford himself:

Wisdom, with penetrating eye, surveys
Each cause for censure, and each claim for praise;
Divides the good from bad; - the right from wrong;
The sons of Genius from the vulgar throng.³⁶

With Neoclassicists, it became commonplace to represent the “new Romantic school” as being afraid of independent professional critics, preferring their own internal mutual praise and even writing their own reviews. An instance is to be found in Platen’s satirical drama *Der romantische Ödipus* (1827), where Nimmermann’s self-parodying Romantic tragedy is characterized as facile, untaught, mass-produced nonsense refusing to face rational criticism, “Histörrchen, Abenteuer, plattes Volksgewäsch, Statt folgerechten Gegenstands Entwicklung”:³⁷

Leicht fertig sind Romantiker,
Die’s laufen lassen, wie es läuft.³⁸

33 Emerson, *The Poet*, in: *Essays. Second Series*, 1844, in: *Essays and Lectures*, ed. Joel Porte, Library of America, New York NY 1983, 457 – 458.

34 Gautier, *Histoire du romantisme*, MS 1872, 17.

35 Gifford, *The Maeviad*, London 1795, 7th edition 1810, lines 132 – 133, in: *British Satire 1785 – 1840*, IV. 44. Note Gifford’s derogatory double meaning.

36 Robinson, *Modern Manners*, 1793, lines 93 – 96, in: *British Satire 1785 – 1840*, IV. 94.

37 Platen, *Der romantische Ödipus*, 1827, act V, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, X. 163.

38 *Ibid.* act I, X. 94. Reference to Karl Leberecht Immermann.

The populace, *mobile vulgus*, had neither the sense nor knowledge of tradition and was instead forever on the lookout for something new, a Tory and Neoclassical persuasion confirmed by the erratic developments of the French Revolution. The Romantics were reproached for fulfilling that ever changing and insatiable popular greed for innovation, so their works would not last. After the meteoric rise and fall of the Della Crusicans, the ephemeral nature of the new school or schools, as opposed to the lasting art of the old school, became a common weapon in the Neoclassical arsenal. The eagle survives the insect. Poetasters come and go with Beau Brummell's change of fashions, French revolutionary parties, and popular crazes; good taste and art remain forever. Lady Anne Hamilton's *Epics of the Ton* (1807), in large parts a work of literary criticism, paints a satirical portrait of a more and more quick-lived time, in which the heroes, poets, and fashions of the day are no candidates for immortality. It is the modern critic's duty to counteract this modern inflation, to separate lasting quality from ephemeral quantity, to discourage greed-driven time serving for profit and fame. Hamilton's imagery is significantly borrowed from the ancients in the *querelle des anciens et des modernes*:

Who's in? who's out? A question hard as vain,
 Before we speak, the outs are in again:
 We see our error; – while we turn about
 To mend the phrase, – good luck! The ins are out:
 Thus all by turns enjoy the sweets and sorrow,
 They're here today, and they are gone tomorrow.
 So grass, that grows at morn, at evening dies,
 So sees one sun the birth and death of flies;
 So cobwebs, spread to gild the morning ray,
 Are swept, ere noon, by housemaid's broom away.³⁹

Hamilton's comic epic anticipated a central motif in Byron's body of work. Tory periodicals would identify two Byrons, one (Romantic) writing hastily and carelessly for the prevailing taste of the hour, the other (Neoclassical) having recourse to his knowledge of the Classical Tradition and Horatian skill and writing works for all time. Professional periodical criticism should cause him to renounce catering to novelty and to return to a long-lasting and slow-evolving tradition:

The avidity with which the public have swallowed all the rapid compositions with which he [Byron] has been pleased to indulge their insatiable appetite for something new, has led him to ascertain with how much ease the public can be gratified.⁴⁰

39 [Hamilton], *The Epics of the Ton*, 1807, 120 – 121.

40 "Silurensis", Letter to the Editor, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 11 (February 1822), 213.

Smooth poetry, and felicitous expressions, the noble bard can bestow on his readers when he is so minded [...]⁴¹

Hold! Hold! – By the public thus sated and cramm'd,
Lest your lays, like yourself, stand a chance to be d—d!⁴²

In all these Neoclassical statements, Romantic writers and Romantic critics are denigrated as sharing incompetence rather than common qualification, being neither born and trained “artisan”-poets, nor born and trained “artisan”-critics, but mere self-applauding, money-loving stagers of a mere show of spontaneity and congeniality. Byron himself endorsed this view when he returned the reproach of lack of feeling and sympathy as well as the reproach of lack of qualification both upon the untaught Romantics themselves and upon their untaught critics in the *Edinburgh Review*. Abstaining from the Classical-Romantic divide as usual, Byron chose incompatible arguments and slashed at both sides:

A man must serve his time to every trade
Save Censure; Critics are all ready made.
Take hackneyed jokes from MILLER, got by rote,
With just enough of learning to misquote;
A mind well skilled to find, or forge a fault,
A turn for punning, call it Attic salt;
To JEFFRY go, be silent and discreet,
His pay is just ten sterling pounds per sheet:
Fear not to lie, 'twill seem a sharper hit,
Shrink not from blasphemy, 'Twill pass for wit;
Care not for feeling – pass your proper jest,
And stand a Critic hated, yet caress'd.⁴³

Francis Jeffrey and the editors and critics of many other journals are charged with following a low and vulgar popular taste, and the mass of poets with seeking not to offend the powerful critics in the mass press instead of producing quality literature. Corruption, cruelty and greed for profit are seen to dominate criticism with a regression into pristine savagery and thirst for blood, – a negative imagery diametrically opposed both to cultivated Augustanism and to the Romantic cult of primitivism and noble savagery:

Yet say, why should the Bard, at once, resign
His claim to favour from the sacred Nine?

41 Ibid. 214.

42 “Palaemon”, in: Blackwood’s *Edinburgh Magazine*, 11 (April 1822), 460.

43 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1809, lines 63–74, l. 231. Byron’s polemical reference is to Joseph (“Joe”) Miller (1684–1738), a popular but illiterate comic actor on the London stage, under whose name publishers compiled an equally popular book of primitive and stale jests, with ever-expanding editions, after Miller’s death. In the Romantic Period, Joe Miller’s *Jests* still sold extremely well and were the butt of Neoclassical ridicule.

For ever startled by the mingled howl
 Of Northern wolves that still in darkness prowl;
 A coward brood, which mangle as they prey,
 By brutal instinct, all that cross their way:
 Aged or young, the living or the dead,
 No mercy find, – these felons must be fed.⁴⁴

The blame of savagery extends to Jeffrey, himself a judge expected to find a balance between justice and mercy in the sense of Christ's Sermon on the Mount and Christian civilization. But Byron's comparison of judge Francis Jeffrey to his almost namesake judge George Jeffreys of the "Bloody Assizes" of 1685 associates both judges with the brutal pack of wolves – another ironic instance of wordplay with names in Neoclassical satire. Jeffrey is denigrated as judging works of literature much as Jeffreys judged men, sentencing them to be cruelly mangled and beheaded on a bloody scaffold:

Health to immortal JEFFREY! Once, in name,
 England could boast a judge almost the same:
 In soul so like, so merciful, yet just,
 Some think that Satan has resigned his trust,
 And given the Spirit to the world again,
 To sentence Letters, as he sentenced men.⁴⁵

Byron's attack on Jeffrey was motivated by his anger at the *Edinburgh Review's* scathing anonymous critique of his *Hours of Idleness* (1807) in 1808, which he believed to be Jeffrey's, but which was written by Henry Brougham. And Byron saw the origin of satire in personal spleen and resentment, not any noble desire to reform mankind. When he was informed of his mistake, Byron regretted his attack and, from 1815, even contributed reviews to Jeffrey's periodical, as both authors had much in common, including their instinctive distrust of metaphysics and their aversion to the Lake School.⁴⁶

Wordsworth flew into a rage over Jeffrey's satirical reviews as well as over parodies of his poems, because he viewed critics that were not themselves inspired poets as mere detractors ignorant of genius. His former friend and ally Hazlitt, who resented Wordsworth's desertion from Radicalism to Toryism and therefore became one of Wordsworth's harshest critics, knew this. Notwithstanding his sympathy with Wordsworth's Romantic positions, the critic Hazlitt attacked the Romantic poet's scorn of mere critics as controllers of literary quality on grounds usually occupied by Neoclassicists. In his review of

44 Ibid. lines 426–433, I. 242.

45 Ibid. lines 438–443, I. 242–243.

46 Duncan Wu, Rancour and Rabies: Hazlitt, Coleridge and Jeffrey in Dialogue, in: Demata – Wu (eds.), *British Romanticism and the Edinburgh Review*, 168–194.

Wordsworth's five-volume *Poetical Works* (1827), it again becomes apparent how aesthetic judgment was topped and adulterated by socio-political prejudice, preventing Romantics from recognizing the family likeness of their Romantic School:

He [Wordsworth] never kicks against the pricks of authority. Never suspects that man was made for any thing but to obey his masters. [...] But with respect to the authority of critics, he is as genuine a rebel as the Wat Tyler of his friend Southey. He holds our sovereignty in contempt; and, though still sore from the wounds inflicted by the cutting irony of Jeffrey, professes to consider us all as a crowd of barking curs, annoyed at the colossal height and insufferable splendour of his own genius.⁴⁷

Wordsworth's scorn of professional critics stood in the wake of Preromanticism's disdain of professional and academic critics, who judged works by rule. In literature, as well as art criticism, there arose a new ideal, the sensitive critic who was either himself a true creator or a true lover of natural and artistic beauty, a dilettante rather than an indentured artisan and appointed judge. This made it easy for the Romantic poets to publicly disdain criticisms of their work in reviews and magazines, although they resented and suffered from them enormously. And it also made it easy for Neoclassical satirists to ridicule such anti-classical Romantic prophetic solipsism as a combination of stupidity and arrogance, as at the end of one of James Hogg's parodies on Wordsworth's *The Excursion*. The devious speaker (Wordsworth), though in reality deeply hurt by the ridicule poured upon him by professional critics of his published works, professes to scorn such base ephemeral creatures and is opinionatedly convinced of his literary immortality:

For, mark my words, – eternally my name
 Shall last on earth, conspicuous like a star
 'Mid that bright galaxy of favour'd spirits,
 Who, laugh'd at constantly whene'er they publish'd,
 Survived the impotent scorn of base Reviews,
 Monthly or Quarterly, or by that accursed
 Journal, the Edinburgh Review, that lives
 On tears, and sighs, and groans, and brains, and blood.⁴⁸

Following Shaftesbury, professional academic critics were vilified as snarling, carping, hampering, ill-natured enemies and spoilers of artistic creation. Thus Nicholas Rowe defended both the original rule-despising genius of Shakespeare and his own rule-despising sentimental tragedies, which paved the way for George Lillo and *das bürgerliche Trauerspiel*, by attacking critics of the Classical

47 The London Weekly Review, 9 June 1827, in: Hazlitt, *New Writings*, II. 38–39.

48 Hogg, *The Poetic Mirror, or, The Living Bards of Britain, The Flying Tailor*, London 1816, in: *Poetic Mirrors*, ed. David Groves, Frankfurt 1990, 61.

Tradition. Tragedies, his “Prologue” to *Jane Shore* (1714) declared, had to be national English rather than cosmopolitan Greek or Latin, simple and ballad-like, moving, humble, honest, and straightforward – the qualities of earlier ages that “hampering critics” would despise and suppress in favour of false art:

In such an age, immortal Shakespeare wrote,
By no quaint rules, nor hampering critics taught;
With rough majestic force he moved the heart,
And strength and nature made amends for Art.⁴⁹

In his *Observations on The Fairy Queen* (1754), Thomas Warton defended Spenser’s post-medieval neglect of classical rules, his “romantic flights of the imagination” and his national preference for “the various and marvellous”, as more poetical than correct. Thus, he drove a wedge between poetic competence and irrelevant critical carping: “In reading Spenser, if the critic is not satisfied, yet the reader is transported”.⁵⁰ Robert Burns, whose first Epistle to John Lapraik (MS 1 April 1786) boasted his alleged lack of learning and poetical training as a precondition for his naturalness and spontaneity, expressed the same scorn of cavilling professional criticism by rules. Not a poet, but a jingler and “rhymers like by chance”, the self-fashioned ploughman of Ayrshire saw his popular rustic Scots art as no suitable object for learned critics in the business-oriented Augustan literary industry. The Neoclassical strictures on the Romantic fusion of verse and prose, as in the prose-poems of Robert Lowth and Christopher Smart, may here be alluded to. The well-read Burns’s parade of boorish ignorance was obviously a mere stage performance of his primitivist Romantic poetics:

Your Critic-folk may cock their nose,
And say, ‘How can you e’er propose,
You wha ken hardly *verse* from *prose*,
To mak a *sang*?
But by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye’re maybe wrang.⁵¹

As in Thomas Warton’s opinion, the reader’s affections should be moved by a poet’s true and spontaneous affections and without any knowledge of classical poetics or the art of rhetoric. It is not the business of a poet to satisfy the critic by a display of verifiable learning and observance of rules:

49 Rowe, *The Tragedy of Jane Shore, Written in Imitation of Shakespeare’s Style*, Prologue, 1714, lines 17–20, in: *Eighteenth-Century Plays*, ed. John Hampden, Everyman’s Library, London 1928, 1958, 60.

50 Thomas Warton, *Observations on The Fairy Queen*, 1756, in: *Critical Essays of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Scott Elledge, Ithaca 1961, II. 772.

51 Burns, [First] Epistle to [John] Lapraik, an Old Scottish Bard, lines 55–60, in: *Poems and Songs*, Oxford English Texts, ed. James Kinsley, Oxford 1968, I. 87.

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
 That's a' the learning I desire;
 Then tho' I drudge thro' dub and mire
 At pleugh or cart,
 My Muse, tho' hamely in attire,
 May touch the heart.⁵²

In the "Preface" to his Kilmarnock volume (1786) containing two of his three verse epistles to Lapraik, in which he denied standing in the Classical Tradition of Theocritus or Virgil and thus gave his own show of ignorance the lie, Burns was keen to present himself as a private rhymer standing without public criticism's field of inimical fire:

Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing Poet by rule, he [the Author of this] sings the sentiments and manners, he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language.

And two years later, in his reciprocating "Epistle to Robert Burns" printed in his own Kilmarnock volume of simple Scots poems (1788), Lapraik struck the same tone with the same purpose and arguments, a private rhymer avoiding and scorning public criticism:

O far fam'd RAB! my silly Muse,
 That thou sae prais'd langsyne,
 When she did scarce ken verse by prose,
 Now dares to spread her wing.

Unconscious of the least desert,
 Nor e'er expecting fame,
 I sometimes did myself divert,
 Wi' jingling worthless rhyme.⁵³

Throughout the Romantic Period, Neoclassical critics mocked the Romantic poets for their scorn or evasion of public criticism, hitting out at their paraded ignorance and privacy although they knew all too well that it was a theatrical pose. Towards the end of the Period, John Gibson Lockhart wrote a long negative review of Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges's *Recollections* (1825), taking the Romantic author to task for his slighting of literary criticism in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, notwithstanding Brydges's Tory allegiance. Lockhart, Gifford's designed successor as editor of the *Quarterly Review*, derided Brydges as the head and nestor of "THE MOPING SCHOOL", young followers "who prefer

52 Ibid. lines 73 – 78, l. 87.

53 Lapraik, *Poems on Several Occasions*, Epistle to Robert Burns, lines 1 – 8, Kilmarnock 1788, 35.

lounging in a green lane over a Coleridge or a Collins” and hold with Brydges that original genius is autochthonous,

[...] that criticism is nothing but mockery and malignity – that every one must entirely rely upon himself [...] that the only thing of real value in literature is the expression of what one actually feels in consequence of what one actually meets with in the world, and that art, arrangement, condensation, patient elaboration, revision, and correction, are only so many names for the trickery by which second-rate beings attempt in vain to hide their deficiency in genius.⁵⁴

From the vantage point of old age and experience, former Romantics would admit to there being a grain of truth in the former Neoclassical allegation of mass production unaccompanied and unfiltered by criticism. Théophile Gautier’s memories of *Les Jeunes France*, reaching back over a gap of forty years, describes the young Romantics’ enthusiasm, imaginative flights, rebellion, and disdain of tradition with a mixture of pride in past battles and ridicule in past follies. At a time when, to these young rebels with their admiration of Byron, the whole formerly amalgamated world seemed to be breaking up, seething, sparking, red-hot, floating, flaming in liquid lava (-much as Blake had imagined Fuzon’s and Orc’s rebellion against frozen and stony Urizen-), from which chaos arose a clutch of artists whose chief qualification was their youth and juvenile flouting of conventions in their “originalité agressive”.⁵⁵ “On était beau, on était jeune, on était fier, on était enthousiaste”.⁵⁶ There were two categories, old and young, irrespective of good and bad in artistic accomplishment:

Pour nous le monde se divisait en *flamboyants* et en *grisâtre*, les uns objets de notre amour, les autres de notre aversion. Nous voulions la vie, la lumière, le mouvement, l’audace de pensée et d’exécution [...]⁵⁷

Where the red waistcoat (“le gilet rouge”)⁵⁸ with its association of bullfighting counted more than the artistic performance itself, so that no qualified criticism sorted out the ephemeral from the lasting works of art, many stars arose in the firmament of poetry who had their “moment d’éclat” and flashes from the muzzles of their guns. But they were forgotten when “la fumée du combat” had subsided. Gautier’s prime example is Philothée O’Neddy (pseudonym of Théophile Dondey), a young poet who, after 1830, wrote his “littérature frénétique”, breaking all rules in order to realize “l’idéal et les postulations secrètes de la jeunesse romantique”.⁵⁹ Following the practice then used in the war between

54 Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine, 17 (May 1825), 505 – 507.

55 Gautier, *Histoire du romantisme*, MS 1872, 65.

56 Ibid. 69.

57 Ibid. 93.

58 Ibid. 90 seqq.

59 Ibid. 61 – 64.

Neoclassicists and Romantics, Gautier selected a particularly weak and self-parodying example of schoolboy verse from O’Neddy’s collection *Feu et flamme* (1833), in which a qualified critic would have diagnosed both lack of art and certainty of oblivion. The untutored and uncorrected child was not necessarily a Blakean Romantic poet, “mighty prophet” and “seer blest”:

Amour, enthousiasme, étude, poésie,
C’est là qu’en votre extase, océan d’ambrosie,
Se noiraient nos âmes de feu!
C’est là que je saurais, fort d’un génie étrange,
Dans la création d’un bonheur sans mélange,
Être plus artiste que Dieu!⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Ibid. 65.

VI. Arguments in the Debate against the Romantic School

1) Dethronement of Reason: Revolutionary Ethics, Aesthetics, Religion, and Politics

In revolutionary France, Condorcet and his circle of Radical philosophers demanded the total separation of reason, art, and ethics from religion. In his historical novel *Zanoni* (1842), set during the era of the French Revolution, Bulwer-Lytton fictionalized these controversies in a plot which showed the failure of pure independent reason in all domains, including aesthetics and ethics, from a retrospective point of view and with the satirical irony of a Victorian, reminiscent of Charles Dickens:

All the Old Virtues were dethroned for a new Pantheon: Patriotism was a narrow sentiment; Philanthropy was to be its successor. No love that did not embrace all mankind, as warm for Indus and the Pole as for the hearth of home, was worthy the breast of a generous man.¹

The English – as opposed to the French – Enlightenment of the eighteenth century was Christian and understood the feudal order of the *ancien régime* to be the earthly image of the divine hierarchy of heaven, established in accordance with a rational plan of a benevolent, divine creator. Reason and Scripture were taught to be the foundation of the traditional feudal order and traditional ethics, not least in floods of Neoclassical and Latitudinarian sermons.² Biblical passages were quoted out of context in the Holy Alliance of reason and Scripture typical of the English Enlightenment: “Fear the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change”.³

The rule of general nature, as propagated and illustrated by Samuel Johnson’s

1 Bulwer-Lytton, *Zanoni*, 1842, in: *Novels and Romances*, VII. 66–67.

2 For these contexts see Rolf Lessenich, *Elements of Pulpit Oratory in Eighteenth-Century England* (1660–1800), *passim*.

3 Proverbs 24, 21. Quoted from the epigraph to Alexander Watson, *The Anti-Jacobin: A Hudibrastic Poem*, Edinburgh 1794.

poet Imlac, applied to epistemology, socio-politics, and religion as well as to art. Individualism and perspectivism, which later found an epistemological vindication in Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781) and Coleridge's contributions to Southey's *Omniana* (1812), as well as in his Dejection Ode (1802), were still widely held to be both heterodox and sectarian because their Romantic idealism turned away from the narrow epistemology of Enlightenment empiricism. Furthermore, the act of seeing the world not only as perceived but also as created by the human mind threatened to expose established ethics to individual perspectives and radical changes. The works of Coleridge, Scott, Moore, and Byron were often criticized on moral grounds for promoting the cause of immorality in various ways by rendering vice lovable in violation of the rule formulated by Boileau and Samuel Johnson. So were Gothic novels and dramas, with their rebel villains who roused disgust of their crimes and admiration of their courage to oppose things as they were – witness the critiques of Maturin's *Bertram* (1816) and the fact that *Bertram* put an end to Maturin's prospect of advancement in the church, even in its final domesticated form.⁴ In Maturin's Gothic tragedy which Coleridge attacked in *Biographia Literaria* (1717), *Bertram* wins the admiration even of the pious prior who, however, can also erupt into passionate calls for violence and bloodshed. Both are "antithetically mixed" characters in the sense of the sceptical anthropology of Byron and Charles Lamb, who were both on the sub-committee of management for Drury Lane and helped Maturin revise the first draft of his Gothic tragedy for the stage:

PRIOR: High-hearted man, sublime even in thy guilt,
 Whose passions are thy crimes, whose angel-sin
 Is pride that rivals the star-bright apostate's. –
 Wild admiration thrills me to behold
 An evil strength, so above earthly pitch -⁵

In Enlightenment eyes, and also in the eyes of Romantics turned Tory like Coleridge, such works subverted the eternal foundations of ethics and of the state in favour of epistemological perspectivism and individual self-realization. In *Christabess* (1816), a parody on Coleridge's "Christabel" (1816), the anti-heroines Christabess and Adelaide (replacing Christabel and Geraldine) are voluptuous and drunk on cheap gin, and the scene of their undressing and lesbian embracing is transformed into a chaotic orgy followed by the sexual intercourse between Christabess's vulgar father, the tinker Tom Bottomly (replacing Sir Leoline), and her equally shameless guest Adelaide.⁶ Byron's verse tales have similar scenes of sexual promiscuity, confusion, and indecency that

4 See Jeffrey N. Cox (ed.), *Seven Gothic Dramas 1789–1825*, Introduction, 60–66.

5 Maturin, *Bertram*, 1816, III/2, in: Cox, 343.

6 *Christabess*, 1816, lines 256–266 and 640–641, in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, II. 143 and 151.

conservative critics took exception at, the most offensive being the seraglio scene in the sixth canto of *Don Juan* (1819–24). William Roberts's adverse review of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812–1816) in the Tory *British Review* hits at both the author and the persona of his epic:

No man has a right to be angry with the world because he has been outwitted by it in a contest of iniquity; because prostitutes have jilted him; and the promises of sensuality have proved false and treacherous. There is no dignity in the melancholy or misanthropy of such a man.⁷

Radical levellers were thus stigmatized as muddle-brained dreamers, sentimental fools and dupes, abject sinners, and high traitors insofar as they tried to change the divinely ordained “radix” (root or foundation) of the old feudal state, together with the church, whose duty it was to support and hallow the old feudal state.⁸ Reason, also called “the light of nature”, and reason's laws safeguarded the traditional feudal state and the traditional Neoclassical arts – a concept which the eighteenth-century sentimental movement strongly opposed. Erasmus Darwin, his grandson's precursor in anti-traditional and revolutionary theory of natural evolution, was a case in point. Preromantic sensibility and reevaluation of the imagination in Darwin's didactic poetry were joined with religious agnosticism and political Radicalism. In his Popean didactic poem in heroic couplets, *The Botanic Garden* (1791), Darwin claimed an Ovidian metamorphosis of flowers and advanced his sentimental theory of “the loves of the plants”,⁹ imagining stamens and pistils as men and women making love. This replacement of the traditional concept of *natura naturata* with a more dynamic concept of *natura naturans* prepared central Romantic ideas in the poetry of Wordsworth and Shelley, enlisting “Imagination under the Banner of Science”¹⁰. In times of revolution, Tory politicians and poets like George Canning, William Gifford, and John Hookham Frere saw an inseparable connection between sentimentalism, agnosticism, and revolutionary egalitarianism in Darwin's implicit plea for free natural love, which threatened the existence of feudal society. This led to one of the most popular parodies in three numbers of the *Anti-Jacobin*, “The Love of the Triangles”, written by Canning, Gifford, Frere, and Ellis in cooperation and intending to reassert the need of reason to control the freely roaming imagi-

7 [William Roberts] in: *British Review*, 3 (1812), 285. Also see Hayden, *Romantic Reviewers*, 136.

8 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, London 1790.

9 Darwin, *The Loves of the Plants* (1789), was later incorporated as part II of *The Botanic Garden* (1791). Erasmus Darwin died in 1802.

10 Darwin, *The Botanic Garden*, Preface, London 1791. For Darwin's enormous influence on Romanticism see Desmond King-Hele, *Erasmus Darwin and the Romantic Poets*, London 1986. For Darwin's Radicalism and Preromanticism see James V. Logan, *The Poetry and Aesthetics of Erasmus Darwin*, Princeton 1936.

nation of the freely feeling heart. The satire's target, the dethronement of reason in favour of imagination and the feeling heart, becomes apparent in the parody's invocation of the muse:

But chief, thou Nurse of the Didactic Muse,
Divine NONSENSIA, all thy soul infuse;
The charms of *Secants* and of *Tangents* tell,
How Loves and Graces in an *Angle* dwell.¹¹

The *Anti-Jacobin's* multifunctional Romantic and Radical speaker, Mr Higgins, who alternately impersonates Godwin, Darwin, Schiller along with other “Jacobins”, reveals himself as a highly irrational Shandean speaker who follows his hobby-horsical associations as a visionary and confused revolutionary scientist. He misreads Latin quotations out of context, as when he builds a long-winded theory on his confusion of “mus” and “murus”; he conflates classical mythology with non-classical myths and fairy tales; his text and footnotes teem with irrelevant Shandean digressions as when he jumps from a nonsensical “new botany” to a nonsensical “new world” arising out of the carnage of revolution and the blood of Pitt's guillotined head. Edmund Burke, who died in the year of the *Anti-Jacobin's* foundation (1797), had opposed his reason to the mad French craze for innovation out of destruction and quoted a revolutionary slogan: “Il faut tout détruire pour tout renouveler”.¹² Thus, Burke and other Tories roused their audience's indignation against experimental chemists, biologists, and psychiatrists, denouncing them as sex-driven alchemists and devil's disciples, with the result that the violence of a revolutionary Paris mob in 1789 was turned into the violence of a conservative Birmingham mob in 1791. Joseph Priestley's house was stormed, the crowd intent on murdering him and roasting him upon a spit, and, although he escaped, all his precious instruments were destroyed.¹³ Priestley's and Antoine Lavoisier's discovery of oxygen was discredited as impelled by the spirit of revolution rather than reason, so that the Radicals, in their turn, could blame the *ancien régime* for denying men oxygen to breathe freedom. Thomas Beddoes and Erasmus Darwin fared no better than Priestley. What appeared as genius in Romantic eyes was anathema to their enemies, a mixture of fraud and sacrilege. The *Anti-Jacobin* satirists were keen to discredit Darwin, the self-fashioned advocate of reason and perfectibility, as an erratic individual of uncontrolled imagination driven by an extremely prurient impulse. The model of their satire was the materialistic Hack Writer of Swift's *Discourse concerning*

11 [Frere et al.] in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 23 (16 April 1798), lines 35–38, in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, I. 170.

12 Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790,

13 Mike Jay, *The Atmosphere of Heaven: The Unnatural Experiments of Dr Beddoes and His Sons of Genius*, New Haven CT 2009, *passim*.

the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit (1704). Darwin, as they saw him, was a Romantic rogue who projected his own sexual fantasies on the behaviour of even inanimate things such as triangles, tangents, parabola, and curves:

AND first, the fair Parabola behold,
Her timid arms, with virgin blush, unfold!
Though, on one focus fix'd, her eyes betray
A heart that glows with love's resistless sway.¹⁴

In the first issue of the *Anti-Jacobin*, where he had diagnosed a "NEW SCHOOL of Poetry" and opposed those "Jacobin Poets" to the "Old Poets" of the Classical Tradition, Frere's friend Canning gave definitions and characteristics of that "*Jacobin Art of Poetry*" practised by those "Bards of Freedom":

The *Jacobin* Poet rejects all restrictions in his feelings. His love is enlarged and expanded so as to comprehend all human kind.¹⁵

It was little wonder that the new school's cult of universal love, which could even include flowers and animals, was, to a Tory perspective, discredited by its degeneration into the atrocities of the French Revolution and paradoxical outbreaks of tears and sensibility under the guillotine. Darwin's later poems teemed with verses welcoming the French Revolution. Thus the parody on Darwin's Preromantic botanical poem ends in a vitriolic parody of a Romantic revolutionary eulogy on France's conquest of England, the arrival of freedom, and the blessings of the guillotine:

Ye Sylphs of DEATH, on demon pinions flit
Where the tall Guillotine is rais'd for Pitt:
To the pois'd plank tie fast the monster's back,
Close the nice slider, ope the' expectant sack;
Then twitch, with fairy hands, the frolic pin –
Down falls the' impatient axe with deafening din;
The liberated head rolls off below,
And simpering Freedom hails the happy blow.¹⁶

If imagination uncontrolled by reason could instil human erotic behaviour in flowers' stamens and pistils, it could draw a similar conclusion from the etymologies of secants and tangents in geometry and mathematics, reducing Darwin to total absurdity. Frere's and Canning's is the text and Darwin's the pre-text.

Parody, in generally defined terms, is an imitation of the distinctive style and thought of a literary text, author, or tradition for comic or burlesque effect, and for playful or satirical purposes. Parody takes over the form of its pre-text,

14 [Frere et al.] in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 24 (23 April 2008), lines 107–110, I. 177.

15 *Ibid.* 1 (20 November 1797), I. 13.

16 *Ibid.* 26 (7 May 1798), I. 193.

inverting or exaggerating its content to grotesqueness. Postmodernism, with its insistence on reading as rereading and its consequent reduction of all texts to pre-texts and pastiches, deconstructs and blurs the necessary distinctions and is not helpful in understanding the arguments that the Romantics opposed to anti-Romantic and anti-Jacobin parodies, although they wrote parodies (just as they wrote other forms of satire) themselves. In Hunt's and Hazlitt's defences of Romanticism, Canning appears as a poet incapable of originality, whose preference for parody betrayed his imitative mind as well as his preference for a dead Classical Tradition. As the Greek composite term *παρ-ωδία* indicates, parody was a genre of the Classical Tradition as old as Hegemon, treated in Aristotle's *Poetics*. The Neoclassicists saw satirical parody as a kind of Menippean satire, a respected, time-honoured, and extremely effective weapon in the literary arsenal for the destruction of the enemy, cruel in its very rational techniques of discrediting the adversary's rationality and health of mind. There exist widely different types of parody, which have proved extremely difficult to sort into a recognized theoretical system, including parody as satire. Parody as satire either identifies the weaknesses of a work, a pre-text of supposedly low value, which it exposes to ridicule by inversion, exaggeration, or quotation and re-assemblage of passages out of context so that they parody themselves. Alternatively, satirical parody is aimed at a person ridiculed for some incompetence in the performance of his or her public office. This may be blundering in politics, as in Swift's and Byron's mock epitaphs on Marlborough and Castlereagh respectively, which pervert the conventions of epitaph writing without discrediting that pre-text. It may also be lack of intelligence or education, as in Neoclassical parodies on Radicals and Romantics who neither understand nor esteem the high value of a pre-text of Horace, Virgil, or Catullus in their literary production. Burlesque rather than comic types of parody, repeatedly called "Jacobinical Imitations", constituted the bulk of the *Anti-Jacobin's* poetry column. As early as in the sixth number, Canning and Frere expatiated on the success and advantages of their parodies, as these could ridicule the philosophical, political, and poetical unreasonableness of their Radical or Jacobin adversaries:

We cannot enough congratulate ourselves, on having been so fortunate as to fall upon the curious specimens of classical metre and correct sentiment, which we have made the subject of our late Jacobinical Imitations.

The fashion of admiring and imitating these productions has spread in a surprising degree. Even those who sympathize with the principles of the writer selected as our model [i.e. the pre-text], seem to have been struck with the ridicule of his poetry.¹⁷

¹⁷ Ibid. 6 (18 December 1797).

The English Augustan Enlightenment insisted on the concurrence of “reason and Scripture”, so that, next to classical Greek and Latin texts, the text of the Bible was another positive pre-text for anti-Jacobin parody. In the long poem of the *Anti-Jacobin*’s last number, “New Morality”, Canning lambasted the French revolutionists and English radicals as atheists ignorant or disdainful of Holy Scripture as well as the Classical Tradition. The ersatz god of their ersatz religion was La Réveillière-Lepaux, a demonic hunch-back perverting all reason and traditional rational virtue. Waving their red caps, the unholy revolutionaries sing unholy hymns based upon the biblical Psalms, calling upon their English sympathizers, Coleridge, Southey, Charles Lloyd, and Charles Lamb in poetry as well as Paine, Williams, Godwin, and Holcroft in prose, to praise La Réveillière-Lepaux:

C-----dge and S---th---ey, L---d, and L---be and Co.
Tune all your mystic harps to praise Lepaux!
[...]
All creeping creatures, venomous and low,
Paine, W---ll---s, G---dw---n, H---lcr---ft, praise Lepaux!¹⁸

Canning’s positive counter-example to such sacrilegious and traitorous Romantics and Radicals was Edmund Burke, the apologist of the *ancien régime* and guardian of its cultural support, the Classical Tradition:

BURKE! In whose breast a Roman ardour glow’d,
Whose copious tongue with Grecian richness flow’d.¹⁹

James Gillray illustrated Canning’s anti-Lloyd-Lamb passage in a caricature later inserted between the pages of the first number of the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*. Here, the monsters Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity here hide themselves under the masks of Justice, Philanthropy, and Sensibility; Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb, authors of a small octavo volume of Romantic *Blank Verse* in the poetical tradition of eighteenth-century sensibility (1798), do homage as toad and frog, preceding the monster Leviathan.²⁰

Charles Lloyd, at least, was stung by the reproach of high treason in view of French revolutionary atrocities and soon repented his Radicalism, though keenly aware of the fact that Tories and advocates of the Classical Tradition would distrust such conversions. In their eyes, anarchy in literature, meaning desertion of the classical rules of reason, reflected anarchy in politics, and an old

18 [Canning], *New Morality*, 1797, lines 336–337, 344–345, in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, I, 281. For the self-protective technique of hyphenating names cf. Thomas Moore’s satires on aristocratic vice and government surveillance, *Intercepted Letters* (1813) and *The Fudge Family in Paris* (1818).

19 [Canning], *New Morality*, 390–391, ed. cit. I, 283.

20 *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 1 (1798), between 114 and 115.

anarchist would remain a despiser of universally valid divine and rational law. Only a year after Canning's satire, Lloyd published *Edmund Oliver* (1798), an anti-Jacobin novel, "written with the design of counteracting that generalizing spirit, which seems so much to have insinuated itself among modern philosophers", that "mad spirit of experiment".²¹ An "excessive sensibility"²² misleads the immature titular hero to temporarily sympathize with *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. Another year later, Lloyd published a verse recantation of his earlier revolutionary persuasions, extolling the conservative virtues of humility, subordination, patriotism, and the maintenance of divine order:

HUMBLE yourselves, my Countrymen! Bow down
 The stubborn neck of Pride! for east, and west,
 Do Anarchy and Outrage raise a shout,
 And tempt with blasphemy the God of Heaven!²³

The type of argument advanced by Canning against Lloyd and Lamb is the reproach of high treason in their collusion with the country's enemies in times of war, a cruel yet highly effective argument as it exposed the adversary to legal persecution and possibly capital punishment. Before Canning, Alexander Watson had already implicitly charged the English sympathizers of the French Revolution with high treason, in satirically ironic Hudibrastics:

Yet Paine of merit has his share,
 His writings form'd a Robespierre!
 [...]
 A Robespierre mankind had not seen,
 Nor blest been with the guillotine!²⁴

In view of the cold, rational cruelty of this kind of traditional satire, the Romantics censured both Toryism and Neoclassicism for a lack of sensibility and human sympathy. Leigh Hunt's *Ultra-Crepidarius Gifford*, represented as an arrogant shoe, has no sense of compassion and beauty as a true follower of the *ancien régime* both in politics and aesthetics:

But the Shoe, deaf and blind to all beautiful things,
 Scarce showed more emotion than if 'twere a king's.²⁵

21 Lloyd, *Edmund Oliver*, Advertisement, Bristol 1798, VII – VIII.

22 Ibid. X. The novel was based on Southey's account of Coleridge's earlier erratic life and persuasions, and led to estrangement between Lloyd and Coleridge.

23 Lloyd, *Lines Suggested by the Fast*, Birmingham 1799, 1. The poem was written against "The Spirit of political, moral, and religious Jacobinism" (3, footnote).

24 Watson, *The Anti-Jacobin: A Hudibrastic Poem*, 96.

25 Hunt, *Ultra-Crepidarius. A Satire on William Gifford*, 1823, lines 110–111, in: *Selected Writings*, VI. 40.

John Hamilton Reynolds's defence of Keats's *Endymion* (1818) against cruel Neoclassical reviews in Tory periodicals showed the same conjunction of political and aesthetic arguments:

We have met with a singular instance, in the last number of the *Quarterly Review*, of that unfeeling arrogance, and cold ignorance, which so strangely marked the minds and hearts of Government sycophants and Government writers.²⁶

Keats's friends mistook William Gifford for the author of the scathing review of *Endymion* in the *Quarterly Review*, in fact written by John Wilson Croker, whereas the similarly scathing review in *Blackwood's* was written by Lockhart himself. In July 1821, Charles Cowden Clarke sent an anonymous letter, signed Y, to the editor of the Whig daily *Morning Chronicle*, in which he accused Gifford of being a government mercenary whose cruel literary warfare had caused the young poet's death. The ancient cultural practice of presenting trophies in triumph to the mob here appears as a typical instance of the unfeeling nature of a Classical Tradition, whose right of survival is called in question:

It is truly painful to see the yearnings of an eager and trusting mind thus held up to the fiend-like laugh of a brutal mob, upon the pikes and bayonets of literary mercenaries. If it will be any gratification to Mr Gifford to know how much he contributed to the discomfort of a generous man [...] ²⁷

Hazlitt took the matter up in the Gifford portrait of *The Spirit of the Age* (1825), where he ferociously attacked Gifford as Keats's murderer in his review of *Endymion*, unqualified due to his lack of sensibility and his lack of any sense of beauties that are independent of rules and traditions. Romanticism in literature corresponded to Radicalism and liberalism in politics. Hazlitt's contrasting of a passage from Keats's *Eve of St Agnes* with passages from Gifford's poetry was meant to prove the concurrence of outdated Toryism and outdated Augustan Neoclassicism in Gifford, an unoriginal mind enslaved by fixed traditional rules:

He [Gifford] damns a beautiful expression less out of spite than because he really does not understand it: any novelty of thought or sentiment gives him a shock [...] He would go back to the standard of opinions, style, the faded ornaments, and insipid formalities that came into fashion about forty years ago. Flashes of thought, flights of fancy, idiomatic expressions, he sets down among the signs of the times – the extraordinary occurrences of the age we live in. They are marks of a restless and revolutionary spirit; they disturb his composure of mind, and threaten (by implication) the safety of the state. His slow, snail-paced, bed-rid habits of reasoning, cannot keep up with the

26 [Reynolds] in: Examiner, 563 (11 October 1818), in: Keats. The Critical Heritage, ed. G.M. Matthews, London 1971, 117.

27 Quoted from: John Barnard, A Sleepless Night, in: TLS, 5566 (4 December 2009), 14.

whirling, eccentric motion, the rapid, perhaps extravagant combinations of modern literature.²⁸

It is remarkable that, in this context, “Radical” and “Jacobin” were derogatory terms much more frequently used for anti-Neoclassical poets than “Romantic” and “Gothic”. This mirrors the fact that there existed a hierarchy of arguments. As a rule, socio-political aspects prevailed over theological and philosophical aspects, and both prevailed over aesthetic aspects in the rejection of individual or groups of Neoclassical or Romantic poets respectively. In a satirical poem entitled “The New Schools”, a contributor to the *London Magazine* thus consoled young dissident authors:

’Tis not your work they criticize, but you.
By politics alone, they try and tear ye,
And as you love or hate Lord Castlereagh, so fare ye!²⁹

The truth of this remark has already been diagnosed in an analysis of the articles of the Church-and-King defenders in the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*: “As for those Romantic works that did win the notice of [John] Gifford and his staff, the key to their treatment [...] was unquestionably their political and religious content, which far outweighed literary merit as a factor for assessing critical praise or blame”.³⁰ And a close analysis of the *Quarterly Review* from John Murray’s archives yields a similar result: “[...] privately Murray made it clear that the ‘merely literary’ articles would be so many spoonfuls to disguise the taste of the [political] medicine”.³¹ The Cockney School attacks in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* were also clearly ideological, political allegiance being the bond “between poets as different as Hunt, Shelley, Keats, and Byron”.³² This prevalence of political ideology had disastrous effects on the motives of reviewers of literature and on the objectivity of their reviews as their perspectives became warped by prejudice. In the heyday of “duelling periodicals”, a poet that found favour in the Radical *Monthly Magazine* could not escape scathing reviews in the *Quarterly Review* or *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*; witness the fate of the Cockney Poets.³³ Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) had assigned a primary role to the state, a secondary role to religion and church, and placed the arts in a subservient role to both, supporting the divinely decreed feudal order of the *ancien régime*. The hierarchy may be exemplified from another passage in Hazlitt’s portrait of Gifford above-quoted,

28 Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, Mr Gifford, 1825, in: *Complete Works*, XI, 116.

29 *London Magazine*, 1 (May 1820), 543.

30 Emily Lorraine de Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobin 1798 – 1800*, Basingstoke 1998, 29.

31 Jonathan Cutmore (ed.), *Conservatism and the Quarterly Review*, 41.

32 Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School*, 31.

33 Richard Cronin, *The Politics of Romantic Poetry*, Basingstoke 2000, 181 – 182.

identifying Neoclassicism's preference for reason over the imagination, for generality over individuality, for regularity over spontaneity, and for the past over the present and future:

He [Gifford] inclines, by natural and deliberate bias, to the traditional in laws and government; to the orthodox in religion; to the safe in opinion; to the trite in imagination; to the technical in style; to whatever implies a surrender of individual judgment into the hands of authority, and a subjection of individual feeling to mechanical rules.³⁴

In the interests of the *ancien régime*, Burke had pleaded in favour of a strict separation of legitimate patent theatres, supporting tradition and orthodoxy, from the illegitimate non-patent and private theatres with their penchant for subversion. His aim was to exclude the classically uneducated and potentially revolutionary populace from established cultural venues. In chapter 23 of his *Biographia Literaria* (1717), Coleridge the converted Tory closely followed Burke in his attack on the "barbarisms and Kotzebuisms" of popular, hybrid, indecent, sentimental, and Gothic drama in the wake of Schiller's *Räuber*, notably Maturin's *Bertram* acted at Drury Lane Theatre in 1816. From his Tory point of view, a Gothic drama acted in a patent theatre was an act of subversion. Coleridge's public criticism demonstrated the prevalence of his socio-political over his aesthetic views. Of the fourth act of *Bertram*, Coleridge the Tory remarked: "The shocking spirit of jacobinism seemed no longer confined to politics".³⁵ Had Coleridge known the original manuscript version of *Bertram* with the devil on the stage and Bertram's Faustian devil's pact, which Maturin sent to Scott in Abbotsford and which is still kept there, he would have been even more shocked. Coleridge the Romantic, by contrast, wrote dramas in the very style that, as a Tory, he violently attacked, witnessed his Gothic tragedy *Remorse* (1813). And he felt deeply injured when the patent theatre that accepted Maturin's *Bertram* rejected his own *Zapolya* (MS 1815) with a central scene set in a horrid cavern in a wild wood said to be haunted by werewolves and vampires. Coleridge the Tory continued writing Romantic plays, albeit tamed by a dominating conservative and moral message. *Zapolya's* warning against lycanthropy as a metaphor for the eruption of violent animal instincts in man echoed his fear of revolutionary violence in his *Statesman's Manual [...] A Lay Sermon Addressed to the Higher Classes of Society* (1816) written at the same time.³⁶ Romantic poets converted to conservatism were open to satire from both sides, as former revolutionaries and present-day time-servers respectively. Hazlitt noted the contradiction by pointing out similarities between *Bertram* and *Zapolya*, although *Bertram* was (in Coleridge's view) tainted by political and aesthetic

34 Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, Mr Gifford, XI. 117.

35 Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 1817, chapter 23, in: *Collected Works*, ed. cit. VII. II. 229.

36 Burwick, *Playing to the Crowd*, 55.

Jacobinism and *Zapolya* was conspicuously anti-Jacobin in its rejection of popular government as illegal usurpation. Hazlitt reminded his readers with unconcealed schadenfreude that Coleridge's Tory play was now being acted to the lower orders as a burletta with music at a transpontine illegitimate theatre, the Surrey, under the shocking Gothic title of *Zapolya, or, The War Wolf* (1818). Thomas Dibdin had adapted it to suit the prevailing craze for Gothic melodrama, depriving it of its homiletic earnestness, which would not draw crowds that expected even Shakespeare to be played out in a way that deferred to the prevailing taste for melodrama and spectacle.³⁷ Thus, Hazlitt effectively satirized the fellow Romantic poet's desertion from the Radical cause, his double standard, and his plea for a patrician and elitist reform of Drury Lane.³⁸

The dealing of Whig and Radical periodicals with the poetry of Wordsworth attests to the same hierarchy of arguments. When former Radicals turned Tory and High Church, reviews of their poetry changed from the praise of noble rebels to the chastisement of turncoats. Wordsworth and Coleridge had begun to write their *Lyrical Ballads* for the new Radical Whig *Monthly Magazine* (1796 – 1825), and the collection was duly praised as expected. Later, however, the same magazine joined in the chorus of deprecatory reviews of Wordsworth and Coleridge, with arguments that betray the prevalence of a socio-political and ecclesiological perspective. So did Hazlitt's review of Coleridge's first Tory *Lay Sermon* (1816), in a letter from a fictitious speaker to the editor of Hunt's *Examiner*. Hazlitt, the son of a Unitarian minister preaching in favour of American independence, had admired the young Unitarian lay preacher Coleridge. Hazlitt's speaker, like Hazlitt himself, had heard Coleridge preach a pacifist and visionary lay sermon in 1798,³⁹ only eighteen years previously, and was upset about Coleridge's "loss of genius and eloquence". But, in reality, he primarily meant Coleridge's loss of a Radical's hope for a better future, his turn with Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* from loving and generous magnanimity to misanthropic meanness. Gifford's sour Jacobin is taken up and inverted into Hazlitt's sour Tory:

Or again, what right has he [Mr Coleridge] to invite me to a feast of poets and philosophers, fruits and flowers intermixed, – immortal fruits and amaranthine flowers, – and then to tell me it is all vapour, and, like *Timon*, to throw his empty dishes into my face?⁴⁰

In the opposite phalanx, the *Quarterly Review* denigrated Wordsworth's *White Doe of Rylstone* (1815) as another instance of Wordsworth's lingering revolu-

37 Ibid. 53, 104.

38 Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London*, 59 – 60.

39 [Hazlitt], *My First Acquaintance with Poets*, in: *Liberal*, 3 (April 1823).

40 [Hazlitt] in: *Examiner*, 472 (12 January 1817), 29.

tionary mentality, as his Romantic individualism and self-conscious was centred around his own soul as opposed to the traditional and rational business of the Neoclassical poet, general nature. The reviewer saw Wordsworth's rejection of the rule of general nature in favour of individuality and sectarian heterodoxy in literary creation, his "mind Turned inward",⁴¹ as symptomatic of Wordsworth's disdain of sovereign reason and traditional hierarchy in politics, accepted by the "common sense" of the majority:

It is impossible to take up the works of Mr. Wordsworth without remarking that, instead of employing his pen upon subjects of durable and general interest, he devotes himself almost exclusively to the delineation of himself and his own peculiar feelings, as called forth by objects incidental to the particular kind of life he leads.⁴²

The Pursuits of Literature (1794–97), in which Mathias declared the purpose of his ponderous and bitter anti-Romantic satire, clearly subordinates aesthetics and religion to the maintenance of the existing socio-political order. When Mathias calls for censorship to prevent the moral licentiousness of Gothic fiction and drama, it is less for its offence against the Augustan rule of decorum than for its implicit support of the French Revolution's mad moral chaos and phallic tree of liberty:

But though that garden-god [Priapus] forsaken dies;
Another Cleland see in Lewis rise.
Why sleep the ministers of truth and law?
Has the State no control, no decent awe,
While each with each in maddening orgies vie,
Panders to lust, and licenced blasphemy?
[...]
Methinks as in a theatre I stand,
Where vice and folly saunter hand in hand,
With each strange form in motley masquerade,
Featured grimace, and impudence pourtray'd.⁴³

Mathias's watchwords "theatre" and "motley masquerade" refer to the Gothic drama, in his time a medley of dark tragedy and funny burlesque, with villains accompanied by clowns, where even the villains themselves displayed incongruous elements of buffoonery.⁴⁴ A typical example at Mathias's time of publication was *Motley the Fool*, Matthew Gregory Lewis's Shakespearean addition to his eerie Gothic tragedy *The Castle Spectre* (1797), a mixture of comedy and horror. Rape, incest, and murder committed by a nobleman were thus con-

41 Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, 1814, I. 65–66, in: *Poetical Works*, 592.

42 [William Rowe Lyall] in: *Quarterly Review*, 14 (1815), 201–225.

43 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, ed. cit. 306–307.

44 Frederick Burwick, *Romantic Drama: Acting and Reacting*, 177–201.

veniently distanced by laughter, so that the Examiner of Plays should find as little evidence as possible for the play's subversive nature, especially its liberal and democratic tendency as well as its anti-slavery propaganda. The Larpent version deleted a few religious jokes and abolitionist speeches, and the play opened at Drury Lane on 14 September 1797.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the populace in the theatre must have understood the Gothic drama's revolutionary message exposing the old-type nobleman's mischief and misogyny. The Gothic genres, as distinct from the Radical genres, were subversive by implication only. The atrocious hidden crimes of their villains, noblemen in castles and churchmen in monasteries, were primarily intended to make the reader's flesh creep with horror; above that, they raised thoughts about corruption and madness in the privileged superiors of the feudal *ancien régime*. The Romantic aesthetic of effect thus extended to the raising of hatred against things as they were. When Helen Maria Williams dedicated her *Poems* of 1786, including her lurid Gothic "Irregular Fragment" about horrid crimes committed in a closed apartment of the Tower of London, to the Queen, there was an implicit suggestion that the monarchy was a succession of homicidal maniacs.⁴⁶ Many readers would not understand the Radical message, but after the outbreak and excesses of the French Revolution there was good reason for Mathias's rejection of all Gothic genres as subversive to the Classical Tradition of religion, socio-politics, and aesthetics.

Anti-Gothicism was subordinate to the main target of Mathias's satire, the "Jacobin Club-doctrine" of Voltaire, Holbach, Holcroft, and Paine.⁴⁷ Their advocacy of reform is indicted for having unleashed a grotesque dance of madmen, so that Mathias's concluding plea is to stick to classical learning and to shun all reform:

Prepared to prove in senate, or the hall,
That states by learning rise, by learning fall;
Serene, not senseless, through the awful storm,
In principles sedate, to shun Reform;
To mark man's intellect, its strength and bound,
Nor deem stability in change to found.⁴⁸

Much the same can be observed in Mathias's later satire in heroic couplets, *The Grove* (1798). The Radical theorists and novelists, Godwin and Holcroft, range first in the list of adversaries. The Gothic authors, Ann Radcliffe and James Boaden, come second, but their irrationality, sensationalism and alleged immorality is seen as supporting the cause of the Jacobin party. Weakening the enemy's frontline by setting one against the other, seeing Boaden as radicalizing

45 See the variants in Jeffrey N. Cox's edition, *Seven Gothic Dramas 1789–1825*, 150–220.

46 Duncan Wu (ed.), *Romanticism: An Anthology*, 287.

47 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, Preface, XIII.

48 *Ibid.* 373–375.

and sexualizing the moderate Radcliffe in his Gothic dramas and destroying her social respectability, was a favourite method of arguing. This is the aim of Fame's report to Apollo's priest Chryses on the occasion of Apollo's judgment of the poets:

RADCLIFFE, the incoherent and the wild,
Whom BOADEN, *gay deceiver*, first beguil'd:
Her works he ravish'd, gain'd his wicked ends,
And left her almost ruin'd with her friends.⁴⁹

William Gifford's supporter Colton hit the same target in his satire, which put Gothicism, medievalism, sensibility, and morbid erotic sensationalism on the same level as causing the political, ethic, and aesthetic corruption of a divinely instituted order of things. The satirist's pose of *mea parvitas*, despair of curing the ignorant mass of swinish and rebellious readers from the spreading Gothic infection, lends additional impetus to his satirical attack:

For hope not thou to *rout* Enchantments, Knights,
Dwarfs, Curses, Monsters, Castles, Spectres, Sprites;
Or please, with modest truth, a sensual herd,
T' Anacreon, or Ambrosio preferred;
[...]
Nor hope to win those wanton eyes, that burn,
Or weep, or languish, o'er insidious Sterne.⁵⁰

The Gothic genres of the Walpole succession, with their usurpers, rapists, bluebeards, and vampires as Gothic villains, featured aristocrats and clerics of the *ancien régime* who sadistically abused their power over their subjects. Sexual predators from Bluebeard Gilles de Rais and Vampire Lord Ruthven to Vampire Count Dracula are all noblemen and depraved libertines of the old order. Radicals read the works of the Marquis de Sade not so much as literary fantasies of a madman and psychopath, but as literary representations of feudal abuses. James Cobb's *The Haunted Tower* (1789), set to music by Stephen Storace, was a Gothic comedy based on de Sade's play *La tour enchantée*, written in the Bastille in 1788. In its anti-classical mixture of genres and comic treatment of villainy, it worked on the conflict of the aristocracy with their subjects, emphasizing the integrity and sincerity of the lower classes and their culture.⁵¹ Generic indeterminacy passed for a symptom of a play's democratic tendencies, so that the Tory daily *True Briton* identified Elizabeth Inchbald's *Every One Has His Fault* (1793) as

49 Mathias, *The Grove: A Satire*, London 1798, 57.

50 Colton, *Hypocrisy*, 1812, 195–197. The references are to M.G Lewis's lustful monk Ambrosio as well as to the sexually prurient poems of Anacreon and novels of Sterne.

51 Frederick Burwick, *Romantic Drama: Acting and Reacting*, 178–191.

being a revolutionary piece on the grounds of this offence against the Neo-classical rule:

[...] we are at a loss what to term this new species of composition: 'tis neither Comedy, nor Tragi-Comedy, but something anomalous in which the two are jumbled together.⁵²

In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Burke gave a political reason for the observance of this rule. He polemically imagined the chaos of the French Revolution as a tragicomedy, and the mixture of genres on the stage as mirroring the upheaval of order in the political as well as the in histrionic theatre. The hierarchy of box, pit, and gallery was violated, and “a mixed mob of ferocious men, and of women lost to shame” turned the classical theatre of the aristocracy into a carnivalesque fair and theatre of the people.⁵³ The secession of the Théâtre de la République with its performances of Jean-François Ducis’s Shakespeare from the Comédie Française in revolutionary Paris, which Wordsworth visited in 1792 and which spread both its republican ideology and its egalitarian theatre management to Britain, confirmed Burke’s conservative position.⁵⁴

In the turmoil of the Romantic Period, the revolt against the rules of reason thus became subservient to the revolt against the *ancien régime*, the established feudal state supported by the established hierarchical church. Significantly, Victor Hugo’s clarion call for the demolition of all artificial and superimposed rules in art, in his anti-classical manifesto *Préface de Cromwell* (1827), had distinctly political overtones, inspired by the English regicide and the English Romantics:

Disons-donc hardiment. Le temps en est venu, et il serait étrange qu’à cette époque, la liberté, comme la lumière, pénétrât partout, excepté dans ce qu’il y a de plus nativement libre au monde, les choses de la pensée. Mettons le marteau dans les théories, les poétiques et les systèmes. Jetons bas ce vieux plâtre qui masque la façade de l’art! Il n’y a ni règles, ni modèles [...]⁵⁵

The prevalence of theology and philosophy over aesthetics explains the Radical Joseph Ritson’s attacks on Preromantic ballad editors and ballad enthusiasts such as Thomas Percy and George Ellis, the former a bishop, the latter a Tory and contributor to the *Anti-Jacobin*, both representative of the *ancien régime*. Ritson’s fascination with ballads and romances was subordinate to his socio-po-

52 True Briton, 30 (30 January 1793), 2. Quoted from: Gillian Russell, *Revolutionary Drama*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to British Literature of the French Revolution in the 1790s*, 181.

53 Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 2nd edition London 1790, 102. Russell, 178.

54 Reeve Parker, *Romantic Tragedies*, 58–60.

55 Hugo, *Préface de Cromwell*, in: *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Jacques Seebacher et al., Paris 1985–1989, XI. 23. Also see Heike Grundmann, *Orientalism in Byron, Delacroix and Victor Hugo*, in: *British and European Romanticisms*, 69.

litical convictions in times of revolution, when Burke's romanticized feudal royalty and chivalry as satirized in Peacock's *Maid Marian* (1822) provided an argument on the Tory side.⁵⁶ Similarly, it explains Lord Byron's Pyrrhonic polemics against the Positive Romantics, when the Radical Whig Byron sided with the Tories and the Classical Tradition against the Tory converts or "renegadoes" Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey. It elucidates why it was the later Tory press, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in particular, that rescued Wordsworth from the odium of childishness and lack of classical education, establishing the construct of the later "Victorian" Wordsworth.⁵⁷ This, again, accounts for Leigh Hunt's attacks on Wordsworth and Scott in *The Feast of the Poets* (1814):

I ought to have taken care also not to fall into one of the very prejudices I was reproving, and think ill or well of people in proportion as they differed or agreed with me in politics.⁵⁸

This was also the case with Francis Jeffrey's scathing *Edinburgh Review* polemic against the Lake School. Jeffrey's zealous Whiggism as first editor of the *Edinburgh Review* (1802) resented Wordsworth's, Coleridge's, and Southey's conversion to Toryism. Thus Jeffrey, who defended the poetry of Keats, attacked Wordsworth for his deviation from the Classical and Augustan standard of poetic diction. Therefore, the Classical Tradition, which was naturally on the side of the anti-Jacobins and Tories, could also be utilized by Whigs when the opportunity offered itself and the hierarchy of arguments permitted it. Keats, himself a Radical, resented Wordsworth's heavy didactic Toryism, so that Keats's *Sleep and Poetry* (1817) is blind to the family likeness of himself, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, although Keats advocated the Romantic against the Classical position when he identified Boileau and the Augustans as the schismatics and handicraftsmen and rocking-horse riders of heaven-inspired poetry.⁵⁹ The primacy of philosophical or socio-political sympathies split the Romantics themselves, so that they could not easily make out a common Romantic School. Misrepresentations and contortions of facts were an additional weapon in the dispute, a complaint often vented by Romantics who were thus attacked, especially from those enemies who identified all Romanticism with Radicalism and Whiggism. In his *Letter to William Gifford* (1819), William Hazlitt raised this reproach against William Gifford:

The distinction between truth and falsehood you make no account of: you mind only the distinction between Whig and Tory. [...] Your reasoning comes under the head of Court-news; your taste is a standard of the prevailing *ton* in certain circles, like

56 Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels, Reactionaries*, 142–143.

57 D. Higgins, *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine*, 90–201.

58 Hunt, *Autobiography*, 1850, 221.

59 Keats, *Sleep and Poetry*, 1817, lines 181–206, in: *Poems*, 77–78.

Ackerman's dresses for May. [...] When you say that an author cannot write common sense or English, you mean that he does not believe in the doctrine of *divine right*.⁶⁰

The mixture of political and aesthetic arguments is most prominent in the reproach that poets and critics siding with Toryism and the Classical Tradition are government spies. Hence Hazlitt's famous attack on Gifford:

You are the *Government Critic*, a character nicely differing from that of a government spy – the invisible link, that connects literature with the police.⁶¹

The arguments were repeated in the controversy between Byron and Southey over Byron's *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, in their prefaces to their controversially opposite poems both entitled *The Vision of Judgment* (1821, 1822), Southey's pious obituary and Byron's obituary parody on the death of King George III in 1820. In his preface to his official obituary poem, Robert Southey, poet laureate from 1813, attacked Byron (and the younger Romantic Radicals such as Percy Shelley and John Keats) as "The Satanic School". Southey's Tory commitment appears from his low view of the public, who rightly disapprove of Byron's innovative Italianate recourse to Ariosto and Pulci, but fail to see his first fault, his Machiavellian subversion of religion and morality. As in Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), the church is seen as supporting the divine order of the state which alone guarantees its subjects' virtue and happiness. The reproach of biblical sin in combination with political and cultural treason and aesthetic offence against the rule of decorum is emphasized by polemical misrepresentations of historical facts as well as by threats of punitive consequences both in this world and the world to come. The fact that Byron, in *Don Juan*, demonstratively evoked the Classical Tradition is polemically suppressed, as is the fact that Southey's grudge was entirely personal. Southey's own attempt at subscribing to the Classical Tradition by writing his *Vision of Judgment* in classical hexameters, an experiment bound to fail due to the fixity of English word accents, stood prominent and could be expected to incur Byron's ridicule. Enlightenment theologians and rationalists such as the preacher Robert South are called up as witnesses in the defence of the rationalist tradition:

Would that this literary intolerance were under the influence of a saner judgement, and regarded the morals more than the manner of a composition; the spirit rather than the form! Would that it were directed against those monstrous combinations of horrors and mockery, lewdness and impiety, with which English poetry has, in our days, first been polluted! For more than half a century English literature had been distinguished by its moral purity, the effect, and, in its turn, the cause of an improvement in national manners. [...] every person, therefore, who purchases such books, or admits them into

60 William Hazlitt, A Letter to William Gifford, 1819, in: Complete Works, IX. 13–14.

61 Ibid. IX. 13.

his house, promotes the mischief, and thereby, as far as in him lies, becomes an aider and abettor of the crime.

[...] The publication of a lascivious book is one of the worst offences which can be committed against the well-being of society. It is a sin to the consequences of which no limits can be assigned, and those consequences no after repentance in the writer can counteract.

[...] Men of diseased hearts and depraved imaginations, who, forming a system of opinions to suit their own unhappy course of conduct, have rebelled against the holiest ordinances of human society, and hating that revealed religion which, with all their efforts and bravadoes, they are unable entirely to disbelieve, labour to make others as miserable as themselves, by infecting them with a moral virtue that eats into the soul! The school which they have set up may properly be called the Satanic school [...] This evil is political as well as moral, for indeed moral and political evils are inseparably connected. Truly has it been affirmed by one of our ablest and clearest reasoners, that “the destruction of governments may be proved and deduced from the general corruption of the subjects’ manners, as a direct and natural cause thereof, by a demonstration as certain as any in the mathematics.”⁶²

Southey here referred to Burke’s bedevilling of the French revolutionaries as evil magicians, Furies, hell-hounds, and other monsters, – a satirical technique that was also susceptible to reversal, as in Blake’s “Voice of the Devil” in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790–1793).⁶³ In their demonizing of their “heretical” adversaries, Southey and Gifford knew that they had both the church and the law on their side. Where Gifford, however, was personally vulnerable in his low origin, Southey, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, was personally vulnerable in his youthful commitment to Radicalism, so that the counter-attack could be advanced both on the grounds of espionage and venality. In his preface and poem, Byron took up the Classical and Renaissance Tradition of Menippean satire by tracing his literary lineage back to Francisco Quevedo, Alexander Pope, Henry Fielding, and Jonathan Swift with emphasis on “redivivus”. He answered Southey by calling him “the author of *Wat Tyler*”, reminding him that the former Radical Southey had become a “renegado” and government spy. Spies were much hated and badly reputed turncoats on government pay, and Byron refused to consider that Wordsworth’s, Coleridge’s, and Southey’s conversion to Toryism was due to their (the generation of the 1770s) shock at the crimes and failure of the French Revolution rather than to venality. That conversion was a long and painful process, far from a turncoat’s rapid and datable desertion of his former

62 Southey, *The Vision of Judgment*, Preface, 1821, in: Byron: *The Critical Heritage*, 179–181. Cf. Southey’s Letter to Walter Savage Landor, 20 February 1820, in which Don Juan is called “an act of high treason to English poetry”, *ibid.*

63 David Duff, *Burke and Paine: Contrasts*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to British Literature of the French Revolution in the 1790s*, 63.

cause.⁶⁴ But fairness, even-handedness, and the benefit of a doubt, qualities in the rhetorical *genus deliberativum*, were no desirable qualities in the *genus demonstrativum* of invective literature, any more than in physical warfare:

The gross flattery, the dull impudence, and renegado intolerance and impious cant of the poem by the author of *Wat Tyler*, are [...] stupendous [...]

So much for his poem – a word now on his preface. In his preface it has pleased the magnanimous Laureate to draw the picture of a supposed ‘Satanic School’, the which he doth recommend to the notice of the legislature, thereby adding to his other laurels the ambition of those of an informer. [...]⁶⁵

After four questions aiming to compromise Southey by casting him as a turncoat and former author of seditious publications, Byron contrasted his own liberal advocacy of freedom of speech and the press against Southey’s call for Tory censorship:

Putting the four preceding items together, with what conscience dare *he* call the attention of the laws to the publications of others, be they what they may?⁶⁶

Whereas Southey’s polemic avoided names, though it meant Byron in the first place, Byron’s counter-polemic gave names in a crippled or metonymic form (“S.”, “the author of *Wat Tyler*”), but attacked Southey for the whole group of Romantic converts to Toryism. Again, as in the case of Dryden and Rochester as well as of Pope and Swift, the theoretical borderline between general satire and personal libel remained blurred in literary practice. Once again, the aesthetic argument (against the inadequacy of hexameters in English poetry) is subordinated to more effective philosophical and political arguments. Nevertheless, the aesthetic mockery appears both in the preface and in the Menippean satire itself. Southey (“the Bard”), whom one of Satan’s devils has swept up from the Lake District in spite of the dull weight of his voluminous hackneyed work, welcomes an other-worldly audience for his *Vision of Judgment*, because he can find no terrestrial admirers. Mere noise and hobbling metres stand in the place of what the Romantics claimed to be prophecy and flights of the imagination, so that even the audience of spirits take to their heels:

Now the Bard, glad to get an audience, which
By no means often was the case below,
Began to cough, and hawk, and hem, and pitch
His voice into that awful note of woe
To all unhappy hearers within reach

64 Brenda Banks, *Rhetorical Missiles and Double-Talk: Napoleon, Wordsworth, and the Invasion Scare of 1804*, in Behrendt (ed.), *Romanticism, Radicalism, and the Press*, 103–119.

65 Byron, *The Vision of Judgment*, Preface, 1822, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, VI. 309–310.

66 *Ibid.* VI. 310.

Of poets when the tide of rhyme's in flow;
 But stuck fast with his first hexameter,
 Not one of all whose gouty feet would stir.⁶⁷
 [...]
 Those grand heroics acted as a spell:
 The angels stopp'd their ears and plied their pinions;
 The devils ran howling, deafen'd, down to hell,
 The ghosts fled, gibbering, to their own dominions –
 (For 'tis not yet decided where they dwell,
 And I leave every man to his opinions;)
 Michael took refuge in his trump – but lo!
 His teeth were set on edge, he could not blow!⁶⁸

Byron, who vacillated between Radical Whiggism and Toryism as he had between Romanticism and Neoclassicism, is hard to classify. The Negative Romantic's sceptical rejection of the Neoplatonic Romantics' fundamentalism was one of the few constants in Byron's life and work. The case had been less complicated with the *Anti-Jacobin, or Weekly Examiner* (1797–98), where, under the editorship of the committed and constant Tory William Gifford, Tories like George Canning, John Hookham Frere, and George Ellis drew all satirical registers of the Classical Tradition to pour scorn upon those whom they identified as Jacobins in politics and Romantics in aesthetics. The periodical continually opposed its own "learned reader", whom a sound knowledge of the Classical Tradition had enabled to understand its rational arguments and its many Latin epigraphs, quotations, and poems, against the ignorant "Jacobin reader", whom lack of a classical education has deprived of man's light of nature, reason, and thrown upon a false Romantic world-view and taste. This includes the Jacobin reader's sentimental and egalitarian embracing of "all human kind" comprising the lowest classes, his indiscriminate and unrestricted levelling of "was die Mode streng geteilt".⁶⁹

Reason, the (classical) capacity for distinction counterbalancing the opposed imagination, the faculty of (romantic) integration, also dictated the natural rules of art, "of old *discover'd*, not *devis'd*".⁷⁰ This explains Gifford's synonymous use of "classical poets" and "old poets". The "NEW SCHOOL" of "Jacobin poets", as Canning called it, ignored those rules of reason, offending against probability, general validity, measure, symmetry, and even the grammatical rules of culti-

67 Byron, *The Vision of Judgment*, stanza 90, VI. 340. Note Byron's adherence to the burlesque ottava rima of his *Beppo* (1818) and *Don Juan* (1819–24).

68 *Ibid.* stanza 103, VI. 344. Note, again, the Liberal stress on freedom of opinion and speech in line 822.

69 Friedrich Schiller, *Ode An die Freude*, 1786, in: *Werke*, ed. Paul Stapf, Tempel-Klassiker, Berlin and Darmstadt 1964, II. 86.

70 Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1711, lines 88 and 146.

vated Augustan English. This again accounts for the many “Jacobinical Imitations” in the periodical’s poetry column, parodies of Romantic literature (poetry as well as drama), mostly written by Canning in the Classical Tradition of Menippean satire and later republished as *Poetry from the Anti-Jacobin* (1799). Burns’s Radical celebration of confessional lyrical egocentricity, low-life drink, promiscuity, popular poetry, liberty, and rebellion could not go unpunished, though the chorus of Canning’s “I Am a Bard of No Regard” (1786) might have been in imitation of John Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera* (1728) and not necessarily Burns’s own voice. But Burns’s well-known republicanism and the ideological contentions of the Romantic Period left no space for such benefits of a doubt:

Life is all a VARIORUM,
 We regard not how it goes;
 Let them cant about DECORUM,
 Who have character to lose.
 [...]
 A fig for those by law protected!
 Liberty’s a glorious feast!
 Courts for Cowards were erected,
 CHURCHES built to please the Priest.⁷¹

In Canning’s view, Burns’s, Blake’s, and Wordsworth’s construct of a simple and popular poetic diction, which Wordsworth later programmatically opposed to Augustan diction in his “Preface” to his and Coleridge’s *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), thus appeared as a Jacobin attempt at levelling and dumping “*Freemen*” with the plebeian mob of the sans-culottes who stormed the Bastille. Sentimental moods were thus suspected of being mere varnish to cover the irreligious and blasphemous destruction of feudal society:

For, in whatever disguise she appears, whether of mirth or of melancholy, of piety or of tenderness, under all disguises, like *Sir John Brute* in woman’s clothes, she is betrayed by her drunken swagger and ruffian tone.⁷²

Hence numerous parodies, in the style of Samuel Johnson’s parody of a popular ballad quoted and disapproved of by Wordsworth, are “Jacobinical imitations” of “plebeian” Romantic poetry. Examples are “The Duke and the Taxing Man”,⁷³ written to show the debasement of refined civilization by a Radical levelling of nobles and commoners, or the “Bacchanalian Ode in Imitation of Horace’s Ode

71 Burns, I Am a Bard of No Regard, 1786, lines 270–281, in: *Poems and Songs*, ed. cit. I. 208–209. See also Robert Crawford, *The Bard: Robert Burns: A Biography*, London 2009, 199–200.

72 [Canning] in: *Anti-Jacobin*, Introduction, 1 (20 November 1797).

73 [Sir Archibald Macdonald] in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 8 (1 January 1798).

25 of Book 3”,⁷⁴ composed in popular tail-rhyme to put the simple-minded Romantic speaker’s ignorance of the Classical Tradition to shame, along with Fox’s and Norfolk’s drunkenness while proposing their famous Whig toast to “His Sovereign The People”.

One of the most effective literary parodies in the *Anti-Jacobin* was “The Rovers, or, The Double Arrangement” (1798), Canning’s, Gifford’s, and Frere’s burlesque take-off of German Romantic drama, successfully performed in the Haymarket Theatre as late as 1811. Mr Higgins, the turbulent and muddle-brained Romantic portmanteau poet and Jacobin “new philosopher” of “The Progress of Man” and “The Loves of the Triangles”, sends his *Sturm und Drang* play, written on German models popular at the time both in printed translations and the London theatres, to the editor of the *Anti-Jacobin*,⁷⁵ the editor printing it in order to allow Mr Higgins to make a fool of himself. The play grotesquely breaks with all the rules of reason “of old discovered, not devised”, sacred to Neoclassicism. The prologue’s programme, proclaiming a total rupture from the Classical Tradition, aims at identifying the surrender of the classical rules as a surrender of reason both in literature and politics, a hotchpotch of nonsense and a hotbed of revolt against the feudal order. In the ironic prologue’s nationalist Tory perspective, all traditional values are reversed by Jacobins, Whigs, and Romantics, who are identified as disloyal cosmopolitans, “patriots of the world”, lovers of all countries but their own, deserters to the ideology of France and to the literature of Germany:⁷⁶

Too long have Rome and Athens been the *rage*;
 And classic Buskins soil’d a British Stage.
 Tonight our Bard, who scorns pedantic rules,
 His Plot has borrow’d from the German schools;
 The German schools – where no dull maxims bind
 The bold expansion of the electric mind.
 Fix’d to no period, circled by no space,
 He leaps the flaming bounds of time and place.
 Round the dark confines of the forest raves,
 With *gentle* Robbers stocks his gloomy caves;
 Tells how Prime Ministers are shocking things,
 And *reigning Dukes* as bad as tyrant Kings;

74 [Ellis – Canning] in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 18 (12 March 1798).

75 Graeme Stones, Headnote to his edition in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, I. 214 – 15. The title of “The Rovers” mimics Schiller’s “The Robbers”.

76 [Canning], *New Morality*, lines 113 – 14, in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 36 (9 July 1798), in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, I. 272.

How to two swains one nymph her vows may give,
And how *two* damsels with *one* lover live!⁷⁷

The “electric mind”, like electricity in general, had become a symbol of revolution, associated with its explorer, the American revolutionary Benjamin Franklin, as well as with Joseph Priestley’s and Erasmus Darwin’s conviction that liberty, equality, and fraternity were more powerful and more natural than the static and stale *ancien régime*.⁷⁸ With regard to literary aesthetics, this also implied that a flash of inspiration was superior to a chain of reasoning or observance of rules. In a polemical distortion for the sake of frontline formation, Tories like Canning and Mathias tended to see German states and German literature as having yielded to the aims of the American and French Revolutions, a view adopted in James Gillray’s political caricatures inserted between the pages of the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*. King Frederick of Prussia’s invitation of Voltaire to Sanssouci and later German *Rheinbund* politics in support of Napoleon’s continued occupation of Germany provided fuel for that fire. German literature and German princes, chiefly Voltaire’s friend King Frederick, were blamed for being infected by “the Gallic phrenzy”.⁷⁹ Numerous promoters of German culture and literature in Britain were and continued to be women, many of whom were also prominent sympathizers with the French Revolution and authors of sentimental or Gothic novels: Anna Letitia Barbauld, Amelia Opie, Sarah Taylor Austin, Dorothea Felicia Hemans, Anna Jameson, and Germaine de Staël, to name but a few. This nourished conservative distrust of Germany as another Continental stronghold of Jacobinism. British patriotism, anti-feminism, and xenophobia were thus mobilized as defined against un-English cosmopolitanism, which imported French and German Trojan horses into Britain in times of war. Thus Mathias, like Canning, railed against German *Schauerromantik*:

No German nonsense sways my English heart,
Unused at ghosts and rattling bones to start.⁸⁰

John Gifford’s *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* continued the *Anti-Jacobin*’s hostility to the politics and literature of the German states, in view of the disturbing fact that “the passion for German literature” was “making rapid strides

77 *Anti-Jacobin*, 30 (4 June 1798), I. 220–221. The references are to Schiller’s *Die Räuber* and *Kabale und Liebe* as well as to Goethe’s *Stella*.

78 Tim Fulford – Debbie Lee – Peter J. Kitson, *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era*, Cambridge 2004, 179.

79 *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 3 (1799), 555–557.

80 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, ed. cit. 261.

among my countrymen”.⁸¹ German literati were represented as a large, revolutionary, mass-producing tribe, “an ignorant, assuming, and noxious race of beings, compilers of an incoherent mass of various knowledge”, without a holistic classical education in systematic logic and rhetoric, without Greek or Latin, and acquainted only with scraps of English, French, and Italian.⁸² Customers of German bookshops in London were discriminated as Radicals or Jacobins. Coleridge, a Germanist and frequenter of German bookshops who published the first edition of his collected poems as *Sibylline Leaves* (1817), and Leigh Hunt, who entitled his collection of poems *Foliage* (1818), found themselves accused by Tory reviewers of having imitated the German *Blätter* in demonstration of their political and literary Jacobinism.⁸³ It was not until the Wars of German Liberation against Napoleon, in 1813, and the appearance of Madame de Staël’s *De l’Allemagne*, published in London by John Murray in the month of the allied victory over Napoleon in the Battle of Leipzig (October 1813), that the image of German literature began to improve. Reginald Heber, Madame de Staël’s favourable Tory critic in John Murray’s *Quarterly Review*, observed that the poor German literature had not been known until the first wild, childish, popular, revolutionary rubbish of the “new German school” poured into Britain in bad translations. These threatened to spoil Britain’s advanced taste, to corrupt her loyal readers, and to undermine her government, until Winckelmann’s Neo-classicism rose to control such Romantic excesses:

With a few exceptions [...] the stock of German literature for the consumption of London has been furnished by the vilest hacks of Grub-street, or the idlest of our dilettanti poets; to the terror of nurseries, the corruption of boarding-schools, the lamentable disparagement of the king’s English, and the utter dismay of teachers, parents, and guardians [...]⁸⁴

In Canning’s parody in the *Anti-Jacobin*, the admirers of German Romantic drama are still denigrated as unpatriotic and disorder-loving Jacobins who sympathize with robbers and seek the destruction of “things as they are”, as in young Schiller’s *Die Räuber* (1781) and *Kabale und Liebe* (1784). These plays were translated and staged, but even their domesticated English versions written to please the Examiner of Plays raised suspicions.⁸⁵ Furthermore, they are imputed with destroying traditional sexual and social morality, as in young

81 *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 5 (1800), 568. *Ibid.* 107 opposes “true-born Englishman” to “mongrel cosmopolite”.

82 *Ibid.* 572–573.

83 *Monthly Magazine*, 10 (September 1818), 162.

84 [Heber] in: *Quarterly Review*, 10 (January 1814), 360.

85 For details see Frederick Burwick, *Schiller’s Plays on the British Stage, 1797–1825*, in: Jeffrey L. High – Nicholas Martin – Norbert Oellers (eds.), *Who Is Schiller Now? Essays on His Reception and Significance*, Rochester NY 302–320.

Goethe's *Stella* (1776), where the conflict of the right choice in marriage, the foundation of all feudal order, is rebelliously resolved in a *ménage à trois*. Free love, a demand of the early French revolutionists, replaces fidelity in the feudal institution of marriage. The Romantic literary programme with its turn against the Classical Tradition appears as a prelude to the French Revolution. Mixing political with aesthetic objections, Charles Dibdin echoed widespread antagonism to modern German drama in general when he declared that their authors were wild new-school Jacobins who "violate probability, wound morality, terrify instead of delight, menace instead of conciliate, [...] teach filial ingratitude, encourage adultery, and circulate [...] revolting and scandalous tenets".⁸⁶ As a popular dramatist, Dibdin had a good motive to please the Examiner of Plays, in order to get his own politically suspicious plays performed.

In opposition to the classical rule of probability, the plot of the burlesque tragedy is constructed on the principle of the greatest possible improbability. It mixes disparate elements of the Gothic novel, the Gothic drama, German *Sturm und Drang* drama and poetry, and Shakespeare into a carnivalistic grotesque which deflates or comically undercuts all reason and tragic seriousness. The evil tyrant Count Roderic of Sachse-Weimar is counselled by his evil minister Gaspar. A wild love for Matilda Pottingen had driven Count Roderick to an evil aristocratic intrigue. With the help of a wicked Roman Catholic prior and his grovelling Counsellor Gaspar, Count Roderick had his bourgeois and unprivileged rival, Matilda's suitor Rogero, the noble son of his noble predecessor in office whom he had ruined and murdered, incarcerated in the subterranean dungeon of his abbey. In the Jacobin *Sturm und Drang* mind, state and church ever abuse their privileges in the commission of acts of injustice against their subjects. Rogero had suffered and pined for eleven years for his beloved Matilda. However, Matilda had not felt even a moment's suffering or loss and conquered another lover, Casimere, a handsome Polish officer, and so got on Casimere's nerves with her illegitimate children that, in panic, Casimere had married Cecilia Mückenfeld. Going from bad to worse and pursued by two women driven mad with love, Casimere had made his escape. As in young Goethe, the play begins with the accidental meeting of Matilda and Cecilia with Casimere at an inn in Weimar. And, as in young Goethe, the commonplace sentimental anagnorisis leads to a "double arrangement" or "*ménage à trois*" which, however, strains Casimere's nerves even more. Casimere decides to rescue the suffering Rogero from his dungeon, not for any Romantic opposition to tyrannical aristocrats, but in order to get rid of at least one of his two mad lovers. With the help of two exiled Englishmen, Puddingcrantz and Beefinstern, Casimere brings about of the lib-

86 Dibdin, *A Complete History of the English Stage*, London [1800], 377–378. See also Burwick, *ibid.* 304.

eration of Rogero and the fall of both the secular and the spiritual tyrant, the duke and the prior, whose castle and abbey are taken by storm. The storming of those *bastilles* of the *ancien régime* is supported by troubadours returning from the Crusades as well as by grenadiers returning from the Seven Years' War. The *imbroglio* plot with its burlesque improbabilities and anachronisms is further complicated by subplots, as when Old Professor Pottingen sends his son in search of his daughter Matilda, a typical element of German sentimental bourgeois tragedy.

The classical and ethical traditions of literature and society are presupposed as rational norms from which this burlesque Romantic *Sturm und Drang* play deviates on all levels. The *règle des trois unités* of classical drama, a special variant of the rule of probability applied to drama, is violated in a grotesque mixture of times and historical events, as well as in improbable shifts of scene and a confusingly intricate, dark plot. The rule of genre decorum that forbade hybrid plays is violated by a grotesque mixture of tragedy, comedy, Gothic novel and drama, Radical novel and drama, melodrama, opera, and a Romantic cult text, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Another inversion of traditional rational norms and expectations consists in women pursuing – instead of subordinating themselves to and waiting for the advances of – men, as well as aristocrats and divines pursuing – instead of protecting – their subjects. Revolution performed on all levels is stigmatized as reason deposed on all levels: chaotic nonsense.

Satirical parody naturally appeals to human reason and common sense because it distorts and indicts the parodied sub-text as offending against reason and common sense. This, we have seen, made it weapon of choice in the Neo-classical campaign against all Romantic literature and Gothic literature in particular, all the more so as the Gothic genres of the period contained elements of Romantic irony and self-parody.

George Crabbe chose another, more indirect method of indicting the irrationality of the Gothic. Instead of parody, he created a literary *Kontrafaktur*, as in his campaign against nostalgic Romantic pastoral. In the preface to his *Tales* (1812), he exposed his poetics of realism and rational objective observation as opposed to falsifying invention, arguing with Boccaccio, Chaucer, Chaucer's translator Dryden, Pope, and Johnson against wild effusions of poetic fancy and imaginary Gothic castles in the air.⁸⁷ His polemic against the poetology of Duke Theseus in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one of Shakespeare's passages that he deemed "not divinely inspired", is just as polite and implicit as his polemic against the Gothic genres in his verse tale of Peter Grimes in *The Borough* (1810). Satire, Crabbe argued, is bound to reality instead of fancy and

87 Crabbe, *Tales*, Preface, 1812, in *Poetical Works*, II. 8.

fairy-land, and satire is the poetry of the Classical Tradition.⁸⁸ As a naturalist and physician, Crabbe shared the contemporary interest in the functions of the psyche and the unconscious, especially in diseased minds and states of madness. However, unlike the Romantics, he did not use it for purposes of aesthetic sensationalism, soul-expanding terror and soul-contracting horror, but for realistic case studies. The third-person narration of the wicked rural fisherman Peter Grimes, who knocked down his father and killed his three apprentices and then went mad as a result of his repressed guilt, is distanced, analytic, and scientifically rational. It discredits the Gothic by evoking all the themes and conventions of the genre, converting them into a rhymed psycho-medical report. Gothic villainy, secret crime, horror, social isolation, madness, visions of spectres, and the finality death are elements in the long amnesia of a lunatic patient, whose pathological symptoms are carefully observed. Peter Grimes's guilt is hidden, yet turns up in his partly mendacious yet partly confessional report of his dreams of persecution by his victims, spectres not to be shaken off because they are fixed in his unconscious. His wild ravings on his madman's sick bed are observed and analysed with a psychiatrist's precision that predated and anticipated the novels of Flaubert and Dostoyevsky at a later time when verse tales were no longer the fashion:

He knew us not, or with accustom'd art
 He hid the knowledge, yet expos'd his Heart;
 'Twas part Confession and the rest Defence,
 A Madman's Tale, with gleams of waking Sense.⁸⁹

Peter's final death in horror, unlike the deaths of the villainous Montoni and Signora Laurentini in Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) or the villainous Ambrosio in Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), are not suddenly eruptive in the sense of a short and violent climax, but the result of a long and minutely observed process of degeneration. Even the narration's argument against domestic slavery – cheap orphan-boy apprentices bought from workhouses and subject to all kinds of ill treatment including exploitation and murder – has a rational basis. It lacks the usual sentimentality and acrimoniousness of the Romantic anti-slavery and abolitionist discourse.

Whereas Crabbe's rejection of Romantic fancy and sensationalism is implicit rather than overtly aggressive, satirical reviews and replies to reviews in periodicals and pamphlets yield more direct evidence of the reproach of unreason. A typical and productive controversy between modern advocates of a Romantic and traditional defenders of a Neoclassical poetic took place between Hazlitt,

⁸⁸ Ibid. II. 9.

⁸⁹ Crabbe, *The Borough*, XXII, 286–289, 1810, ed. cit. I. 572.

author of *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817) and *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818), and Gifford, editor of the *Quarterly Review*. From the publication of *The Round Table* (1817) to *Table-Talk* (1821–22), Hazlitt's books appeared with such frequency that reviews could hardly keep up, this at a time of increased rivalry between the Tory William Blackwood, publisher of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, who was attacking Hazlitt, whilst the Whig Archibald Constable, publisher of the *Edinburgh Review*, was defending him. The Tory press would not stop their long intensive campaign to suppress that popular upstart Radical William Hazlitt.⁹⁰ As Gifford conflated Hazlitt and Hunt when he attacked Radical and Romantic positions, Hazlitt summarized his many Tory and Neoclassical critics under the name of Gifford, although the anonymous reviews were also by James Russell, John Wilson Croker, Eaton Stannard Barrett, Sydney Walker, the Tory lawyer John Taylor Coleridge (Samuel Taylor Coleridge's nephew), and others, whom he could not identify.⁹¹ They were the *Quarterly's* most scathing reviewers, stirred up by William Gifford more often than not. Thus, Hazlitt's *Letter to William Gifford* (1819), a long self-defensive pamphlet in book form reprinted in 1820, together with a second edition of his *Lectures on the English Poets*, constitutes part of a complete Romantic *ars poetica*. It was highly esteemed by John Keats, who copied passages from Hazlitt's letter into his own letters. As adherents to the Classical Tradition and late Augustan poetics, Gifford and the other Tory reviewers were intrigued by Hazlitt's mystical and expressionist definitions of poetry, with their strong if not exclusive reduction of poetry to the imagination and the passions, just as they were by his inimical attitude to reason as the mind's capacity for definition and analysis, by his view of poetry as innate in every man (Gifford's vulgar revolutionary crowd), by his reduction of poetry to individual pleasure or pain as well as emotional sympathy rather than general and useful doctrine, as well as by his use of the word "poetry" in three distinct but related meanings: the composition of poetry, the talent for poetry, the subject matter of poetry. Hazlitt's theory of the innate "sympathetic imagination" as expounded in his *Essay on the Principles of Human Action* (1803) was the basis of his theory of genius both in the production and the criticism of poetry, suspect to Neoclassicists because of its irrational mysticism.⁹² Keats, for one, attended Hazlitt's lectures at the Surrey Institute in London, and Hazlitt's affective rather than rational definitions were contemporary and congenial with Percy Shelley's in *A Defence of Poetry* (MS 1821):

The best general notion which I can give of poetry is, that it is the natural impression of any object or event, by its vividness exciting an involuntary movement of imagination

90 Stanley Jones, Hazlitt, Oxford 1989, 286–303.

91 Also see John Strachan's notes in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, IV. 369–384.

92 Burwick (ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Romantic Literature*, Hazlitt, II. 566–567.

and passion, and producing, by sympathy, a certain modulation of the voice, or sounds, expressing it. [...] Poetry is the language of the imagination and the passions. It relates to whatever gives immediate pleasure or pain to the human mind. [...] Poetry is the universal language which the heart holds with nature and itself.⁹³

[...]

Poetry puts a spirit of life and motion into the universe. It describes the flowing, not the fixed. It does not define the limits of sense, or analyze the distinctions of the understanding, but signifies the excess of the imagination [...]⁹⁴

Gifford based his review on Hazlitt's lack of rational analysis and stylistic clarity, allegedly due to his lack of a classical education. He exposed his "vulgar descriptions, silly paradoxes, flat truisms, misty sophistry, broken English",⁹⁵ nebulous definitions, neglect of gentlemen and interest in washerwomen,⁹⁶ conflating Hazlitt and Hunt in order to shout down two adversaries at once. Thus, throughout his review of *The Round Table* (1817), Gifford contested Hazlitt's and Hunt's claims to have continued the periodical essay tradition of Joseph Addison, and contrasted Addison's learning and lucid rationality against their ignorance and dark confusion.⁹⁷ After all, Addison was the son of an academic and dean of Lichfield, brought up at Charterhouse and Queen's College, Oxford, a representative of the Classical Tradition and the English Enlightenment, and an outstanding theorist of early eighteenth-century Neoclassicism. Again, the severance of the Romantics from the Classical Tradition was, originally, due less to the Romantics' own agenda than the Neoclassicists' group identification of their adversaries. Recent studies have shown how subtly and inconspicuously the Romantics, from Blake to Keats, absorbed and developed the Classical Tradition.⁹⁸

Conflating Hazlitt and Hunt and thus ignoring their marked differences was typical of Neoclassical techniques of enemy frontline formation. They were twinned like Beaumont and Fletcher, and denigrated as ignorant fellow Cockneys. A reviewer of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* ironically called them "the Aristotle and Longinus of the Cockneys", jackasses who replaced Greek by Billingsgate (his nickname for "Billy Hazlitt").⁹⁹

Percy Shelley was classified with the Cockney Poets and the "coterie" of new-school poets, if not for low origin and lack of a classical education than for his incomprehensibility. From a Neoclassical perspective, "Shelley, or any of his

93 Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Poets*, 1818, in: *Complete Works*, V. 1.

94 *Ibid.* V. 3.

95 *Quarterly Review*, 17 (1817), 155.

96 *Ibid.* 155–157.

97 *Ibid.* 154–159.

98 E.g. Christopher R. Miller, *The Invention of Evening: Perception and Time in Romantic Poetry*, Cambridge 2006.

99 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 16 (July 1824), 67.

coterie” accused solid old-school poets of insensibility to poetical excellence merely because he had not learned to think clearly in the sense of Boileau’s dictum that clear thinking entails clear writing. In an excoriatingly satirical review of *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), a reviewer subsumed:

The predominating characteristic of Mr. Shelley’s poetry [...] is its frequent and total want of meaning.¹⁰⁰

Coleridge, another reader of Greek, Latin, and the Classical Tradition, whom the anti-Romantics generally portrayed as a muddle-brained author of low origin and as the purveyor of Hazlitt’s nebulous ideas and style, incurred the same satirical criticism as Hazlitt and Shelley. In *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), Peacock discredited Coleridge as a confused thinker and speaker on the negative model of the incomprehensible Kant, interested in dark and tortuous ways to truth rather than clear truth as such. To Flosky-Coleridge, the “lover of shadows”, the light of truth would be an anti-climax to the enjoyable obscurity and pain of the search, as manifested in his honest confession to Mr Listless:

“[...] I have myself an enthusiasm for truth, [...] for the pleasure of metaphysical investigation lies in the means, not in the end; and if the end could be found, the pleasure of the means would cease.”¹⁰¹

Flosky-Coleridge’s fascination with the sublimity of darkness is manifested in his love of Gothic fantasies as well as in his tortuous sentences, which lack a logical structure, take his interlocutors round in circles, and lead nowhere. In *Melincourt* (1817), Peacock ridiculed Coleridge as the confused and confusing tenant of Cimmerian Lodge, in a learned Rabelaisian catalogue of wordplay typical of Menippean satire, “the poetopolitical, rhapsodicoprosaic, desidaemoniaco-paradoxographical, pseudolatreiological, transcendental mereosophist, Moley Mystic”.¹⁰² The incomprehensibility and illogicality of his plagiarized German Romantic idealistic philosophy, synthesizing Kant’s transcendental philosophy with Schelling’s philosophy of nature and history, is reflected in the fog of his Cimmerian Lodge, in the manner of Gothic novels, tales, poems, and dramas:

The fog had penetrated into all the apartments: there was fog in the hall, fog in the parlour, fog on the staircases, fog in the bedrooms:

100 [W.S. Walker] in: Quarterly Review, 26 (October 1821), 168–180, in: Shelley: The Critical Heritage, ed. James E. Barcus, London 1975, 255.

101 Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, chapter 6, in: Novels, 381.

102 Peacock, *Melincourt*, chapter 31, 274. The Cimmerians and the mole are allusions to obscurity.

“The fog was here, the fog was there,
The fog was all around.”¹⁰³

Earlier in the novel, Feathernest-Southey is also satirized as being infected by the bedlam humbug of Mystic-Coleridge, both former Radicals and present-day Tories. Such obscurity, Peacock suggested, constituted an offence against a major heritage of the Classical Tradition, the Augustan Enlightenment’s call for rational clarity, and a prime rule of the Neoclassical canon, “be clear”!

His [Mr Feathernest’s] friend Mr Mystic, of Cimmerian Lodge, had initiated him in some of the mysteries of the transcendental philosophy, which on this, as on all similar occasions, he called in to his assistance; and overwhelmed his Lordship [the stupid and useless aristocrat Lord Anophel Achthar] with a volley of ponderous jargon, which left him in profound astonishment at the depth of Mr Feathernest’s knowledge.¹⁰⁴

Asked to give a definition of a fine poem, be it a ballad or Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Feathernest-Southey makes a declamation that lacks all clarity and precision. It is, in fact, Peacock’s parody of Romantic literary criticism, which described the subjective effect of a work on the congenial reader or listener rather than objective analysis of its rhetorical fabric and observance of the rules of reason. It recalls Southey’s book reviews, Hazlitt’s and Coleridge’s lectures, De Quincey’s “On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth” (1823), or Poe’s *The Philosophy of Composition* (1846). The heritage of the Classical Tradition, Boileau’s and Pope’s and Peacock’s demands for rational clarity in poetry as well as in criticism, is thus programmatically thrown overboard. Peacock’s parodic technique consists of a pastiche of Romantic commonplaces condensed into meaningless jargon:

“A fine poem is a luminous development of the complicated machinery of action and passion, exalted by sublimity, softened by pathos, irradiated with scenes of magnificence, figures of loveliness and characters of energy, and harmonized with infinite variety of melodious combination.”¹⁰⁵

Peacock’s satirical portrait of Romantic poetry in a Post-Enlightenment and scientific age adopts a similar view, representing the modern poetry of the “age of bronze” as a regressive and outdated relapse into the unenlightened barbarism of the pre-classical “age of iron”:

A poet in our times is a semi-barbarian in a civilized community. He lives in the days that are past. [...] The march of his intellect is like that of a crab, backward. The brighter the light diffused around him by the progress of reason, the thicker is the

103 Ibid. 277. The quotation is an obvious parody on a famous stanza from Coleridge’s *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner* (1798).

104 Peacock, *Melincourt*, chapter 8, 147. Also see Marilyn Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 89.

105 Ibid. chapter 9, 149.

darkness of antiquated barbarism, in which he buries himself like a mole, to throw up the barren hillocks of his Cimmerian labours.¹⁰⁶

The pantheistic or panentheistic Romantic view of one legible and sensitive nature, man included, denied reason's right to differentiate between human and animal, animate and inanimate nature. It recalled medieval mysticism and was antagonistic to Enlightenment world views. Pope, and even James Thomson, had described the natural world as a background for reflections on and as a magazine of metaphors centred in man. Francis Jeffrey, a journalist in the wake of the Scottish Enlightenment and favourable reviewer of his friend Archibald Alison's *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (1790, 1811), had a double reason for attacking Wordsworth in the *Edinburgh Review*. As a Whig, he resented Wordsworth's turn to medievalism and Toryism. And as an anthropocentric rationalist, he opposed Wordsworth's fascination with inanimate and low things, hills and valleys, ponds and dunghills. In Jeffrey's eyes, Wordsworth's mystical discerning of the universe in its most banal details in alleged prophetic moods, mistaking whims and megrims for general truths, documented itself in unintelligibility, obscurity of diction following obscurity of thought.¹⁰⁷ Hence Jeffrey's scathing review of *The White Doe of Rylstone* (1815), an obscure poem that makes a pother about a white deer or an old mare:

In consequence of all which, we are assured by Mr Wordsworth, that she [the doe] 'is approved by Earth and Sky, in their benignity;' and moreover, that the old Priory itself takes her for a daughter of the Eternal Prime – which we have no doubt is a very great compliment, though we have not the good luck to understand what it means.¹⁰⁸

In his second imaginary conversation between Porson and Southey (1842), which intensified his critique of Wordsworth advanced previously in his first imaginary conversation of 1823, Walter Savage Landor still gave voice to the old stricture. He used the classical scholar Porson, who had died in 1808, as a mouthpiece arguing against the Romantic poet Southey, who was still alive and died a year later. Angered by the recent rise to fame of a Victorian Wordsworth due to his Toryism and concomitant change of style, Landor made Porson repeat Jeffrey's and others' critique of Wordsworth's lack of reasoning and clarity by meting the "egotistical sublime" of the poet against the superior "chameleon poet" Shakespeare. Wordsworth thus appears as an irrational, muddle-brained, self-centred and talkative Romantic poetaster ignorant of Greek and Latin and the values of the Classical Tradition:

106 Peacock, *The Four Ages of Poetry*, 1820, in: *Works*, XIII. 20–21.

107 Paul H. Fry, *Jeffreyism, Byron's Wordsworth and the Nonhuman in Nature*, in: Demata – Wu (eds.), *British Romanticism and the Edinburgh Review*, 124–145.

108 [Jeffrey] in: *Edinburgh Review*, 25 (1815), 363. Quoted by Fry, 135.

Southey. Wordsworth has now turned from the ballad style to the philosophical.

Porson. The philosophical, I suspect, is antagonistic to the poetical.

Southey. Surely never was there a spirit more philosophical than Shakespeare's.

Porson. True, but Shakespeare infused it into living forms adapted to its reception. He did not puff it out incessantly from his own person, bewildering you in the mazes of metaphysics, and swamping you in sententiousness.¹⁰⁹

The Romantic School's standard reply to such reproaches of obscurity and mysticism due to ignorance of the Classical Tradition was connected to its alleged stony barrenness: its lack of riddles. To European Romantic poets, explained mysteries impoverished the world, depriving it of beauty and poetry, reducing its wholeness to mere parts. Charles Baudelaire based his polemical defence of Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* on their regression to the primitive, especially to dreams that reveal the truths of man's original nature, which partakes equally of heaven and hell, clear reason and dark passions. In this light, decadence and regression, the vices of the Classical Tradition in its Enlightenment Neoclassical definition, had become the virtues of Romantic poetry, just as Keats asked poets to restore the mysteries of the rainbow that philosophy had dissolved. Baudelaire combined his defence of the reproach of "décadence" with the obligatory Romantic derision of the pedantic professional pundits of Neoclassical literary criticism:

Littérature de décadence! – Paroles vides de sens que nous entendons souvent tomber, avec la sonorité d'un bâillement emphatique, de la bouche de ces sphinx sans énigme qui veillent devant les portes saintes de l'Esthétique classique. [...] Mon choix ne saurait être douteux, et cependant il y a des sphinx pédagogiques qui me reprocheraient de manquer à l'honneur classique¹¹⁰

2) Destruction of Reason: Physical and Mental Disease

The spread of sensibility to the detriment of reason and the growing concern with interiority, promoted by philosophical enquiries into the individual human psyche, did not progress unchallenged. Sensibility had its dangers, and Enlightenment philosophers, physiologists, and physicians would mark the popular literature of sensibility – promulgated by the abolition of the perpetual copyright of London booksellers and the reform of the nationwide postal system in later eighteenth-century Britain – as one produced by hypochondriacs. Solitary self-reflexivity among tombs or in wild natural scenery, focussing on

109 Landor, *Imaginary Conversations*, ed. cit. III. 255.

110 Baudelaire, *Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Allan Poe, 1857*, in: *Sur Edgar Poe*, ed. Marie-Christine Natta, Editions Complexe, Paris 1990, 171 – 172.

one's own mind and individuality rather than on general nature, deviated from the rational norm of behaviour. Beattie's and Wordsworth's protagonists in their long poems on the growth of a poet's mind were declared incurably mad.¹¹¹ At a time when traditionalists and rationalists ranked the mentally insane on a par with wild beasts to be caged for show rather than human beings to be given medical treatment, Francis Jeffrey reviewed Wordsworth's *Excursion* as the effusion of a madman not to be cured by criticism; instead, Wordsworth's readers and critics could only "wait in patience for the natural termination of the disorder", meaning Wordsworth's natural recovery to reason or his quick merciful death.¹¹² In a later letter to the young Thomas Carlyle, Jeffrey repeated his criticism of "the self-indulgence and self-admiration of genius", on the basis of his associationist aesthetic. False habits of association deviating from the ordinary create madmen and monsters for commercial rarity shows:

The more I see of philosophers and men of genius, the more I am inclined to hold that the ordinary run of sensible, kind people, who fill the world, are after all the best specimens of humanity – and that the others are, like our cultivated flowers, but splendid monsters, and cases of showy disease.¹¹³

In the above-quoted fourth Cockney School of Poetry review diagnosing the "metromania" of "this mad age", Lockhart suggested that the "apothecary" Keats, who had attended lunatics, was himself infected by lunacy through overweening poetic ambition and stood in need of treatment and "rational restraint". Like Jeffrey in the case of Wordsworth, Lockhart viciously pretended to hope for the mental doctor's (or rather low apothecary's) recovery from the disease that he was used to treat in other patients. He might then have an insight into the "drivelling idiocy" of his *Endymion*:

His [Keats's] friends, we understand, destined him to the career of medicine, and he was bound apprentice some years ago to a worthy apothecary in town. But all has been undone by a sudden attack of the malady to which we have alluded [...] We hope, however, that in so young a person, and with a constitution originally so good, even now the disease is not utterly incurable. Time, firm treatment and rational restraint, do much for many apparently hopeless invalids; and if Mr Keats should happen, at some interval of reason, to cast his eyes upon our pages, he may perhaps be convinced of the existence of his malady [...] ¹¹⁴

111 Michelle Faubert, *Rhyming Reason: The Poetry of Romantic-Era Psychologists*, London 2009, 66–71.

112 [Jeffrey] in: *Edinburgh Review*, 24 (November 1814), 2.

113 Jeffrey, Letter to Thomas Carlyle, 16 May 1831, in: *The Letters of Francis Jeffrey to Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. William Christie, London 2008, 96. See also William Christie, *The Edinburgh Review in the Literary Culture of Romantic Britain*, 59–79.

114 [Lockhart] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 3 (August 1818), 519.

Taking exception to Keats's erotic and pagan Hellenism that the Tory Wordsworth also found fault with, Lockhart feared the rise of a new culture and declared Keats moon-sick in order to exclude the low-born Cockney upstart from high or polite culture and social recognition:

His Endymion is not a Greek shepherd, loved by a Grecian goddess: he is merely a young cockney rhymester, dreaming a phantastic dream at the full of the moon.¹¹⁵

The Romantic Era was characterized by a special interest in the forms and treatments of madness as well as by enquiries into the unconscious, and thus gave rise to the later established academic sciences of psychiatry and psychoanalysis. Commissioners for lunacy were appointed to control the rank growth of licensed and unlicensed mental institutions, which were profitable businesses for many illusionists and impostors such as Louthembourg and Count Cagliostro. In fact, numerous major Romantic authors experienced fits of depression, anxiety, delusion or psychosis, which found expression in their works: Blake, Fergusson, Burns, Lewis, Coleridge, Charles Lloyd, Percy Shelley, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Clare, and Byron.¹¹⁶ And Keats's friend, the Whig solicitor Barry Cornwall, whose poetical works were permeated by scenes and the central theme of madness, became Metropolitan Commissioner of Lunacy in 1831, shortly after the end of the Tory government.

Lewis, in particular, was singled out as a mad author who infected the readers and audiences of his Gothic works with his own disease. When his Radical Romantic monodrama *The Captive* was acted at Covent Garden on 22 March 1803, theatre critics saw the reason for its immediate withdrawal in its horrifying impact. With his unrestricted emotional sensationalism and maniacal fancy, "[...] the author had included in this single scene all the horrors of a madhouse; imprisonment, chains, starvation, fear, madness, &c.; and many ladies were thrown into fits [...]"¹¹⁷ The similarity of the madhouse scene in Lewis's monodrama to those in the erratic Mary Wollstonecraft's Radical Novel *Maria, or, The Wrongs of Woman* (1797), indicting the subjection of disobedient women by confinement in madhouses, confirmed the traditionalist impression of modern school maniacs spreading mental and social chaos through literature.

A major argument in Neoclassical critiques of the Gothic genres was that, even if their authors were not demented, these wildly improbable fictions infected the minds of their readers with madness. Cervantes's *Don Quijote* (1605–1615), translated into English by Thomas Shelton (1620), Peter Anthony Motteux (1700) and Tobias Smollett (1755), was the best known and most widely imitated

115 Ibid. 522.

116 Turley, *Bright Stars*, 142.

117 *Biographia Dramatica*, London 1812, II. 81. See Jeffrey N. Cox (ed.), *Seven Gothic Dramas 1789–1825*, 43, 225.

example of a satirical novel featuring a hero descending into madness due to his reading of fantastic fiction. Arabella, the protagonist of Charlotte Lennox's satirical novel *The Female Quixote* (1751), has her brain confused by reading the fantastic French *romans héroï-galants* of the seventeenth century. Geoffrey Wildgoose, the protagonist of Richard Graves's satirical novel *The Spiritual Quixote* (1773), loses his reason and sense of reality by studying the wildly enthusiastic theological treatises of the English Dissenters. And Catherine Morland, the protagonist of Jane Austen's satirical novel *Northanger Abbey*, loses her common sense by reading Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, beside such sentimental and Gothic stuff as "Castle Wolfenbach, Clermont, Mysterious Warnings, Necromancer of the Black Forest, Midnight Bell, Orphan of the Rhine, and Horrid Mysteries".¹¹⁸ They contort Catherine Morland's perception of reality. The lack of an education in which a responsible and rational father chooses and supervises his daughter's reading leads to Arabella's and Catherine's mental aberrations. In the view of Lennox and Austen, only a solid fare of books and food can guarantee *mens sana in corpore sano*. Thus Henry Tilney, who takes over the education that her father had failed sufficiently to bestow on Catherine Morland, reprimands her juvenile Gothic fancies by an appeal to the Neoclassical requirements of reason and probability in literature:

"Consult your own understanding, your sense of the probable, your own observation on what is passing around you – Does our education prepare us for such atrocities? Do our laws connive at them? Could they be perpetrated without being known, in a country like this, where social and literary intercourse is on such a footing [...]"¹¹⁹

It must, however, be noted that Romantic poets and novelists apologized for their deviation from the mental norm as a symptom of genius rather than a disease per se, a retirement of reason in favour of a wider imaginative vision that they wanted to pass on to their readers.¹²⁰ It was against this anti-rational identification of madness and inspiration that Neoclassical critics directed their satires in verse and prose, as the anonymous reviewer of Percy Shelley's visionary poem *Alastor* (1816) in the *British Critic*:

If this gentleman [Shelley] is not blessed with the inspiration, he may at least console himself with the madness of a poetic mind.¹²¹

In Planché's *Vampire* (1820), the father of Lord Ruthven's designed bride and victim, Lord Ronald, is blind to the obvious fact of Ruthven's vampiric nature as

118 Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 1818, in: *Novels*, ed. R.W. Chapman, Oxford 1923, 1969, V. 40.

119 *Ibid.* V. 197–198.

120 For these two conflicting views of madness see Michel Foucault, *Folie et déraison*, Paris 1961.

121 *British Critic*, 5 (May 1816), 545, in: *Shelley: The Critical Heritage*, 96.

long as he clings to his enlightened rationalism. Only when he begins to believe in the supernatural and drifts into madness does he see the truth, save his daughter Margaret from the predator, and destroy the monster.¹²² In the philosophical essay “The Soul and its Organs of Sense”, which he contributed to Southey’s *Omniana* (1812), Coleridge distinguished various degrees of madness, including the ingenious madness of the idealist Don Quixote, whose vocabulary was poetic and perceptive rather than scientific and misleading.¹²³ Such a madman could see but not communicate what the sane bourgeois was blind to – an old pre-Enlightenment belief still vital in Ernest Dowson’s neo-Romantic poem “To One in Bedlam” (1896). Coleridge had recourse to the pre-Enlightenment concept, which saw *μανία* as a necessary corrective to deceptive norms and power abuse rather than as a disease.¹²⁴ According to the Neoplatonist Coleridge, who was versed in Kant and Fichte, the true madman and the true poet could overcome the “inner blindness” of the philistine and materialist and contemplate the “facts”, meaning the immaterial reality, behind the deceptive material facts of the Enlightenment empiricists.¹²⁵ However, they could only do so in moments of inspiration, when their “genial spirits” did not fail and did not suspend their “shaping spirit of Imagination”:¹²⁶

I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.¹²⁷

Thus, Romantic poets tended to make a show of their madness of genius, from Blake and Burns to De Quincey and Byron, in an act of defiant self-defence against their Neoclassical critics. Burns, for instance, scribbled poems into a copy of the *Poems* (1773) by his admired predecessor Robert Fergusson, who had died in Edinburgh’s Bedlam in 1774. To Burns, an admixture of madness was an indispensable part of the poetical temperament:

There is a pretty large portion of bedlam in the composition of a Poet at any time; [...] My chained faculties broke loose; my maddening passions, roused to tenfold fury, bore over their banks with impetuous, resistless force, carrying every check & principle before them.¹²⁸

122 Planché, *The Vampire, or, The Bride of the Isles. A Romantic Melodrama*, London 1820, from II/3.

123 Coleridge, *The Soul and its Organs of Sense*, in: Southey (ed.), *Omniana*, 1812, in: *Collected Works*, XI. I. 333–335.

124 See Michel Foucault, *Folie et déraison*, Paris 1961, *passim*.

125 Coleridge, *Inward Blindness*, in Southey (ed.), *Omniana*, ed. cit. XI. I. 311.

126 Coleridge, *Dejection: An Ode*, 1802, lines 39 and 86, ed. cit. XVI. I. II. 699–700.

127 *Ibid.* lines 44–45, ed. cit. XI. I. II. 699.

128 Burns, *Letters*, ed. J. De Lancey Ferguson – G. Ross Roy, Oxford 1985, I. 36. See also Robert Crawford, *The Bard*, 213–214.

Idiosyncratic self-reflexivity, melancholy, and hypochondria became known as symptoms of a typical and very modern English disease, “la maladie anglaise”.¹²⁹ The case of the boy poet Thomas Chatterton, who deserted the Classical Tradition to forge the medievalist Rowley poems and committed suicide at seventeen years of age, was soon investigated as potential proof of the morbid nature of the modern cult of sensibility.¹³⁰ And the case of John Keats – comparable in many respects – later lent itself to confirming such a pathological diagnosis.

Tender feelings could erupt into wild feelings, especially with the masses. *Empfindsamkeit* was closely allied to *Sturm und Drang*, as the experience of the French Revolution would show. Goethe’s famous dictum that Classicism is health and Romanticism disease reflects the poet’s turn from the Preromantic storm and stress of his youth to the mature German Classicism of his Weimar period, which aimed at a union of Romanticism and the Classical Tradition: the marriage of Faust of Germany and Helen of Troy, out of which sprang Euphronion. This explains Goethe’s appeal to the Italians to overcome their polemical divide between a Neoclassical and a Romantic “Schule”, just as he himself had overcome it.¹³¹ After 1786, beginning with his Italian journey, Goethe’s great aim was to update the Classical Tradition in that new cosmopolitan Weimar-German way, in contradistinction both to French Neoclassicism and to Johann Christoph Gottsched, whose aesthetics he continued to regard as misdirected attempts at reviving a dead body. The Classical Goethe published a devastating pronouncement on the purely Romantic German school of the Nazarene painters and on the purely Romantic essays and novels of Wackenroder and Tieck, especially *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1797) and *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen* (1798), marking them off as sickly, self-conscious, introspective, foggy, vague, national-provincial, and innovative in the sense of a desertion from the healthy Classical Tradition. Opposing two schools without calling them so, an old and a new one, Goethe’s author Heinrich Meyer asserted that nothing new, morbid, and detached from the healthy tradition can last, – ephemeral experiments in literature and art which he ridiculed as “klosterbruderisieren” and “sternbaldisieren”:

Von dem kränklichen Klosterbruder hingegen und seinen Genossen, welche die seltsame Grille durchsetzten, “merkwürdige Werke ganz neuer Art, Hieroglyphen, wahr-

129 Thomas Trotter, *A View of the Nervous Temperament*, 1807, in Timothy Morton (ed.), *Radical Food*, III. 563. See also John Brewer, *Sentiment and Sensibility*, in: *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. James Chandler, 21 – 44.

130 *Ibid.* 27. In this context, Brewer mentions the writings of Samuel Auguste Tissot and Herbert Croft.

131 Goethe, *Klassiker und Romantiker in Italien sich heftig bekämpfend*, 1820, in: *Sämtliche Werke, Jubiläums-Ausgabe*, ed. von der Hellen, Stuttgart and Berlin 1902 – 1912, XXXVII. 118 – 125.

hafte Sinnbilder, aus Naturgefühlen, Naturansichten, Ahnungen willkürlich zusammengesetzt, entfernt von der alten Weise der Vorwelt“, zu verlangen, rechnen wir kaum zwanzig Jahre, und dieses Geschlecht [der Romantiker] sehen wir schon in dem höchsten Unsinn verloren.¹³²

August Graf von Platen echoed Goethe when he branded Romantics like Heinrich Heine and Karl Immermann and their low German and French reading public (“Pöbel”) as physically or mentally diseased, in contrast to the ancient Greeks: “Wohl den gesunderen Alten, den sittlichen, stets der Natur treu [...]!”¹³³ The populace, with its outbreaks of democratic chaos, admires all art that is madly chaotic like itself, and Romantic poets serve that taste with their wild, populist, miserable art:

Handwerksmäßiger Bänkelgesang, bockfüßige Geilheit
Macht euch, nebst Wahnsinn, deutsche Gemüter geneigt.¹³⁴

Für das Gediegene stets eiskalt; doch enthusiastisch
Für das Erbärmliche stets bis zur bacchantischen Wut.¹³⁵

Modern Romantic and especially Gothic literature was seen in a line of irrational dissent from the clear and logical Classical Tradition, a deviation that began in the time of Rousseau. Charles Caleb Colton chided Rousseau “the Prince of Contradictions”, “an embodied Paradox”, and “Chief Madman on a Stage where All were mad”.¹³⁶ It was customary for conservative critics to relate Romantic writers to Rousseau with regard to his self-confessed madness, and traditionally to ascribe madness to possession by the devil, as in the *Quarterly Review*’s harsh judgment on Hazlitt’s *Political Essays, with Sketches of Public Characters* (1819):

That so misty a brain should be disturbed by spectres, is not to be wondered at [...] Poor Tom never saw the foul fiend in so many or such fearful shapes. Some of our readers may be learned in demonology [...] There is something, however, in these wanderings of the author which is symptomatic of mania [...] ¹³⁷

The *Quarterly*’s equally harsh review of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), authored by John Wilson Croker, suggested that the daughter of William Godwin could be no better than the disciples of William Godwin, all “out-pensioners of

132 Meyer – Goethe, *Über Kunst und Altertum in den Rhein-Main-Gegenden, Neu-deutsche religiös-patriotische Kunst*, 1817, in: *Werke*, Weimarer Ausgabe, Weimar: Böhlau 1887–1912, IL.1. 59. Not contained in *Jubiläums-Ausgabe*.

133 Platen, *Epigramme*, 1827, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, IV. 173.

134 *Ibid.* IV. 228 (entitled Heine und Konsorten).

135 *Ibid.* (entitled Deutscher Geschmack).

136 Colton, *Hypocrisy: A Satire in Three Books*, 1812, 124–126.

137 *Quarterly Review*, 22 (1819), 162.

Bedlam".¹³⁸ Croker's aim was to protect readers from morally, politically, and aesthetically subversive (meaning non-classical) literature; and a Gothic novel, especially one written by a woman, appalled the mind and made the flesh creep without informing the understanding. To Croker, the whole genre was highly infectious and conducive to mental confusion. Mary Shelley fared no better with the Tory *British Critic*, whose anonymous reviewer blamed her novel's mad excess of imagination on a woman's nature unregulated by male reason. A woman's "diseased and wandering imagination, which has stepped out of all legitimate bounds", had, in the reviewer's perspective, framed "these disjointed combinations and unnatural adventures", although the novel might have been "disciplined into something better".¹³⁹ Significantly, the reviews of Richard Brinsley Peake's melodrama *Presumption, or, The Fate of Frankenstein* (Lyceum Theatre or English Opera House 1823) were much more favourable, largely because a male dramatist had domesticated the unaided female novelist's mad excesses of imagination and immorality.¹⁴⁰ Difference of gender, as we shall see in our next chapter, made much of the difference of literary quality to conservative eyes.

Such dissenting literary works as Hazlitt's and Mary Shelley's reminded Tory and Neoclassical critics of the "madness" of the French and German revolutionary clubs,¹⁴¹ reinforced as they perceived that Germany, which infected the enlightened world with the confused and unintelligible metaphysics of Kant and German idealistic philosophy, was supporting the ideology of the French Revolution.

Visionary Neoplatonism and love of German metaphysics, love of Gothic morbidity, a fascination with madness and death as well as with graveyards and darkness, wallowing in oriental exoticism and excesses of passion, the championship of the ordinary people and democracy in the sense of revolutionary turmoil, consumption of and experiments with psychedelic drugs, and self-consciousness in a cult of solitude – all these could be read as symptoms of diseased minds. Thus, they provided strong arguments in the arsenal of weapons against the various Romantics and their diverse forms of dissent from the Augustan Classical Tradition. David Macbeth Moir's brilliant parody of Coleridge's drug-induced mystery poem "Christabel" (1816), in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, may serve as an example:

138 [J.W. Croker] in: *Quarterly Review*, 18 (1818), 379–385. See Jonathan Cutmore, *Contributors to the Quarterly Review*, 77.

139 *British Critic*, 9 (April 1818) 438.

140 Reproduced in Stephen C. Behrendt's online edition of the melodrama in *Romantic Circles*.

141 *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 6 (1800), 468–472.

LISTEN! Ye know that I am mad,
 And ye will listen! – wizard dreams
 Were with me! – all is true that seems! –
 From dreams alone can truth be had –
 [...] ¹⁴²

What the Romantics would see as symptoms of divinely inspired enthusiasm or “poetic phrenzy”, was closely allied to pathological frenzy, madness. In extreme cases of incomprehensibility such as Blake’s, even fellow Romantics and fellow Radicals could suspect a morbid rather than a sensitive temperament. Blake published a *Descriptive Catalogue* (1809) for his private exhibition of his tempera paintings and watercolours at his family home in London, due to refusal of exhibition by the Royal Academy, with an advertisement defending himself against “those who have been told that my Works are but [...] a Madman’s Scrawls”. He effected the very contrary. Robert Hunt’s scathing review of the catalogue called Blake an “unfortunate lunatic”,¹⁴³ and Blake retaliated by including the three Hunt brothers as the destructive Giant Hand in several plates of his *Jerusalem* (1804–1820). Together with the soldier John Scolfield, against whom Blake defended himself in his garden in Felpham in August 1803, the Giant Hand (alluding to the hand with which the Hunt brothers signed their articles in the *Examiner*) symbolized the false revolution in corporeal instead of intellectual warfare.¹⁴⁴ Few then understood the profound sanity of this pacifist statement. Other Cockney literati like Charles and Mary Lamb visited Blake’s exhibition, but the culture wars between the Lake and Cockney schools¹⁴⁵ and the consequent group formation post 1817 had not yet taken place and protected Blake from such imputations of madness by other fellow Romantics and fellow Radicals. Furthermore the Lambs, with their notorious bouts of mental derangement, were themselves on the defence. Charles Lamb included an essay on the “Sanity of True Genius” in his *Last Essays of Elia* (1833), arguing that philistine insensitivity to art would mistake the poet’s dreamy exaltation of true genius for confused madness. In the eyes of the Romantics, only a true emotional artist could be a true emotional critic, and the Neoclassicists were professional philistine critics by academic rules of reason:

The ground of the mistake is this, that men, finding in the raptures of the higher poetry a condition of exaltation, to which they have no parallel in their own experience, beside

142 [Moir], Christabel, Introduction to Part the Third, in: Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine, 5 (June 1819), 286–291.

143 [Leigh Hunt] in: *Examiner*, 90 (17 September 1809), in: Blake: The Critical Heritage, 66.

144 David V. Erdman, *A Concordance to the Writings of William Blake*, Ithaca NY I. 860.

145 Greg Kucich’s and Jeffrey N. Cox’s General Introduction to Leigh Hunt, *Selected Writings*, ed. John Strachan et al., Pickering Masters, London 2003, I. LII.

the spurious resemblance of it in dreams and fevers, impute a state of dreaminess and fever to the poet. But the true poet dreams being awake.¹⁴⁶

Neoclassical critics would read Lamb's *Elia*-essay "Imperfect Sympathies" (1823) with its plea for whimsies, prejudice, and ambiguity of speech, and his *Elia*-essay "Witches and Other Night-Fears" with its defence of popular superstition, as indicative of its author's romantic derangement. This was exacerbated with Lamb's essays being published first in the *London Magazine*, simultaneously with De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. Lamb's and De Quincey's pre-Baudelairean London *flâneurs* were hardly in line with rational Neoclassical standards. Even Lamb's friend Robert Southey missed "a sounder [originally: saner] religious feeling" in the otherwise delightful and original work.¹⁴⁷ Lamb's reaction was a wildly abusive pamphlet, *Letter of Elia to Robert Southey* (1823), showing Lamb's other, aggressive side. When William Gifford had engaged Charles Lamb as an occasional contributor to his *Quarterly Review*, entrusting him with a review of Wordsworth's *Excursion* (1814),¹⁴⁸ he nevertheless smuggled references to Lamb's insanity into his articles, which had already incensed the otherwise mild Lamb into high dudgeon and a reaction out of all proportion to the offense.¹⁴⁹

Lockhart and William Gifford would chide Coleridge and Byron each as being a "madman", though Byron at least a madman with method.¹⁵⁰ Byron, Keats, Coleridge, and De Quincey exhibited their sufferings of mind and body in their poetry and prose, a fact that the Proteus Byron would deride as masturbatory and personally repent in his Neoclassical moods, whereas, in his Romantic moods, he paraded his unfathomable "madness" and exposed himself to harsh vituperation from all sides.¹⁵¹ What the Neoclassicists found fault with was simply disease itself – Pope and Gifford were misshapen, Goldsmith was disfigured by the smallpox, and Samuel Johnson suffered from depressions. Neither, however, had made these diseases the subject of his poetry, fishing for the compassion of their readers. Romantic confessional poetry and its "pity-beseeching authors" in verse and prose, by contrast, childishly and tastelessly wallowed in masturbatory confessions, painful *journaux intimes*, including their Keatsian "lamentations about the cruelty of the reviewers".¹⁵² The young jour-

146 Lamb, *Last Essays of Elia, Sanity of True Genius*, 1833, in: *Works*, II. 73–74.

147 Jonathan Cutmore, *Contributors to the Quarterly Review*, 222–223, note 52.

148 *Quarterly Review*, 12 (1814), 100–111.

149 Cutmore, *ibid.*

150 Byron: *The Critical Heritage*, 184 and 161.

151 See for example Wordsworth's dismissive remarks about Byron's lyric *Fare Thee Well*, 1816, line 46, in *Byron: The Critical Heritage*, 79.

152 [Crowe] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 12 (August 1822), 157. Cf. Byron's attacks on Keats quoted above.

nalist and historian Eyre Evans Crowe's review of Hazlitt's *Table Talk* (1821 – 1822) in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* sought to expose an immature Romantic poet, critic, and essayist, who had neither refinement nor polite manners. Crowe (1799 – 1868) anticipated the style and arguments of the High Victorians, who, as modern heirs to the Classical Tradition, would also call for adulthood, health, and decorum in literature and the arts:

Now, it is one thing to feel sore, and a bad thing it is there is no denying; but to tell all the world the story of one's soreness, to be continually poking at the bandages, and displaying all the ugly things they ought to cover, is quite another, and far worse affair.¹⁵³

Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (1717) was seen and judged in a similar light, especially as its Neoclassical critics read its disjunct mixture of Romantic confessions and Romantic poetology as a manifestation of the author's madness. An anonymous reviewer, possibly again the formidable Neoclassicist George Croly, indicted the work's offense against the rules of decorum and sanity, associating the author with the notorious Restoration tragedian Nathaniel Lee, who spent the end of his life in London's Bedlam:

It is painful to remark in these volumes, very cogent reasons against their having been published under any form. There are indications of so close an approach to that state of mind which has been said to be nearly allied to great wit, that the author's friends would have done well to persuade him to withhold them from notoriety, at least for some time. Nat Lee never produced so extraordinary a mixture of talent and infirmity.¹⁵⁴

The predecessors to these Romantic authors' confessions had been the numerous Preromantic epistolary novels in the tradition of the Dissenter Samuel Richardson, and the numerous Preromantic first-person narrations in the tradition of Laurence Sterne. As counter-voices to Enlightenment Neoclassicism, they had probed deep into the individual psyche instead of the general nature of their protagonists, laying bare its irreconcilable contradictions as experienced by their authors themselves. This tendency of the novel persisted in later Romanticism, continuing well into the nineteenth century. Bulwer-Lytton's first successful novel, *Pelham* (1828), for instance, poses as the "motley [...] confessions" of a young nobleman, whose virtues and vices, strengths and foibles are antithetically mixed, in "these latter days of alternate Werters and Worthies".¹⁵⁵

This is what the High Victorian critic Gerald Massey had in mind when he attacked the Romantic poets of the contemporary Spasmodic School for their

153 Ibid.

154 *Literary Gazette*, 29 (9 August 1817), 83. The reference to the closeness of great wits to madness is a quotation from John Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, 1681 – 1682, I. 163 – 164.

155 Bulwer-Lytton, *Pelham*, 1828, in *Novels and Romances*, ed. cit. I. 303 – 304.

deviation from health and norm in favour of ego-centred self-analysis and confessed individual morbidity, with allusions to Coleridge's Dejection Ode. Romantic or, as he chided it with a term denoting disease, "Spasmodic" poetry violated the rules of general nature and decorum. The Classical Tradition thus came to be adapted to practical Victorian values, in a time when, after the foundation of University College in London in 1826 and the subsequent reforms of British universities, a knowledge of Greek and Latin and the classical canon was no longer generally expected from educated men:

He who is to image humanity, must at least be able to stand on a common level with it, [...] losing the poverty of the individual in the wealth of the species. But it is the evident predilection of our spasmodists towards that "abstruse research" among morbid phenomena, which "tends to steal from his own nature all the natural man," and the habit of their minds to move in the involution of thinking, instead of the evolution of thought.¹⁵⁶

Whereas, in Massey's Neoclassical and Victorian view, Classical and Neoclassical literature by "objective writers" concentrates (and modern Victorian literature should concentrate) on common sense and broad daylight, the Romantics and Spasmodists cultivate night and the grave and the dark caverns of the individual soul:

Hence their tendency to look with an introverted vision alone, instead of looking out with wide open eyes, and deriving advantage from the experience of others, as do objective writers.¹⁵⁷

It has already been shown above how and why Dissenters, Radicals, and Romantics were traditionally open to imputations of madness and mental confusion often caused by abuse of drugs, and how and why Coleridge in particular remained under such attacks all his life. Peacock's suggestion that Coleridge's obscure *Mystery Poems*, composed from dreams, were themselves narcotics and anodynes, not only hinted at the fact that he had well understood how Coleridge's sleep came about. It also took up the old metaphor of literature as food for the mind, arguing that unhealthy food creates physical as well as mental diseases.¹⁵⁸ Classical literature was argued to be traditional, healthy, and long-lived, Romantic literature by contrast modish, clogging, and short-lived, as in the *Quarterly Review's* moral drawn from the Pope and Bowles controversy:

156 [Massey] in: *North British Review*, 55 (February 1858), 238.

157 *Ibid.* 239.

158 Peacock, *An Essay on Fashionable Literature*, MS 1818, in: *Works*, VIII. 290.

[...] the public taste is beginning to be satiated with the forced meats of modern poetry, and to relish again the wholesome viands, that delighted our fathers, and are destined to be the delight of all future generations.¹⁵⁹

Romantic psychiatry and psychoanalysis, the discovery of the unconscious and exploration of the dark ways of the soul in the manner of Mesmer and Schubert, in states of day-dreaming or natural or drug-induced sleep, dealt with abnormal mental states and diseases. The Gothic genres with their splitting of man into a visible rational and normative half on the one hand and a concealed irrational and devious half on the other hand, concentrating on the latter, were especially vulnerable to attacks for alleged Romantic madness. In a Neoclassical review of the London edition of *Ormond* (1800), the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* chided Charles Brockden Brown “a mad-headed metaphysician”, creator of a “contradictory” and “unintelligible” protagonist that “must have been engendered in the brain of phrenzy”.¹⁶⁰ This reflected on the Gothic villain, the Gothic doppelgänger, the Coleridgean Gothic dream, and the Gothic fascination with subterranean passages and dungeons, madness and bedlams, dungeons and churchyards. In *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), Peacock caricatured Mr Flosky-Coleridge as a mentally confused and trendy constructor of Byronic heroes according to the Byronic view of the “inexplicably mix’d”¹⁶¹ nature of man, a modern anthropology radically diverting from Enlightenment convictions of a logically constructed human nature. Peacock refused to accept the honesty of and genuine disorientation caused by the new anthropology, which, in Flosky’s words, makes a

“[...] single virtue not only redeem all the real and manifest vices of the character, but make them actually pass for necessary adjuncts, and indispensable accompaniments and characteristics of the said virtue.”¹⁶²

Coleridge’s interest in “metaphysics and psychology”,¹⁶³ occult things above and below rational life, which fascinated De Quincey and Lamb, struck Peacock as the nightmarish madness of a clouded brain. De Quincey, the admirer of Kant and Coleridge, was the natural enemy of Peacock, who despised Kant and Coleridge for their obscurity and alleged unintelligibility. The Neoclassical and Enlightenment mind had constructed a clear, luminous classical antiquity, cultivated *das Apollinische* as opposed to *das Dionysische*, and was inimical to such Gothic predilections. Peacock’s Mr Hilary, a champion of the Classical

159 Quarterly Review, 32 (1825), 272.

160 Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, 6 (1800), 451.

161 Byron, Lara, 1814, 1. 289, in: Complete Poetical Works, III. 224.

162 Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, chapter 6, in: Novels, 383.

163 De Quincey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in: Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine (1834–1835), in: Works, X. 288.

Tradition, argues that the light of reason is incompatible with the morbid gloom both of Gothic Romanticism and of Byronism, and that the hilarious spirit as well as the clear style of classical literature gives the lie to the Coleridges, Shelleys, Byrons, the self-fashioned suffering geniuses of their age. Apart from this, these Romantic poets are addicted alcoholics invariably in their cups throughout *Nightmare Abbey*. Hilary's polemical declaration formulates the Classical-Romantic divide from a Neoclassical point of view:

“I am one of those who cannot see the good that is to result from all this mystifying and blue-devilling of society. The contrast it presents to the cheerful and solid wisdom of antiquity is too forcible not to strike any one who has the least knowledge of classical literature. To represent vice and misery as the necessary accompaniments of genius, is as mischievous as it is false, and the feeling is as unclassical as the language in which it is usually expressed.”¹⁶⁴

The imagery of disease and decadence pervades Neoclassical polemics against many and various contemporary authors, giving them a sense of group identity and encouraging them to brave their adversaries by defiantly and proudly assuming poses of disease – a strategy of self-defence resumed by the later Neoromantic Decadents. Uniform behaviour is a non-verbal speech act, a pantomimic theatrical performance creating identity. Gautier remembered how, from 1830, Les Jeunes-France around Pétrus Borel and he himself masqueraded as diseased geniuses, in spite of their contrary claim to youth, health, and vigour against the deadness of the old Neoclassicists:

Il était de mode alors dans l'école romantique d'être pâle, livide, verdâtre, un peu cadavéreux, s'il était possible. Cela donnait l'air fatal, byronien, gïaour, dévoré par les passions et les remords.¹⁶⁵

In the traditionalist arsenal of weapons against the Romantics, allegations of ignorance of the Classical Tradition and lack of rational artistry were thus underpinned by accusations of infirmity, drunkenness, drug addiction, mental disorder, and madness. Drinking too much of the waters of Helicon against the dictates of reason led to irrational enthusiasm, mental intoxication, and error, which was a favourite imputation raised against Romantic and Radical poets, as in an anonymous review of Coleridge's *Poems on Various Subjects* (1796).¹⁶⁶ Allegations of psychic derangement had always been an effective and more or less legitimate satirical weapon in eristic culture. Mad artistry, the product of diseased brains, was Gifford's standard reproach against the Della Crusicans, faults undiagnosed by the sentimental irrationality of their admirers “Who

164 Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, chapter 11, in: *Novels*, 411.

165 Gautier, *Histoire du romantisme*, MS 1872, ed. cit. 31.

166 *English Review*, 28 (August 1796), 172–175, in: *Coleridge: The Critical Heritage*, II. 229.

Anna's bedlam-rant for sense can take".¹⁶⁷ Hence the parodied flights of the speaker's imagination in Ellis's and Canning's above-mentioned *Bacchanalian Ode* are not due to divine inspiration, but to a brain ignorant of classical measures and diseased by alcoholic excess:

WHITHER, O Bacchus, in thy train,
Dost thou transport thy votary's brain
With sudden inspiration?
Where dost thou bid me quaff my wine,
And toast new measures to combine
The *Great* and *Little* Nation?¹⁶⁸

Alcohol – instead of the Muses inspiring the crowd of male and female modern poets – is also the central motif of Byron's two-act dramatic satire *The Blues* (MS 1821), a caricature of the contemporary literary scene in London. After listening to Hazlitt's or Coleridge's lectures, the adherents of the trendy sectarian "schools" are invited to the house of Lady Bluebottle, a heavy drinking literary hostess and admirer of another despiser of the Classical Tradition, Wordsworth, "the poet of peddlars and asses" who has thus "found out the way to dispense with Parnassus".¹⁶⁹ Here, it is the bustling minor poet and luckless dramatist Botherby who, in a state of drunkenness, elaborates on almost all the articles in the creed of Romantic poetology – Prometheanism, emotion, divine inspiration, sublimity, elevation, vision, prophet-poetry:

Botherby. For God's sake, my Lady Bluebottle, check not
This gentle emotion, so seldom our lot
Upon earth. Give it way: 'tis an impulse which lifts
Our spirits from earth; the sublimest of gifts;
For which poor Prometheus was chained to his mountain.
'Tis the source of all sentiment – feeling's true fountain:
'Tis the vision of Heaven upon Earth: 'tis the gas
Of the soul: 'tis the seizing of shades as they pass,
And making them substance: 'tis something divine.
Inkle: Shall I help thee, my friend, to a little more wine?¹⁷⁰

167 Gifford, *The Baviad*, 1810, line 350, in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, IV, 28.

168 *Anti-Jacobin*, 18 (12 March 1798), in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, I, 136. The *Great* and *Little Nation* are, ironically, France (self-styled "la grande nation") and Great Britain. Again, Ellis and Canning parade their own knowledge of the Classical Tradition by quoting Horace's Latin original in the notes.

169 Byron, *The Blues*, II, 53, 119, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, VI, 304 and 306. *The Blues* was published in the third number of *The Liberal* (1823).

170 *Ibid.* II, 133–142, VI, 307. Botherby is William Sotheby, whose numerous published tragedies were either rejected or failed on the stage of Drury Lane. *Inkle* is, at least in part, Byron.

The same imputation of excessive alcohol addiction appears in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine's* satirical attacks against the Romantic Irish nationalists, above all John Lawless of Belfast and his above-cited "Gormandizing School of Oratory". His political speeches on misery and famine in Ireland and in favour of Irish independence, given to a meeting of equally treasonous Scottish Whigs, are pronounced in a state of extreme drunkenness and gluttony that belies all truthfulness and destroys all grammar and logic by belching, "roaring out of his jaws", "cracking and creaking, lolloping and labouring".¹⁷¹ Thus, "Orator Lawless" – his name telling in terms of satire – is vilified on the basis of being nothing more than a national stereotype, a drunken rebellious Irishman that has neither a classical education nor observes the classical rules of rhetoric and decorum. Moreover, this memorable number of "Noctes Ambrosianae", with its two comic versions of classical Greek symposiums, a Scottish Tory and a Scottish Whig at dinners in Scottish taverns, provided a parody of the Romantic claim of inspired and extempore literary creation. In the wake of Swift's *Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* (1704), the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" is reduced to a physical reaction, with additional Swifitean literary scatology. Lawless's eruptions of sentiment, in his Irishman's address to Henry Brougham and other Scottish Whigs, come from a surfeited stomach and an empty head, so that his appeals to the feeling heart in favour of Irish independence, universal suffrage, or the abolition of slavery appear as nothing more than human excrement from above as from below: stuff for the Balaam box or "for the ass".¹⁷² The same holds true of the last of *Blackwood's* memorable diatribes against the Cockney poets, represented in the character of Leigh Hunt, King of Cockneys. In his Italian period of 1822–1825, Leigh Hunt quarrelled with his brother John Hunt in London, yet kindly dedicated his *Bacchus in Tuscany* (1825), a free-verse celebration of wine translated from the seventeenth-century Italian poet Francesco Redi's *Bacco in Toscana* (1685), to him. Both the sentimental dedication and the free verse lent themselves to allegations of mere Romantic posing and self-marketing. Following convention, the satirist John Wilson, author of the diatribe, poses as a physician, who has tried in vain to cure his friend and patient Leigh Hunt from his alternate asceticism and drunkenness, as well as mendacity, vulgarity, and ignorance. Leigh Hunt, the poor upstart from a London gutter, is extreme and self-contradictory in all things. A Radical democrat provocatively wearing yellow trousers as a manifestation of his political heresy, he is nevertheless the village tyrant of his little Realm of Cockaigne, one within the sound of the bells of the Bow Church, vulgarly wishing all his adversaries to hell and the

171 Noctes Ambrosianae, XII, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 14 (October 1823), 498–499.

172 *Ibid.* 499.

devil. A pretender to erudition, he nevertheless confuses, adulterates, and misspells all references to classical mythology. A lover and critic of drama and actor of roles, he turns Olympus into stage farce.¹⁷³ A teetotaler, drinker of large quantities of water and low-quality “saloop” and “bohea” in London, he has now become an alcoholic, drinking large quantities of wine in Florence. He is not a cultivated aristocratic connoisseur of wine, but more a boozing pleb. As such, he glaringly deviates from the Classical Tradition’s rules of *nec nimis* and *nosce teipsum*. Wilson’s long quotations from Hunt’s free verse are, again, deliberately chosen out of context, placed into new ones so as to parody themselves. Again, they come from the stomach rather than spirit and appear as symptoms of inebriety rather than inspiration. Hunt’s confessions of his drunkenness and stomach-aches, like Hazlitt’s confessions of his tooth-aches, are in line with *Blackwood’s* parodies on De Quincey’s confessions of his pains of opium. Intertextual references to the dead Keats’s stanzas on the pleasures of wine and ecstatic coition underpin the Cockney-bashing, as vulgarity and excess replace refinement and measure:

Kings knew when he had a cough – the People were summoned to behold the wry face with which he took a purge or a bolus emetic – [...] the King of Cockney-Land was fast hurrying to his untimely grave. ”O for a blast of that dread horn,” to warn him from such deleterious diet! [...] ”Wine – wine – generous wine,” is his waking and sleeping war-cry!¹⁷⁴

Notwithstanding the factual difference, adversaries of Romantic poetry put alcohol and drugs on the same level as modern substitutes for true classical inspiration. Romantic poets who were known to take drugs, either as an anodyne for insupportable pains or as a means of breaking down the barrier between the rational waking world and the wider world of imagination or dreams, were easy prey for Neoclassical attacks. In connection with his defence of Pope against the strictures of Bowles in the Pope and Bowles controversy, Byron chided Keats’s hot and luscious effusions of confessional verse “the *Onanism* of Poetry”¹⁷⁵ and “a sort of mental masturbation”,¹⁷⁶ implying a romantic and nostalgic regression into a cult of childhood, denouncing him for replacing true poetry with “a Bedlam vision produced by raw pork and opium”.¹⁷⁷ Keats, the physician and

173 The reference is to Leigh Hunt’s *Critical Essays on the Performers of the London Theatres*, London 1807, the most distinguished Romantic theory of drama and acting before Coleridge and Hazlitt.

174 [Wilson], *The Cockney School of Poetry*, VIII, in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 18 (August 1825), 156. Reference to the second stanza of John Keats’s *Ode to a Nightingale* (1819).

175 Byron, Letter to John Murray, 4 November 1820, in: *Letters and Journals*, VII. 217.

176 Byron, Letter to John Murray, 9 November 1820, VII. 225.

177 *Ibid.*

poet, was known for taking psychedelic drugs as an anodyne for his lethal tuberculosis. If possible, the imputation was extended to political adversaries in other professions. Thus, the Scottish Whig barrister and politician Henry Erskine earned the same scorn from the Tory satirist Mathias, on the ground that drug consumption is affirmed to confuse, romanticize, and devolve the brain back to childhood. In a footnote, Mathias comments on his line “And Erskine nods, the opium in his brain”:

Mr *Barrister* Erskine is celebrate for taking opium in great quantities, (I have often heard him speak in praise of it,) and if he proceeds in this manner, it is apprehended that his *political* faculties will die of too large a dose, of which there are many symptoms already.¹⁷⁸

Coleridge and his admirer De Quincey – even more infamous due to being a self-confessed drug addict – were under constant attack. The imputation of drug addiction reducing adults to a child-like state, infantile crying and selfish masturbation, recurs again and again. Coleridge’s poem “The Pains of Sleep” (1816) and introduction to “Kubla Khan” (1798, 1816) as well as De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821) could easily be exploited to enforce such a slur, elaborating on the common-sense contrast of good health versus morbidity, strong adulthood versus childhood. The confessional speaker of “The Pains of Sleep”, who dreams of being persecuted by a fiendish crowd of shapes and then wakes up and weeps as if he “had been a child”, provided his rationalist adversaries with a sufficient explanation for the obscurity of his drug-inspired Mystery Poems. And the narrator of the idiosyncratic and digressive *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* also makes a fool of himself in the view of those rationalist adversaries, by deploying his “growth of a philosopher’s mind” (probably inspired by Wordsworth’s “growth of a poet’s mind” which he had read in manuscript) as a combination of rational “analytic functions” with “an inner eye and power of intuition for the vision and the mysteries of our human nature”.¹⁷⁹ The *Confessions*, like the later *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845) and “The English Mail-Coach” (1849), were about the glory of dreams (in the sense of pure imagination) and of Wordsworthian regression into childhood, and De Quincey knew his “risk of being pronounced a crazy enthusiast or visionary”.¹⁸⁰ Drug-induced growth towards cognition of truth struck Neoclassical minds as philosophical and poetological self-parody. “Noctes Ambrosianae” exploited this satirical potential by making De Quincey a guest of their symposia, sorting him with the visionary Lakers, and repeatedly putting his opium visions on a level

178 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, 1793–1797, ed. cit. 316.

179 De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, Preliminary Confessions, 1822, in: *Works*, II. 13.

180 *Ibid.* II. 47.

with mere drunkenness. It is the Romantic Tory James Hogg himself, “The [Ettrick] Shepherd”, who is ever keen on unmasking opium’s prophetic qualities as mere fallacy and humbug, in his self-fashioned Scots dialects. A Romantic contradicting other Romantics resumed the classical disputative strategy of *divide and impera*:

I tried the experiment mysel, after reading the wee wud wicked wark [*Confessions of an English Opium Eater*], wi five hunner draps, and I couped ower, and continued in ae snore frae Monday night till Friday morning. But I had naething to confess [...]¹⁸¹

Throughout *Blackwood’s*, Hogg’s Scottish primitivism, acted out in Burns’s wake, is revealed as a sham, because his Romantic love of nature appears as a matter for literary salons and his Romantic anti-slavery philanthropy thinly veils his addictive love of whores, which he also shared with the alcoholic Burns.¹⁸² He hates slavery along with Wilberforce and Brougham as an abstract idea, but sees no harm in slapping or sleeping with a black prostitute. His inclusion in the inner circle of *Blackwood’s* classically-minded editors could not safeguard Hogg from his fellow editors’ satirical jibes at his deviations from and contradictions of the norm. Like Walpole and Byron, Hogg was aware of his contradictions and antithetically-mixed nature, amiable and sullen, Neoclassicist and Romantic, Tory and Covenanter, rationalist and primitivist, extrovert and introspective, as represented in the doubles of his most famous novel, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824).¹⁸³ There, the fanatical young antinomian Robert Wringhim Colwan’s proud confessions of his evil deeds and murders are clearly the statements of an unreliable pre-Poesque narrator’s mad, confused brain. These confessions are a satire both on Scottish sectarianism and on Romantic confessional literature.

Unlike De Quincey, Byron was no drug addict, but he could be alternately mad and self-controlled, hysterical and cool, romantic and rationalist. His rational defence of Pope stated above was grounded on a common conception cultivated by eighteenth-century Neoclassicists both in criticism and portraiture. Pope, though crippled and diseased in body, was invariably presented as endowed with the healthiest of minds expressed in the most beautiful of faces, – a striking parallel to the representation of Moses Mendelssohn in Germany. Byron thus opposed Pope’s classical perfection to Bowles’s as well as Keats’s romantic childishness. Pope’s perfection does not stand in need of treatment by moun-

181 Noctes Ambrosianae, XII, in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 14 (October 1823), 485 – 486. Mullion, De Quincey’s champion, is ridiculed by De Quincey’s accidental pouring of laudanum into his food and thus making him talk like an enthusiastic and confused fool.

182 Noctes Ambrosianae, XIV, in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 15 (April 1824), 17 – 40.

183 Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, 1824, ed. John Carey, Oxford English Novels, London 1969, XX – XXI.

tebanks, even in an age of mountebanks (in the double sense of itinerant charlatans and pretenders to skill in the art of poetry). Pope never allowed his indispensable doses of laudanum to interfere with his poetic creation, let alone to bring about dreams and visions as his source of inspiration:

They support Pope I see in the Quarterly – Let them continue to do so – It is a Sin & a Shame and a *damnation* – to think that Pope!! should require it – but he does. – Those miserable mountebanks of the day – the poets – disgrace themselves – and deny God – in running down Pope – the most *faultless* of Poets, and almost of men.¹⁸⁴

Byron the Romantic, however, with his well-known pranks, fits of exaltation and sadness, poses, promiscuous love affairs with young women and young men, was usually denigrated as being mad through his “falls”, which he understood as the heritage of the Fall of man and which psychiatrists later diagnosed as manic depression.¹⁸⁵ Byron’s *Oriental Tales* were seen as expressions of his uncontrolled and violent temper, so that Gifford, in a note to Murray on *The Siege of Corinth* (1816), complained of Byron’s desertion of the classical cause: “I lament bitterly to see a great mind run to seed, and waste itself in rank growth”.¹⁸⁶ George Ellis, reviewer of Byron’s *Oriental Tales* in Gifford’s *Quarterly Review*, formulated the wide-spread Tory and Neoclassical persuasion that a parallel existed between the revolutionary turmoil of the age and the primitivist popularity of violent passions in literature. The reading populace in England, like the mad revolutionary rabble in France, undermined the learning and polish of Augustan civilization. It encouraged poets “to seek for subjects in the manner of ruder ages, to revive the feats of chivalry, and the loves of romance; or to wander, in search of unbridled passion, amongst nations yet imperfectly civilized”.¹⁸⁷ Ellis observed that Scott and Southey had also served that false taste, but Byron was the most widely read. Ellis’s long review is insinuating rather than peppery, careful not to take the occasional Tory Byron too much to task. It pinpoints the young poet’s occasional fits of madness (between his “sane intervals”)¹⁸⁸ which also respectfully acknowledges his popularity:

[...] Lord Byron, having surpassed all his contemporaries in this species of moral anatomy, has, of course, attained the pinnacle of popular favour.¹⁸⁹

However, the Radical Preromantic reformer Rousseau to whom Byron repeatedly confessed himself akin, and whose three autobiographical dialogues *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques* (1775 – 1776) were viewed as symptomatic of his

184 Byron, Letter to John Murray, 4 November 1820, in: *Letters and Journals*, VII. 217.

185 Rolf Lessenich, *Lord Byron and the Nature of Man*, passim.

186 Reprinted in: *Byron: The Critical Heritage*, 70 – 71.

187 *Quarterly Review*, 11 (1814), 456.

188 *Ibid.* 11 (1814), 428.

189 *Ibid.* 11 (1814), 456.

schizophrenia and paranoia, bore the brunt of Neoclassical and Tory attacks. Mathias presented him as the *exemplum horrendum* of a mad mind that must necessarily have come to false conclusions about nature and society:

But chief Equality's vain priest, Rousseau,
A sage in sorrow nurs'd, and gaunt with woe,
By persecution trained [...]¹⁹⁰

Whereas Gifford and Ellis treated Byron with kid gloves and avoided satirical exposures of his fits of passion and alleged madness, their attacks against other authors of *Oriental Tales* were much more pugnacious. In the Tory and Church of England *British Critic*, Gifford is approvingly quoted as having ridiculed Landor's long epic poem *Gebir* (1798), highly esteemed by Lamb, Southey, Shelley and De Quincey, as the lamentable overflow of the poet's well-known violent and aggressive temper, so that the imputation of madness against the poet was a salient argument. In his bitter Juvenalian way, Gifford had insulted Landor's stylistically obscure oriental tale of the rise and subsequent fall of a conqueror and tyrant as

[...] a jumble of incomprehensible trash – the most vile and despicable effusion of a mad and muddy brain that ever disgraced, I will not say the press, but the *darkened walls of Bedlam*.¹⁹¹

On a smaller scale to Rousseau, Byron, and Landor, William Hazlitt was indicted for madness on account of his angry smacking the buttocks of a peasant girl while visiting Keswick back in 1803. Wordsworth had then saved Hazlitt from the rage of the villagers, and Hazlitt had made an ignominious escape. The ridiculous episode became well known, and the Tory press would not allow it to be forgotten, even inflating it to an attempted public rape. Allusions to the Keswick episode were numerous, as in an anonymous article entitled "Hazlitt Cross-Questioned" in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, whose contributor accused Hazlitt of mixing his "madness" with the "idiocy" of the publisher and editors of the *Edinburgh Review*. Hazlitt's madness is then proved from his misbehaviour in Keswick and ingratitude to Wordsworth, to whom he owed both his rescue and his poetics:

Is it, or is it not, true that you owe all your ideas about poetry or criticism to gross misconceptions of the meaning of [Wordsworth's] conversation; and that you once owed your personal safety, perhaps existence, to the humane and firm interference of

190 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, 1793–1797, ed. cit. 253.

191 [Gifford] in: *British Critic*, 22 (September 1803), 265. See also Gifford, *An Examination of the Strictures of the Critical Reviewers on the Translation of Juvenal*, London 1803, 7.

that virtuous man, who rescued you from the hands of an indignant peasantry whose ideas of purity you, a Cockney visitor, had dared to outrage.¹⁹²

Shelley's *Julian and Maddalo* (MS 1818) acknowledged his adversaries' allegations of madness against his friend Byron as well as allegations of apostasy against himself, while he remained silent on suspicions of madness against his own person. Even his friend and benefactor Peacock, with whom he quarrelled in the Neoclassic-Romantic-debate, launched that satirical suspicion in *Melincourt* (1817), where Forester-Shelley admits his admiration for the mad poet Tasso. Forester-Shelley confesses his Romantic poetology through his praise of Tasso's fantastic *Gerusalemme Liberata* and *Aminta*. He sees them as Tasso's improvements upon the Classical Tradition of the epic and the drama, as *Gerusalemme Liberata* with its supernatural machinery and magic combined "the magnificent simplicity of ancient Greece with the mysterious grandeur of the feudal ages".¹⁹³

"Those windows of stained glass would recall to an enthusiastic mind the attendant spirit of Tasso [...]. Italian poetry is all fairyland."¹⁹⁴

To complement the insinuation of mental derangement or madness, Shelley's biographer and self-styled "Athenian" Thomas Jefferson Hogg is represented as the whimsical and morbidly depressive Humphrey Hippy of Hypocon House, the keeper of Melincourt Castle in the Lake District and friend of Harry and Alice Fell from Wordsworth's stupid *Lyrical Ballads*. That servile domestic "reflected all the humours of his master with wonderful nicety".¹⁹⁵

If Neoclassical satirists followed a *locus communis* of the Classical Tradition and compared themselves to physicians curing a dangerous and infectious disease such as drug addiction or madness, their Romantic opponents, in their counter-satires, strategically assumed the same role. Combating their adversaries by turning their own weapons against them, as was usual in eristic culture with the biblical legitimation of David's victory over Goliath, they targeted their adversaries' physical and mental diseases with the same cruelty and the same excuse: that cures may well be unpleasant for the physician and painful for the patient, but were indispensable nonetheless. In view of the current classicism-health and romanticism-disease formula, this may appear a logical paradox. But logic and rhetoric rarely concurred, and the strategy was rhetorically effective, especially as *similia similibus curantur* was a well-established and time-hon-

192 "Z" [Lockhart] in: Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 3 (August 1818) 551. Also see Stanley Jones, Hazlitt, 298. Note the prolonged attack against the Cockney School.

193 Peacock, *Melincourt*, chapter 15, in: *Novels*, 187.

194 *Ibid.* Reference to the familiar spirit with whom the mad Tasso was said to have held long conversations.

195 *Ibid.* chapter 3, 115.

oured medical principle. Hazlitt, thus, did not much hesitate to attack Gifford for his morbid miniature size as well as morbid fits of depression and aggression:

SIR, You have an ugly trick of saying what is not true of any one you do not like; and it will be the subject of this letter to cure you of it. In doing this, give me leave to borrow the familiarity of your style [...] You are a little person, but a considerable cat's paw [...]¹⁹⁶

Hazlitt thus availed himself of the traditional assumption that crippled bodies housed crippled minds and souls. Changing from the second to the third person (“a dull, envious, pragmatic, low-bred man”), he pointed out Gifford’s “irritable, discontented, vindictive, peevish effusions of bodily pain and mental imbecility”.¹⁹⁷ To excuse this breach of decency and its contradiction to his advocacy of sentimentalism and universal brotherhood, Hazlitt immediately reminded his addressee and readers of his social duty as a physician-satirist, in a mixture of medical and legal vocabulary:

The task to me is no very pleasant one [...] But you are a nuisance, and should be abated.¹⁹⁸

Hazlitt made much of Gifford’s compassionate epitaph on his deceased simple servant woman.¹⁹⁹ First, Hazlitt saw it a proof that a compassionate heart lingered in every human being, even in that of the sour rationalist Gifford. Second, it provided Hazlitt with a counter-argument to Gifford’s imputation that he and Leigh Hunt were sour Jacobins who loved no one but washerwomen. Sourness was the contrary of the classical ideal of cheerful serenity, and returning the reproach of sourness upon Gifford was to say that his classicism was laboriously superimposed. Thirdly, the epitaph allowed Hazlitt to turn Gifford’s argument against him once more and consider the possibility that Gifford loved no one but sick and infectious people like himself. This also implied the use of the imagery of disease and morbidity against the self-styled “healthy” Neoclassicist himself, who is suspected of having infected the poor serving woman with her deadly illness, and to be sane only in relation to the more diseased and suffering. The Neoclassical rationalist appears as a Romantic vampire:

Is there anything in your nature and disposition that draws to it only the infirm in body and oppressed in mind; or that, while it clings to power for support, seeks consolation in the daily soothing spectacle of physical malady or morbid sensibility? The air you breathe seems to infect; and your friendship to be a canker-worm that blights its

196 Hazlitt, A Letter to William Gifford, 1819, in: Complete Works, IX. 13.

197 Ibid.

198 Ibid.

199 Ibid. IX. 21 – 24.

objects with unwholesome and premature decay. You are enamoured of suffering, and are at peace only with the dead.²⁰⁰

Hazlitt's counter-polemic inverted the innumerable Neoclassical attacks on Graveyard School poetry, the Gothic drama, and the Gothic romance, later to be called the Gothic novel. The Preromantic and Romantic genres' fascination with necrophilia, vampirism, madness, melancholy, phantasmagorias, psychopathy, visions of ghosts, their flagrant violation of Neoclassical rules, and their strong irrational appeal to the reader's sensibility and enjoyment of horror naturally invited Neoclassical aggression. Della Cruscan poets like Bertie Greatheed enthusiastically praised Gothic romances, especially when written by other Della Cruscans, like Mary Robinson's first romance *Vancenzena* (1792). Gifford would also naturally include both in later editions of his *Baviad* as examples of a bad non-classical taste. In this case, he quoted a stupid, uncorrected "Sonnet to Mrs Robinson upon Reading her *Vancenzena*" allegedly extemporized by Bertie Greatheed alias Arno in his footnote, but which was in fact Gifford's parody of the Della Cruscan style in the Della Cruscans' mutual adulation. To this, Gifford added an extremely short commentary including a classical quotation from Virgil's *Eclogues*, denouncing both Greatheed and Robinson as stupid heifers: "Et vitula TU dignus, et HAEC! The Novel is worthy of the Poetry, the Poetry of the Novel". Here, Gifford used a favourite method of satire, choosing the weakest literary works, intentionally misquoting passages, or cutting correct quotations out of their context, so that they parodied themselves in their lack of art, sense, and grammar:

VANCENZA rises-o'er her time-touched spires,
 GUILT *unreveal'd* hovers with killing dew,
 Frustrates the fondness of the VIRGIN's fires,
 And bares the *murd'rous* CASKET to her view.
 [...]
 The thrilling pulse creeps back upon each Heart,
 And HORROR lords I [*sic*] by thy fascinating art.²⁰¹

A more efficient satirist of Romanticism's fascination with madness and aberration – the Dionysian rather than the Apolline component of man – was Thomas Love Peacock. As a personal friend and fellow reformer, he protected Percy and Mary Shelley against social ostracism, offering them shelter in Marlow before their final flight to "that Paradise of exiles, Italy". As a self-educated classical scholar with an excellent command of Greek and Latin, and as a moderate Utilitarian rationalist at variance with Shelley's idealism, however, Peacock

200 Ibid. IX. 25.

201 Gifford, *The Baviad*, 1815, in: *British Satire 1785 – 1840*, IV. 26.

ridiculed what has been called dark romanticism, the *mise en scène* of eccentricity, vampirism, madness, necrophilia, horror and fantastic vision throughout his life and work. Peacock's intense reading of Greek with Percy (not Mary) served the purpose of bringing his high prophetic visions and Neoplatonic idealism back to earth again, as things detrimental to the practical implementation of egalitarian ideals. The later Chief Examiner of the East India Company came to be sandwiched between the Radical Utilitarian James Mill, his predecessor, and the Victorian Utilitarian John Stuart Mill, his successor. Living until 1866, a well-known and respected author, he was among the leaders of Victorian realists in their campaign against high-flown and exalted Romanticism, an important figure in the transition from the Romantic to the Victorian Period. Peacock's satirical novels (1816–1861) constitute a modern update of the Classical Tradition in their combination of Menippean prose satire with Socratic dialogue.²⁰² Like his older model, the Greek philologist and Radical Whig John Horne Tooke, Peacock was fascinated by the Socratic dialogue's spirit of liberty and contradiction to convention. The grotesque narratives of Peacock's novels, enlivened by similarly grotesque romantic love-plots, are peppered by farcical disputations conducted by viciously caricatured characters representing philosophical, socio-political, and literary ideologies of their age. They include Romantic as well as Radical Utilitarian eccentrics, "perfectibilians, deteriorationists, statu-quo-ites [...], transcendentalists, political economists, theorists in all sciences [...], lovers of the picturesque [...]"²⁰³ Peacock was especially keen on a satirical anatomy of the contemporary Romantic craze for German idealist philosophy, Gothic horror, and literary introspection, which he associated with the conservatism of the converted Radicals Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and Scott. The satirically telling names of the younger Walter Scott (Mr Derrydown), the younger and older Southey (the time-server Mr Feathernest), Coleridge (the Platonists Mr Flosky and Mr Mystic), Percy Shelley (the necrophiliac Mr Scythrop and the primitivist Mr Sylvan Forester), as well as Thomas Robert Malthus (the Radical Utilitarian Mr Fax), pinpoint the follies or downright madness of both Romantic and rationalist extremes. This is performed with the typically demonstrative recourse to classical (especially Greek) learning which earned Peacock his nickname, "Greeky Peaky". It must, however, be noted that, as a Neoclassicist, Peacock observed the rule of general nature in satire, as formulated by Dryden and Swift, and portrayed types rather than individuals, amalgams of various living persons.²⁰⁴ A one-to-one identification

202 For Peacock's debt to the model of Lucian and preference for Petronius and Lucian over Virgil see Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 56 and 24–25.

203 Peacock's Preface to the edition of 1837, in: *Novels*, XXI.

204 Peacock, *Melincourt*, chapter 6, 135. Editor's comment.

of Peacock's satiric characters is impossible; his characters are caricatures, *mixta composita*. Nevertheless the chief butt of Peacock's satire was Coleridge, the prototype of the mystic dreamer and surrealist chiefly interested in metaphysics and psychology, whose abnormal behaviour and talk was often traced back to a diseased brain confused by drugs. Thus, in Peacock's characterization of the erratic residents and visitors of *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), the portrait and name of Mr Flosky-Coleridge, a φιλοσκίος or lover of shadows, aims at explaining Coleridge's visionary Neoplatonism as the result of mere morbid hallucinations:

Another occasional visitor, much more to Mr Glowry's [Sir Timothy Shelley's] taste, was Mr Flosky, a very lachrymose and morbid gentleman, of some note in the literary world, but in his own estimation of much more merit than name. [...] Mystery was his mental element. He lived in the midst of that visionary world in which nothing is but what is not. He dreamed with his eyes open, and saw ghosts dancing round him at noontide. [...] he plunged into the central opacity of Kantian metaphysics, and lay *perdu* several years in transcendental darkness, till the common daylight of common sense became intolerable to his eyes.²⁰⁵

The consciously impressionistic nature of Romantic literary criticism with its stress on effect rather than conscious artistry is denigrated as an offence to reason and common sense, due either to a lack of classical education, bragging imposture, or a raving mental disease. The philosophical system of the incomprehensible Coleridge and of his great forerunner, the incomprehensible Immanuel Kant, is ironically praised as a hotchpotch of the heterogeneous systems of other benighted muddle-brains, "as fine a mental chaos as even the immortal Kant himself could ever have hoped to see".²⁰⁶ Flosky cannot elucidate the precise meaning of his literary theory and criticism, because he is a confused thinker and calls that confusion "metaphysics", as in his imprecise distinction of imagination and fancy in chapter 13 of *Biographia Literaria* (1817):

"This distinction between fancy and imagination is one of the most abstruse and important points of metaphysics. I have written seven hundred pages of promise to elucidate it, which promise I shall keep as faithfully as the bank will its promise to pay."²⁰⁷

In this dialogue between two extreme characters, the mystically-minded Romantic poet Flosky and the superficial conventional woman Marionetta, the Rabelaisian parody of Coleridge's style gains greater impetus. As opposed to

205 Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, chapter 1, 359–360.

206 *Ibid.* 411.

207 *Ibid.* 395. Peacock here referred to the Bank of England's recent introduction of banknotes, promising to pay the bearer real gold cash after state bankruptcy in the extremely expensive wars with France.

Stella, Marionetta is the least likely to understand the psychological explorations in Coleridge's *Mystery Poems*, *écriture automatique* written from wild dreams induced by opium. In a piece of Menippean satire, Coleridge's love of irrational paradox in the context of his love of dream interpretation is here derided as "juxtaposition of antiperistatistical ideas" and "hyperoxysophistical paradoxology":

"Mystery is the very keystone of all that is beautiful in poetry, all that is sacred in faith, and all that is recondite in transcendental psychology. I am writing a ballad which is all mystery; it is "such stuff as dreams are made of," and is, indeed, stuff made of a dream; for, last night I fell asleep as usual over my book, and had a vision of pure reason. I composed five hundred lines in my sleep; so that, having had a dream of a ballad, I am now officiating as my own Peter Quince, and making a ballad of my dream, and it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it has no bottom."²⁰⁸

3) Levelling Divine Order: Women Poets, Dramatists, and Novelists

Women's right to the same education as men had already been claimed by the then famous unmarried Restoration theologian and philosopher Mary Astell in her proto-feminist treatises *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694) and *Some Reflections upon Marriage* (1700). In the latter, she had argued against male opposition to female erudition as motivated by vice and folly, because foolish and ignorant men were afraid that learned women will not be easy objects for sexual appetite. The advocates of tradition are beaten with their own arguments, man's insistence on and title to a liberal education:

But some sage Persons may perhaps object that were Women allow'd to Improve themselves, and not amongst other discouragements driven back by those wise Jestes and Scoffs that are put upon a Woman of Sense or Learning, a Philosophical Lady as she is call'd by way of Ridicule, they would be too Wise and too Good for the Men; I grant it, for vicious and foolish Men.²⁰⁹

Astell's Cartesian feminism was a phenomenon of the Enlightenment and produced such emancipatory works as John Duncombe's poem *The Feminiad* (1754) in praise of the intellectual women of history, until the French Revolution put an end to this first phase of the women's rights movement. Jane Austen knew Mary Astell and shared her rational enlightened Anglicanism, but rejected her Cartesian feminism, seeing it as having been discredited by the events of the

208 Ibid. 395–396. The allusions are to Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, with references to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

209 Mary Astell, *Some Reflections upon Marriage*, 1700, 2nd edition London 1703, 89.

French Revolution. This may have been the reason why William Gifford recommended the publication of *Emma* and *Mansfield Park* to John Murray, though he suggested that 500 £ for the rights to both novels was quite enough. Gifford may also have been the reader who corrected Austen's style before publication, erasing traces of the Hampshire accent in her spelling and re-ordering her paragraphs.²¹⁰ All symptoms of rusticity and provincialism had to be removed from a work in the Classical Tradition, which advocated the maintenance of the *ancien régime's* social order. Unlike Walter Scott, Austen was a Tory from her childhood and youth, so that it is safer to classify her with Neoclassicism and the Classical Tradition than with post-1815 Biedermeier, as has been suggested.²¹¹ The carefully veiled and submerged political message of Austen's anti-Jacobin and anti-Romantic novels, including the subtle parody of Ann Radcliffe's Gothic Novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) in *Northanger Abbey* (MS begun 1798), is usually imputed to the author's mild nature. The mildness of Jane Austen has become a critical cliché. But, as a woman writing in the cause of the *ancien régime* and the Classical Tradition, she would have given the lie to her own position if, as a woman, she would have arrogated male prerogatives by openly assuming the role of a theologian, philosopher, or mathematician, openly interfering with politics and parading a classical erudition traditionally denied to women. While Austen publicly declared that she would not write "on subjects of science and philosophy, of which I know nothing" and that she "was the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress", she was an Enlightenment thinker and had probably read the sceptical philosophy of David Hume, which informs her novels.²¹² This was one strategy of her female double-voiced discourse. Conduct literature for women was then almost unanimous in tacitly assuming that such inelegant and abstract studies were beyond women's natural mental capacities and would render them unwomanly.²¹³ Conduct literature was no fixed genre and was frequently embedded in novels, so that novels written by women were tolerated, and Austen's novels were in large parts conduct literature. Here, women could subvert their restrictions by problematizing or even parodying conduct literature: Austen by mildly questioning its narrow limits in her anti-Jacobin novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Charlotte Dacre in her Gothic novel *Zofloya* (1806) by rendering these limits ridiculous through her narrator's stupid and exaggerated moralizing.

210 TLS 5613 (29 October 2010), 3.

211 Virgil Nemoianu, *The Taming of Romanticism: European Literature and the Age of Biedermeier*, Cambridge MA 1984, 56–60.

212 E.M. Dadlez, *Mirrors to One Another: Emotion and Value in Jane Austen and David Hume*, Malden MA 2009, *passim*.

213 Pam Morris (ed.), *Conduct Literature for Women, 1770–1830*, London 2005, II. 118, 205.

The philosopher, literary critic, and novelist Madame de Staël was being lionized in London both by Whigs and Tories for being a bold adversary of Napoleon, when John Murray republished her *De l'Allemagne* (1810) in French and English in 1813, yet her male interests and penetrating eyes nevertheless shocked Murray and other Tories. Wellington found her charming on matters of literature, but refused to talk politics with her, to which she rebelliously replied: "Et moi, discuter sur la politique, c'est vivre!"²¹⁴ Her philosophical writings, not her novels, were the toad that Murray and Wellington had to swallow for hosting the enemy of their enemy. Most novelists of the Romantic Period were indeed women, the majority of which were bourgeois – a breach of decorum that was tolerated because novels still had a low literary reputation as they were perceived as demanding less abstraction than poetry. Female poets were regarded as much more proud and rebellious than female novelists – one possible reason why Austen wrote no poetry. Thus, given a choice between the classical ideals of *humilitas* and *bellicositas*, Austen's satire practised humility, without provocatively looking her adversary in the eyes. She subtly discredited male arrogance by making her shallow John Thorpe an ignorant despiser of women writers and a secret uncritical reader of Gothic romances written by women, a fraudulent fop as incapable of learning as his shallow sister Isabella Thorpe.²¹⁵ As has already been highlighted, Austen implicitly indicted the male romantic passion of Captain Benwick, an uncritical admirer of Scott's and Byron's verse romances and their antithetically-mixed romantic heroes, when she made the intelligent Anne Elliot unpretentiously yet slyly remark "that she thought it was the misfortune of poetry, to be seldom safely enjoyed by those who enjoyed it completely; and that the strong feelings which alone could estimate it truly, were the very feelings which ought to taste it but sparingly."²¹⁶ Women were brought up to suppress a penchant for controversy, philosophy, and classical erudition. The conservative Scottish novelist and essayist Elizabeth Hamilton, for instance, wrote her anti-Jacobin *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* (1800) as a satirical novel on William Godwin without, however, engaging in serious philosophical controversy or taking a firm stand on the question of justifiable wars.²¹⁷ Reading at home, she hid her philosophical books such as Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism* (1762) from the sight of her family. Women were instead expected to be domestic and mild, and to learn some socially useful graces such as music and dance as well as some practical modern languages such as French, German, and Italian, especially if they were forced to earn their living as governesses. This

214 Paul Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern*, 137.

215 Karl Kroeber, *Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey*, in: Jones (ed.), *The Satiric Eye*, 105.

216 Jane Austen, *Persuasion*, posth 1818, in: *Novels*, ed. cit. V. 100 – 101.

217 Fischer, *Literarische Entwürfe des Konservatismus in England 1790 bis 1805*, Paderborn 2010, 126 – 128.

discrimination lasted far into the nineteenth century, when Patrick Prunty (alias Brontë) taught his son Branwell Greek and Latin to qualify him for studying in Cambridge, whereas he sent his daughters Charlotte, Emily, and Anne to learn German and French to qualify them as governesses. These modern languages were not introduced into the English academic curriculum until 1826 with the foundation of the University of London in Gower Street. With this low academic esteem of modern languages and literatures and their chiefly practical function, it was not until the 1870s that the University Extension Movement, under John Churton Collins, tentatively introduced English Literature at Oxford and Cambridge, by tertiary teaching, against a phalanx of protest from conservative university authorities and social commentators.²¹⁸ The traditional academic languages were Greek and Latin, reserved for and compulsory in academic curricula for men and their allegedly higher mental capacities, at least until the first admission of women to the University of London in 1878. On the level of grammar schools, conservative efforts to strengthen Greek and Latin and fortify the Classical Tradition as a bulwark against democratic reforms and the emancipation of women were no less desperate, though ultimately doomed to fail. In 1805, Lord Eldon, then Lord Chancellor, ruled it illegal for an endowed grammar school to teach the boys anything but Greek and Latin; and it was not until the Grammar School Act of 1840 that exceptions were allowed with the headmaster's consent.²¹⁹ This still excluded schoolgirls from a legitimate classical education, at least until the 1869 Endowed Schools Act – passed under the Whig Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone – that paved the way for grammar schools with a broad curriculum for girls. How much Greek and Latin Jane Austen might have taught herself and which poets of classical antiquity she might have secretly read remains largely a matter of speculation. But she definitely knew Augustan literature, Dryden, Swift, Pope, Johnson, including the Neoclassical novels of Henry Fielding which served as models for her own Neoclassical works manipulated to suit the needs of her own time and sex. In any case, modern languages and literatures from outside Britain and North America had begun to be read and explored to the detriment of the Greek and Latin classics, even by men.²²⁰ This modernist development seriously challenged the hegemony of the Classical Tradition for the first time, breaking it up after 1830 into its present-day eclecticism. In this respect, female reading culture proved victorious.

The anti-Jacobin novelist Hannah More, author of *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*

218 Alexandra Lawrie, English Literature and the University Extension Movement, in: *TLS*, 5677 (20 January 2012), 14–15.

219 Raymond Chapman, *The Victorian Debate*, London 1968, 1970, 51.

220 Paul Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern*, 141.

(1809), did learn some Latin so that her Anglican High Church father, a scholarly teacher at the Stapleton Free School north of Bristol, was shocked at his own success. But Jacob More made sure that his daughter's main foreign languages were French, Italian, and Spanish, and that she discontinued "male" studies of theoretical mathematics. Though originally one of the Bluestocking ladies surrounding Elizabeth Montagu and a major propagator of Preromantic sensibility, the excesses of the French Revolution and English patriotism made Hannah More desert her former Dissenting principles of individual liberty, inherited from her grandmother, and she came to assume her father's conservative, anti-feminist position in matters of education.²²¹ Her *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799) was a plea for traditional gender roles and gender separation, arguing that women should not be educated to be philosophers or politicians, nor epicenes like Thalestris or Joan of Arc or indeed Charlotte Corday, the over-educated woman from Normandy and murderess of Marat. And the enormously successful *Cheap Repository Tracts* (1792 – 1798), which she initiated in order to establish a conservative popular opposition to Thomas Paine's Radical treatise *The Rights of Man* (1792) in the wake of the Romantic Period's counter-revolutionary culture, supported the homogeneous feudal order, religion, values, and arguments of the *ancien régime* in general. After all, Charlotte Corday had stabbed Marat to death, as a true-life incarnation of the Romantic *femme fatale*, an unnatural female that shamelessly penetrates her male victims first with her eyes and then her dagger. Female eyes should chastely look down, concealing the domestic privacy of the heart, and concede the male prerogative of courtship. Male anti-feminists had taught for centuries that any act of penetration, be it penetration by the eyes in looking at men or penetration of the page in studying a book – or indeed writing a book with a pen (a phallic name and symbol) – was a naturally male activity. Juvenal's and Boileau's anti-feminist verse satires placed such traditional anti-feminism in the Classical Tradition.

Enlightenment or Cartesian feminism, by contrast, had tended to assume that the status and educational level of a woman in a given society were important indicators of historical progress.²²² The "boudoir" (from French "boudier" = "to pout") was an eighteenth-century invention imported from France to England, a space of feminine privacy and emancipation, so named by men who ridiculed the boudoir as a refuge for "pouting" women. It extended to women the privileges of the male cabinet, "to think, to read, or work, or, in a word, to be

221 For the causes of More's "counter-revolutionary nationalism" in a gendered public sphere see Angela Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation in the 1790s*, 131 – 158.

222 Karen O'Brien, *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Cambridge 2009, 2.

alone”.²²³ It supported the replacement of the traditional one-sex model with a new rebellious two-sex one, which assumed fundamental differences between man and woman. Thus, French and English Enlightenment feminism, and even more so English Preromantic feminism strongly supported by Dissenters with their democratic church discipline and cult of the private sphere, promoted equal rights and freedom of women against traditional feudal assumptions of divinely decreed male rule.

A dispute between the Anglican principle of uniformity and the Dissenting principle of variety raged, sparked by the Declaration of American Independence. Each side had its own texts of Scripture to support its own concept of liberty as well as its own model in classical antiquity, uniform Sparta or multiform Athens. Tories and most Anglicans adhered to the traditional education and curriculum of the four public schools (Eton, Westminster, Winchester, and Harrow) and the two English universities (Oxford and Cambridge), whereas mostly middle-class Whigs and Dissenters tended towards new subjects and modern (instead of classical) languages in free schools and dissenting academies such as Warrington and Hoxton. Dissenting educators such as Joseph Priestley demanded more modern and practical orientation not only for girls, but also for boys, a plea for diversity, modernity, and equality which threatened both Tory values and the monopoly of the Classical Tradition. And the connection between Dissenting cultural practices and the rise of Romanticism and Revolution in England has recently been documented with excellent precision and on a broad basis of sources.²²⁴ Dissenting educators brought the curricula for boys and girls closer together, manifested in the proximity of the Preromantic “man of feeling” and “woman of feeling”, a project violently opposed by Tories and High Church Anglicans. The result was that many dissenting women, whose works were widely read and reviewed, promoted the cause of Romanticism versus the Classical Tradition, such as Letitia Barbauld, Joanna Baillie, Mary Hays, Amelia Opie, and Helen Maria Williams.²²⁵ Their education and activity seemed to confirm the reservations of traditionalists, who traced the unnatural chaos of the French Revolution back to unnatural women’s liberation.

After his conversion from Radicalism to Toryism, Wordsworth seemed unable to remember that Helen Maria Williams (and not Milton) had been his first muse, and that his first published poem had been a contribution to the Della Cruscan-supporting *European Magazine*, a sentimental sonnet entitled “On Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress” (March 1797).

223 Nicole Reynolds, *Building Romanticism: Literature and Architecture in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Ann Arbor MI 2010, 44.

224 Daniel E. White, *Early Romanticism and Religious Dissent*, 1–33.

225 *Ibid.* 69.

Then, he would still retain a moderate sympathy for Williams, but reject Letitia Barbauld, who, he found, “was spoiled as a poetess by being a Dissenter, and concerned with a Dissenting academy”.²²⁶ Wordsworth’s kindness to Dorothea Felicia Hemans rested on the fact that Hemans was an Anglican and a Biedermeier poet, who veiled her advocacy of women’s rights and her “unwomanly” pretensions to philosophy behind a mask of conformity and mildness. In Biedermeier, the visions of High Romanticism were compromised with reality, tamed but not given up.²²⁷ The poems contained in her *Records of Woman* (1828), such as “Indian Woman’s Death Song” and “The Grave of a Poetess”, conceal both their belief in and doubt of Romantic Neoplatonism, whereas Wordsworth’s “Intimations Ode” (1807) paraded it in philosophical vocabulary. Had she written her poetry in open claim of a Romantic female poet’s self-determination, parading innovation of style and verse, like her contemporary Karoline von Günderrode in Germany, she would have shared Karoline’s fate: branded as too bold and masculine, she would have been punished by neglect and excluded from literary prosperity. Biedermeier domestication guaranteed Hemans’s enormous commercial success and mostly favourable reviews from men such as Francis Jeffrey, who praised her – seemingly conformist – self-limitation to a woman’s domestic virtues, sweetness, elegance, tenderness, and “sober and humble tone of indulgence and piety”.²²⁸ Otherwise, even the enlightened Whig Jeffrey would denigrate the bolder female poets’ work, as when his *Edinburgh Review* praised Southey’s and Cottle’s edition of *The Works of Chatterton* (3 vols. London 1803) while blaming it for adding laudatory verses by Hannah Cowley, Mary Robinson, Helen Maria Williams, and others:

We confess that we think Chatterton little honoured by their tribute of mawkish and affected sympathy. It is disgusting to hear blue-stocking ladies jingle their rhymes.²²⁹

With a similar aim of stemming the tide of literature by women deviating from the Classical Tradition, Charles Caleb Colton railed against the young Romantic Walter Scott’s edition of the posthumous works of the sentimental poet Anna Seward (1742 – 1809), before her literary executor, the later Laird of Abbotsford, turned Tory. Colton’s hope was that Anna Seward, Ann Radcliffe, and other named female authors, would soon be consigned to oblivion. As an adherent of Pope, Gifford, and the Classical Tradition, Colton was convinced that the promotion of female authors of mass-produced literature by mass-producing critics and journalists was for merely commercial reasons, not for artistic merit:

226 Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation in the 1790s*, 48 – 49.

227 Virgil Nemoianu, *The Taming of Romanticism*, 1 – 40.

228 *Edinburgh Review*, 50 (1829), 34. Quoted in: Duncan Wu (ed.), *Romantic Women Poets*, 490.

229 *Ibid.* 4 (1804), 219. Partly quoted in the OED.

But ah, to greet them, not a Muse will rise,
 Though magazines lift females to the skies.²³⁰

One of the most boisterous advocates of women's rights, Thomas Love Peacock, came from a Dissenting family steeped in Dissenting values, individual liberty and cultural variety. Peacock's satirical characterization of the education of his heroine Anthelia Melincourt by her father Sir Henry Melincourt pinpoints the fact that, after the French Revolution, pains were taken not to allow women too much educational equality and independent understanding to ask for equal rights:

[Sir Henry Melincourt] devoted himself in solitude to the cultivation of his daughter's understanding; for he was one of those who maintained the heretical notion that women are, or at least should be, rational beings; though, from the great pains usually taken in what is called education to make them otherwise, there are unfortunately very few examples to warrant the truth of the theory.²³¹

Mr Forester-Shelley, though a professed reformer in romantic love with Anthelia, proves to be a tradition-spoiled aristocrat when he pleads for an "enlightened female mind" in the service of "loveliness" rather than analytical reason. Anthelia's acute answers give him the lie, as when she understands that his reading canon for women, sixteenth-century Italian poets adulterating classical literature with medieval fantasies, is reformist only insofar as it risks awakening women's appetite for unadulterated classical literature:

"Perhaps it is feared, that, having gone thus far, they might be tempted to go farther: that the friend of Tasso might aspire to the acquaintance of Virgil, or even to an introduction to Homer and Sophocles."²³²

Anthelia explains the educational discrimination of women, which aimed at "fixing their imagination on chimaeras"²³³ and keeping them ignorant enough never to reach the level of men, a reproduction of the *ancien régime* in traditional concepts of courtship and married life. Thus, in the interest of the maintenance of their feudal power and privileges, men destroy the happiness of women, filling their heads with ideals of the world of fantasy unattainable in the world of realities. Throughout the Socratic dialogue, Anthelia's analytical precision is modelled on Mary Wollstonecraft's extremely rationalist argument in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792):

"To think is one of the most unpardonable errors a woman can commit in the eyes of society. In our sex a taste for intellectual pleasures is almost equivalent to taking the

230 Colton, *Hypocrisy: A Satire*, 1812, 9.

231 Peacock, *Melincourt*, chapter 1, in: *Novels*, ed. cit 105. Cf. *ibid.* 151.

232 *Ibid.* chapter 15, 189.

233 *Ibid.*

veil; and though not absolutely a vow of perpetual celibacy, it has almost always the same practical tendency. In that universal system of superficial education which so studiously depresses the mind of women, a female who aspires to mental improvement will scarcely find in her own sex a congenial associate; and the other will regard her as an intruder on its prescriptive authority, its legitimate and divine right over the dominion of thought and reason.²³⁴

Most intellectual women, however, would rather conform to tradition and hide their “masculine knowledge” and “masculine intellectual power” under a mask. It could be a mask of humility, as in the case of Jane Austen. Or it could be a mask of childishness and superficiality, as in the case of Ellen Glanville, the beloved young aristocratic lady of the titular hero and first-person narrator in Bulwer-Lytton’s *Pelham* (1828), a Romantic silver-fork novel full of satire on aristocratic pride and stupid conservatism:

Though her knowledge was even masculine for its variety and extent, she was averse from displaying it; the childish, the lively, the tender, were the outward traits of her character – the flowers were above, but the mine was beneath; one noted the beauty of the first – one seldom dreamt of the value of the last.²³⁵

The proliferation of short-lived novels by numerous female authors such as Amelia Opie and Charlotte Dacre, produced with speed and devoured by the masses, could thus be explained. Men were praised for or charged with fixing women’s minds on trifling issues, so that women conformed to men’s expectations. Peacock agreed with Gifford and Mathias that female novelists produced mass nonsense, and these Tory Neoclassicists would have agreed with *Headlong Hall*’s satirical portrait of Amelia Opie (amalgamated with other prolific women novelists and poets) as the mind-boggling bore Miss Philomela Poppyseed, “an indefatigable compounder of novels, written for the express purpose of supporting every species of superstition and prejudice”.²³⁶ This explains some parallels between Peacock’s attacks on the mass production of romances by women and Mathias’s polemics against “Romances or Novels” by Charlotte Smith, Elizabeth Inchbald, Mary Robinson, Ann Radcliffe, “Mrs. &c &c.”, notwithstanding Mathias’s Tory equation of revolution and woman’s frailty:

[...] too frequently *whining* or *frisking* in novels, till our girls’ heads turn wild with impossible adventures, and are now and then tainted with democracy, and sometimes with infidelity and with loose principles.²³⁷

234 Ibid. 188.

235 Bulwer-Lytton, *Pelham*, 1828, in *Novels and Romances*, ed. cit. I. 208.

236 Peacock, *Headlong Hall*, chapter 3, in: *Novels*, 21.

237 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature, 1794–1797*, ed. cit. 72.

In *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), Peacock exposed two contemporary false types of women – the conventional plaything and puppet Marionetta, Scythrop-Shelley’s first beloved (containing features of Harriet Westbrook), and Stella, the Romantic intellectual, Scythrop-Shelley’s second beloved (containing features of Mary Godwin). Marionetta stands for light amusement and fashionable subservience, Stella for heavy amusement and fashionable rebellion. Marionetta is the type of the traditional woman as described by Mary Wollstonecraft, educated by tyrannical man to serve his own power and prejudices, “a dancing, laughing, singing, thoughtless, careless, merry-hearted thing” whose “inheritance was passive obedience”.²³⁸ Both, however, are evasive, as they offer no real alternative to the subjection of women in neo-feudal society.²³⁹

Though he was Peacock’s opponent in aesthetics, De Quincey largely shared his criticism of conservative post-revolutionary female education and admired bold, courageous female authors. This is the reason why, in sharp relief to his admiration for William Wordsworth, he disparaged his sister Dorothy Wordsworth’s reading as being fixed on the first two pages of a book and her literary production as tame and conventional, finding fault with her “utter want of pretension, and of all that looks like *bluestockingism*”.²⁴⁰ De Quincey knew all too well that his honesty would offend his idol William. In *Lake Reminiscences*, “Miss Wordsworth” appears as debilitated by traditional female education, in contrast to self-confident, thoroughly professional female Romantic dramatists and poets such as Joanna Baillie and Mary Russell Mitford, to whom De Quincey did not hesitate to apply the male epithet of “genius”:

We all know with how womanly and serene a temper literature has been pursued by Joanna Baillie, by Miss Mitford, and other women of admirable genius – with how absolutely no sacrifice or loss of feminine dignity they have cultivated the profession of authorship.²⁴¹

There were some Neoclassical and anti-Jacobin female novelists and essayists, yet fewer Neoclassical and anti-Jacobin female poets. By contrast, lots of Romantic (though usually less frankly self-confessed Jacobin) female poets, novelists, and dramatists published numerous volumes of verse and novels, contributed to numerous well-selling but short-lived annual gift-books such as the *Anniversary* and the *Keepsake*, and wrote plays to be performed at Drury Lane or

238 Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, chapter 4, 370.

239 Marilyn Butler, *Peacock Displayed*, 126. Butler correctly doubts the clear attributions to Shelley and his two wives, as Peacock’s characters are satiric types, *mixta composita*, due to his adoption of the Menippean model of Lucian.

240 De Quincey, William Wordsworth, in: Tait’s *Edinburgh Magazine* (1839), in: *Works*, XI. 107.

241 *Ibid.*

Covent Garden, though mostly with the aim not to offend anyone and not to alienate an audience that had little sympathy for subtle plays by women.²⁴² Recent anthologies of Romantic female poets give a good impression of their number and, in some cases, of their genius.²⁴³ Coleridge, for instance, called Mary Robinson “a woman of undoubted genius”,²⁴⁴ much as De Quincey admired the genius of Baillie and Mitford. It is symptomatic that, mainly in the 1820s and 1830s, in what Dora Wordsworth’s friend Maria Jane Jewsbury called the “era of [merely] accomplished women”, each of the Lake Poets had his protégées. Maria Jane Jewsbury, Robert Southey’s favourite and later wife Caroline Bowles, the American poet Maria Gowen Brooks, Coleridge’s daughter Sara Coleridge, and Christina Rossetti’s cousin Anna Eliza Bray were among the chosen few whom the Lake Poets credited with sufficient intellectual capacity and boldness to challenge and break the mould of mere accomplishment literature.²⁴⁵ Biedermeier idyllism, it has been convincingly shown, was Romantic millenarianism tamed, utopia brought down closer to reality and possibility, by male as well as female authors.²⁴⁶ Robert Southey, tamed and turned Tory, dissuaded Charlotte Brontë from earning her living by literature: “Literature cannot be the business of a woman’s life, and it ought not to be”.²⁴⁷ However, this discouragement must be understood in the context of his general discouragements of young authors of both sexes in a time of light-weight mass production.²⁴⁸ Southey had retained enough of his Romantic sympathies to promote talented women by giving them introductions to publishers and “puffs” in the *Quarterly Review*. Most female authors, however, especially such as were credited with revolutionary sympathies, did not find favour in the *Quarterly Review*. Its editor, William Gifford, and some of his diehard Tory contributors like John Wilson Croker, friend of Canning and Secretary to the Admiralty, were declared anti-feminists, who believed in female frailty due to female imagination when uncontrolled by male reason. This accounts for the mockery and acerbity of their excoriating review of Lady Morgan’s *France* (1817), the work of a successful woman poet and rebellious author of the controversial national tale *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806):

242 Marlon B. Ross, *The Contours of Masculine Desire: Romanticism and the Rise of Women’s Poetry*, Oxford 1989, passim.

243 Andrew Ashfield (ed.), *Romantic Women Poets 1770 – 1838*, Manchester and New York NY 1995, and Duncan Wu (ed.), *Romantic Women Poets: An Anthology*, Oxford 1997.

244 *Ibid.* 177.

245 Dennis Low, *The Literary Protégées of the Lake Poets*, Aldershot 2006, 34.

246 Virgil Nemoianu, *The Taming of Romanticism*, 40.

247 Low, *ibid.* 23.

248 *Ibid.* 23 – 25.

Our charges (to omit minor faults) fall readily under the heads of – Bad taste – Bombast and Nonsense – Blunders – Ignorance of the French language and manners – General Ignorance – Jacobinism – Falsehood – Licentiousness, and Impiety.²⁴⁹

This was in line with Croker's *Quarterly* review of Letitia Barbauld's violent anti-war campaign, especially in her chafing anti-war poem "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven" (1812). Like many Dissenters and many women in the sentimental movement, Barbauld was a pacifist.²⁵⁰ Upholding the Classical Tradition's view of war as an act of expurgatory and honourable patriotism, "dulce et decorum est pro patria mori", Croker sneered at unqualified and ignorant female intervention in politics. Women should stick to their traditional role as educators of children in the house, chastise unruly children rather than adult male politicians who acted for their country's benefit:

OUR old acquaintance Mrs Barbauld turned satirist! [...] she must excuse us if we think that she has wandered from the course in which she was respectable and useful [...] in exchanging the birch for the satiric rod [...]

We had hoped, indeed, that the empire might have been saved without the intervention of a lady-author.²⁵¹

As women were either condemned or celebrated as chief instigators and agents of the French Revolution, Lady Morgan came under double attack. Tories would denigrate Irish calls for independence and Catholic emancipation as ingredients in the "Irish Stew of the French Revolutionary Pot", thus defaming an unwelcome cause by ranking it with a totally different, though highly disreputable one: high treason.²⁵² The heat of combat blinded the conservatives to see or even admit to the wide gap between hierarchical Irish Catholicism and revolutionary anti-Catholic egalitarianism, as it blinded Lady Morgan in her advocacy of the French Revolution.

In a letter to his and the *Quarterly Review's* publisher John Murray, Byron protested mildly against the harshness of John Wilson Croker's criticism, although, in his Tory mood, Byron showed a traditional condescension to female authors strongly reminiscent of Lord Chesterfield's advice to his son to humour them but not to take them seriously:

[...] what cruel work you make with Lady Morgan – you should recollect that she is a woman – though to be sure they are now & then very provoking – still as authoresses

249 [Gifford and Croker] in: *Quarterly Review*, 19 (1818), 264.

250 McCarthy, Anna Letitia Barbauld, 455 – 490.

251 [Gifford and Croker] in: *Quarterly Review*, 7 (June 1812), 309. Also quoted by William McCarthy, Anna Letitia Barbauld, 477.

252 See the caricature inserted between pages 232 and 233 of the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 2 (1799).

they can do no great harm – and I think it a pity so much good invective should have been laid out upon her [...] ²⁵³

Most female poets thought it wiser to confine their verse to domestic affairs, be it only under the mask of Biedermeier conformity to social expectations. Then they would receive a milder, though no less condescending, treatment from male Tory critics. As co-editor of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, John Wilson reviewed Alexander Dyce's two-volume anthology *Specimens of British Poetesses* (1825) as a collection of light-weight "female effusions" and second-rate poetry. But both his Tory contributor Caroline Bowles, whose "Birthday: A Poem" he reprinted and reviewed in *Blackwood's*, and the harmless nature of the verse of Dyce's more modern "poetesses" softened him into tolerance. They made no pretence to Romantic prophetic stances and original genius, thus breaking neither social nor political taboos, and produced some agreeable rhythmical-poetical *quantité négligeable*:

Why should we always be desiring Fancy, Imagination, Passion, Intellect, Power, in Poetry, as if these were essential to it, and none were poets but those gifted with "the vision and the faculty divine?" Surely the pure expression of pure thoughts and feelings – the staple of common life – if imbued with a certain sweetness of soul-felt sound beyond that of ordinary speech – coloured, if that image please you better, with a somewhat greener light than is usual to our eyes – *is* poetry. Surely they who are moved so to commune with their own hearts, or with the hearts of them they love – since forms and hues of sentiment are thus produced that else had not been – *are* poets. ²⁵⁴

Apparently, a title such as Isabella Lickbarrow's *Poetical Effusions* (1814), a Lake District publication, and the pose of unlettered extempore writing in humble circumstances, did not only declare identity with the Romantic School of writing. It also served the purpose of protecting women poets against male reproaches of unsexed female arrogance, to be expected from the quarter of conservative male Romantic poets and critics. This gambit, low-profile strategy, made it easier for Wordsworth, Southey, and De Quincey to subscribe the volume, and for the male publishers to sell it. ²⁵⁵ Letitia Barbauld must have had this in mind when, in her review, she praised the volume for its "chastened feeling" and declared "simplicity and humility which are sufficient to mollify the severest critic". ²⁵⁶

The case of aristocratic ladies, who had both the leisure time and the means to

253 Byron, Letter to John Murray, 20 February 1818, in: Letters and Journals, VI. 12 – 13. Also cf. Wu (ed.), *Romantic Women Poets*, Introduction, XIX.

254 [Wilson] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 41 (March 1837), 404. The reference is to William Wordsworth, *The Excursion*. Also see Low, *The Literary Protégées of the Lake Poets*, 35.

255 Duncan Wu (ed.), *Romantic Women Poets*, 471 – 472.

256 [Barbauld] in: *Monthly Review*, 76 (1815), 211.

employ male instructors to teach them Greek and Latin to make them acquainted with the Classical Tradition, was somewhat different. They were afforded that pastime, including the formation of literary salons and the writing of voluminous historical novels of love and adventure (*romans héroï-galants*) in particular, but they were not really taken seriously. In Albert Lortzing's comic opera *Der Wildschütz* (1842), the Countess von Eberbach reads and acts Sophocles in her palace to an audience of uneducated subjects and servants of both sexes, who feel her emotions, but cannot understand a word. Their mildly satirical chorus shows the absurdity of the unworldly and exalted countess's cultural aspirations:

Die Frau Gräfin liest vortrefflich,
 Unnachahmlich, wunderschön,
 Tränen möchte man vergießen,
 Schade, dass wir's nicht verstehn!²⁵⁷

The traditional male distrust of writing women, especially of female middle-class literatae, had its source in male constructions of gender roles. Besides socio-economic changes beginning in the seventeenth century which restricted women to household duties and the education of children,²⁵⁸ this was the legacy of the Classical Tradition and its myths. The male Poet kissed by the Muse was the father of his works, his children – some well-begotten, some ill-begotten – and “genius” and (male) “genitals” had the same Greek and Latin etymon, “γενναυ” and “gignere”. Before the outbreak of the French Revolution with its plea for the equal rights of the sexes, however, and before the notorious participation of women in *la terreur*, Augustan cultural practice in sexual politics was rather liberal. Whether this was due to genuine respect or mere condescension and flattery, as in the case of Lord Chesterfield, is hard to say. The Blue-Stocking Circle of intelligent, learned, and literary women, which flourished in London in the middle of the eighteenth-century, was of considerable size.²⁵⁹ It included women who had taught themselves Greek and Latin, and even Hebrew, like Elizabeth Carter, translator of *All the Works of Epictetus which Are Now Extant* (1758), whose classical erudition even Samuel Johnson admired. The numerous paintings of these brilliant women, mostly commissioned by the rich Elizabeth Montagu, show them in classical poses, Carter as Minerva, goddess of wisdom, kitted up in helmet, breastplate, and shield, and brandishing a

257 Lortzing, *Der Wildschütz*, 1842, beginning of act II.

258 Ina Schabert, *Englische Literaturgeschichte: Eine neue Darstellung aus der Sicht der Geschlechterforschung*, Stuttgart 1997, 45.

259 S.H. Myers, *The Bluestocking Circle*, Oxford 1990, 1992, and Gary Kelly (ed.), *Bluestocking Feminism: Writings of the Bluestocking Circle 1738 – 1785*, 6 vols., London: Pickering & Chatto 1999.

volume of Plato instead of a spear.²⁶⁰ This imitation of a male celebrity culture signalled a female claim to equality and sharing of male expertise in the Classical Tradition. The Blue-Stocking Circle in Elizabeth Montagu's sumptuous house in Hill Street was not only attended by Preromantic literati such as Horace Walpole, James Beattie, and James Boswell, who might have sympathized with egalitarian feminism, but also by numerous distinguished Neoclassical poets and artists, including Samuel Johnson, George Lyttelton, David Garrick, and Joshua Reynolds. Nevertheless, the etymology of "bluestocking" indicates a certain amount of patronizing condescension, as men attending such meetings did not respectfully think it necessary to wear formal black silk stockings, but often came in informal blue worsted stockings. Thus, like "romantic" and "Gothic", "bluestocking" is another instance of an original dysphemism proudly appropriated by the party under attack to define themselves and denote the seriousness and value of their position.

Anne Dacier, prose translator of Homer into French, and Elizabeth Carter, translator of Epictetus into English, were among the most respected Greek scholars of the long eighteenth century. Carter also translated Francesco Algarotti's *Il Newtonianismo per le dame* (1739), thus invading another male domain: physics and mathematics. Translation was a suitable form for women to enter the literary market, because it made them co-authors and allowed them to assume subtle forms of authority.²⁶¹ The visible presence of the Bluestockings in England made it difficult for English educationists to deny women equal mental powers. Instead, William Duff and John Burton defended the male domain by arguing that women's study of classical languages and mathematics made them neglect their domestic duties and deprived them of the "female character".²⁶² Dacier's polemical aggressiveness in her quarrels with Houdar de la Motte and Alexander Pope, as well as Carter's reputation for being half a witch, gave support to their inherently traditionalist but profoundly admiring and still tolerant attitudes.

After 1789, under Pitt's government, Tory sexual politics became less tolerant. The differentiation of sexual roles in feudal society was affirmed in opposition to revolutionary egalitarianism and feminism. In what has been called The Feminist Controversy in England 1788–1810²⁶³ numerous publications conducted a hot debate concerning the essential nature and social role of women. In this

260 Norma Clarke's review of the "Brilliant Women" exhibition in the National Portrait Gallery, in: TLS, 5485 (16 May 2008), 17. Also see Norma Clarke's *The Rise and Fall of the Woman of Letters*, London 2004.

261 Hayes, *Translation, Subjectivity and Culture*, 149.

262 Schabert, *Englische Literaturgeschichte*, 44–45.

263 *The Feminist Controversy in England 1788–1810*, 89 reprint volumes, ed. Gina Luria, New York NY 1974–1978.

debate, Richard Polwhele's satirical poem dedicated to Thomas James Mathias, *The Unsexed Females* (1798), reflected on God's punishment of female advocates of women's rights who would not accept their traditional subordinate roles. Mary Wollstonecraft, who died shortly after childbirth, was allegedly mad like the "unsexed female" Lady Macbeth, and Polwhele insinuated that similar punishments awaited other rebellious and mad female authors supporting egalitarianism in philosophy and poetry, including Letitia Barbauld, Mary Robinson, Charlotte Smith, Ann Yearsley, Helen Maria Williams, Mary Hays:

I shudder at the new unpictur'd scene,
Where "Unsex'd Woman" vaunts the imperious mien,
With equal ease, in body or in mind,
To Gallic freaks or Gallic faith resign'd,
The crane-like neck, as fashion bids, lay bare
Or frizzle, bold in front, their borrow'd hair;
[...]
Or, frantic, midst the democratic storm,
Pursue, Philosophy! Thy phantom-form.²⁶⁴

Romantic female dress and fashion, casting off the classical close-laced collar and stylized wig, symbolized desire for freedom and revolt against restriction by the *ancien régime*. Polwhele put such inner and outer rebellion down to his traditionalist conviction that women do not have reason enough to think for themselves and become philosophers. Women let loose appear as the maenads and *tricoteuses* in the excesses and blood orgies of the French Revolution:

And doest thou rove, with no internal light,
Poor maniac! Thro' the stormy waste of night?²⁶⁵

The numerous Della Cruscan women poets, for whom the staginess of *The Florence Miscellany* (1785) had the greatest appeal at the height of the Siddons craze, posed in such free dress even in print and became a butt of traditionalist anti-feminine satire which included digs at their physicality, theatricality, and ignorant mass production. In an anonymous verse satire in the spirit of Gifford, *Modern Poets* (1791), that proliferation of writing women poets was compared to the proliferation of prostitutes posing on the seductive lookout for customers:

Where can I fly for refuge from *the muse!*
TH' Exchange, the Inns, the Court, nay e'en the stews,
All rave alike! The Venus of the streets
In verse *Ovidian*, her betrayer greets.²⁶⁶

264 Polwhele, *The Unsexed Females. A Poem: Addressed to [T.J. Mathias] the Author of The Pursuits of Literature*, 1798, in: *Poems*, London 1810, I. 36–37.

265 *Ibid.* I. 42.

266 Anon., *Modern Poets: A Satire*, London 1791, 8.

Before Napoleon's defeat in the Battle of Leipzig and the publication of *De l'Allemagne* in London (October 1813), Gifford's and Canning's enmity towards female writers, such as the female Della Cruscan poets, also extended to Madame de Staël. In the last number of the *Anti-Jacobin* (1798), where Canning called upon Gifford to return to satire, he included the chastisement of writing women, epicenes, whom he put on a level with drinking women. Madame de Staël, then author of various smaller publications in politics and literary criticism, was an easy target with her notorious indomitability of temper, advocacy of women's rights, indefatigability of intrusion into male company and male prerogatives, and love of wine and opium. After all, Charles James Fox had quoted from Madame de Staël's political pamphlet *Réflexions sur la paix adressées à M. Pitt et les Français* in his great anti-war speech of March 1795:²⁶⁷

But ah! What verse can grace thy stately mien,
 Guide of the world, preferment's golden queen,
 Neckar's fair Daughter, Stael the Epicene!
 Bright o'er whose flaming neck and purple nose
 The bloom of young desire unceasing glows.²⁶⁸

The *British Lady's Magazine*, founded in 1815 to defend the intellectual equality and the equal rights of the sexes by offering their female readers heavy-weight articles and book reviews, printed a Letter to the Editor, whose female author defended Madame de Staël against such arrogations. Women writing on philosophy and metaphysics, she argued, are no epicenes copying a male norm. As women, they have the advantage of a sentimental appeal to the heart, so their works enjoy a larger readership and a wider circulation for the benefit of all mankind. Gifford's and Canning's traditional one-sex model is, with "female delicacy of mind" instead of satirical raillery, replaced by a two-sex model, which sees the two "different sexes" endowed with "equal minds" though different styles:²⁶⁹

If such works as Madame de Stael has produced, always contribute to enlarge the wisdom, and improve the condition of society: they are sure of extensive perusal; for a female philosopher must excite curiosity: and they will acquire an interest by their style; for a woman, even in metaphysics, writes to the heart.²⁷⁰

The *Anti-Jacobin's* successor, the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* (1798–1821), continued Gifford's and Canning's anti-feminism as part of the con-

267 Sabine Appel, Madame de Staël, Düsseldorf 2006, 106.

268 [Canning], New Morality, lines 293–297, in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 36 (19 July 1798), in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, I. 279.

269 Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Cambridge MA 1990, passim.

270 *British Lady's Magazine*, 1 (January 1815), 21–22.

temporary Tory creed. It was anti-feminist throughout, from its first number, which recommended women authors such as Charlotte Smith and Mary Robinson acquire more learning in classical rhetoric (from the English of Hugh Blair rather than the Latin of Cicero or Quintilian) and to “abstain from attempting political philosophy”.²⁷¹ And, in a review of Mary Hays’s novels *Emma Courtney* (1796) and *The Victim of Prejudice* (1799), the periodical defended the traditional bourgeois education of affectionate and obedient women in view of the ferocious and murderous women of the French Revolution. The different gender characters and gender privileges are taken for natural, pre-established *in rebus*, so that the call for equal roles and rights must appear as an offence against God and his creation. With a passionate and polemical rhetorical question, the reviewer asks:

Whether it is most for the advantage of society that women should be so brought up as to make them dutiful daughters, affectionate wives, tender mothers, and good Christians, or, by a corrupt and vicious system of education, fit them for revolutionary agents, for heroines, for Staels, for Talliens, for Stones, setting aside all the decencies, the softness, the gentleness, the female character, and enjoying indiscriminately every envied privilege of man?²⁷²

Emma Courtney, the rebellious heroine of Mary Hays’s eponymous novel, reads Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives of Grecian and Roman Heroes*, and the reviewer sees this self-education in the classics against the demands of her female nature as the cause of her unnatural turn of mind:

That the mind here displayed should run into errors of no inferior enormity, was naturally to be expected [...]²⁷³

Here, John Gifford, the editor of the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, agreed with his namesake William Gifford, the co-editor of the *Anti-Jacobin*. William Gifford’s anti-feminist views in literature and politics especially were much resented by his Romantic adversaries such as Leigh Hunt. Gifford’s distrust of the Della Cruscan for their many women poets culminated in his satirical lines on old Mary Robinson, who, handicapped by rheumatism, had to walk on crutches. Gifford’s couplet suggests that a female poet forgets her divinely attributed state, nature having made woman incapable of writing good verse, so that all her production is handicapped by her sex and is therefore necessarily lame and trivial, heading for oblivion:

271 *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 1 (1798), 163–164.

272 *Ibid.* 3 (1799), 55.

273 *Ibid.* 56.

See Robinson forget her state, and move
On crutches towards the grave, to 'Light o' Love'²⁷⁴

The acerbity of these lines, designed to offend fashionable sensibility, provoked a chorus of sentimental and egalitarian protests which echoed well into the middle of the nineteenth century, when Hazlitt published his portraits of contemporaries and when Hunt recalled his indignation in his autobiography. In *The Spirit of the Age* (1825), Hazlitt lashed out at the outrageousness of Gifford's satire on Mrs Robinson's crutches with caustic irony, setting it in context with his conservative rejection of women poets, especially those whom the editor and contributors of the *Tory Quarterly Review* discriminated against for their liberal and feminist views. The ironic catalogue of sentimental virtues is noteworthy:

Mr. Croker is understood to contribute the St. Helena articles and the liberality, Mr. Canning the practical good sense, Mr. D'Israeli the good-nature, Mr. Jacob the modesty, Mr. Southey the consistency, and the Editor himself the chivalrous spirit and the attacks on Lady Morgan. It is a double crime, and excites a double portion of spleen in the Editor, when female writers are not advocates of passive obedience and non-resistance.²⁷⁵

In his *Autobiography* (1850), Hunt still showed compassion for "poor Mary Robinson", whom the Prince Regent had allured from the stage and then jilted, and who was afflicted by rheumatism in her declining years:

[...] as she solaced her pains, and perhaps added to her subsistence, by writing verses, and as her verses turned upon her affections, and she could not discontinue her old vein of love and sentiment, she fell under the lash of this masculine and gallant gentleman, Mr Gifford, who, in his *Baviad and Maeviad*, amused himself with tripping up her "crutches", particularly as he thought her on her way to her last home. This he considered the climax of the fun.
"See," exclaimed he, after a hit or two at other women, like a boy throwing stones in the street - [...] ²⁷⁶

Gifford's epideictically satirical couplet preceding that on Mary Robinson was aimed at "poor old" Hester Lynch Piozzi, the remarried widow of Henry Thrale, an attack on whom, especially in such an unsentimental way, marked another outbreak of cold reason and cruelty in the eyes of Hunt:

See Thrale's grey widow with a satchel roam,
And bring, in pomp, her labour'd nonsense home.²⁷⁷

274 Gifford, *The Baviad*, 1810, lines 27–28, in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, IV. 10. In Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, III/4, 41–42, "light o' love" is "a tune that goes without a burden".

275 Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, Mr. Gifford, in: *Complete Works*, XI. 124.

276 Hunt, *Autobiography*, 1850, 216.

277 Gifford, *The Baviad*, 1810, lines 25–26, IV. 10.

By 1793, when Mary Robinson published her satirical riposte to Gifford, the shock of *la terreur* had made her a staunch anti-Jacobin, long before Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey (whose senior she was by one generation) underwent the same metamorphosis from Radical Whig to Tory. Thus, she published her satirical riposte under the male pseudonym of “Horace-Juvenal”, complying with the conservative rule that satire is not women’s business, especially when answering rudeness with rudeness. As Gifford had attacked her for walking on crutches, Robinson pinpointed his diminutive size, physical as mental, and his low origin, while denying his literary succession to the great Pope. She does not chastise Gifford for being a Neoclassic, but for being a Grub Street hack, such as had already attracted Pope’s ridicule. And she does not reprimand him from her former sentimental outlook, either. Both in the ideology and in the style of the Augustan couplets of Robinson’s *Modern Manners* (1793), the change from the sensibility of her Della Cruscan verse to Neoclassicism and the Classical Tradition is astounding:

In the enlightened times, when critic elves
 Attack each wit, less barb’rous than themselves:
 With pens, deep drenched in Satire’s *thickest* ink,
 Condemn, before they condescend to *think!*
 Who arm’d in paper panoply, stalk forth,
 The *calm* assassins of poetic worth!
 [...]
 Ye giants gaunt, of Lilliputian birth,
 Laborious libellers of letter’d worth!
 Who with waste paper cram the gaping town,
 And sell *whole* years of toil – for *half* a crown.²⁷⁸

While Robinson had long deserted her sentimentalist and egalitarian stance, Hunt never gave up defending her on sentimentalist and egalitarian grounds. In the “Preface” to his second Menippean satire against Gifford, *Ultra-Crepidarius* (1823), Hunt paraded his “man of feeling’s” sensibility as being offended by Gifford’s treatment of women, especially revolting in the case of a worthy, elderly, and sick woman jibed at by an elderly man who was himself plagued by the pains of a crippled body:

The delicate of health he [Gifford] has not spared, though his own hand shook that struck them. [...] He attacked a woman. He struck, in her latter days, at the crutches of poor Mary Robinson – a human being, who was twenty times as good as himself, and whose very lameness (that last melancholy contradiction to qualities of heart and

278 [Robinson], *Modern Times: A Poem*. In *Two Cantos*, 1793, lines 1–6, 33–36, in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, IV. 92–93.

person which he might well envy) was owing to a spirit of active kindness which he never possessed.²⁷⁹

The Romantic Period was awash in satire²⁸⁰ because the Romantics, when attacked, could easily defend their counter-satires with the *jus naturale* right of self-defence. They tended to regard satire as morally insupportable, like Percy Shelley in his “Satire upon Satire” fragment,²⁸¹ but made use of it, like Percy Shelley defending the dead Keats in *Adonais* (1821) while merely pretending to transcend it.²⁸² Sentimentalism was a pose quickly abandoned when ridicule offered itself as a weapon of pre-emptive attack or self-protection against the adversaries of sentiment and equality, including the “herded wolves” that killed Keats. Here, Percy Shelley, Leigh Hunt, and Hazlitt were no better than Letitia Barbauld had been decades before them in her satire against the preservers of the slave-trade. In one of his countless periodical articles, Hazlitt implicitly admitted this:

A great deal has been said against laughing and that with a gravity which is really laughable. It appears that laughing is part and parcel of the human constitution [...]²⁸³

In *Ultra-Crepidarius*, Gifford’s and Canning’s ally and co-founder of the *Quarterly Review*, John Wilson Croker, incurred Hunt’s ire and raillery for his anti-feminist prejudices as apparent in his above-quoted review of Lady Morgan’s revolutionary poem *France* (1817). Southey and Croker are denigrated as “court-understrappers” congregating in the house of the Tory publisher John Murray, at the “sign of the Shoe”:

For Croker to lurk with his spider-like limb in,
And stock his lean bag with way-laying the women.²⁸⁴

Croker’s *Quarterly* reviews of women’s publications are, in fact, proof of the traditionalists’ reserves against women authors. They were in full accordance with Gifford’s suspicion of literary women as potential feminists, although he recommended the anti-Jacobin Jane Austen’s novel *Emma* for publication by John Murray and offered to make the necessary revisions of the manuscript.²⁸⁵ After the French Revolution, the Preromantic cult of the individual versus social norms and rational restrictions, culminating in Johann Gottlieb Fichte’s

279 Hunt, *Ultra-Crepidarius*, Preface, 1823, in: *Selected Writings*, VI. 36–37.

280 Burwick (ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Romantic Literature*, Satire, III. 1163–1177.

281 Steven E. Jones (ed.), *Shelley’s Fragment of a Satire upon Satire: A Complete Transcription of the Text with Commentary*, in: *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 37 (1988), 136–163.

282 Burwick (ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Romantic Literature*, Satire, III. 1168.

283 [Hazlitt] in: *Atlas*, 28 December 1828, 825, in: *New Writings*, II. 183.

284 Hunt, *Ultra-Crepidarius*, lines 219–220, in: *Selected Writings*, VI. 43.

285 Clark, *William Gifford*, 168–244.

Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre (1794–1795) and Charles Lamb's essays of *Elia* (1823) as well as *Last Essays of Elia* (1833), came to be regarded as a Radical and Romantic programme, let alone one promoting female individualism.²⁸⁶ The Romantic "familiar essays" of Lamb or Hazlitt or John Thelwall, characterized by their distinctly personal voices, were Shandean in the self-reflexivity, free associations, and originality of their very egotistical speakers, quite different from the essays of Joseph Addison or Samuel Johnson. Such cult of individualism versus general nature and conventional rational norm was invariably chastised by aesthetic and political conservatives. In her individualistic intellectual arrogance and independence of thought, Jane Austen's Emma Woodhouse is a romantic heroine misdirected as a result of a deficient education by her weak father. As such, she resembles Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), whose irresponsible father had educated her to think independently and to regard herself as infallible while finding faults with and pouring ridicule on all others, including men like Darcy. Both Emma and Elizabeth need time and endure much suffering to reach their insights into their proper place in a feudal society which allowed women no independence of thought, no pride nor prejudice, let alone in rebellious literary production:

"How despicably have I acted!" she [Elizabeth Bennet] cried, – "I, who have prided myself on my discernment! – I, who have valued myself on my abilities! [...] – How humiliating is this discovery, – Yet, how just a humiliation! [...] Till this moment, I never knew myself."²⁸⁷

In his Neoclassical – as opposed to his Romantic moods – Byron shared Gifford's and Croker's view of women as being genetically unfit for literature. Women's inconstancy and lies allied them with those male Romantic poets and critics who supported women's claim to social equality. In Byron's satire this confederacy multiplied the number of Romantic women poets, who rarely dared and whose education in practical modern languages rarely qualified them to write in the Classical Tradition:

And shall we own such judgment? No – as soon
 Seek roses in December, ice in June;
 Hope constancy in wind, or corn in chaff,
 Believe a woman, or an epitaph,
 Or any other thing that's false, before
 You trust in Critics who themselves are sore;

286 Also see Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels, Reactionaries*, 180.

287 Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, in: *Novels*, ed. cit. II. 208. Also see Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, 206–218.

Or yield one single thought to be misled,
By JEFFREY's heart, or LAMB's Boeotian head.²⁸⁸

And, as appears from these lines, woman's alleged dearth of reason (and surplus of imagination) explained both Charlotte Dacre's obscure poems and her confused Gothic fiction. Time, Byron argues, has spoken its verdict over the female poet who, under the name of Rosa Matilda, had published incomprehensible nonsense in prose masked as poetry as a Della Cruscan contributor to periodicals. The satirist has no more healing or punishing work to do:

Far be't from me unkindly to upbraid
The lovely ROSA's prose in masquerade,
Whose strains, the faithful echoes of her mind,
Leave wondering comprehension far behind.²⁸⁹

Byron's desultory attack on the Blue-Stocking Circle and their Romantic descendants, "the great body of the Blues",²⁹⁰ has already been quoted above. His assessment is in line with Swift's diagnosis who, in 1734, had written to Mrs Pendarves: "A pernicious heresy prevails among the men, that it is the duty of your sex to be fools in every article except what is merely domestic".²⁹¹ And it might be supplemented by a much-quoted passage in a letter that Lord Chesterfield wrote to his son in 1748, advising him to share, but to conceal as well the current male assessment of women's intellectual status:

Women, then, are only children of a larger growth; they have an entertaining tattle and sometimes wit; but for solid, reasoning good-sense, I never in my life knew one that had it, or who reasoned or acted consequentially for four-and-twenty hours together. [...] A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humours and flatters them [...]; but he neither consults them about, nor trusts them with, serious matters; though he often makes them believe that he does both.²⁹²

The narrator of Byron's first satirical epic in *ottava rima*, *Beppo* (1818), works on this traditional assumption when commenting on the Turks' subjection of their wives and regrets such treatment from the point of view of European orientalism. But he welcomes its positive side effect – the prevention of bluestocking poet-

288 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1809, lines 75–82, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, I. 231. The characterization of Charles Lamb as Boeotian, meaning wild and unlettered as the agricultural and pastoral Boeotians, shows Byron's anti-Romantic and anti-primitivist stance in this Neoclassical satire.

289 *Ibid.* lines 755–758, I. 253.

290 Byron, *Some Observations*, 1820, in: *Complete Miscellaneous Prose*, 107.

291 Swift, *Letter to Mrs Pendarves*, 7 October 1734, in: *Correspondence*, ed. Harold Williams, Oxford 1963–1965, IV. 258.

292 Philip Dormer Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield, *Letters to His Son*, posth 1774, 5 September 1748, ed. R.K. Root, *Everyman's Library*, London 1928 and 1963, 66.

esses that male poetasters encourage to break out of the roles naturally assigned to them:

They cannot read, and so don't lisp in criticism;
 Nor write, and so they don't affect the muse;
 Were never caught in epigram or witticism,
 Have no romances, sermons, plays, reviews, -
 In harems learning soon would make a pretty schism!
 But luckily these beauties are no 'blues',
 No bustling Botherbys have they to show 'em
 'That charming passage in the last new poem.'²⁹³

Byron's *The Blues* (MS 1821), written in Ravenna around the time of the Pope and Bowles controversy, resumed his conservative derision of ignorant drinking women poets who frequent lecture on poetry, invite crowds of equally ignorant poets and critics to their houses at their henpecked husbands' expenses, and write poems under the inspiration of wine. In this scathing satire on the trendy social mass cult of literature, in which bluestocking poetesses and literary hostesses play a leading role, Sir Richard Bluebottle (*solus*) complains of Lady Bluebottle encumbering his house and purse with a heavy-drinking rabble who mistake their sublime nonsense for literature:

But the thing of all things which distresses me more
 Than the bills of the week (though they trouble me sore)
 Is the numerous, humorous, back-biting crew
 Of scribblers, wits, lecturers, white, black, and blue,
 [...]
 No pleasure! no leisure! no thought for my pains,
 But to hear a vile jargon which addles my brains;
 A smatter and chatter, glean'd out of reviews,
 By the rag, tag, and bobtail, of those they call 'Blues';
 A rabble who know not [...]²⁹⁴

4) Levelling Divine Order: Poets of Low Birth

In a brilliant parody on the principles of reviewing in the Romantic Period, the anonymous contributor to *The Scourge* (1811) made a critic denigrate Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as the abstruse work of a low fellow with a criminal record who keeps company with drunkards and deer-stealers.²⁹⁵ Whig and Romantic reviewers would not judge a poet's quality by his or her low birth or sojourn in

293 Byron, Beppo, 1818, stanza 72, in: Complete Poetical Works, IV. 151.

294 Byron, *The Blues*, 1821, II. 14–24, *ibid.* VI. 302.

295 Nesbitt, Benthamite Reviewing, 3.

prison for debt or rebellion. The Scots poets Robert Burns, John Lapraik, and James Hogg paraded their low origin as simple shepherds and ploughmen unspoiled by polish and sophistication, preferring country clothes to city fashion and making a show of rusticity. The simple verse epistles that Burns and Lapraik addressed to each other (1786 – 1788), with Lapraik having suffered in a debtor’s prison, are examples of that Romantic, poetically and politically rebellious *mise-en-scène*: low birth, poverty, and lack of formal schooling as anti-Augustan hallmarks of true genius. In the “Dedication” of his own Kilmarnock volume of simple Scots poems, published by the same printer two years after Burns’s Kilmarnock volume, Lapraik indicted the dishonesty of conventional dedications of printed books to the great and rich as mere flattery, their unnatural Augustan diction a symptom of that dishonesty:

The eloquence of all the age
 By *flattery* is corrupt;
 The ornament of eloquence
 Is nat’ral sentiment.

Those *Dedications* blow our stile
 To a swell’d *symphony*,
 That nat’ral beauty can’t appear
 With true vivacity.²⁹⁶

Augustan culture was basically aristocratic and courtly, so Tory authors tended to regard poets of low birth as automatically unqualified for their profession, this view becoming more aggressively intolerant in the wake of the French Revolution. From its foundation in 1809, the *Quarterly Review* printed articles and reviews of books by Americans (such as Washington Irving) along with articles and reviews of books on America that were extremely critical of the country, founding the legend of American ignorance due to its desertion of the Classical Tradition. John Murray, William Gifford, and Sir John Barrow were firmly convinced that no government without a king could be efficient and no good literature could be written without hereditary wealth and titled men.²⁹⁷ Thus, the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* was homogeneously opposed to the United States of America and rather recommended emigration to Canada, a colony with civilization preserved under the British Crown.²⁹⁸ The Irish poet Thomas Moore’s Juvenalian satire *Corruption and Intolerance* (1808) attacked the democratic ideals of both the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the American Revolution of 1776 as having failed to deliver the promised salvation, leading to

296 Lapraik, *Poems on Several Occasions*, *Dedication*, stanzas 13 – 14, Kilmarnock 1788, VI.

297 Clark, William Gifford, 185.

298 *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, 2 (1799), 241.

deterioration rather than an improvement in society.²⁹⁹ As the American Revolution had preceded and inspired the French Revolution, Tories saw America as a country of democracy in the sense of insurrection, low birth, low breeding, and high treason to Britain, shaped by a relapse into barbarity and uncivilized rudeness. Thus, the articles in the *Quarterly Review* often complained of heavy British emigration to America, which they tried to counteract, and their anti-democratic attacks sparked off a long-lasting quarrel with American periodicals.³⁰⁰ Sir John Barrow's scathing review of Charles Jared Ingersoll's *Inchiquin the Jesuit's Letters During a Late Residence in the United States* (New York 1810),³⁰¹ Southey's review of Timothy Dwight's *Travels in England and New York* (New Haven 1821),³⁰² and Barrow's review of William Faux's *Memorable Days in America* (1823),³⁰³ all of which Gifford probably peppered in his function of editor, serve as examples. Barrow, for one, ridiculed Faux as a fool and dupe writing in a simplistic "rude and homely" style, a victim of American cultural "retrograding and barbarizing", and urgently dissuaded the readers of "our simple farmer" from emigration to America, that "Paradise of Fools":

We therefore most earnestly entreat those who may cast their eye over our pages, while in a state of hesitation whether to embark their all on a speculation to the back-woods of America [...], and carefully to peruse the journal of Farmer Faux [...]³⁰⁴

As Tory foreign secretary and Neoclassical poet, Canning was bitterly opposed to American Independence, and nothing but his disastrous duel with Castlereagh (1812) and unwise rejection of Lord Liverpool's offer to remain in office prevented Britain from harsher negotiations in the Treaty of Ghent (1815). But Canning's Irish father had died in penury, and his mother was an actress. A commoner, untitled and without inherited wealth, Canning had fought his way to the top in politics and literature, exchanging his earlier Whig loyalties for a promising career in the Tory party. This fact made him vulnerable to attacks both by his Tory critics, who suspected him of double-dealing, and by his Whig opponents, who ridiculed his justification of social and literary elitism. A British Tory upstart from rags to riches, Whigs argued, should not ridicule a democracy in which everybody could rise to everything. Tory elitism was best summed up in a satirical poem on the newly founded London University College in Gower Street (1826) with its modern middle-class and practice-oriented education, an

299 Reprinted, with introduction and commentary, in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, V. 22–45.

300 Clark, William Gifford, 183–187.

301 *Quarterly Review*, 10 (January 1814), 494–539. Charles Jared Ingersoll was a distinguished American author, lawyer, and politician.

302 *Ibid.* 30 (October 1823), 1–40.

303 *Ibid.* 29 (July 1823), 338–370.

304 *Ibid.* 29 (July 1823), 370.

ironically Jacobin populist song which the facetious Theodore Edward Hook published in *John Bull*, the ultra-conservative magazine which derided the University of London as the “Joint-Stock Cockney Learning Company”:³⁰⁵

Come bustle, my neighbours, give over your labours,
 Leave digging, and delving, and churning:
 New lights are preparing to set you a staring,
 And fill all your noddles with learning.
 Each Dustman shall speak, both Latin and Greek,
 And Tinkers beat Bishops in knowledge –
 If the opulent tribe will consent to subscribe
 To build up a new Cockney College.³⁰⁶

The Scottish writer Thomas Hamilton, educated at Glasgow University and a contributor to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, who had served in the American campaign, published *Men and Manners in America* (1833). In this work he showed a comparable aristocratic dislike of a democracy of equal chances for all. Hamilton's scathing review of the former dragoon Edward Quillinan's *Dunluce Castle* (1814), viciously entitled “Poems by a Heavy Dragoon”, made use of the dragoons' low social status and reputation. A dragoon committed to low practical duties such as riding in the rear of a troop, visiting stables, and peeping into camp-kettles should not aspire to learning and poetry. Though encased in brass, the head of a heavy dragoon is “certainly the least vulnerable part of his body”.³⁰⁷ *Blackwood's* attacks on Keats took a similar view – an apothecary committed to low practical duties should not aspire beyond his social status.

When, in the first year of *Blackwood's* (1817), Lockhart and Wilson launched their series of attacks against “the Cockney poets” Leigh Hunt, William Hazlitt, and John Keats under the pseudonym “Z”, they combined Johnsonian ridicule of Romantic constructs of a popular, simple, non-Augustan diction with the reproach of low birth (and the implicit reproach of popular insurrection):

All the great poets of our country have been men of some rank in society, and there is no vulgarity in any of their writings; but Mr Hunt cannot utter a dedication, or even a note, without betraying the *Shibboleth* of low birth and low habits. He is the ideal of a Cockney poet.³⁰⁸

305 Quoted from: Rosemary Ashton, Henry Brougham and Radical Reform in Nineteenth-Century London, in: TLS, 5521 (23 January 2009), 14.

306 Quoted from: Rudolf Beck – Konrad Schröder (eds.), *Handbuch der britischen Kulturgeschichte*, Paderborn 2006, 264.

307 [Hamilton] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 4 (February 1819), 576.

308 Z [Lockhart et al.] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (October 1817), 39.

Two pages later, Z added with an oblique reference to Horace:

He [Leigh Hunt] is as completely a Plebeian in his mind as he is in his rank and station in society.³⁰⁹

Blackwood's continued its campaign against Cockney ignorance and low birth for many issues, and even its female contributor Caroline Bowles (later Caroline Southey) joined in the satiric chorus when, in a grotesque Cockney Letter to the Editor, she made one of Leigh Hunt's much-quoted washerwomen report how Hunt (alias Mr Pennyfeather) and Percy Shelley (alias Mr Pollar) refashioned her garden in Islington as Mount Helicon and her pigsty as the Temple of Apollo.³¹⁰ The washerwoman and narrator of the prose satire, the vulgarly hypocritical Patience Lilywhite, is quite ignorant of the Romantic craze for "picturesque gardens" in the style of Knight and Uvedale Price, just as she is too stupid to understand the Romantic Radicals' affected egalitarian engagement for her woman's rights. All she can think of is money, sex, and food, – a Tory argument against more rights and more education for the low-born populace. Furthermore, the letter and its concluding parodies of Hunt and Shelley give the lie to the Cockneys' egalitarian cult of sentiment and humanity by bringing it to the test of their actual behaviour, their quite unsentimental meanness and rude treatment of their fellow creatures. When it came to stigmatizing low birth and low education in both men and women, women could be as aggressively satirical as men, using the same strategies of character assassination, charging the adversary with mean origin, mean intelligence, mean language and pronunciation, mean conduct, not to mention mean lies and mean hypocrisy. Caroline Bowles's parodies of Hunt and Shelley, in the fragments of Romantic poetry they leave behind when they abscond after the incendiary incident with the washerwoman's fifteen-year-old daughter Nance, pinpoint Radical vegetarianism and teetotalism, neo-pagan heresies, extempore sloppiness and spontaneous overflow, mendacious idealization of rural dirt and primitive country life, popular eroticism and free love, ignorance of the classics and of poetic diction, and ignorance of metres. Bowles's parody on the Cockney Leigh Hunt's praise of rural Hampstead life in *Foliage* (1818), for instance, is as pointed as her parody on Shelley's *Adonais* (1822), revealing a self-centred and scatter-brained Ro-

309 Ibid. 41.

310 [Caroline Bowles], Letter from a Washerwoman, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 13 (February 1823), 232–238. The names denigrate Leigh Hunt as a Grub Street author and P.B. Shelley as a neo-pagan adorer of Apollo instead of Christ. Kent – Ewen (eds.), *Romantic Parodies 1797–1831*, 313, however, identify Pollar as Hazlitt. The town and later London borough of Islington was the location of a famous Dissenting Academy, of numerous academies for young ladies, and of reformist mass meetings led by the Radical John Thelwall and satirized by Edmund Burke and James Gillray.

mantic poetaster, who writes fragments because he does not have social rank, classical education, intellect, and control enough for matured and finished works:

I never saw a more delightful spot! –
 One might have lain there, when the days were hot,
 Hours and hours – hark'ning to the sweet singers
 Up in the leaves – twiddling one's thumbs and fingers –
 Watching the sun-beams in that quiet scenery,
 Spangling about the jaunty greenery,
 And the small flies and gnats – that sort called midges,
 Bite one confoundedly, raising long ridges
 Upon one's skin. – Oh! it were sweet, most sweet,
 As I before said, in the summer heat,
 To lie there sprawling flat upon one's back,
 Dozing and dreaming of one's – Zounds! what's that? –
 Pshaw! a cockchafer – what was I saying? –
 Oh! that would be delicious, thus a laying,
 To dream of *****³¹¹

It is worth noting that Lockhart did not argue in terms of schools and aesthetics, but of social origin, when he opposed Keats, the son of a groom, to Shelley, the son of a peer. Lockhart's modified praise of Shelley to the detriment of Keats had a political motivation and proceeded on the well-established technique of weakening the enemy's frontline by setting one against the other. The cultivated nobleman must shake himself free from the influence of the Cockneys and Radicals and give up his "monstrous perversity in a man of genius and talent" in order to be one of England's greatest modern poets.³¹² In defence of Keats, Hazlitt accused Lockhart of social prejudice warping any adequate poetic assessment, and Lockhart's furious denial proves that Hazlitt's observation was correct.³¹³ Keats's rising middle class challenged the established powers for which Lockhart was a spokesman. "Cockney" culture was destined to overcome the dominance of Classical Tradition high-class culture. A recent innovative study of Keats's politics, school education, medical training, and poetry of a dissenting, democratic, middle-class culture effectively demolishes the misconception of the apolitical or even reactionary aestheticist.³¹⁴

311 [Caroline Bowles] in: Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 13 (February 1823), 236. The torn metre refers to Leigh Hunt's metrical experiments as in *The Story of Rimini* (1816).

312 [Lockhart's] Review of Shelley's *Rosalind and Helen*, in: Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 5 (June 1819), 268–274.

313 Keats: *The Critical Heritage*, 20.

314 Richolas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, passim. Roe's argument against Lockhart is also directed against Marjorie Levinson's critique of Keats as an ape of the

The virulence of Lockhart's and Wilson's prolonged attacks against "the Cockney school" estranged even the Tory (and Londoner) John Murray from *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, so that he withdrew his initial support and cooperation. But *Blackwood's* persisted in its opposition to poets of low birth. When Keats died in February 1821 and Shelley published his elegy on Keats's death, *Adonais* (1821), in the same year, George Croly and William Maginn, as aggressive Irish ultra-Tory and ultra-Protestant reviewers of *Blackwood's*, came out with a mock elegy in the tradition of elegies on favourite pets, a parody of Shelley's style. "Elegy on my Tom Cat" put the death of Keats on a level with the death of a vulgar stray cat, with a possible side-sweep at the previous death of John Keats's brother Tom. The spiteful elegy-parody is given additional pungency by the ridiculous contrast of Shelley's "odoriferous, colorific, and daisy-enamoured style" in a poem "sent over to his honoured correspondents throughout the realm of Cockaigne, with a delightful mysteriousness worthy of the dignity of the subject and the writer".³¹⁵ Keats the vulgar tomcat is, fortunately, stone-dead beyond any hope of resurrection and eternal life, unlike Shelley's Keats, and unlike Keats's Endymion, the titular hero of his narrative poem of 1817, which Maginn's friend Lockhart had reviewed as "drivelling idiocy" in the same "Maga":

Weep for my Tomcat! all ye Tabbies weep,
For he is gone at last! Not dead alone,
In flowery beauty sleepeth he no sleep;
Like that bewitching youth Endymion.³¹⁶

The implication is much the same as in Neoclassical arguments against Robert Burns and the enormous popularity of his poetry. A gifted young poet who died young had not had time to mature, so that his wild youthful peevishness shaped poems that an adult poet trained in the self-restrictions of the Classical Tradition would later have rejected. The image of a fertile garden laid waste by a wild boar, which Charles Caleb Colton used in connection with Burns, evinces the Neo-classical demand for rational, time-consuming cultivation and pruning both in horticulture and poetry. As opposed to the Romantic-Neoplatonic preference for the young poet closer to his origin in the world of ideas, the Neoclassicists would prefer the adult, rational, refined, and erudite poet that they found recommended by Horace:

poetry of the ruling classes. Both misconceive the political dimensions of Keats's thought and work, his combative republicanism.

315 [Croly – Maginn], *Elegy on my Tom Cat*, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 10 (December 1821), 700, in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, II. 321 – 322, headnote and endnote.

316 *Ibid.* lines 1 – 4.

Ah! could ye not, Sylphs, Fauns, and Fairies? Guard
 From *fatal* snares, your rash, your reckless Bard?
 Uncharm the Spell that held him pleasure-bound?
 And dash the cup of Circe to the ground?³¹⁷

This critique of Burns is typical insofar as it was milder in tone than the Neoclassical critiques of Keats, notwithstanding the similarity of arguments that could be advanced against both poets. In the first number of the *Quarterly Review* (1809), Lockhart's father-in-law Walter Scott had treated Burns with much more fairness than Lockhart dealt with Keats, not least because Burns was Scott's countryman, had taught himself the Greek and Latin classics, and could write in polished Augustan as well as simple Scots diction. Neoclassical assessments of Burns were mostly ambiguous, wavering between esteem and rejection, and sometimes even positively contrasted Burns to other "vulgar" poets. Nevertheless, Scott's review did put Burns's rustic style and violent temper down to his low origin, just as it put Burns's Jacobite and Jacobin sympathies down to his immature youth and passionate, immoderate, uncouth way of life:

The dignity, the spirit, the indignation of Burns was that of a plebeian indeed, of a citizen of Rome and Athens, but still of a plebeian untinged with the slightest shade of that spirit of chivalry which since the feudal times has pervaded the higher ranks of European society.³¹⁸

Scott, Lockhart, Wilson, and Maginn were not of humble origin and had received the university education appropriate to their upbringing. Their London ally Gifford, by contrast, had been raised as an orphan boy in Ashburton, Devonshire, apprenticed to a shoemaker, and then read the classics in Oxford and become a reputed Tory poet, translator, and reviewer due to the patronage of a peer. When, however, Gifford staged his Toryism by hitting at the very *οχλος* or *vulgus* which he came from, the Whigs turned against him and satirically aimed at his weakest spot, namely his own low origin. The argument is effectively advanced in William Hazlitt's long prose *Letter to William Gifford* (1819), which Keats found so brilliant that he used parts of it in his own correspondence. It is typical of Hazlitt's deviation from the Classical Tradition that he replaced the classical verse epistle with a public prose letter, a novelty in eristic culture. Again, the political and social reproach is combined with an aesthetic one from the Romantic point of view, the Neoclassicist Gifford's lack of originality:

Again, of an humble origin yourself, you recommend your performances to persons of fashion by always abusing *low people*, with the smartness of a lady's waiting woman,

317 Colton, *Hypocrisy: A Satire*, 1812, 240.

318 [Lockhart] in: *Quarterly Review*, 1 (1809), 26–27.

and the independent spirit of a travelling tutor. [...] You have been well called an Ultra-Crepidarian critic.³¹⁹

As Radical Whigs and advocates of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, William Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt had to be careful not to hit at Gifford's low origin as such, but instead at his denial of his low origin. Hunt made this point clear in his short "Preface" to *Ultra-Crepidarius* (1823), in which, taking up Hazlitt's neologism, he ridiculed Gifford's unjustified social arrogance as well as the Tory concept of a divinely established feudal society:

Nothing can be more foreign from my purpose than to treat it with contempt for its own sake. [...] What are called low origins and high origins are equally, to me, matters of indifference.³²⁰

Charles Lamb, whose paternal grandfather had also been a cobbler, entered the lists with his satirical sonnet "St Crispin to Mr Gifford" (1819), in which the patron saint of shoemakers reminds William Gifford of his low origin. Lowness, the narrator argues, is no blemish, and a dry philologist and sour critic stretching his brain is worse than a happy cobbler stretching his leather. Lamb's argument was both Radical and Romantic. His study of the classics at Christ's Hospital had enabled him to write Latin poems and elegant, sensitive criticism in spite of his low origin and lack of a university education, and so he despised untalented observers and critics who judged by fixed rules and were mere social climbers on the feudal ladder:

The wiser sort of shrub affects the ground;
The sweet content of mind is oftener found
In cobbler's parlour, than in critic's bower.
The sorest work is what does cross the grain.³²¹

Lamb's preceding sonnet, "Written at Cambridge" (1819), underscores his Romantic criticism of Tory philology and social arrogance. He was not a Cambridge student with a formal schooling, yet Cambridge and the River Cam inspired him, so that reading and imagination replaced academic tuition. Lamb's reference to Petrus Ramus and the Classical Tradition of logic and rhetoric reminds his readers of the fact that the famous Ramus, whose ghost enters his brain and whom he seems to "transcend", was of low origin like himself. As a true Ro-

319 Hazlitt, A Letter to William Gifford, 1819 in: Complete Works, IX. 15–16. By "Ultra-Crepidarian", Hazlitt means critics who, like classical philologists, are "verbal critics – mere word-catchers" (OED). The reference is to Gifford's original profession of shoemaker and to the Latin Proverb "ne sutor supra crepidam", "Schuster bleib bei Deinem Leisten". Also see John Strachan's headnote in his edition of Leigh Hunt's Selected Writings, VI. 36.

320 Hunt, Ultra-Crepidarius, Preface, 1823, in: Selected Writings, VI. 37.

321 Charles Lamb, St Crispin to Mr Gifford, 1819, lines 6–9, in: Works, V. 109.

matic, Lamb forever pretended to a child's and imaginative genius's naturally acquired learning instead of forced learning by rote:

I was not train'd in Academic bowers,
 And to those learned streams I nothing owe
 Which copious from those twin fair founts do flow;
 Mine have been any thing but studious hours.
 Yet can I fancy, wandering 'mid thy towers,
 Myself a nursling, Granta, of thy lap;
 My brow seems tightening with the Doctor's cap,
 And I walked *gowned*; feel unusual powers.
 Strange forms of logic clothe my admiring speech,
 Old Ramus' ghost is busy at my brain;
 And my skull teems with notions infinite.
 Be still, ye reeds of Camus, while I teach
 Truths, which transcend the searching Schoolmen's vein,
 And half had stagger'd that stout Stagirite!³²²

The Romantics were keen to reject their Augustan adversaries' reproach of total ignorance of the Classical Tradition, while simultaneously being careful not to parade their classical knowledge in the explicit way of Pope's and Gifford's examples by extensively inserting Latin and Greek quotations and annotations. *Ultra-Crepidarius* attests to Hunt's effort to simultaneously show both his sound knowledge of the Classical Tradition, which Gifford polemically denied, and his Romantic rejection of the monopoly of the Classical Tradition, which Gifford resented. Thus, the learned title and the many intertextual allusions to classical myths and literature are combined with a programmatic renunciation of extensive original quotations and philological notes. They converge in polemical attacks on the deterioration of Tory politics and philology from the times of Robert Harley, Matthew Prior, and Alexander Pope to the times of William Gifford. The representatives of the Classical Tradition have forgotten the very rules and standards which they propagate. Hence Mercury's characterization of Gifford's exactness as an editor and translator of Persius and Juvenal, classical philologist, journalist, critic, and government spy:

'Misquote, and misplace, and mislead, and misstate,
 Misapply, misinterpret, misreckon, misdate,
 Misinform, misconjecture, misargue; in short,
 Miss all that is good, that ye miss not the Court.'³²³

322 Charles Lamb, *Written at Cambridge*, 1819, *ibid.* V. 108.

323 Hunt, *Ultra-Crepidarius*, lines 231 – 234, in: *Selected Writings*, VI. 43.

The standard Romantic strictures on the Classical Tradition, namely that it was cold and uninspired, and that spleen and hatred were the true motives of its satire, appears from Mercury's disdain of Gifford's *Juvenal*:

'These Latins will help too thy fondest of penchants,
And swell thy large hate with the hates of the ancients.'³²⁴

Mercury's long polemic is also meant to invalidate Gifford's social argument, which denied men and women of low birth the qualification of poet. Gifford appears as a bad editor and translator, but remains *quantité négligeable* as to his own poetry, not even worth mentioning. Gifford, himself of low birth, sticks to the gutter when he eschews an edition of the divine Shakespeare, the inspired idol of the Romantics for his soaring flights of imagination, and rather chooses to edit the vulgar and pedestrian Jacobean dramatists Ben Jonson and Philip Massinger:

'Thus, edit no authors but such as unite
With their talents a good deal of dirt and of spite;
Ben Jonson, because he was beastly and bluff;
And Massinger, – mince through his loathsomer stuff;
And Persius, – "let him be writ down" Imitated,
And say to poor Juvenal, "Thou art translated".'³²⁵

As John Murray was the publisher of Gifford's *Quarterly Review*, an influential Tory contributing to the maintenance of the *ancien régime* in Britain, he was a legitimate target for Hunt's satire, who did not hesitate to parody Murray's name, adapting it to the term for a national plague, "the murrain" or cattle disease, in context with the vulgar diction of Jonson's and Massinger's plays which he co-published in Gifford's editions of 1816 and 1813 respectively.³²⁶ Such insulting abuse of names was still common practice, provided it no longer had recourse to sexual obscenities, as when, in the Pope and Bowles controversy, Byron repeatedly changed the name of John Keats into that of the vulgar hangman Jack Ketch.³²⁷ In Mercury's speech to Gifford the shoe, Hunt thus returned the reproach of lowness against Murray as well as Gifford:

'I hear some one say, "Murrain take him, the ape!"
And so the Murrain shall, in a bookseller's shape;
An evil-eyed elf, in a down-looking flurry,
Who'd fain be a coxcomb, and calls himself Murray.

324 Ibid. lines 203–204, ed. cit. VI. 42.

325 Ibid. lines 197–202, ed. cit. VI. 42. The exclamation refers to the unfortunate "translation" of the Classical Tradition into modern times.

326 The publishers on the title-pages of both editions, however, were G. and W. Nicol in London.

327 For example in: Letter to John Murray, 4 November 1820, VII. 217.

Adorn thou his door, like the sign of the Shoe,
For court-understrappers to congregate to.³²⁸

Thus, all the political and aesthetic arguments of Hunt's satire revolve around Gifford's weakest spot, his disdain of the populace and concealment of his own low birth. The Menippean satire's burlesque plot is constructed around an arrogant though cheap high-heeled shoe (*crepida*), the type a young arrogant Roman (*crepidarius*) wore, in Gifford's native provincial town of Ashburton. Venus has sent one of her paramour Mercury's winged shoes to Ashburton to find a pair of new shoes for her. The portrait of the easy virtue of the Olympians allegorized the decayed state of the *ancien régime*, as the portrait of the chaos of Heaven in Byron's *Vision of Judgment* (1822) had done in the previous year. Because Mercury misses his shoe the morning after making love with Venus and cannot do with only one shoe, Mercury and Venus fly to Ashburton in search of the missing shoe, already envied and insulted by an arrogant high-heeled shoe from Ashburton, the ultra-crepidarian Gifford, who thinks himself too good for the gutter. The descent of the Gods and the narrator's appeal to the Muses with their intertextual references are commonplace, showing Hunt's knowledge though ridicule of the Classical Tradition, as in his deflating pararhymes. The satire culminates with Gifford the shoe's lack of sensibility and blindness in recognizing his Olympian betters – grave reproaches raised against a political Tory as well as expert in and representative of the Classical Tradition:

'I was made for a Squire; and my instinct has told me,
That if through the dirt with discretion I hold me,
My service, some day, will be under an Earl,
Which I think's something higher than you and your girl'³²⁹

Envy of others and the ambition to rise in society appear as Gifford the shoe's main motives, because kicking at his apparent betters is his only means of advancement:

'Why, I can't bear,' returned this most cross-grained of leathers,
'To look at your shoe there, tricked out in such feathers.
Why need any shoe be more gifted than I?
There was just such another' – [...]'³³⁰

To Neoclassical eyes, Gifford was a laudable exception to the rule, a cobbler from the margins of the British Isles raised to the highest social and poetical ranks through both exceptional talent and hard work. This explains the satirist Byron's

328 Hunt, *Ultra-Crepidarius*, lines 211 – 216, in: *Selected Writings*, VI. 42 – 43.

329 *Ibid.* lines 102 – 105.

330 *Ibid.* lines 118 – 121. Reference to Mercury's feathered pair of superior shoes, the one he wears and the one whom Gifford the cheap calf-skin shoe met before.

high praise of Gifford, whom he distinguished from a mass of provincial and uneducated Preromantic poets who (instead of sticking to their honest trades) cobbled and hammered verses on their native soil and in their native dialect, such as Allan Ramsay, Robert Burns, James Hogg, the “Cumberland Muses” Robert Anderson and Susanna Blamire, and the Radical brothers Joseph and Amos Simon Cottle, sons of a tailor and draper in Southey’s Bristol. Joseph Cottle was a bookseller and author, who co-edited and published Thomas Chatterton (1803), printed Wordsworth and Coleridge’s *Lyrical Ballads* and celebrated Welsh culture in his *Malvern Hills* (both 1798). His brother Amos Cottle was also the primitivist verse translator of *Icelandic Poetry* (1797) eulogized by Southey and later ridiculed by Peacock. Byron seems to have conflated both brothers in his satirical address to Amos Cottle:

Oh! AMOS COTTLE! For a moment think
 What meagre profits spring from pen and ink!
 When thus devoted to poetic dreams,
 Who will peruse thy prostituted reams?
 Oh! pen perverted! Paper misapplied!
 Had COTTLE still adorned the counter’s side,
 Bent o’er the desk, or, born to useful toils,
 Been taught to make the paper which he soils,
 Plough’d, delv’d, or plied the oar with lusty limb,
 He had not sung of Wales, nor I of him.³³¹

The poet and shoemaker Robert Bloomfield, though living and working in London, was another lover of Wales and bard of rustic landscapes, as well as Byron’s prime example of the rule to which Gifford, “born beneath an adverse star”,³³² was the noble exception:

Let Poesy go forth, pervade the whole,
 Alike the rustic, and mechanic soul:
 Ye tuneful cobblers! Still your notes prolong,
 Compose at once a slipper and a song.³³³

In *The Vision of Judgment* (1822), Byron complimented this criticism of rural poetry with his satirical view of the “petty sphere” of the Lake District, from which the devil Asmodeus brings the “silly fellow” Robert Southey to judgment, a conceited genius among stupid neighbouring boors (like a one-eyed among the blind). His hexameters are as lame as overworked boors, and the primitive noise of his verses is as intolerable as that of an untrained village band with its brass

331 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1809, lines 399–410, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, I. 241.

332 *Ibid.* lines 777–780, I. 253.

333 *Ibid.* lines 789–792, I. 254.

trumpets. The Preromantic and Romantic assumption, culminating in Percy Shelley's *Defence of Poetry* (MS 1821), that all men are essentially poets once classical metres are removed and the noble savages' original natural rhythms laid bare, is thus exposed to ridicule. Romantic primitivism is denigrated through Neoclassical eyes, Lake District boors appear as uncultivated rough country clots rather than *edle Landleute* and *bons sauvages*. Again, as in *Hints from Horace* (MS 1811), Horace's dictum that mediocrity may be tolerated in any *métier* but that of poetry is alluded to:

But ere the spavin'd dactyls could be spurr'd
 Into recitative, in great dismay
 Both cherubim and seraphim were heard
 To murmur loudly through their long array;
 And Michael rose ere he could get a word
 Of all his founder'd verses under way,
 And cried, 'For God's sake stop, my friend! 'twere best –
 "Non Di, non homines – " you know the rest."³³⁴

This was the haughty aristocrat and Tory Byron, who alternated Proteus-like with the sentimentalist and Radical Whig Byron. This was the Byron Hazlitt despised and repeatedly attacked, even years after Byron's death and irrespective of the principle of *de mortuis nil nisi bene*, the aristocrat full of "scorn of homely simplicity", who filtered all poetical experience through his classical education.³³⁵ In the *London Weekly Review* (1828), Hazlitt favourably opposed Wordsworth with his democratic interest in novelty and all the small natural things of his native country to Byron with his aristocratic interest in the traditional and artificial and exotic, the "obvious result of pampered luxury and high-born sentiments".³³⁶ Hazlitt's plea was for heraldry of intellect, not of ancestry:

With his [Byron's] pride of heraldry, had he no curiosity to explore the heraldry of intellect? [...] I am afraid that high birth and station, instead of being (as Mr Burke predicates) 'a cure for a narrow and selfish mind,' only make a man more full of himself, and, instead of enlarging and refining his views, impatient of any but the most inordinate and immediate stimulus. I do not recollect, in all Lord Byron's writings, a single recurrence to a feeling or object that had ever excited an interest before; there is no display of natural affection [...]³³⁷

334 Byron, *The Vision of Judgment*, 1822, stanza 91, *ibid.* VI. 340–341.

335 [Hazlitt] in: *London Weekly Review*, 5 April 1828, in: *Complete Works*, XX. 156.

336 *Ibid.* XX. 155.

337 *Ibid.*

5) Primitivism: The Backwardness and Revolutionary Programme of Simple Life and Speech

When, in 1924, Paul van Tieghem introduced the convenient term “le préromantisme” into literary history,³³⁸ extensive research on cultural and chronological as well as aesthetic primitivism revealed a change of paradigms in the course of the eighteenth century, paving the way for Romanticism. It was manifested in a growing nostalgia for a less civilized and refined way of life, one supposed to be more conducive to virtue and happiness as well as to better poetry. It opposed Thomas Hobbes’s, and later still Peacock’s, Enlightenment view of the state of nature as a state of ignoble (though honest) savagery, “the naked motto of the naked sword”,³³⁹ to be overcome by a social contract and ensuing civilization. Against this progressivism, rural existence came to be preferred to city life, the “dark” Middle Ages to the “enlightened” Augustan ages of Virgil and Pope, noble savagery to Augustan refinement, naïve and visionary childhood to experienced and rational adulthood, spontaneity to rational artistry, “primitive and oriental” poetry to Neoclassical and Augustan verse, natural rhythm to artificial scansion, emotion to reason, intuition to tuition, vision to computation, rural speech (including dialects) to polished Ciceronianism and Augustan diction.³⁴⁰ Harley and Harry, the norm-ignoring “men of feeling” in Henry Brooke’s and Henry Mackenzie’s sentimental novels, were like children giving the lie to the rational and corrupt world of Augustan adults. This constituted an implied attack on the feudal distinctions of the non-primitive and non-egalitarian social, political, and ecclesiastical order of the *ancien régime*.³⁴¹ In the field of aesthetics, Letitia Barbauld’s “domestic Muse In slipshod measure loosely prattling on Of farm or orchard”³⁴² was a programme dissenting from the dogmatic uniformity of Neoclassicism, just as her religious Dissent was a plea for variety dissenting from the dogmatic uniformity of Anglicanism, although both Neoclassicism and Anglicanism were in fact much less homogeneous than their ideology would have it. By the time of the French Revolution, such regressive programmes could no longer be regarded as mere aesthetic counterbalance to strict French Neoclassicism and manifestation of British freedom in art, because its advocates such as Blake, Burns, Samuel Thomson, Thelwall, Wordsworth, and Scott then were Radicals. The *Quarterly Review*’s critique of the *Reliques of Robert Burns* (1808), though balanced in its

338 P. van Tieghem, *Le préromantisme*, 3 vols., Paris 1924–1947.

339 Peacock, *The Four Ages of Poetry*, 1820, in: *Works*, VIII, 3.

340 Studies by H.N. Fairchild, G. Boas, L. Whitney, A.O. Lovejoy, E.A. Runge.

341 Brooke, *The Fool of Quality*, London 1760–1772, and Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, London 1771.

342 Barbauld, *Washing-Day*, 1797, 3–4, in: *Works*, London 1825, I, 202.

assessment of a deceased poet's works and sympathetic with a compatriot, yet discerned the origin of Burns's rustic Scots diction as well as Scottish Jacobitism and Jacobinism in his untutored and unrestrained youthfully primitive impulses and feelings. The Tory review, which Walter Scott contributed to this first number of the *Quarterly Review*, suggests that an English education to mature adulthood and sober reason would have corrected Burns's primitivism:

The political predilections, for they could hardly be termed principles, of Burns, were entirely determined by his feelings. Indeed, a youth of his warm patriotism, brought up in Scotland thirty years ago, could hardly escape this bias. The side of Charles Edward was the party, not surely of sound sense and sober reason, but of romantic gallantry and high achievement. [...] The same enthusiastic ardour of disposition swayed Burns in his choice of political tenets, when, at a later period, the country was agitated by revolutionary principles.³⁴³

Sober reason and Augustan diction, however, were anathema to the Radical Romantic new school, from which the former primitivist Scott had absconded. Sober reason and Augustan diction stood for the cultural dictate and progressivist ideology of the *ancien régime*. The Radical avant-garde advocated a return to simple original feelings, passions, and speech, as was deemed more appropriate to the nature of man and conducive to better cognition and better poetry. The dethronement of reason and the restoration of the feeling heart called for a new primitivism in all fields: epistemology, theology, politics, and aesthetics. In a letter to Coleridge, whom he visited in Nether Stowey where he also met William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Thelwall blamed the abstruse diction of Coleridge's Radical *Religious Musings* (1796). Instead, he recommended the simple popular diction of his own poetic exercises, which Wordsworth and Coleridge then used in their *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).³⁴⁴ Hence, Mathias smelled the spirit of Jacobinism, free love, and sentimental marriage in the Romantic programme of composing simple non-classical verse

From laws of metre free, (which idly serve
To curb strong genius and its swelling nerve)
[...].³⁴⁵

In a satirical review of Maria Edgeworth's *Popular Tales* (1804), Francis Jeffrey took occasion to ironically praise "the laudable exertions of Mr Tom Paine to bring disaffection and infidelity within the comprehension of the common people, or the charitable endeavours of Mr Wirdsworth [sic] & Co to accom-

343 [Scott] in: *Quarterly Review*, 1 (February and May 1809), 28–29. Jonathan Cutmore's author identification in the *Quarterly Review Archive*.

344 Thelwall, Letter to Coleridge, 10 May 1796, in: Duncan Wu (ed.), *Romanticism: An Anthology*, 3rd edition, Oxford 2006, 321–322.

345 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature, 1794–1797*, ed. cit. 79.

modate them with an appropriate vein of poetry”.³⁴⁶ And, in a review of the Radical Leigh Hunt’s *Foliage* (1818) in the anti-Jacobin *New Monthly Magazine* (1814–1836), a reviewer set out by deriding the Romantic author’s declaration that one of the properties of poetry is a concentration on simple outward things, along with a “sensitiveness [...] to the unsophisticated impulses of our nature”.³⁴⁷ The Tory and Neoclassicist John Taylor Coleridge’s mischievous review of *Foliage* in the *Quarterly Review* aimed at a similar effect. The reviewer discovered in Hunt’s simplistic and unpolished treatment of nature a childishly regressive “namby-pamby disposition” that resuscitated primitive Lucretian and Epicurean neo-paganism, typical of that erroneous and heretical “new sect” of Romantic poets.³⁴⁸ So did the reviewer of Hunt’s *Ultra-Crepidarius* (1823) in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, joining the reproach of namby-pamby childishness with the periodical’s Cockney-bashing. On the model of Dryden’s Menippean satire *Mac Flecknoe* (1682), the reviewer made Hunt, King of Cockayne, the father of an imbecile boy and real author of this crippled attempt at Neoclassical satire. As usual, the literary satire of the review is extended to a political satire on the enemies of Britain and the *ancien régime*, so that the traitors of the old eternally valid school of poetry appear simultaneous as traitors of the old eternally valid order of state and church:

THIS is a very pretty little precocious performance, and proves young Master Hunt to be a promising plant of the Cockney nursery-ground. “Heigh Johnny Nonny,” as his papa called him in short metre some four or five years ago, cannot, we think, have done much more than finished his digits. Now, such a copy of verses as this is most creditable to a boy of ten years, and this small smart smattering satirist of an heir-haparent, as he is pronounced in Cockaigne, really seems to smack of his sire, almost as racily as that mischievous urchin the Duke of Reichstadt does of Napoleon the Great.³⁴⁹

As, in Horace and Pope, simplicity should not be dirt and rags, nature should not be raw and unimproved by art. Hence Richard Mant’s distinction of Classical and Neoclassical from Romantic poetry in the *Simpliciad* (1808):

Now shame to genius, learning, feeling, sense!
Poets of old to Nature made pretence,
Yet did they not for naked Nature scorn
Art that refines, and graces that adorn.³⁵⁰

346 [Jeffrey] in: *Edinburgh Review*, 4 (July 1804), 329.

347 *New Monthly Magazine*, 10 (September 1818), 162.

348 [John Taylor Coleridge] in: *Quarterly Review*, 18 (January 1818), 327.

349 [Lockhart or Wilson] in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 15 (January 1824), 86. The reference is to Napoleon Franz Joseph Karl Bonaparte, only legitimate son and heir of Napoleon, then 12 years of age.

350 [Mant], *The Simpliciad*, lines 347–350, London 1808, 50.

Catching “glimpses of the truth of things”³⁵¹ in simplest natural and cultural phenomena, stones and flowers and animals and peasant’s cottages as well as peasant songs and dialects, unadulterated by classical refinement, combined Romantic Neoplatonism with Radical egalitarianism, as a declaration of the natural equality of all things:

To see a world in a grain of sand,
 And a heaven in a wild flower,
 Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
 And eternity in an hour.³⁵²

There are stupendous parallels found in the thoughts of Blake in England and Novalis in Germany, especially in the latter’s poetological fragments of 1799–1800 and in his neo-medieval novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802), where he recommends the simplicity of both style and folk tale as an antidote to complexity of meaning, just as logarithm is the contrary of multiplication. The universe should reveal itself “in einfachen Worten und Geschichten”, reacting against the disintegration of the world and perversion of the order of things that the Enlightenment had effected through the tyranny of reason.³⁵³ In a polemical turn against the adversaries of Romanticism such as Johann Heinrich Voss and Alois Wilhelm Schreiber, the latter is allegorized as the incarnation of the Enlightenment, in the fantastic but simple *Klingsohr-Märchen* of Eros and Fabel in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, a villain resembling Blake’s Newton, a usurper, murderer, and hater of all simple things, who is ultimately vanquished by love and poetry with the return of the Golden Age. In fact, though, Schreiber was a professor of aesthetics and history at Heidelberg University, a member of the Neoclassical circle around Voss, and a brilliant parodist of the Romantic cult of simplicity, nature symbolism, visionary mysticism, and other non-classical characteristics in his anonymously published *Comoedia Divina* (1808):

Windes Rauschen, Gottes Flügel,
 Tief in kühler Waldesnacht,
 Wie der Held in Rosses Bügel
 Schwingt sich des Gedanken Macht.
 Wie die alten Tannen sausen
 Hört man Geisteswogen brausen.³⁵⁴

351 Peacock, *Melincourt*, 1817, chapter 8, in: *Novels*, 146.

352 Blake, *Auguries of Innocence*, Pickering MS ca 1803, in: *Complete Poems*, ed. cit. 612.

353 Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, 1802, in: *Werke und Briefe*, ed. Alfred Kellertat, Munich 1953, 307. These are the words of the hermit Sylvester, who explains to Heinrich the simple language of nature in flowers and plants. See also Gerhard Kaiser, *Literarische Romantik*, Göttingen 2010, 64.

354 [Schreiber], *Comoedia Divina*, n.p. 1808, 137.

Reviewing Wordsworth's *The White Doe of Rylstone* (1815), the liberal *British Lady's Magazine* vigorously defended the poet's fine feeling for and discovery of universal truths in "the inferior and more trifling objects of the creation".³⁵⁵ The anonymous female author may have been the magazine's most distinguished reviewer, Mary Lamb, a Romantic in sympathy with revolutionary ideals. Such a poetological programme was, naturally, both a provocation of and an easy target for the Augustan Tories of the Romantic Period, and even the Augustan Whigs in sympathy with the aims of the French Revolution would signal their aesthetic disagreement. Champions of the Classical Tradition, like the reviewer of Coleridge's *Christabel and Other Poems* (1816) in *The Academic*, never forgave what they felt to be a relapse into barbarity, a regressive boorish wallowing in the mud after ancient civilization had raised poetry to a level of social and technical refinement and elitism:

They [the Lake Poets] prefer the uncouth diction and gross conceptions of the humblest ballad to all the sublimity of Homer and grace of Virgil; and when they have laboriously raked up low manners and low language from the very kennel of society, they invite us to admire their picture [...]³⁵⁶

An anonymous critic of the "Lake School of Poetry" in the *New Monthly Magazine* invoked the "Spirit of Homer" to disparage Wordsworth's "Idiot Boy" and warned against imitating Wordsworth's concessions to the false babyish taste of the crowd that gives a work neither quality nor longevity: "[...] we must protest against the taste, that would adopt his idiocy, his affectation, his riddling and ridiculous rusticity".³⁵⁷ Healthy English common sense, he argued from a markedly Tory perspective, was adulterated by sickly German mysticism and eccentricity. It was the young Thomas Noon Talfourd, later one of the strongest defenders of the Romantic poets including Keats and Charles Lamb, who answered this long satirical attack in two longer defences of Wordsworth printed in the two succeeding numbers of the *New Monthly*. Talfourd warned not to confuse Wordsworth's unfortunate theories of his poetry with his fortunate poems, which, he tried to prove by examples of excellence, were lasting works of genius. Mnemosyne, he warned, was not the goddess of one school of poetry only:

[...] the productions of genius are "for all time." Its discoveries cannot be lost – its images will not perish – its most delicate influences cannot be dissipated by the change of times and of seasons.³⁵⁸

355 *The British Lady's Magazine*, 2 (1815), 33–37.

356 *The Academic*, 15 September 1821, 339–340.

357 Anon., On the Lake School of Poetry: Mr Wordsworth, in: *New Monthly Magazine*, 14 (October 1820), 367.

358 [Talfourd], On the Genius and Writings of Wordsworth, in: *New Monthly Magazine*, 14 (November 1820), 499.

The High Victorian William Edmonstoune Aytoun continued the Neoclassical attacks on primitivism and visionary child mysticism in his anti-Romantic parody of the Spasmodic School in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. Apollodorus, a presumptuous critic puffing the Spasmodists, meets a doltish costermonger that he mistakes for a prophetic child of nature capable of seeing truths beyond mere sense perception. But he soon finds that he was “a most egregious ass To take this lubber clodpole for a bard”, a fact which the costermonger’s weak-witted and vulgar country song might have told him from the start. Thus, Aytoun dumped Blake’s and Wordsworth’s primitivism together with Coleridge’s mysticism, Shelley’s idealism, Keats’s eroticism, Goethe’s storm and stress, and Byron’s and Bailey’s Prometheanism into one homogeneous Spasmodic School, later called Romantic School, to the detriment of substantial differences. His costermonger’s song is mere primitive nonsense, a satirical parody of a natural volkslied:

‘Down in the garden behind the wall,
 Merrily grows the bright-green leek;
 The old sow grunts as the acorns fall,
 The wind blows heavy, the little pigs squeak.
 One for the litter, and three for the teat-
 Hark to their music, Juanna my sweet!’³⁵⁹

Peacock’s ridicule of the ballad collector Walter Scott and the country bard Wordsworth, and of the triteness of what he ironically called “the philosophy of ballads”, matched Gifford’s and Aytoun’s ridicule:

[...] he locked up his library, purchased a travelling chariot, with a shelf in the back, which he filled with collections of ballads, and popular songs; and passed the greater part of every year in posting about the country, for the purpose, as he expressed it, of studying together poetry and the peasantry, unsophisticated nature and the truth of things.³⁶⁰

In a letter to Percy Shelley, Peacock quite seriously repeated his conviction that he had humorously advanced in “The Four Ages of Poetry” (1820), the decline of true classical poetry in favour of weak-minded and mass-produced sentimental simplicity for a mass public of simpletons, due to loss of respect in a modern age of philosophy and science:

The truth, I am convinced, is, that there is no longer a poetical audience among the higher class of minds; that moral, political, and physical science have entirely withdrawn from poetry the attention of all whose attention is worth having; and that the poetical reading public, being composed of the mere dregs of the intellectual com-

359 [Aytoun] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 75 (May 1854), 543.

360 Peacock, *Melincourt*, *ibid.*

munity, the most sufficing passport to their favour must rest on the mixture of a little easily intelligible portion of mawkish sentiment with an absolute negation of reason and knowledge.³⁶¹

Peacock's natural antagonist De Quincey, by contrast, preferred poetry of a "natural, racy, and domestic growth", praising the Lake Poets and lamenting the fact that contemporary German literature, which he read extensively in the original German, "grew up too much under the oppression of Grecian models".³⁶² Hence, De Quincey was keen to live near Wordsworth in the Lake District (from 1807) and admired the Wordsworth family's cult of simplicity in their Grasmere household, their "simple rustic system of habits", as well as the contrast of "dignity" and "honourable poverty" that Wordsworth summarized as "Plain living, and high thinking".³⁶³

Preromanticism had gradually shifted poetical interest from Augustan to "primitive and oriental" poetry, and from London to the rural borders of the British Isles, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Cumberland and Westmoreland (the Lake District), Cornwall and Devonshire. Regional writers, often of low origin and profession, had raised their rural simplicity, simple language and dialect, local traditions, local customs, and local landscapes against London's cultivated city and salon and coffee-house culture as well as against conventional Augustan myths, plots, names, images, and inventions of landscape. Early in the eighteenth century, the Scottish wigmaker and poet Allan Ramsay had advanced this programme in the preface to *The Ever Green* (1724), a collection of great poets of late medieval Scotland complementing *The Tea-Table Miscellany* (1724–1727), Ramsay's collection of songs and ballads. It is a Romantic programme consciously formulated in opposition to the Classical Tradition, based on a Preromantic and Romantic preference and imagery of natural growth, that true poetry can only flourish and burgeon on native soil:

When these good old *Bards* wrote, we had not yet made use of imported Trimming upon our Cloaths, nor of foreign Embroidery in our Writings. Their *Poetry* is the Product of their own Country, not pilfered and spoiled in the Transportation from abroad: Their *Images* are native, and their *Landskips* domestick; copied from those Fields and Meadows we every Day behold.

The *Morning* rises (in the Poets Description) as she does in the *Scottish* Horizon. We are not carried to *Greece* or *Italy* for a shade, a Stream or a Breeze. The *Groves* rise in our own Valleys; the *Rivers* flow from our own Fountains, and the *Winds* blow upon our

361 Peacock, Letter to P.B. Shelley, 4 December 1820, in: Works, VIII. 219–220.

362 De Quincey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in: Tait's Edinburgh Magazine (1834–35), in: Works, X. 310.

363 De Quincey, William Wordsworth and Robert Southey, in: Tait's Edinburgh Magazine (1839), XI. 111–113. The quotation is from Wordsworth, "Written in London, September 1802", 1807, line 11.

own Hills. I find not fault with those Things, as they are in *Greece* or *Italy*: But with a *Northern Poet* for fetching his Materials from these Places, in a Poem, of which his own Country is the Scene [...]³⁶⁴

Burns, who saw himself in the tradition of Ramsay, radicalized Ramsay's national "Scottishness" by parading his own regional version, "the ancient Baireries of Carrick, Kyle, & Cunningham", whose poet he wanted to be.³⁶⁵ "The Vision" (1786) is a typically Romantic poem, divided into Ossianic "duans", in which Burns the speaker imagines neither the universal Muse of Homer nor the national Muse of Ramsay, but a local Muse of Ayrshire to call her "own inspired bard" to his vocation. Here, "bounded to a district-space", the "rustic bard" was born, not made and matured by education:

'Of these am I – COILA my name;
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the *Campbells*, chiefs of fame,
Held ruling pow'r;
I mark'd thy embryo-tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.³⁶⁶

The then famous Scottish physician, nerve theorist, and Radical Preromantic poet Thomas Trotter published a tragedy set in Scotland instead of Greece or Rome, *The Foundling, or, The Hermit of the Tweed* (1812). In its versified prologue, Trotter celebrated all the primitivist virtues that he also extolled in his medical treatises and poems: simplicity, contentment, humility, and patriotism in the sense of attachment to one's native soil. Trotter's regional Scottishness is opposed to both Tory concepts of Englishness and to Neoclassical cosmopolitanism. In the view of the anti-colonialist and abolitionist Trotter, Neoclassical recourse to Greek and Roman models came under the category of colonial expansion as opposed to patriotic humility:

Too oft the tragic muse, inclin'd to roam,
Stretch'd her wide flight, disdain'g scenes at home:
Proud to expand on Greek and Roman name,
Thought all beneath her but a foreign fame –
Our humbler bard in unambitious strains,
Invokes the buskin'd dame to native plains:

364 Ramsay, *The Ever Green*, Preface, 1724, in: *Critical Essays of the Eighteenth Century 1700 – 1725*, ed. W.H. Durham, New Haven 1915, repr. New York NY 1961, 399.

365 Burns, *Commonplace Book 1783 – 1785*, ed. James Cameron Ewing – Davidson Cook, Fontwell 1965, 36. See also Robert Crawford, *The Bard*, 191.

366 Burns, *The Vision*, 1786, duan II, lines 199 – 204, in: *Poems and Songs*, ed. cit. I. 111.

O'er stubborn glebes his careful culture wields:
And reaps his harvest in paternal fields.³⁶⁷

The simple Scottish countryside and simple Scots poetry were much admired by the Romantics, who tended to idealize Robert Burns as walking

[...] in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side.³⁶⁸

The Wordsworths, Coleridge, Charles Lamb, and Keats were the earliest literary pilgrims to Burns's grave in St Michael's churchyard, Dumfries, acknowledging their debt to and admiration of what they took for a simple ploughman bard drawing immediate inspiration from his noble native countryside, without the artificial and distorting filter of the Classical Tradition. Neoclassical critics, by contrast, would hardly share Henry Mackenzie's Romantic admiration of the "heaven-taught ploughman".³⁶⁹ They found fault with Burns's lack of a formal higher education in the classics and preference for his native Scots as opposed to eighteenth-century Augustan English, in which he nevertheless wrote with the same facility. They carped at his primitivism, blind to the belief in and need for improvement implied in the "Caledonian antiszygy" of Burns's pastorals.³⁷⁰ Traditionalist advertisements and reviews of Burns's *Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Kilmarnock 1786; Edinburgh 1787) thus varied between recognition of a potential young genius badly in need of cultivation of form and diction on the one hand, and mordant satire on his liberal views and rural simplicity on the other hand. In the elder John Murray's *English Review* (February 1787), John Logan reviewed the Kilmarnock volume thus:

The stanza of Mr. Burns is generally ill-chosen, and his provincial dialect confines his beauties to one half of the island. [...] Fame may be procured by novelty, but it must be supported by merit. We have thrown out these hints to our young and ingenious author because we discern faults in him which, if not corrected, like *the fly in the apothecary's ointment*, may give an unfortunate tincture and colour to his future compositions.³⁷¹

367 Trotter, *The Noble Foundling, or, The Hermit of the Tweed*, Prologue, 1–8, London 1812, vi. See Michelle Faubert, *Rhyming Reason*, 135–144.

368 William Wordsworth, *Resolution and Independence*, MS 1802, lines 45–46, in: *Poetical Works*, 156. Cf. William Wordsworth, *At the Grave of Burns*, MS 1803, 226, and Keats, *On Visiting the Tomb of Burns*, 1818, in: *Poems*, 357–358.

369 Henry Mackenzie, *Burns*, 1786, reprinted as a review by the *Scots Magazine* and the *Edinburgh Magazine* and read in every corner of Britain. In: *Eighteenth-Century Critical Essays*, ed. Scott Elledge, II. 982.

370 Nigel Leask, *Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, Oxford 2000, *passim*.

371 [Logan], *The English Review, or, An Abstract of English and Foreign Literature*, February 1787, in: *Burns: The Critical Heritage*, ed. D.A. Low, London 1974, 78.

Francis Jeffrey reviewing Robert Hartley Cromek's posthumous *Reliques of Robert Burns* (1808) and writing in response to Scott's review in the first number of the *Tory Quarterly* as quoted above, was also in two minds about the poet's achievements. With the polished cosmopolitan partiality for the rough past of his own country, a contradiction typical of colonized, colonial, or postcolonial cultures, Jeffrey praised Burns's strength of genius while blaming his affectation of boorish roughness. Though of low origin, Jeffrey remarked with his typical Whiggism, Burns knew Latin and Pope, and he could and should have avoided excess, immorality, libel, and, above all, his favourite low diction more worthy of a penal colony than of polished poetry:

The style we have been speaking of, accordingly, is now the heroics only of the hulks and the house of correction; and has no chance, we suppose, of being greatly admired, except in the farewell speech of a young gentleman preparing for Botany Bay. [...] This odious slang infects almost all his prose, and a very great part of his poetry [...]³⁷²

Neutralizing such assessments of his poetry by professional critics by way of a classical rhetorical *anticipatio*, Burns expressed his mixture of fear and disdain of scorching reviews in the "Preface" to his Kilmarnock volume of *Poems* (1786). He parodied them as the same kind of libelling and insulting personal invective with which Jeffrey would charge him:

'An impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel, Scotch rhymes together, looks upon himself as a Poet of no small consequence forsooth.'³⁷³

Animadversions on Some Poets and Poetasters of the Present Age [...] With a Contrast of Some of the Former (1788), was a low-quality Augustan satire in which James Maxwell (of Paisley) lambasted Robert Burns and his fellow-poet John Lapraik for their backward and uncultivated provincial verse in Scots, contrasting them against the great Augustans. His arguments against Burns were Tory and Neoclassical standard: humble origin, provincial horizon, simple mind, lack of tuition, ignorance or disrespect of ethic as well as aesthetic laws "of old discovered", corruption both of morals and taste challenging the divinely decreed order of "things as they are":

Of all British poets that yet have appear'd,
None e'er at things sacred so daringly sneer'd,
As he in the west, who but lately is sprung,
From behind the plough-tails, and from raking of dung.
[...]
For none have like him, been by Satan inspir'd,

372 *Edinburgh Review*, 13 (January 1809), 254.

373 Burns, *Poems*, chiefly in the *Scottish Dialect*, Preface, Kilmarnock 1786, IV.

Which makes his rank nonsense by fools so admir'd.
 [...]

His jargon gives rakes and vile harlots delight,
 But all sober people abhor the vile sight.
 He makes of the scripture a ribaldry joke;
 By him are the laws of both God and man broke.³⁷⁴

Lady Anne Hamilton had a somewhat more lenient attitude towards Burns's rusticity and alcoholism. She saw him as a victim of Scotland and the Whig Earl of Moira, who was also the literary patron of Thomas Moore. In England, the Tory Hamilton argued, Burns would have found more tradition-minded and truly aristocratic patrons and not been left to "earn his scanty bread by gauging beer!"³⁷⁵ In her comments on Wordsworth's primitivism, however, Hamilton was relentlessly ironic when, in a footnote, she compared the literary values of Wordsworth and Pope:

In his [Wordsworth's] unsophisticated pages we discover no gaudy trappings, no blazing metaphors, no affected attempts at poetical diction. Every thing is pure from the hand of untutored nature; nor do we discover a single thought or phrase that might not have been uttered by a promising child of six years old. What an improvement is this on the laboured conceits of Pope!³⁷⁶

In *The Simpliciad* (1808), Richard Mant lists Burns among a number of erring poets, either blunt or flowery instead of naturally graceful in the sense of Horace's "simplex munditiis". Both extremes constitute deviations from the ideal of natural, virginal, graceful simplicity. Whereas, in one extreme, Virgil's translator William Sotheby makes Virgil smile by artistically embellishing and degrading his natural lines, Burns, in the other, appears as a familiar boor. Mant's assessment stands in the context of a satirical attack on Thomas Moore's alleged offences against the rule of decorum:

Spirit and ease of each the brave intent,
 Burns is familiar, Cowper negligent;
 While Virgil smiles to see himself so fine
 In graceful Sotheby's embellished line,
 [...]

O! if the poet with immodest stain
 The heav'nly gift of poesy profane,
 In fair array the wanton harlot deck,

374 Maxwell, *Animadversions, On the Ayrshire Ploughman Poet, or Poetaster*, R.B., Paisley 1788, in: Burns. *The Critical Heritage*, 93.

375 [Hamilton], *The Epics of the Ton*, 1807, 277.

376 *Ibid.* 9 – 10.

And wake the blush on Virtue's maiden cheek;
Spare not [...] ³⁷⁷

Burns corresponded with the northern Irish Preromantic poet Samuel Thomson, the "Bard of Carngranny", who assembled a circle of rustic bards in his cottage, Crambo Cave, published three volumes of Scots and English verse in the style of Burns, and thus became the founder of a tradition of Ulster-Scots poetry. ³⁷⁸ There existed a great number of such local rustic poetic circles on the periphery of the British Isles that established critics knew of, but met with total neglect as *quantité négligeable*. This was another Neoclassical strategy in the old-school campaign against Romanticism and Radicalism.

One standard argument advanced against Blake's, Burns's, or Wordsworth's anti-Augustan primitivism and heterogeneity of diction had already been made use of in Gifford's satires on the Della Crusicans. It was undeniable that such primitivism was not original but constructed, a strained return to a state of nature quite unknown to civilized poets, just as claims of untaught genius and ploughman poetry were mere modern constructs. Della Cruscan primitivism was often so obviously fabricated that Romantics like Hazlitt and Hunt themselves found fault with it, let alone Gifford. Just as Samuel Johnson argued that an Augustan Briton relapsed into savagery was worse than a real savage, Gifford would prefer real genuine simplicity of speech to any Romantic reconversion of polished Augustan diction into a mere semblance and affectation of simplicity by motley literary fools writing in a foolishly motley style. The reproach of studied artificial laboriousness is turned against the Romantics themselves:

Oh for the gold old times! WHEN all was new,
And every hour brought prodigies to view,
Our sires in unaffected language told,
Of streams of amber, and of rocks of gold:
Full of their theme, they spurn'd all idle art,
And the plain tale was trusted to the heart.
Now all is changed! [...]
Whate'er we paint – a grot, a flower, a bird,
Heavens, how we sweat! laboriously absurd!
Words of gigantic bulk, and uncouth sound,
In rattling triads the long sentence bound;
While points with points, with periods periods jar,
And the whole work seems one continued war! ³⁷⁹

377 [Mant], *The Simpliciad*, London 1808, lines 42 – 52. Satirical dialogue between P and F in the manner of Persius and Gifford.

378 Jennifer Orr (ed.), *The Correspondence of Samuel Johnson (1766 – 1816)*, Introduction, Dublin 2012.

379 Gifford, *The Baviad*, 1810, lines 215 – 228, in: *British Satire 1785 – 1840*, IV. 22 – 23.

In *Melincourt* (1817), Peacock would echo Gifford's argument and satirize Mr Pamperstamp-Wordsworth as "another variety of the same genus [as Mr Feathernest-Southey], chiefly remarkable for an affected infantine lisp in his speech".³⁸⁰ Peacock had, after all, begun his career as a satirical novelist by deriding the artificiality of primitivism and its preference for the margins of the British Isles, in his grotesque representation of Welsh culture and Welsh love of doltish song and ballads in *Headlong Hall* (1816). In *The Misfortunes of Elphin* (1829), he exposed the old bards' imposition on the ignorant multitude, and, in "The Four Ages of Poetry" (1820), he argued that his new primitivist and bardic "iron age of poetry" dominated by the Lake Poets, by Scott, and by Byron reconstructed the old bardic "iron age" by nostalgically reviving the ashes of the past:

While the historian and the philosopher are advancing in, and accelerating, the progress of knowledge, the poet is wallowing in the rubbish of departed ignorance, and raking up the ashes of dead savages to find gewgaws and rattles for the grown babies of the age. [...]

These disjointed relics of tradition and fragments of second-hand observation [...] compose a modern-antique compound of frippery and barbarism, in which the puling sentimentality of the present time is grafted on the misrepresented ruggedness of the past into a heterogeneous congeries [...]³⁸¹

James Mill's *Westminster Review*, founded four years later, took the same stance against literature in general and Romantic literature in particular. In the periodical's first number, Peregrine Bingham disqualified poets like Thomas Moore as carrying us "back to days of yore when the mind of man was still cradled in infantine weakness", especially to "the blessed days of chivalry, with all their darkness and *donjons*, violence and insecurity".³⁸² And Bingham regretted such a fault in an author who was not "a court sycophant" and who "dared to attack the vices and follies of men in power" in "masterpieces of ridicule and invective" such as *The Twopenny Post-Bag* and *The Fudge Family Paris*.³⁸³ Romantic and Gothic literature, with their nostalgic backward orientation, appeared as the polar opposite of the Radical Utilitarian ideal of the New Chestomathic Man of the New Age. Seeing Moore as a representative of the new school, Bingham did not give much thought to the fact that, as in Byron's case, Moore's two works were non-primitivist verse satires and quite different from his *Irish Melodies* and *Lalla Rookh* (1817).

380 Peacock, *Melincourt*, chapter 28, in *Novels*, 260. Pamperstamp alludes to Wordsworth's office of distributor of stamps for Westmoreland (from 1813).

381 Peacock, *The Four Ages of Poetry*, in: *Works*, VIII, 20.

382 [Bingham] in: *Westminster Review*, 1 (1824), 19. Also see Nesbitt, *Benthamite Reviewing*, 96–129.

383 Bingham, *ibid.* 18.

British Romantics adhered to the belief in a possible retrieval of true original diction and true savage rhythms, as well as spontaneity of overflow of powerful feelings, although they must have known better and could not discard their Enlightenment heritage and their education in the Classical Tradition. After all, their primitive diction was a modern construction, which adapted or forged originals for the modern reader, as in the cases of Thomas Percy or Thomas Chatterton, or filtered peasant dialect for cultivated sensibility, as in the case of Wordsworth; and even Burns's original Scots poems were mostly read in English adaptations.³⁸⁴ It was Friedrich Schlegel, ahead of his time in his theory of Romanticism proposed in his early years in Jena and Berlin, who pointed out the irretrievability of truly primitive poetry. Schlegel admitted that the Romantic return to myth could not make European civilization forget the Enlightenment as if it had not happened, and that modern mythopoetic poetry had to bridge a gulf between artifice on the one hand and savagery and childishness on the other. Thus, he distinguished between affectation (which he rejected) and artifice of natural speech (which he advocated), defining both the old and the new Romantic naïve as the progeny of instinct and intention:

Ist es bloß Instinkt, so ist's kindlich; kindisch oder albern; ist's bloß Absicht, so entsteht Affektation. Das schöne, poetische, idealische Naive muß zugleich Absicht und Instinkt sein. [...] Absicht erfordert nicht gerade einen tiefen Calcul oder Plan. Auch das Homerische Naive ist nicht bloß Instinkt: es ist wenigstens soviel Absicht darin wie in der Armut lieblicher Kinder oder unschuldiger Mädchen. Wenn er auch keine Absicht hatte, so hat doch seine Poesie und die eigentliche Verfasserin derselben, die Natur, Absicht.³⁸⁵

Although he recommended a return from affectation and reason to nature and myth, Schlegel's primitivism was both moderate and conscious of its own constructive nature. Furthermore, his concept of a distancing and self-parodic Socratic "Romantic irony" allowed him to let contrary elements – the real and the ideal, illusion and reality, expectation and result, appearance and reality – co-exist, at least for a limited span of time, permitting enjoyment of carnivalistic chaos. It enabled him to alternately create and to destroy the illusion he had created, or the theory he had advanced through meta-narration, as an *alter deus* in command of his work. The Shakespeare translator Ludwig Tieck, familiar with dramatic disillusion in Elizabethan and Jacobean plays as well as with the self-parodically meta-narrative anti-novels of Cervantes, Swift, Sterne, and Diderot gave an instance of that irony in *Der gestiefelte Kater* (1797), where a

384 Maximillian E. Novak, Primitivism, in: *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, IV. 464.

385 Friedrich Schlegel, Rede über die Mythologie, in: *Gespräch über die Poesie*, in: *Werke in zwei Bänden*, ed. Wolfgang Hecht, Bibliothek deutscher Klassiker, Berlin 1980, II. 164.

boisterous audience interrupts the magic fairy play for children throughout the performance and comments on the propriety of presenting primitivist fairy tales to adult spectators in a post-Enlightenment age. Ironic distance alone can tolerate such intersection of the contraries of illusion and its disillusion. Thus, in the wake of Tieck, Schlegel's primitivism was much more clearly differentiated than Wordsworth's, though both were developed in the same years 1798 – 1800, and would not have opened such an easily vulnerable flank to the polemics of a Gifford or Peacock:

Denn das ist der Anfang aller Poesie, den Gang und die Gesetze der vernünftig denkenden Vernunft aufzuheben und uns wieder in die schöne Verwirrung der Fantasie, in das ursprüngliche Chaos der menschlichen Natur zu versetzen, für das ich kein schöneres Symbol bis jetzt kenne als das bunte Gewimmel der alten Götter³⁸⁶

The cult of noble childhood and noble savagery was a form of Preromantic and Romantic primitivism closely related to simple diction and a return to myth, for, in Shelley's words, "the savage is to ages what the child is to years".³⁸⁷ Peacock satirized the cult of the noble savage in his Menippean portrait of Lord Monboddoo as Sir Oran Haut-ton, in *Melincourt* (1817), Forester-Shelley's favourite companion, allegedly a benevolent and philosophical monster without the drawback of artificial speech, "the natural and original man – a genuine facsimile of the philosophical Adam".³⁸⁸ The oxymoron "genuine facsimile" is a negative hallmark of the Chattertonian forgery. In reality Peacock's Sir Oran is simply too stupid to understand his manipulation by his supposed friends, the African boy and the English slave trader, and easily corruptible by Forester-Shelley, who cannot forget his aristocratic privileges and fits him into *ancien régime* society by knighting him instead of using him as a paragon for a new egalitarian society. In Peacock's Augustan view, there exist no noble savages. A discredited model for Augustans corrupted by enlightenment and civilization, Sir Oran is a parody of Blake's, Wordsworth's, and Shelley's children of nature, frequently derided models for adults corrupted by reason. The Neoclassical ideal was adult maturity and finished polish, but not all Neoclassicists conformed to that ideal, which made them and their Augustan ideology vulnerable to satirists. William Pitt, Tory Prime Minister at the age of twenty-four (December 1783) and an unoriginal speaker, could easily be attacked on the grounds that he was still a mere schoolboy, doing his rhetorical exercises in parliament. This was made all the more awkward as he stood for the maintenance of the Classical Tradition against the "new schools". In *Criticisms on the Rolliad* (1785), a satirically fictional review of a mock epic on Pitt and his supporter John Rolle, Pitt was

386 Friedrich Schlegel, [Athenaeums]Fragmente, 1798, Nr 51, I. 195 – 196.

387 P.B. Shelley, A Defence of Poety, MS 1821, in: Complete Works, VII. 110.

388 Peacock, *Melincourt*, chapter 6, in *Novels*, 129.

ridiculed as a schoolboy, his parliamentary speeches as schoolboy exercises under the supervision of his former Cambridge tutor and present secretary George Pretyman Tomline. The anonymous authors, Joseph Richardson, journalist and later proprietor of the Whig *Morning Post*, and George Ellis, then a Whig (before becoming a Tory) satirist, pinpointed Pitt's rhetorical immaturity in contradistinction to the Romantic image of the inspired child-poet: "O miserande puer!"³⁸⁹ "A kingdom trusted to a school-boy's care" and a child delivering memorized heroic speeches in parliament are ironically praised as wonders of the world,

In word a giant, though a dwarf in deed,
Be led by others while he seems to lead.³⁹⁰

In *Blackwood's* satirical invectives on the Cockney School, Keats was represented as a mere child, a Cockney "bantling" lispng sediton, as typical of vulgar, illegitimate, immature, uneducated working class boys from the suburbs of big cities. Lockhart and Wilson saw Keats as a reincarnation of the Jacobites of the 1790, and identified the "Cockney School of Poetry" with a "Cockney School of Politics". In their view, children were savages inclined to chaos and sediton, revolutions were regressions into childhood and savagery, and immature verse, such as the anti-feudal introductory lines to the third book of *Endymion* (1818), quoted in full, indicated Keats's lack of reason, rule, polish, discipline, respect, and obedience to church and state as well as to the literary authority of Boileau:

We had almost forgot to mention, that Keats belongs to the Cockney School of Politics, as well as the Cockney School of Poetry. [...] Hear how their bantling has already learned to lisp sediton.³⁹¹

Regression into adolescence or even childhood was also a standard argument against the Gothic novel and other Gothic genres regarded as a throwback to an earlier stage of the literary tradition and infantile resistance to the grand progress of the novel towards the maturity of realism. Beckford, Lewis, Percy Shelley, and Coleridge were all derided as immature boys, even as rosy babies that would not grow up, writing for other immature children. They wallowed in such pre-rational vices as disorder, cruelty, moral chaos, indecent fantasies, superstitions, obscurity, and simplicity of diction.³⁹²

From the Neoplatonic viewpoint of Positive Romanticism, childishness ap-

389 [Richardson – Ellis et al], *Criticisms on the Rolliad*, 1785, IV, in: *British Satire 1785 – 1840*, II. 3 – 5.

390 *Ibid.* V, ed. cit. II. 6 – 7.

391 "Z" [Lockhart – Wilson], *On the Cockney School of Poetry*, IV, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 3 (August 1818), 524.

392 Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, London and New York NY, 1995, 1997, 33.

peared in a much more favourable, even in a divine light. Keats's Romantic defenders such as Leigh Hunt and John Hamilton Reynolds accentuated the poet's youth as a positive argument for his unsophisticated originality, marking him as "a young man of genius".³⁹³ Adults recalling and reliving their childhood, close to the world beyond from which they came, dance once again like naked noble savages, once again see the world unspoiled by civilization, once again ignore feudal distinctions, and even weep over dead and suffering animals: mighty prophets and seers blessed.³⁹⁴ Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789–94) and Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" (MS 1804, 1807) combine primitivism with the anamnesis and dialectics of Neoplatonism, and are potentially destructive of the feudal system. The child's – as well as the man and woman of feeling's – sensitive hearts see all creatures on a level, without the social distinctions made by reason and tradition. Such nostalgic and regressive discarding of Augustan reason by adult men and women grown up in an adult Augustan civilization exposed the Romantics to continued ridicule, the more so as more sceptically minded Romantics like Friedrich Schlegel as well as Romantic Disillusionists like Byron and De Quincey doubted that possibility. In *The Baviad* (1791), Gifford mocked such irrationality in the Della Cruscan: Jerningham weeping like a little boy at unfortunate animals, Hannah Cowley frisking to childish chimes like a little girl, and Mrs Piozzi proudly parading her schoolroom verse like another little girl. The scornful deictic pointing out of such ludicrous primitivists as Blake, piper and bard, underscores the satirist's savage indignation at such regressions into dotage and second childhood:

Yet, when I view the follies that engage,
 The full-grown children of this piping age;
 See snivelling Jerningham, at fifty, weep
 O'er love-lorn oxen and deserted sheep;
 See Cowley frisk it to one ding-dong chime,
 And weekly cuckold her poor spouse in rhyme;
 See Thrale's grey widow with a satchel roam,
 And bring, in pomp, her labour'd nothings home.³⁹⁵

In the view of Richard Mant's anti-Romantic satire *The Simpliciad* (1808), Gifford was a champion of the "old and classical School of Poetry",³⁹⁶ who defended

393 Leigh Hunt's Examiner essay on Young Poets, 466 (1 December 1816), 761.

394 Wordsworth, Intimations Ode, 1807, line 115.

395 Gifford, *The Baviad*, 1810, lines 19–26, in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, IV. 10.

396 [Mant], *The Simpliciad*, Preface, London 1808, III.

the Classical Tradition from degenerating back into the “accents of the nursery” and the whining of a “stammering, staggering, puling, puny child”:³⁹⁷

Gifford, the dread of every snivelling fool,
That loves and rhimes by Della Cruscan rule.³⁹⁸

Mant’s suggestion is that Wordsworth’s “numbers shilly-shally” are not due to a return to original nature, but to sheer prosodic incompetence. In default of a thorough knowledge of classical metres and poetical genius, the new school cannot rhyme like Dryden and Gray and hence resorts to Ambrose Philips and Thomas Percy. Mant’s own verse underscores that alleged ignorance by parodically mangling the pronunciation of classical metres:

But ye for metre rummage Percy’s Reliques;
In sapphics limp, or amble in dactyls;
Trip it in Ambrose Philips’ trochaics;
In dithyrambics vault; or hobble in prosaics.³⁹⁹

In the manner of Gifford’s satires, the “authorities” or annotated quotations of passages alluded to are, in the footnotes which form part of the satire, chosen out of context and arranged as a pastiche so as to parody themselves in silliness of verse, diction, logic, and sentiment. Reviews in conservative periodicals such as the *Augustan Review* used the same technique when they deprecated Wordsworth’s “trifles” as well as “childish and juvenile pieces”⁴⁰⁰ or Coleridge’s “unintelligible sublimities” as well as “errors and absurdities”.⁴⁰¹

The reproach of childish triviality in default of Augustan competence recurred in William Maginn’s attack against “The Cockney School of Poetry” in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* (1821), which ranked the Cockney School as a descendent from the Della Cruscan School and derided its claim to originality and hostility to rational criticism as infantile ignorance of the Classical Tradition:

Here we must again advert to the *Della Crusca*. One of the characteristics of those childish persons was, the restless interest which they summoned the public to take in every thing belonging to their own triviality. If Mrs Robinson’s dog had a bad night’s repose, it was duly announced to the world [...] The New School are here the humble imitators of those original arbiters of human fame.⁴⁰²

397 Ibid. 7–8, lines 12 and 25.

398 Ibid. 10, lines 64–65.

399 Ibid. 40, lines 277–280.

400 *Augustan Review*, 1 (1815), 343–356.

401 Ibid. 3 (1816), 14–24.

402 [Maginn] in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 10 (December 1821), 696–697.

The imputation of a regression from adulthood into childishness, the dotage of old age, was a prompt and effective argument with Enlightenment rationalists. It mirrored their cyclic Polybian concept of history: first the gradual rise of civilization from savage dark ignorance to the first Augustan peak of the light of reason at the time of Horace and Virgil, then a gradual decline back into the childhood and savagery of civilization, then, again, a second gradual rise to the second Augustan peak at the time of Dryden and Pope, with a second decline back into childhood and savagery imminent. Such a critique of Romantic primitivism as the final stage of the cycle along with its desertion of the Classical Tradition and the Augustans could be milder, as in Francis Jeffrey's long 1814 *Edinburgh Review* article on Byron's *Turkish Tales*, but, for all praise of Byron, there remained the harsh rejection of a fascinated return to "the most revolting dregs of utter wretchedness and depravity".⁴⁰³ Peacock availed himself of that classical mythical concept in his satirical essay "The Four Ages of Poetry" (1820), only changing the names of the ages with special regard to literary value. The rise of poetry from the age of iron via the age of gold to the age silver (Horace, Virgil, and the first Augustan peak) repeated itself after degeneration into a second childhood in the age of brass, reaching another age of silver (Dryden, Pope and the second Augustan peak) followed by another decline into another age of brass (Wordsworth, Coleridge and contemporary primitivism repeating decadent late antiquity). The Lake School – in Francis Jeffrey's dysphemistic sense – thus appeared as a symptom of old-age dotage, a decaying poetology fondly remembering and regressing into its infancy. Hence Peacock's mock quotation of the poetic creed of "that egregious confraternity of rhymesters, known by the name of the Lake Poets":⁴⁰⁴

"Poetical genius is the finest of all things, and we feel that we have more of it than any one ever had. The way to bring it to perfection is to cultivate poetical impressions exclusively. Poetical impressions can be received only among natural scenes: for all that is artificial is anti-poetical. Society is artificial, therefore we will live out of society. The mountains are natural, therefore we will live in the mountains. There we shall be shining models of purity and virtue, passing the whole day in the innocent and amiable occupation of going up and down hill, receiving poetical impressions, and communicating them in immortal verse to admiring generations."⁴⁰⁵

The young erudite Walter Scott's love of Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) and craze for local popular and literary ballads, as manifested in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–3), thus appears as a ridiculously regressive search for "unsophisticated nature" and "glimpses of the

403 [Jeffrey] in: *Edinburgh Review*, 23 (1814), 198–229.

404 Peacock, *The Four Ages of Poetry*, 1820, in: *Works*, VIII. 18.

405 *Ibid.* VIII. 17–18.

truth of things”.⁴⁰⁶ Peacock’s ensuing chapter on “The Philosophy of Ballads” is an ironic Menippean grotesque.⁴⁰⁷ Self-fashioned simple farmer-poets or handicraft-poets who, like children, write verse in simple standard English or non-standard native dialects or sociolects, in simple volkslied or madrigal stanzas, suggested a no less ridiculous return to original nature and noble savagery. This was a Romantic counter-programme to Augustan diction and the progressivist Classical Tradition. Allan Ramsay, Robert Fergusson, John Lapraik, and Robert Burns in their native Scots, Robert Anderson in his Cumberland dialect, or the “Cockney poets” accused of smuggling London or Estuary peculiarities of speech into their poetry and prose, were favourite targets of parody as the most frequent form of Menippean satire. Such parodies combined Neoclassical ridicule of non-Augustan diction with ridicule of unenlightened simplicity of mind, truisms, as in Samuel Johnson’s parody of a popular ballad, which aroused Wordsworth’s anger when he defended his simplicity of diction:

I put my hat upon my head,
And walked into the Strand,
And there I met another man
Whose hat was in his hand.⁴⁰⁸

In Johnson’s wake, Lockhart and Moir (impersonating Colonel Odoherly) parodied Walter Scott’s ballad “The Eve of St John” (1806) in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* (1819), along with a parody of Coleridge’s “Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner” from *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). The speaker of the Scott parody, “The Eve of St Jerry”, proudly introduces his childish immature ballad with its mock-heroic supernatural action featuring a barbarous barber and a butchered butcher as a work of youthful genius, one that the classical poets of the past would have been incapable of:

The reader will learn with astonishment that I composed the two following ballads in the fourteenth year of my age, i. e. A.D. 1780. I doubt if either Milton or Pope rivalled this precocity of genius. M[Morgan] O[Doherty]

DICK GOSSIP the barber arose with the cock,
And pull’d his breeches on;
Down the staircase of wood, as fast as he could,
The valiant shaver ran.⁴⁰⁹

406 Peacock, Melincourt, chapter 8 in: Novels, 146.

407 Ibid. chapter 9, 148–54.

408 Wordsworth’s Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, 1800, ed. H. Littledale, Oxford 1911, 1959, 249.

409 [Lockhart – Moir], *The Eve of St Jerry*, in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 4 (February 1819), 569. This is the first of forty-one stanzas.

The ensuing Coleridge parody, “The Rime of the Ancient Waggonere”, has no scenes of ghosts and madness, but replaces Coleridge’s heroic characters and mysterious events with vulgar types and slapstick action. A drunk and rascally drayman, who has slaughtered a goose and a pursuing “bum bailiff” before escaping from jail, tells his story to a cowardly wedding guest, a tailor, who then runs away horrified and breaks his neck in the bridegroom’s house. The antiquated fifteenth-century English is as fabricated as young Chatterton’s. The complex Romantic message of Coleridge’s mystery poem is reduced to infantile triteness, in order to deny any philosophic meaning that Coleridge was so proud to claim:

Such is the fate of foolish men,
The danger all may see,
Of those, who, list to waggoneres,
And keepe bade companye.⁴¹⁰

In both parodies, the critique of childishness and incompetence of rhyming is supplemented by a critique of primitive barbarism in drink and bloodshed, as in Peacock’s parody of old and new bardic war songs. The alleged noble savages of the Romantics are discredited. In Peacock’s parody, the heroes of the merry songs of the bards of the old Welsh King Melvas (and the new Scottish bard Robert Burns) reveal themselves as barbarous carousers, looters, and murderers, brutes from the childhood of civilization:

The Mountain sheep are sweeter,
But the valley sheep are fatter;
We therefore deemed it meeter
To carry off the latter.
We made an expedition;
We met a host, and quelled it;
We forced a strong position,
And killed the men who held it.⁴¹¹

If written in regional dialect rather than pre-modern or modern standard English, such parodies of poetical primitivism or provincial backwardness were even more effective in the Neoclassical war against Romantic poetics and politics. A typical example is to be found in a short satirical drama based on Lord Byron’s liberal and Romantic moods, which he often repented when he assumed Neoclassical and Tory positions: *The Illiberal! Verse and Prose from the North! Dedicated to My Lord Byron in the South!* (1822). The title of that anonymous

410 [Lockhart – Moir], The Rime of the Ancient Waggonere, in: Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine, 4 (February 1819), 574.

411 Peacock, The Misfortunes of Elphin, The War Song of Dinas Vawr, 1829, chapter 11, in: Novels, 603. This is the first of five stanzas.

Tory diatribe, of which neither Canning nor Gifford can have been the author, was itself a parody of *The Liberal. Verse and Prose from the South* (1822 – 1824), the short-lived magazine planned by Percy Shelley and edited by Byron and Leigh Hunt in Pisa. The satire's championship of the Classical Tradition is exposed in its "Invocation", an "imitation" of Virgil's *Georgics*, part I, quoting the Latin original in the notes, in the manner of Gifford. In Pisa, where the scene is set, Lord Byron speaks his "Lines on the Past", a repentant palinode of his life, including his scandalous libertinism and co-editorship of the *Liberal*. Byron's repentance, however, is repeatedly interrupted by poetasters who submit their childish primitivist nonsense for publication in the *Liberal*. Byron:

'How have I spent the moments of my life!
I have deserted Home, Friends, Child, and Wife,
(Oh! Melancholy retrospective view,
They've felt some pain, and I have felt some too:
Besides, I fear, I've been some people's ruin,
By writing that immoral work, *Don Juan!*
I do repent [...]'⁴¹²

The scandalous Lord's fits of repentance for his desertions to Romanticism and Whiggism, short and unstable as they were known to be, are further threatened by the Cockney poets Mr. H. and Little Aitch, who try to have their poems, which are, in fact, the satire's parodies of dialectal and childish rhyming combined with Whig political sympathies, printed. Mr. H., named after his aitch-dropping Cockney dialect, reads what he calls a sonnet, a parody of rustic poetry which bears witness to the poetaster's low origin, low interests, low company, low standard of education, and low level of rhetorical performance:

'From Hampstead I have look'd upon St. Paul,
When Sol shone bright,
O! Pleasing sight,
To see the glittering of the *Crass and Ball*.
And though about me everything was mum,
Around St. Paul there was a busy hum.
Porters and Jarvies swearing, people squalling;
Carts, Hacks, and Stages, rattling o'er the stones;
And when the way is stopp'd, you'll hear them balling
"If you don't move your cart, I'll break your bones."
"I shan't," he cries: ... "O, won't you, Mr. Prime,
Why then I'll move it for you, so here goes."

412 Anonymus, *The Illiberal!*, London 1822, 5. Written shortly after P.B. Shelley's death, which is also a target for the satire.

They 'gin to quarrel, and it ends in blows: ...
And thus the folk in London *spent their time*.⁴¹³

Little Aitch's subsequently declaimed "Elegy on the Death of Lord Castlereagh", though not written in dialect, combines parody on rusticity of style with parody of tasteless revolutionary exaltation at the recent death of a Tory prime minister.⁴¹⁴

Aristocratic London with its salons and clubs, the venues of cultivated society and correct conversation, was vastly different from the bulk of London with its filth, stink, and poor alleyways. Arlington Street and St James's were, of course, small enclaves compared with Cripplegate and Grub Street, the home of the uncultivated mob and hordes of would-be poets to Tory eyes, especially at a time when, with the Industrial Revolution, the population of London exploded with immigration from the country to the city. The Romantic flâneurs De Quincey and Charles Lamb, driven by their addiction to opium and alcohol respectively, frequented both sides of London. Gifford's dictum that "THE TOWN HAS ASSES EARS", refers to London as the place of the stupid and vulgar *οχλος*, with or without London's Cockney sociolect, a mere extension of the backward country. Long before Lockhart's and Wilson's *Blackwood's* attacks on the "Cockney poets" (1817), Gifford had stigmatized Thomas Holcroft's and Robert Merry's London birth as responsible for what he criticized as their popular nonsense, meanness, and triteness in drama and verse, infected by the so-called London "metromania" and the "pernicious pest" of writing verse for the masses. In Gifford's lists of modern Popean "dunces", London-bred primitiveness is worse than country-bred stupidity. In Gifford's satires against Romantic and Radical poets, quantity triumphs over quality, and the "applause of fashion" is given to hordes of mass-producing dramatist such as Thomas Morton and Frederick Reynolds:

Is it not giv'n to Este's unmeaning dash,
To Topham's fustian, Reynolds' flippant trash,
To Morton's catch-word, Greathead's idiot line,
And Holcroft's Shug-lane cant, and Merry's Moorfields whine?⁴¹⁵

George Canning's earlier parodies of didactic couplets in praise of both noble savagery and simple romantic songs and ballads in the poetry column of the *Anti-Jacobin* (1797–1798) showed similar combinations of aesthetic with political satire. The series entitled "The Progress of Man", purporting to show the superior virtue and happiness of the noble rural savage, implicitly admits the

413 Ibid. 7.

414 Ibid. 9–10.

415 Gifford, *The Baviad*, 1810, lines 133–136, in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, IV. 17–18.

noble savage's innate ignoble savagery and finds its culmination in an encomium on the mob's atrocities in the French Revolution. The Jacobin speaker betrays himself both by his triteness of argument and language as well as by the high treason of his militant opposition to the divinely decreed feudal order:

Lo! the rude savage, free from civil strife,
Keeps the smooth tenour of his guiltless life;
Restrain'd by none, save Nature's lenient laws,
Quaffs the clear stream, and feeds on hips and haws.

[...]

Then restless roams – and loaths his wonted food;
Shuns the salubrious stream, and thirsts for blood.

[...]

Vast seas of blood the ravaged field shall stain,
And millions perish – that a *King* may reign!⁴¹⁶

Another simple-minded Jacobin speaker, invented by Robert Nares, has composed a popular song in the style of Burns in praise of rebellion and the sovereignty of the ordinary people, but ignorant of the classical rules of poetry and prosody. Consequently, he is prepared to commit any crime for his new-fashioned ideals of freedom and universal suffrage:

I am a hearty Jacobin
Who own no God, and dread no sin,
Ready to dash through thick and thin,
For freedom:

[...]

Whatever is in France, is right;
Terror and blood are my delight;
Parties with us do not excite
Enough rage.

Our boasted Laws I hate and curse,
Bad from the first, by age grown worse,
I pant and sigh for univers-
al suffrage.⁴¹⁷

In a note, as usual in Augustan satires, the editor ironically comments on his poet's ignorance of the Classical Tradition:

416 [Canning] in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 16 (26 February 1798), lines 1–105, in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, I. 128–129.

417 [Nares] in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 22 (9 April 1798), ed. cit. I. 156–57.

This division of the word, is in the true spirit of the English as well as the ancient Sapphic.⁴¹⁸

Unlike Canning and Frere, who wrote the bulk of the *Anti-Jacobin's* satirical poetry, Gifford's contributions were mostly controversialist prose. But he also contributed some mordant satirical poems. Gifford's parody of the young Robert Southey's Romantic and Radical poem "The Soldier's Wife" deserves mentioning, because it ridicules Southey's compassion with the exploited and suffering rural poor. The parody aimed at exposing Southey's ignorance of classical scansion as in his attempts at English dactyls. The primitivist, revolutionary poet appears as a boring and weak-witted blockhead:

WEARISOME Sonneteer, feeble and querulous,
Painfully dragging out thy demo-cratic lays -
Moon-stricken Sonneteer, "ah! for thy heavy chance!"
Sorely thy Dactyls lag on uneven feet:
Slow is the syllable which thou would'st urge to speed,
Lame and o'erburthen'd and "screaming its wretchedness!"⁴¹⁹

The young Southey's alleged ignorance of the Classical Tradition is also ridiculed in Canning's and Frere's parody of Romantic and Radical simple language poems, as in "The Friend of Humanity and the Knife Grinder", which poses as classical "Sapphics". The parody simultaneously discredited William Godwin's Radical belief in the original and natural goodness of man. A Godwinian revolutionary and self-styled "friend of humanity" meets a suffering knife grinder, put in the stocks by a cruel judge, asks him for the cause of his exploitation by his superiors and torture by feudal injustice, and tries to indoctrinate him with Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* (1791 – 1792), weeping theatrical "drops of compassion" with his "pitiful story". The primitive triteness of the simple scene counteracts any associations of heroic suffering and contributes to the poem's parodic character, as seen when the self-styled friend of humanity offers his help to a fellow creature in sore need:

"NEEDY Knife-Grinder! whither are you going?
Rough is the road, your wheel is out of order -
Bleak blows the blast; - your hat has got a hole in't,
So have your breeches!"⁴²⁰

418 Ibid. I. 157.

419 [Gifford], Imitation: Dactyls, in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 6 (8 December 1797), ed. cit. I. 53. For a commentary see *British Satire 1785 – 1840*, IV. 66.

420 [Canning – Frere], *The Friend of Humanity and the Knife-Grinder*, in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 2 (27 November 1797), ed. cit. I. 21.

But, when the simple knife grinder shows no interest in revolutionary doctrine and asks for a coin to buy a pot of beer, the friend of humanity's fake compassion gives way to grosser inhumanity than that of squires and judges:

"I give thee sixpence! I will see thee damned first –
Wretch! Whom no sense of wrongs can rouse to vengeance –
Sordid, unfeeling, reprobate, degraded,
Spiritless outcast!"

[Kicks the Knife-grinder, overturns his wheel, and exit in a transport of Republican enthusiasm and universal philanthropy.]⁴²¹

"Friend of the people" ("ami du peuple") was an epithet that Radicals were proud of, a qualification that Hazlitt had carved upon his gravestone in St Anne's Church, Soho. But, in the minds of staunch Tories, it betrayed an identity with French revolutionary thought and sympathy with the rabble that stormed the Bastille and murdered the bishops and aristocracy. After the failure of their millenary dreams followed by that of their smaller-scale pantisocratic dreams of universal equality, Wordsworth and Coleridge tried to save democracy in the aesthetic programme of their *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Wordsworth should give the charm of novelty and the supernatural to common things and show the heroism of simple characters, and Coleridge, by complementary contrast, should endow supernatural things with a semblance of psychological truth and show the simplicity of heroic characters. Both poets decided to embody their plan in simple rustic diction.⁴²² Hazlitt recalled Coleridge's explanation of that regressively nostalgic programme and its medievalist associations from the year 1798, in his famous *Liberal* essay "My First Acquaintance with Poets" (1823):

He [Coleridge] said the *Lyrical Ballads* were an experiment about to be tried by him and Wordsworth, to see how far the public taste would endure poetry written in a more natural and simple style than had hitherto been attempted; totally discarding the artifices of poetical diction, and making use only of such words as had probably been common in the most ordinary language since the days of Henry II.⁴²³

Wordsworth's "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) explains the purpose of a primitivist return to simple rural scenes, characters, and diction as a return to true and genuine human nature and human passions, those not falsified by Augustan refinement. As usual, good parodies reveal a literary work's characteristics much better than the work itself, and both Wordsworth's poems and preface were easy targets for parody. The anonymous author of *The Nose-Drop*:

421 Ibid. I. 22.

422 Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*, Preface, 1800, passim, and Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 1817, in: *Collected Works*, VII. II. 6–7.

423 [Hazlitt], *My First Acquaintance with Poets*, in: *The Liberal*, 2 (1823), 23–46, in: *Complete Works*, XVII. 120.

A Physiological Ballad by the Late W.W. (1821)⁴²⁴ confesses himself to be an adherent of the Classical Tradition in his Latin epigraph from Horace, with an aversion to the difficulty of saying simple things, and in his imputation of ignorance of the classics to Wordsworth. The speaker of the preface-parody, by contrast, knows Aristotle and Horace from hearsay only. He believes that his own original and seminal weak-witted preface propounds a “system” and that Hazlitt is a greater “philosopher” than Aristotle with his Cockney School assumption that prose is poetry and that all men are poets. The parodist’s summarizing of the Lake School poets and the Cockney School poets under one “school” again shows the formation of the Romantic School from an inimical perspective:

For the object of poetry is truth, of which knowledge is the result. And therefore Aristotle, as I have been told, hath said that poetry is the most philosophic of all writing; and a still greater philosopher than Aristotle, Mr. Hazlitt, – by the bye, I reckon Mr. Hazlitt among the number of my pupils, for the Cockney school is nothing but an affiliation from mine – has demonstratively proved, in his Lectures on the English Poets, that there is nothing which is not poetry, and that poetry is every thing, that the child is a poet [...], that the city-apprentice is a poet [...]; the pedagogue who lifts a rod, and the dunce who smarts under its application; the cripple who leans on a crutch; the clown who whistles for want of thought; The Bedlamite who fancies himself a king, and the king who behaves like a Bedlamite.⁴²⁵

Wordsworth reveals himself and Coleridge as revolutionaries who have inverted the natural order of things, turning kings to beggars and beggars to kings, madness to sanity and sanity to madness. Wordsworth’s interest in mad mothers and idiot children is, again, presented as a symptom of his own mental derangement. Hence, in the subsequent Note by the Editor, Wordsworth’s alleged death is imagined as that of a solitary madman reciting his verses aloud in the hills of the Lake District. In search of the symbolism of simple things such as the reflection of starlight in water, Wordsworth is found drowned in a small pool, “in an inverted perpendicular position, his head stuck fast in the mud, and his feet erect and elevated, like a couple of water-lilies”,⁴²⁶ symbolizing his inversion of natural order and his equalization of men, animals, and plants during his life.

The poem-parody, based mostly on Wordsworth’s “The Thorn” (1798) and “The Leech-Gatherer” (1807), bears out the preface-parody’s programme (borrowed from Francis Jeffrey’s satirical formulations in his *Edinburgh Review*) of converting “Parnassus into a nursery” by avoiding “what is usually called *poetic diction*” and making “leech-gatherers, spades, plates, and porringers” his

424 First published in *The Academic* (January 1821), reprinted in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, II. 309–316.

425 *Ibid.* II. 310.

426 *Ibid.* II. 312.

“ordinary theme”.⁴²⁷ The plain speaker and solitary wanderer in the Lake District, always eager to read nature’s simplest symbols and to see a world in a grain of sand, meets a grey, squinting, and possibly mad old man with a brown drop on his nose. The feeling of awe and terror with which the trite sight inspires the speaker are comically reminiscent of Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner* and *Wedding Guest*. Unable to interpret the symbolism of the scene, the speaker asks the old man about his nose-drop – and is evidently taken for a madman himself. Forgetting his programmatic Romantic sensibility and universal sympathy, he beats the old man and is told that the nose-drop is a drop of snuff, which, when sneezed full into the speaker’s face, has the effect of an inspiration. In a “moment of time” and fit of joyful Wordsworthian epiphany, the speaker implicitly admits his idiocy and mystically comprehends what no reader can understand: the integral and purposeful nature of all creation. The Wordsworthian stanza and meter as a simple counter-design to the artistic Augustan heroic couplet or Pindaric ode form are exactly imitated:

OH! happy, happy, happy me!
The outward shews of earth and sky
Are fair – and very fair, but they
Have never made me half so gay
As did that brief reply.

At once it made the matter plain. –
My limbs they were alive with glee:
I danced and ran about in joy,
And chattered like my Idiot Boy,
As like as like could be.

Now thanks to heaven! that of its grace
Hath given me large gray eyes to see,
And, with them, sense to comprehend
All things, – their being, use, and end, –
That in this strange world be.⁴²⁸

James Hogg’s parodies of the Lake School and the Cockney School of poetry also target the disparity between high claims and humble things. Preromanticism and Radical medicine had declared humility of life and retirement from cities as essential to health of both body and soul, and included the poor classes in modern medical care hitherto reserved for the “middling and affluent classes”.⁴²⁹

427 Ibid. II. 309.

428 Ibid. stanzas 14 – 16, II. 316.

429 See the full title of the major work of nerve doctor Thomas Beddoes, *Hygeia, or, Essays Moral and Medical on the Causes Affecting the Personal State of Our Middling and Affluent Classes*, 3 vols. Bristol 1802.

It had also begun to take special humanitarian care of insane patients, hitherto treated with severity and corporal punishment.⁴³⁰ Making the poor and mad the centre of interest, as well as simple flowers and insects a starting point for symbolic reflections on all nature and the world beyond, without hierarchical distinctions, smacked of revolution. A creaking door, a ringing door bell, a dunghill, a cow, a donkey, a sheep bone, a bee, a tadpole, a tramp, a jumping tailor boy, a blind day labourer, an errand boy – all are connected in universal correspondences, so that each can excite “A vision of that distant future world To which the yearning soul so fondly clings”.⁴³¹ Wordsworth, the speaker of most of Hogg’s parodies, announces the humblest things with gravitas of a roll of distant thunder or a universal hush of affright, to bathetic effect: “It was a beetle”, “It was a tadpole”, “It was the parlour bell”. Due to imputed ignorance of the classics, Hogg’s Wordsworth practises seriously and solemnly what Horace had warned against, that mountains will labour and give birth to a laughter-rousing mouse, “Parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus”.⁴³² And his subsequent rambling explanations to his companions, who can only scratch their heads in vain attempts at comprehension in response, are confused nonsense in the style and narrative model of *The Excursion*, an absurd patchwork of quotations and commonplaces worked into sheer unintelligibility:

“Not from the naked heart alone of man
 Though framed to high distinction upon earth,
 As the sole spring and fountain-head of tears,
 His own peculiar utterance for distress
 Or gladness – it is not the vital part
 Of feeling to produce them, without aid
 From the pure soul [...]”⁴³³

Hogg’s jumping tailor boy Hugh Thwaites is imagined as an alter ego of Wordsworth. He compensates for a sedentary profession by excessive physical and mental activity, his thoughts and associations run riot, his “imaginative will” sees great things and eternal truths in the humblest circumstances, just as the narrator [Wordsworth] digresses so as to lose sight of his subject. Hogg turns *The Excursion* into *Tristram Shandy*, taking advantage of Wordsworth’s anti-classical themes and techniques that Francis Jeffrey of the *Edinburgh Review* found fault with, Wordsworth’s frog-like “bouncing to and fro”, “descriptions of

430 Faubert, *Rhyming Reason*, 75–115.

431 Hogg, *The Poetic Mirror*, 1816, ed. cit. 47–48. The quotation is from *The Stranger*, Hogg’s brilliant parody of Wordsworth’s *The Recluse*.

432 Horace, *Ars Poetica*, line 139.

433 Hogg, *The Poetic Mirror*, *The Stranger*, ed. cit. 53.

baby-houses”, “puerile ambition of singularity”, and “affected passion for simplicity and humble life.”⁴³⁴

Later, Hogg added a parody on Leigh Hunt, “Hamatory Verses to a Cow”, pinpointing his Cockney English and interest in low things as well as indecent and rebellious sexual fascination with washerwomen and milkmaids. Wordsworth and Hazlitt are polemically seen as representatives of the “new school”, soon to be called the Romantic School. In spite of his change of style, his conversion to Toryism, and his origin from and residence in the Lake District instead of London, Wordsworth is placed on a level with the notorious self-confessed Radical Hazlitt:

Delicious creature, with sweet gladsome *hair*,
And belly polished round like *welwet* fair!
Thy balmy *hudder* (pressed by maiden fingers
Not half so soft) where creamy beauty lingers.⁴³⁵

The anonymous author of the most accomplished of the numerous parodies of Coleridge’s “Christabel” that appeared after the Gothic mystery poem’s publication in 1816, the above-mentioned *Christabess* (1816), targeted the same Romantic preference by bringing it to the same social and moral discredit. The Romantic poets and essayists are constructed and excluded as a group fascinated with vulgar people and manners – Bess a common name for both washerwomen and prostitutes. When only a year previously *Blackwood’s* had campaigned against the Cockney School of poetry, Coleridge’s heroic narrator and aristocratic characters are replaced by sexually licentious, low-class Cockney rogues and sluts from a poor quarter of London. Coleridge’s serious theme of sexual taboos and dreams in the noble castles of the medieval nobility is therefore perverted into prurient cant and criminal activities in the modern underworld of the metropolis. Similarly, Coleridge’s noble animals such as dogs and owls are mostly replaced by donkeys and swine, referring to his much-ridiculed poem on a donkey and to the uneducated lower classes of the revolution, especially women, that Burke had chided the “swinish multitude”. The vulgar *Christabess’s* stealthy smuggling of the vulgar Adelaide into her sleeping and drunken father’s dirty tinker’s hut, parodying *Christabel’s* silent taking of Geraldine into her sleeping father’s castle, is told by a vulgar narrator who betrays both his own and his promiscuous heroine’s dirty mind:

They cross’d the ditch – and *Christabess*,
Who knew the way i’ the dark I guess,

434 Jeffrey, quoted *ibid.* 138.

435 Hogg, *A New Poetic Mirror, Hamatory Verses to a Cow*, lines 1–4, London 1829–1831, in: *Poetic Mirrors*, 114.

From the wicket took the pin,
 Which let a brace of maidens in:-
 This wicket had lately been broke by the hogs
 While clumsily scudding away from the dogs.⁴³⁶

As this and other late parodies of Wordsworth and Coleridge show, poetical interest in animals, simple people, and humble speech was and remained suspect to conservatives. Due to the Twenty Years' War with France and its identification of Radicalism with high treason, nothing changed after Richard Mant had pointedly attacked Wordsworth's and Coleridge's rural primitivism in *The Simpliciad* (1808). The Augustan disqualification of their Romantic search for origins with idiotic regression into infancy and boorish regression into mud-raking was a standard argument against their "NEW ANTI-CLASSICAL SCHOOL":

Poets, who fix their visionary sight
 On Sparrow's eggs in prospect of delight,
 With fervent welcome greet the glow-worm's flame,
 Put it to bed and bless it by its name;
 Hunt waterfalls, that gallop down the hills:
 And dance with dancing laughing daffodils;
 Or measure muddy ponds from side to side,
 And find them three feet long and two feet wide.⁴³⁷

The later Wordsworth, one converted to Toryism and High Church Anglicanism, continued to read the symbolism of nature in his Romantic tradition, yet dropped the aesthetic primitivism of his early simple diction in favour of a cultivated classical rhetoric. This is a fact that Francis Jeffrey could not see in his above-quoted devastating review of *The Excursion* (1814). And Wordsworth's young admirer John Wilson, a Scottish Tory poet and later *Blackwood's* critic who then resided near the Wordsworths in the Lake District, followed him in the nature poetry of his own collection of verse, *The Isle of Palms and Other Poems* (1812). That made it easy for the Whig Francis Jeffrey to drive a wedge between the disciple and his master by praising Wilson's poems to the detriment of Wordsworth, on the ground that Wilson "is scarcely ever guilty of the offence of building them upon a foundation that is ludicrous or purely fantastic".⁴³⁸ True, Jeffrey pinpointed Wilson for having become "a new recruit to the company of lake poets" and for "occasional mistakes as to the energy and simplicity of his

436 Anon., *Christabess*, by S.T. Colebritche, London 1816, lines 118–123, in, *British Satire 1785–1840*, II. 139–140.

437 [Mant], *The Simpliciad*, London 1808, 13–15, lines 94–101.

438 *Edinburgh Review*, 19 (February 1812), 374.

diction". But, unlike Wordsworth, Jeffrey's Wilson "is not perverse".⁴³⁹ *Divide et impera* was an established critical technique in the arsenal of argumentative weapons. Here, an adversary is praised in order to beat another adversary and to weaken the inimical camp as a whole. Jeffrey's praise of Wilson is all the more astounding because Wilson's poems, written in close personal contact with Wordsworth in the Lake District and echoing numerous Wordsworthian thoughts, were diametrically opposed to the aesthetic of the Scottish Enlightenment. This was seen in their pose of the visionary prophet-poet, their search for inspiration on stormy mountains, their preference for nature to the detriment of art, and their primitivist nostalgia for the anamnesis of happy natural childhood, following the "Intimations Ode" (1807):

WHEN by God's inward light, a happy child,
 I walk'd in joy, as in the open air,
 It seem'd to my young thought the Sabbath smiled
 With glory and with love. So still, so fair,
 The Heavens look'd ever on that hallow'd morn,
 That, without aid of memory, something there
 Had surely told me of its glad return.
 How did my little heart at evening burn,
 When, fondly seated on my father's knee,
 Taught by the lip of love, I breathed the prayer,
 Warm from the fount of infant piety!
 Much is my spirit changed; for years have brought
 Intenser feelings and expanded thought;
 -Yet, must I envy every child I see!⁴⁴⁰

Staunch Tories never really forgave Wordsworth his early poetical advocacy of Radical egalitarianism, not even when the reviewers of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (among them John Wilson) and, after 1830, the reviewers of the new Tory *Fraser's Magazine* changed their editorial policy and constructed the later, "Victorian" poet Wordsworth as a conservative genius. And staunch Radicals remained blind to the fact of Wordsworth's affinities with their own aesthetics. They ridiculed his acceptance (in March 1813) of the office of Collector of Stamps for Westmoreland from William Lowther, Earl of Lonsdale, as a return to eighteenth-century literary patronage. A prophet-poet had prostituted his pen, sold himself to a nobleman's household, and degraded himself to the level of his valet, steward, attorney, and political canvasser at elections.⁴⁴¹ A primitivist in

439 Ibid. 373–374.

440 Wilson, *The Isle of Palms and Other Poems*, sonnet Written on the Sabbath-Day, Edinburgh 1812, 393.

441 Paul Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern*, 356–360.

sympathy with lowly people, a simple lifestyle, and healthy poor diet had gone to sit at the sumptuous table of a lord.⁴⁴²

In their day, Hunt's and Hazlitt's egalitarian essays roused numerous critics' anger and scorn, the more so as both Romantic authors resented Wordsworth's conversion and paradoxically pinpointed his homely "levelling" Muse's "principle of equality" which "strives to reduce all things to the same standard."⁴⁴³ Innovation on the principle of *tabula rasa* and *de novo* no longer seemed a viable choice in liberal new-school poetry. Tables were now turned. Hazlitt accused Wordsworth and Coleridge of ignorance of the Classical Tradition and classical forms, sacrificing the consistency of his arguments to their efficiency. Gifford, in turn, attacked Hunt and Hazlitt together for "writing eternally about washerwomen", sour Jacobins who "hate everything but washerwomen", an interest at variance both with God's pre-established feudal order and the elitist Classical Tradition.⁴⁴⁴ And Hazlitt defended himself on the grounds of Romantic anthropology and poetics, universal sympathy being the natural order of creation. Gifford's and Eaton Stannard Barrett's harsh criticism of the plain style of Hazlitt's *Lectures on English Poetry* and *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* linked their author to the barbarians waging war against Rome, reason, and clarity.⁴⁴⁵ This corresponded to the traditional progressivist view of the repeated victory of cultural progress and light over prehistoric and medieval darkness in two Augustan Ages, and of the rule of clarity as a rule of reason, "of old discovered, not devised". And Hazlitt could easily beat Neoclassicism on its own ground by arguing that plain common English was clearer than artificial Augustan diction, and that quotations from Shakespeare were both clearer and more varied for the ordinary reader than heaps of Greek quotations. Implicitly, Hazlitt contested the Classical Tradition's elitism and monopoly for clarity and common sense:

You begin by observing, 'Mr. Hazlitt seems to have bound himself like Hannibal to wage everlasting war, not indeed against Rome, but against accurate reasoning, just observation, and precise, or even intelligible language.' [...] Certainly, Sir, your style is very different from Shakespeare's. I observe in your notes to the Baviad and Maeviad, you diversify your matter by frequently quoting Greek. – Now it appears to me that these quotations of your's add to the wit only by varying the type. [...] Your objection amounts to this, that on reasoning on a difficult question I write common English, and this is the whole secret of my extravagance and obscurity.⁴⁴⁶

442 John Keats, Journal 25–27 June 1818, Letter to Tom Keats, in: Letters, ed. cit. I. 299.

443 Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, Mr Wordsworth, 1825, in: Complete Works, XI. 87.

444 Hazlitt, Letter to William Gifford, 1819, in: Complete Works, IX. 21–22.

445 Quarterly Review, 19 (1818), 424.

446 Hazlitt, Letter to William Gifford, IX. 43–44.

Satirists of Romanticism attacked Hunt and Hazlitt as a pair, in William Hay Forbes's words "The Aristotle and Longinus of the Cockneys".⁴⁴⁷ Forbes's *Blackwood's* satire continuing *Blackwood's* campaign against the "Cockney school" features "Billy Hazlitt" of "Billingsgate" as author of a silly letter with a weak-minded article reprinted by *Blackwood's*, a parody of Hazlitt's *Lectures on Poetry*, which slurred the two Cockneys' logic, critical standards, diction, social respectability, and decency. Hunt and Hazlitt appear as infantile, scatter-brained, stupid, chatty, vulgar, bawdy in their imagination, sloppy in their quotations, uneducated, parading the self-conscious and self-confessional obsession and the doctrine of the split nature of man attributed to the upstart Romantics, and extremely ignorant of the Classical Tradition. The satire harps on Hunt's and Hazlitt's alleged preference for imitated childish verse over Augustan poetry, for want of better taste and greater refinement and deeper knowledge, as when Forbes's Hunt writes:

The rhyme itself seems "to have caught the trick" of carelessness, and to wanton in the inspiration of the subject!

See saw, Margery Daw, sold her bed, and lay in the straw;
Was not she a dirty *slut*, to sell her bed, and lie in the *dirt*.⁴⁴⁸

Whereas Hunt and Hazlitt sought to distinguish themselves from the early Wordsworth's studied simplicity of diction as an outdated poetical expression of the revolutionary spirit, their Neoclassical adversaries ranked them in a line with Wordsworthian namby-pamby, childishness combined with prurience and prosodic incompetence. The frontline had to be clearly defined to the detriment of distinction and detail; the Romantic School was about being constructed from the period's culture of contention as a useful, indispensable, but imprecise and often misleading category of literary history.

6) Ignorance of the Classical Tradition: Lack of Higher Education and Augustan Rhetoric

After his acquittal from a charge of high treason in 1681, the Whig leader Anthony Ashley Cooper, First Earl of Shaftesbury, had a commemorative medal struck as befitting a coronation or jubilee of a king, inscribed with a Latin call for joy, "laetamur". In his formal satire *The Medal* (1682), the Tory John Dryden mocked Shaftesbury's Whig advocacy of kingship by the people's (instead of

447 [Forbes] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 16 (July 1824), 67. Also see Kent – Ewen (eds.), *Romantic Parodies 1797 – 1831*, 327 – 328.

448 [Forbes], *ibid.* 16 (July 1824), 71 – 72.

God's) grace, all the more keenly as the Tories accused him of planning to make Britain an electoral monarchy on the model of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Dryden's main argument, next to the common people's fickleness and cowardice, was their ignorance of classical languages, as seen in mistaking Latin for Polish:

The Word, pronounc'd aloud by Shrieval voice,
Laetamur, which, in Polish, is rejoyce.⁴⁴⁹

Dryden was convinced that the "common people", ignorant of the Classical Tradition, lacked the education that alone would qualify them to appreciate politics, theology, philosophy, and literature. But he wrote these bitter Juvenalian lines at a time when even the ruling elite could no longer be expected to have acquired complete mastery of Greek and Latin at Oxford or Cambridge, let alone at Scottish universities. From the seventeenth century onward, classical scholarship was on the decline.⁴⁵⁰ In the Romantic Period, it was, for the first time, pushed into a defensive position and found itself in sore need for apologists. The knowledge of Greek and Latin and their ancient literatures was becoming more and more eclectic and diluted, replaced by more "practical" and "profitable" languages and subjects. The erudite eighteenth-century scholar-poet of the type of Thomas Warton or Thomas Gray died out, with scholars and poets going different ways, Richard Porson here and John Keats there.⁴⁵¹ Looking back to his school days, Leigh Hunt admitted his preference for reading classics in translation, which often got him into trouble with his traditionalist classics teacher at Christ's Hospital.⁴⁵² Classics in translation opened the way for modernized readings and modernizing transformations of myths. In 1825, the conservative *Times* published a satirical "Parody of a Cambridge Examination Paper" in which students, instead of being assessed on their knowledge of the classical languages and literatures, are examined on more modern subjects such as fashion and advertising.⁴⁵³ "Shopkeeper's Greek" was a term coined by *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal* in 1851 for the Victorian practice of ennobling mer-

449 Dryden, *The Medal: A Satire against Seditious, 1682*, lines 14–15, in *Works*, II. 43.

450 Charles Burnett – Nicholas Mann (eds.), *Britannia Latina*, Turin 2005, 194–208, and Christopher Stray, *Classics Transformed: Schools, Universities, and Society in England, 1830–1960*, Oxford 1998, 7–29.

451 James Bowen, *Education, Ideology and the Ruling Class: Hellenism and English Public Schools in the Nineteenth Century*, in: G.W. Clarke (ed.), *Rediscovering Hellenism: The Hellenic Inheritance and the English Imagination*, Cambridge 1989, 164, and Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, 64–65.

452 Leigh Hunt, *Autobiography*, 1850, ed. cit. 76–77.

453 John Strachan, *Advertising and Satirical Culture in the Romantic Period*, Cambridge, 2007, 2009, 72.

cantile goods by giving them odd Greek and Latin trademark names for commercial promotion.⁴⁵⁴

There was a complex variety of reasons for this decline. In seventeenth and eighteenth century universities, modern national languages were strengthening their position against Latin as the academic *lingua franca* of Europe. By the middle of the eighteenth century, about half of all university lectures were in English. In the course of Preromanticism as a rising counter-voice to Neoclassicism and the Enlightenment, moreover, the high-culture hegemony of the Classical Tradition was challenged by other, national, local, “primitive and oriental” myths and literary models, including Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, as well as Germanic and Celtic *Volkspoesien*. Just as the Classical Tradition of the Augustans and the classical myths of the Romantics were selective inventions, so were the National Traditions of the Romantics as in Robert Lowth’s *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum Praelectiones* (1753) or Johann Gottfried Herder’s *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (1778–1779, 1807).⁴⁵⁵ The challenge reached a peak in the *Creuzer-Streit* in Germany. In his seminal four-volume work *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* (1810–1812), Friedrich Creuzer argued that Greek culture was indebted to earlier oriental cultures. That a distinguished Heidelberg professor of classical philology should thus contest the Classical Tradition’s pride of place led to a campaign of hatred against him, vilifying him as an agent of the Roman Catholic Church and its Romantic medievalism. It is significant that Creuzer’s supporters were Romantics: Friedrich Schlegel, Friedrich von Savigny, Jacob Grimm, and the philosopher Hegel.⁴⁵⁶ Romantic mythmaking from Blake to Byron, as opposed to Fontenelle’s Enlightenment theory of myth as orally transmitted attempts at explaining the unknown, was syncretistic, understanding all national myths as converging narrations of the soul’s archetypes. Sinking a pure Classical Tradition in what traditionalists saw as the swamp of oriental luxury and the free fancy of the *Arabian Nights*, however, served to weaken the cause of classical education at a time when its hegemony was already massively threatened, and thus to bereave enlightened *ancien régime* Europe of its chief support. But that alleged purity of the Classical Tradition had already been called into doubt in the late seventeenth century. One weighty argument against it came from the “moderns” in the *querelle des anciens et des modernes*: that the Greeks, even more so than the Romans, were pre-Christian, haughty, and barbarous, no model for a polished age. In the Romantic Period, this was a weighty argument in the battle of modernism versus the Classical Tradition. The

454 Ibid. 97.

455 For these conflicting inventions and reinventions of traditions see Stephen Prickett, *Modernity and the Reinvention of Tradition*, Cambridge 2009, *passim*.

456 Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, Cambridge 2009, *passim*.

Radical Bristol nerve theorist Thomas Beddoes, a major influence on Coleridge and other Romantics, took the sentimental Preromantic stance when he denigrated both the conquering Alexander's "ardent thirst of Glory and of Power"⁴⁵⁷ and the modern education in barbarous classics such as Alexander's favourite poet Homer:

The spirit of antient [sic] poetry must undoubtedly have contributed to pervert the moral sentiments of mankind, by establishing a false standard of excellence [...] It may be worth while to consider whether, in consequence of the present absurd mode of education, a similar pernicious influence is not still exerted upon the ardour of the youthful mind.⁴⁵⁸

This development took place in connection with the decline and fragmentation of classical studies in eighteenth-century Oxford and Cambridge. The Romantic Period was a threshold period, when the Classical Tradition, with its claim to exclusive and universal validity, came under heaviest fire and finally lost its monopoly for good. In an age of rising mercantilism and utilitarianism, doubts of the usefulness of a classical education grew louder, and young aristocrats and ambitious sizarers tended to study Greek and Latin less for the intrinsic beauties of the languages and literatures than mainly for the maintenance of their social positions. Fashionable society admired young men who could show off their brilliance with Greek or Latin quotations broken out of the context of classical authors. Such practical functionalization of the Classical Tradition stood in no need of any good mastery of the ancient languages nor any sound contextual knowledge of an established canon. Hence, conservatives (both Neoclassicists and Tories) would complain at the obvious loss of the Classical Tradition's monopoly, whereas liberals (both Romantics and Radicals) would welcome that loss by pointing out the Classical Tradition's outdatedness and modern uselessness. In his Radical anti-feudal and anti-epicurean argument, William Cobbett went so far as to pronounce the knowledge of Greek and Latin as detrimental to practical action, with reference to an intercepted letter allegedly written by Napoleon, published in Britain, and ridiculed by British conservatives for its palpable lack of a polite aristocratic education. "Intercepted letters" belonged to the satirical technique of having a speaker make a fool of himself, but could also be weapons turned against the combatant. Useless Greek and Latin instead of his "extensive acquaintance with *men* and *things*", Cobbett argued, would never have enabled Napoleon to win his famous victories:

The reader will recollect, that some time ago, the editors of some of the London papers treated us with an intercepted letter of Buonaparte; from which it was evident, that the

457 Beddoes, *Alexander's Expedition*, line 220, London 1792, 26.

458 *Ibid.* 38, footnote. See also Faubert, *Rhyming Reason*, 150–156.

poor little fellow was not only not a classical scholar, but that he was deficient even in that part of the art of grammar, which the ‘learned’ call orthography, and which the ‘ignorant’ call *spelling*. This letter was the subject of a good deal of merriment, which would have lasted for several days, and would, probably, have lasted much longer, had not the attention of the learned and witty been called off by the news of the battle of Austerlitz, which served, too, as a sort of practical illustration of the inutility of Latin and Greek, in the performance of great actions in the world.⁴⁵⁹

Two key texts illustrate this dispute about the usefulness or futility of a classical education in modern times. Charles Lamb’s collected essays of *Elia* (1823) and *Last Essays of Elia* (1833) contained a number of essays on art as well as traditional and modern education, in which Elia, Lamb’s Shandean persona and, like him, a London business company accountant without a university education, took the part of the Romantic moderns, though with typical distancing Romantic irony. Elia pretends to be an uneducated member of the populace with neither profound reading of nor an ear for classical music. He is a modern flâneur who cannot sit through an opera or an oratorio without running into the street to hear ballad singers or vulgar city noises. He does not even succeed in whistling or humming “God save the King”, slyly insinuating that there might be a political reason for his failure. Giving the lie to his pretences of ignorance, Elia has numerous references to and quotations from literature and music, which imply that he does have an education, though not an exclusively classical one, and that the aspersions of his elitist adversaries are unjustified.⁴⁶⁰ Elia’s boast of “little Latin and less Greek”, combined with an ignorance of modern foreign languages and a fascination with England’s dark Middle Ages, is an obvious self-ironic Romantic pose. It serves the purpose of derogating classically educated university dons as either uninterested snobs or outdated bearers of useless dead knowledge and languages. During his holidays from his work in the South Sea Office (and later in the East India House), Elia visits Oxford and Cambridge, and finds it easy to imitate and converse with the various academic types from professors to aristocrats and gentleman commoners and sizarers. As for schools, the old-type schoolmaster of Greek and Latin grammar in the Renaissance tradition of William Lily and Thomas Linacre is described as a dry fossil of the past, although the modern-type schoolmaster, who does not allow his pupils to learn from the book of nature without moralizing upon every sight and experience, also receives his share of subtle satire. Children, whom Lamb regarded as potentially natural men, should be allowed to be taught by and in nature, as idealized by James Beattie and William Wordsworth, and not warped by the one

459 Cobbett, *Political Register*, 12 (14 November 1807), 750–751. Quoted from: John Whale, *Imagination under Pressure, 1789–1832: Aesthetics, Politics and Utility*, 145.

460 Charles Lamb, *Elia*, A Chapter on Ears, 1823, in: *Works*, I. 74–82.

or other pedagogue. Lamb's portrait of descendants of the old-type schoolmasters, who will not realize their cultural deadness with the fragmentation of the Classical Tradition into some Greek and Latin grammar and literature, recalls Hazlitt's much more viciously and indignantly satirical portraits of the crumbling Classical Tradition's Tory and Neoclassical victims, George Canning and William Gifford. And that fragmentation was due to the explosive expansion of far more immediately useful knowledge in the eighteenth century, especially in the natural sciences, which were just beginning to challenge the dominating position of the old humanities and would increasingly continue to do so throughout the Victorian into the Modern Period:

Rest to the souls of those fine old Pedagogues; the breed, long since extinct, of the Lilys, and the Linacres; who believing that all learning was contained in the languages which they taught, and despising every other acquirement as superficial and useless, [...] dreamed away all their days as in a grammar-school. Revolving in a perpetual cycle of declensions, conjugations, syntaxes, and prosodies; [...] rehearsing continually the part of the past; [...] The fine dream is fading away fast; and the least concern of a teacher in the present day is to inculcate grammar-rules. The modern schoolmaster is expected to know a little of every thing, because his pupil is required not to be entirely ignorant of any thing⁴⁶¹

Vivian Grey (1826–1827), the young Benjamin Disraeli's first novel, a Byronic fiction written at twenty-one years of age, two years after Byron's death, gives a lively fictional portrait of the fragmentation and social functionalization of classical studies so polemically yet inoffensively painted in Lamb's essays. Disraeli's eponymous hero has a diffuse and superficial education in the classics, which, after a short spell of youthful idealism, he applies in order to shine in high society and to promote his political career. There, in the company of shallow ambitious types with the telling names of Lord Alhambra, Toad, Clay, Puff, Cayenne, Foaming Fudge, and Boreall, who hardly know the name of Goethe, all literature is a matter of small-talk and market commodity. There Vivian Grey, an imitator of voices rather than original thinker, can promote his career even with fake quotations that nobody will control.⁴⁶² It is easy to see the young Radical Disraeli's Romantic arguments against the Tories and their adherence to the Classical Tradition, and the later Tory Disraeli's embarrassment with (and textual changes in) his early Romantic novel.⁴⁶³

In connection with this Romantic Period development, the balance in the dispute between the use of Latin or English in university lectures and theses was

461 Ibid., *The Old and the New Schoolmaster*, 1823, in: Works, I. 101–102.

462 Disraeli, *Vivian Grey*, 1826–1827, 1853, book II, chapters 1, 12, 13, in: *Novels and Tales*, I. passim.

463 Daniel R. Schwarz, *Disraeli's Fiction*, London and Delhi 1979, 8–21. Unfortunately, Guedella's text is Disraeli's revised version of 1853.

tipped in favour of the vernacular. The Preromantic demand for more naturalness and originality tended to denigrate the normative study of classical languages as artificial, cliché-ridden, and ultimately hypocritical. Neither classical grammars nor classical metres were innate, but superimposed exercises for schoolboys under the threat of the rod. Percy Shelley's plea for naturally innate national speech and naturally innate national rhythm in his *Defence of Poetry* (MS 1829) had been anticipated in Herder's defence of Macpherson's Ossianic poems against their Neoclassical detractors:

In fremden Sprachen quälte man sich von Jugend auf, Quantitäten von Silben kennenzulernen, die uns nicht mehr Ohr und Natur zu fühlen gibt; nach Regeln zu arbeiten, deren wenigste ein Genie als Naturregeln anerkennt; [...] Leidenschaften zu erkünsteln, die wir nicht haben; Seelenkräfte nachzuahmen, die wir nicht besitzen – und endlich wurde alles Falschheit, Schwäche und Künstelei.⁴⁶⁴

Robert Burns's first Scots "Epistle to John Lapraik" (1786), his Radical Romantic *ars poetica*, added another argument: natural mental capacity. Stupidity is innate in aristocrats and commoners alike, and Greek and Latin cannot turn a moron into a philosopher. Burns voted with rustic common sense in native rustic language and metre against Augustan feudal rules and conventions:

What 's a' your jargon o' your Schools –
 Your Latin names for horns an' stools;
 If honest Nature made you *fools*,
 What sairs your Grammars?
 Ye'd better taen up *spades* and *shools*
 Or *knappin-hammers*.
 A set o' dull, conceited Hashes
 Confuse their brains in *Colledge-classes!*
 They *gang in* Stirks, and *come out* Asses,
 Plain truth to speak;
 An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
 By dint o' Greek!⁴⁶⁵

In Burke's, Canning's, and Gifford's polemics against such Jacobins, Democrats, Liberals, and Romantics, the reproach of the lack of a classical education and ignorance of Greek and Latin, causing a deficiency in rhetoric and Augustan diction as well as in rational thought, stood prominently. Throughout the *Anti-Jacobin*, this was propagated as the common stigma of all Jacobins, Whigs, and Romantics. In his addresses, as we have seen, the editor distinguished between

464 Herder, Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker, 1773, in: Werke in fünf Bänden, ed. Regine Otto, Berlin and Weimar 1978, II. 252.

465 Burns, [First] Epistle to J[ohn] Lapraik, an Old Scottish Bard, lines 61 – 72, in: Poems and Songs, ed. cit. I. 87.

his “learned readers” and “Jacobinical readers”. Similarly, the periodical’s positive correspondents and characters show a profound knowledge of classical literature in Greek and Latin, its negative correspondents and characters such as Mr Higgins and Citizen Muskein are ignorant of both. The French naval commander Muskein, though confident of victory, had suffered an unexpected defeat in his attack on the British fleet on the island of St Marcou; and Lord Morpeth, an elegant classical scholar and contributor to the *Anti-Jacobin*, made him the ridiculous speaker of two parodic poems, which turn the poetry of Horace and Catullus into popular revolutionary jargon: “*Citizen Muskein, if he understands Horace, and can read English [...]*”.⁴⁶⁶ Thus, “An Affectionate Effusion of Citizen Muskein” viciously “Sans-Culottized” the Augustan original of Catullus’s “*Ad Sirmionem Peninsulam*” into what came close to the poetic programme of Burns and Wordsworth. Such simple or vulgar poetic diction was, furthermore, contrasted negatively with an elegant Latin panegyric on the victories of the British navy in the war against revolutionary France, written by a fictitious Eton boy and reprinted in the same paper. Citizen Muskein:

Well – now I’ve leisure, let me see
 What boats are left me; one, two, three –
 Bravo! The better half remain;
 And all my Heroes are not slain.
 And if my senses don’t deceive
 I too am safe, – yes, I believe,
 Without a wound I reach thy shore;
 (For I have felt myself all o’er)
 I’ve all my limbs, and, be it spoken
 With honest triumph, no bone broken -⁴⁶⁷

When the young John Thelwall published his two volumes of *Poems upon Various Subjects* (1787), their choice of simple ballads and fairy-tales, as well as the author’s ironic apology for his ignorance of Greek and Latin and for his quick extempore writing, announced the later ultra-Radical poet, dramatist, and orator. It was in this programmatically primitive and rudimentary state that the attorney’s clerk submitted his poems to “the tribunal of the public”, instead of the professional critics.⁴⁶⁸

The reader will be informed in several parts of these volumes, (what perhaps he would have discovered without any formal declaration) that the author is unacquainted with the classical languages. Nor is the ignorance of Greek and Latin his only misfortune.⁴⁶⁹

466 *Anti-Jacobin*, 27 (14 May 1798), in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, I, 196.

467 *Anti-Jacobin*, 32 (18 June 1798), I, 244–245.

468 Thelwall, *Poems on Various Subjects, Apology*, London 1787, VII.

469 *Ibid.* V–VI.

Thelwall defended his publication by defying critics and satirists with an effective, time-honoured strategy of argumentation: turning a vice into a virtue. Parodies of popular vernacular poetry, of Romantic *Volkspoesie*, would not cease. When Byron read the Tory John Hookham Frere's *Prospectus and Specimen of an Intended National Work, by William and Robert Whistlecraft of Stowmarket, in Suffolk, Harness- and Collar-Makers* (1817), published by the Tory John Murray, he immediately flared up, using Frere's poem as a formal model for his own comic epics *Beppo* (1818) and *Don Juan* (1819–1824).⁴⁷⁰ Translating Frere's literary source, Luigi Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore*, Byron may or may not have seen that Pulci had written a serious epic in the style of popular *Bänkelsängerei*, an art and style esteemed by Pulci's Florentine patron Lorenzo Il Magnifico, whereas Frere turned it into a parodic satire on Romantic primitivism and medievalism. Frere's title recalls Wordsworth's long titles, together with Wordsworth's praise of simplicity. And Frere's speaker is an uncultivated, chaotic, superstitious, and low-class Romantic poet professing to write a national Arthurian epic "such as all English people might peruse".⁴⁷¹ In reality and in contradiction to his self-fashioning as an inspired Romantic national poet, he is a mere hack in search of financial success. His spontaneous overflow, simple diction, and Shandean digressions are due to his lack of classical education, of which he even brags as a popular simpleton that has acquired his speech and learning from his godmother. Like primitive, uneducated, narrowly national-minded, drunk and snuff-taking British country people, whose source of inspiration is the bottle, he has no narrative plan for his medieval nonsense:

[...] in spite of Aristotle –
 Those rules of his are dry, dogmatic stuff,
 All life and fire they suffocate and throttle –
 And therefore I adopt the mode I mention,
 Trusting to native judgment and invention.⁴⁷²

Like Romantic poets in a hostile Neoclassical view, Frere's narrator mixes up scraps of misunderstood or misremembered classical history or myth with Celtic and Germanic fables, superstitions, and his own mythopoetic inventions. His imagery is confused, ill-chosen, and unelaborated, his style an odd mixture of "The Grave, the Vulgar, and the grand High-flyer",⁴⁷³ making ample use of Pope's bathetic "art of sinking", and his fantastic narrative so fragmented by endless Shandean digressions as to be unintelligible. To crown his ignorance, the

470 Albert Eichler, John Hookham Frere: Sein Leben und seine Werke: Sein Einfluss auf Lord Byron, Vienna 1905, New York NY 1964.

471 Frere, Whistlecraft, 1. 2, 2nd edition London 1818, 1.

472 Ibid. 2. 2. 4–8, 26.

473 Ibid. 4. 12. 6, 39.

Latin stanzas that he inserts into his narrative are poor, medieval Latin with a ridiculous English substratum, because, as he confesses, his Latin is no better than that of the grotesquely pugnacious and coarse-grained medieval monks who fight the giants of romance:

Those Monks were poor proficient in divinity,
And scarce knew more of Latin than myself;
Compared with theirs they say that true Latinity
Appears like porcelain compar'd with delf.⁴⁷⁴

If the speaker's Latin is so deficient, his Greek would be almost non-existent. "Little Latin and less Greek" appears as the motto of Romantics, Whigs, and Radicals. As mentioned above, it was a standing joke with Tories that Whigs and Dissenters, who fashioned themselves and Britain in the liberal succession of Athens with its cultural and religious variety and tolerance, knew neither Attic Greek nor refined manners due to their alleged ignorance of the Classical Tradition. This polemical denigration of the adversary became more pronounced after the French Revolution, when both Whigs and Tories sought their respective ideals in ancient Greece instead of Rome, with the Tories advocating an admixture of victorious Spartan aristocracy and militancy. Plans were made to build an Edinburgh Acropolis on Calton Hill in order to establish Edinburgh as Britain's cultural metropolis and rival to London as Britain's economic metropolis. Athens, however, had distinctly republican and anti-aristocratic associations, which aroused the opposition of the Edinburgh Tories, who (with Scott and Lockhart) preferred national to cosmopolitan identity.⁴⁷⁵ Significantly, after 1816, plans changed. Instead of an entire Acropolis, a facsimile of the Parthenon was begun as a National Monument for the fallen Scottish soldiers of the Napoleonic Wars, heralding the later Victorian preference for national culture over the eighteenth-century concept of the Republic of Letters united across all nationalities and opinions in intellectual capacity and the mastery of Greek and Latin. In the second number of *Blackwood's* "Noctes Ambrosianae", for instance, Tickler (Lockhart) derides the Edinburgh Whigs, champions of the rights of uneducated masses and rude mobs, who would build a second Athens but could not even read a smattering of Greek on opening a book:

"There are not ten persons in Edinburgh – not one Whig I am sure, who could read three lines of Homer *"ad aperturam libri."* There are pretty Athenians for you! Think of shoals of Scotch artisans, with long lank greasy hair, and corduroy breeches, walking in the Parthenon!"⁴⁷⁶

474 Ibid. 3. 27. 1–4, 14.

475 Ian Duncan, *Edinburgh, Capital of the Nineteenth Century*, in: *Romantic Metropolis*, ed. James Chandler – Kevin Gilmartin, 48–54.

476 *Noctes Ambrosianae*, II, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 11 (April 1822), 484.

Blackwood's chief periodical competitor and antagonist, the *Edinburgh Review*, had recommended its editor and contributors to its readership as "The Modern Athenians", and the distinguished Greek scholar Thomas Love Peacock, though himself a Radical Whig, ridiculed this pretension in his satirical novel *Crotchet Castle* (1831).⁴⁷⁷ In the dialogue between the classically educated Reverend Dr Folliot and the stupidly arrogant and crotchety MacQuedy – a satirical portrait of the Scottish national economist John Ramsay McCulloch – Peacock doubted that Francis Jeffrey and Henry Brougham with their Scottish Enlightenment march-of-mind optimism knew more Attic Greek than Wordsworth to arrogate such a designation.⁴⁷⁸

In Neoclassical and Tory propaganda, Burns and Wordsworth did not only write their simple poetic diction as an aesthetic counter-programme to Augustan diction and as a political counter-programme to God's feudal order, but because they lacked an education which might have taught them better. The Classical Tradition appeared as a safeguard against revolutionary thought in church and state, pleasing in the sight of God in spite of its pre-Judaeo-Christian paganism. In traditional feudal society legitimized by the will of God, a classical education was the prerogative of the higher classes, though there were exceptions, as in the case of Gifford. Their resentment of Gifford's arrogant contempt of his own "vulgar" origin notwithstanding, Radicals and Romantics used him as a proof of the mental capacity of people of low origin, who were, though socially "neglected", no less amenable to a classical education than the Burkes and Cannings. Hunt thus praised Gifford's intellect and success in *The Feast of the Poets* (1814), through the words of Apollo Musagetes:

'And there's something, which even distaste must respect,
In the self-taught example, that conquer'd neglect.'⁴⁷⁹

Thus, the Tory *Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* teem with attacks on the Romantic poets' low origin and alleged lack of a classical education, whereas the Whig *Edinburgh Review* and the Radical *Examiner* often stand up in their defence. The attacks became even more acrimonious with the rise of the younger Romantic poets of low origin – Leigh Hunt, William Hazlitt, John Keats, and Charles Lamb. Lockhart's and Wilson's series of review attacks against some younger Romantics in the first year of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* link the reproach of low origin with that of no classical education. This explains why Barry Cornwall, a Harrow-educated solicitor and classmate of Lord Byron, was – at first – not included in the Cockney-School bashing in spite of his

477 William Christie, *The Edinburgh Review in the Literary Culture of Romantic Britain*, chapter 2 *The Modern Athenians*, 39–58.

478 Peacock, *Crotchet Castle*, 1831, in *Novels*, 657.

479 Hunt, *The Feast of the Poets*, lines 154–55, in: *Selected Writings*, V. 36.

affiliations with the Hampstead coterie, at least not until Lockhart's and Wilson's caustic *Blackwood's* review of his *Flood of Thessaly* (1824). Leigh Hunt, author of *The Story of Rimini* (1817) based on Dante rather than Homer or Virgil but sympathizing with the adulterers Paolo and Francesca, is ridiculed for quoting Greek tragedians without being able to read them in the original:

In the preface to his poem, Mr Hunt has made an apology for the nature of his subject and, pleaded the example of many illustrious predecessors. He quotes the Greek tragedians (of whom, in another part of the same preface, he confesses his total ignorance) [...].⁴⁸⁰

In the eyes of Tories and most Neoclassical critics, popular sexual emancipation appeared as an offence against classical restraint as well as divine law. When Barry Cornwall's Romantic policy of flattering and giving identity to a mass readership by a generally comprehensible style (as well as his Whig sympathies and popular eroticism) became too obvious, Lockhart and Wilson savagely turned against Cornwall. They suddenly agreed with their political opponent and aesthetic ally Peacock that Cornwall prostituted himself to ignorant and tasteless readers. They found Cornwall's Cockney "Greekish" as preposterous as his adulterated use of classical mythology, culminating in the final taunt: "A Hot-tentot in top-boots is not more ridiculous than a classical Cockney".⁴⁸¹

Although Byron sympathized with the Radicalism of Leigh and John Hunt, visiting Leigh Hunt in prison and welcoming him as a refugee in Italy, he despised another Radical of the same surname: Henry Hunt (also called "Bristol Hunt" or "Orator Hunt" for his addresses to the common people). In a letter from Ravenna, the classically educated Byron, with his scorn of Keats's origin and education, placed Henry Hunt and William Cobbett as "ruffians" on a level with Robespierre and Marat. To Byron in his Neoclassical and Tory mood, when he did not plead in the popular cause of sexual emancipation, they and their rabble lacked the noble origin and classical education that would have taught them polish and honesty:

[...] and what is there in Bristol Hunt and Cobbett [...] "Arcades Ambo" blackguards both. – Why our classical education alone – should teach us to trample on such unredeemed dirt as the dishonest bluntness – the ignorant brutality, the unblushing baseness of these two miscreants; – and all who believe in them.⁴⁸²

In the above-quoted review of Cornwall's volume of poetry entitled *The Flood of Thessaly* (1823), Lockhart and Wilson ridiculed what they despised as the

480 [Lockhart – Wilson] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (November 1817), 195.

481 [Lockhart – Wilson] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 13 (May 1823), 541. See also Turley, *Bright Stars*, 58.

482 Byron, Letter to John Cam Hobhouse, 22 April 1820, in: *Letters and Journals*, VII. 81. Note Byron's contrastive self-fashioning in his classical quotation from Virgil's *Eclogues*.

Cockneys' "new" and unreasonable "craze [...] to be Greekish" without being able to read the Greek originals. They were opinionated in their narrow view that there existed but one genuine Classical Tradition of Greece:

Mr Barry Cornwall must really excuse our freedom, – we do think that this new sort of classical poetry is without exception the most exquisite trash that was ever attempted to be foisted down the throats of reasonable animals.⁴⁸³

The Neoclassical reviewers either were or pretended to be blind to the fact that the new Hellenism which they branded as new-school nonsense in Cornwall, Keats, and Hunt was not quite new. In the later eighteenth century a Romantic Hellenism had arisen that was altogether distinct from Neoclassical Hellenism, one focused on a primitive Homeric Greece akin to other primitive and oriental civilizations.⁴⁸⁴ Furthermore, Romantic Hellenism (like all Romantic Classicism) was strongly eroticized, contradicted the Augustan view of the Classical Tradition's cult of rational moderation, and shocked traditional feelings of decorum. This is apparent from the numerous attacks – in satires and caricatures – on the diplomat Sir William Hamilton's craze for erotic antiques and an uneducated wife, Emma Hamilton, a blacksmith's daughter who threatened to entice an infatuated Lord Nelson away from his national duties. Thus, in inimical perspective, there existed a parallel between the eroticism of the vulgar Keats's shameless poetry and the vulgar Lady Hamilton's shameless poses.⁴⁸⁵

The reproach of "little Latin and less Greek" recalls Ben Jonson's obituary poem to his rival Shakespeare (1621). It had echoed attacks that the classical scholar and Elizabethan representative of the Classical Tradition, the self-styled Horace of his age, had advanced against the popular and allegedly ignorant dramatist in the War of the Theatres (1599 – 1602) and which have frequently been misread as biographical evidence:

He [Leigh Hunt] is a man of little education. He knows absolutely nothing of Greek, almost nothing of Latin [...]⁴⁸⁶

This onslaught on the London group summarized under the dysphemism "The Cockney School of Poetry", Hunt, Keats, Hazlitt, Lamb, and, in due course, Barry Cornwall, in the first year of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, invariably linked the social with the educational stigma. Neoclassical views of the universal validity of the rules of reason were incompatible with Romantic views of good

483 [Lockhart – Wilson] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 13 (May 1823), 534.

484 Harry Levin, *The Broken Column: A Study in Romantic Hellenism*, Cambridge MA 1931; Bernard H. Stern, *The Rise of Romantic Hellenism in English Literature, 1732 – 86*, Menasha WI 1940; René Wellek, *Concepts of Criticism*, 164; and Rolf Lessenich, *Aspects of English Preromanticism*, 134 – 144.

485 Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School*, 168 – 186.

486 [Lockhart] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (October 1817), 38.

poetry as various products of the national and provincial soil. Hence, the semantics of “Cockney” was extended from a London sociolect to a general class slur, by which well-educated Tories portrayed their liberal counterparts as provincial and ill-bred social climbers.⁴⁸⁷ The campaign was sustained for several years, culminating in Lockhart’s cruel review of Keats’s *Endymion* (1818), Maginn’s representation of the “Cockney school” as a continuation of the popular English “Della Cruscan school”, and Maginn’s impious obituary on Keats’s death (1821), saying it would have been better if Keats had not given up the low but decent profession an apothecary “for the melancholy trade of Cockney poetry”.⁴⁸⁸ For the classically educated Irish Tory and lawyer Maginn, Keats was a “pharmacopolitical poet”, meaning his Radicalism widespread in the medical profession of his time, and moreover a practitioner belonging to the lowest-reputed class of the medical profession, the ignorant apothecaries, because they had no formal classical education. In the Classical Tradition, doctors and bad poets were habitual butts of satire, so Maginn’s invectives were justified in his own eyes, and it seemed ludicrous to suppose that a Cockney pleb could die from bad reviews.⁴⁸⁹ Like Maginn, Lockhart was a Tory, lawyer, and distinguished linguist who prided himself on his classical scholarship, and so his *Endymion*-review repeated the old argument of ignorance of the Classical Tradition and the vulgar nature of Whiggism. In conjunction with his philosophical free-thinking and political liberalism, Keats’s free use of Greek myth was a very sore point with traditionalist critics trained in the classics.⁴⁹⁰ They could or would not see what Keats’s friend, the painter Joseph Severn, remarked retrospectively in 1861, that, with his imaginative melting of Greek and other pagan legends, Keats had been “an impulse to an entirely new school [...] a mine of inexhaustible wealth wherein the modern poets may delve without limit, without exhaustion”.⁴⁹¹ The same applied to Keats’s promoter Leigh Hunt, who, in *Foliage* (1818), mixed Greek mythology with his own, much in manner of Blake.⁴⁹² In his “Preface” to *Foliage*, Hunt justified this Romantic practice from Shakespeare, who did not only use mythology as he had learned it in school, but gave it originality by looking into nature and his own mind for various images of truths:

487 Duncan Wu, Keats and the “Cockney School”, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Keats*, ed. S.J. Wolfson, Cambridge 2001, 37.

488 [William Maginn] in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 10 (December 1821), 696.

489 See Maginn’s unpublished letters to William Blackwood, quoted from: Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, 160–162.

490 G.M. Matthews in: *Keats. The Critical Heritage*, 165.

491 MS quoted in: Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, 69.

492 See, for example, Hunt’s *Foliage* poem *The Nymphs*, where he mixed nymphs derived from classical antiquity (Dryads, Naiads, Nereids, Oreads) with nymphs created by his own mythopoetic imagination, to whom he gave fantastic Greek names (Ephydriads, Limniads, Napeads, Nepheliads).

[...] Shakespeare felt the Greek mythology not as a set of school-boy commonplaces which it was manly to give up, but as something which it requires more than mere scholarship to understand – [...]

[...] all great poets look at themselves and the fine world about them in the same clear and ever-living fountains.⁴⁹³

In Lockhart's view, by contrast, Greek mythology was finished and fixed, petrified and dogmatized in the sense of Blake, and modern poets like Keats and Hunt who admittedly could only read Greek texts in translations were incapable of adequate treatments of Greek myths:

From his prototype, Hunt, John Keats has acquired a sort of vague idea that the Greeks were a most tasteful people, and that no mythology can be so finely adapted for the purposes of poetry as theirs. It is amusing to see what a hand the two Cockneys made of this mythology; the one [Hunt] confesses that he never read the Greek tragedians, and the other [Keats] knows Homer only from Chapman, and both of them write about Apollo, Pan, Nymphs, Muses, and Mysteries, as might be expected from persons of their education.⁴⁹⁴

The reproach was repeated in *Blackwood's* "Noctes Ambrosianae" and Byron's *Don Juan* (1824), when they ridiculed the sentimental theory that another Tory review had caused Keats's premature death. Keats, Cornwall, Hunt, and Hazlitt would confuse myths and mistake Olympians for Cockneys (as Keats enacted "ApollAR, because he believed that personage to have been, like himself, an apothecary").⁴⁹⁵ Tickler's (Lockhart's) macabre jibe at the low origin of the deceased Cockney poet and physician Keats, as well as at his lack of classical learning and clarity, is supported by North (Wilson) quoting Byron. Cornwall with his great popularity received a somewhat more respectful treatment, whereas Keats, whose poetry suffered from ill reputation under the attacks of the periodicals of the period, was an easy target for Wilson and Byron:

John Keats who was killed off by one critique,
 Just as he *really promised* something great,
 If not intelligible – without Greek,
 Contrived to talk about the Gods of late,
 Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
 Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate;
 'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
 Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article.⁴⁹⁶

493 Hunt, *Literary Criticism*, ed. cit. 135.

494 Z [Lockhart] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 3 (August 1818), 519–524.

495 *Noctes Ambrosianae*, XII, *ibid.* 14 (October 1823), 488–489.

496 Christopher North's [Wilson's] quotation from Byron, *Don Juan*, 11. 60. 1–8.

John Wilson Croker had published a similarly devastating review of *Endymion* in the *Quarterly Review*. He suggested that lack of higher education must lead to such Neoclassical vices as obscurity and disjointedness of thoughts, which leave the reader “perplexed and puzzled”, as well as lack of rhetorical polish:

[Keats] is unhappily a disciple of the new school of what has been somewhere called Cockney poetry; which may be defined to consist of the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language.⁴⁹⁷

The Blakean and Schlegelian mixing of separate myths was a conscious technique of Romantic literature, as was the mixing of separate genres and styles, a programme of de-hegemonizing, democratizing, and returning to a supposed original *Alleinheit*. Washington Irving’s Gothic tale “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (1819) is a characteristic American instance of such Romantic mixtures of Greek, German, and Celtic myths, probing into the formation of myths through orally transmitted popular local legends in particular.⁴⁹⁸ Even Byron, with his scorn of the ignorant populace and his Harrow and Cambridge education, used this technique in his drama *Manfred* (1816), so that the *Literary Gazette* found fault with his “heterogeneous assemblage of mythology”.⁴⁹⁹ Neither did the reproach of ignorance stand the test of facts with regard to the other Romantic poets of the younger generation. These had enjoyed a classical education, though not a systematic and profound one in the established public schools and universities of the aristocracy. Keats had a grounding in Latin, and perhaps even in Greek, in John Clarke’s academy in Enfield, a reformist school founded by a Dissenter and designed for the children from less affluent families, who were not necessarily looking forward to entering a university.⁵⁰⁰ Keats and his friend Charles Cowden Clarke, his headmaster’s son, became ardent readers of classics such as Homer and Virgil in the school’s rich library, though partly in translations, and avid readers of John Lemprière’s *Bibliotheca Classica*. Coleridge and Charles Lamb (from 1782), and later Leigh Hunt (from 1791), attended Christ’s Hospital, a charity school for orphans adjoining Christ Church in Newgate Street, very strictly disciplinarian, less reform-oriented than Enfield, but boasting eminent classical scholars as teachers for the boys – a fact of which Hunt was proud.⁵⁰¹ Although Coleridge used to speak contemptuously of modern attempts at Greek verse, Christ’s Hospital had taught Coleridge sufficient

497 [Croker] in: *Quarterly Review*, 19 (1818), 204–208.

498 Günter Ahrends, *Die amerikanische Kurzgeschichte*, Stuttgart – Berlin – Cologne – Mainz 1980, 59–61.

499 *Literary Gazette*, 21 (June 1817), 338.

500 Walter Jackson Bate, *John Keats*, Cambridge MA 1964, 9–10, and Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, 27–50.

501 Leigh Hunt, *Autobiography*, 1850, 56.

Greek to win The Browne Medal competition with “an ode in imitation of Sappho” soon after he arrived in Cambridge early in November 1791.⁵⁰² The ode was published in *Musae Cantabrigienses* (1810), and, significantly, Coleridge’s Greek ode was one of the first works of a Romantic poet that the newly established *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* derided as proving those poets’ little Latin and less Greek, in a polemical review contributed by John Wilson. For an accomplished Greek scholar under the supervision of the Neoclassicist Lockhart as editor, it was easy for Wilson to find fault with the Greek composition of a young student in a review that

[...] for ever blasted his [Coleridge’s] character as a scholar; all the rules of that language being therein perpetually violated.⁵⁰³

When the young Radical Coleridge wrote his Heroic Sonnets in praise of other Radicals and democrats (Joseph Priestley, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, R.B. Sheridan, Charles Stanhope, Marquis de La Fayette), he did not only make free use of Milton’s equally Radical Heroic Sonnets of the Fairfax, Cromwell, Vane group and their classical rhetorical structure (*invocatio, dynamis, preces*). He also read Milton’s Greek models, chiefly Pindar, in the original.⁵⁰⁴ Little wonder that the conservative advocates of the Classical Tradition, in search of a clearly defined enemy frontline, would not have this fact true.

We have already mentioned the Oxford classics professor Edward Copleston’s defence of a traditional formal university education in Greek and Latin against the aspersions of a series of satirical articles in the *Edinburgh Review* (1808–1809). In these, Sydney Smith, Richard Payne Knight and other Whigs poured ridicule upon the pedantry, uselessness, and dead routine of teaching the merely technical aspects of Greek and Latin as well as Greek and Roman authors, to the neglect of their still useful “spirit and genius”.⁵⁰⁵ Lifeless learning of passages by heart, the reviewers argued, replaced a vital modern understanding of the classics and advanced nothing but social foppery, “as an idol for worship”.⁵⁰⁶ It was this critique of a formal university education in the classics for the maintenance of a social rank, defended by the Tory Copleston and his Tory friend William Gifford, that the Romantics endorsed, rather than denying the modern relevance of a profound knowledge of the Classical Tradition. Classics in good translations might do as well, provided that, unlike Henry Stewart’s two-volume

502 Coleridge, *Collected Works*, XVI. I. I. 72–84.

503 Christopher North [John Wilson] in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (October 1817), 12, footnote. Incorrectly quoted in: Coleridge, *Collected Works*, XVI. I. I. 73.

504 Kurt Schlüter, *Polyhymnia: Demokratische Heldenverehrung nach antikem Vorbild in Jugendgedichten von S.T. Coleridge*, 12–16.

505 *Edinburgh Review*, 14 (April 1809), 189.

506 *Ibid.*

translation of Sallust (1806), they were elegant, reader-friendly, and not swamped in ponderous and voluminous erudite commentaries:

The translation itself, which fills about one fifth part of the huge volumes before us, is insulated by vast masses of dissertation and annotation; through some part of which it is necessary for us to work our way before we can get at the main body.⁵⁰⁷

In his two Elia-essays on Christ's Hospital, "Recollections of Christ's Hospital" (1813 and 1818) and "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago" (1820 and 1823), Charles Lamb's literary persona Elia paints a lively portrait of what Lamb remembered Christ's Hospital to have taught him, including Xenophon and Plato, Greek and Latin, and the sound erudition and wide reading he had acquired there.⁵⁰⁸ Although the free wit and wild mixture of his classical and non-classical references are typically Romantic, radically different from Gifford or Mathias or Copleston, Lamb's knowledge of the classics is undeniable. The New Unitarian College at Hackney in London which Hazlitt attended (from 1793) also taught the classics, though for the special purpose of training boys for the Nonconformist ministry. And although Hazlitt, like Coleridge, refused to follow his father's profession, the school made him a voracious reader, including the classics. It was Hazlitt who suggested the classical Latin title of Hunt's satire *Ultra-Crepidarius*. Hunt's references invalidated Gifford's reproach of the lack of a classical education; but the shortness and nature of the notes, demonstratively abstaining from quoting parallel passages from the Latin satirists, showed the Romantics' programme of overcoming the Classical Tradition as cultivated by the Neoclassicists and formally taught in public schools and universities. Hazlitt's essay "On Classical Education", published in *The Round Table* (1817), welcomed the study of the classics as "humanizing" and "educating" mankind, teaching them altruism, strength of mind, liberal views, elegance of style, and useful knowledge, but turned against a mere study of classical languages that produces pedants.⁵⁰⁹ Hazlitt's model example was his first biographer and life-long friend, a convert from Toryism, the highly successful and widely read Radical reformer William Cobbett, editor of *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register* (1802–1835) and author of *Rural Rides* (1830). The son of a farm labourer, born at Farnham, Surrey, in 1763, Cobbett was almost completely self-educated and developed a vigorous plain style, one free from affectation, loose, irregular, brisk, and bold, independent of the Ciceronian prose requirements of the Classical Tradition. An original writer in an original style, Cobbett posed as having been bred "at the plough-tail" and demonstrated his enmity to a formal classical

507 Edinburgh Review, 11 (January 1808), 414.

508 Charles Lamb, Elia, Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago, 1823, in: Works, I. 23–44. The essay had first appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine in 1813.

509 Hazlitt, The Round Table, Of Classical Education, in: Complete Works, IV. 4–6.

education, which, however, did not exclude his voracious private reading, including the classics in translations. This explains both his own and Hazlitt's tribute to independence of mind and reading, which they acknowledged to have acquired from the classics. Hazlitt on Cobbett:

A celebrated political writer of the present day, who is a great enemy to classical education, is a remarkable instance both of what can and what cannot be done without it.⁵¹⁰

The Romantic Period was the last epoch in post-medieval cultural history when the Classical Tradition was still generally known among authors, either from school or from private study. The self-fashioning of the Burns and Hoggs and Clares as untaught shepherd-poets or ploughman-poets corresponded to the Romantic view of Shakespeare as an untaught child of nature, and was mere poetological programme and *mise en scène*. Burns, Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Hogg, and Cobbett knew the Classical Tradition, either from school or from private reading in translations. Jane Austen, Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, Mary Robinson, Felicia Hemans, and Dorothy Wordsworth, who, as women, were taught practical modern rather than classical languages at school, nevertheless also read and knew the classical texts. Mary Shelley even learned ancient and modern Greek from a private tutor. Thus, the Romantics' break with the Classical Tradition, though part of their proclaimed programme of originality and social progress, was not a total rupture. In a study of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's aversion from classical rhetoric, rhetorical and psychoanalytical and poststructuralist approaches have been combined to show that the poets' "aversion" and "repression" did not overcome, but merely distanced classical rhetoric in the sense of *paraleipsis* or *preterition*: a shift of emphasis, a putting aside, a turning away that was also a dwelling.⁵¹¹ The repressed tradition of classical rhetoric would force its way back in both the later Wordsworth and Coleridge as well as in the younger generation of Romantic poets. The Romantics studied the classics for the education of the heart rather than the exercise of the understanding, rather for freedom of thought than instruction in the rules of writing, strongly future-oriented rather than past-bound both in political and poetological outlook. This allowed the reading of Greek and Latin literature in modern translations. Hazlitt's quotation of Pope's praise of the universality and serenity of the classics,⁵¹² together with Wordsworth's complaint of the specialized and hectic modern world,⁵¹³ concur in Hazlitt's strong recommendation

510 Ibid. IV. .5

511 J. Douglas Kneale, *Romantic Aversions: Aftermaths of Classicism in Wordsworth and Coleridge*, Liverpool 1999, 1–10.

512 Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1711, lines 181–184, 189–192, in: *Poems*, 150.

513 Wordsworth, *The world is too much with us*, 1807, in: *Poetical Works*, 206.

of a future self-education in the classics, without the formal training of a classical education producing old-style pedants and philologists. Hazlitt left no doubt that this “conversing with the mighty dead” should liberate the human mind instead of confining it in dead commonplaces, and that, consequently, it was indispensable for the formation of the whole man (as opposed to specialized skills). John Henry Newman was later to repeat this argument in his nine discourses on *The Idea of a University* (1852), giving his conservatism a modern twist:

The study of the Classics is less to be regarded as an exercise of the intellect, than as ‘a discipline of humanity’. [...] It gives men liberal views; it accustoms the mind to take an interest in things foreign to itself; to love virtue for its own sake; to prefer fame to life, and glory to riches; and to fix our thoughts on the remote and permanent, instead of narrow and fleeting objects. [...] Rome and Athens filled a place in the history of mankind, which can never be occupied again.⁵¹⁴

Hazlitt’s distinction between “useful knowledge”, which gives pleasure to the mind, and modern specialized “knowledge of useful things”, as in surgery and wound-dressing, led to his refutation of Peacock’s denigration of the role of poetry in the modern world, which Percy Shelley had already attacked in his long *Defence of Poetry* (MS 1821). Hazlitt cut a long argument short by turning the reproach of disease against the Neoclassicists themselves. Humane studies are superior to artisan or medical studies, because man lives in the world, not in a hospital.

In Hazlitt’s judgment, Gifford was the exact opposite of the naturally elegant Cobbett, a studied philological pedant who “merely understands the mechanical and instrumental part of learning”, and who has “no pretensions to be thought a man of genius, of taste, or even of general knowledge”, a “critic of the last age” specialized in editions of the classics, “who scans his sentences instead of weighing his sense”. Believing that “Tory writers are classical and courtly” and that “Whig reformers must be persons of low birth and breeding”, Hazlitt’s Gifford stuck to the Classical Tradition as a Tory prison for confining liberal minds:

He believes that modern literature should wear the fetters of classical antiquity; that truth is to be weighed in the scales of opinion and prejudice; that power is equivalent to right; that genius is dependent on rules; that taste and refinement of language consist in *word-catching*.⁵¹⁵

Hazlitt’s equation of Toryism and the Classical Tradition was, of course, a polemical simplification of complex facts. Peacock, champion of the Classical

514 Hazlitt, *The Round Table, Of Classical Education*, in: *Complete Works*, IV. 4.

515 Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age, Mr Gifford, 1825*, in: *Complete Works*, XI. 115.

Tradition and one of the best Greek scholars of the age, was a Radical Whig. And his friend and political sympathizer Percy Shelley was a Romantic, whom Peacock taught better Greek and derided for his bad university-taught “semi-barbarous dialect of Anglo-Saxonized Latin”,⁵¹⁶ notwithstanding Shelley’s aristocratic birth and Eton and Oxford education. Little Latin and less Greek was a standard argument against the Romantics, be it true or false. In that respect, Peacock sided with his Whig party friend Hazlitt and demanded that classical learning should not be academic philological pedantry. In the Desmond episode of Peacock’s *Melincourt* (1817), Mr Vamp-Gifford appears as just such a pedant (and corrupt government critic). And Desmond’s tale of his life comments on his classical studies as inspired by a true love of literature and wisdom rather than by the linguistic niceties of a mere pasticheur vamping up fragments of the Classical Tradition:

“I delighted in the poets of Greece and Rome, but I thought that the *igneus vigor et coelestis origo* of their conceptions and expressions was often utterly lost sight of, in the microscopic inspection of philological minutiae. I studied Greek, as the means of understanding Homer and Aeschylus: I did not look on them as mere secondary instruments to the attainment of a knowledge of their language.”⁵¹⁷

Peacock’s undated holograph draft of a prospectus entitled “Classical Education” may have had Gifford in mind when the author affirmed that the young mind is most effectively educated by “an intimate acquaintance with the poets, philosophers, and historians of antiquity”, a reading pleasure spoiled by pedantic teachers of Greek and Latin:

In fact it too frequently happens that the instructors of youth aim only at communicating the knowledge of the words and rules of a language, without exciting the taste of the student to penetrate into the beauties of the authors who have written in it: and instead of leading him forward by an easy and pleasant progress, involve him in the first instance in studies so dry, disgusting, and repulsive that the first ideas he associates with classical literature are those of weariness, pain, and privation.⁵¹⁸

When, in 1821, De Quincey met Keats’s friend Richard Woodhouse, he told him a story explaining why he had broken off his studies in Oxford, reported in Woodhouse’s manuscript cause book recently published in an unabridged version. De Quincey was excellent in the classical languages, but hated his tutors’ fixation on difficulties of grammar and textual cruxes rather than focussing on a classical author’s beauty, spirit, and meaning. He passed his Latin examination

516 Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, 1818, chapter 1, in: *Novels*, 357.

517 Peacock, *Melincourt*, chapter 13, in: *Novels*, 170. Peacock saw his political adversary Gifford as spoiling the cause of the Classical Tradition by his sourness and pedantry, hence his portrait as Mr Gall in *Headlong Hall* (1816).

518 Peacock, *Classical Education*, in: *Works*, VIII. 429.

with distinction, but was disappointed when asked to answer philological questions concerning Greek texts in English rather than Greek, and left Oxford. “When the time came he was *non inventus*”.⁵¹⁹ He wanted to speak Greek, not construe Greek sentences. If this is truth mixed with fiction, its critique of a stagnated academic Classical Tradition is typical of self-styled “modern” Romantic authors of a “new school”.

The same critique was advanced in Bulwer-Lytton’s *Pelham* (1828), a narrative that stresses the satirical element of the then fashionable “silver fork novel”. Retrospectively, the eponymous hero, a converted Byronic dandy and the novel’s first-person narrator, remembers his school time in Eton as marked by a mere mechanical learning of Latin and Greek by rote, neither acquiring a love of classical antiquity nor a knowledge of English modernity, English history, and English literature. The standard Romantic reproach to the traditional aristocratic education of boys in the Classical Tradition was its lifelessness, dustiness, and obsolescence, a kind of life-in-death. By the age of twenty-five, Pelham has consequently forgotten all his mummified Greek and Latin. And Pelham’s friend Lord Vincent, superficial and reckless, parades his aristocratic education in volleys of disconnected Latin quotations without, however, having acquired any “*humanitas*” from his “*humaniora*”. In his brilliant arrogance, he derides children who learn no classical languages as mere “Latinless young lubbers”.⁵²⁰ As a Tory candidate canvassing for a seat in parliament, knowledge of classical languages and literatures was a part of conservative self-fashioning, theatrical *mise en scène* rather than true interest and erudition, whereas Pelham, as his telling name indicates,⁵²¹ is a candidate for the Whigs and need not parade his classical education. Thus, a distinction was polemically established between the teaching of the Classical Tradition and knowledge of the Classical Tradition, against their traditionalist Augustan and Neoclassical identification. Bulwer-Lytton’s historical novel *Rienzi* (1835), which imagined the early Renaissance Roman Revolution of 1347 in terms of the French Revolution of 1789, projected this distinction into the early fourteenth century. The plebeian protagonist Cola di Rienzi, ambitious and profoundly read in the classics, bitterly reprimands the arrogance and ignorance of the aristocratic Colonna. In their habitual fixation on the past and on their pleasures, these obsolete aristocrats have forgotten both their Latin and their duty of caring for the people:

519 Robert Morrison (ed.), Richard Woodhouse’s Cause Book: The Opium-Eater, the Magazine Wars, and the London Literary Scene in 1821, *Harvard Library Bulletin*, Cambridge MA 1998, vol. 9, no. 3, 33.

520 Bulwer-Lytton, *Pelham*, 1828, in: *Novels and Romances in Ten Volumes*, I. 52.

521 The Pelhams, father and two sons, had been eighteenth-century Whig politicians and Prime Ministers.

“They affect, dull souls, the knowledge of the past, play the patron, and misquote Latin over their cups.”⁵²²

Remembering his five fruitless terms 1829 – 1830 at Trinity College, Cambridge, William Makepeace Thackeray satirized the attitude of modern Oxbridge students in *Pendennis* (1848 – 50). When the novel’s titular hero, Arthur Pendennis, visits “Boniface College, Oxbridge”, he and his fellow students are much less interested in their subjects than in the business of becoming gentlemen. To them, literature is a means to an end. Pendennis’s later experience in the literary world gives a self-satirical portrait of the business of writing in an age of puffing or vicious reviews. Solid knowledge of Greek and Latin and a profound acquaintance with the Classical Tradition have yielded to histrionic superficiality, a desire to shine in fashionable society for profit and advancement. When, in 1842, General Sir Charles James Napier rather too brutally quelled an insurrection at Sindh in British India, he was reported to have sent a one-word Latin message to headquarters: “peccavi”, [“I have sinned”]. His pun served to show both his erudition and regret. Without a classical education, even an eclectic one, it was well nigh impossible to become a military officer, civil servant, politician, or Church leader.

Napier’s pun would have been stuff for one the satirical novels of the Victorian “snobographer” Thackeray. Although Thackeray – like Lockhart – despised and satirized Bulwer-Lytton as a Byronic fop and writer for profit and the masses, chiefly because he envied his rival’s success, his view of the decline of classical education in the early nineteenth century was much the same.

Another argument against the traditional higher education of boys, which Bulwer-Lytton advanced *Pelham*, was the detrimental effect of such an outdated education, “so ineffective with the many, so pernicious to the few”.⁵²³ Pelham’s Cambridge friend and protégé Christopher Clutterbuck is satirically portrayed as an example of the latter. Among the few who take their classical studies in Cambridge seriously, Clutterbuck ruins his health and loses all contact with present-day reality. Latin, not English, becomes his mother tongue. The position in the church which Pelham procures for him proves no safeguard against Clutterbuck’s ineptitude for the modern world. Henpecked, awkward, sickly, and dry as dust he drifts to his premature death. “Oh, the curse of an English education!”⁵²⁴

A factual instance of such a detrimental Cambridge education was seen in the young promising Romantic poet Henry Kirke White (1785 – 1806), a sizar at Cambridge, whom overwork brought to a premature death at twenty-one years

522 Bulwer-Lytton, Rienzi, 1835, ed. cit. IV. 2.

523 Bulwer-Lytton, *Pelham*, ed. cit. I. 184.

524 *Ibid.* I. 181.

of age. During his short stay at St John's College 1805 – 1806, where he died in his lodgings from overwork and consumption, White had distinguished himself in the classics and had twice come out first in his examinations. Robert Southey, who admired White's verses published in 1803, prepared a posthumous edition of White's works, prefaced by a memoir in which he anticipated Bulwer-Lytton's strictures on the educational anachronism of teaching classics in the traditional way.⁵²⁵ In the wake of the Oxonian Southey, Byron saw Cambridge, his own old-style university, as well as incompetent reviewers by rule as the butchers that had killed a young promising genius ranking next to Thomas Chatterton.⁵²⁶ In the eyes of the Romantics, knowledge of the Classical Tradition was desirable if supplemented by non-classical traditions and tempered by elegance as well as critical distance. The traditionally required learning by heart of dead classical authors, by contrast, preserved mere corpses and could prove destructive of natural health and genius:

The exercise which Henry [Kirke White] took was no relaxation, he still continued the habit of studying while he walked: and in this manner, while he was at Cambridge, committed to memory a whole tragedy of Euripides.⁵²⁷

Wordsworth's admirer De Quincey, for instance, fashioned himself as the victim of a traditional classical education even before he broke off his studies at Oxford. He refuted the imputation of his own ignorance of the Classical Tradition by suggesting that in 1802, at the age of seventeen, he ran away from his grammar school at Manchester partly because his headmaster was a pedant, who taught the boys Greek rules instead of Greek literary elegance. Lavishly praising his boy's knowledge of elegant Greek rhetoric, he staged himself as having deserted school with a volume of Wordsworth in one pocket and a volume of Euripides in the other,⁵²⁸ intending to visit or even to live next to Wordsworth in Grasmere (which he did five years afterwards). The later opium eater, who could balance pleasure and pain and make such contrasts and counterpoints the structural principle of his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821), could also reconcile English rustic and Greek classical speech. And when, in his essay "On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts" (1827 – 1854), De Quincey implicitly confessed his *l'art pour l'art* through his Romantic speaker's representation of the murderer as a Romantic artist regressed into original brutality; he made his

525 Southey (ed.), *The Remains of Kirke White, with an Account of his Life*, London 1807, I. 44 – 58.

526 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1809, 831 – 843, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, I. 255; and Byron, *Letter to Robert Charles Dallas*, 27 August 1811, in: *Letters and Journals*, II. 82.

527 Southey, *Remains*, I. 48.

528 De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, 1822, in: *Works*, II. 17 – 18.

speaker a highly cultivated man proficient in both Greek and Latin. Hence, it is small wonder that De Quincey's works were unfavourably reviewed in the Tory press, so that, in the *John Bull Magazine*, the Tory classicist William Maginn ranked De Quincey as a hanger-on with the ignorant Lake School, aggressively counting him among "The Humbugs of the Age".⁵²⁹ In the hilarious symposium atmosphere of "Noctes Ambrosianae", Maginn and Wilson continued this attack on *Blackwood's* former heretical contributor De Quincey by making him a guest at Ambrose's Tavern and having his Confessions parodied in dialogue by the Ettrick Shepherd James Hogg, in his Confessions of the symptoms of a vulgar hangover.⁵³⁰ In the *Maga*, several contributors wrote complete parodies of De Quincey's Confessions, from Confessions of a Footman to Confessions of a Cantab. The most accomplished of these is Thomas Colley Grattan's "Confessions of an English Glutton" (1823), referring back to the Greek satirist Hipponax, the supposed inventor of parody, who had portrayed Achilles as a glutton in his parody of the *Iliad*. Grattan here pinpointed De Quincey's Romantic individualism, egotism, self-scrutiny, affectation of spontaneity, and idiosyncratic Shandean narrative, to the detriment of common sense, altruism, decorum, and healthy general nature. Confidentially whispering one's confessions into the ears of the public, as De Quincey paradoxically put it, challenged both reason and good taste, approximating a parade of madness. Exhibiting one's regressions into the nightmares and tears of childhood associated itself with the primitivism and self-scrutiny of the Lake Poets, in whose company in Grasmere De Quincey had chosen to live. Observing oneself in spontaneous and sketchy, jumpy writing, and leaving it at that, contradicted the Neoclassical demand for maturity, control, and finish. Grattan's Swifitean speaker reveals himself as chaotic psychopath, infantile liar, immoral poetaster, and impostor greedy for fame and gain. As such, he may be read as a combined caricature of De Quincey and Wordsworth. All that probing into origins is what Thomas Carlyle was later to brand as morbid self-consciousness, as he took recourse to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment that he admired for its cult of common sense and adulthood, yet repudiated for its lack of faith and heroism. Grattan's parody supported all these objections that the Neoclassical adversaries of Romanticism would raise against De Quincey's *Confessions*:

This is confessedly the age of confession, – the era of individuality – the triumphant reign of the first person singular. Writers no longer talk in generals. All their observations are bound in the narrow compass of self. They think only of number one. Ego

529 [William Maginn], *The Humbugs of the Age*, in: *John Bull Magazine*, 1 (1824), 21. Also see Margaret Russett, *De Quincey's Romanticism*, Cambridge 1997, passim.

530 *Noctes Ambrosianae*, XII, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 14 (October 1823), 485–486.

sum is on the tip of every tongue and the nib of every pen, but the remainder of the sentence is unuttered and unwritten. The rest of his species is now nothing to any one individual.⁵³¹

Grattan saw De Quincey's confessions of his opium addiction in a line with Rousseau's confessions of the origin of his masochistic inclinations, Ireland's confessions of his Shakespearean forgeries, Hazlitt's confessions of his pursuits of a young woman, Charles Lamb's confessions of his addiction to alcohol, and the whole lot of self-exploring and self-lacerating Romantic *journaux intimes*. To Grattan's eyes, they bore witness both to their authors' lack of good classical taste and discipline and to their bad classical knowledge, as when his erratic speaker confuses the battle of Salamis with Ovid's nymph Salmacis:

Since, then, the whole tribe of which I am an unworthy member, have one by one poured out their souls into the confiding and capacious bosom of the public; since the goodly list of scribblers, great and small, from the author of *Eloise* to the inventor of *Voltigern* – since the Wine-drinker, the Opium-eater, the Hypochondriac, and the Hypercritic, have in due succession “told their fatal stories out” [...]⁵³²

Parodies of Romantic texts and poets usually imply the unjust reproach of ignorance of the classics and total desertion of the Classical Tradition, which they claim for themselves. They viciously construct situations which suggest classical associations to the learned reader, but, instead, lapse into banality or mystic obscurity. Catherine Maria Fanshawe's fine “Fragment in Imitation of Wordsworth”⁵³³ makes use of Wordsworth's symbolic identification of growing men and growing trees. In irregular stanzas and simple diction, her speaker imagines his little five-year-old prophetic boy Will metamorphosed into a tree, initiating a Romantic vision of all nature's unity. But, instead of drawing upon Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which classical learning would have suggested, he lapses from rustic simplicity into rustic banality. Fanshawe avails herself of the satirical technique of Popean anti-climax or βαθος, “the art of falling”:

It were a blessed sight to see
That child become a willow tree,
His brother trees among.
He'd be ten times as tall as me,
And live three times as long.⁵³⁴

531 [Grattan] in: Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 13 (January 1823), 86–93. Also see Kent – Ewen (eds.), *Romantic Parodies 1797–1831*, 302–303.

532 Ibid. 86.

533 Fanshawe (1765–1834), date of composition unknown. First published posthumously in: William Harness's *Memorials of Miss Catherine Maria Fanshawe*, London 1865, and reprinted in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, II. 354–55.

534 Ibid. stanza 6, II. 355.

Notwithstanding such polemics suggesting blank ignorance and boorish stupidity, the Romantics knew the Classical Tradition. But their cult of originality obliged them either to ignore it, to marginalize it, or enthusiastically to romanticize it into daydreams and nightmares, or radically to change its myths and legends and *matières*. This may have been one reason for the Romantics of the Hunt circle (Leigh Hunt, Barry Cornwall, Percy and Mary Shelley) resuming the tradition of the Jacobean court masque, because this late Renaissance genre traditionally created its own myths and allegories, adding new gods and mortals to the classical ones. In Hazlitt's masque *The Descent of Liberty* (1815), the visionary poet tells his Goddess Liberty of former poets from Greece, Rome, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance, whose prophetic works and myths still

[...] can raise to sight
Happiest visions of delight,
By themselves perhaps to be
After made reality.⁵³⁵

The Prospero-like magic of Hunt's poet then parades these poets in a masque show and mixes the myths of the Classical Tradition ("Jupiter, the Muses, Venus, Apollo, Mercury, Cupid and Psyche, &") with "creatures of the fancy ("Ariel, Caliban, Comus, &").⁵³⁶ We have already noted the mythopoetic imagination of the Preromantic poets, who broke the rigid pattern of school-taught classical mythology by personifying abstracts such as Variety, Mercy, Hope, and Adversity as gods and goddesses – a recourse to the Jacobean court masque and a technique adopted by Milton and Coleridge in their Heroic Sonnets.⁵³⁷ The most radical deconstructionist and syncretizer of myths, however, was William Blake, who turned Zeus into Urizen, Prometheus into Orc and Fuzon, and so on, and altered the outcome of the myths in the sense of his millenary vision. In addition, he mixed classical myths with alienated Christian, Germanic and Celtic myths, and, above all, with his own visions. Originally fluent myths, memories of the world beyond communicated in culturally different tales, had been frozen and hammered into dogmas of *ancien régime* tyranny, and stood in need of melting and mixing. Blake's Radical or Jacobin line in *Jerusalem* (MS 1804–1820) condensed his mythopoetic Romantic programme and has been much quoted: "I must Create a System, or be enslaved by another man's".⁵³⁸ Percy Shelley, kin to

535 Leigh Hunt, *The Descent of Liberty: A Masque*, 1815, lines 491–494, in: *Selected Writings*, V. 112–113.

536 *Ibid.* V. 112–113.

537 Schlüter, *Polyhymnia*, 79–85.

538 Plate 10 line 20, in: *Complete Poems*, 676. There are some striking similarities between Blake's, Wackenroder's, and Tiecks hostility to system and Neoplatonic advocacy of freely floating myths in a non-dogmatic Romantic world religion; compare *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*, ed. cit. pp. 43–47. See also Lilian R. Furst, *Other*

Blake in many respects including his antinomianism and Gnosticism, also changed classical myths, though less radically. His preface to *The Revolt of Islam* (1817) claimed mythopoetic and formal originality while simultaneously admitting his vast reading in “the poetry of ancient Greece and Rome, and modern Italy, and our own country” and defending his adoption of the Spenserian stanza.⁵³⁹ His vast learning might have allowed him a restriction of his myths to those of the Classical Tradition, but his typically Romantic mixture of classical and oriental myths could not possibly be truly original. His preface to his masque *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) disavowed both Hesiod’s *Theogony* and Aeschylus’s lost *Prometheus Unbound* for being too legalistic, pessimistic, and loyal to Jupiter’s *ancien régime* of tyranny, and rewrote the myth of Prometheus according to his own Radical millenary vision. Peacock satirized him in *Melincourt* (1817), as Mr Forester in romantic love with Anthelia Melincourt, adulterating the serenity of classical literature with the wild Gothic fantasies of Tasso and falling into fits of infectious enthusiasm “when any allusion is made to ancient Greece”.⁵⁴⁰ The further satirical implication is that Forester-Shelley, though a declared advocate of women’s liberation, cannot get rid of his aristocratic feudalism. Forester-Shelley confines women’s education in the Classical Tradition to being leisurely promenaded through beautiful, picturesque, or sublime landscapes, not crediting them with sufficient analytical reason to read serious literature, Homer, Sophocles, Virgil, Horace, or Ovid, in the Greek and Latin originals:

“[...] how delightful should I think the task of conducting the lovely aspirant through the treasures of Grecian genius! – to wander hand-in-hand with such a companion among the valleys and fountains of Ida, and by the banks of the eddying Scamander; through the islands of Calypso and the gardens of Alcinous; to the rocks of the Scythian desert; to the caverned shores of the solitary Lemnos; and to the fatal sands of Troezen: – to kindle in such scenes the enthusiasm of such a mind [...]”⁵⁴¹

John Keats was violently attacked for his alterations and contaminations of classical with other myths and tales. If we compare Peacock’s verse tale *Rhododaphne* (1818) with Keats’s verse tale *Lamia* (MS 1819), or even with Keats’s ballad “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” (MS 1820), we find major differences in the use of sources, handling of plot, and dénouement. This is the more striking because the characters and the magic theme are similar and Keats’s debt to Peacock in the characterizations of his type of the suffering helpless *femme*

Voices: Wackenroder’s Herzenergießungen and the Creation of a Romantic Mythology, in: *The Romantic Imagination: Literature and Art in England and Germany*, ed. Frederick Burwick – Jürgen Klein, Amsterdam 1996, 269 – 285.

539 P.B. Shelley, *The Revolt of Islam*, Preface, 1817, in: *Poetical Works*, 34.

540 Peacock, *Melincourt*, chapter 15, in: *Novels*, 190.

541 *Ibid.* 189.

fatale (Rhododaphne-Lamia) and the suffering helpless lover (Antemion-Knight), both victims of fate, is obvious. The Neoclassicist Peacock prefixed a learned preface and added learned notes to his long narrative. There, he insists on his exclusive use of classical sources for his magic tale, the Circe episode in Homer, the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, the *Satyricon* of Petronius, Pliny on Menander, Pausanias on Praxiteles and his beautiful hetaera Phryne as well as Nero's removal of Praxiteles's statue of Eros. Keats marginalizes the Classical Tradition by foregrounding Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) and mixing him with Oriental Tales popular in Romanticism. The clearly arranged plot of *Rhododaphne* is located in a city of classical Boeotia, Phryne's birthplace Thespieae, near the foot of Mount Helicon; the darkly embroiled plot of Keats's *Lamia* is placed somewhere on the island of Crete, with a mixture of Classical, Germanic, and Celtic mythology as well as English superstitions. Unlike Peacock, Keats would never, in a learned preface, have appealed to and presupposed an erudite "classical reader", who expected learned notes, and would never have quoted Pindar's elitist lines on the classical poet, let alone in Greek:

Σοφος ο πολλα ειδως φυα
 μαθοντες δε λαβροι
 παγγλωσσια, κορακες ως, ακραντα γαρυετον
 Διος προς ορνιχα θειου.⁵⁴²

Pindar's comparison of the true gifted poet to the eagle, the god-like bird of Zeus, in contrast to a multiplicity of noisy chattering crows, anticipated Horace's elitist concept of the rare true poet untainted by mediocrity. His lines, which Keats might have read in Gilbert West's translation of 1749, would have clashed with Keats's anti-elitist and anti-feudal Radicalism in politics as well as in poetics.

To conclude this chapter on the Classical Tradition's *ancien régime* elitism in its battle against popular Radical culture, it should be added that the counter-revolutionary Tories also launched a popular culture in order to spread their conservative ideas among the people ignorant of Greek and Latin.⁵⁴³ Tory periodicals of the type of the *British Critic*, the *Anti-Jacobin*, the *Quarterly Review*, and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* required too much learning to reach the wider populace and fortify it against republican and revolutionary propaganda. Popular Radical pamphlets like Hone's had to be met with popular Tory pamphlets such as William Jones's "John Bull" series of broadsheet tracts, circulated by John Reeves's Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers (founded in 1792 against the Radical activism

542 Pindar, *Olympian Odes*, II. 86–88. Quoted in: Peacock, *Rhododaphne*, or, *The Thessalian Spell*, Preface, London 1818, like Attic Greek without accents.

543 Pascal Fischer, *Literarische Entwürfe des Konservativismus in England 1790–1805*, passim.

of the London Corresponding Society).⁵⁴⁴ Their problem was that they had to employ popular culture and literature to vilify popular culture and literature. The satires and invectives of their pamphlets attacked Radicalism and the “new schools” of Romanticism without recourse to the eristic models of the Classical Tradition, as in John Bowles’s invective entitled *The Spirit of Anti-Jacobinism for 1802*:

JACOBINISM [...] pervades every department of literature and insinuates itself into every branch of science. Corruption is its food, profligacy its recreation, and demolition the motive of its actions, and the business of its life.⁵⁴⁵

7) Sloth, Ignorance, or Imposture: The Claim of Originality and Inspiration

Harold Bloom’s Poststructuralist analysis of the Romantic poets’ “anxiety of influence”, their claim to poetical originality and prophetic vision due to a refusal to admit their unavoidable intertextuality, is not quite new. It elaborates upon what critics of Romanticism in the Romantic Period had already begun to observe. All Romantic vision was, in reality, a re-visioning and mixing of various classical and national traditions, much as Neoclassicism consisted in continued re-visioning of the Classical Tradition.⁵⁴⁶ Recent scholarship has confirmed this inherent insincerity of the pose of sincere writing, this basic artifice of the authentic in Romantic poetry.⁵⁴⁷ We know, for instance, that Coleridge’s hymn “Chamouny: The Hour before Sunrise” was neither composed in Switzerland (but in the Lake District) nor “involuntarily poured forth”, but was studiously written on the model of a German poem three weeks after Coleridge’s Scafell ascent.⁵⁴⁸ Charles Lamb indirectly admitted, through the essayistic confessions of his persona Elia, that authors writhed “under the toil of what is easy writing”.⁵⁴⁹ Romantic painting and engraving, too, were laborious processes, in which Caspar David Friedrich or William Turner would carefully assemble in the studio what they had pencilled under the open sky, and in which Blake would

544 Kevin Gilmartin, Counter-revolutionary Culture, in: *The Cambridge Companion to British Literature of the French Revolution in the 1790s*, 153–143.

545 *The Spirit of Anti-Jacobinism for 1802*, London 1802, IV, quoted in: Gilmartin, 142.

546 Bloom, *Shelley’s Mythmaking*, New Haven CT 1959; *The Visionary Company*, Ithaca, NY 1961; *The Anxiety of Influence*, Oxford and New York NY 1973.

547 Jacqueline Labbe, Revisiting the Egotistical Sublime, in: Beth Lau (ed.), *Fellow Romantics*, 17–38.

548 Duncan Wu (ed.), *Romanticism: An Anthology*, 677.

549 Charles Lamb, *Last Essays of Elia, Newspapers Thirty-Five Years Ago, 1833*, in: *Works*, II. 143. The essay was first published in *The Englishman’s Magazine*, October 1831.

rework and hammer his plates into semblances of spontaneity.⁵⁵⁰ Both Friedrich and Blake worked *lege artis*, following (and sometimes modifying) the techniques of their handicraft. Blake's Los, the sweating artist, would more than once fling down his hammer in rage and fury. In his hand-written annotations to the *Discourses* of Sir Joshua Reynolds delivered to the Royal Academy annually from 1769 to 1790, manifestoes of Neoclassical *ars graphica*, Blake polemicized against all earthbound learning from masters and against all mimetic art that was not enthusiastically inspired by the painter's prophetic inner eye. His marginalia were obviously formulated so as to be shown round and thus partook of the nature of public dispute. Against Reynolds's Neoclassical denigration of an irrational enthusiasm that he shared with Voltaire, Blake upheld a pure enthusiasm unrestrained by classical and Enlightenment philosophy:

Meer Enthusiasm is the All in All! Bacon's philosophy has Ruin'd England. Bacon is only Epicurus over again.⁵⁵¹

The Romantic artist and art philosopher Richard Payne Knight even declared originality and novelty to be the first source of our happiness in all domains of life and art, due to the fancy that allows us glimpses beyond the trodden paths of mere reality:

The source and principle of it [our happiness] is, therefore, *novelty*: the attainment of new ideas; the formation of new trains of thought; the renewal and extension of affections and attachments [...] and above all, the unlimited power of fancy in multiplying and varying the objects, the results, and the gratification of our pursuits beyond the bounds of reality [...]⁵⁵²

In his edition of the literary remains of the precocious and early deceased Cambridge poet Henry Kirke White, in which he made intense academic studies responsible for the death of a young genius, Robert Southey was proud to reprint White's praise of his *Thalaba* (1801) for following nature rather than imitating models. This applied to Southey's pose of inspired innovation and originality of inventions, myths, and metres, meaning his vaunted overcoming of the Classical Tradition, which earned *Thalaba* many Neoclassical taunts as seen in the *Edinburgh Review* and the *British Critic*. White's defence of Southey formulated a central doctrine of anti-classical Romantic poetics:

550 Mei-Ying Sung, *William Blake and the Art of Engraving*, London 2009.

551 Blake, *Annotations to Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses*, MSS ca 1808, in: *Complete Writings with Variant Readings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, London 1957, 1966, 456. "ενθουσιασμος" is the Greek equivalent to Latin "inspiratio", meaning a metaphysical visitation by the divine breath or spirit.

552 Knight, *An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste*, London 1805, 469; quoted in: Walter John Hipple, *The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque*, Carbondale IL 1957, 277.

The world naturally looks with suspicion on systems which, as they have been used to, men are apt to think cannot be improved upon. Southey never treads in the beaten track; his thoughts, while they are those of nature, carry that cast of originality which is the stamp and testimony of genius.⁵⁵³

White's Cambridge and Southey's Oxford erudition gave the lie to their proclamation of inspired original genius taught in nature rather than schools. Their Neoclassical critics had an easy task in exposing such Romantic self-fashioning and self-contradiction to public ridicule. Similarly, the Neoclassical *Blackwood's* editors knew perfectly well that both Burns's and Hogg's declared scorn of books was a mere anti-classical pose, and made fun of it. And they were keen to unmask the nature poetry of the Cockneys, Leigh Hunt and John Keats, as the artifacts of city poets unacquainted with real nature, their nature being copied from vases rather than valleys.⁵⁵⁴ The Romantic Disillusionists also demystified Romantic poetry by reducing it to sheer realities and artifice (Byron, Heine, Poe, Kleist, Hoffmann). Horace had taught that poetry is an art to be learned in a long tradition and a long process of intensive studies, but now, in the Romantic period, another difficulty had arisen. There were few Maecenases, but many poets, and the professional poet's hard daily work was increased by his difficult trade in a highly competitive book market. Byron's letters and journals give evidence of his hard work and of his monetary interests, which his aristocratic descent obliged him to conceal under a mask of ease. But Heine, who descended from a family of Jewish tradesmen, never denied his hard work on his publications any more than his monetary interests, dispensed with all inspirational poses, and only contradicted Horace insofar as modern times would not allow a work nine years of maturation in a drawer, "nonum prematur in annum".⁵⁵⁵ Thus, his *Ideen: Das Buch Le Grand* (1827) again undercut its Romantic Shandean form by a very matter-of-fact anti-Platonic view of things as they were:

Als Horaz dem Autor die berühmte Regel gab, sein Werk neun Jahre im Pult liegen zu lassen, hätte er ihm auch zu gleicher Zeit das Rezept geben sollen, wie man neun Jahre ohne Essen zubringen kann.⁵⁵⁶

In this respect, the Romantic Disillusionists pointed back to Neoclassicism and its distrust of metaphysical inspiration, as well as doubt about literary originality. In his Neoclassical moods, Byron would have agreed with Charles Caleb Colton's heroic couplets on the hypocrisy of Romantic claims and poses. Colton called upon the happy few (gifted rather than inspired) poets to rely on truth and

553 Southey (ed.), *The Remains of Henry Kirke White*, London 1807, II. 285.

554 *Noctes Ambrosianae*, XI, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 14 (August 1823), 241.

555 Horace, *Ars Poetica*, line 388.

556 Heine, *Ideen: Das Buch Le Gand*, 1827, in: *Sämtliche Schriften*, II. 290. Cf. Byron, Letter to Leigh Hunt, 22 October 1815, in: *Letters and Journals*, IV. 320.

common sense, in emulation of the Greeks and in continuation of the Classical Tradition:

Taught by plain Truth alone, and Common sense,
I make to inspiration *no* pretence,
Rare Gift! – to prove it, mark the Grecian’s page,
Th’ unrivalled wonder still of every age.⁵⁵⁷

One cause that the Neoclassicists diagnosed for a Romantic poet’s belief in his own inspiration and originality was his seclusion from the society of metropolitan literary circles and salons. In his review of Wordsworth’s *Excursion* (1814), Francis Jeffrey found fault with Wordsworth’s retirement to the solitude of the Lake District, a criticism that Byron repeated in his “Dedication” to *Don Juan* (MS 1818). Jeffrey combined his reproach of Wordsworth’s relapse to the childhood of man with the frequent image of a desertion from the one true literary creed to one of many petty heresies, the literary paganism that he dubbed the “Lake School”:

Long habits of seclusion, and an excessive ambition of originality, can alone account for the disproportion which seems to exist between this author’s taste and his genius; or for the devotion with which he has sacrificed so many precious gifts at the shrine of those paltry idols which he has set up for himself among his lakes and mountains.⁵⁵⁸

Another cause that the Neoclassicists identified has already been dealt with: lack of reason and madness combined with mendacity. Frere’s parody of Erasmus Darwin’s Preromantic, visionary, and often ecstatic didactic poem *The Botanic Garden* exposes a revolutionary Shandean speaker under the influence of madly confused thinking rather than divine inspiration:

Triumphs the Seer, and now secure observes
The kindling passions of the *rival* CURVES.⁵⁵⁹

And the Shandean speaker of Frere’s *Whistlecraft* (1817) explicitly or implicitly admits in his digressions that his inspiration comes from the bottle and that his haste in writing, in defiance of Horace and Boileau, is furthermore due to his unromantic greed for money from the bookseller. On the model of Swift’s Hack as speaker of *The Battle of the Books* (1704), Frere’s erratic speaker hurries to submit his manuscript to the publisher before he has time to narrate the outcome of the battle between monks and giants, in an unfinished (and ultimately ever open-ended) work. Inspired variety and *Entgrenzung* reveal themselves as

557 Colton, *Hypocrisy*, 1812, 209.

558 [Jeffrey] in: *Edinburgh Review*, 47 (November 1814), 3.

559 [Frere et al] in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 24 (23 April 1797), I. 177.

the uninspired hack-writings of an artisan incompetent in his craft of hammering out verses:

Our Giants' memoirs still remain on hand,
 For all my notions, being genuine gold,
 Beat out beneath the hammer and expand
 And multiply themselves a thousand fold
 Beyond the first idea that I plann'd;
 Besides, – this present copy must be sold:
 Besides, – I promis'd Murray t'other day,
 To let him have it by the tenth of May.⁵⁶⁰

James Hogg's parodies of Wordsworth are less aggressive, but point in the same direction. The speaker of *The Excursion* (1814) appears as a digressive Shandean writer without control of his pen, and his affirmations of honesty are discredited by obvious contradictions. In "James Rigg", the protagonist's simple speech is due to an apoplexy rather than natural originality, just as mining by dynamite gives the lie to his allegedly happy rustic countryside and just as the painful loss of his eyesight by a dynamite accident gives the lie to his alleged philosophical calmness.⁵⁶¹ William and Dorothy Wordsworth may be content with the memory of Tintern Abbey when they have left the scene, but James Rigg would hardly be content with the memory of his superior inward eye immediately after his accident. Neither is James Rigg a trustworthy original philosopher nor is Wordsworth a trustworthy narrator of facts and inspired poet of insights into universal truths.

Preromanticism had already initiated a break with the classical rules by re-discovering a body of poetry ranking above Greek and Latin antiquity, the Hebrew poetry of the Bible.⁵⁶² Divine prophetic inspiration transcended poetical artisanship and reanimated the time-honoured self-fashioning of the poet as a divinely inspired prophet and priest, a Miltonic rather than Virgilian or Ovidian *poeta vates*. In her seminal poem "Sensibility" (1782) Hannah More praised the most distinguished European scholar of Hebrew aesthetics, Robert Lowth, for his pioneering work on the sublimely irregular poetry of the Old Testament and for overcoming mere rule and reason by flights of prophetic inspiration.⁵⁶³ It is remarkable that, as a female writer, More would not assume the pose of the

560 Frere, *Whistlecraft*, 1817, 4. 56. 1–8 (final stanza), ed. cit. 61.

561 Hogg, *The Poetic Mirror*, James Rigg, 1816, in *Poetic Mirrors*, ed. cit. 67.

562 Murray Roston, *Prophet and Poet: The Bible and the Growth of Romanticism*, London 1965, and Rolf Lessenich, *Dichtungsgeschmack und althebräische Bibelpoesie im 18. Jahrhundert*, Cologne and Vienna 1967.

563 Lowth, *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum Praelectiones*, Oxford 1753. More will have read the Latin original of Lowth's Oxford lectures, before their translation by George Gregory, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, London 1787.

prophet-poet herself and replaced it by the Bluestockings' claim to true sensibility:

Illustrious LOWTH! For him the muses wove,
 Their fairest garland from their greenest grove.
 Tho' Latian bards had gloried in his name,
 When in full brightness burnt the Latian flame;
 Yet, fir'd with nobler hopes than transient Bays,
 He scorn'd the meed of perishable praise;
 Spurn'd the cheap wreath by human science won,
 Borne on the wing sublime of Amos' son;
 He seiz'd his mantle as the Prophet flew,
 And caught some portion of his spirit too.⁵⁶⁴

A standard argument against the male Romantic poets was that they substituted their lack of artistic command and controlling reason with a false pose of originality and inspiration. *Écriture automatique*, surrealistic visions and dreams, be they natural or drug-induced, should not replace the clear fountain of true classical inspiration, and untaught scribbling or "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" should not be allowed to replace the hard work below an easy and elegant surface, *ars est celare artem*. Richard Brinsley Sheridan's verse satire *Clio's Protest* (1771), aimed at an extemporized piece of occasional verse entitled *The Bath Picture*, possibly by the Della Cruscan poet Miles Peter Andrews, pointed out the difference between ease as a result of art and ease as a result of incompetence or carelessness. The modern Goddess of Dullness, not the classical Muse Clio, inspired that hastily and badly hammered verse. Sheridan's lines echo a line from Pope's Horatian satire on mass production, "The Mob of Gentlemen who wrote with Ease":⁵⁶⁵

You write with ease, to show your breeding;
 But *easy writing*'s vile *hard reading*.⁵⁶⁶

This demand for ease as a result of hard work and craftsmanship is also the core of Byron's exordium to his satire *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), where the poet announces his retreat from exotic dreams and irrational visions:

Then let us soar to-day, no common theme,
 No Eastern vision, no distempered dream

564 More, *Sacred Dramas* [...]. To which is added, *Sensibility, a Poem*, London 1782, 270. More refers to Lowth's *Isaiah: A New Translation*, London 1778, a congenial translation of Hebrew prophetic poetry into English rhythmical prose (prose-poetry).

565 Pope, *The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated*, 1737, 108, in: *Poems*, 639. Pope here referred to the outmoded sloppy and indecent Restoration wits like Rochester.

566 R.B. Sheridan, *Clio's Protest*, posth. 1819, in: *Plays and Poems*, III. 100 and 117.

Inspires – our path, though full of thorn, is plain:
Smooth be the verse, and easy be the strain.⁵⁶⁷

In the Pope and Bowles controversy, Byron again claimed Pope and the Classical Tradition as a model against Romantic efforts at originality, drawing upon himself the wrath of Percy Shelley with his Romantic concept of original genius:

I certainly do not think Pope, or *any* writer, a fit model for any succeeding writer; if he, or they, should be determined to be so, it would all come to a question as to under *what forms* mediocrity should perpetually reproduce itself; for true genius vindicates to itself an exemption from all regard to whatever has gone before [...]⁵⁶⁸

The Proteus Byron's elitist stance, which he occasionally assumed against the Romantics and which Shelley tried to meet with the argument of intrinsic non-hereditary quality, was not only that of the aristocrat, but also that of Horace and Neoclassicism in general. To Neoclassical eyes, poets from the populace ignorant of traditions and models writing poetry for the populace equally ignorant of traditions and models were anathema. Mathias's satire *The Grove* (1798) returned to the classical myth of the feast and judgment of Apollo attended by his priest Chryses and informed by Fame. Crowds of ignorant popular writers of poetry or prose flock to Apollo's grove, where they receive Lethe and oblivion instead of Ambrosia and immortality. They seek to substitute a mere pose of inspiration for lack of art, whereas the few good modern literati live in neglect and poverty, not least due to the time's lack of true Maecenas, who had still sponsored Dryden and Pope:

For see where VANITY, beneath her wings,
Whole legions of her *darling children* brings;
Infatuate and dull, by her inspir'd,
The host presume they are by CYNTHUS fir'd.⁵⁶⁹

In the case of Romantic women poets, who were less inclined to visionary poses than to the theatricality of being ablaze with poetic fire, attacks were even more mordant. The female dress of the period easily caught fire, and satirists suggested that this was the only true fire a woman could be exposed to and that a woman was all dress and show. Against the background of traditionalist male views of the female character, the staginess of Romantic poetology lent itself to such ridicule, as in the case of Della Cruscan women poets:

So, if the wintry blaze too near they sit,
(The wintry blaze as dangerous as *wit*),

567 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1809, lines 23–26, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, I. 230.

568 P.B. Shelley, *Letter to Byron*, 4 May 1821, in: *Complete Works*, X. 265–266.

569 Mathias, *The Grove: A Satire*, 13.

Some little spark, "a trifle light as air,"
 Kindles along the apron of the fair,
 Her silken petticoat, her linen gown,
 Buffont, and cap, and stays, and furs, and down,
 Stuff'd rumps, and greasy wool, and bones of whale,
 Flame out, and crackling, catch the fanning gale,
 Now far and wide the conflagration strays,
 Till all *my lady* trembles in a blaze.⁵⁷⁰

The implicit reproach to the Romantic poets, most obviously in the case of the writers of literary ballads, is intellectual sloth and stagy affectation combined with ignorance of the Classical Tradition. Romantic literature appears as facile literature, as in Désiré Nisard's polemic against the French Romantics, *Contre la littérature facile* (1833). Polish and finish, accomplished poetical artisanship, this is the positive aspect of the fault for which the Romantics satirized the Neoclassical poets of the "old school". From their perspective, polish and finish were seen as the result of a pedestrian lack of imaginative flights in strict observance of elaborate scansion, for instance in Leigh Hunt's ridicule of the regular gait and smooth ground of Gifford the shoe on the pavement of Ashburton, who

[...] walked through the world, if with not many graces,
 At least in good steps and calm classical paces.⁵⁷¹

It was on the same ground that Heine, though himself advocating a return to the Classical Tradition as an antidote to Romantic Neoplatonism, attacked his personal enemy August Graf von Platen. Platen's attention to classical form and scansion struck Heine as merely technical, uninspired, and ungifted, the stately movements of a heavy poetical bird like a lame ostrich (as opposed to a soaring eagle). Heine viciously elaborated on the image of the ostrich, with its head stuck in the sand and its bottom up, to deprecate Platen as a homosexual, taking revenge for Platen's vilification of Heine's mutilated penis as a Jew. In the heat of unsavoury attacks and counter-attacks, neither poet saw his kinship with the other as Romantic Disillusionists and members of persecuted minorities. Thus, Platen's misrepresentation of Heine as an untaught Romantic jingler and pretender to inspiration was as much dictated by personal hatred as was Heine's misrepresentation of Platen as an uninspired and laborious versifier, a mere "Altflicker" or formal imitator of the Greeks and Romans. Nice slavish ob-

570 Anon., *Modern Poets: A Satire*, London 1791, 23–24.

571 Hunt, *Ultra-Crepidarius*, 1823, lines 146–147, in: *Selected Writings*, VI. 41. This repeats a stricture which William Hazlitt had made in his invective prose *Letter to William Gifford*, London 1819, *passim*.

servance of outdated rules as a substitute for lack of inspiration and natural ease was a standard Romantic argument against self-proclaimed Neoclassicists:

Mit seinen schönen Federn ohne Schwungkraft, mit seinen schönen Versen ohne poetischen Flug, bildet er den Gegensatz zu jenem Adler des Gesanges, der minder glänzende Flügel hat, aber sich damit zur Sonne erhebt [...] ⁵⁷²

The polemical reproach of laboured formalism naturally entailed the equally polemical reproach of lazy incompetence substituted by false claims to inspiration. Throughout their polemics in verse and prose, the Neoclassical satirists derided the Preromantic and Romantic pose of the inspired prophet-poet, as opposed to their honesty as well-apprenticed and hard-working “artisan”-poets. Byron’s *The Vision of Judgment* (1822) aggressively replaced Southey’s Romantic concept of prophetic vision with an earthbound Neoclassical one, a satiric vision pouring ridicule on both Southey’s prophetic metaphysics and claim to inspired vision of truth when Southey had settled “all things by intuition” ⁵⁷³ in his *The Vision of Judgment* (1821). Byron’s image of a precise Newtonian telescope for enlightened empirical cognition is programmatically opposed to that of imaginative delusion in oneiric, drug-induced, or simply faked visions:

As for the rest, to come to the conclusion
Of this true dream, the telescope is gone
Which kept my optics free from all delusion,
And show’d me what I in my turn have shown. ⁵⁷⁴

Romantic Disillusionism naturally destroyed the Neoplatonic pose of the inspired prophet-poet and high-priest of nature, substituting a renewed awareness and justification of artifice in its stead. This is most obvious in the works of Poe and Baudelaire, who replaced a non-existent, or at least bungling, god by themselves as artists, strict form-givers of chaos in a modern terrestrial religion of art. ⁵⁷⁵

Combined with the reproach of diseased visions and irregular imaginative flights was the reproach of innovative imposture. Both the biblical Book of Ecclesiastes and the Characters of La Bruyère had observed that there is “no new thing under the sun”, ⁵⁷⁶ at least not “depuis sept mille ans qu’il y a des hommes,

572 Heine, *Italien: Die Bäder von Lucca*, 1830, in: *Sämtliche Schriften*, II. 458.

573 *Ibid.* stanza 101, line 5, VI. 344.

574 *Ibid.* final stanza 106, lines 1–4, VI. 345.

575 Poe, *The Philosophy of Composition*, 1846, and review of Hawthorne’s *Twice-Told Tales*, 1842.

576 *Ecclesiastes* 1, 9.

et qui pensent”⁵⁷⁷ Thus, Byron had both the Biblical and the Classical Tradition to support his reproach of innovative imposture and quackery:

Thus saith the Preacher; ‘nought beneath the sun
Is new’, yet still from change to change we run.
What varied wonders tempt us as they pass!
The Cow-pox, Tractors, Galvanism, and Gas
In turn appear to make the vulgar stare,
Till the swoln bubble bursts – and all is air.⁵⁷⁸

In Canning’s and Ellis’s *Anti-Jacobin*-parody of Romantic drama, *The Rovers* (1798), the first act concludes with innocent Rogero’s melodramatic song in his tyrants’ subterranean prison in the Gothic abbey, an altered version of the English Göttingen students’ song,

Whene’er with haggard eyes I view
This dungeon that I’m rotting in,
I think of those companions true
Who studied with me at the U-
niversity of Gottingen
niversity of Gottingen.⁵⁷⁹

Apart from the fact that this comic version of a nostalgic students’ song perverts the Romantic convention of a prisoner’s complaint (as Florestan’s in Beethoven’s *Fidelio* or Jacopo’s in Byron’s *The Two Foscari*), it is meant to give the lie to Romantic claims of originality. Hence the mordantly ironic commentary of the editor of the *Anti-Jacobin*:

The Song of ROGERO, with which the First Act concludes, is admitted on all hands to be in the very first taste; and if no German original is to be found for it, so much the worse for the credit of German Literature.⁵⁸⁰

To the Neoclassicists, such inspired and original “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” was suspicious for various reasons. It could be a mere construction, even a tacit plagiarism, or was, at least, the result of a lack of education, reflection, polish, and maturity. Opposing the few classical “bards of other days” to the vulgar multitude of modern would-be dramatists, Gifford’s *Maeviad*

577 La Bruyère, *Les caractères, Des ouvrages de l’esprit*, 1, 1688 – 94, in: *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Julien Benda, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Paris 1951, 65.

578 Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, lines 129 – 34, in: *Complete Poetical Works*, I, 233.

579 [Canning] in: *Anti-Jacobin*, 30 (4 June 1798), in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, I, 227. Also see H.M. Margoliouth, *Wordsworth and Coleridge 1795 – 1834*, Oxford 1953, 61.

580 [Canning or Gifford] in: *Anti-Jacobin*, quoted from the first reprinted London edition in the British Library.

(1795) lashed the modern fashionable substitute of alleged inspiration for ignorance of the Classical Tradition and its time-honoured heritage:

O! had our sots, who rhyme with headlong haste,
 And think reflection still a foe to taste,
 But brains your pregnant scenes to understand,
 'Twere something yet! But no; they never look –
 Shall souls of fire, they cry, a tutor brook?
 Forbid it, inspiration!⁵⁸¹

Although the Neoclassicist Peacock was Gifford's political adversary, his *Four Ages of Poetry* chimed in with Gifford's reproach that Romantic inspiration was a mere imposture. The pre-Homeric bards of Greece's "iron age of poetry", who predated the Classical Tradition of old poetry's "age of gold" (Homer) and "age of silver" (Virgil), were savages who certainly spoke in natural rhythms and poetical numbers. But, regarding their claim to supernatural revelation and divine prophetic inspiration, they were already impostors, let alone their modern Romantic epigones and fraudulent copyists:

A skilful display of the little knowledge they have gains them credit for the possession of much more which they have not. Their familiarity with the secret history of gods and genii obtains for them, without much difficulty, the reputation of inspiration; thus they are not only historians but theologians, moralists, and legislators: delivering their oracles *ex cathedra*, and being indeed often themselves (as Orpheus and Amphion) regarded as portions and emanations of divinity; building cities with a song, and leading brutes with a symphony; which are only metaphors for the faculty of leading multitudes by the nose.⁵⁸²

Poetry here appears as a mere "trade" and poetic inspiration as a mere imposture, creating an imaginary heaven for the sake of maintaining the chief's or the government's as well as the false shamanic poet's own power over the gullible multitude. Peacock's broadside attack against the Romantics was certainly half playful, but it cut Percy Shelley to the quick, who retaliated by reintegrating Peacock's division of poetry and knowledge, vindicating the truth and honesty of the inspired Romantic prophet-poet's mythopoetic visions:

Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.⁵⁸³

581 Gifford, *The Maeviad*, 1810, lines 93–99, in: *British Satire 1785–1840*, IV. 40.

582 Peacock, *The Four Ages of Poetry*, 1820, in: *Works*, VIII. 6.

583 Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*, MS 1821, in: *Complete Works*, VII. 140.

Shelley's scorn of writing for profit recalls that of Burns and Lapraik, in verses that offered themselves to conservative attacks because they smelled of an ideological and poetological self-fashioning that would hardly stand the test of biographers. Neither the affluent Radical Shelley nor the poor Radical Burns were content to live on prophecy and the expectation of after-fame alone and to spurn the Mammon that they cursed in their writings. As his correspondence with his publishers, Charles and James Ollier, shows, Shelley was an astute negotiator with his and marketer of his books and pamphlets.⁵⁸⁴ And Burns's lines contradict his efforts at profitable farming in Ayrshire, his expectations of royalties from his volumes of poetry, and his plans to make more money by emigrating to America:

O Mandate, glorious and divine!
 The followers o' the ragged Nine,
 Poor, thoughtless devils! yet may shine
 In glorious light,
 While sordid sons o' Mammon's line
 Are dark as night!⁵⁸⁵

In the fine arts, painting and landscape gardening in particular, the Neoclassical disbelief in and satire of such Romantic self-fashioning display many of the same arguments. This appears from William Combe's and Thomas Rowlandson's scathing parody of William Gilpin, who, in his seminal *Observations on the River Wye* (1782), had introduced the term "picturesque" – hitherto designating the odd and striking – into Preromantic aesthetics. *The Tour of Dr Syntax in Search of the Picturesque* (1812), written by the satirist Combe and illustrated by the caricaturist Rowlandson, cast the cultivated, modest country parson and country schoolmaster Gilpin as an impoverished and sex-hungry rogue in need of money. The libertine Whig Combe, a close companion of Charles James Fox and William Beckford, sketched his Dr Syntax as a pious rogue, who affects new-school tastes and holds appalling old-school prejudices, also with regard to companionate marriages of rank and riches and the subordination of wives.⁵⁸⁶ Though possessed of little Latin and less Greek, Dr Syntax is clever enough to see the public's greed for novelty and illustrated picturesque travel books, prompting him to set out on an author's journey in search of the picturesque, including amours and quixotic adventures. Dr Syntax has read Gilpin's pub-

584 Stephen C. Behrendt, *The History of Shelley Editions in English*, in: *The Reception of P.B. Shelley in Europe*, eds. Susanne Schmid – Michael Rossington, London 2008, 7–25.

585 Burns, *To the Same* [John Lapraik], 1786, lines 91–96, in: *Poems and Songs*, ed. cit. I. 92. Here, "thoughtless" means improvident rather than shallow. See also Robert Crawford, *The Bard*, 189.

586 As in *The Third Tour of Dr Syntax in Search of a Wife* (1821); see the commentary in *British Satire 1785–1840*, II. 229–230.

lications, which recommend the improvement of nature for picturesque effects in pictures, and concludes that every picture of natural scenery must be an artificial pastiche. Thus, the satire attacks the Romantic painters where they were most vulnerable, in their make-believe of *in situ* authenticity and of copying nature under the open sky, whereas it was a well-known fact that they carefully assembled their various sketches and finished their paintings in their studios. The satire ridicules Romantic artists on all levels, denigrating them as prurient, uneducated, greedy, commercial impostors who pretend originality and construct novelties for pleasing a reading public hungry for novelty. As in Dr Syntax's opening of his plan to his ugly fat wife, the Hudibrastics underscore the satire's quixotic model:

"I'll make a TOUR – and then I'll WRITE IT.
You well know what my pen can do,
And I'll employ my pencil too: -
I'll ride and write, and sketch and print,
And thus create a real mint;
I'll prose it here, I'll verse it there,
And picturesque it everywhere."⁵⁸⁷

The profit from book-sales to the gullible vulgar is all, and Dr Syntax does not hesitate to admit his forgeries as justified by Romantic concepts of painting:

"To heighten every work of art,
Fancy should take an active part:
Thus I (which few I think can boast)
Have made a Landscape of a Post."⁵⁸⁸

And this is little wonder in a mediocre country schoolmaster with a comically telling name, for whom even Greek and Latin are mere commodities:

"My Greek and Latin are immured
Within the warehouse of my brain,
And there in safety they remain."⁵⁸⁹

The period's awareness of the satire's anti-Romantic bite appears from the title of the French version, *Le Don Quichotte Romantique* (1821). Its huge popularity both in Europe and America, with its numerous sequels, attests to the vitality of the anti-Romantic movement in the Romantic Period.

A dozen years after *Dr Syntax in Search of the Picturesque* (1812), William Frederick Deacon's *Warreniana* (1824) was perhaps the period's most successful

587 Combe – Rowlandson, *The Tour of Dr Syntax in Search of the Picturesque*, London 1812, Philadelphia 1865, 17.

588 *Ibid.* 23.

589 *Ibid.* 287.

literary attack on the Romantic pretension to a pure and disinterested prophetic calling, as it connected the parodied Romantic poets with the ubiquity of commercial culture in England. Advertising was popular, often promoting cheap quality and quackery, and had enormous comic potential for satirists and parodists, including spoof collections of advertisements as well as Juvenalian and Horatian satires on the art of advertising.⁵⁹⁰ Thus, the modern, commercial, self-promoting marketing techniques of Robert Warren's *Boot Blacking* lent themselves to ridicule in various ways.⁵⁹¹ As Warren placed rhymed advertisements for his products in daily newspapers, so Romantic poets are featured to shamelessly "puff" or promote their poetry for sale in the poems themselves: BUY WARREN'S BLACKING, BUY WORDSWORTH'S OR BYRON'S POEMS. Deacon's parody of Wordsworth, telling the story of the Old Cumberland Pedlar through the Solitary as his speaker, suggests that Wordsworth's love and praise of all-healing and all-saving nature was but for commercial profit:

Beauteous it was but lonesome, and while I
Leaped up for joy to think that earth was good
And lusty in her boyhood, I beheld
Graven on the tawny rock these magic words,
"BUY WARREN'S BLACKING;" then in thought I said
My stars, how we improve!⁵⁹²

There is a suggestion here that the Romantic poets themselves were paid for writing such trite verses for Warren's shoe-blackening advertisements, so they are no better than *Blackwood's* and other self-promoting literary magazines, which could claim no supernatural inspiration. In number four of "Noctes Ambrosianae", a fictitious dialogue between Odoherly (Maginn as the author) and Byron in Pisa, Byron is suspected of having written "puffs for Day and Martin", another shoe-blackening firm with much-ridiculed modern marketing strategies,⁵⁹³ and that his scandalous representation of the split nature of man (in his Byronic heroes' antithetical mixture of shining virtues and dark vices) is for making profit rather than for revealing new truth:

Is Byron surprised that his enemies say
He makes puffing verses for Martin and Day?
[...]

590 John Strachan, *Advertising and Satirical Culture in the Romantic Period*, 72–116.

591 *Ibid.* 117–161.

592 Deacon, *Warreniana*, *Old Cumberland Pedlar* by W.W., 1824, in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, IV. 27–32.

593 Strachan, 117.

So shining, so dark – all his writing displays
 A type of this liquid by Martin and Day's -⁵⁹⁴

Byron's profit-orientation, which gave the lie to his poses of independent aristocratic genius, is underscored by his jealous preoccupation with Wordsworth's publications. What interests him is a comparison of the weight and sales figures of his own and Wordsworth's volumes, so that his vilification of the rustic Wordsworth as the "old Ponder" and the "great god Pan" appears motivated by competitive envy rather than critical standards.⁵⁹⁵

Byron was not the only Romantic poet and critic who would writhe under such allegations of commercial interest and imposture of truth and novelty. In *A Letter to William Gifford* (1819), Hazlitt defended himself and the Romantics against the Neoclassical distrust of inspiration, novelty, and originality, and against the reproach of mere marketing interest. He stigmatized the ideal of the Horatian and Virgilian "artisan"-poet as trite, as the Classical Tradition limited the poet to "What oft was *Thought*, but ne'er so well *Express*".⁵⁹⁶ In the sense of the *anciens* (in the *querelle des anciens et des modernes*) this meant that predecessors could only be surpassed, but never replaced. Hazlitt's and Hunt's Romantic poetry and prose claimed inspired originality in the sense of independence of thought, analogous to independence in Whig and Radical politics, combined with a firm belief in the existence of new ideas and new truths. Thus, the arguments of the quarrel between *anciens* and *modernes* in the age of Dryden and Pope were radically transformed into the arguments of the quarrel between Neoclassicists and Romantics in the age of Gifford and Canning, Hazlitt and Hunt. Attacking Gifford's poetological position, Hazlitt presented his own interest in the "modern" Joseph Addison's *Spectator* (1711–1714) as genuine and spontaneous, not motivated by any desires of imitating and surpassing models of perfection from the past:

Is this the only reason you can conceive why any one should take an interest in such things; or did you write your Baviad and Maeviad that you might not fall short of Pope, your translation of Juvenal that you might surpass Dryden [...]? A truth is, however, not the worse but the better for being new. I did not try to think with the multitude nor to differ with them, but to think for myself.⁵⁹⁷

Τοποι, *loci communes*, commonplaces, were a repository of time-honoured ideas and formulae of the Classical Tradition, so that young poets such as John Milton kept commonplace books to provide themselves with for their poetic career. The

594 [Maginn], *Noctes Ambrosianae*, IV, in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 12 (July 1822), 110.

595 *Ibid.* 102.

596 Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1711, line 298, in: *Poems*, 153.

597 Hazlitt, *Letter to William Gifford*, 1819, in: *Complete Works*, IX. 28–30.

word's later pejorative turn as denoting worn clichés and truisms was a result of Romantic poetics with its demands of originality. Gifford's repeated reproach, that poets who refused to write in the Classical Tradition were too lazy, too stupid, or too socially low to know or even read that repository of conventions in the original languages, was easily met by Leigh Hunt, who denied Gifford originality of thought. In the "Literary Warfare" chapter of his *Autobiography*, he quoted passages of well-known and often taught classical Horatian poetics from Gifford's satires, giving the word "commonplace" a negative turn and naming three poets who, like himself, were capable of rising above the usual and habitual. Again, the frontlines between Neoclassicists and Romantics are drawn and defined, though not named, in the literary warfare of the Romantic period:

What commonplace talking is that? Here is some more of the same stuff: [...] Was there ever a fonder set of complacent old phrases, such as any schoolboy might utter? Yet this is the man who undertook to despise Charles Lamb, and to trample on Keats and Shelley!⁵⁹⁸

This argumentative strategy recalls the former Whig George Ellis's and other Whigs' diatribe against Prime Minister Pitt in *Criticisms on the Rolliad* (1785). The pun on the name of John Rolle suggests that Pitt and his allies are mere role players, as indicated on the title-page of James Ridgway's printing of the *Rolliad* from 1812: "Jouez bien votre rôle". Hunt's polemics against Gifford's commonplaces with their fixed roles parallel Hazlitt's polemics against Canning's commonplaces, both in his *Table-Talk* (1821–1822) and *The Spirit of the Age* (1825). Hazlitt's point, that commonplaces are schoolboy knowledge learned by rote for histrionic roles, implies that adults should free themselves from such shackles in order to gain independence. This metaphorical cluster transforms Wordsworth's praise of prophetic infancy into a satire on blind obedience to Toryism and Neoclassical infantilism, as in the exordium of Hazlitt's devastating portrait of Canning:

Mr. CANNING was the cleverest boy at Eton: he is, perhaps, the cleverest man in the House of Commons. It is, however, in the sense in which, according to Mr. Wordsworth, 'the child is father to the man'. [...] he has never assumed a manly independence of mind. [...] His reasoning is a tissue of glittering sophistry; his language is a cento of florid common-places. [...] There is [...] something second-hand in the whole cast of his mind.⁵⁹⁹

Hazlitt certainly remembered Canning's brilliant and often reprinted Liverpool Dinner Speech of 1819, an example of classical Ciceronian oratory from the

598 Hunt, *Autobiography*, 1850, 218.

599 Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, Mr Canning, 1825, in: *Complete Works*, XI. .150–151.

mouth of an eminent Tory politician.⁶⁰⁰ And he may have remembered its defence in the sixth number of “The Warder” series of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* (1819–1821) on the basis of the counter-revolutionary propaganda of elitist versus popular culture:

The natural effects, indeed, even of the wisdom and the eloquence of the greatest and best of men [Canning] are thwarted and weakened in these days, by the unrelenting persevering spleen with which all such men are persecuted by the base rabble, who have obtruded themselves, in the character of teachers and writers, on the too credulous ears of by far too great a part of our population.⁶⁰¹

The young Whig William Lamb, later Lord Melbourne and Prime Minister, struck a similar note as Hazlitt when, in a Popean verse epistle, he attacked Canning’s poetical contributions to the *Anti-Jacobin* as mere schoolboy exercises in pedantry, with an oblique reference to the Tory author’s low origin:

Who e’er ye are, all hail! – whether the skill
Of youthful CANNING guides the ranc’rous quill;
With powers mechanic far above his age,
Adapts the paragraph and fills the page;
Measures the column, mends what e’er’s amiss,
Rejects THAT letter, and accepts of THIS.⁶⁰²

Instead of novel ideas describing and solving modern problems, Hazlitt’s Canning has recourse to the “staple commodity” of a warehouse of commonplaces, which costs him little and his country dear. Old ideas are not replaced, but merely vamped up under a coating of rhetorical glitter – a reproach also implied in Peacock’s caricature of Gifford as Mr Vamp, a mere *bricoleur* and *pasticheur* of scraps of tradition rather than an innovator for modern times, a dead Gothic villain kept alive by sucking the blood of his betters.⁶⁰³ Like the sophists, as opposed to the honest philosophers, Hazlitt’s Canning and Peacock’s Gifford prefer effects to truth, coating to substance. Transferred from Eton to the House of Commons, Hazlitt’s Canning remains in an artificial hothouse which excludes both modern reality and vital nature. Sterile artificiality and mean servitude were standard reproaches which the Romantics raised against Toryism and Neoclassicism. The hothouse plants of Canning’s rhetoric can have no progeny, just as traditionalist commonplaces can shape no future. Prescribed schoolboy exercises replace independence of thought and originality of invention. Using an “established text-book”, Canning illustrates his speeches

600 Gilmartin, *Writing against Revolution*, 145–49.

601 *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 7 (March 1820), 11.

602 William Lamb, *Epistle to the Editors of the Anti-Jacobin*, in: Wendy Hinde, *George Canning*, London 1973, 59.

603 Peacock, *Melincourt*, 1817, in: *Novels*, 171.

“by the application of some well-known and well-authenticated simile”, supports his argument “with a passage in Cicero” and “relieves exhausted attention by a sounding passage from Virgil”.⁶⁰⁴ In an earlier essay entitled “On Common-Place Critics”, Hazlitt applied his favourite abusive term of “learned pedant” to poets and critics who constantly refer “to the authority of Cicero and Virgil”, carrying about the “sentiments” of their superiors “as the dancing master does their air, or their valet their clothes”.⁶⁰⁵ Dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants may look farther than them, but remain, nevertheless, dependent on them for their vision.

Comparing this portrait with Hazlitt’s earlier essay “On Paradox and Commonplace”, we find a similarly constructed attack on Canning. The political and rhetorical master of commonplace is a brilliant parodist, because parody is the mere inversion of commonplaces, not an original art. Parody and paradox are mere child’s play, tumbling customary things upside down. But here, the imagery of personal growth is extended to that of cultural growth, a natural process which Tories and Neoclassicists refuse to accept. Like Hunt, Hazlitt quotes a negative sample, the passionate peroration of Canning’s Liverpool Dinner Speech of 1820, in order to prove Canning’s lack of originality both in politics and rhetoric. The fact that neither adherence to Toryism nor to the Classical Tradition excluded change and progress is polemically ignored. After such a caricature of conservatism, satirized as burying man in the “solitary confinement” of past creeds and passed forms, and after a typically Whig sketch of history’s progress through the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the French Revolution of 1789, Hazlitt’s arguments become insistently Romantic in opposing spontaneous feelings to old prejudices and commonplaces as well as free nature to stagnation and imprisonment:

Men never act against their prejudices but from the spur of their feelings [...] Nature has ordered it so, and Mr. Canning, by shewing off his rhetorical paces [...], cannot invert that order, efface the history of the past, or arrest the progress of the future.⁶⁰⁶

Pope had argued with La Bruyère against what Neoclassicists chided Baroque “false wit”, that there can be no originality of thought, that all has already been said in the past of human civilization and thinking:

*True Wit is Nature to Advantage drest,
What oft was Thought, but ne’er so well Exprest.*⁶⁰⁷

604 Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, Mr Canning, in: *Complete Works*, XI. 152.

605 Hazlitt, *The Round Table*, *Of Classical Education*, 1817, ed. cit. IV. 139–140.

606 Hazlitt, *Table Talk*, or, *Original Essays, On Paradox and Commonplace*, 1821–1822, ed. cit. VIII. 155. Note, again, the attack on calm rhetorical paces as well as on the Tory refusal of prison reform (solitary confinement).

607 Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 1711, lines 297–98, in: *Poems*, 153.

Hazlitt and Hunt implicitly opposed Pope by calling that concentration on the rhetoric of commonplace mere noise, flourish, froth, and rhetorical clap-trap for the purpose of covering up the worn clichés, sophisms, and truisms of the Classical Tradition due to lack of political courage and poetic originality. This imagery of artificial make-up versus natural substance pervades Romantic polemics against Neoclassicism in general and Canning in particular:

The *matter* is nothing; the only question is how he shall express himself. [...] Not being at liberty to choose his own side of the question, nor to look abroad into the world for original (but perhaps unwelcome) observations, [...] the whole force of his mind has been exhausted in an attention to the ornaments of style [...] It is his business and his inclination to embellish what is trite, to gloss over what is true, to vamp up some feeble sophism, to spread the colours of a meretricious fancy [...] Not an image has struck his eye, not an incident has touched his heart, any farther than it could be got up for rhetorical and stage effect.⁶⁰⁸

By gradually distancing themselves from their early Radicalism and by turning to Toryism, Wordsworth and Southey characteristically gave up simple diction and pretence to childlike ignorance. Peasant poets and poetry of Burns's type were no longer their favourites, although many traditionalists continued to identify them with their early primitivism and revolutionary sympathies. Wordsworth's admiration of Burns waned, as Hogg satirically testified. And, in *Our Uneducated Poets* (1831), Southey took on a tone of patronizing condescension towards the mass of simple lower-class poetry, to John Clare's resentment. Such simplistic stuff, Southey argued with an updating of Horace, Persius, and Juvenal to his own times of mass production, does not have the quality of luxury which was reserved for the higher classes as the proper readership of poetry. Such rustic stuff should be generously tolerated as long as it "can do no harm, unless it passes for good, becomes fashionable, and so tends to deprave still further a vitiated public taste, and still further to debase a corrupted language":

When we are told that the thresher [Stephen Duck], the milkwoman [Ann Yearsley], the tobacco-pipe maker [John Frederick Bryant] did not deserve the patronage they found, – when it is laid down as a maxim of philosophical criticism that poetry ought never to be encouraged unless it is excellent in its kind, – that it is an art in which inferior execution is not to be tolerated, – a luxury, and must therefore be rejected unless it is of the very best, – such reasoning may be addressed with success to cockered and sickly intellect, but it will never impose upon a healthy understanding, a generous spirit, or a good heart.⁶⁰⁹

608 Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age*, Mr Canning, in: *Complete Works*, XI. 150–151.

609 Southey (ed.), *Attempts in Verse by John Jones, an Old Servant, [...] and an Introductory Essay on the Lives and Works of Our Uneducated Poets*, London 1831, 164–166. See also

Here, Southey directed the old argument of health vs sickness against what he saw as the weak minds of uneducated poets and their uneducated readers, all “cockered” and pampered children. The later Southey’s anti-primitivism limited his concept of health to the intellect instead of the body. In fact, writing in a simple style to the exclusion of the Augustan Classical Tradition and parading ignorance or disdain of academic learning was still a revolutionary pose of literary sansculottism. The Radical William Hone, for instance, an unschooled man of low origin yet wide private reading, cultivated the invective rewriting of popular songs and nursery rhymes. Twice acquitted of charges of blasphemy and sedition in 1817, Hone felt free to print and sell cheap pamphlets libelling public figures instead of types of tyrants, from the Prince Regent and the Prime Minister via the Judges and the Attorneys General down to the editor of *The Times* and conservative Church of England clergymen after the Peterloo Massacre of August 1819. Illustrated by the young George Cruikshank, “The Political House That Jack Built” and “The Clerical Magistrate” avoid all learned reference to the liberty of Greece or Rome in favour of a childish, or at least populist, performance. Popular satire was carnivalesque, anarchic, unstable and *malséant* in its mixture of genres (including child and folk songs and rhymes as well as generally known liturgical texts),⁶¹⁰ and this disdain of rules threatened the existing order just as much as the volatile mixture of classes, races, and nationalities that Wordsworth aptly portrayed in the London scenes of book VII of *The Prelude* (MS 1805–1850). Ironically dedicating his invective to his alleged political godfather, “Dr SLOP” [Dr John Stoddart, editor of *The Times*] and to “The NURSERY OF HIS CHILDREN, SIX FEET HIGH; HIS READERS”, Hone viciously implied that the Tory *Times* had inspired “THIS JUVENILE PUBLICATION”, a Radical version of the popular cumulative nursery rhyme of “The House That Jack Built”. The House [Britain], a structure erected by the people and topped by the symbols of liberty, is threatened by all kinds of vermin keen on destroying its wealth: Habeas Corpus, Magna Charta, and the Bill of Rights. But, as in the nursery rhyme, the house, though threatened, will survive, even against such conceited and privileged rascals as George, Prince of Wales and future King George IV, who attend to their own pleasure instead of the people’s welfare:

This is THE MAN – all shaven and shorn,
 All cover’d with Orders – and all forlorn;
 THE DANDY OF SIXTY,
 who bows with a grace,

Frederick Burwick, *Poetic Madness and the Romantic Imagination*, University Park PA 1996, 270.

610 For Hone’s parody entitled *The Late John Wilkes’s Catechism of a Ministerial Member* see Burwick (ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Romantic Literature*, William Hone, III. 1174–1175.

And has *taste* in wigs, collars,
 cuirasses and lace;
 Who, to tricksters, and fools,
 leaves the State and its treasure,
 And, when Britain's in tears,
 sails about at his pleasure:
 Who spurn'd from his presence
 the Friends of his youth,
 And now has not one
 who will tell him the truth;
 Who took to his counsels,
 in evil hour,
 The Friends of the Reasons
 of lawless power [British soldiers and jailors]
 That back the Public Informer,⁶¹¹
 who
 Would put down the *Thing*,⁶¹²
 that, in spite of new Acts,⁶¹³
 by Soldiers or Tax,
 Will *poison* the Vermin⁶¹⁴
 That plunder the Wealth,⁶¹⁵
 That lay in the House,
 That Jack built.⁶¹⁶

Hone's and Cruikshank's populist turn away from classical models of satire occurred about the same time that Thomas Jonathan Wooler's above-mentioned Radical journal *The Black Dwarf* began to appear, with the first number published a day after the furious attack by a crowd on the Prince Regent in January 1817. Like other populist journals and pamphlets, the *Black Dwarf* owed its large readership to its low-culture and often childish carnivalesque satire.⁶¹⁷ Also, Byron's *Don Juan*, with the first canto published by John Murray in 1819, began to be appropriated by Hone and the populist Radical press.⁶¹⁸ It was not until Hone and Cruikshank modified their primitivism and Radicalism, not until they published more traditionally didactic books and caricatures, that they became

611 Attorney General Robert Gifford, who had unsuccessfully charged Hone in court.

612 Hone's printing press.

613 The Six Acts of 1819, aimed at gagging Radical newspapers, rendering publications more expensive, preventing large meetings, and stifling any armed insurrections.

614 Government officials and their servants.

615 Habeas Corpus, Magna Charta, Bill of Rights.

616 Hone and Cruikshank, *The Political House That Jack Built*, accumulation 7, 1819, in: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, II. 286–287.

617 Steven Jones, *The Black Dwarf as Satiric Performance; or, The Instabilities of the Public Square*, in: Behrendt (ed.), *Romanticism, Radicalism, and the Press*, 203–214.

618 Kyle Grimes, *William Hone, John Murray, and the Uses of Byron*, *ibid.* 192–202.

respectable Victorians and found favour in the eyes of Robert Southey and Charles Dickens. In the novels and tales of Dickens often illustrated by Cruikshank, with their marked interest in and occasional address to children though written for adults of all classes including the lower classes, non-classical carnivalesque and burlesque socio-political satire inherited its technique from the Radical rather than the Classical Tradition. Dickens's grotesquely negative portrayals of classically educated men such as The Latin Grammar-Master ("Holiday Romance"), Wackford Squeers (*Nicholas Nickleby*), Dr Blimber (*Dombey and Son*), and Thomas Grandgrind (*Hard Times*) continued the living indigenous traditions of tavern song, circus show, street performance, magic-lantern display, and popular chapbook literature instead of Greek and Roman satire.⁶¹⁹

619 Paul Schlicke, *Dickens and Popular Entertainment*, London 1985, 2003, 46.

VII. The Romantic School

The arguments of the representatives of the Classical Tradition in their satirical war against the Romantic poets developed a catalogue of philosophical, political, and poetological “errors” and “deformities” (seen from the point of view of the Neoclassical adherence to rule and reason). This catalogue gradually gave the Romantic School its identity, its diversity notwithstanding. When Byron’s *Don Juan* began to appear in 1819, William Maginn ingeniously attacked its Don-Giovanni Prometheanism and rule-despising sacrilegious nature with a parody of Wordsworth’s rural poem “Yarrow Unvisited” (MS 1803): “Don Juan Unread” (1819). Maginn printed Wordsworth’s original side by side with its parodic satire on Byron, so that both Wordsworth and Byron appear as rebels against the *ancien régime* in aesthetics, ethics, philosophy, and socio-politics. The satire is important in its sweeping construction of one inimical Romantic School defined by the most heterogeneous representatives and forms of revolt against Augustan reason and the Classical Tradition, all “Whiggish folk *frae* Holland House, Who have been lying, prating”.¹ Besides the Lake-School and Cockney-School poets with their revolutionary cult of common speech, now also used in Byron’s Satanic-School *Don Juan*, Maginn lists William Godwin, Mary Shelley, Thomas Moore, Thomas Paine, Lady Morgan, Charles Robert Maturin, as well as the mercenary London publisher Henry Colburn. In a conversation-poem dialogue, the parody’s speaker protests against Byron’s invitation to read *Don Juan* as a heretical stepping up of his earlier *Oriental Tales*:

“There’s Godwin’s daughter,
Shelley’ wife,
A writing fearful stories,
There’s Hazlitt, who, with Hunt
and Keats
Brays forth in Cockney chorus;

1 [Maginn], *Don Juan Unread*, lines 9–10, in: *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 6 (November 1819), 194. Quoted from: *Parodies of the Romantic Age*, II, 300.

There's pleasant Thomas Moore,
 a lad
 Who sings of Rose and
 Fanny;
 Why throw away those wits so gay
 To take up Don Giovanni.²

It should be remembered that the anti-rational cult of sensibility as developed in Preromanticism forbade satire as doing harm to a fellow creature, at least in theory. Punishment was not through satirical lashes, but sentimental persuasion and appeals to the offender's feeling heart as in sentimental comedy should correct vices and follies, just as many Preromantics wanted to abolish corporal punishment in families, schools, and the military. Here again, however, practice would not follow theory, especially when feelings of resentment ran high, as in Percy Shelley's satirical verses against the Tory government, *The Mask of Anarchy*, written in direct response to the Peterloo Massacre at Manchester in 1819 but not published until 1832. Where no feeling heart in the offender could be found, the old punitive practice of satire – like public beating and public execution – could be justified as ultimately indispensable. Furthermore, Romantic literati could be naturally quarrelsome and self-righteous just as their Neo-classical colleagues could, so that there existed a striking similarity between the opponents William Hazlitt and William Gifford. Sources describe both as walking guillotines and men without friends. Hazlitt quarrelled with all his original mentors – Coleridge, Wordsworth, Godwin, Southey, Leigh Hunt, and Benjamin Robert Haydon, and would have quarrelled with Charles Lamb if only Lamb had allowed him.³ The aggressive appearance and vitriolic attacks of both groups of authors overstepped the line and provoked vitriolic counter-attacks from literati less patient than Lamb, although Lamb had his violent moods which could also erupt into public aggression. In the preface and the short notes to his satire on William Gifford, *Ultra-Crepidarius* (1823), Leigh Hunt showed his sentimental reluctance to write a counter-satire, overcome by nothing but extreme indignation at extremely abject thoughts and acts. As observed above, theories of war were invalidated by indignation and hatred in both bellistic and non-bellistic campaigns. Justifications were easily found for such exceptions, which did, however, not invalidate the principle. Paradoxically, Hunt's justification was basically derived from Persius and Pope, one that stated that all patience must have an end somewhere:

The following *jeu d'esprit* is the stick which is mentioned in the third number of the *Liberal*, as having been cut up for Mr Gifford's special use. [...] I had resolved never to

2 Ibid. stanza 3, lines 17 – 24.

3 Paul Johnson, *Never Changing*, in: *TLS*, 5565 (17 November 2009), 17 – 19.

make use of it at all. But there may be reasons for altering my mind [...] 'Nothing', said a gallant acquaintance, 'puts me so much out of temper, as that confounded ill temper'. The person who crawled for his portrait in the following sketch, has no excuse for the malignity of his very mediocre pretensions and slavish success.⁴

Both Neoclassicists and Romantics wrote satires in the old and new forms of the Classical Tradition. In them, the Neoclassicists upbraided the Romantics for lack of pedigree and education, whereas the Romantics found fault with the Neoclassicists for lack of feeling and originality. To the Neoclassicists, as stated above, commonplaces were time-honoured and legitimate rhetorical *τοποι* or *loci communes*; to the Romantics, they were outmoded, dead clichés corresponding to the ancient classics' dead Olympic religion, whose cruelty had been replaced by Christian compassion and charity. Thus, Hunt defended Keats and Percy Shelley against the strictures of Gifford published in Murray's *Quarterly Review*, on aesthetic as well as theological grounds, working out a common literary school in frontline opposition to another literary school to be exposed to ridicule:

Hence, and for no other cause, his [Gifford's] unfeeling attack on Mr Keats; for extraordinary genius was calculated merely to perplex him. Hence, in some measure, his unchristian hatred and misrepresentations of the christian temper of Mr Shelley: for if ever faith and charity were separate, it was in the person of these two men. Mr Gifford's faith delights in scorning charity and extinguishing hope.

All the power of this man [Gifford] has consisted in the sympathy he has found with common-place understandings, and in the co-operation of the Tories, to whom he is a flattering servant. But the common-place are a large and well-faggotted set of brethren; and tools become formidable in the hands of power, though but wooden idols themselves. He has been well hacked in prose by Mr Hazlitt. It may not be amiss to hold him up once more in verse. If he cannot bleed (which is not necessary) he may be made a scarecrow and as an example.⁵

In his short notes, Hunt reminded his readers of John Wolcot's (alias Peter Pindar's) satire on William Gifford, in which Wolcot had accused the Tory Gifford of pandering to Lord Grosvenor. Hunt affirmed that he would naturally refuse to believe Wolcot's satirical slanders, just as he would naturally detest Gifford's "loathsome" answer in his counter-satire *Epistle to Peter Pindar* (1800), in spite of Gifford's "foul offices which he can discharge for the state,

4 Hunt, *Ultra-Crepidarius*, Preface, 1823, in: *Selected Writings*, VI. 36.

5 *Ibid.* VI. 37. Note the formation of a literary school consciousness: Robinson, Keats, Shelley, Hazlitt, and Hunt. Reluctant to make their enemies bleed, in consonance with Christian charity, the Romantics yet cannot do without an *exemplum horrendum* or *imago adversarii*. Hunt's reference is to his own verse satire *The Feast of the Poets* (1814, 1815) and Hazlitt's *Letter to William Gifford* (1819).

and the readiness he exhibits to scandalize and believe ill of others".⁶ Thus, Hunt legitimized both his poetological creed and the violation of it, aggressively recalling Wolcot's satirical attack which aimed below the belt. Decades later, in his *Autobiography* (1850), looking back from "these kindlier days of criticism" when indignation and hatred had subsided, Hunt repeated his self-apology and Romantic self-fashioning, referring back to the Pre-romantic sentimental cult of the equality of all fellow-creatures:

I am sorry to have had occasion to differ with any of my fellow-creatures, knowing the mistakes to which we are all liable, and the circumstances that help to cause them. But I can only regret it, personally, in proportion to the worth or personal regret on the side of the enemy.⁷

Gifford, Hunt affirmed, was the only adversary whom, now in 1850, he did not regret to have cruelly scourged in his satires and reviews. And now, retrospectively and after the gun-smoke emotions of the former "literary warfare" had cleared, he could identify two conflicting "schools", which, however, he did not call Romantic and Classic, but "old French" and "new German". Beside denoting the continuation of or break with the Classical Tradition in literature, this also alluded to the increasing political hostility between France and Germany around the middle of the nineteenth century:

To return to the *Feast of the Poets*. I offended all critics of the old or French school by objecting to the monotony of Pope's versification, and all the critics of the new or German school, by laughing at Wordsworth, with whose writings I was then unacquainted, except through the medium of his deriders. On reading him for myself, I became such an admirer, that Lord Byron accused me of making him popular about town.⁸

As early as 1816, when he was released from prison having served a two year sentence with his brother John for having insulted the Prince Regent, Leigh Hunt made himself the nucleus of and provided the venue for Romantic poets whom he saw as "a new school" opposed to the Prince Regent, the Tory government, and its cultural support, the Classical Tradition.⁹ In the first December number of his brother John's *Examiner*, Hunt identified "a new school of poetry rising of late, which promises to extinguish the French one that has prevailed among us since the time of Charles 2d".¹⁰ As examples, as we have seen above, he presented Percy Shelley, John Hamilton Reynolds, and John Keats, "three young writers, who appear to us to promise a considerable ad-

6 Hazlitt, Letter to William Gifford, VI. 45.

7 Leigh Hunt, *Autobiography*, 1850, 215.

8 *Ibid.* 223.

9 See Introduction above.

10 [Leigh Hunt] in: *Examiner*, 466 (1 December 1816), 761.

dition of strength to the new school".¹¹ Several months later, from 1 June 1817, Hunt continued his *Examiner* campaign against Neoclassicism with a series of favourable reviews of Keats's recently published *Poems* (March 1817), including Keats's "Sleep and Poetry" with its attack on Boileau. To Hunt, that old school of the Classical Tradition was "rather a school of wit and ethics in verse" with "little imagination, of a higher order, no intense feeling of nature, no sentiment, no real music or variety".¹² In Hunt's view of history, the older Romantic poets of the Lake School, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, had adumbrated the new school. They had broken away from the old one of Boileau, though imperfectly. Now have the younger Romantic poets definitely overcome "mere imitation", visible in Keats, who is "a young poet giving himself up to his own impressions, and revelling in real poetry for its' own sake".¹³ Now

[...] something which was not poetry has made way for the return of something which is.¹⁴

By the time that Hunt wrote this, however, conservative opponents of the new schools had begun to change their attitudes. The old and the new schools, the establishment and the vanguard, appeared in a less polemical light, a distanced perspective which also levelled the differences between the Romantic authors. The publication of the French version of Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* by John Murray in October 1813, the year of the allied victory over Napoleon in the Battle of Leipzig, had marked the beginning of less controversial opposition of the two schools. In the numerous reviews, the Classical-Romantic divide established by August Wilhelm Schlegel and Madame de Staël was made known and welcomed. An Anglo-German "école romantique" was proclaimed as rivalling a Latin-French "école classique". French hegemony in politics and culture had suffered a defeat in one and the same month. Even the review of *De l'Allemagne* by Napoleon's admirer William Hazlitt welcomed this blow to French arrogance, "to mortify the natural prejudices and exclusive egotism of the French in literature, by a systematic and galling comparison with the works of the most celebrated German writers, and to establish that balance of power which they are as little inclined to admit in matters of taste and opinion as in political questions".¹⁵ Heber's 55-page review, written for John Murray's *Quarterly Review*, shows a Tory's and minor Romantic poet's politically argued justification of the Romantic School, in opposition to Napoleon and French Neo-

11 Ibid.

12 Leigh Hunt, *Selected Writings*, II. 116.

13 [Leigh Hunt] in: *Examiner*, 497 (6 July 1817), II. 122.

14 [Leigh Hunt] in: *Examiner*, 492 (1 June 1817), II. 115.

15 [Hazlitt] in: *Morning Chronicle*, 13 November 1813, in: *Complete Works*, XIX. 9.

classicism. Every “new school”, Heber argued, had its wild excesses; and both in England and Germany that new school had to mature from Gothic monstrosities to the works of the later Goethe, Scott, and Southey. Now, that “new school” can successfully rival the “old school” of Rome and France:

In both countries the present generation has seen the establishment of a new school in composition, and in neither country, at the period to which we refer, had this school attained either perfection or consistency [...] First essays are almost always faulty. England was obliged to submit to a long and nauseous course of diablerie and sentiment, before these morning shadows gave way to the sunshine of Thalaba and the Last Minstrel; and the eccentricities of the Robbers and Gortz [sic] von Berlichingen were, in like manner, the precursors of those mighty efforts of tragedy which have placed the Teutonic muse on a level with Aeschylus, and little below Shakespeare. In both nations, in fact, the transition was of the same kind and nearly contemporary; it consisted in a reference to other models than those of France or Rome [...]¹⁶

The neutral literary history term “Romantic School” came up in the calmer atmosphere and with the clearer perspective afforded by the time of the prosperous Victorian 1850s. It was roughly synonymous with “Spasmodic School”, which comprised all Romantic and Postromantic authors from Coleridge and Byron to Bailey and Dobell regardless of their differences. In 1852 David Macbeth Moir, one of the *Blackwood's* champions of the Classical Tradition with a leaning towards Romanticism, published his *Sketches of the Poetical Literature of the Past Half Century*, in which he described and assessed the Romantic poets in a multiplicity of schools.¹⁷ By then, Moir’s judgments on them had become more fair and balanced, largely untainted by formerly prevalent socio-political aspects. Moir still repudiated the wildly improbable Gothic fancies of “the raw-head-and-bloody-bones and the trap-door German school”, while he even ranked Burns’s ballad poetry above his favourite author Scott.¹⁸ What Moir called “the purely romantic school” was an umbrella term for High Romanticism with its large range of authors of both sexes, whereas “the artistic artificial school” was his umbrella term for what, with Paul van Tieghem’s study, we have come to name Preromanticism. Moir did not mention William Wordsworth in his selective list, but gave him extensive treatment as “our greatest poetical regenerator”.¹⁹

To the artistic artificial school of [Erasmus] Darwin, [Anna] Seward, [William] Hayley, and the Della Crusicans, may be said to have succeeded the purely romantic school – of which Matthew Gregory Lewis ought to be set down as the leader, and John Leyden,

16 [Heber] in: *Quarterly Review*, 10 (January 1814), 359.

17 René Wellek, *Concepts of Criticism*, 150.

18 Moir, *Sketches of the Poetical Literature of the Past Half Century*, 1852, 3rd edition Edinburgh and London 1856, 19.

19 *Ibid.* 265.

Walter Scott, Coleridge, Southey, James Hogg, Mrs Radcliffe, Anna Maria Porter, and Anne Bannerman, as the chief disciples. The germ of their tenets must be traced back to the North [...]²⁰

William Rushton followed Moir in his Dublin *Afternoon Lectures on English Literature* (1863), where he discussed “The Classical and Romantic Schools of English Literature” as represented by Spenser, Dryden, Pope, Scott and Wordsworth.²¹ After a defence of the originally dysphemistic synonyms “Gothic” and “Romantic” on the basis of a historical misunderstanding of the Goths as mere barbarians, Rushton proceeded to identify and exemplify the characteristics of these contrary schools on the model of August Wilhelm Schlegel, Simonde de Sismondi, and Madame de Staël. Here, he placed special emphasis on Romanticism overcoming classical anti-feminism, which his own Victorian Age of women’s liberation and equality had inherited from the Romantics in spite of the Victorian return to elements of the Classical Tradition, or rather its reinvention:

Chivalry was the soul of this literature. “It represented,” says Sismondi, “the ideal world such as it existed in the imaginations of the romantic writers.” Its essential character was devotion to women and to honour. [...] Some of the ancients, especially among the Romans, systematically speak of women as inferiors; but, except in satires or comic stories, this was not the tone of romantic literature [...] The same spirit has been inherited by modern Europe; we cannot conceive of a noble-minded man, who does not cherish a high admiration for the true woman.²²

Rushton saw what present-day literary historiography has confirmed, the Romantic inheritance of the anti-Romantic Victorians. His plea to combine the merits (and avoid the weaknesses) of both schools in an advanced age of modern science and technique involves a plea to have recourse to classical rationality, lucidity, and formal finish:

Constant complaints are made that our modern literature is too spasmodic and sensational: perhaps classical training would administer the very sort of correction that is wanted.²³

Thomas Arnold, Keats’s contemporary, Coleridge’s friend, and headmaster and classics teacher at Rugby, still held the Romantics, especially the Lake Poets, in a state of veneration. His awareness of the need to connect classical studies both with the Romantic tradition and with modern life passed on to his eldest son Matthew. Matthew Arnold, as we shall see, reluctantly disavowed Wordsworth’s

20 Ibid. 17–18.

21 René Wellek, *Concepts of Criticism*, 150.

22 Rushton, *Afternoon Lectures on English Literature*, Dublin 1863, 46–47.

23 Ibid. 91.

Neoplatonic optimism in view of the burden of modern man's life, siding with a stern classical concept of Stoic resignation to fate and Empedoclean "sad lucidity of soul".²⁴ In his preface to his classical tragedy *Merope* (1858), however, he took pains to deny any mere imitation of the "classical school", while he confessed his emulation of the Greek and Roman classics. He wrote this shortly after his appointment to the Oxford Chair of Poetry, when the Postromantic Spasmodists had been exposed to ridicule by Aytoun, but remained widely read:

[...] there exists, I am convinced, even in England, even in this stronghold of the romantic school, a wide though an ill-informed curiosity on the subject of the so-called classical school [...]²⁵

In 1870, Edward Armitage painted a fresco entitled *The Vanguard of the Age*, featuring the most various male and female Romantic authors under the presidency of Henry Crabb Robinson: Flaxman, Blake, Wordsworth, Southey, Lamb, Mary Lamb, Coleridge, Wieland, Herder, Schiller, Arndt, Goethe, Tieck, von Knebel in the first row, with such different authors, scientists, and patrons as von Bunsen, Thomas Arnold, Schlegel, Godwin, Hazlitt, Princess Amalie, Lady Byron, Mrs Barbauld, and Madame de Staël in the second row.²⁶ And, in 1887, Murray published Lady Elizabeth Eastlake's translation of Alois Brandl's unprejudiced scholarly study *Samuel Taylor Coleridge und die englische Romantik* (1886) as *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the English Romantic School*. By now, around the time of the University Extension Movement and the instalment of Chairs of English Literature in British and Continental universities, "Romantic School", "Romanticism", and "Romantic Age" had become firmly established neutral portmanteau terms in the periodization of English literary history.

24 Arnold, Resignation: To Fausta, MS 1843–1848, line 298, in: Poems, ed. Kenneth Allott, Longmans Annotated English Poets, London 1965, 92.

25 Arnold, *Merope*, Preface, 1858, in: Complete Prose Works, ed. R.H. Super, Ann Arbor MI 1960–1978, I. 38.

26 Reproduced in: William McCarthy, Anna Letitia Barbauld, 358–359, figure 60.

VIII. Neoclassicism, Romantic Disillusionism, Victorianism, and after

Lord Byron's death in 1824 caused a widespread cultural shock, creating the impression of a cultural watershed in the minds of many English intellectuals. The young Tennyson carved the mournful lines "Byron is dead" upon a rock. And the young Bulwer-Lytton retrospectively diagnosed 1824 as the year of the death of solipsistic, oneiric, and morbid Romanticism, and the beginning of a new age of practical commitment:

When Byron passed away, the feeling he had represented craved utterance no more. With a sigh we turned to the actual and practical career of life: we awoke from the morbid, the passionate, the dreaming, 'the moonlight and the dimness of the mind', and by a natural reaction addressed ourselves to the active and daily objects which lay before us [...] Hence that strong attachment to the Practical, which became so visible a little time after the death of Byron, and which continues [...] to characterize the temper of the time.¹

Later, 1837 saw Queen Victoria's succession to the throne, Benjamin Disraeli's election to the House of Commons as a Tory MP, and the publication of his novel *Venetia*, very freely modelled on incidents in the lives of Byron and Percy Shelley. It was Disraeli's farewell both to Radicalism and Romanticism. In the course of the novel's plot, fate and experience of life bring Plantagenet Cadurcis (modelled on Byron) and Marmion Herbert (chiefly modelled on Percy Shelley) down from their high mountains of scoffing Pyrrhonism and overbearing Neoplatonism respectively to more domesticated and socially integrative positions, allowing them to discuss their contrary world views in friendship and harmony. At the novel's end, their illusory paradise in their happy valley in Italy is destroyed by fate and death, this finale typifying the common death of Negative as well as Positive Romanticism. Both overreaching Romantic geniuses are drowned in a storm, and *Venetia*, also brought down from her high romantic dreams of

¹ Bulwer-Lytton, *England and the English*, 1833, ed. Standish Meacham, Chicago IL 1970, 286. See also Vincent Newey, *Rival Cultures: Charles Dickens and the Byronic Legacy*, in: Andrew Radford – Mark Sandy (eds.), *Romantic Echoes in the Victorian Era*, 67–83.

happiness with Plantagenet Cadurcis, finally marries Captain George Cadurcis, Plantagenet's pedestrian but decent and respectable cousin. Many subsequent Victorian novels would end on such a note of the triumph of common sense and duty over romantic flights and expectations.

Literary historians have described the years of transition between Romanticism and Victorianism in terms of Biedermeier domestications.² The isolated heretic was tamed into a dutiful member of the congregation; the revolutionary into the citizen; the guilty raptures of incestuous lovers into the wedded bliss of respectable first cousins; and Promethean overreaching into humility (in the literal and metaphorical sense of Latin "humus").³ After Byron's death, female poets like Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon became more fashionable than male ones. Between 1824 and 1840, biographies of and novels on the Romantics, especially the deceased younger Romantics Keats, Percy Shelley, and Byron, sought to distance themselves from the chaotic lives and aspirations of those rebels. Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* is Byronic in the beginning, only to end by repudiating Byronism.⁴

In order to define themselves against their predecessors in what they called the "old romantic age" before the advent of railways and photography rang in their "new modern age", the Victorians followed the critics of Romanticism in the Romantic Period with their construction of a homogeneous "Romantic school" from a greatly diverse body of authors. On the other hand, they did not deny their Romantic heritage: their insistence on the need for imagination and outstanding genius, their worship of heroes, their cult of sensibility and the feeling heart, their belief in theurgy and mesmerism. They found mere rational calculation suspicious, as expressed in the sustained attacks on French Enlightenment philosophers in Bulwer-Lytton's esoteric historical novel *Zanoni* (1842), where the Illuminists of the French Revolution, Louis Claude de Saint-Martin and Jacques Cazotte (and Zanoni himself) give the lie to the rationalist philosopher Jean-Antoine-Nicolas Condorcet and the fictitious rationalist artist Jean Nicot. And the scholar Bulwer-Lytton knew very well that these Illuminists, notably Saint-Martin, had developed theories of prophetic genius, symbolic nature, the soul's yearning for the real world beyond, and the esemplastic imagination that anticipated Romanticism. Thomas Carlyle, Charles Dickens, and other more or less conservative Victorians constructed Thomas Robert Malthus, James and John Stuart Mill, Harriet Martineau, and Karl Marx into one common calculating, unfeeling, and unimaginative "Utilitarian school", regardless of the unbridgeable gulf between the four philosophers. Thus, they did

2 Virgil Nemoianu, *The Taming of Romanticism*, passim.

3 Richard Cronin, *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824–1840*, Basingstoke 2002, 4.

4 Andrew Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians*, Cambridge 1995, 221–229.

much the same as the Neoclassicists of the Romantic Period had done in the inimical formation of a common nebulous, egotistic, and ignorant “Romantic school”. They bundled them together so as to satirize and hit them together – a polemical strategy of frontline formation inherited from the Classical Tradition. Aytoun’s naming of and opposition to the “Spasmodic School” of the 1840s and 1850s, which continued the Romantic tradition and its holding on to spontaneity, inspiration, and innovation as a counter-voice to Victorianism, shows the Victorian return to the Classical Tradition and eighteenth-century Enlightenment Neoclassicism, though under new historical circumstances and in new selective perspectives. In a heterogeneous group of popular (and soon forgotten) young poets, Aytoun identified a number of outstanding characteristics that the satirists of Romanticism had impugned and derided. Dark metaphysics and spontaneous overflow were the most ostensible targets, as formulated by Haverillo, the representative of common sense and Aytoun’s mouth-piece among raving madmen, in his voluminous *Firmilian* (1854), a satirical drama printed by the publisher of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*:

Critics and poets both (save I who cling
 To older canons) have discarded sense,
 And meaning’s at a discount. Our young spirits,
 Who call themselves the masters of the age,
 Are either robed in philosophic mist,
 [...]
 [...] or they come
 Before us in the broad bombastic vein,
 With spasms, and throes, and transcendental flights,
 And heap hyperbole on metaphor.⁵

The Spasmodic hero-poets, Faustian descendants of the Byronic heroes, challenged the Victorians to satirical reviews and parodies with their extreme individualism, spurning common man, common sense, and the whole Classical Tradition in their determination to never be craftsmen, to never follow rules, to always regress to original nature and to always be inspired by the depths of their own minds. The Gothic medievalism of Bailey’s *Festus* is typical of that Romantic stance:

There is no style is good but nature’s style.
 And the great ancients’ writings, beside ours,
 Look like illuminated manuscripts

5 Aytoun, *Firmilian*, II. 5–15, Edinburgh and London 1854, 14–15. Also quoted in: Buckley, *The Victorian Temper*, 41, and Weinstein, *The Spasmodic Controversy*, 130.

Before plain press print; all had different minds
And followed only their own bents [...]⁶

In the parody's first scene, modelled on Goethe's Faust soliloquizing in his study, Aytoun's Firmilian scornfully rejects the whole Classical Tradition, from the fool Aristotle to any modern "dotard of antiquity", in favour of "the limpid fountain" of his own prurient and confused mind.⁷ The obvious reason is that he lacks both solid education and serious application to classical studies, dismissing the Classical Tradition after a ridiculously short perusal in the way of Swift's ridiculous Hack: "Three hours of study – and what gain thereby?"⁸

Adding Edgar Allan Poe and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to the black list on which Byron and Bailey ranked prominently, Aytoun continued Gifford's and other Neoclassical critics' preference for the Classical Tradition when he impugned the Romantic poetic of effect-catching as a kind of literary prostitution to the masses. Such poets sacrificed common sense as well as "unity or strength of design", and tried to be innovative instead of emulative:

[...] the enterprising innovator must either fall back upon the principle of common sense, or submit to become a laughingstock [...]⁹

Aytoun followed Thomas Carlyle, who used to oppose classical "noble strength" to "spasmodic violence", both in literature and politics.¹⁰ What the Whig George Gilfillan, with his revolutionary sympathies, praised as Byron's and the Spasmodists' "genius of convulsion", was pathological "spasm" in the eyes of Carlyle and his admirer Charles Kingsley. Aytoun's review and parodies hence targeted all the non-classical characteristics of Byron as well as those of the Victorian Romantic School, which he, as we have seen, vilified with the dysphemism of "Spasmodic School". These literary vices were disdain and ignorance of the Classical Tradition, poses of supernatural inspiration, extravagance of imagination, primitivism, lack of classical education and artistic control, false claim to originality, prurience and vulgarity, immorality, self-centred arrogance and social uselessness, incomprehensibility, metaphysical jargon concealing lack of meaning, Gothic improbabilities of plot, puffing by incompetent critics, self-prostitution to the sensation-loving populace, Promethean celebration of po-

6 Bailey, *Festus*, 1839, 1845, New York NY 1885, 269. As in Horace Walpole's preface to the second edition of *The Castle of Otranto* (1765), the "ancients" here means the "Gothic" authors of medieval romances.

7 Aytoun, *Firmilian*, I. 28–30, ed. cit. 3.

8 *Ibid.* I. 1–32, ed. cit. 1.

9 [Aytoun] in: *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 71 (February 1852), 225, and 74 (November 1853), 535.

10 Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History, The Hero as Priest [Luther]*, 1840–1841, in: *Works*, V. 138.

litical and moral revolt, and mendacious self-defence in the denial of immorality as regularly practised by Byron: “[...] Mr Percy Jones takes pains to show that he is not personally identified with the opinions of his hero”.¹¹ His reckless egoism and striving for the superhuman, and his equally reckless efforts to gain ever fresh, exciting sensations by murdering men and blowing up a cathedral, make Aytoun’s Firmilian a caricature of the Byronic-Spasmodic hero. As a satirical amalgam of Goethe’s Faust, Byron’s heroes, De Quincey’s murder-artist, Bailey’s Festus, and – later – Wilde’s Dorian Gray, he represents the mainstream High Victorian opposition against subversive Victorian Romanticism or Spasmodism. Spasmodic poetry sold extremely well and was widely read as a kind of under-the-counter literature, resembling pornography, during the whole Victorian Period. It shows the constant challenge that repressed Romantic self-consciousness and revolt constituted to official Victorian social earnestness.¹²

This might suggest that the Victorians simply took over the pejorative meaning of “romanticism and revolution”, changing its designation from that used by the Augustans and their successors in the Romantic Period. The Victorians, however, applied the word “romantic” very loosely and contradictively, often in the sense of everything before the age of speed and railways, including classical antiquity, as an antonym to “modern”.¹³ Thus, its semantics mirrored the Victorians’ split attitude to Romanticism. In the word’s negative connotation, “romantic” designated their supreme demand for progress, which they had inherited from the Enlightenment ideal of perfectibility¹⁴ and which was diametrically opposed to the primitivist Romantic nostalgia for origins. In the word’s positive connotation, “romantic” expressed their fear of deracination through the unchecked speed of progress and consequent nostalgia for tradition and religion. In this latter sense, “romantic” could include the Classical Tradition. Victorians born very late in the eighteenth or early in the nineteenth century, who grew up with and admired Romantic literature when young and had to emancipate themselves for their “new age” with its new demands, came to construct a simplified image of Romanticism for the sake of contrastive self-definition. And, as was the case with Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Alfred Lord Tennyson, they also had to pull themselves clear of their outdated contemporaries, the temporarily fashionable Victorian Romantics of the Spasmodic School. Without regard for the heterogeneity of the Romantics’ aesthetic ideals, literary styles, philosophical stances, and socio-political convictions, the Romantics appeared to them as one outdated group, characterized by unworldly

11 [Aytoun] in: Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine, 75 (May 1854), 545.

12 Stephen Marcus, *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England*, New York NY 1966, *passim*.

13 Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830–1870*, New Haven 1957, 3.

14 Nesbitt, *Benthamite Reviewing*, 68.

exaltation, disdain of commitment and work, incomprehensibility and irresponsibility, escapism from reality, primitivism, self-conscious egotism, addiction to dreams and drugs, prophetic poses, neglect of form and tradition, rage for innovation, and socially irrelevant aestheticism. Thomas Carlyle's formulations of his anti-self-consciousness-theory and Protestant work ethic have recourse to a vocabulary typical of Enlightenment rationalists and Neoclassical poetics from Dryden and Locke, via Hume and Johnson, to Peacock and Gifford. And Matthew Arnold's typically Victorian portrait of his boisterous "new age", with its new Post-Romantic demands, updates the Classical Tradition from Phidias via the Tory Pitt to the conservative Weimar Classicism of Goethe in its demand for new schools and new rules, while the speaker's self-ironic note moderates a too inconsiderate welcome and expectation of modern speed and progress:

Thundering and bursting
 In torrents, in waves –
 Carolling and shouting
 Over tombs, amid graves –
 See! on the cumbered plain
 Clearing a stage,
 Scattering the past about,
 Comes the new age.
 [...]
 Look, ah, what genius,
 Art, science, wit!
 Soldiers like Caesar,
 Statesmen like Pitt!
 Sculptors like Phidias,
 Raphaels in shoals,
 Poets like Shakespeare –
 Beautiful souls!
 [...]
 The world but feels the present's spell,
 The poet feels the past as well.¹⁵

Like other Victorians who had been brought up with Romantic literature, Arnold had distanced himself from high-flown expectations when he wrote his own Victorian version of Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" (1798), entitled "Resignation" (1849). It was a modern, alternative conversation poem addressed to another sister than Dorothy, this time with the Latin name Fausta, fortunate not in that the speaker ecstatically teaches her the pure joy of life and nature as

15 Arnold, *Bacchanalia*, or, *The New Age*, 1867, II. 33 – 66, in: *Poems*, ed. cit. 537 – 538. Also see Buckley, *The Victorian Temper*, 14 – 40.

Wordsworth had done, but in that he is resigned to the hard work and limitations of human achievements:

*To die be given us, or attain!
Fierce work it were, to do again.*¹⁶

Matthew Arnold's "Preface" to his new edition of his *Poems* (1853), written at the height of the popularity of the Spasmodic School, attacked Keats's Romanticism and the Spasmodists' Neoromanticism in favour of the Classical Tradition, especially Aristotle and the poetry of Greece. The calm, the cheerfulness, the disinterested objectivity which the Weimar Classicists had discovered in ancient Greece had disappeared, the doubts and discouragement of Hamlet and of Faust had begun to haunt the modern age, and the modern reader needed "a hand to guide him through the confusion".¹⁷ Throughout the preface, Arnold refers to the Aristotelian rules, including the rule of general nature and the *consensus omnium*: "What are the eternal objects of poetry, among all nations, and at all times? They are actions, human actions".¹⁸ Not the individual and the exceptional, but the general – the species of man – is what the poet should delineate, according to the eternal rules of art, and here Arnold saw the ancients superior to the moderns, even to Shakespeare, and he resumed the *Quarterly's* and *Blackwood's* Neoclassical attacks on the "utter incoherence" of Keats's *Endymion* (1818). Those innovators who wrote Romantic poetry against what they mistook for "an exhausted past" had reappeared in Arnold's time, and he attacked the Spasmodists at the same time and on the same grounds as Aytoun without even naming them. They lacked the virtues of the Classical Tradition: attention to general nature, clearly constructed plots of general interest, observance of rule and overall architecture, polish and craftsmanship, "disinterestedness" in the sense of serenity beyond the passions of the moment,¹⁹ and a clear didactic moral aim. Moreover, the puffing critics of the Spasmodists no longer fulfilled the function of strict quality control as Pope and Gifford had demanded:

We have poems which exist merely for the sake of single lines and passages; not for the sake of producing any total impression. We have critics who seem to direct their attention merely to detached expressions, to the language about the action, not to the action itself. I verily think that the majority of them do not in their hearts believe that there is such a thing as a total impression to be derived from a poem at all [...] They will permit the poet to select any action he pleases, and to suffer that action to go as it will,

16 Arnold, *Resignation: To Fausta*, 1849, lines 1–2, ed. cit. 85.

17 Arnold, *Poems*, Preface, 1853, in: *Complete Prose Works*, I, 8.

18 *Ibid.* I, 3.

19 Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism*, IV, 156.

provided he gratifies them with occasional outbursts of fine writing, and with a shower of isolated thoughts and images.²⁰

In his “Preface” to the revised edition of his *Poems* (1854), Arnold was even more outspoken in favour of the modern need of a return to the Classical Tradition. The disease of modern life and literature was loss of orientation and rules, which guarantee sanity, whereas the Romantic or Spasmodic literature that infected the new age with a breath from the past was insane and sickly. Hence the Greek and Roman classics must be read, preferably in the original, as a corrective and antidote to the Romanticism that he described but did not name:

They [the classical writers of antiquity] can help to cure us of what is, it seems to me, the great vice of our intellect, manifesting itself in our incredible vagaries in literature, in art, in religion, in morals: namely, that it is *fantastic*, and wants *sanity*. Sanity – that is the great virtue of ancient literature; the want of that is the great defect of the modern, in spite of all its vagaries and power. It is impossible to read carefully the great ancients, without losing something of our caprice and eccentricity; and to emulate them we must at least read them.²¹

The Classical Tradition permeated all cultural representations of the Victorian Period: poetry, prose, fiction, art, and opera.²² It served as a bulwark of intellectual and social conservatism, but, paradoxically, it was an alibi for undermining that conservatism by dealing with controversial issues such as the justification of war and sexual desire. John William Waterhouse’s painting of the martyrdom of St Eulalia (1885) is a case in point.²³ Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema’s paintings of Roman life add another aspect of the Victorian fascination with classical antiquity: nostalgia for tranquillity, serenity, faith, and hygiene. His corrective stylization, with its implicit critique of modern life, basically distinguished Victorian Neoclassicism from the Neoclassicism of the Romanticism Period. The Neoclassicism of the Romantic Period adhered to the rules of a normative aesthetic for socio-political stabilization, as a counterbalance to the turmoil of the French Revolution. Victorian Neoclassicism, by contrast, rather sought to stabilize the soul of man in a time of receding faith and increasing disorientation, when poetry was taking over the role that religion had played in the “old world”:

The present age makes great claims upon us: we [the poets] owe it service, [...] I know not how it is, but their commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce, in those

20 Arnold, *Poems*, Preface, 1853, in: *Complete Prose Works*, I. 7.

21 Arnold, *Poems*, Preface, 1854, ed. cit. I. 17.

22 Simon Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity*, passim.

23 *Ibid.*

who constantly practise it, a steadying and composing effect upon their judgment, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general.²⁴

This is why Arnold had recourse to the old principle of Neoclassical criticism that it should be an institution of objective quality control, that the critic should be what he termed “disinterested” in the sense of “unbiased”. The critic should neither puff nor condemn a work for external reasons, neither in the interest of a friendship nor of a party nor of a publisher nor of the pecuniary demands of the market. Thus, towards the end of his essay “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” (1864), he came to a memorable definition that might have been Pope’s or Colton’s:

I am bound by my own definition of criticism: *a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and taught in the world.*²⁵

In his own poetry, Arnold was not only keen to avoid Romantic-Spasmodic excesses and idiosyncrasies of style (except for purposes of caricature) and to return to classical rules and ideals. Like his father Thomas, who admired Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776 – 1831) and taught ancient history in Rugby, Matthew studied classical history and myth for parallels to his own time, applying them in his poetry for didactic and reformatory purposes. As the historical novel from Scott’s *Waverley* (1814) to Charles Reade’s *The Cloister and the Hearth* (1861) and Walter Pater’s *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) with their heavy use of historical source material and the portrayal of past events in terms of modern situations and problems indicates, Victorian historians studied history not as antiquaries, but as committed social critics and reformers. In this respect, they adhered to the Classical Tradition of historiography and its circular view of history, which understood history as continuing present and shapable future, with the didactic consequence of “*historia magistra vitae*” and in confirmation of the biblical “*nil novum sub sole*”.²⁶ This was the conviction held by both Thomas and Matthew Arnold, this distinguished them from the young Bulwer-Lytton, who, in his excellently researched historical novel *Rienzi* (1835), had made his erudite protagonist the spokesman of this programme and unmasked it as an idealist dream. The fourteenth-century scholar and politician Rienzi studies classical Roman history for models to restore the greatness of Rome in times of chaos and corruption. His address to the patricians and plebeians of Rome pre-formulates the Victorian classical historian’s aim in polemical words that Thomas and Mathew Arnold would subscribe to:

24 Arnold, *Poems*, Preface, 1853, ed. cit. I. 13.

25 Arnold, *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*, 1864, 1865, ed. cit. III. 283.

26 Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeit*, Frankfurt am Main 1979, 1989, 40 and *passim*.

“Let the Past perish! – let darkness shroud it! Let it sleep for ever over the crumbling temples and desolate tombs of its forgotten sons, – if it cannot afford us, from its disburied secrets, a guide for the Present and the Future.”²⁷

The young Bulwer-Lytton, however, was still held too profoundly under the influence of Byron’s Romantic Disillusionism to let the reader have glimpses of any possibility of success. In his novel, *Rienzi* and his revolution are bound to fail; Rome is bound to relapse into degeneracy and corruption. Following Thomas Carlyle, the Victorians overcame this Byronism. Studying the causes of recurrent patterns of rise and fall, the Victorians firmly believed that their work ethic could break the old circles and convert them into upward lines for a better future.

Convinced that patterns of history such as the inroads of new ages and the obsolescence of old religions recurred again and again, in the sense of Robert Browning’s “earth’s returns”,²⁸ Matthew Arnold’s poetry teems with constructed historical and mythical parallels between his own age and classical antiquity. Thus “*Bacchanalia, or, The New Age*” (1867) consists of two parts, the first describing the invasion of a crowd of mad, ecstatic revellers into the serenity of ancient Greece, the second describing the invasion of the new Victorian speed into the serenity of the old Romantic Age. Twice, quick hectic dymeters follow calm regular tetrameters.²⁹ In “*Dover Beach*” (1855), the speaker and his young wife stand at a window at nightfall and full tide facing the beach at Dover, opposite the glimmering and fading lights of Calais. The speaker’s reflections on changeability, the necessary ebb after the high tide of faith, and the consequent loss of orientation in darkness recall, to him, the Greek tragedian Sophocles standing on the edge of the Aegean, thinking about the turbid ebb and flow of human misery, as well as the Greek historian Thucydides telling the story of the battle of Epipolae, where “ignorant armies clashed at night”.³⁰ In “*Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*” (1855), written shortly after “*Dover Beach*”, however, an insight that the past is irrecoverable is gained, referring to both the past of classical antiquity and of the Middle Ages. Nor was Romantic withdrawal into solitude or an earlier stage of civilization compatible with the Victorian demand of altruism. The past could, nevertheless, yield corrective standards of orientation. Like most Victorians, the Arnolds were convinced that they could learn solutions to the problems of their time from history and myth, as shown in “*The Scholar-Gipsy*” (1853). The “strange disease of modern life”,³¹ its adult loss of

27 Bulwer-Lytton, *Rienzi*, 1835, in: *Novels and Romances*, IV. 71.

28 Browning, *Love Among the Ruins*, 1855, line 80, in: *Poetical Works 1833–1864*, ed. Ian Jack, Oxford Standard Authors, London 1970, 537.

29 *Bacchanalia, or, The New Age*, 1867, in: *Poems*, 534–536 and 536–538.

30 Arnold, *Dover Beach*, MS 1851, 1855, line 37, in: *Poems*, 243.

31 Arnold, *The Scholar-Gipsy*, 1853, line 203, ed. cit.. 342.

faith and orientation as well as its adult exhaustion under the weight of more and more duties and acceleration, is difficult for many to sustain. But, as a Tyrian trader fled from the inroad of hectic Greek traders back to more primitive and calmer forms of trading in North Africa, the cradle of his Phoenician civilization, so modern Britons incapable of sustaining the hurry of the new age can withdraw to more primitive forms of trading in the colonies of the British Empire.³² The ancient Tyrian Trader's regression into the past was not tainted by the egoistic self-withdrawal of the seventeenth-century dropout Scholar-Gipsy. Thus, ancient history could teach how Victorian altruism could be saved without relapsing into Romantic solipsism and escapism. One result of the inroads made by the hectic new age and the incapacity of many Victorians "like children reared in shade Beneath some old-world abbey wall"³³ was the disturbing rise in the rate of suicides, another form of solipsistic escapism. Here, Arnold's parallel was the history and philosophy of the Greek philosopher Empedocles, which Arnold changed and interspersed with anachronisms to fit his own age in his dramatic poem *Empedocles on Etna* (1852). Living at an adult time when Greek philosophy had begun to doubt the old primitive Olympic religion from the infancy of Greek civilization, Empedocles has come to assume a phylogenetic explanation of life, which Arnold combined with Lucretian materialism, Pyrrhonic scepticism, Byronic disillusionism, Schopenhauerian negation of life, and Victorian science. Empedocles's ascent from the fertile base (the region of the young pious believer Callicles) via the more barren sides (the region of the rationalist Pausanias) to the bleak peak of Mount Etna (the landscape of Empedocles's soul) is a perverted *ascensio*, not to rise but to fall in an act of despairing suicide. *Empedocles on Etna* was Arnold's Greek *exemplum horrendum* of the final consequence of a loss of faith in a civilization's progress from childhood via adulthood to old-age decadence. And Robert Browning's dramatic monologue "Cleon" (1855), written in admiration and emulation of Arnold's *Empedocles*, invented another classical parallel to voice the same warning: a fictitious old Greek philosopher, contemporary of St Paul, who has lost his old faith in his old Olympic religion without being able to substitute a new faith in its stead. Both philosophers, Empedocles and Cleon, make the experience that there is no romantically nostalgic way back into the youth of man and civilization.

Arnold knew perfectly well that his modern age, infected by scepticism and mass culture and industrialization, could not possibly regain the cheerful serenity of Greece or the unshakeable faith of the Middle Ages. But it needed "religious" regulations (in the literal sense), firmly based ideals to bind itself back to in order not to get lost in a wild rush into an unknown future. Where the

32 Ibid. lines 232–250, ed. cit. 343–34.

33 Arnold, Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse, lines 169–170, MS 1851, 1855, *ibid.* 292.

old religious creed had become incredible, something must be substituted in its stead “to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us”, and that was poetry, especially the literature of Greece, from which Arnold amply quoted in the original Greek.³⁴ Hellenism and Greek beauty must moderate the Hebraism of modern Victorian culture, its functional and doctrinal aridity and its hideousness. Hellenic “sweetness and light” must temper Victorian Puritan-Hebraic-Philistine earnestness and dullness, not to allow modern science- and profit-oriented culture to degenerate into anarchy. In accordance with this humanist programme, Arnold wrote an elegant literary prose style modelled on Demosthenes and Cicero, quite distinct from the aridity of scientific publications:

Sweetness and light evidently have to do with the bent or side in humanity which we call Hellenic. [...] That is to say, we are to join Hebraism, strictness of the moral conscience, and manful walking by the best light we have, together with Hellenism, inculcate both, and rehearse the praises of both.³⁵

Arnold joined the chorus of nineteenth-century intellectuals all over Europe stating that modern man and modern culture stand in need of deliverance, *Erlösung*, from loss of religion and orientation. And literature, especially the literature of ancient Greece and Rome, must be preserved and cultivated to bring about this deliverance where, as he complained in “Dover Beach”, the sea faith was no longer at the full:

An intellectual deliverance [from all that impairs the moral activity of man] is the peculiar demand of those ages which are called modern; [...] [and] the literature of Greece is, even for modern times, therefore, an object of interest.³⁶

Here, Arnold ranked himself in the argumentative frontline of the “Victorian Debate”³⁷ which John Henry Newman, whom Arnold came to know and admire in Oxford at the end of the Tractarian Movement, had built up against the advocates of modern science versus the traditional humanities: Auguste Comte and Positivism, John Stuart Mill and Utilitarianism, Thomas Henry Huxley and Darwinism. To educate the whole man before training a part, both in physical and intellectual education, as Newman demanded in his above-mentioned nine Dublin lectures on *The Idea of a University* (1852), meant the indispensability of a classical education in the Greek and Latin languages and literatures for every qualified individual. Only complete gentlemen with a previous liberal education could be elegant and healthy lawyers, physicians, or engineers competitive in

34 Arnold, *The Study of Poetry*, in: *Complete Prose Works*, IX. 161.

35 Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 1868, *ibid.* V. 178.

36 Arnold, *On the Modern Element in Literature*, MS 1857, *ibid.* I. 19–20. This was Arnold’s inaugural lecture as Oxford Professor of Poetry, delivered in the Sheldonian Theatre.

37 Raymond Chapman, *The Victorian Debate*, *passim*.

their respective markets. After all, Mill and Huxley themselves admitted their self-cultivation through reading the classics in the original languages. For Newman and Arnold as admirers of Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Bildung* was superior to and had to precede *Ausbildung*.

For all his rejection of Byron's scepticism, pessimistic deism, and lack of a moral aim that Byron shared with Heinrich Heine, Arnold admired Byron's stoical sense of reality. Romantic Disillusionism and Augustan Neoclassicism had joined in bringing Romantic Platonism down to earth again. As in Alfred Tennyson's "Lady of Shalott" (1832), romantic self-isolation, the romantic cult of esoteric art, and romantic withdrawal from a direct touch with everyday reality were doomed to perish. The Lady of Shalott lives alone in her palace of art, grows weary of Coleridgean shadows, leaves her seclusion, and allows herself to drift romantically down the river to die in the busy, populated capital of Camelot. Her infatuation with *ερως* and *θανατος* exclude any active altruistic coping with everyday reality and any modern social commitment. Lancelot's final words, "She has a lovely face, God in his mercy lend her grace", are a satirically devastating commentary upon the obsolescence and uselessness of High Romanticism in modern Victorian times with its very real social problems.³⁸ In the hectically busy 1830s, forced to confront realities instead of shadows and dreams, Tennyson suggests in his allegory that Romanticism was beautiful, useless, and dead. A parallel from the Classical Tradition that served the same function of satirizing Romanticism is Tennyson's Oenone, the playmate whom Paris deserted for the *femme fatale* Helen of Troy, egotistically mourning herself to death, not heeding the very Victorian admonition of Mother Ida,

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power."³⁹

In Tennyson's dramatic monologue, Oenone makes a fool of herself in her romantic self-pity, like Tennyson's Mariana, the deserted fiancée of Shakespeare's Angelo in *Measure for Measure*. And yet, the discredited though pitiable suffering mourner's *Weltschmerz* and *Todessehnsucht* were the conflicting Romantic substratum, the second of the "two voices" that accompanied Tennyson's Victorian poetry from the first to the last of his publications. Later in his life, when Tennyson had to cope with the Neoromantic Decadence of Baudelaire and Swinburne more than the High Romanticism of Keats, he expressed the same inner conflict in his dramatic monologue *Lucretius* (1868), only two years after the publication of Swinburne's scandalous post-Spasmodic *Poems and Ballads* (1866). Lucretius, the materialistic philosopher drugged by his wife Lucilia, is

38 Tennyson, *The Lady of Shalott*, 1832, 1842, lines 169–170, in: *Poems*, 361.

39 Tennyson, *Oenone*, 1832, lines 142–143, ed. cit. 392.

ironically discredited for his egotistical suicide. And yet he commands our sympathy and betrays the depressive poet's fascination with drugs and courageous death as a solution to loss of faith and orientation for an old man in a civilization growing decadent. In Neoromantic imagery varying the Romantic motif of *ερως* and *θανατος*, death is a cold, indifferent, fatal bride waiting to relieve all men, sooner or later:

“[...] Oh Thou,
 Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,
 Yearned after by the wisest of the wise,
 Who fail to find thee, being as thou art
 Without one pleasure and without one pain,
 Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine
 Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus
 I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not
 How roughly men may woo thee so they win –
 Thus – thus: the soul flies out and dies in the air.”⁴⁰

This secret fascination with Romanticism and Decadent Neoromanticism and their characteristics in the Victorian perspective – egotism, self-consciousness, wildness, madness, drugs, necrophilia, suicide – shines through even the most Victorian of Victorian anti-Romantic poems, establishing their two conflicting voices, the public and the private voices of Victorian poetry.⁴¹

The decline of formal satire in Victorian literature notwithstanding, anti-Romantic satire survived in genres such as the dramatic monologue, the verse tale, the parody, the novel, the drama, and the dramatic monologue. But it was a milder kind of satire for its clandestine sympathy with Romanticism.

Around the same year as Tennyson's *Poems* of 1832, Heinrich Heine pointed the way back from the Schlegels' Romantic medievalism to contemporary finite reality and its needs, from the love of infinity and spirituality to the re-energizing Antaeus touch with the earth. The would-be Romantic's and must-be realist's regret is as palpable as in his famous “Lorelei-Lied”, the polemical nature of his presentation of the Classical-Romantic divide notwithstanding. The Positive Romantics appear as foolishly overreaching adulterators of the finite Classical Tradition:

Die klassische Kunst hatte nur das Endliche darzustellen [...]. Die romantische Kunst hatte das Unendliche und lauter spiritualistische Beziehungen darzustellen oder vielmehr anzudeuten [...]. Daher das Mystische, Rätselhafte, Wunderbare und Überschwengliche in den Kunstwerken des Mittelalters; die Phantasie macht ihre entsetz-

40 Tennyson, Lucretius, 1868, lines 265–273, in: *Poems*, 1217.

41 Sabine Coelsch-Foisner / Holger Klein (eds.), *Private and Public Voices of Victorian Poetry*, Tübingen 2000.

lichsten Anstrengungen, das Reingeistige durch sinnliche Bilder darzustellen, und sie erfindet die kolossalsten Tollheiten, sie stülpt den Pelion auf den Ossa, den 'Parzifal auf den Titurel', um den Himmel zu erreichen.⁴²

Balder, the exalted poet-hero of Sydney Dobell's dramatic poem, a late example of the Post-Romantic Spasmodic School, experiences the difficulty of such a descent to earth. Living high above ordinary mortals in an "old tower gloomy and ruinous", Balder would associate with those ordinary mortals according to the needs of his new time. But he is caught in the web of Romantic self-analysis and ultimately fails:⁴³

In the form
Of manhood will I get me down to man!
As one goes down from Alpine tops with snows
Upon his head, I, who have stood so long
On other Alps, will go down to my race.⁴⁴

Such an admission of the incompatibility of Romanticism with Victorian social commitment invited opposition and parody. Aytoun's spoof review of T. Percy Jones's (i. e. of his own parody) *Firmilian* (1854) took the Spasmodic School to task for disregarding or even breaking "every social relation" in the self-centred conviction of their own "sacred calling".⁴⁵ In a time celebrating modern versions of classical values, health and sanity as well as hard work and cold water, such Post-Romantic "symptoms of unmistakable lunacy" in works of poetry "which might have borne the *imprimatur* of Bedlam" were outdated.⁴⁶ This made for social exclusion or quarantine of the highly infectious adversary *de rigueur*.

As a robust Victorian, Thomas Carlyle was less pessimistic than Byron's standard-bearer Dobell, whom Carlyle vigorously opposed. At the beginning of his early novel *Sartor Resartus* (1833–34), Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, the German idealist philosopher, Radical Romantic, and Professor at the University of Weissnichtwo, is satirically portrayed as an eccentric and incomprehensible speculator in his garret high above his busy modern city with its "doing and driving", to which he has no contact, being "alone with the Stars". Everything in the professor's caricatured domicile denotes confusion, absence of mind, and madness, the very contrary of classical rule and order:

It was the attic floor in the highest house in the Wahngasse; and might truly be called the pinnacle of Weissnichtwo, for it rose sheer up above the contiguous roofs, themselves rising from elevated ground. [...] Books lay on tables, and below tables; here

42 Heine, *Die romantische Schule*, MS 1833, 1836, in: *Sämtliche Schriften*, III. 367–368.

43 Buckley, *The Victorian Temper*, 55–57.

44 Dobell, *Balder*, London 1854, 143.

45 [Aytoun] in: *Blackwood Edinburgh Magazine*, 75 (May 1854), 533.

46 *Ibid.*

fluttered a sheet of manuscript, there a torn handkerchief, or night-cap hastily thrown aside; ink-bottles alternated with bread-crusts, coffee-pots, tobacco-boxes, Periodical Literature, and Blücher Boots. [...] Glad would he have been to sit here philosophising for ever, or till the litter, by accumulation, drove him out of doors [...]⁴⁷

Reality and sorrow, the loss of his Blumine, casts Teufelsdröckh down into depression and negation, the antithesis of his hitherto superficially optimistic life, into “The Everlasting No”. Finally, he succeeds in overcoming his Romantic egoism, discovers his altruistic social responsibility, turns the work of idealist Plato from its head on his feet, from airy visions to earthbound needs, and develops a practical Platonic “philosophy of clothes”, demanding a step-by-step modernization of institutions for the protection of modern men in everyday life. The divine part of man (Diogenes) is not to be eradicated, but man can improve his infernal and ignoble part (Teufelsdröckh, Entepful, and Hinterschlag). Thus, Teufelsdröckh completes his dialectical evolution, arriving at the socially committed synthesis of “The Everlasting Yea”. The satirized Romantic and Radical has become a respectable and orderly Victorian. His return to Enlightenment common sense is, however, modified by a victory over Enlightenment scepticism. Debilitating doubt is overcome by a new firm faith, expressed in his exclamatory and affirmative Carlylean style.

Robert Browning’s dramatic monologues resumed the Classical Tradition of Ovid’s *Heroides* and Pope’s *Eloisa to Abelard* (1717) in their dramatic irony and critical distance to the speaker, which the dramatic monologues of Romanticism, Byron’s *The Prophecy of Dante* (1817) and *The Lament of Tasso* (1817), had given up in favour of Romantic confessional poetry, the voice of the poet’s self-fashioning. The young Robert Browning’s first dramatic monologue, *Pauline* (1833), published in the same year as *Sartor Resartus*, featured an erratic young Neoplatonic poet fascinated by Percy Shelley, who has lost his beloved Pauline as Teufelsdröckh has his beloved Blumine. And, like the early Teufelsdröckh, the young poet is a self-conscious Romantic egoist whose thoughts revolve around himself and his painful loss. His mad addresses to the dead Shelley, like his mad addresses to the dead Pauline, are modelled on Shelley’s poetry, although their exaggerations and incomprehensibility reveal them as parodies. Browning could read and write Greek and Latin as well as French and Italian at fourteen years of age, then took up studies at the newly-founded and practice-oriented University of London and developed a sense of altruism and commitment to the practical needs of modern times. By consequence, Browning bid adieu to Shelley, the positive idol of his boyhood after Byron. His dreamy young Shelleyan poet’s fragmentary invocations of Pauline and confused imitations of Shelley, which betray lack of training in the Classical Tradition, were meant to discredit the

47 Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, 1833–1834, in: *Works*, II. 15 and 18.

speaker as an unreliable narrator and erratic character, although Browning's readers tended to misunderstand them as Browning's belated and outdated confession of Romantic Neoplatonism:

“Oh Pauline, I am ruined! who believed
That tho' my soul had floated from its sphere
Of wide dominion into the dim orb
Of self – that it was strong and free as ever: -
It has conformed itself to that dim orb,
Reflecting all its shades and shapes, and now
Must stay where it alone can be adored.
I have felt this in dreams [...]”⁴⁸

In a later, more accomplished dramatic monologue, “Abt Vogler” (1864), Robert Browning stigmatized the high-flying, overreaching, remote idealism of another Romantic artist, a once respected, but at the time forgotten, teacher of the Romantic composers Weber and Meyerbeer. Georg Joseph Vogler, a second-rate artist and cultivator of musical originality, is the perfect Horatian caricature of a Romantic artist: a conceited self-fashioned prophet divorced from and out of touch with the world, a despiser of tradition and rules of art who builds a Tower of Babel or Coleridgean Dome of Xanadu with his music extemporized upon a small orchestrion of his own invention. Vogler is finally brought to realize that his Romantic “castle in the air” cannot last, so that he must par down both his exalted tones and his artistic claims to the common chords and keys. His Romantic self-estimation is given the lie by the smallness of his instrument as well as by historical oblivion. In the monologue's irony, the classical heritage of Browning's satirical portraits of failed artists and of his didactic purpose becomes evident:

Well, it is earth with me; silence resumes her reign:
I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce.
Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord again,
Sliding by semitones, till I sink to the minor, – yes
And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien ground,
Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from into the deep;
Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my resting-place is found,
The C Major of this life [...]”⁴⁹

Toppling Platonic Romanticism by bubble-pricking its illusions was the aim of all Romantic Disillusionists, of whose techniques Browning availed himself without, however, buying into their scepticism. The classical rhetorical figures

48 Browning, Pauline: A Fragment of a Confession, 1833, lines 89–96, in: Poetical Works 1833–1864, 905.

49 Browning, Abt Vogler, 1864, lines 89–96, *ibid.* 811.

and techniques of inversion, hyperbole, and anti-climax, which Alexander Pope had dubbed βαθος as opposed to παθος,⁵⁰ were among its favourite techniques.

Heinrich Heine's polemical treatise against Positive Romanticism, *Die romantische Schule* (1836), contains a passage in which this technique, learned from Byron, is applied to bring exalted Romantic mystics and Platonists back down to earth. They fashioned themselves as exceptional men far removed from the world and eventually metamorphosed into stars, high priests and prophets joining heaven and earth. But a subversive view of the very banal and common lives which these "stars" share with all other men destroys that myth of a stellar metamorphosis, discredits their stylistic nebulosity, reveals their all-too-human weaknesses and corruptibility, and affirms everybody's need of and involvement in the very earthly eristic culture of Western civilization:

Die Sterne des Himmels erscheinen uns aber vielleicht deshalb so schön und rein, weil wir weit von ihnen entfernt stehen und ihr Privatleben nicht kennen. Es gibt gewiß dort oben ebenfalls manche Sterne, welche lügen und betteln; Sterne, welche heucheln; Sterne, welche gezwungen sind, alle möglichen Schlechtigkeiten zu begehen; Sterne, welche sich einander küssen und verraten; Sterne, welche ihren Feinden, und, was noch schmerzlicher ist, sogar ihren Freunden schmeicheln, eben so gut wie wir hier unten. Jene Kometen, die man dort oben manchmal wie Mänaden des Himmels, mit aufgelöstem Strahlenhaar, umherschweifen sieht, das sind vielleicht liederliche Sterne, die am Ende sich reuig und devot in einen obskuren Winkel des Firmaments verkriechen und die Sonne hassen.⁵¹

Attacking the metaphysical exaltation and mysticism of German idealistic philosophy and the desertion of the Romantic generation of the 1770s to medievalist Roman Catholicism, especially Hegel, Görres, and the Schlegels, Heine recommended the example of the Classical Tradition as preserved in French Neoclassicism as an antidote. He followed Boileau in claiming that clear thoughts (as learned from the literature of classical antiquity) lead to a clear style, and that, conversely, the Positive Romantics' stylistic obscurity is the deplorable result of their confused thoughts, due in turn to their ignorance or neglect of the classics. Leslie Stephen, author of *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876) and *The English Utilitarians* (1900), welcomed such healthy agnosticism as going against the grain of the public opinion of his time, stressing the Post-Romantic heritage of his own Victorian Age to the Augustan eighteenth century, modernizing it by adding the need for Victorian manliness and commitment. Christian historiographers, Charles Kingsley, Thomas Babington Macaulay, James Anthony Froude, and Henry Hart Milman would take a similar view, recognizing and praising Augustan England's "masculine" Roman inheritance

50 See above.

51 Heine, *Die romantische Schule*, 1836, in: *Sämtliche Schriften*, III. 436–437.

of common sense and vitality though lamenting its infection by scepticism and Hamlet's sickly "pale cast of thought". In contrast to his image of the eighteenth century in his *History of England* (1849–1855), Macaulay's extremely popular *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842) tried to poetically reconstruct Roman history in Rome's oral ballad tradition which he suspected to have been the source of Livy's Roman History. The classical Latin common sense and the victorious Roman heroism celebrated in these tales stand in strong contrast to Walter Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), with its sentimental speaker's Romantic lament of the decline of his art and nation. The narrator of Macaulay's ballad of Horatius Cocles, for instance, a late antique Roman living at the time of the decline of the Roman Empire, recalls the "virtus Romana" of the legendary Roman hero who once defended the Tiber bridge single-handed against the Etruscan enemies. The ballad revival of the Romantic heritage of Victorianism provided the form to celebrate Latin clarity paired with Latin vitality in a Neo-Neoclassical spirit:

Then out spake brave Horatius,
 The Captain of the Gate:
 "To every man upon this earth
 Death cometh soon or late.
 And how can man die better
 Than facing fearful odds,
 For the ashes of his fathers,
 And the temples of his Gods."⁵²

What made the realistic turn of the Romantic Disillusionists, Byron and Heine, unacceptable to Victorianism was their "effeminacy", their incomplete dialectic, their unvanquished doubt. From a Victorian perspective, the Romantic Disillusionists revelled in what Carlyle and Newman sweepingly diagnosed as the witty self-complacency and enjoyment of heresy which they saw as characteristics of eighteenth-century Augustan civilization in general, and of the historian Edward Gibbon in particular. What these Victorians wanted was a modern Augustan civilization and a Classical Tradition deprived of Enlightenment doubt, to avoid another lapse into Revolution and Romanticism. Victorian historiography and history of ideas both went back to and overcame their eighteenth-century models.⁵³ Carlyle and Newman studied and had formed their thought and prose styles on Cato, Addison, Johnson, and Gibbon. To Carlyle, however, Enlightenment scepticism had enfeebled the healthy Classical Tradition and turned the century of Neoclassicism into a distracted century of nightmares, ignorance, fraud, and infernal turmoil which sent the "fireships" first of the American Revolution and then of the French Revolution all over

52 Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome*, Horatius, stanza 27, 1842, ed. cit. 425.

53 Brian W. Young, *The Victorian Eighteenth Century*, Oxford 2007, 10–102.

Europe, setting all order ablaze with Romantic “democracy” in the dysphemistic sense of *Pöbelherrschaft*:

It was the age of impostors, cut-purses, swindlers, double-goers, enthusiasts, ambiguous persons; quacks simple, quacks compound; crackbrained, or with deceit prepense; quacks and quackeries of all colours and kinds. How many Mesmerists, Magicians, Cabalists, Swedenborgians, Illuminati, Crucified Nuns, and Devils of Loudun? To which the Inquisition Biographer adds Vampires, Sylphs, Rosicrucians, Freemasons, and an *Etcetera*. Consider your Schröpfers, Cagliostros, Casanovas, Saint-Germains, Dr. Grahams; the Chevalier d’Eon, Psalmanazar, Abbé Paris, and the Ghost of Cock-lane! As if Bedlam had broken loose; as if rather, in that ‘spiritual Twelfth-hour of the Night,’ the everlasting Pit had opened itself, and from *its* still blacker bosom had issued Madness and all manner of shapeless Misbirths, to masquerade and chatter there.⁵⁴

To Newman, the eighteenth century held an equally ambiguous fascination, a mixture of admiration for its Classical Tradition and disdain for its loss of faith and sceptical self-debilitation. Newman never ceased admiring Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776 – 1788) and *Memoirs* (posthumous 1796), on which he modelled his own *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864), with his clear vigorous style. At the same time, Newman never grew tired of blaming Gibbon’s hostile view of the destructive role that Christianity played in the decay of ancient Rome. Newman understood Christianity as a continuation of – not a rupture with – the Classical Tradition as most High Victorians invented it – in contrast to the later Decadents. Like Carlyle, Newman believed that Gibbon’s scepticism had helped to pave the way for the French Revolution. Nevertheless, Newman’s partial admiration of the Augustan Gibbon prevailed, chiefly for his Latin discipline of thought and style:

With all his faults [...] few can be put in comparison with him: and sometimes, when I reflect on his happy choice of expressions, his vigorous compression of ideas, and the life and significance of every work, I am prompted indignantly to exclaim that no style is left for historians of an after day. O who is worthy to succeed our Gibbon!⁵⁵

It is evident from all their writings that Carlyle and Newman, who were both good classical scholars proficient in Greek and Latin and well read in Neoclassicism, were haunted by eighteenth-century scepticism. In spite of their return to what they saw as the common sense, clarity, and support-giving strength of the Classical Tradition, they could never quite rid themselves of the

54 Carlyle, Count Cagliostro, 1855, in: Works, XXVIII. 271.

55 Newman, Letter to John William Bowden, October 1819, in: The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman, ed. Charles Stephen Dessain et al., London and Oxford 1961 – 1984, I. 67.

doubt against which they led a life-long campaign. Thus, they fought an inner conflict quite symptomatic of all Victorian culture.⁵⁶

Anti-Platonism and Romantic Disillusionism alone were no longer considered sufficient, because they had limited themselves to mere negation without offering positive and practicable alternatives. Peacock's successor John Stuart Mill, though a Victorian socialist fighting in the political camp opposed to Carlyle and Newman, saw two contrary poles in the philosophy both of classical antiquity and his own decades, the 1820s and 1830s. He classified contemporary thinkers either as Platonist Coleridgeans or Aristotelian Benthamites, much as classical philosophers had been either traditionalist Platonists committed to ideas or modernist Aristotelians committed to facts.⁵⁷ With his lucid argumentation as well as his clear and elegant style modelled on the Neoclassical prose writers, the moderate Utilitarian John Stuart Mill paid his respects to both schools of thought, but left little doubt that his sympathies were with the Classical Tradition of Aristotle, the Augustans, and his teacher Jeremy Bentham rather than with the Romantics, who nevertheless continued to fascinate him. Corrective scepticism, doubt about the truth of his own position, however, remained his constant companion throughout his life and saved him from opinionated foundationalism.

As contended above, the Romantic Period was the last epoch in post-medieval cultural history when, among authors both male and female, the influence of the Classical Tradition was still generally felt and known, either from school or from private study and tuition. In the Victorian Period, however, an author's (or indeed any educated person's) knowledge of the Classical Tradition could no longer be taken for granted. Romantics had doubted its modern relevance and replaced it with a more immediate, "original" cult of nature and nation. Victorian natural philosophers began to shift emphasis from the humanities to natural science, thus creating an opposition and alternative which had been quite unknown to Robert Boyle or Isaac Newton, Erasmus Darwin or the Chevalier de Lamarck. The time-honoured argument that a study of the classics educated young men in clarity of thoughts and style, making them proof against all mystic and useless flights of fancy, was to dominate the defence of the humanities versus science throughout the Victorian era. Another advantage of an education in the classics was added in the Victorian conflict between Hellenism and Hebraism: the learning of elegance to temper stylistic aridity and contravene the loss of beauty in an industrialized world growing more and more calculated and materialist.

56 B.W. Young, *The Victorian Eighteenth Century*, chapter 5 *Hanoverian Hauntings*, 148–186.

57 J.S. Mill, *Coleridge*, 1840, in: *Collected Works*, X. 121. This essay was a companion piece to an earlier essay on Jeremy Bentham, 1838, X. 77–115.

Matthew Arnold, whose sweetness of temper disinclined him to satire, nevertheless took a firm controversial stand against Thomas Henry Huxley's provocative prose treatise *Science and Culture* (1880). In his counter-treatise, *Literature and Science* (MS 1881), Arnold polemically misrepresented Huxley's defence of the abolition of Greek and Latin in the newly founded Science College at Birmingham as a plea for the general abolition of letters in favour of science in modern education. His *ad personam* argumentation, reducing his opponent's differentiated defence of reform to a simplified *Feindbild*, is the heritage of the satire of the Classical Tradition, which he set out to defend:

I am going to ask whether the present movement for ousting letters from their old predominance in education, and for transferring the predominance in education to the natural sciences, whether this brisk and flourishing movement ought to prevail, and whether it is likely that in the end it really will prevail.⁵⁸

Arnold uses "humane letters" in the sense of poetry and eloquence in general, but makes it clear that, to him, a profound knowledge of "the humanities", meaning the Greek and Latin languages of classical antiquity (extensively quoted in the original) cannot be fully replaced by modern languages and modern cultural studies. Arnold reduced "humane" and "humanities" to indispensable needs, without which man would no longer be human, or have senses of conduct and of beauty:

[...] the majority of men will always require humane letters; and so much the more, as they have the more and the greater results of science to relate to the need in man for conduct, and to the need in him for beauty.⁵⁹

Hence, it is the "instinct of self-preservation in humanity" that will not allow man to let the study of letters die out, least of all the Greek language and culture as the very source of beauty:

The instinct for beauty is set in human nature, as surely as the instinct for knowledge is set there, or the instinct for conduct. If the instinct for beauty is served by Greek literature and art as it is served by no other literature and art, we may trust to the instinct of self-preservation in humanity for keeping Greek as part of our culture.⁶⁰

Arnold's Latin quotation from Leonardo da Vinci, "Defuit una mihi symmetria prisca", introduces his recommendation of Neoclassical against Neogothic architecture, in tacit opposition to his friend John Ruskin. "The glorious beauty of the Acropolis at Athens did not come from single fine things stuck about on that hill", but from an instinctive recourse to an overall design, "symmetria prisca",

58 Arnold, *Literature and Science*, MS 1881, 1885, in: *Complete Prose Works*, X. 55.

59 *Ibid.* X. 72–73.

60 *Ibid.* X. 70–71.

as the essence of beauty innate in man.⁶¹ Arnold's Neoclassicism repeats and adapts an eighteenth-century Neoclassical argument in favour of Palladian and in disapproval of Gothic architecture, positing that all variety must be controlled by unity.

Again, Thomas and Matthew Arnold's advocacy of the Greek and Roman classics was basically Victorian, an updating and modernizing rather than an antiquarian preservation of the Classical Tradition. This explains why, in the Victorian Age, the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Augustan Neoclassicists, Pope and Crabbe, like Henry Fielding and Jane Austen, fell into neglect, their ideological kinship with Victorian humanism notwithstanding. The heroic couplet, the formal verse satire, and the verse tale appeared as obsolete in what the Victorians saw as the "new age" after the death of "romanticism" (meaning everything before the age of steam and railways, from Regency stage-coaches back to the chivalric tournaments of the Middle Ages). The demolition of an old world and its favourite literary forms demanded the reconstruction of new ones, including a modernization of the Classical Tradition.

Increasing nineteenth-century efforts toward better education of the middle classes, stemming from various sources, resulted in a heated *Kulturkampf* debate on classical learning versus natural sciences, traditionalism versus modernism. Classical studies were no longer reserved for male aristocrats or candidates for the ministry, but the progress of science and technology, as well as economic interests, demanded a new alternative to socially distinctive Greek and Latin studies in grammar schools. Old-type grammar schools, with their emphasis on Greek and Latin, began to be rivalled by new-type secondary schools which were shifting their focus to science; universities began to be rivalled by polytechnics. Women demanded admittance to universities and to subjects traditionally reserved for men, the classics as well as the sciences. And the change in the structure of the Victorian and Edwardian population, the shortage of males due to their pressing requirement in the worldwide British colonies, was a major reason why upper-class and middle-class women finally gained admittance.

John Henry Newman was a Christian conservative who still understood the Classical Tradition like the Augustans, namely as paganism updated and enriched by Christianity. But there were numerous counter-voices to Victorianism. Some such heretical Victorians who stood up in defence of the Classical Tradition reduced it to Greek and Roman paganism, which they separated from Christianity as inimical to and destructive of the Classical Tradition. We have seen that this anti-Christian view had already been cautiously advanced in Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1788), which a century later became a cult text of the Decadents. In this construction of the

61 Ibid. X. 71.

Classical Tradition, Swinburne, Pater, and Wilde largely agreed with the French Parnassians, whose periodical bore the significant title *Le Parnasse contemporain* (1866–1876). Their modern classicism was anti-Romantic in their Horatian elitist pose, elevated above the vulgar on a mountain like Montparnasse, and anti-Christian in their rebellion against moral restrictions and their preference of the Greek Mount Parnassus to the Hebrew Mount Sinai.⁶² Although he admired the Radical Romantic poets (Blake, Shelley, Keats), Swinburne understood himself as a classicist and preferred classical themes for his heretical poems such as *Atalanta on Calydon* (1865) and the “Hymn to Proserpine” (1866). His epicedium on Baudelaire, *Ave Atque Vale* (MS 1868), constructs a pure and unadulterated Classical Tradition without any Romantic admixtures of other myths in opposition to a sickly and decadent Christian religion. Pater and Wilde, with their equally deviant sexual orientation which was acceptable in classical antiquity but not in medievally coined Christian civilization, were to follow him in that respect. Leconte de Lisle, who had broken with Romanticism in his *Poèmes antiques* (1852), wrote his aggressively satirical anti-Christian and anti-Romantic *Histoire populaire du Christianisme* (1871). A distinguished anti-Christian and anti-Romantic Neoclassicist in Italy was Giosuè Carducci. In his poem “Classicismo e Romanticismo” (*Rime nuove* 1887) he satirically opposed healthy and lucid classism with morbid and dark romanticism, its livid gaze on dead skulls and graves. The image that these poets and critics had of the Classical Tradition was just as selective as their image of the Romantic School. In their neo-pagan thought, Christianity meant repression and a slavish mind, where paganism had safeguarded liberty and pride. To them, chiselled and finished classical art must replace a degenerate and morbid religion. It was in line with them that Friedrich Nietzsche, professor of classics at Basel, Neoclassical poet, and philosopher, wrote his mordant polemics against Christianity, with their implicit critiques of Romantic *Weltschmerz* and *Todessehnsucht*. Although Nietzsche admired Percy Shelley’s atheism and Byron’s scepticism, he despised Shelley’s Neoplatonism as well as the plaintive world-weariness of Byron’s lyrics and of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. Nietzsche’s overall view of the Romantic School resembled Heine’s in many respects. He admired the Classical Tradition’s cult of serenity and self-control, while, with the Neoclassicists of the Romantic Period, he despised the Romantic School’s mixture of myths, intoxicated chaos, and short-lived fashionable innovations, “den Carneval aller Götter und Mythen, den die Romantiker zusammenbrachten, und die im Rausch ersonnenen dichterischen Moden und Tollheiten”.⁶³ A Romantic

62 Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition*, 439.

63 Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*, part I David Strauss der Bekenner und der

Disillusionist himself, his sympathies were with Byron and Heine in their satirical rather than their plaintive moods.

Another anti-Decadent – even Fascist – reinvention of the Classical Tradition appeared after the turn of the century in the poetry and prose of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. The beauty and serenity of Greece as well as the strength and discipline of Rome were called up to contrast with and actively oppose the drabness, meanness, and fragmentation of modern life. Eliot, for example, wrote his fragmentary Aristophanic comedy *Sweeny Agonistes* (1932) against the positively contrasting background of Grecian form and finish. And, in his essay *Modern Education and the Classics* (1932), he found a new defence for a classical education on the basis of his “Catholic” anti-materialism, opposing the Decadents by firmly placing Christianity in the Classical Tradition. And Ezra Pound’s *Cantos* (1919–1970) hammered fragments into new poems *in statu nascendi*, packed with classical allusions by a speaker who is a modern Ulysses and Homeric *periplous*, just as he supported Mussolini’s project to destroy Italy’s disconnected, poor, rotting, and unrepresentative buildings and replace them with splendid edifices in a neo-Roman style. Pound’s *Cantos* teem with dialogues and argumentative strategies inherited from classical antiquity, vigorously opposing Romanticism (or rather his negative construction of Romanticism) in tandem with T.S. Eliot:

The cult of the innocuous has debouched into the adoration of Wordsworth. He was a silly old sheep with a genius, an unquestionable genius, for imagisme, for a presentation of natural detail, wildfowl bathing in a hole in the ice, etc., and this talent, or the fruits of this talent, he buried in a desert of bleatings.⁶⁴

What his [Blake’s] genius required, and what it sadly lacked, was a framework of accepted and traditional ideas which would have prevented him from indulging in a philosophy of his own, and concentrated his attention upon the problems of the poet. Confusion of thought, emotion, and vision is [...] eminently not a Latin virtue.⁶⁵

In the satirical polemics of this anti-Romantic frontline formation, Pound and Eliot followed the lead of T.E. Hulme’s essay on “Romanticism and Classicism” (1911) which maintained that, “after a hundred years of romanticism, we are in for a classical revival”.⁶⁶

In his magisterial study *The Classical Tradition* (1949), Gilbert Highet traced the influence of and debates about Greek and Roman influences on Western literature and culture down to his own time, post-Second-World-War Europe.

Schriftsteller, 1873, in: Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe, ed. G. Colli – M. Montinari, Berlin 1967- , III, I. 164.

64 Pound, *Literary Essays*, ed. T.S. Eliot, London 1954, 1968, 277.

65 Eliot, William Blake, 1920, in: *Selected Essays*, ed. T.S. Eliot, London 1932, 1969, 322.

66 Hulme, *Romanticism and Classicism*, 1911, in: Robert F.Gleckner – Gerald E. Enscoe (eds.), *Romanticism: Points of View*, 2nd ed. Detroit 1975, 55.

And we may well trace them into our own time, the early twenty-first century, and find the Classical Tradition and its art of public arguing an ongoing event, updated, reinvented, metamorphosed, and contested by various forms of “modernism” including the claims of popular culture, scientific culture, and the new media, but never defenceless with its inherited *ars disputandi* and ever “adaptable to change” – the Darwinian condition of survival.

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Index

- Accademia della Crusca 111, 115
Académie Française 45
Ackermann, Rudolph 213 seq.
Addison, Joseph 105, 109, 111, 140, 226, 277, 369, 403
Adney, Thomas (“Yenda”) 124
Aeschylus 87, 346, 353, 382
Ainsworth, William Harrison 144
Alfieri, Vittorio 111
Alison, Archibald 103, 229
Alma-Tadema, Sir Lawrence 392
Almon, John 129
American Revolution 280 seq., 403
ancien régime 10, 13, 19, 28, 38, 46, 57 seq., 71, 78, 87–89, 115, 137, 142, 43 seq., 188, 197, 200, 203 seq., 206 seq., 210–212, 220, 223, 257, 260, 263, 271, 289 seq., 293–295, 307, 328, 352–354, 377
Anderson, Robert 291, 312
Andrewes, George 146
Andrews, Miles Peter 64 seq., 69, 115, 124, 128, 360
Anna Amalia, Herzogin 384
anti-feminism 140, 220, 260, 272, 383
anti-Jacobin 30, 40, 42 seq., 56, 60, 64, 68, 80, 95 seq., 100, 103–105, 120, 134, 154, 158, 163, 165 seq., 197, 199–204, 206, 208, 212 seq., 217–221, 237, 242, 244, 257–259, 265, 267, 272 seq., 275 seq., 280, 295, 315–317, 332 seq., 354, 358, 364, 371
anti-Romantic satire 16, 50, 64, 130, 209, 309, 398
Apollo 27, 61, 81, 116, 164, 211, 283, 336, 340, 352, 361
Apuleius 354
Arbuthnot, John 53, 80, 125
Ariosto, Ludovico 43, 214
Aristophanes 16, 83, 87, 409
Aristotle 10, 29, 93, 162, 202, 226, 319, 326, 334, 388, 391, 405
Armitage, Edward 384
Arndt, Ernst Moritz 384
Arnold, Matthew 38, 383 seq., 390–397, 406 seq.
Arnold, Thomas 92, 383 seq.
ars disputandi, art of arguing, culture of public contention, Streitkultur 9, 12, 15 seq., 19, 32, 60, 74, 80, 101, 103 seq., 326, 410
Astell, Mary 256
Astley, Philip 145
Athens and Sparta 10, 86, 261, 335
Auger, Louis-Simon 45
Augustan Neoclassicism 10, 19 seq., 23, 29 seq., 33 seq., 36, 40, 49 seq., 53 seq., 62 seq., 65 seq., 69 seq., 72–74, 77 seq., 85 seq., 88 seq., 98, 107 seq., 111–114, 116, 118–120, 126, 131–134, 138, 149, 155, 159, 162, 169 seq., 173, 176 seq., 184, 187, 193, 203, 205, 209, 213, 218, 225, 228, 237, 249, 259, 269, 275, 280, 282, 286, 288, 293 seq., 297, 299, 301 seq., 304, 307, 309–312, 316, 318,

- 320, 323, 325 seq., 328, 332 seq., 336,
338, 347, 374, 377, 389, 397, 402 – 405,
407
- Augustus, Emperor 10 seq., 50, 67, 70
- Austen, Jane 20, 22, 57, 64, 77, 131, 233,
256 – 259, 264, 276 seq., 344, 407
- Austin, Sarah Taylor 220
- Aytoun, William Edmonstoune 32, 34,
73, 97, 298, 384, 387 – 389, 391, 399
- Bailey, Philip James 32, 298, 382, 387 –
389
- Baillie, Joanna 102, 131, 140 seq., 146,
261, 265 seq.
- Bannerman, Anne 30 seq., 383
- Barbault, Anna Letitia 42, 45, 56, 113,
220, 261 seq., 267 seq., 271, 276, 293, 384
- Barker, Robert 90
- Barnes, Thomas 38 seq., 148
- Barrett, Eaton Stannard 20 seq., 225, 325,
389
- Barrow, Sir John 280 seq.
- Bates, William 154
- Baudelaire, Charles 230, 363, 397, 408
- Bayle, Pierre 70 seq.
- Beattie, James 51, 112, 231, 270, 330
- Beaumont, Francis 65, 151, 226
- Beckford, William 145, 308, 366
- Beddoes, Dr Thomas 27, 200, 320, 329
- Beddoes, Thomas Lovell 33
- Beethoven, Ludwig van 364
- Bell, John 115, 117 – 119, 123
- Bentham, Jeremy 56, 90, 405
- Berlin circle 43, 306
- Bewick, Thomas 132
- Biedermeier* 257, 262, 266, 268, 386
- Bingham, Peregrine 305
- Blackmore, Sir Richard 30, 126
- Blackwood, William 63, 82, 96, 104, 161,
169, 225, 339
- Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 18, 24,
26 – 29, 31 seq., 34, 36, 63, 68, 73, 81 – 83,
96 seq., 101 seq., 104 seq., 107 – 109,
127 seq., 130 seq., 140 seq., 148, 170,
176 seq., 189 seq., 194 seq., 206, 213,
225 seq., 231, 237 – 240, 245 seq., 248,
250 seq., 268, 282 – 285, 295, 298, 308,
310, 312 seq., 324, 326, 335 – 340, 342,
350 seq., 354, 357, 369, 371, 377, 387 –
389
- Blake, Benjamin 171
- Blake, William 5, 13 seq., 19, 23, 40, 46,
51, 114, 122, 195, 215, 218, 226, 232, 234,
238, 293, 296, 298, 304, 307, 309, 328,
339 seq., 352 seq., 355 seq., 384, 408 seq.
- Blamire, Susanna 291
- Bloomfield, Robert 291
- Bluestockings, Blue-Stocking circle* 23, 72,
112, 127, 260, 262, 265, 269 seq.,
278 seq., 360
- Boaden, James 210
- Boccaccio 223
- Boileau, Nicolas 10, 50, 114, 127, 179, 198,
213, 227 seq., 260, 308, 358, 381, 402
- Borel, Pétrus 188, 243
- Boscawen, Frances 23, 72, 125
- Boscawen, William 72 seq., 125
- Bowden, John William 404
- Bowdler, Thomas 77
- Bowles, Caroline 266, 268, 283 seq.
- Bowles, John 355
- Bowles, William Lisle 39, 173 – 177, 241,
246, 249, 279, 289, 361
- Brandl, Alois 384
- Bray, Anna Eliza 266
- Brontë, Anne 259
- Brontë, Branwell 259
- Brontë, Charlotte 259, 266
- Brontë, Emily 259
- Brontë, Patrick (Patrick Prunty) 259
- Brooke, Henry 293
- Brooks, Maria Gowen 160, 266
- Brougham, Henry 102 seq., 191, 245, 248,
282, 336
- Brown, Charles Brockden 242
- Browning, Elizabeth Barrett 389
- Browning, Robert 102, 394 seq., 400 seq.
- Brummell, George Bryan (“Beau Brum-
mell”) 31, 189
- Bryant, John Frederick 373
- Brydges, Sir Samuel Egerton 27, 194 seq.

- Buckingham, Second Duke of (George Villiers) 77
- Bulwer-Lytton, Edward 54, 92, 107, 113, 138, 144, 197, 240, 264, 347–349, 385 seq., 393 seq.
- Burdon, William 66 seq.
- Burgoyne, John 155
- Burke, Edmund 41, 55 seq., 88, 112, 115, 132, 165, 181, 199 seq., 203, 206 seq., 212–215, 283, 292, 322, 332, 336
- burletta* 78, 137, 141 seq., 144, 147, 152 seq., 208
- Burney, Frances (“Fanny”) 21, 112
- Burton, Decimus 90 seq.
- Burton, John 270
- Burton, Robert 354
- Butler, Samuel 42, 120
- Byron, Frederick George 55
- Byron, Lord (George Gordon Noel) 20, 26 seq., 32–34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 49, 51, 55, 59–63, 72, 81 seq., 85, 89, 95 seq., 101 seq., 107–109, 112, 126 seq., 131–133, 137, 140 seq., 152, 156 seq., 159–164, 166–177, 184 seq., 189–191, 195, 198 seq., 202, 206, 212–217, 229, 232, 234, 239, 242–244, 246, 248–251, 258, 267 seq., 277–279, 289–292, 298, 305, 309, 311, 313 seq., 328, 331, 334, 336 seq., 340 seq., 349, 357 seq., 360 seq., 363 seq., 368 seq., 375, 377, 380, 382, 384–386, 388 seq., 394, 397, 399 seq., 402 seq., 408 seq.
- Cagliostro, Comte de (Joseph Balsamo) 85, 147, 232, 404
- Campbell, Archibald 63
- Campbell, Thomas 33, 61, 107, 174, 176 seq., 185
- Carducci, Giosuè 408
- Carey, Henry 135, 248
- caricature, cartoon* 23, 69, 76, 78 seq., 126, 181, 203, 220, 244, 255, 267, 338, 350, 371 seq., 375, 389, 393, 401
- Carlyle, Thomas 10, 32, 45, 66, 83, 85, 104 seq., 231, 350, 386, 388, 390, 394, 399, 400, 403–405
- Caroline, Queen (of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel) 101, 143
- Carter, Elizabeth 269 seq.
- Casaubon, Isaac 23, 55, 93
- Castlereagh, Viscount (Robert Stewart) 59, 68, 72, 182, 202, 206, 281, 315
- catharsis* 56, 60, 62, 64, 76, 148, 155, 157
- Cato the Elder 403
- Catullus 27, 80, 202, 333
- Cervantes, Miguel de 161, 232, 306
- Charles II, King 42, 49 seq., 58, 62, 67, 74–76
- Charlotte Augusta, Princess 143
- Chateaubriand, François-René, Vicomte de 45
- Chatterton, Thomas 235, 262, 291, 306, 313, 349
- Chaucer, Geoffrey 25, 223
- Chesterfield, Lord (Philip Dormer Stanhope) 267, 269, 278
- Christ’s Hospital 287, 327, 341, 343
- Churchill, Charles 183
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius 27, 44, 180, 273, 372, 396
- Clare, John 232, 344, 373
- Clarke, Charles Cowden 38, 205, 341
- Clarke, John 42, 341
- classical education, liberal education* 29, 98, 106, 121, 138, 148, 153 seq., 172, 213, 217, 221, 226, 245, 255 seq., 259, 284, 292, 328–330, 332, 334, 336 seq., 339, 341, 343–349, 372, 388, 396, 409
- classical learning* 23, 92, 146, 165, 210, 340, 346, 351, 407
- classical rhetoric* 273, 323, 344
- classical-romantic divide* 19, 35, 43 seq., 102, 190, 243, 251, 381, 398
- Classical School, Neoclassical School* 44, 164, 309, 384
- Classical Tradition* 9–12, 14, 16, 19, 21, 23, 27, 29, 31, 33 seq., 36–38, 40, 43, 45, 49 seq., 52–55, 58, 61, 63–66, 69, 78, 80–88, 90–92, 97 seq., 100 seq., 103–106, 108 seq., 115–121, 123, 126 seq., 132, 135, 138, 140, 142, 144, 150, 152 seq., 155, 157–159, 161–163, 166–

- 170, 173, 176 seq., 179, 183, 185–187, 189, 193 seq., 201–203, 205, 210, 213 seq., 217–219, 222, 224–230, 235–237, 240 seq., 243 seq., 246, 251, 254, 257, 259–262, 267, 269 seq., 275, 277, 280, 284–290, 297, 299, 301, 306 seq., 310–312, 314, 316 seq., 319, 325–329, 331, 335 seq., 338 seq., 342–349, 351–356, 358, 361 seq., 364 seq., 369 seq., 372–374, 376 seq., 379–383, 387–393, 397 seq., 400, 402–410
- classics in translation* 16, 91, 327, 344
- Cleghorn, James 63, 96, 169
- Cleland, John 209
- Clifton, William 118
- Cobb, James 211
- Cobbett, William 41, 102, 329 seq., 337, 343–345
- Cockburn, Henry 104
- Cockney School* 22, 24, 26–28, 38, 82, 101, 108, 137, 146, 158, 175, 206, 231, 238, 246, 251, 285, 308, 310, 319 seq., 322, 326, 338 seq.
- Colburn, Henry 107, 377
- Coleridge, Henry Nelson 32
- Coleridge, Sir John Taylor 225, 295
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor 19 seq., 24, 26 seq., 31–35, 39, 43–45, 58, 62, 70 seq., 83, 88 seq., 95, 98, 105–108, 114, 128 seq., 131, 133, 136 seq., 148 seq., 159 seq., 162, 164–167, 171, 176, 180, 185–187, 191, 195, 198, 203 seq., 207 seq., 213, 215, 218, 221, 225, 227 seq., 232, 234, 237, 239–244, 246 seq., 254–256, 266, 275, 291, 294, 297–299, 301, 308, 310–313, 318–320, 322 seq., 325, 329, 341–344, 352, 355, 364, 378, 381–384, 397, 401, 405
- Collier, Jeremy 173
- Collin, Heinrich von 85
- Collin, Matthäus von 85
- Colman, George the Elder 21
- Colman, George the Younger 141, 143, 156
- Colton, Charles Caleb 56 seq., 182 seq., 211, 236, 262 seq., 285 seq., 357 seq., 393
- Combe, William 366 seq.
- commercialization, marketing, promotion, boasting, puffing, hyping (of literary products)* 16, 23, 37, 67, 71, 77, 83, 90, 97, 99, 104, 106 seq., 109, 115, 119, 123, 126 seq., 135, 139, 142, 144, 148, 152, 156, 164, 168, 180–185, 298, 230 seq., 245, 262, 266, 270, 298, 328, 331, 348, 351, 357, 366–369, 388, 393, 391, 397,
- comedy* 11, 60–62, 64, 77 seq., 134, 137, 141, 149–151, 153–156, 173, 175, 180, 209, 211 seq., 223, 378, 409
- commonplace (τοπος, locus communis)* 24, 39 seq., 55, 59 seq., 69 seq., 78, 98, 113, 116, 122 seq., 161 seq., 188, 222, 228, 290, 300, 321, 340, 345, 369–373, 379
- Comte, Auguste 396
- Condorcet, Jean-Antoine-Nicolas 197, 386
- confession, journal intime* 33, 52, 106, 119, 218, 224, 227, 239 seq., 246–248, 326, 349–351, 355, 400 seq.
- Congreve, William 61, 64
- Constable, Archibald 96, 98, 107, 225
- Copleston, Edward 71, 99 seq., 342 seq.
- Corday, Charlotte 260
- Cornwall, Barry (Bryan Waller Procter) 35, 38, 232, 299, 336–338, 340, 352
- cosmopolitanism versus nationalism* 37, 184, 193, 335
- Cottle, Amos Simon 65, 182 seq., 291
- Cottle, Joseph 262, 291
- Cowley, Hannah (“Anna Matilda”) 65, 116 seq., 122–124, 262, 309
- Cowper, William 51, 61, 131–133, 163, 303
- Crabbe, George 20 seq., 63, 131–133, 169, 176 seq., 223 seq., 407
- Creuzer, Friedrich 328
- Croft, Herbert 235
- Croker, John Wilson 91, 205, 225, 236 seq., 266 seq., 274, 276 seq., 341
- Croly, George 31, 180, 240, 285
- Cromek, Robert Hartley 302
- Cross, John Cartwright 146

- Crowe, Eyre Evans 239 seq.
 Cruikshank, George 78, 146, 374–376
 Cruikshank, Isaac Robert 146
- Dacier, Anne 270
 Dacre, Charlotte (Charlotte Byrne, “Rosa Matilda”) 124, 257, 264, 278
 Daguerre, Jacques 90
 Daniel, George (of Islington) 64 seq., 155 seq., 183 seq.
 Daniel, Samuel 5
 Dante 26, 40 seq., 113, 143, 337, 400
 Darwin, Charles 199, 410
 Darwin, Erasmus 27, 199–201, 220, 358, 382, 405
 Deacon, William Frederick 28, 367 seq.
Decadence 16, 33, 46, 186, 243, 398, 404, 407, 409
decorum, bienséance, Schicklichkeit 69, 73, 77, 80–82, 84, 103, 118, 134, 137 seq., 144, 148, 164, 166, 171, 209, 214, 223, 240 seq., 245, 258, 267, 303, 338, 350
 Dekker, Thomas 73
Della Crusicans 30, 35, 64 seq., 89, 111–158, 184, 188 seq., 243, 253, 261, 271–273, 278, 304, 309 seq., 339, 360 seq., 382
 Demosthenes 93, 396
 Dennis, John 64, 181, 266
 Descartes, René 65, 256
 Deschamps, Émile 45
 Dibdin, Charles 145–147, 155 seq., 222
 Dibdin, Thomas John 147, 150, 208
 Dickens, Charles 144, 146, 197, 376, 385 seq.
 Diderot, Denis 306
 Disraeli, Benjamin 170 seq., 331, 385
 D’Israeli, Isaac 274
Dissenters, dissent 24, 28, 38, 42 seq., 86, 91, 129, 165, 236 seq., 240, 261 seq., 284, 293, 327, 339, 341
Dissenting Academies 85, 261 seq., 283
 Dobell, Sydney 32 seq., 382, 399
 Doubleday, Thomas 108, 170
 Dowson, Ernest 234
 Drummond, William 81
- Dryden, John 10, 23, 30, 40, 50–56, 59–61, 63–78, 97, 105, 112 seq., 116, 119 seq., 125–128, 139, 162, 168 seq., 173 seq., 176, 183, 216, 223, 240, 254, 259, 295, 310 seq., 326 seq., 361, 369, 383, 390
 Ducis, Jean-François 212
 Duck, Stephen 373
dramatic unities, règle des trois unités 77
duel 18, 70, 74, 95, 101, 105, 124 seq., 281
 Duff, William 270
 Duncombe, John 256
 Dundas, William 181
 Dwight, Timothy 281
 Dyce, Alexander 268
 Dyer, John 113
- Eastlake, Lady Elizabeth 384
 Edgeworth, Maria 20, 294
Edinburgh Review 27, 29, 44 seq., 63, 71 seq., 83, 90, 95–105, 107 seq., 158, 163 seq., 174, 190–192, 213, 225, 229, 231, 250, 262, 295, 302, 311, 319, 321, 323, 336, 342 seq., 356, 358
effect, aesthetic of 37, 84, 99, 124, 131, 135, 137, 141, 148, 150, 153, 181, 201, 210, 255, 367, 371, 373, 388
egalitarianism 115, 123, 165, 199, 267, 270 seq., 296, 324
 Egan, Pierce 146, 148
 Eldon, Lord (John Scott) 259
 Eliot, George (Mary Ann Evans) 93
 Eliot, Thomas Stearns 69, 159, 409
elitist culture 141
 Ellis, George 80, 199, 212, 217, 219, 244, 249 seq., 308, 364, 370
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo 187 seq.
 Empedocles 395
Empire style 9
 Epictetus 100, 269 seq.
 Epicurus 295, 329, 356, 393
 Erasmus (of Rotterdam) 23, 80, 382
 Erskine, Henry 247
essay (new prose genre) 16, 26, 39, 54, 57 seq., 88, 96–99, 102–104, 106 seq., 158, 188, 226, 229, 234–236, 238–240,

- 246, 277, 309, 311, 318, 325, 330 seq.,
343, 349, 372 seq., 393, 405, 409
- Euripides 349
- extravaganza (dramatic and musical variety entertainment)* 137, 153
- Fanshawe, Catherine Maria 140, 351
- farce* 78 seq., 134 seq., 139, 141, 146, 150,
153, 155 seq., 246
- Faulder, Robert 120
- Faux, William 281
- feminism, women's liberation* 98, 256,
260 seq., 269 seq., 274, 276, 353, 383
- Fergusson, Robert 232, 234, 312
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb 234, 276
- Fielding, Henry 64, 69, 83, 128, 135, 215,
259, 407
- Fin de Siecle* 33
- Flaxman, John 384
- Forbes, William Hay 326
- formal satire* 119, 326, 398
- Fox, Charles James 41, 79 seq., 219, 272,
366
- Franklin, Benjamin 220
- Frederick II (the Great), King of Prussia
220
- French Revolution* 12, 20, 23, 25, 33, 35,
38, 42, 44, 49, 56, 66, 78, 85, 87–89, 98,
108, 115, 118, 130 seq., 142, 148, 154,
166, 181 seq., 189, 197, 201, 204,
209 seq., 212, 215, 220, 222, 235, 237,
256 seq., 260 seq., 263, 267, 269, 271,
273, 276, 280 seq., 293, 297, 316, 335,
347, 355, 372, 386, 392, 403 seq.
- Frere, John Hookham 20, 170, 199–202,
217, 219, 317, 334, 358 seq.
- Freud, Sigmund 14, 18, 272
- Friedrich, Caspar David 355 seq.
- Froude, James Anthony 402
- Galignani, Giovanni Antonio 128
- Galt, John 108, 148
- Garrick, David 87, 112, 138 seq., 149, 156,
270
- Gautier, Théophile 46, 188, 195 seq., 243
- Gay, John 135, 218
- Gellius, Aulus 82
- general nature* 33, 52, 67, 197, 209, 231,
240 seq., 254, 277, 350, 391
- George II, King 58
- George III, King 77, 79, 116, 152, 214
- George IV, King, formerly Prince Regent
59, 68, 101 seq., 105, 143, 274, 374 seq.,
380
- German drama* 148, 155–157, 222
- Gibbon, Edward 403 seq., 407
- Gifford, John (John Richards Green) 80,
120, 206, 220, 273
- Gifford, Robert 375
- Gifford, William 20, 30, 35, 51 seq., 54–
56, 59–61, 63–68, 80 seq., 98, 104, 112,
115–131, 133 seq., 136, 140–142, 147,
154–156, 162, 167–169, 172, 174–177,
182–184, 188, 194, 199, 204–208, 211,
214–215, 217, 219, 225 seq., 239,
243 seq., 249 seq., 252 seq., 257, 262,
264, 266 seq., 271–277, 280 seq., 286–
291, 298, 304 seq., 307, 309 seq.,
314 seq., 317, 325, 331 seq., 336,
342 seq., 345 seq., 362, 364 seq., 369–
371, 378–380, 388, 390 seq.
- Gilchrist, Octavius Graham 175
- Gildon, Charles 184
- Gilfillan, George 32, 388
- Gillray, James 78 seq., 181, 203, 220, 283
- Gilpin, William 366
- Girtin, Thomas 90
- Godwin, William 12–14, 22, 116, 140,
158, 165, 200, 203, 210, 236, 258, 265,
317, 377 seq., 384
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 18, 27, 43,
45, 154, 220, 222, 235 seq., 298, 331, 382,
384, 388–390
- Goldsmith, Oliver 63 seq., 112, 126, 132,
155, 175 seq., 180, 183, 239
- Görres, Joseph 402
- Gothic* 21–23, 27, 30, 37, 64 seq., 124,
136–140, 144 seq., 150 seq., 158,
163 seq., 198, 206–211, 220, 222–224,
227, 232 seq., 236 seq., 242 seq.,
253 seq., 257 seq., 270, 278, 305, 308,

- 322, 341, 353, 364, 371, 382 seq.,
387 seq., 407
- Gottsched, Johann Christoph 235
- Grattan, Thomas Colley 350 seq.
- Graves, Richard 233
- Gray, Thomas 112 seq., 327
- Greathed, Bertie ("Arno") 111–114,
124, 127, 136, 253
- Grillparzer, Franz 37, 85
- Grimaldi, Joseph 147
- Grimm, Jacob 328
- Grose, Francis 146 seq.
- Günderode, Karoline von 262
- Hallam, Henry 102
- Hamilton, Lady Anne 30, 100, 156 seq.,
164, 189, 303
- Hamilton, Elizabeth 258
- Hamilton, Lady Emma 338
- Hamilton, Thomas 83, 282
- Hamilton, William (metaphysician)
17, 97
- Hamilton, Sir William (diplomat) 338
- Hampstead (London), Hampstead circle
10, 26, 38, 40, 84, 91, 116, 137, 157, 283,
314, 337
- Hard, Josiah 103
- Harness, William 140 seq., 351
- Hayley, William 51, 182 seq., 382
- Haym, Rudolf 46
- Hays, Mary 24, 261, 271, 273
- Hazlitt, William 25, 27, 36–40, 95 seq.,
98, 107 seq., 125, 134, 137, 150, 152, 159,
173, 177, 186 seq., 191 seq., 202, 205–
208, 213 seq., 224–228, 232, 236 seq.,
240, 244, 246, 250–253, 274, 276 seq.,
282–284, 286 seq., 292, 304, 318 seq.,
322, 325 seq., 331, 336, 338, 340, 343–
346, 351 seq., 362, 369–373, 377–381,
384
- Heber, Reginald 89 seq., 221, 381 seq.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich 28, 149,
328, 402
- Hegemon (of Thasos) 202
- Heine, Heinrich 28, 46, 61, 84 seq., 162,
166, 168 seq., 236, 357, 362 seq., 397–
399, 402 seq., 408 seq.
- Heinsius, Daniel 23
- Hellenism* 90 seq., 232, 327, 338, 396, 405
- Hellenism and Hebraism* 396, 405
- Hemans, Felicia Dorothea 20, 220, 262,
344, 386
- Herder, Johann Gottfried 328, 332, 384
- Hervey, Lord (John Hervey) 80, 184
- Hesiod 353
- high culture, polite culture* 38, 49, 83, 138,
144, 147, 152 seq., 181, 232, 328
- Hipponax (of Ephesus) 350
- Hobbes, Thomas 54, 74, 293
- Hoffmann, Ernst Theodor Amadeus 357
- Hogg, James 63, 82, 95–97, 108, 192, 248,
280, 291, 320–322, 344, 350, 357, 359,
373, 383
- Hogg, Thomas Jefferson 251
- Holcroft, Thomas 138, 142 seq., 149 seq.,
154, 158, 203, 210, 315
- Homer 10 seq., 22 seq., 30, 88, 92 seq., 97,
126, 162, 168, 263, 270, 297, 300, 329,
335, 337, 340 seq., 346, 353 seq., 365
- Homer, Francis 103
- Hone, William 59, 105, 354, 374 seq.
- Hook, Theodore Edward 282
- Horace 10, 23, 33, 40, 50–52, 57, 61, 63–
66, 89, 97, 112, 117 seq., 120, 125, 127,
129, 131, 133 seq., 155, 162, 165, 167–
169, 171, 173, 177, 181, 202, 218 seq.,
244, 283, 285, 292, 295, 303, 311, 319,
321, 333, 338, 353 seq., 357 seq.,
360 seq., 373, 401
- Howard, Alfred 60
- Hughes, Charles 145
- Hugo, Victor 45 seq., 151, 168, 212
- Hulme, Thomas Ernest 409
- Hume, David 103, 181, 257, 390
- Hunt, Henry ("Orator Hunt") 337
- Hunt, John 40 seq., 67, 102, 238, 245, 337
- Hunt, Leigh 22, 24–27, 29, 35–41, 51, 67,
81, 83 seq., 86, 89, 91, 95 seq., 98, 102,
108, 116, 122–124, 137, 141, 150 seq.,
153, 157, 173, 175, 202, 204 seq., 208,
213, 221, 225 seq., 232, 238, 245 seq.,

- 252, 273–276, 282–284, 287–290, 295,
304, 309, 314, 322–327, 336–341, 343,
352, 357, 362, 369 seq., 372 seq., 377–
381
- Hunt, Robert 40, 238
- Huxley, Thomas Henry 396 seq., 406
- illegitimate theatres* 141–143, 145, 152,
154
- Immermann, Karl Leberecht 188, 236
- Inchbald, Elizabeth 146, 211, 264
- Industrial Revolution* 21, 315
- Ingersoll, Charles Jared 281
- introspection, interiority* 33, 230, 254
- Ireland, William Henry 351
- Irving, Washington 280, 341
- Jacob, William 274
- Jacobin* 17, 40, 96, 103 seq., 115, 154, 163,
165, 185, 200–202, 206, 208, 210, 217–
219, 221 seq., 252, 265, 282, 286, 316,
325, 332, 352
- Jameson, Anna 220
- Jeffrey, Sir Francis 22, 24, 26 seq., 29, 31,
38, 63, 83, 97, 99–101, 103–105, 108,
137, 139, 149, 158, 163 seq., 190–192,
198, 206, 210, 213, 221, 229, 231 seq.,
238, 262, 294 seq., 302, 311, 319, 321–
324, 336, 338, 358
- Jena circle 25, 306
- Jerningham, Edward 35 seq., 124, 309
- Jewsbury, Maria Jane 266
- Johnson, Joseph 12
- Johnson, Samuel 12, 20, 23, 41, 45, 50, 52,
63, 69, 72, 78, 92, 105, 112, 117, 119,
131 seq., 139, 146, 149, 158, 176,
197 seq., 218, 223, 239, 258 seq.,
269 seq., 277, 304, 312, 324, 378, 390,
403
- Jones, Inigo 50
- Jones, John 373
- Jones, William 354
- Jonson, Ben 18, 34, 38, 50, 65, 73, 83, 140,
289, 338
- Juvenal 23, 50 seq., 54–58, 60, 63–67, 78,
80, 117 seq., 120, 169, 179, 250, 260, 275,
288 seq., 369, 373
- Kames, Lord (Henry Home) 103, 258
- Kant, Immanuel 198, 227, 234, 237, 242,
255
- Kemble, John Philip 87, 115, 136, 140,
147, 157
- Kingsley, Charles 32 seq., 388, 402
- Kleist, Heinrich von 357
- Knight, Richard Payne 165, 186 seq., 283,
342, 356
- Kotzebue, August von 134, 137, 146, 154,
156
- La Bruyère, Jean de 363 seq., 372
- La Motte, Antoine Houdar de 270
- Lake School* 27 seq., 35, 108, 176, 191, 213,
297, 311, 319 seq., 350, 358, 381
- Lamb, Caroline 107
- Lamb, Charles 27, 37–39, 57 seq., 87, 89,
102, 137, 149, 157, 163, 186, 198,
203 seq., 238 seq., 242, 250, 277 seq.,
287 seq., 297, 301, 315, 330 seq., 336,
338, 341, 343, 351, 355, 370, 378, 384
- Lamb, Mary 238, 297, 384
- Lamb, William 371
- Lammenais, Félicité de 45
- Landon, Letitia Elizabeth (L.E.L.) 20, 113,
386
- Landor, Walter Savage 20, 32–34, 68 seq.,
93, 100, 179 seq., 187, 215, 229 seq., 250
- Lapraik, John 193 seq., 280, 302, 312, 332,
366
- Larpent, John 143, 210
- laughing comedy, stage satire* 64, 77 seq.,
180
- Lavoisier, Antoine 200
- Lawless, John (of Belfast) 28, 245, 375
- Leconte de Lisle, Charles-Marie 408
- Lee, Nathaniel 220, 240
- Lemprière, John 341
- Lennox, Charlotte 233
- Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim 70 seq.
- Lewis, Matthew Gregory 65, 137 seq.,
144, 164, 209, 211, 224, 232, 308, 382

- Leyden, John 382
libel, lampoon, lex contra famosos libellos
 11, 59, 62, 67–71, 73 seq., 77 seq., 82–
 85, 97, 102, 105, 119, 173, 216, 302
- Lickbarrow, Isabella 107, 268
- Lillo, George 192
- Lily, William 330 seq.
- Linacre, Thomas 330 seq.
- Livy 403
- Lloyd, Charles 203 seq., 232
- Logan, John 199, 301
- London Corresponding Society* 12, 355
- Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth 388
- Longinus (Pseudo-Longinus) 226, 326
- Lonsdale, Earl of (William Lowther) 62,
 104, 324
- Lortzing, Albert 269
- Louis XIV, King (“le roi soleil”) 50, 76
- Loutherbourg, Philippe Jacques 90, 137,
 147, 232
- low culture, popular culture* 38, 49 seq.,
 66, 81, 90, 120 seq., 136, 140, 144,
 146 seq., 150, 152 seq., 158, 181,
 354 seq., 371, 375, 410
- Lowth, Robert 193, 328, 359 seq.
- Lucian 23, 139, 254, 265
- Lucilius 123, 133 seq., 169, 179
- Lucretius 397 seq.
- Luther, Martin 80, 388
- Lyll, William Rowe 209
- Lyttelton, George 270
- Macaulay, Catherine 56
- Macaulay, Thomas Babington 34, 92 seq.,
 96, 158, 402 seq.
- Macdonald, Sir Archibald 218
- Mackenzie, Henry 293, 301
- Mackintosh, James 44 seq., 102
- Macneill, Hector 126, 131, 163
- Madame Tussaud’s Waxworks 146, 152
- Maginn, William 27, 81–83, 109,
 127 seq., 159, 161, 169, 285 seq., 310,
 339, 350, 368 seq., 377
- Maistre, Joseph de 45
- Malherbe, François de 50
- Malthus, Thomas Robert 21 seq., 254,
 386
- Mant, Richard 126, 128 seq., 133,
 164 seq., 295, 303 seq., 309 seq., 323
- Marana, Giovanni Paolo 126
- marketing, boosting, advertising* 28, 180,
 245, 368 seq.
- Marlow (Buckinghamshire), Marlow cir-
 cle 10, 91
- Martineau, Harriet 386
- Marx, Karl 13, 386
- Mason, John 134
- Mason, William 113
- mass production* 30, 105, 118, 127 seq.,
 130, 133, 145, 155, 182 seq., 195, 264,
 266, 271, 360, 373
- Massey, Gerald 33, 240 seq.
- Mathias, Thomas James 27, 51 seq.,
 66 seq., 125, 127, 130, 147, 169, 209–
 211, 220, 247, 250, 264, 271, 294, 343,
 361
- Maxwell, James (of Paisley) 302 seq.
- McCrie, Thomas 97
- McCulloch, John Ramsay 336
- melodrama* 90, 137 seq., 141, 144 seq.,
 147, 149 seq., 153 seq., 157, 208, 223,
 234, 237
- Menander 87, 155, 354
- Mendelssohn, Moses 248
- Menippean satire* 16, 58, 69, 82, 202,
 215 seq., 218, 227, 256, 275, 290, 295,
 312
- Meredith, George 64
- Merry, Robert (“Della Crusca”) 111 seq.,
 114 seq., 116 seq., 122–125, 129,
 133 seq., 142, 152, 154 seq., 158, 188, 315
- Meyer, Heinrich 235 seq.
- Meyerbeer, Giacomo (Jacob Liebmann
 Beer) 401
- Mill, James 12, 22, 101, 254, 305, 386
- Mill, John Stuart 11 seq., 17, 254, 386,
 396 seq., 405
- Miller, Joseph (“Joe”) 190
- Milman, Henry Hart 402
- Milton, John 5, 26, 30, 96 seq., 99, 112–

- Paine, Thomas 41, 56, 130, 203 seq., 210, 215, 260, 294, 317, 377
- Palladian style* 50, 407
- pantomime* 79, 87, 134, 137, 141 seq., 145, 147, 150, 153 seq.
- Parini, Giuseppe 111
- parody* 16, 32, 64, 97, 103, 106, 134 seq., 138, 145, 157, 160, 165, 198, 200–203, 214, 218, 221, 223, 228, 237, 245–247, 253, 255, 257, 279, 283, 285, 289, 298, 307, 310, 312–315, 317–319, 321 seq., 326 seq., 350, 358, 364, 366, 368, 372, 374, 377, 388, 398 seq.
- parrhesis* 11, 179
- Parsons, William 111–114, 124, 136
- patent theatres* 87, 115, 135, 140–142, 152 seq., 207
- Pater, Walter 33, 393, 408
- Patmore, Peter George 38
- Pausanias 354, 395
- Peacock, Thomas Love 18, 20–22, 33, 44, 86, 93, 98 seq., 106 seq., 171–173, 213, 227–229, 241–243, 251, 253–255, 263–265, 291, 293, 296, 298 seq., 305, 307, 311–313, 336 seq., 345 seq., 353 seq., 365, 371, 390, 405
- Peake, Richard Brinsley 237
- penny gaff* 145
- Percy, Thomas 113, 212, 306, 308, 310 seq.
- Persius 23, 50 seq., 54, 57 seq., 63–67, 81, 122 seq., 129, 169, 183, 288 seq., 304, 373, 378
- Petronius 254, 354
- phantasmagoria* 90, 146, 253
- Philips, Ambrose 19, 310
- Philipsthal, Paul 90
- Phocylides (of Miletus) 169 seq.
- Phryne (of Thespieae) 354
- Pignotti, Lorenzo 111
- Pindar 86, 88, 320, 342, 354
- Pindar, Peter (John Wolcot) 56, 65, 68, 77, 80, 88, 120 seq., 342, 354, 379 seq.
- Pindemonte, Ippolito 111, 113 seq.
- Piozzi, Gabriele 112, 114
- Piozzi, Hester Lynch, formerly Mrs Thrale (“Adelaide”) 112–114, 116 seq., 124, 188, 274, 309
- Pisa (Tuscany), Pisan circle 314, 368
- Pitt, William the Younger 30, 41, 79, 100, 121, 181, 200 seq., 270, 272, 307 seq., 370, 390
- Pixerécourt, Guilbert de 149 seq.
- Planché, James Robinson 150, 153, 233 seq.
- Platen, August, Graf von 36 seq., 84, 188, 236, 362
- Plato 10, 71, 159–161, 177, 269, 343, 400
- Platonic Romanticism, Positive Romanticism* 18, 401
- Pliny the Elder 354
- Poe, Edgar Allan 173, 228, 230, 388
- Polidori, John William 150
- Poole, John 155
- Pope, Alexander 18–20, 23, 25, 28, 33, 36, 39 seq., 50–53, 56 seq., 60 seq., 63, 65, 69, 72, 77–80, 89, 102, 105, 112–114, 118, 120, 123, 125, 127 seq., 131, 140, 154, 160, 162 seq., 166, 168 seq., 171, 173–177, 179, 182 seq., 185 seq., 215–217, 223, 228 seq., 239, 241, 246, 248 seq., 259, 262, 270, 275, 279, 288 seq., 293, 295, 302 seq., 311 seq., 334, 344, 360 seq., 369, 372 seq., 378, 380, 383, 391, 393, 400, 402, 407
- popular culture* 38, 66, 81, 90, 121, 135, 140, 144, 146 seq., 152 seq., 158, 354 seq., 371, 410
- Porson, Richard 68, 187, 229 seq., 327
- Porter, Anna Maria 314, 383
- Pound, Ezra 190, 409
- Pratt, Samuel Jackson (“Courtney Melmoth”) 124
- Praxiteles 354
- Preromanticism* 19 seq., 23, 30, 33, 38, 42 seq., 45, 49, 51, 54, 61, 74, 77 seq., 86, 88 seq., 98, 111–116, 118–120, 122 seq., 132, 165, 171, 174–176, 186, 188, 192, 199, 201, 212, 235, 240, 249, 253, 260 seq., 270, 276, 291 seq., 299 seq., 304, 307, 320, 328 seq., 332, 338, 352, 358 seq., 363, 366, 378, 380, 382

- Priapus 209
 Price, Richard 56
 Price, Uvedale 283
 Priestley, Joseph 200, 220, 261, 342
primitivism 98, 108, 115, 165 seq., 171, 190, 248, 292–294, 298, 301, 303–307, 309, 311, 313, 323, 334, 350, 373–375, 388, 390
 Pringle, Thomas 63, 96, 148, 169
 Prior, Matthew 198, 222 seq., 288
probability, vraisemblance, Wahrscheinlichkeit 69, 77, 138, 144, 154, 156, 217, 222 seq., 233
psychiatry and psychoanalysis 232, 242
 Pückler-Muskau, Hermann, Fürst von 87
 Pulci, Luigi 161, 214, 334
Punch and Judy show 88
puppet show 88
 Pye, Henry James 163
 Pyrrho 10, 25, 73 seq., 213, 385, 395
- Quarterly Review* 21, 83, 89 seq., 95, 99 seq., 102–105, 107, 174 seq., 182, 194, 205 seq., 208 seq., 221, 225–227, 236 seq., 239, 241 seq., 249, 266 seq., 274, 276, 280 seq., 286, 289, 293–295, 325, 336, 341, 354, 379, 381 seq.
- querelle des anciens et des modernes* 10, 66, 170, 189, 328, 369
 Quevedo, Francisco 215
 Quillinan, Edward 32, 68 seq., 282
 Quintilian 69, 181, 273
- Rabelais, François 82, 227, 255
 Radcliffe, Ann 21, 154, 210 seq., 224, 233, 257, 262, 264, 383
Radical 10, 12 seq., 17 seq., 20, 22, 27, 41–43, 46, 49 seq., 57, 59, 65, 78, 80, 86–89, 91, 98, 101, 104–106, 108, 115, 119, 129 seq., 142, 147, 149, 151–154, 162, 164 seq., 169 seq., 181, 186, 197–200, 202 seq., 206, 208, 210–215, 217 seq., 221, 223, 225, 228, 232, 235, 238, 241, 243, 245, 249, 254, 260, 275, 277, 282–284, 287, 291–296, 300, 305, 315, 317 seq., 320, 322, 324, 329, 331–333, 335–337, 342 seq., 346, 352–354, 366, 369, 374–376, 399 seq., 408
- Ramsay, Allan the Elder 112, 291, 299 seq., 312
 Ramsay, Allan the Younger 112
 Ramus, Petrus (Pierre de la Ramée) 287 seq.
 Reade, Charles 25, 30, 33, 58, 62, 100, 106, 109, 182, 193, 210, 217, 227 seq., 253, 257 seq., 306, 312, 320, 325, 329, 333, 341, 343, 351, 354, 391, 393 seq.
- Reeves, John 354
reform 12 seq., 17 seq., 31, 34, 38, 49, 56, 71 seq., 101 seq., 111, 132, 135 seq., 141, 147, 152, 156, 169, 191, 208, 210, 230, 241, 249, 253, 259, 263, 282, 341, 343, 372, 406
Regency style 91
 Renan, Ernest 38
Republic of Letters 180, 184, 335
 Reynolds, Frederick 315
 Reynolds, John Hamilton 24, 26 seq., 37–40, 155 seq., 205, 309, 380
 Reynolds, Sir Joshua 112, 270, 356
 Richardson, Joseph 148, 308
 Richardson, Samuel 240
 Riddell, John 97
 Ridgway, James 115, 370
 Ring, John 99 seq., 151
 Ritson, Joseph 212
 Roberts, William 199
 Robinson, Mary (“Laura Maria”) 20, 43, 57, 117, 122–125, 128, 134, 188, 253, 262, 264, 266, 271, 273–275, 310, 344, 379, 384
 Rochester, Second Earl of (John Wilmot) 61 seq., 73–78, 80 seq., 173, 216, 221, 360
 Rogers, Samuel 33, 37, 61 seq., 176 seq.
 Rolle, John 307, 370
Romantic Disillusionism, Pyrrhonic Romanticism, Negative Romanticism 10, 159, 173–175, 363, 385, 394, 397, 405
Romantic School → *new schools* 26 seq., 32, 34, 39, 41, 44 seq., 108, 159, 162, 166, 185, 188, 192, 197, 213, 230, 268, 298,

- 319, 322, 326, 377, 381–384, 386–388, 408
- Rossetti, Christina 266
- Rowe, Nicholas 192 seq.
- Rowlandson, Thomas 78, 366 seq.
- rule and reason* 10–12, 15, 18–20, 29, 37, 42, 46, 50–55, 62–65, 67, 69, 73, 75, 77, 79 seq., 82, 84, 89, 103, 108, 111, 114, 118, 121, 127, 131, 133 seq., 138, 141, 147–149, 152, 154 seq., 157 seq., 161 seq., 164–168, 170–173, 179, 185–188, 192–195, 197 seq., 203, 205–207, 209, 212, 214, 217, 219 seq., 222 seq., 228, 238, 240 seq., 245 seq., 253 seq., 261, 275, 287 seq., 290 seq., 303, 308, 310, 316, 325, 331 seq., 334, 338, 342, 344–346, 349, 359, 363, 374, 377, 387, 390–393, 399, 401
- rule-based aesthetics and criticism, Regel-ästhetik* 50, 54, 149, 167, 185–188, 192–194, 207, 207, 220, 238
- Rushton, William 383
- Russell, James 158, 212, 225
- Ryland, John Collett 42
- Sade, Marquis de 211
- Saint-Martin, Louis Claude de 386
- Sallust 343
- Savigny, Friedrich von 328
- Sayers, James 41, 78 seq.
- Scaliger, Julius Caesar 23, 55
- Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm 159, 227
- Schicksalstragödie* 37
- Schlegel, August Wilhelm von 25 seq., 28, 43 seq., 85, 166, 381, 383 seq., 398, 402
- Schlegel, Friedrich von 26, 28, 43 seq., 98, 166, 186, 306 seq., 309, 328, 398, 402
- Schreiber, Alois Wilhelm 296
- Scott, John 42, 95, 101, 105, 109
- Scott, Sir Walter 30, 34, 45, 51, 63, 100–102, 105, 108, 136, 163 seq., 184 seq., 198, 207, 213, 249, 254, 257 seq., 262, 286, 293 seq., 298, 302, 305, 311 seq., 335, 382 seq., 393, 403
- Seneca the Younger 69, 100
- sensibility, sensibilité, Empfindsamkeit* 21, 23, 38, 51 seq., 58 seq., 74, 78, 111, 118, 122, 124, 126, 138, 154, 165, 176, 186, 188, 199, 201, 203–205, 211, 227, 230, 235, 252 seq., 260, 274 seq., 290, 306, 320, 359 seq., 378, 386
- sentimental* 21, 54, 59, 64 seq., 78, 103, 108, 113, 115 seq., 118, 123–125, 132, 134, 136 seq., 139 seq., 151, 155 seq., 161, 165, 175, 182 seq., 192, 199, 207, 217 seq., 220, 222 seq., 233, 243, 245, 261 seq., 267, 272, 274 seq., 293 seq., 298, 329, 340, 378, 380, 403
- Severn, Joseph 339
- Seward, Anna 262, 382
- Shadwell, Thomas 69
- Shaftesbury, First Earl of (Anthony Ashley Cooper) 76, 326
- Shaftesbury, Third Earl of (Anthony Ashley Cooper) 54, 57, 64, 179, 182, 192
- Shakespeare, William 18, 26, 38, 43, 65, 84, 89, 97, 125, 139, 149, 151, 171, 192 seq., 208, 212, 222 seq., 225, 229 seq., 256, 274, 279, 289, 306, 325, 338–340, 344, 382, 390 seq., 397
- Shandean writing* 57, 200, 277, 330, 334, 350, 357–359
- Shelley, Mary 38, 89, 137, 158, 236 seq., 243, 253, 344, 352, 355, 377
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe 10 seq., 13 seq., 18 seq., 21 seq., 24, 26 seq., 33 seq., 37–39, 45, 89, 92, 108, 112–114, 127, 136 seq., 141, 149, 158, 162, 171, 187, 199, 206, 213 seq., 225–227, 232 seq., 243, 250 seq., 253–255, 263, 265, 276, 283–285, 292, 298 seq., 307 seq., 314, 332, 345 seq., 352 seq., 355, 361, 365–370, 378–380, 385 seq., 400, 408
- Shelley, Sir Timothy 255
- Sheridan, Richard Brinsley 20 seq., 41, 56, 64, 77, 87, 116, 147, 155 seq., 175, 180 seq., 342, 360
- Siddons, Sarah 126, 136, 140, 157, 271
- Sismondi, Léonard Simonde de 383
- Smith, Alexander 32
- Smith, Charles 146
- Smith, Charlotte 113, 264, 271, 273

- Smith, Horace 38, 137, 157 seq.
 Smith, James 157
 Smith, Sydney 102 seq., 342
 Smollett, Tobias 232
 Soane, George 145
 Soane, Sir John 145
 Sophocles 84, 263, 269, 353, 394
 Sotheby, William 126, 177, 244, 303
 South, Robert 214
 Southey, Robert 19 seq., 22, 27, 29 seq.,
 35 seq., 39, 62, 68, 100, 105, 108, 122,
 128 seq., 133, 162 seq., 166 seq., 171 –
 173, 176, 184 seq., 187, 192, 198,
 203 seq., 213 – 216, 228 – 230, 234, 239,
 249 seq., 254, 262, 266, 268, 274 – 276,
 281, 283, 291, 299, 305, 317, 349,
 356 seq., 363, 373 seq., 376, 378, 381 –
 384
Spasmodic School 32, 240, 298, 382, 387 –
 389, 391, 399
 Spenser, Edmund 26, 43, 193, 383
 St Augustine 116, 168
 St John, John 134, 312, 349
 Staël, Germaine de 44 seq., 69, 185,
 220 seq., 258, 272, 381, 383 seq.
 Stanhope, Charles 342
 Stephen, Leslie 25, 41, 97, 211, 237, 328,
 366, 389, 402, 404
 Sterne, Laurence 21, 58, 162, 211, 240,
 306, 402
 Stewart, Dugald 103
 Stewart, Henry 342
 Stoddart, John 374
 Stott, Robert (“Hafiz”) 124, 133, 147
 Strahan, Andrew 119
street acting 88, 376
Sturm und Drang 134, 156, 219, 222 seq.,
 235, 298
 Suetonius 80
 Swift, Jonathan 28, 50, 53, 55, 65, 69, 72 –
 74, 78 seq., 83, 85, 106, 120, 123, 173,
 184, 200, 202, 215 seq., 245, 254, 259,
 278, 306, 358, 388
 Swinburne, Algernon Charles 33, 397,
 408
 Sym, Robert 109
 Talfourd, Thomas Noon 107, 297
 Tasso, Torquato 30, 251, 263, 353, 400
 Taylor, Jane 57, 77
 Taylor, Thomas 71
 Taylor, William (of Norwich) 45
 Tennyson, Alfred Lord 92, 385, 389,
 397 seq.
 Terence 155
 Thackeray, William Makepeace 348
theatre audiences, spectators 64, 87, 135,
 139, 142 – 144, 151, 307
theatre scene in London 145 seq.
theatres (legitimate, patent) 87, 115,
 135 seq., 140 – 142, 146 seq., 152 seq.,
 207
theatres (illegitimate) 88, 138, 140 – 143,
 145, 149, 152, 154, 158, 208
 Thelwall, John 88 seq., 119, 130, 175, 277,
 283, 293 seq., 333 seq.
 Theophrastus 109
 Thomson, James 86, 113, 229
 Thomson, Samuel 293, 304
 Thucydides (historian) 394
 Tickell, Richard 148
 Tieck, Ludwig 28, 139, 166, 186, 235,
 306 seq., 352, 384
 Tighe, Mary 20
 Tissot, Samuel Auguste 235
 Tomline, George Pretzman 308
 Tooke, John Horne 56, 80, 86, 254
 Topham, Edward 115 seq., 123, 315
 Trapp, Joseph 51
 Trotter, Thomas 235, 300 seq.
 Turner, William 355
 Tytler, Alexander Fraser 136
 Uhland, Ludwig 166
 University College (Gower Street, Lon-
 don) 241, 259, 281 seq.
University Extension Movement 259, 384
update, modernization, construction,
reinvention (of the Classical Tradition)
 58, 64, 81, 109, 167, 169, 235, 254,
 390
 Vanbrugh, Sir John 78 seq., 151

- Vaughan, Miss ("Cesario", daughter of the Della Cruscan dramatist Thomas Vaughan) 124
- Vaughan, Thomas ("Edwin") 124
- Verdi, Giuseppe 151
- Verlaine, Paul 85
- Victoria, Queen 87, 92, 385
- Victorianism* 9, 385–387, 403, 407
- Virgil 23, 30, 33, 89, 97, 116, 122, 126, 130, 132, 161 seq., 169, 194, 202, 253 seq., 257, 262 seq., 266, 293, 297, 303, 311, 314, 337, 341, 353, 365, 372, 386
- Vogler, Georg Joseph 401
- Voss, Johann Heinrich 296
- Wackenroder, Wilhelm Heinrich 186, 235, 352 seq.
- Wakefield, Gilbert 130
- Walker, William Sydney 225, 227
- Walpole, Horace 112, 135, 145, 211, 248, 270, 388
- War of the Theatres, Poetomachia* 18, 38, 338
- Warren, Robert (Warren's Blacking) 368
- Warton, Joseph 174
- Warton, Thomas the Younger 43, 113, 193, 327
- Waterhouse, John William 392
- Watson, Alexander 42 seq., 197, 204
- Webb, Cornelius 26, 38
- Weber, Carl Maria von 29, 153, 401
- Weimar Classicism* 18, 44, 235, 390 seq.
- Wellington, First Duke of (Arthur Wellesley) 20, 49, 258
- West, Gilbert 354
- White, Henry 41
- White, Henry Kirke 348 seq., 356 seq.
- Wieland, Christoph Martin 384
- Wilberforce, William 248
- Wilde, Oscar 33, 186, 389, 408
- Wilkes, John 77, 152 seq., 374
- Williams, Charles 23
- Williams, Helen Maria 56, 210, 261 seq., 271
- Williams, John ("Anthony Pasquin") 120, 124
- Wilson, James 97
- Wilson, John 27, 31–34, 63, 68, 82 seq., 95–97, 101, 108 f, 130 seq., 245 seq., 268, 285 seq., 295, 308, 315, 323 seq., 336–338, 340, 342, 350
- Winckelmann, Johann Joachim 89 seq., 221
- Wollstonecraft Godwin, Mary 12 seq., 14, 232, 263, 265, 271, 344
- Woodhouse, Richard 277, 346 seq.
- Wooler, Thomas Jonathan 41, 375
- Wordsworth, Dora 266
- Wordsworth, Dorothy 20, 265, 294, 301, 323, 344, 359, 390
- Wordsworth, William 10, 19 seq., 22, 25–27, 30–32, 34–36, 39 seq., 45 seq., 58, 62, 68, 88 seq., 91, 97–102, 104 seq., 108 seq., 116, 119, 128 seq., 131–133, 136, 149, 160, 162, 164–167, 171, 176, 182, 185, 187, 191 seq., 199, 208 seq., 212 seq., 215 seq., 218, 229–232, 239, 244, 247, 250 seq., 254, 261 seq., 265 seq., 268, 275, 291–294, 297–299, 301, 303–307, 309–312, 318 seq., 320–326, 330, 333–336, 344, 349–351, 358 seq., 364, 368–370, 373 seq., 377 seq., 380–384, 390 seq., 409
- Xenophon 92, 343
- Yearsley, Ann 271, 373
- Yeats, William Butler 18
- Young, Edward 113



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