

THE HAZLITT REVIEW

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HAZLITT AND THE MONARCHY

Legitimacy, Radical Print Culture, and Caricature

Ian Haywood

When I was invited by Greg Dart to speak at the Hazlitt Society's annual Day-school in 2015 I realized that I had never given a paper solely on Hazlitt; although I had used him extensively in my published work, this was always in support of other authors and topics. I accepted Greg's invitation with relish and embraced the opportunity to discuss one of Hazlitt's and my own *bêtes noires*: the monarchy. However, the prospect of initiation into the Hazlitt Society also filled me with a certain trepidation as I became aware that the keynote speaker was none other than Kevin Gilmartin who would be talking about his excellent new book *William Hazlitt: Political Essayist* (2015). While I was keen to get Kevin to sign a copy of his book, I was also aware that the concluding section of his study is precisely about Hazlitt's views on monarchy. Yet this seemed to me a fortunate coincidence and clear evidence that both of us regarded this theme as in many ways a litmus test or crystallization of Hazlitt's core political values, principles, and 'good' hatreds. In this essay, which is based on my presentation, I acknowledge Gilmartin's many insights while applying a different methodology and contextual reading, most significantly by framing Hazlitt's anti-monarchical writings within the contexts of caricature prints, radical satire, and the formal processes of radical print culture, and by positing some key intertexts which Gilmartin has overlooked.¹ At the end of the essay I also discuss briefly the radical 'afterlife' of Hazlitt's anti-monarchical writing in the 1830s and the era of Chartism.

Like Gilmartin, I am particularly interested in Hazlitt the journalist and in the ideological function and political efficacy of radical print culture in the Romantic period. This issue was of course Hazlitt's *métier* but as Gilmartin and other critics have shown, Hazlitt's relationship to journalism was complex and even contradictory. As a professional writer, he felt both the power and the limitations of his medium: on the one hand, there was the sense that print was a direct mode of communication with the reader and the equivalent of having a live audience he could touch, inspire, badger, tease, and mould with his 'dramatic

¹ See Kevin Gilmartin, *William Hazlitt: Political Essayist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 273–89.

utterance[s]’;² on the other hand, there was the awareness that readers occupied a highly mediated position in a commercial market subject to multiple pressures, allures, and viewpoints that could draw them away from his various political and cultural agendas. Moreover, Hazlitt’s conflicted feelings about journalistic identity were intensified by the fact that he eschewed organized oppositional politics. This meant that he was essentially a print activist, reliant on the page, not the platform, to influence public opinion.³ The frustrations of having to conduct his political edification remotely may explain some of his characteristic volte faces and tirades regarding the democratic health of the reading public during a period of thwarted radical reform.

As Gilmartin shows in great detail, Hazlitt’s inconsistencies make him a fascinating and intriguing writer who wrestled with the gap between the Whiggish, enlightened ideal of the press as (in his own words) ‘the great organ of intellectual improvement and civilisation’ and the blockages and reversals on the ground: not only the stalled pace of political reform but also the lag or uneven development between political and cultural advancement (xiii, 38).⁴ For Hazlitt, the former was barely worth granting without a citizenry sufficiently educated and cultured to appreciate that art is the quintessence of civilization. Hence his advocacy of restricted access to art galleries has drawn fire from critics for its elitism: as he puts it notoriously in his essay ‘Fine Arts. Whether They are Promoted by Academies and Public Institutions’ (1814), ‘The principle of universal suffrage, however applicable to matters of government, which concern the common feelings and common interests of society, is by no means applicable to matters of taste, which can only be decided upon by the most refined understandings’ (xviii, 46). But this animus towards the popular was also fuelled by his keen realization that culture in its widest sense – the system of symbolic or second order codes in a society – was rarely separable from ideological interests. As much as Hazlitt clung to a liberal-humanist ideal of a benign and beneficial higher realm of aesthetics whose blessings could eventually be disseminated throughout society, he was daily confronted by his nemesis: the irrational, spectacular attachment of the people to the debased institution of the monarchy, a cult of myth, glamour, romance, and quasi-divine reverence which was the antitype of a virtuous, republican culture. The question ‘What is the People’ was inseparable from another question: ‘what is the monarchy, and how does it sustain its hold over the people?’ Unless this latter question could be answered satisfactorily, Hazlitt’s vision of a nation purged of political corruption and ‘mass loyalty’ could never be realized.⁵

Hazlitt wrote two key essays on the monarchy: ‘Coriolanus’, a review of Philip Kemble’s production of the play which was first published in the *Examiner* in

2 Jon Cook in ‘Introduction’, *William Hazlitt: Selected Writings* (World’s Classics), ed. Jon Cook (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), xxviii–ix.

3 Kevin Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 228–9.

4 All quotations from Hazlitt are taken from *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London: J. M. Dent, 1930–4). References are by volume and page.

5 Gilmartin, *William Hazlitt*, 273.

December 1816 and subsequently reprinted in *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* in 1817; and 'On the Spirit of Monarchy', published in John Hunt's periodical *The Liberal* in late 1822. In addition to denunciations of tyranny and arbitrary rule, both essays contain quite damning portrayals of what we might call 'monarchism' or the public's susceptibility to admire supreme power. 'Coriolanus' is the more notorious and celebrated of the essays as it takes a surprising turn in its analysis of the play's politics and accuses Shakespeare, poetry, and by implication ourselves of elitism and power-worship; this tendency is nothing less than a desertion of the democratic principles of republicanism that Hazlitt associates with prose and rational discourse. 'On the Spirit of Monarchy' also includes some surprises, notably an argument that we naturally admire monarchy as it is a projection or sublimation of our ideal selves, a hyperbolic expression of egotism. These provocative, even outrageous formulations are classic instances of Hazlittian idiosyncratic writing, but rather than try to penetrate the mysteries of Hazlitt's political imagination, as numerous critics have done, I want to take a different approach and shed new light on these and other essays by considering some of the external events, contexts, and intertexts that made the topic of monarchy so conspicuous and urgent for Hazlitt and the radical movement.

The beast of Legitimacy and Gothic Spain

My narrative of Hazlitt's war against the monarchy begins paradoxically in the year of Peace, 1814. While national celebrations and festivities took place outside his lodgings in London (as it happened these were premature, but no one could have predicted Napoleon's Hundred Days at this time), Hazlitt was seething at the restoration of Bourbon rule in Spain and France. While this reversal was clearly a major blow to his political hopes, the betrayal of the Spanish and French people by the Allied powers turned Hazlitt into a 'good hater' (vii, 151) of monarchy and fed his hyperbolic portrayal of the monster of Legitimacy, the revamping of Divine Right.⁶ We can only imagine his feelings as he watched the Prince Regent and the Tsar of Russia take part in a victory parade directly beneath his curtainless rooms overlooking St James's Park in the summer of 1814.⁷ According to Tom Paulin, Hazlitt's mood in this bleak postwar period was so 'excited, desperate, tormented' that a 'wild Protestant populist atavism howl[ed] through Hazlitt's prose' as he identified with the persecuted victims of Catholic Spain and France.⁸ This may explain why he inflated the bogey of Legitimacy into an all-consuming evil, the

6 'Even when the spirit of the age (that is, the progress of intellectual refinement, warring with our natural infirmities) no longer allows us to carry our vindictive and headstrong humours into effect, we try to revive them in description, and keep up the old bugbears, the phantoms of our terror and hate, in imagination' ('On the Pleasure of Hating'; xii, 128–9).

7 Stanley Jones, *Hazlitt: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 150–1.

8 Tom Paulin, *The Day-Star of Liberty: William Hazlitt's Radical Style* (London: Faber, 1998), 39–40.

'bloated hideous form [...] that claims mankind as its property, [...] that haunts the understanding like a frightful spectre' (vii, 259–60).

Gilmartin shows convincingly how Hazlitt constructed a demonological fantasy of omnipotent absolutism against which he could define his heroic resistance,⁹ but it is also important to note that in these bristling, venomous, and often highly entertaining assaults, Hazlitt conveniently blurred the boundaries between Europe and Britain. For Hazlitt, Ferdinand VII of Spain, Louis XVIII of France, and the other despots of the Holy Alliance provided spectacular and incontrovertible evidence that monarchs naturally gravitated towards tyranny. But Britain's more modern system of limited monarchy, a system which even Thomas Paine admitted contained republican elements of an elected government and a separation of powers, could only be included in this foul company by association rather than definition. More often than not, Hazlitt simply tarred all monarchs with the same melodramatic brush. In a later essay 'Whether Genius is Conscious of Its Powers' (1826) he recalled that in 1814 'there was but one alternative – the cause of kings or of mankind'. There was no rejoicing when 'the Mighty [Napoleon] fell':

we, all men, fell with him, like lightning from heaven, to grovel in the grave of Liberty, in the stye of Legitimacy! There is but one question in the hearts of monarchs, whether mankind are their property or not. There was but this one question in mine. I made an abstract, metaphysical principle of this question. [...] By my hatred of tyrants I knew what their hatred of the free-born spirit of man must be, of the semblance, of the very name of Liberty and Humanity. And while others bowed their heads to the image of the BEAST, I spit upon it and buffeted it, and made mouths at it, and pointed at it, and drew aside the veil that then half concealed it [...]. (xii, 122)

This visceral response to the return of the Bourbons may well have been influenced by the caricature prints, which specialized in grotesque transformations of political affairs. As Baudelaire was later to say, the 'distinctive' quality of the Golden Age of political cartoons was the 'inexhaustible abundance of grotesque invention' realized in the 'extravagant violence of gesture and movement, and the intensity of expression. All [the] little figures mime with furious vigour and boisterousness, like actors in a pantomime'.¹⁰ Caricaturists seized on any opportunity to present unjust political power as violent, Gothic melodrama. By early 1815, Ferdinand had already begun to replace Napoleon in the popular visual imagination as *the* bloodthirsty despot, a 'BEAST' of backwardness and tyranny. Whereas Louis XVIII tended to be portrayed in political cartoons as a bloated buffoon (Hazlitt called him a 'scare-crow'; vii, 151), Ferdinand personified the

9 According to Gilmartin, Hazlitt and other radical journalists inflated the menace of the 'post-revolutionary state authority in Europe' into a 'nightmarish' fantasy of 'oppressive power that extended through time and space and left nothing outside its reach' (*William Hazlitt*, 111–20).

10 Charles Baudelaire, 'Some Foreign Caricaturists' (1857) in *Selected Writings on Art and Artists*, ed. P. E. Charvet (Penguin, 1972), 234.



Figure 1 Thomas Rowlandson, *The Privy Council of a King* (1815). © Trustees of the British Museum

revival of ‘Gothic’ Spain of the Black Legend. In Thomas Rowlandson’s *The Privy Council of a King* (1815), for example, Ferdinand sits on a toilet-throne which rests on a base of skulls while reactionary religious and political cronies preach counter-revolution and oppression (Figure 1). For Hazlitt, Ferdinand was the essence of recidivist Legitimacy:

When we see a poor creature like Ferdinand VII., who can hardly gabble out his words like a human being, more imbecile than a woman, more hypocritical than a priest, decked and dandled in the long robes and swaddling-clothes of Legitimacy, lullabied to rest with the dreams of superstition, drunk with the patriot-blood of his country, and launching the thunders of his coward-arm against the rising liberties of a new world, while he claims the style and title of Image of the Divinity, we may laugh or weep, but there is nothing to wonder at. (vii, 285)

Like many radicals, Hazlitt followed the rollercoaster political fortunes of Spain closely: aligning himself ironically with Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, he railed,

This subject of Spanish liberty and deliverance is one that we dwell upon with willingness. ‘It feeds fat the ancient grudge we owe’ to hereditary tyranny and its pitiful tools.’ (xix, 154n)



Figure 2 William Hone and George Cruikshank, *A Slap at Slop* (August 1821)

He was appalled by the shocking apostasy of the Spanish people in embracing Ferdinand in 1814 and again in 1823 after the crushing of the liberal Cortes by the Holy Alliance.

These events and their representations in the radical press and caricature provide a dramatic political context for Hazlitt's two key essays on the monarchy. From his perspective, Britain was guilty by association of legitimist tendencies. The political betrayal of Spain by the Allies (no matter how predisposed its people were to worship absolutism) was also for liberals and radicals the betrayal of the British people who had supported the expulsion of Napoleonic tyranny in the name of Spanish freedom, only to see 'old' dictatorship restored (the cant loyalist phrase in 1814 was the 'Good Old Times').¹¹ But once the reform movement at home revived after 1815 and the government began to crack down on civil liberties, the Spanish imbroglio began to seem uncomfortably relevant. Although backward Spain was an extreme case of inquisitorial injustice, radical pressmen such as William Hone drew vivid parallels between domestic and foreign oppression, particularly after the Peterloo massacre of 1819.

The most spectacular rendition of this conjunction was George Cruikshank's satirical cartoon *Damnable Association* which appeared in Hone's satirical newspaper *A Slap at Slop* in 1821 (Figure 2).¹² The image shows conservative British politicians and their fellow conspirators in despotic Europe torturing the naked female figure of Liberty in a dungeon and burning the free press. Given Hazlitt's collaboration with Hone at this time, it is hard not to conclude that this lurid yet witty Gothic iconography would have struck a chord. In *Political Essays*, published by Hone in 1819, Hazlitt had already drawn on the reportage and imagery of inquisitorial persecution to expose Southey's apostasy. For Hazlitt, continuing support for reform in Spain and at home was the litmus test of political and literary integrity:

11 See a satirical poem called 'The Good Old Times', *Morning Chronicle*, 13 June 1814.

12 See Ian Haywood, *Romanticism and Caricature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), chapter 6 (121–40).



Figure 3 George Cruikshank, *Twelfth Night* (1814) © Trustees of the British Museum

It was understood to be for his exertions in the cause of Spanish liberty that he was made Poet-Laureate. It is then high time for him to resign. Why has he not written a single ode to a single Spanish patriot who has been hanged, banished, imprisoned, sent to the galleys, assassinated, tortured? (vii, 95)

Shakespeare and the spectacle of politics

If the Gothic Spain of the political cartoons was a fertile source of imagery for Hazlitt's construction of despotic monstrosity, another powerful influence on his anti-monarchical imagination could have been the caricature depictions of the Congress of Vienna as vaudeville and pantomime (Figure 3). It is important to note that the lampooning of postwar realpolitik as theatre and performance coincided with Hazlitt's lectures and essays on Shakespeare in which some of his seminal 'dramatic utterance[s]' on monarchy appear, including 'Coriolanus'. The parallels between the plays and contemporary political events are for the most part implicit and contextual but occasionally they become explicit. In his lecture on *Henry V*, Hazlitt criticizes the king's invasion of France as a reflex of 'kingly power' and the 'right divine of kings to govern wrong' (iv, 286).¹³ He then makes a republican joke about the Bourbon Restoration:

¹³ Hazlitt used the same phrase in 'What is the People' (1817): see vii, 264. William Hone borrowed it for the title of one of his own satires (1821).

The object of our late invasion and conquest of France was to restore the legitimate monarch, the descendant of Hugh Capet, to the throne: Henry v. in his time made war on and deposed the descendant of this very Hugh Capet, on the plea that he was a usurper and illegitimate. What would the great modern catspaw of legitimacy and restorer of divine right have said, to the claim of Henry and the title of the descendants of Hugh Capet? (iv, 286)

This witty debunking of the play's jingoism is extended when Hazlitt asserts that any admiration we have for Henry is restricted solely to the theatrical experience:

We like him in the play. There he is a very amiable monster, a very splendid pageant. As we like to gaze at a panther or a young lion in their cages in the Tower, and catch a pleasing horror from their glistening eyes, their velvet paws, and dreadless roar, so we take a very romantic, heroic, patriotic, and poetical delight in the boasts and feats of our younger Harry, as they appear on the stage and are confined to lines of ten syllables; where no blood follows the stroke that wounds our ears, where no harvest bends beneath horses' hoofs, no city flames, no little child is butchered, no dead men's bodies are found piled on heaps and festering the next morning – in the orchestra! (iv, 286)

The closing macabre witticism is a typical example of Hazlitt pushing his relentless logic to an absurd, even surreal extreme and collapsing the antithetical trope that underpins his assertions. The basis of his critique is to utilize the dualism of mimesis and distinguish between theatrical illusion (the monarchy as a spectacle) and real history (the warmongering of kingcraft), yet the frisson of the concluding joke relies on the imagination refusing to sustain the separation. At a deeper level this could be Hazlitt's grotesque mimesis of the deleterious consequences of the public's faith in the monarchy, of refusing to place rational boundaries round the institution and failing to judge it by its violent policies. The 'festering' consequence of royalist delusion is the spectral contamination of art and culture by conservative ideology, dead bodies having replaced the musicians in the orchestra, Shakespeare's patriotic hero mistaken for a real king. This disaster reaches its devastating climax in 'Coriolanus' where Hazlitt shames the whole of history as a 'royal hunt' of the strong against the weak:

The history of mankind is a romance, a mask, a tragedy, constructed upon the principles of *poetical justice*; it is a noble or royal hunt, in which what is sport to the few is death to the many, and in which the spectators halloo and encourage the strong to set upon the weak, and cry havoc in the chase though they do not share in the spoil. We may depend upon it that what men delight to read in books, they will put in practice in reality. (iv, 216)

This makes for uncomfortable reading: everyone is tainted by this unseemly sport, either as a bawling spectator of elite power or a dupe of mainstream print

culture. To rub salt in the wound, the phrase 'cry havoc' recalls Mark Anthony's rabble-rousing speech from *Julius Caesar* Act III Scene 1 in which the fickle mob are easily manipulated into abandoning their allegiance to the republican rebellion led by Brutus and Cassius.

If Hazlitt's ironic use of the collective pronoun ('We like him in the play') is prepared to cede a purely symbolic, theatrical role for Henry V and the monarchy ('a very splendid pageant'), his judgement of Henry VIII is much harsher, refusing him any role on the public stage. In this declamation, monarchical history is simply too horrific to be performed as entertainment or turned into art:

Kings ought never to be seen upon the stage. In the abstract, they are very disagreeable characters: it is only while living that they are 'the best of kings'. It is their power, their splendour, it is the apprehension of the personal consequences of their favour or their hatred that dazzles the imagination and suspends the judgment of their favourites or their vassals; but death cancels the bond of allegiance and of interest; and seen *as they were*, their power and their pretensions look monstrous and ridiculous. [...] No reader of history can be a lover of kings. We have often wondered that Henry VIII. as he is drawn by Shakespear, and as we have seen him represented in all the bloated deformity of mind and person, is not hooted from the English stage. (iv, 305–6)

In this tirade the trope of theatrical illusion is displaced onto the court system which is already and essentially a spectacle. As in the Congress of Vienna caricatures, Hazlitt emphasizes that monarchical power relies on 'pageantry' to mask its true ('abstract') deformity. The equivalent of a theatrical audience who 'suspend' their disbelief is now the fawning court, the 'favourites' and 'vassals' who are willing dupes and lickspittles of royal 'dazzle'. But once this bond of 'allegiance and interest' is broken by the death of the monarch, the 'monstrous and ridiculous' reality is revealed.

In his allusion to death as a levelling force Hazlitt may have been influenced by the Romantic revival of the Dance of Death and in particular its prolific use by caricaturists: Thomas Rowlandson's popular series the *English Dance of Death* (1814–16), for example, overlapped with Hazlitt's Shakespearean writings.¹⁴ But unlike the ironic inclusiveness of Henry V's admirers, Henry VIII provokes the intervention of the dissenting, republican reader: 'No reader of history can be a lover of kings'. Sound education is a shield against royalist jiggery-pokery, what Paine called the 'master fraud'. From this enlightened, high-minded vantage point, Hazlitt wittily imagines a revolutionary *coup d'état*: in general, 'Kings ought never to be seen upon the stage', and in particular the 'bloated' Henry VIII (surely an echo of the 'voluptuary' Prince Regent as represented by Gillray and Cruikshank) should be 'hooted from the English stage'.¹⁵

14 Haywood, *Romanticism and Caricature*, chapter 4 (74–99).

15 James Gillray's *A Voluptuary Under the Horrors of Digestion* (1792) was adapted by George Cruikshank in 'Qualification', an illustration in William Hone and Cruikshank's

'Cross readings'

Leaving aside explicit analogies, another intriguing way in which we can see Hazlitt's Shakespearian criticism interacting with contemporary political events is to revisit the formal organization of the Regency newspaper and consider the synergies and new readings that can emerge from the spatial proximity of seemingly unrelated articles. The first example of this inconsequential hermeneutics occurs on the front page of the *Examiner* issue of 15 December 1816 in which 'Coriolanus' first appeared. It is surely no coincidence that the front page contained Hazlitt's unattributed article 'On Modern Apostates' in which he lampoons Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge for becoming 'converts to the cause of kings' and 'hired pimps and panders of power' (vii, 132). This invective sets the tone for the whole issue. As David Higgins comments perceptively, when 'Coriolanus' appears some pages later, 'Hazlitt is so politically sensitive that even the "protean" Shakespeare is represented as a sort of apostate.'¹⁶ In other words, Shakespeare is made to conform to the spirit of the Romantic age and to undergo a democracy health check which, like his central character, he fails calamitously. Hazlitt's hyperbolic reaction to Coriolanus's famous dismissal of the popular will is to reduce history and culture to a Manichean struggle between the forces of rationality and humanity and the 'royal hunt' of monarchical superstition. In literary terms, the republican prose of the heroic liberal press (his own medium) is pitted against 'right-royal' poetry which is associated with a reactionary literary establishment and its headline apostates the Lake poets:

The language of poetry naturally falls in with the language of power. [...] The understanding is a dividing and measuring faculty [...]. The one is an aristocratical, the other a republican faculty. The principle of poetry is a very anti-levelling principle. [...] It rises above the ordinary standards of sufferings and crimes. It presents a dazzling appearance. It shows its head turretted, crowned, and crested. Its front is guilt and blood-stained. Before it 'it carries noise, and behind it tears.' It has its altars and its victims, sacrifices, human sacrifices. Kings, priests, nobles, are its trainbearers, tyrants and slaves its executioners. – 'Carnage is its daughter.' – Poetry is right-royal. (iv, 214)

The 'royal hunt' of unjust history is the apotheosis of this dismal 'logic of the imagination and of the passions.' The conclusion of Hazlitt's tidal flow of rhetoric is that English culture has willingly succumbed to Bourbonization: 'wrong dressed out in pride, pomp, and circumstance, has more attraction than abstract right' (iv, 215). This vision of national apostasy expresses Hazlitt's profound disillusionment with the Regency settlement in the wake of Napoleon's defeat.

The sweeping condemnation of poetry in 'Coriolanus' has rightly provoked critical controversy and is often dismissed as inconsistent or hypocritical: just two years later, for example, Hazlitt wrote in 'On Poetry in General': 'He who has

The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder (1820).

16 David Higgins, *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine* (London: Routledge, 2005), 106.

a contempt for poetry, cannot have much respect for himself, or for any thing else' (v, 1). Nevertheless, the tirade is a remarkable politicization of Shakespeare which derives its power less from its critical accuracy than its engagement with the immediate political context; it is also worth adding that he may have been exploiting the play's already controversial reputation, it having been banned in 1797 for its 'dangerous tendency' of showing a rebellious people facing up to their rulers.¹⁷ Hazlitt's anti-monarchical offensive appeared in the midst of a massive resurgence of the reform movement. Just before the essay was published a mass protest at Spa Fields in London resulted in a riot and the subsequent execution of a demonstrator. The next example of inconsequential interpretation will show how this context or (in its material form) paratext effectively allegorized Shakespeare's play and transformed it into a fable of Regency injustice.

'Coriolanus' first appeared in the *Examiner* on the same page as a report of a delegation from the Corporation of London petitioning the Prince Regent:

Our grievances are the natural effect of rash and ruinous wars, unjustly commenced, and pertinaciously persisted in when no rational object was to be obtained; of immense subsidies to Foreign Powers [...], of an unconstitutional and unprecedented military force in time of peace [...] all arising from the corrupt and inadequate state of the Representation of the People in Parliament.¹⁸

The report is in the left-hand column, 'Coriolanus' in the right. Normally the reader would proceed vertically down each column and keep the two articles distinct, but their spatial contiguity creates the possibility of lateral reading in which discourses unexpectedly collide and illuminate each other. Gilmartin has shown that such 'cross-reading' was a well-established practice among radical readers: often merely done for fun, this 'hermeneutic of reversal' could also yield subversive readings of topical events and bring 'the disruptive energy of radical satire' into the 'core, news content' of the newspaper.¹⁹ Hence if the two texts are read in parallel it becomes apparent that the people's 'grievances' in 1816 provide a contemporary analogue for the play's political themes. Hazlitt's claim that the play is a political education in its own right – a 'store-house of political common-places' which can save the reader 'the trouble of reading Burke's *Reflections* or Paine's *Rights of Man*' – seems at first sight to undermine his attack on Shakespeare's elitism. But as the report of the petition continues, the parallels between the Prince Regent and Shakespeare's hero become compelling. The Prince's response to the people's petitioning of the monarch (which was one of the most fundamental constitutional rights of the British political system) is a refusal to intervene: his address, published verbatim, states that economic difficulties are the

17 The phrase 'dangerous tendency' is Joanna Baillie's, cited in Jonathan Sachs, *Romantic Antiquity: Rome in the British Imagination 1798–1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 201.

18 *The Examiner* 468 (15 December 1816), 792.

19 Gilmartin, *Print Politics*, 95–6.

result of 'unavoidable causes'. His main concern is not the Corn Laws and starvation but discontent: only renewed loyalty and the 'enlightened benevolence' of parliament will ensure public safety.²⁰ The report concludes with a telling detail: the Prince 'partook of an early dinner, and left Carlton House on his return to Brighton.' The Prince Regent retreats to his pleasure palace, leaving the political stage vacant for his counterpart Coriolanus who succeeds him in the next article. The alert radical reader would surely have perceived (and relished) the similarities. Coriolanus joins the rogue's gallery of monstrous Legitimists.²¹

This subversive interleaving of reportage and theatre criticism may be an unintentional product of the periodical format (there is no way to know if editorial cunning lay behind the juxtapositions) but the synergies and cross-currents are clearly there. For Jonathan Bate, who regards 'Coriolanus' as a 'one of the crucial texts of the age' in its analysis of the relations between politics and art, there is no question that Hazlitt was consciously Jacobinizing Shakespeare by evoking parallels with the repressive postwar political climate. Bate notes that Hazlitt's critics certainly saw things this way. William Gifford, for example, claimed that Hazlitt had 'libelled our great poet as a friend of arbitrary power'. Hazlitt's reponse was apposite: 'Do you then really admire those plague spots of history, and scourges of human nature, Richard I, Richard II, King John, and Henry VIII?'²²

20 Jonathan Bate sees an echo of the Corn Laws in the play's opening depiction of the starving populace (*Shakespearian Constitutions: Politics, Theatre, Criticism 1730-1830* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989], 164-75).

21 One objection to this allegorical reading of 'Coriolanus' could be that it ignores Hazlitt's theory of the universal 'admiration of power', a phrase he uses in 'On the Connexion between Toad-Eaters and Tyrants' (1817), an essay that reiterates many of the bitter condemnations of 'On Modern Apostates'. If it is really the case that 'the greater the lie, the more enthusiastically it is believed and greedily swallowed', then it is hard to have any sympathy for the oppressed masses who are the ideological fodder of powerful leaders:

So we feel some concern for the poor citizens of Rome when they meet together to compare their wants and grievances, till Coriolanus comes in and with blows and big words drives this set of 'poor rats', this rascal scum, to their homes and beggary before him. There is nothing heroic in a multitude of miserable rogues not wishing to be starved, or complaining that they like to be so: but when a single man comes forward to brave their cries and to make them submit to the last indignities, from mere pride and self-will, our admiration of his prowess is immediately converted into contempt for their pusillanimity. (iv, 215)

Even in the context of Hazlitt's and the *Examiner's* liberal reservations about the 'multitude' flexing its muscles in a divided country, this seems an unduly harsh assessment of popular protest and an ironic redoubling of the elitism supposedly under attack. One way round this problem, as suggested earlier, is that Hazlitt is being ironic and typically provocative, impersonating rather than recommending the dire consequences of hegemonic delusion. The parallels between Coriolanus the 'single man' of 'pride and self-will' and the Prince Regent are glaring and they are all negative.

22 Bate, *Shakespearian Constitutions*, 174-5. Nathan Drake in *Shakespeare and His Times* (1817) refers to the play's 'electioneering mob' (cited Bate, 163).



Figure 4 George Cruikshank, *Coriolanus Addressing the Plebeians* (1820) © Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Coriolanus and the plebeians

The impact of ‘Coriolanus’ can be gauged by the fact that only a few years after its publication the Prince Regent, just one month into his new role as King George IV, appeared literally as Coriolanus in a George Cruikshank caricature, *Coriolanus Addressing the Plebeians* (1820) (Figure 4). The print shows the King berating a motley crowd of radicals and reformers: from agitated and pusillanimous Spenceans on the left through to stolid, defiant and dignified pressmen on the right, including William Hone and Cruikshank himself who is at the extreme edge nearest the viewer. The King declaims the lines from *Coriolanus* Act 1 Scene i, 173–93: ‘What would ye have ye Curs that like not Peace, nor War? [...] / You cry against the Noble Senate, who (under the Gods,) / Keep you in awe, which else would feed on one another?’

This print seems to be the perfect illustration of Hazlitt’s theory of ‘right-royal’ poetry spurning democracy, but as Bate argues, beneath the apparent glorification of the king is a ‘profoundly ambivalent’ response. A loyal interpretation of the print, aimed at flattering the new king, has to rely on an ‘over-simplified reading’ of the play that ignores Coriolanus’s ‘peremptory response’ to the demands of the people and the obvious parallels with George IV’s refusal to sanction political reforms in the wake of Peterloo and the Six Acts. For Bate, Hazlitt’s essay had permanently damaged Coriolanus’s reputation, and in effect this made Hazlitt the co-creator of the print. To support this claim further, Bate reminds us that Hazlitt was a colleague of Cruikshank and his collaborator William Hone during their

most prolific period. Hone published *Political Essays* in 1819 just before Peterloo, an event which inspired the phenomenally successful Hone-Cruikshank caricature partnership beginning with *The Political House that Jack Built*.²³ According to Hazlitt's grandson William Carew Hazlitt, the three men would meet regularly at the 'Southampton' public house 'and discuss the subject for Hone's next squib'.²⁴ So, although Hazlitt is not visually present in Cruikshank's *Coriolanus* (probably for the reason that he was not regarded as an activist), Bate concludes that 'both publicly and privately Hazlitt presides over this engraving'.²⁵

In the spirit of Bate's assertion, a fuller Hazlittian reading of the print is possible. The image performs rather than declares its 'ambivalence' about popular politics. In 'Coriolanus' Hazlitt went against the grain of Romantic aesthetics and deflated the sublime spectacle of revolution: 'the tame submission to usurped authority or even the natural resistance to it has nothing to excite or flatter the imagination' (iv, 215). There is some evidence for this withering view of 'resistance' in the cowardly stances of the ultra-radicals on the left of the scene, but not in the stolid poses of Hone and Cruikshank, tribunes of the free press. The figure which most 'flatters the imagination' is the King: not only is his classical demeanour and 'statuesque imperiousness'²⁶ so unlike the usual bloated caricature as to lack credibility, even his facial expression is (to quote Bate) 'smug'.²⁷ Finally, for all its ambivalence, the composition shows the sheer scale of radical activism and radical print culture in the wake of the Six Acts and anticipates their mobilization in the Queen Caroline controversy which was about to erupt.²⁸

This Queen Caroline campaign soon restored George IV to his unflattering caricature identity, and it was in the wake of this furore that Hazlitt submitted 'On the Spirit of Monarchy' to John Hunt in late 1822.²⁹ Hazlitt's second major demolition of monarchism was therefore in tune with popular-radical culture and the last great burst of mass activism before the Reform Bill agitation. The next section of this essay proposes that Hazlitt's decision to write this piece may have been influenced by a remarkable anti-monarchical text which Hone republished in 1821 and which has been overlooked by Hazlitt critics.

23 Ibid, 101-4.

24 Cited in Ben Wilson, *The Laughter of Triumph: William Hone and the Fight for the Free Press* (London: Faber, 2005), 310.

25 Bate, *Shakespearian Constitutions*, 103.

26 Sachs, *Romantic Antiquity*, 204.

27 Ibid, 103.

28 Hazlitt's republicanism made him sceptical about this campaign which he called a 'farce' (cited Gilmartin, *Print Politics*, 272-3).

29 Stanley Jones is wide of the mark when he states that the 'storm of politics had blown over' in 1820 (*Hazlitt*, 306).

The spirit of despotism

In 1821 Hone reprinted a minor classic from the 1790s, Vicesimus Knox's *The Spirit of Despotism*.³⁰ In order to stamp his own identity on the book, Hone replaced Knox's name with 'Edited by the Author of *The Political House that Jack Built*' and even added a satirical vignette. This rebranding made Knox an ally in the campaign against George IV rather than George III. *The Spirit of Despotism* had a cult reputation as it was withdrawn soon after publication in 1795. The original text belonged to a surge of republican denunciations of monarchy including Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791–2), Godwin's *Political Justice* (1793), and Charles Pigott's *Political Dictionary* (1795). But the Treason Trials of 1794 and the Two Acts of 1795 made publishers of radical texts distinctly nervous. Hone makes clear in his Preface that there are chilling parallels between the 1790s and the renewed censorship and ultra-Loyalist campaigns of the post-Peterloo years. It is hard to imagine that Hazlitt would not have been attracted by this text which Hone puffed as a weapon against 'apostacy' and 'sycophantic subserviency'.³¹ The echo of both 'On the Spirit of Monarchy' and *The Spirit of the Age* in the title of Knox's book, to say nothing of the shared interest in debunking the cult of monarchy, brings the texts into close proximity.

Knox's declared politics in the book are very similar to Hazlitt's: he is a reforming Protestant Whig who associates despotism with Jacobitism and Catholicism. One of the values of his book is that it focuses on the British monarchical system which Hazlitt frequently effaces. The danger of the Hanoverian rule for Knox is that the war against France has aggrandized its power and it 'would transfuse the principles of the Stuarts into the bosom of a Brunswick'.³² Blocking reform discourages participation in the public sphere and promotes the 'extension of royalism and the depression of the people'.³³ Knox uses an interesting Enlightenment metaphor to describe his role: he is a 'Political ophthalmist' [sic] who must remove the 'gold dust' from people's eyes,³⁴ even in Britain where monarchy is supposedly founded on the 'rock' of Liberty. Knox is clear that if the monarch performs his duties adequately he is entitled to respect or even 'proofs of love and honour, *on this side idolatry*'.³⁵ But unfortunately monarchism has become a quasi-religious cult of devotion, quiescence and abjection, propagated by a 'venal press' who pump out 'daily falsehood' to a 'credulous' readership:³⁶ 'Every stratagem is used to delude the common and unthinking part of the people into a belief, that their only way of

30 Vicesimus Knox, *The Spirit of Despotism* (London: William Hone, 1822).

31 *Ibid.*, vii.

32 *Ibid.*, 125. Hazlitt's use of a very similar phrase ('ingrafting the principles of the House of Stuart on the illustrious stock of the House of Brunswick') in 'What is the People' suggests that he may have known Knox's text (vii, 261).

33 Knox, *Spirit of Despotism*, 37.

34 *Ibid.*, 9.

35 *Ibid.*, 55.

36 *Ibid.*, 42.

displaying loyalty is, to display a most servile obsequiousness to the throne, and to oppose every popular measure.³⁷

These sentiments, which echo Hazlitt's attack on the 'hireling[s] of the press' and the 'intellectual pimp[s] of power' in 'On the Connexion between Toad-Eaters and Tyrants' (1817) (vi, 149), have an obvious relevance for the early 1820s. One of Knox's nicest insights is that such unthinking loyalism actually encourages despotism and undermines 'limited monarchy and constitutional liberty':

I will not pay a limited monarch, at the head of a free people, so ill a compliment, as to treat him as if he were a despot, ruling over a land of slaves. I cannot adopt the spirit of despotism in a land of liberty; and I must reprobate that false, selfish, adulatory loyalty, which, seeking nothing but its own base ends of avarice and ambition, and feeling no real attachment either to the person or the office of the king, contributes nevertheless to diffuse by its example, a servile, abject temper, highly promotive of the despotic spirit.³⁸

Knox's aim is to make 'constitutional liberty' work properly: through a limited extension of the franchise and the abolition of Old Corruption and militarism, Britain can become a bourgeois, meritocratic Utopia:

In a word, – let parliament be reformed. This measure will remove all grievances, and satisfy all demands. It will at once give permanency to the throne, and happiness to the people. Kings will be republicans in the true sense of that term; and the Spirit of Despotism become the Spirit of Philanthropy.³⁹

Hazlitt rarely engaged so directly with Britain's constitutional monarchy, perhaps because its hybrid character as a 'crowned republic' undermined his desire to tar all monarchs with the same despotic brush. Republican polemicists such as Thomas Paine had argued that the key reform was to make the political system more representative through universal suffrage, and to this extent the precise form of the political state was incidental and in theory could even accommodate a limited monarchy. However, all the recent historical evidence pointed towards the incompatibility between the democratic and hereditary elements of the constitution. As Paine argued in *Common Sense* (1776), the use of placemen meant that the 'corrupt influence of the crown' had 'eaten out the virtue of the House of Commons (the republican part of the constitution)'.⁴⁰ Hazlitt followed the same line: monarchical corruption was endemic and irredeemable. In 'On the Regal Character' (1818) he notes that parliament enables some 'sympathy' or communication between monarchs and their subjects, but the more important

37 Ibid, 54.

38 Ibid, 58.

39 Ibid, 56.

40 Thomas Paine, *Common Sense, Addressed to the Inhabitants of America* (London: H. D. Symonds, 1792), 11.

point is that this 'medium' is flimsy; once this 'check upon their ambition and rapacity' is removed, the result is 'monstrous' and 'ridiculous' (vii, 285). Recidivism is Hazlitt's comfort zone: 'what King would not attain absolute power?' Even limited monarchs justify their existence by 'levying cruel wars and undermining the liberties of the world' (vii, 264; xix, 266). But the stubborn popularity of the British monarchy clearly rankled him. According to Linda Colley it was precisely at this time that the 'apotheosis' of the British crown took place: in the face of French aggression, the king became a symbol of the Protestant nation and the personification of Englishness.⁴¹

Hazlitt could only respond to this popularity with exasperation, incredulity, and sarcasm. In 'On The Spirit of Monarchy', for example, he interrupts the flow of his argument with a sardonic interjection. Having launched a familiar accusation that 'the stream of corruption begins at the fountain-head of court-influence' (236), he resorts to bluster:

Phaw! we had forgot – Our British monarchy is a mixed, and the only perfect form of government; and therefore what is here said cannot properly apply to it. But MIGHT BEFORE RIGHT is the motto blazoned on the front of unimpaired and undivided Sovereignty! [...] A constitutional king [...] is a servant of the public, a representative of the people's wants and wishes, dispensing justice and mercy according to law. Such a monarch is the King of England! Such was his late, and such is his present Majesty George the IVth! (xix, 261–3)

The frantic punctuation conveys a mixture of scorn and embarrassment. Britain's exceptionalism is so unpalatable to Hazlitt that he has to rely on exclamatory despair: 'But power is eternal; it is "enthroned in the heart of kings". If you want the proofs, look at history, look at geography, look abroad; but do not look at home!' (vii, 265). The closest that Hazlitt comes to Knox's ideal of a 'republican king' is his notion of a 'patriot King' who has 'the power in imagination of changing places with his people', but this is a faculty which sovereigns 'seldom possess' and no examples are given (vii, 287).

There is much more convergence between Knox and Hazlitt in their shared critique of what Godwin called the 'impudent mysticism' of monarchy.⁴² As Colley has argued, the 'magic' of royal spectacle transformed 'royal ordinariness' into semi-divine status.⁴³ For Knox, royal pageantry is a well-practised political deception:

41 Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (1992; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), chapter 5 (195–236); see also Marilyn Morris, *The British Monarchy and the French Revolution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), chapter 8 (160–87), 'Conclusion' (188–94).

42 William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), ed. K. Codell Carter (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 198.

43 Colley, *Britons*, 238.

The people, it must be owned, in the simplicity of their hearts, gape with admiration at the passing spectacle which insults them with its glare, and feel themselves awe-struck with the grandeur of the cavalcade, which would trample them in the dirt if they did not struggle to escape. Politicians, observing the effect of finery and parade on the minds of the unthinking, take care to dress up the idol, which they themselves pretend to worship, and which they wish the people really to adore, in all the taudry glitter of the lady of Loretto. They find this kind of vulgar superstition extremely favourable to their interested views.⁴⁴

This could almost be Hazlitt (including the sardonic reference to Catholic superstition). In 'On the Spirit of Monarchy' he launches a withering attack on George IV's coronation in 1821 in very similar terms. Like all such pageants, it 'debauches the understandings of the people, and makes them the slaves of sense and show':

What does it all amount to? A shew – a theatrical spectacle! What does it prove? That a king is crowned, that a king is dead! What is the moral to be drawn from it, that is likely to sink into the heart of a nation? That greatness consists in finery, and that supreme merit is the dower of birth and fortune. (xix, 264)

As Gilmartin points out, such debunking of spectacle was a stock-in-trade of radical analysis, but this does not diminish the eloquence and discursive proximity of Knox's text.⁴⁵ Where Hazlitt departed from Knox and made the critique uniquely his own was in the burrowing down into the deeper psychology of mass delusion. Hazlitt locates a dark secret behind this propensity:

The Spirit of Monarchy then is nothing but the craving in the human mind after the Sensible and the One. It is not so much a matter of state-necessity or policy, as a natural infirmity, a disease, a false appetite in the popular feeling, which must be gratified. [...] Each individual would (were it in his power) be a king, a God: but as he cannot, the next best thing is to see this reflex image of his self-love, the darling passion of his breast, realized, embodied out of himself in the first object he can lay his hands on for the purpose. The slave admires the tyrant, because the last *is*, what the first *would be*. He surveys himself all over in the glass of royalty. (xix, 255)

What Knox called 'idolatry' becomes in Hazlitt the anthropological or ontological equivalent of 'right-royal poetry'. Where Hazlitt once again universalizes this idolatrous tendency, Knox at least emboldens the enlightened, 'unbedizened' reader to see through the delusion. This can be seen in the different ways that both

44 Knox, *Spirit of Despotism*, 53.

45 Gilmartin, *William Hazlitt*, 287–8. Gilmartin discusses John Wade but not Knox.

writers deploy the republican trope of monarchical theatre. Following Paine and Godwin, Knox debunks royal mystique by exposing its tawdry flummery:

The pageantry of life may answer the purpose of the scenery of the play-house, and keep the vulgar from beholding the grandees of the world, before they are dressed and *made up* for public exhibition. The galleries would certainly lose much of their veneration for the theatrical kings, queens, and nobles, if they were to see them behind the scenes, unbedizened. [...] Chains of gold and silver are no less galling than fetters of iron.⁴⁶

In Hazlitt's account, our love affair with monarchy is pathological and regressive, a political and cultural infantilization redolent of backward Spain:

We make kings of men, and Gods of stocks and stones: we are not jealous of the creatures of our own hands. We only want a peg or loop to hang our idle fancies on, a puppet to dress up, a lay-figure to paint from. It is 'THING Ferdinand, and not KING Ferdinand', as it was wisely and wittily observed. (xix, 256)

Monarchy is a primitive cult of animism and superstition, an atavistic hangover that has no place in the grand march of the intellect. But in an unequal society, its fairy-tale promises keep us in 'mock-sublime' awe, simultaneously servile and fantasizing. Unlike Knox's invitation to visit the green room of the political theatre, Hazlitt declares that 'We ask only for the stage effect; we do not go behind the scenes, or it would go hard with many of our prejudices!' (ix, 256)⁴⁷ This depressing and seemingly defeatist analysis of mass delusion could have been motivated by Hazlitt's being forced to witness the growing popularity of George IV who had survived the Queen Caroline scandal intact. It was proving well-nigh impossible for the radical 'ophthalmist' to remove the gold-dust from the eyes of what Milton in *Eikonoclastes* called the 'image-doting rabble'.⁴⁸ However, a more optimistic assessment of 'On the Spirit of Monarchy' is possible if once again we consider the place of Hazlitt's writing in the pages of a radical periodical, in this case John Hunt's *The Liberal*, and if we return to the European context of radical politics.

46 Knox, *Spirit of Despotism*, 179. Compare Godwin: 'kings are always exhibited [...] they are carefully withdrawn from the profaneness of vulgar inspection' (*Political Justice*, 196). And Paine: 'what is called monarchy, always appears to me a silly, contemptible thing. I compare it to something kept behind a curtain, about which there is a great deal of bustle and fuss, and a wonderful air of seeming solemnity; but when by any accident the curtain happens to be open, and the company see what it is, they burst into laughter' (*The Rights of Man*, ed. Eric Foner [London: Penguin, 1984], 182).

47 In 'On the Regal Character' Hazlitt asserts that for self-obsessed monarchs the 'common drama of human life' is a 'fantoccini exhibition got up for their amusement' (vii, 285).

48 *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton: Vol III, 1648-1649*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 601.

The Liberal and European republicanism

As David Higgins has noted, *The Liberal: Verse and Prose from the South* was probably named after the Spanish *Liberales* who governed Spain for three years after the Cadiz rebellion of 1820. The subtitle associated the journal with nationalist and revolutionary movements in the south of Europe, notably in Spain, Naples and Greece. These radical credentials were taken seriously enough by the literary establishment to provoke 'press hysteria', particularly when it emerged that the Hunts had recruited Byron to their cause.⁴⁹ In the Preface to the first volume, Hunt refuted allegations of sedition by declaring that the periodical eschewed explicit politics. At the same time, he makes clear that its focus on literature is a case of conducting republicanism by other means:

The object of our work is not political, except inasmuch as all writing now-a-days must involve something to that effect [...]. We wish to do our work quietly, if people will let us, – to contribute our liberalities in the shape of Poetry, Essays, Tales, Translations, and other amenities, of which kings themselves may read and profit, if they are not afraid of seeing their own faces in every species of inkstand.⁵⁰

The Hazlittian brio of the concluding metaphor reverses the process of monarchical hegemony: as Hazlitt showed in his essay 'On Court Influence' (1818), the 'mephitic' diffusion of royalist propaganda infected society from top to bottom through the channels of patronage and influence, a servile press and other media (vii, 235). It is playfully disingenuous of Hunt however to suggest that arts journalism is a 'quiet' revolution: the inclusion of the genre of the 'Essay' opens the door to political writing, and the bland designation 'Poetry' says nothing about the content of the texts and, just as importantly, their paratexts. Hence the naive reader taken in by these reassurances would have been shocked to find that Hunt's Preface was followed by the lead poem, Byron's satirical masterpiece *The Vision of Judgement*. This poem and 'On the Spirit of Monarchy' comprised a full-frontal assault on the reigning and previous monarch, and Hunt was prosecuted for libel.⁵¹ Byron's Preface to *The Vision of Judgement* dismisses the idealization of George III's private life and judges the late king on his political record:

[...] to attempt to canonise a Monarch, who, whatever were his household virtues, was neither a successful nor a patriot king, – inasmuch as several years of his reign passed in war with America and Ireland, to say nothing of the aggression upon France, – like all other exaggeration, necessarily begets opposition.⁵²

49 Higgins, *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine*, 115.

50 *The Liberal: Verse and Prose from the South* (London: John Hunt, 1822), vii.

51 See Tim Webb's entry on Hazlitt in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

52 George Gordon Byron, *The Vision of Judgement* (London: John Hunt, 1822), iii.

This is a massively important critique as it targets the domestication of the royal family, one of the myths of royal 'ordinariness' that begins in the Romantic period with 'Farmer George', flourishes in the reign of Queen Victoria, and continues to secure the popularity of the monarchy to the present day. Byron's use of poetic satire, redolent with the irreverent atmosphere of Hone and Cruikshank's pamphlets and a shining example of non-'right-royal' poetry, also refutes Colley's claim that anti-monarchical caricature had a benign effect on public opinion by focusing on the king's private life and ignoring the more fallible public role.⁵³

It can be argued therefore that Byron's presence in the same volume of *The Liberal* boosted the radical efficacy of Hazlitt's essay, despite the latter's 'stifling sense of mass loyalty'.⁵⁴ But it was the periodical's 'southern' European outlook which provided a more spectacular fillip for the republican decanonization of royal power. As already noted, the early 1820s saw a resurgence of nationalist movements in Italy and Greece: Hone claimed that Knox's text could contribute to the resistance to 'the revival and assertion of strongly despotic pretensions' in Italy.⁵⁵ Hazlitt's essay appeared just as radical energies were galvanized against the latest 'despotic' act, the Holy Alliance's plan to invade Spain and oust the Liberal government. Britain was uncomfortable with the policy but refused to intervene. This new apostasy brought the odious figure of Ferdinand back to centre stage. For Hazlitt and other liberals, Ferdinand was the *ne plus ultra* of Legitimacy. As he puts it in 'On the Spirit of Monarchy':

The line of distinction which separates the regal purple from the slabbering-bib is sometimes fine indeed: as we see in the case of the two Ferdinands. Any one above the rank of an idiot is supposed capable of exercising the highest functions of royal state. Yet these are persons who talk of the people as a swinish multitude, and taunt them with their want of refinement and philosophy. (xix, 260n)

By helping to restore Ferdinand for the second time in less than ten years, Britain had sold its soul again. For Hazlitt, the European monarchical system had reverted to type. He summed up his feelings in 'On the Pleasure of Hating', published in *The Plain Speaker*:

The echoes of liberty had awakened once more in Spain, and the morning of human hope dawned again; but that dawn has been overcast by the foul breath of bigotry, and those reviving sounds stifled by fresh cries from the time-rent towers of the Inquisition [...]. And England, that arch-reformer, that heroic deliverer, that mouther about liberty and tool of power, stands gaping by, not feeling the blight and mildew coming over it, nor its very bones crack

53 Colley, *Britons*, 213–14; Morris, *British Monarchy*, 174–80.

54 Gilmartin, *William Hazlitt*, 282.

55 Knox, *Spirit of Despotism*, vi.

and turn to a paste under the grasp and circling folds of this new monster, Legitimacy! (xii, 136)

This brings us back to where we began. Hazlitt's dystopian nightmare draws its imaginative energies from popular visual caricature and radical print culture: the Legitimate monster is both the Gothic Ferdinand and the dragon-like 'Legitimate Vampire' of Hone and Cruikshank's *The Political Showman – at Home* (1821).⁵⁶ The thorny question of Britain's more democratic monarchical system can be ducked by focusing only on its worst aspects, when it is in cahoots with its gory, despotic relatives. Monarchy represents social and political injustice: to present it in any other form is merely window-dressing.

Coda: radical afterlives

No critic has traced the afterlife of Hazlitt's anti-monarchical writings. This would be a valuable exercise as it would help to preserve the important if marginal current of republican thought in British political and cultural history.⁵⁷ To end this essay I want to make a modest contribution to this narrative by pointing out that 'On the Spirit of Monarchy' had a revival in popular-radical print culture in the late 1830s, the period of Chartism and the arrival of Victoria onto the throne. In the cheap, radical-satirical press there are several adverts for the essay. In the *Penny Satirist* for April 1836 'The Spirit of Monarchy' (note the title change) is advertised with Godwin's 'The Moral Effects of Aristocracy' for two pence, and the same advert appears in *Cleave's London Satirist and Gazette of Variety* in October 1837, just after Victoria's accession. The list of booksellers stocking the essay is a *Who's Who* of radical publishing, including James Watson, Abel Heywood, and Joshua Hobson. Hazlitt is now an actor in the still unwritten story of the radical satirical offensive against the new monarch. 'No reader of history can be a lover of kings' – or queens.

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56 Gilmartin uses this image on the cover of *William Hazlitt*.

57 See Anthony Taylor, *Down with the Crown: British Anti-Monarchism and Debates about Royalty since 1790* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), and Richard Williams, *Contentious Crown: Public Discussion of the Monarchy in the Reign of Queen Victoria* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997).

LIBER AMORIS,
THE LITERARY GAZETTE,
AND THE POET L.E.L.

Lucasta Miller

This essay is based on the talk I gave at the Hazlitt day, in which I focused not on Hazlitt's own journalism but on a piece of journalism directed against him: the vituperative review of *Liber Amoris* published on 31 May 1823 in *The Literary Gazette*. I can't claim to be a Hazlitt scholar, but I have been working on the journalistic culture of the 1820s for my forthcoming book about the life and work of the poet Letitia Landon, who published under her initials L.E.L. She was closely associated with the *Literary Gazette* at the time the review of Hazlitt's book was published.

Landon is now attracting more and more interest as one of the leading voices of the ambiguous transition phase between the Romantics and the Victorians. Given her international fame during the 1820s and 1830s, it is worth asking why it has taken until this century for her to begin to be rediscovered. One reason, I have discovered, is that the Victorians made a concerted effort to brush her under the carpet after she was found dead with a bottle of prussic acid in her hand in West Africa in 1838 at the age of 36. She was so well-known in her lifetime – though not yet in 1823, the year of *Liber Amoris* – that numerous memoirs and biographies were published in the immediate wake of her death. As I have found during the course of my research, they turn out to be a tissue of lies and half-truths. The facts about her life – including her three secret illegitimate children – were considered so shameful and scandalous that they were successfully suppressed by her contemporaries and remained buried for over a century and a half.

Another reason, in my view, for Landon's posthumous marginalization is that the tone of her writing is so difficult to gauge. Throughout the twentieth century, if she was remembered at all, she was dismissed as an insipid lady poetess who penned pretty romantic verses about flowers and birds. That is not in fact what she did at all, but her work is hard to interpret, and this is where her early poetry has something in common with the equivocal *Liber Amoris*.

Many of Hazlitt's admirers have found *Liber Amoris* almost irreducibly discomfiting and tricky to read. Hazlitt transforms the object of his unrequited desire, Sarah Walker, into an emblem of inscrutable femininity, but his own

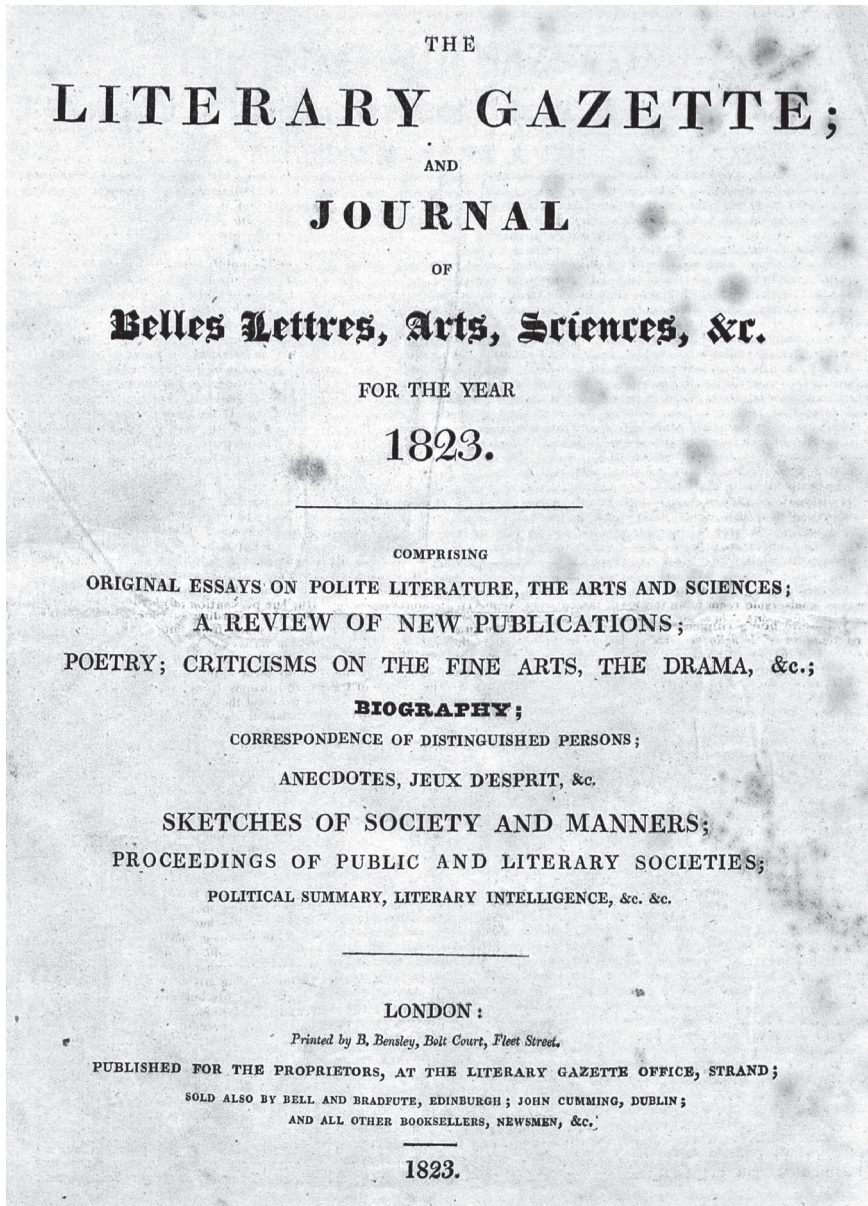


Figure 1 Title page of *The Literary Gazette* for 1823, the year in which it reviewed *Liber Amoris*. Note the low priority given to politics.

intentions and labile tone seem equally inscrutable. In my view, both Hazlitt's strange book and L.E.L.'s strange poetry reflect the moment of cultural crisis which was taking place in 1823, at a time when political idealism was in its death-throes, and disappointed revolutionary instincts were relocated in the rebel emotions of the individual psyche.

In publishing *Liber Amoris*, Hazlitt was engaging in an act of willed reputational suicide born of despair, both personal and political, like a Roman republican falling on his sword. I find it impossible to believe that he could not have anticipated the cruel response of the Tory press to his humiliating act of erotic self-exposure, which replicated the emotional sado-masochism of his entanglement with Sarah Walker, and drew historically on the equally sado-masochistic literary consciousness found in Rousseau's *Confessions*.

Among the most negative reviews *Liber Amoris* inspired was the one published in the *Literary Gazette*. Before going on to call him an 'oaf' and a 'blockhead', it opened with unqualified abuse:

This matchless conjunction of vulgar sensuality and Cockney affectation – of the sensibilities of the pot-house and the loves of Fleet Street – has been cruelly ascribed by some malignant enemy to Mr Hazlitt; and we are only surprised that a writer so prone to resent attack has not leaped forth to disclaim the foul reproach, through all the channels of Cockaigne-periodical literature. It is absolute slaughter to have such an imputation thrown upon one; and we are very sure that if Mr Hazlitt HAD been guilty of the book, we should long before now have read in the Newspaper obituaries an account of his melancholy ending. To criticise such a production would indeed be a prostration of intellect and entitle the critic to no small portion of the contempt which immeasurably attaches to *Liber Amoris*. But it is our duty to warn the public against imposture, as well as to point out the pleasing paths of letters and to this we must sacrifice a brief space of our publication.¹

The writer responsible for this coruscating review was – as far as we can be certain given its anonymity – William Jerdan, the editor of the *Literary Gazette*, which was at the time a relatively new and cutting-edge magazine, the first cultural weekly in a world of monthlies and quarterlies when it was founded in 1817. From the way it described itself on its front page (see Figure 1), it was not overtly much concerned with politics. However, its underlying bias was Tory. Indeed, the very reason Jerdan eschewed political coverage in his columns was because he had been advised to avoid politics by George Canning, whose patronage he sought and whom he persuaded to stand godfather to one of his sons. Clearly it was in the interests of the ruling elite to have the support of a professedly apolitical press; Jerdan was happy to oblige.

The *Gazette* already had form when it came to attacking the radical literary counterculture, if it's not anachronistic to call it that. In 1821, its review of

1 *Literary Gazette* (31 May 1823), 339.

Queen Mab had portrayed Shelley as a devil in human shape – and had also publicized gossip about his private life, accusing him of having driven a virtuous woman to prostitution and suicide (a view of Harriet Shelley's fate which was not completely off-beam given that, after being deserted by the poet, she had indeed drowned herself in the Serpentine, pregnant with another man's child). Later that year, Jerdan had continued his attack in his review of *Adonais*, Shelley's lament for Keats. He treated Keats slightly more leniently than he did Shelley, but patronizingly dismissed him as a silly young man with radical sympathies who had made the mistake of publishing some dirty poetry in a desperate bid to make some cash.

Jerdan's own political allegiances were more opportunistic than motivated by sincerely held ideological belief. The *Gazette* was primarily a commercial operation, a sign of the times when it came to the way in which the new journalism was developing. The magazine's original founder, Henry Colburn, was known as the most hard-nosed businessman in publishing: he realized that it was in a publisher's interests to own a magazine in which books from his stable could be puffed through glowing anonymous reviews. Colburn became known as the father of 'puffery', a concept which encompasses the modern idea of 'hype' along with seamier implications of corruption and insider trading. William Jerdan, however, transformed the *Gazette* into something more than a promotional vehicle for Colburn. It became a market leader among cultural magazines, whose reviews had the power to make or break a book, while Jerdan also used its columns to develop his own personal genius for literary marketing.

The *Gazette's* moralistic, conservative pose was, to use the vocabulary of the day, 'cant'. In his review of Shelley's free love manifesto *Queen Mab*, Jerdan claimed that it was only to warn readers off that he felt duty-bound to lay before them long extracts from the offending text. But he clearly realized that a substantial section of his readership was gagging for Shelley's forbidden fruit. His target audience at the time included the undergraduate market who – according to a review in the *Gazette* of a book on Cambridge slang – were addicted to drunken dissipation and had a particular interest in 'vice' (i.e. sex). What Jerdan wanted above all was to expand his consumer base, which meant pandering to middle-class values and the status quo while simultaneously offering surreptitious smut to youthful rebels. Ironically, the mocking review of *Liber Amoris* may in fact have gained Hazlitt as many readers as it alienated.

In fact, throughout the period Jerdan was assaulting Keats and Hazlitt as vulgar and morally depraved Cockneys, he was also showcasing poetry by his young protégée Letitia Elizabeth Landon, a self-described female Cockney and admirer of Keats. Since the autumn of 1821, she had been contributing on a near weekly basis to the magazine's 'Original Poetry' column. Like Hazlitt on the title page of *Liber Amoris*, she refused to reveal her identity, although the editor tantalizingly revealed in a note that she was a 'lady yet in her teens', a hint designed to inflame readers' interest further.² Her work was published

2 *Literary Gazette* (9 February 1822), 89.

under the mysterious initials 'L.E.L.' Like *Liber Amoris*, it specialized in the psychopathology of romantic love, the trauma and frisson of erotic suffering. The lyrics were written in the first person, inviting readers to interpret them as the writer's personal love confessions, while never quite saying so overtly.

L.E.L.'s poems were written in a Della Cruscan pastoral code which some readers took at face value, and behind which she was always able coyly to shelter if necessary. They were not literally about flowers and birds but about transgressive sex and suicide, and as erotic as it was possible to be in the mainstream press at the time – quite astonishingly so, given the social background of the real life Letitia Landon, who was the niece of the Dean of Exeter, and who had first come to the attention of the editor of the *Gazette* through the ministrations of her governess, who had sent him some of her poetry for his comments.

Under the radar of the *Gazette*'s overt editorial bias, L.E.L.'s on-going poetry column offered the very 'conjunction of vulgar sensuality and Cockney affectation' which Jerdan attacked in his review of *Liber Amoris*. Jerdan claimed to be warning readers against 'impotence' – an allusion to the fact that Hazlitt pretended that the work was by someone else – but the fantasy figure of L.E.L., as she was constructed in the pages of the *Gazette*, was herself an admixture of fact and fiction, treading a calculated line between art and imposture, authentic confession and theatrical artifice.

Stylistically, L.E.L.'s lyrical performances seem to have little in common with the downbeat naturalism of Hazlitt's diaristic prose in *Liber Amoris*, with its quotidian references to tea-trays and the everyday realities of the boarding-house. However, her lyrics – which by May 1823 had been gracing the weekly 'Original Poetry' column of the *Gazette* for a year and a half – had long been presented as equally personal and subjective. A title such as 'Extracts from my Pocket Book' suggested to readers that – like Hazlitt in *Liber Amoris* – she was recording a real affair in real time.³ Her mood moreover reflected the 'mawkishness' said by detractors to sum up the Cockney sensibility: a sort of willed neuroticism which was self-consciously sensual and often melancholy to the point of morbid.⁴ Contrary to the *Gazette*'s overt editorial line, her verse was filled with buried allusions to Keats, including his *Eve of St Agnes*, which had been excoriated elsewhere as 'unfit for ladies'.⁵

The very issue of the *Gazette* which contained the attack on *Liber Amoris* also contained two first-person, seemingly confessional lyrics by L.E.L. The first began:

Twine not those red roses for me, –
Darker and sadder my wreath must be;
Mine is of flowers unknissed by the sun,

3 *Literary Gazette* (4 October 1823), 635.

4 For 'Cockney mawkishness', see, for instance, Gregory Dart, 'Introduction' to *Liber Amoris* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2008), 6.

5 Quoted in H. E. Rollins (ed.), *The Keats Circle*, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), I, 91.



Figure 2 Letitia Landon by William Henry Pickersgill. The original painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1825. It was later engraved from William Jerdan's *Autobiography*. The image sums up the ambiguity of L.E.L.'s image: her hair is styled innocently *à l'enfant*, yet she sports the 'Spanish hat' of a female Don Juan. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

Flowers which died as the spring begun
 The blighted leaf and the cankered stem
 Are what should form my diadem.⁶

By the end, the poem has become a quasi-suicide note with the speaker claiming the grave as her home and her haven, and threatening her lover that he will be left 'drooping' over it like a lone cypress tree. The lyric thus paralleled the fictional pretence of *Liber Amoris*: that it was the work of an unknown writer who had died – implicitly committed suicide – as the result of an unhappy passion.

For her undergraduate fans in the Cambridge Union, the basic question posed by L.E.L.'s flowery poetry was: had the lady in her teens herself been deflowered? Was that what she meant when she confessed that her wreath was cankered and corrupted? The second poem she published on the day *Liber Amoris* was reviewed also offered a metaphorical confession of the loss of virginity, portraying love as a wound that could never be healed.

Each pulse throbs to recall again
 What once it was my lot to feel;
 I have flung off my weary chain,
 The scar it left I may not heal.⁷

In fact, at the time these poems – and the review of *Liber Amoris* – were published in May 1823, the young poetess genuinely had something to confess: she was already pregnant by the middle-aged editor William Jerdan. Their daughter Ella – presumably named after their other joint creation L.E.L. – would be christened in April 1824, according to her baptismal certificate, and was probably born (if my detective work is right) in September 1823. It was only after one of Letitia Landon's descendants came forward in 2000 that the truth about her affair with William Jerdan – which produced three children in all – began to come out, raising all sorts of questions about the confessional pose she adopted in her theatrically depressive love poetry, and about the nature of literary intentionality.

Clearly, the attitude of the *Literary Gazette* towards Hazlitt's sexual confessionalism was more complicated than its review of *Liber Amoris* suggests at first glance. Like Hazlitt, the editor William Jerdan was a man in his forties involved in an erotic entanglement with an unmarried girl two decades younger. Both relationships had begun in 1820. At the time Hazlitt was falling for Sarah Walker in Southampton Buildings in Holborn, about three miles away in Brompton, Jerdan was already engaging in a flirtation with the teenage Letitia Landon, although he was married with a family. The difference was that the editor succeeded in bedding the girl. In later life, Jerdan was known for his 'indomitable effrontery'.⁸ His review of *Liber Amoris* bears this out, but it is worth wondering

6 *Literary Gazette* (31 May 1823), 349.

7 *Ibid.*, 349.

8 Julian Hawthorne, *Hawthorne and his Circle* (New York: Harper, 1903), 143.

whether he reacted with such vicious mockery because Hazlitt's sexual obsession with a teenager struck an uncomfortable nerve.

Letitia Landon was around the same age as Sarah Walker, having been born in 1802. She came from a respectable, well-heeled family, at least on her father's side. Educated in the culture of feminine accomplishments, she had grown into a poetic child prodigy in a sophisticated Regency milieu not dissimilar to that occupied by Jane Austen's fictional Mary Crawford. It was only after her father went bankrupt and absconded that her governess approached William Jerdan, their neighbour, with some of Letitia's poetry, in the hope that she might be established in a literary career and become a breadwinner.

Although her father was descended from the landed gentry, Letitia's mother's background was less elevated. Her own mother – Letitia's grandmother – was an old friend of the actress Sarah Siddons, and had probably been a kept woman in her youth. The bohemian element in Letitia's metropolitan upbringing might perhaps explain how it was that even before she became a published poet she had well-developed sympathies which we could call the 'Cockney' sensibility. The very first poem she published in the *Gazette* in 1820 – long before she and Jerdan came up with the tantalizing idea of turning her into the mysterious 'L.E.L.' – shows that the then seventeen-year-old identified with anti-establishment politics. Written only months after the Peterloo massacre, it was a subversive threnody for Republican liberty called 'Rome', a surprising production for a genteel lady amateur.⁹ Given the *Gazette's* Tory political bias, we have to wonder why Jerdan published it, despite Canning's strictures. My hunch is that he already hoped that a girl so keen on political liberty would be equally open to the idea of free love. As he later revealed in his *Autobiography* (1852–3), even before he met Letitia, Jerdan had been in the habit of ogling her from his neighbouring window as she exercised in the garden of her family home. He recalls how excited he was by the sight of her 'plump' pubescent body and 'exuberance of form' as she ran around bowling a hoop.¹⁰

The voyeurism which is such a frequent feature of *Liber Amoris* was written into the relationship between the editor and the poet from the start, and would also become a frequent trope in L.E.L.'s erotic poetry. As many critics have pointed out, ambiguous class and power relations underlie Hazlitt's obsession with Sarah. The same was true of William Jerdan's relationship with Letitia Landon. When he first saw her in the garden from the back window of his modest cottage, her family was living in a nine-bedroom mansion set in expansive grounds. Their eviction as a result of bankruptcy placed Letitia in a much more vulnerable social and economic position. Initially propelled in his direction by her mother and governess, her ambition to ensorcell the editor into publishing her poetry placed her, perhaps inevitably, on the casting couch. Readers of *Liber Amoris* have often wondered at Sarah Walker's passivity in the face of Hazlitt's advances, some

9 *Literary Gazette* (11 March 1820), 173.

10 William Jerdan, *The Autobiography of William Jerdan*, 4 vols (London: Arthur Hall, Vertue & Co., 1852–3), III, 174.

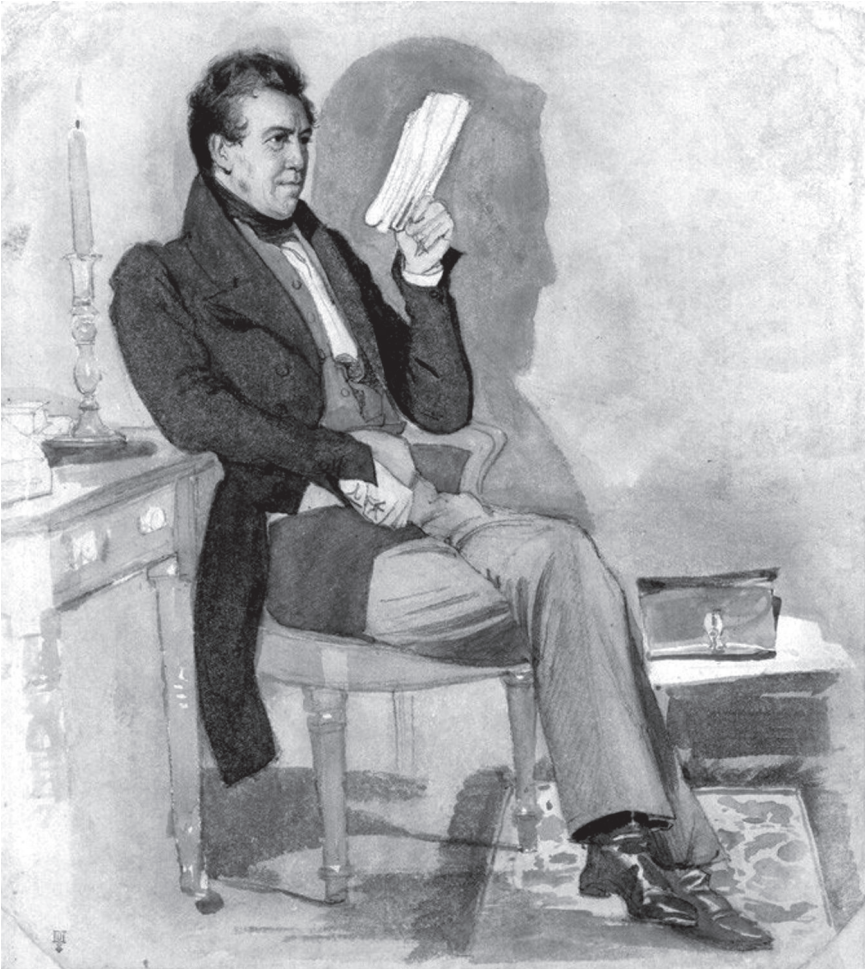


Figure 3 William Jerdan by Daniel Maclise. The editor is shown reading by the light of a huge phallic candle which casts a sinister shadow on the wall. His free hand is clenched in a fist at his crotch. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

suggesting that she had little choice but to submit to his wandering hands given that her parents were his landlords and thus desperate to retain his patronage as rent-payer.¹¹ Similar questions inevitably arise about the practical realities of Letitia Landon's sexual submission to Jerdan, despite the extravagant language of sentiment she employs in her love poetry.

Re-reading Letitia Landon's poetry in tandem with *Liber Amoris* I was struck by the similarities more than the differences. Hazlitt's subtitle, 'the New Pygmalion', echoes Landon's frequent use of the Pygmalion trope and her real-life Pygmalion relationship with the Svengali who helped to transform her into 'L.E.L.', ultimately puffing her into stardom when her first bestselling book *The Improvisatrice* came out in 1824. Yet the power nexus between them was not simply one way. Letitia too often seems to be playing Pygmalion as, week after week, she transformed the bibulous, lecherous middle-aged Jerdan into a Byronic or classical hero. Her poetic heroines are usually shown bewailing their abandonment by some Byronic lover; in reality Jerdan kept coming back for more – more sex, and more poems to fill his columns. In his review of *Liber Amoris*, Jerdan complains that the name of love has been traduced by the 'oaf' Hazlitt. But there is little evidence to suggest that the backstage sexual affair between the editor and his protégée was in reality the idealized passion she painted in her work. It seems to have been far more instrumental.

If Letitia was in a position of economic, social, and gendered weakness vis à vis the editor whose commissions she relied on, her situation as a woman within bohemian Cockney culture was equally stymied. When Keats's friend Thomas Richards wrote to her in 1822, praising her Keatsian poetry and inviting her to inscribe a presentation copy of the late poet's works, she refused out of feminine modesty to join the men offering similar tributes.¹² She knew that as a woman she had to be careful not to push her luck.

Back in the 1790s, political radicalism had incorporated the feminism of Mary Wollstonecraft. But Hazlitt's own remarks on women dating from the early 1820s do not suggest that Cockneydom had much space for women except as sex objects. 'I have an utter aversion to Bluestockings. I do not care a fig for any woman that knows even what an author means', he wrote in *Of Great and Little Things* in 1821.¹³ By the early 1820s, the only imagined position that the avant-garde could offer a woman writer was the one created for Sarah Walker by Hazlitt in *Liber Amoris*.

Letitia Landon's early work is intriguing from a gender perspective because it shows her simultaneously playing the roles of Hazlitt and Sarah Walker. Like Hazlitt, she projects an ego of Rousseauesque proportions in her first person poetry. But she also inhabits a slippery feminine identity analogous to 'little yes

11 See, for instance, Gregory Dart, 'Introduction' to *Liber Amoris*, 15.

12 Letitia Elizabeth Landon, *Letters*, ed. F. J. Sypher (Ann Arbor, MI: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 2001), 10.

13 William Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London and Toronto, J. M. Dent, 1930–4), viii, 236.

and no', as Hazlitt called Sarah.¹⁴ In her flirtatious ongoing relationship with her readership, L.E.L. constructed her persona along calculatedly equivocal lines, striving to keep her audience in a state of perpetual but unresolved sexual arousal with her slippery metaphors. She placed her readers in the position of the 'bold lover' on Keats's Grecian urn, and herself in the position of Sarah Walker, who, Hazlitt complained, kept him in suspense, making it impossible for him to read her accurately.

Near the beginning of *Liber Amoris*, Hazlitt shows Sarah a picture of a woman, saying it reminds him of her, but that it could be considered by some a Madonna, by others a Magdalen.¹⁵ L.E.L. offered a similar double take on her own imagined persona in a poem of 1822, 'There were two portraits': one picture is said to be of a lively innocent girl; in the other the girl is 'wasted', the flower of her innocence corrupted.¹⁶ The ambiguity was enshrined in the actual portrait of Letitia Landon, by the artist William Pickersgill, which was exhibited in the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1825. It showed her with her hair styled demurely 'à l'enfant', but sporting a vampish 'Spanish hat' like that worn by the actress Madame Vestris when she performed the erotically-charged trouser role of Don Juan in a sensational vaudeville (see Figure 2). Viewers were intended to be tantalized, unable to decide whether L.E.L. was an innocent girl or a female Don Juan.

L.E.L.'s stock in trade was the mixed message, the slippery subtext, and, during the early 1820s, the hidden literary allusion to the Cockney or Satanic schools, regarded as libertine at the time. She was an adept in the art of poetic doublespeak, allowing the real woman behind the poetic construct to slip silently away, leaving a tantalizing void. Like Keats's 'poetical Character',¹⁷ she was everything and nothing. Sarah Walker has no voice in *Liber Amoris* beyond the banal remarks ascribed to her by Hazlitt, who clutches at them in a delirium of interpretation. Letitia Landon, in contrast, created a public voice which was calculatedly constructed to be a personification of the inscrutable femininity which, *Liber Amoris* reveals, drove Hazlitt to distraction. We cannot know how calculated Sarah Walker was. But the literary evidence shows that Letitia Landon's poetic persona was designed in response to the psychology of male fantasy which *Liber Amoris* so nakedly reveals.

Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris* has been called 'spectacularly imprudent';¹⁸ but L.E.L.'s every erotic effusion in the *Gazette* brought with it the danger that the backstage sexual relationship between herself and the editor would be publicly exposed. For a woman, the threat of sexual exposure was far more dangerous than for a man. Hazlitt himself opined that 'To find that a woman whom we loved has

14 Hazlitt, *Works*, ix, 117.

15 *Ibid*, 100.

16 *Literary Gazette* (11 May 1822), 297.

17 John Keats to Richard Woodhouse, 27 October 1818 in *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. H. E. Rollins, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), I, 386.

18 Gregory Dart, 'Introduction' to *Liber Amoris*, 17.

forfeited her character, is the same thing as to learn that she is dead.¹⁹ The risks taken by Letitia Landon were far in excess of those taken by Hazlitt. The rhyming words ‘fame’ and ‘shame’ occur again and again in her poetry, and her career was a tightrope walk between the two. It is extraordinary that it lasted as long as it did. It took until 1838 for her repeated risk-taking with reputational suicide to find real-life expression, when she took her fatal overdose. By then she had endured some fifteen years of press mockery and had finally been frozen out from literary society.

‘Women are not philosophers or poets [...] – they are simply women,’ Hazlitt opined in *Characteristics*.²⁰ His views on the opposite sex remain somewhat embarrassing to his modern champions, hard as it is for us to acknowledge that many political egalitarians of the post-Napoleonic period did not include gender equality in their worldview. As Hazlitt put it, ‘Women have as little imagination as they have reason. They are pure egotists. [...] There is no instance of a woman having done anything great in poetry or philosophy. They can act tragedy [...] – they can write romances about love.’²¹

As a Cockney woman poet, Letitia Landon overtly obeyed Hazlitt’s strictures, writing only about love, creating an inflated artificial ego, and projecting theatrical images of herself as a tragic heroine, especially in her dramatic monologues. The only position available to her in terms of constructing a literary voice was that of Hazlitt’s ‘accomplished coquet’, as he depicts the type in *Characteristics*, who, as he puts it, ‘excites the passions of others in proportion as she feels none herself.’²²

Yet under the surface of her coy feminine persona, and theatrical pose of excessive sensibility, Letitia Landon was also in fact a philosopher, even though she was a woman. As such, however, she had no faith in Hazlitt’s humanism. She was a woman on the edge, with no choice but to play up to the role assigned to her, a cynic who saw fatalism as the only choice in a fallen world. As she wrote in 1823, ‘I do not dwell amid the days/ Utopia may have known.’²³ Hazlitt’s *Liber Amoris* constructs a notion of sincerity which still has one foot in the radical innocence of William Godwin, who allied the idea of confessionalism to an ideal notion of truth as the ultimate moral good. Letitia Landon’s work, as it developed through the 1820s, would instead conjure a world of alienation and moral emptiness in which honesty in human relationships were laughable ideals, whether personally or politically.

Towards the end of her life, by which time her longstanding affair with her Svengali William Jerdan had finally unravelled, this one-time female Cockney, who had created a literary voice out of her disempowered situation, expressed her philosophy in far less ambiguous language than she had deployed in her early work:

19 *Characteristics*, no. 255, in *Works*, ix, 204.

20 *Characteristics*, no. 317 in *ibid*, 213.

21 *Characteristics*, no. 316 in *ibid*, 213.

22 *Characteristics*, no. 351 in *ibid*, 219.

23 *Literary Gazette* (19 August 1826), 524.

Which was the true philosopher? – the sage
Who to the sorrows and the crimes of life gave
Tears – or he that laughed at all he saw?
Such mockery is bitter and yet just;
And heaven well knows the cause there is to weep.
Methinks that life is as the actor is –
Outside there is the quaint and jibing mask;
Beneath the pale and careworn countenance.²⁴

The following year, she would be found dead in exile in the white man's grave of West Africa, with the bottle of prussic acid in her hand.

LADY MARGARET HALL, OXFORD

24 Laman Blanchard, *The Life and Literary Remains of L.E.L.*, 2 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1841), II, 261.

AT HAZLITT'S GRAVE

David Cote

Nose away the spent, crushed butt
With a streaky sneaker toe.
Do the same with a soda tab
Dropped upon the granite slab,
Carved for a man they never will know.
Moss furring the groove of his name.

More filth in the uncut scrub...
Smokers and snackers have been by:
Plastic knife postnosh tossed aside.
Twist caps and yogurt lids skinned off,
Glassine derma flayed from fag pack,
Cartoon-bright foils ripped, spilling crisps,
Paper sheaths shucked for sucking straws
To slurp through, blow froth, let fall.

His stone's abused as a loo or street bin,
This man who valorized society—
From the red ruins of battered Hickman's face
To how King's playing of Sir Peter Teazle
Was like the savor of quince
—Now gets its garbage for a garland.

I want to clean and tend this spot,
Be docent and guard, gardener,
Keep the grass trimmed and at a distance.
Let no rubbish or foulness intrude
On contemplation of good to better to best.

Now the kicker.
He lived in a dirty world,
Weighed treasure and waste,
Saw his heart crumpled up by a fair little hand,
And thrown away.
What are critics,
But they who sift and sniff the trash?
Dung dissectors,
Gobblers of experience,
Wrapper splitters,
Littering the earth with opinion.

BOOK REVIEWS

Kevin Gilmartin, *William Hazlitt: Political Essayist*

pp. xvi + 350. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
Cloth, £50.00

William Hazlitt may have relished writing 'On the Pleasure of Hating' – as Kevin Gilmartin reminds us, Hazlitt bombastically declared that 'We hate old friends: we hate old books: we hate old opinions; and at last we come to hate ourselves' (16) – but Gilmartin's book does not pick up Hazlitt's pleasure in hating. Instead it is sympathetic and magnanimous in its treatment of previous critics, as well as of Hazlitt's own writing. Gilmartin's aim in the book is to reclaim Hazlitt's political writing as worthy of the closest critical attention; a feat which Gilmartin sustains throughout. The book provides a substantial reconsideration of Hazlitt's essays, including supposedly merely minor ones, advanced through close readings of, avid attention to, and sensitive analysis of Hazlitt's prose works, with a level of detail frequently reserved only for poetry.

The book is 'a study of Hazlitt's distinctive political voice,' but it is a voice that is both vividly Hazlitt's own and inextricable from a broader set of cultures with which Hazlitt engaged: 'to understand and appreciate that voice we must accept that it was not always singular, still less entirely his own' (25). Gilmartin argues that Hazlitt's writing, especially in the *Political Essays* (1819), 'is as representative as it is idiosyncratic, and representative in its contrary individualism' (107). For Gilmartin, Hazlitt's 'ability to explore competing ideas and inhabit multiple perspectives' is in fact a fundamental aspect of Hazlitt's political writing, just as much as it 'has been identified overwhelmingly with his writing on literature and aesthetics' (15). Even Hazlitt's most committed political works appear to be, for Gilmartin, 'driven more by frustration with his enemies than by any corresponding sense of supportive engagement with a community of like-minded reform activists' (61). Gilmartin figures 'this kind of embattled self-fashioning' as 'a pervasive feature of radical journalism and political leadership in this period, so in this sense Hazlitt developed one side of an available political equation' (61). Gilmartin reconsiders Hazlitt outside of the familiar critical emphasis on Hazlitt's contemplations of apparently high forms of Romantic Literature, and instead draws on the 'cross-currents,' as he calls them (289), between Hazlitt

and contemporary radical journalists, such as T. J. Wooler, William Hone, John Wade, and Richard Carlisle: 'Where Wade invokes progress to distinguish the corrupt mob of the past from the virtuous people, Wooler indicates a narrative of degeneration. Hazlitt's prose entertains both possibilities' (289). The book offers a careful reading of Hazlitt's political essays in which, even at his most challenging and paradoxical, he took on an established guise of public writing, one that belonged both to radical journalism and to political leadership. This style allowed Hazlitt to have his cake and eat it too, in enabling him to embody antithetical stances whilst it simultaneously meant he was not impelled to seek dialectical resolution.

Gilmartin considers one of the 'voices' which Hazlitt invokes to be the radical press's broad disposition 'to understand present economic divisions in political terms' (77). Hazlitt's practice of handling political questions through the lens of aesthetic considerations, and equally vice versa, has made the classification of Hazlitt's works for literary critics somewhat contentious. But Gilmartin contends that even among 'the few political works' that have 'been counted among Hazlitt's great essays,' which display 'all the allusiveness, fondness for paradox, and rapid shifts in tone and direction' that literary critics often 'associate [...] with his literary achievement,' still 'it is worth insisting that the text is firmly grounded in the vernacular idioms and material assumptions of a popular radical challenge to the subtleties of political economy' (72).

As Gilmartin moves through the book, he begins to discuss Hazlitt's contrary stance as imperative to Hazlitt's critical method. Hazlitt is no chameleon writer who chooses alternatives in order only to test his ability to be an Iago or an Imogen. Instead, Gilmartin contends that 'alternating currents of sympathy and animosity, "exaltation" and "hostile attack", were essential to Hazlitt's critical method' (94): 'The tendency to articulate his own position with and against allies and enemies helps account for the sense of contradiction that still hangs about Hazlitt's political prose' (95). As Gilmartin himself explains, his book explores and details various ways in which 'Hazlitt's prose tests lines of political antagonism, setting him against potential allies and binding him in strange ways with his enemies' (92). Hazlitt, however, was no indiscriminating antagonist, as for example he accused William Cobbett of being in the 'Character of Cobbett' from *Table-Talk* (1821): who 'must have an antagonist power to contend with' and who exists 'in systematic opposition' (92). And Gilmartin carefully details the purposes of Hazlitt's oppositional stance: for example,

The assault on the church establishment in the *Yellow Dwarf* essay 'On the Clerical Character' wound up clearing a space, by way of contrast, for a favourable account of 'the Dissenting Clergy' as 'an honest and exemplary body of men. (95)

Gilmartin 'explores the historical dimensions' of Hazlitt's contradictory critical method, and in doing so refines a further paradox about Hazlitt's political expression:

how a distinctively idealized, even visionary, strain of writing and response could be brought to bear upon a sceptical, mobile, and disenchanting critical practice, in ways that both reinforce and complicate radical commitment. (140)

In the later stages of the book, Gilmartin expands on Hazlitt's vexed relationship with 'legitimate' power – that 'new monster, Legitimacy' Hazlitt raged in his essay 'On the Pleasure of Hating'¹ – especially in the contested figure of Napoleon Bonaparte. He had argued in the preface to the *Political Essays* (1819) that Whigs and Tories were like Tweedledum and Tweedledee, and that the 'distinction between a great Whig and a Tory Lord is laughable' (106). Gilmartin argues that 'the refusal to distinguish Whig from Tory was itself a constitutive feature of reformist argument in the period, meant to promote an emerging sense of popular radical solidarity against the Whig claim to be "the party of the people"' (106). Gilmartin considers Hazlitt's 'movement from rational Dissent to radical London' and how these 'opened enabling vistas of democratic potential':

the eulogies Hazlitt often conducted over the historical body of Dissent both enable and sceptically shadowed the apocalyptic development of another more secular radical body, one that he associated with urban commercial modernity and enfranchised public opinion. (139)

At the same time, Hazlitt's, along with his fellow radicals', frustrations with 'the people' and their non-engagement with mass politics is palpable: they 'regularly took an unresponsive public to task' and criticized 'a slavish English populace' (289). Gilmartin considers many questions that Hazlitt himself seems to incite. What is the politics of historical memory in a time of revolution? How did Hazlitt look back upon the radical traditions of sectarian Dissent whilst simultaneously looking forward to consider radicalism's future? In Burkean terms, what is our responsibility to the past? In looking at Hazlitt's consideration of the past, Gilmartin also tackles the topic of his inveterate periodizing – Hazlitt, after all, formulated our notion of the first and second generations of Romanticism – as representative of a fraught internal framework that considers the disruptions, rather than continuities, in historical sequences, and as much more than as a matter of mere journalistic convenience (140–1).

There are many wonderful and enlightening aspects to this book. Not least, that the book is informed by a cavernous knowledge of radical writing and Romantic period print culture, and is throughout supported by and extrapolated from '[s]triking evidence' (63) (in Gilmartin's own terms). In an effort to counter the effects of heavily elided passages of Hazlitt's essays in previous critical accounts, however, which Gilmartin sees as distorting Hazlitt's deliberately 'unstable' standpoint – as for example in M. H. Abrams's 1971 study *Natural Supernaturalism*:

1 William Hazlitt, 'On the Pleasure of Hating', in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London: J. M. Dent, 1930–4), xii, 136.

Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature (2) – Gilmartin throughout the book includes many lengthy extracts of Hazlitt's writing. On the one hand this allows Hazlitt's voice space to shine in its own right, but, on the other, a fuller breaking down of these passages would have provided sections of the book with a greater sense of explicit direction. There are – one might think, perhaps, rather obvious – thoughts provoked by the book that Gilmartin does not attempt to answer, or even acknowledge: for example, the reactions of other contemporaries to Hazlitt's essays are not touched on, and neither is the effect that Hazlitt's writing had on the 'political essay' as a genre. Still, Gilmartin's lucidly written book firmly establishes politics at the centre of Hazlitt's achievement as an essayist and critic, and Hazlitt's political writing is shown to be continually challenging and worthy of considerable critical attention.

OCTAVIA COX
CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD

**Anahid Nersessian, *Utopia, Limited:
Romanticism and Adjustment***

pp. 273. Cambridge, MA: Harvard
University Press, 2015. Cloth, £29.95

This is a brilliant book, exceptionally dynamic and ambitious. Nothing seems to escape its purview. It speaks to current concerns without any historical embarrassment, and is unusually challenging in its simultaneous management of historical and contemporary enquiry. Stars of the American academy are treated as interchangeable with Romantic authors. Maybe there are dangers here. The selectivity required to make examples from Romantic century writers serve current preoccupations displaces questions about *which* context to make representative of the historical distance at which Romantic texts exist. Sometimes the book seems dazzled by its own wealth of detail and the wit of the connections it draws between particulars. But the writing is almost always engaging enough to make the reader accept, eventually, that to continue with these reservations is to want, unfairly, the genre to change and another kind of study to have been written. In temporarily getting us to see things her way, Nersessian lastingly gets us to see a lot more than we usually do.

That said, the thesis that utopia, when limited, becomes both more enjoyable and politically efficacious is in any case crucial to the intellectual history of the period. Rousseau's sentiment of existence, unbounded in the scope of pleasurable reverie it releases, is tuned to the purpose of acculturating it to a new category of the human: a general will, exceeding current institutional jurisdiction, catering for the love of self which affect has shown to be proper to a modern consciousness. Kant's sublime repeats more gently this legislation of the new indulgence. A faculty emerges (invented for the purpose, Nietzsche unkindly said) to host the human wanderer, making exorbitance into a manageable, acceptable experience, very different from irresponsible and socially divisive *Schwärmerei*. Nersessian, though, begins with Blake's 'line', celebrated as quintessentially English by Pevsner, as her opening example of a desirable boundary of affect, but quickly shifts focus to Northrop Frye and even that great art-dealer and philosopher, Nelson Goodman, and other thinkers who can be recruited to the task of 'reclaiming the value of *less*' (22). Outside aesthetics, they are enrolled in Nersessian's critique of the binary of austerity and (unsustainable) prosperity (sometimes known as one law for the rich and another for the poor), and her substitution of it with an egalitarian refusal of the binary of utopia and limitation. This equates with a generally ecological outlook, one in which issues of sustainability require us to retain utopian values but in viable forms. That the Romantic sublime should not be allowed to invalidate a 'quest for the ordinary' is an idea made famous, of course, by Stanley Cavell.¹ Here a sublime

1 See Stanley Cavell, *In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

detached from that settling for a companionable form would be an 'abusive' (35) neoliberalism, a deregulation which has produced the 'disaster capitalism' (24) we know today, its moral poverty and social dysfunctionality. This is the flip-side of the exemplary 'being singular plural' or future-perfect openness of definition which Lyotard, Nancy, and others claim is taught by the sublime.² Nersessian sees her critique working against absolute love (faithful or adulterous), fictional romance, any poetry which is not, in Paul de Man's early words (and in the thinking of most of the Jena *Frühromantiker*), a 'foreknowledge of criticism' (39). Her desideratum chimes with grammatology, but pre-eminently advances an Emersonian pragmatism, a very American position in which it seems to come to rest.

Pragmatism is one way of limiting the Absolute; secularism, as recently reinterpreted by Colin Jager (44ff) and others, is another such 'adjustment' (2 and passim), not just to the marvellous, but also to an opposite disenchantment, one blind to the reconstitution of the older, non-secular view of the world in what Nersessian calls a different ('finer?') 'tone' (46ff). This richer secularization translates into *Weltanschauungen* or *Orientierung* (Kant, 10 and passim) or a 'map of worldmaking' (Goodman, 50 and passim). Such necessary inhabiting of an environment is not exhausted by the scientific explanation supposedly driving secularism, nor by the aesthetic experience supposedly compensating for loss of magic. It retains a subjective inflection, a 'weighting' (55 and passim), as it is called here. Still more interestingly, this habitus can be queered; and that uncanny is also a valid re-construction of what has been lost. Coleridge, for Nersessian, is the great poet of this 'disorientation' (56). Romantics seize upon the secular occasion in ways which make their economizing of the unconditioned interesting and characteristically expressive. She picks this historical juncture because the Romantic or post-Kantian skill in weighting orientation makes its adjustment of the unconditioned release new ideas of the good life, still unconstrained in their constraint as, say, the structural variety of a sonnet, a form enjoying a revival at the time – 'Scorn not the sonnet [...]'.³

Percy Shelley might seem an unlikely advocate of limited utopia: 'You talk Utopia,' meaning the unlimited kind, Maddalo tells the idealistic Julian.⁴ But Nersessian reads *The Revolt of Islam* so as to illustrate a Shelleyan idealism tempered again by ecological care, or revolution modified by vegetarianism, to put it starkly. The next chapter on 'bad taste' (110ff) identifies the 'affective turn' (111ff) gone wrong as the best way of understanding a Romantic manipulation of imperial ideology. In its Irish form, this utopian dissent from empire is so limited as to seem self-incriminating. The mourners sent up in Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* figure a sentimental escape from the hopelessly irrational degradation of Ireland by Britain, an alternative which, however, simply mirrors its incoherence the more professional the mourners become: 'Arrah, now, honey, who is it we're crying

2 See Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000) and Jean-François Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

3 My reference is to Wordsworth's sonnet of that name.

4 In *Julian and Maddalo*, I 179.

for?' (124). Thomas Moore's *The Memoirs of Captain Rock* is matched against this indeterminacy, telling a history which advocates an accommodation different from the anonymous and random terroristic resistance of the real Rockites which was just as unspecific as indiscriminate sentimental affect. It does seem a bit of a stretch, though, then to see in the Captain's implausibilities, as Nersessian does, a kind of creative catachresis insinuating a symbolic freedom. Euphemism, kitsch, and terrorism are not obviously the adjustment of something greater but the inflation of something meaner.

If I've understood her correctly, Nersessian views the diminishment of Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris*, with its sexually abject hero and flibbertigibbet heroine, as the calculated 'placeholders' (147) for human virtues not viable in the post-Napoleonic settlement. The bad taste here arguably powers a negative dialectic delivering us the only credible transcendence of the time's debasement of ideals. Nersessian is very good at diagnosing the distasteful in Hazlitt's book – so good, in fact, that it is hard to see that its Pygmalion trope could be other than a cathartic exercise in self-disgust. Nersessian cleverly has H's Sarah reconstitute Hogarth's line of beauty, 'S', in disenchanting form (153). But she would then represent negatively the ideal she is not, rather than being an adjustment of our expectations. Isn't there also a realism at work saying that Sarah is no better than she should be, and that H's attempts to make her better are coercive, and so limited in a bad way? She runs rings round him anyway, just as the real outmanoeuvres the abstractions Hazlitt spent his life criticizing.

Hazlitt's uncritical investment in Napoleon must have been an unadjusted utopianism which stranded him outside party-political activism. Nersessian takes John Kinnaird's line in his great article in the *Partisan Review* of 1963,⁵ that, more credibly, Hazlitt saw that liberalism was irretrievably broken, and partisanship, *la trahison des clercs*, drove the only politics possible. The comparison surely called for here is Constant (in play in an earlier chapter [Chapter 4]). Constant could envisage a provisional acceptance of existing political means, but with the background support of an unshakeable meliorism, expressed in religious terms. Hazlitt's persuasiveness lay in his criticism, not in his politics, and certainly not in his eroticism. As Nersessian makes us see, the settling for aesthetics as primary is an 'adjustment' not a sublimation. Carl Schmitt famously tries to forbid this thought, and his reading of Jena Romanticism was correspondingly attenuated. Effectively, Nersessian links Schmitt's dislike of Romantic deregulation or occasionalism, as he called it, with the irregulars of partisan warfare (the success of whose resistance should have embarrassed him [146ff]).

In her last chapter, Nersessian addresses the problem of economy head-on. Malthus's frighteningly logical *Essay on the Principle of Population* (but not Burke's almost contemporaneous *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity* with its challenging economizing of state intervention for the relief of the poor), policing production and reproduction with an overriding attention to scarcity, is a major player. What is the best way of reining in an idea of perfection so that it becomes practicable,

5 See John Kinnaird, 'The Forgotten Self', *Partisan Review* 30.2 (1963), 302–6.

but without losing its utopian impulse? Consistently, though, this book has put the question the other way round, asking how the refined abstraction of Utopia can be rehabilitated by our coarser demands for an approximation of it. Adjustment can be improvement, with creativity in response to limited resources adding value to a supposed nonpareil. Rather as when in the Preface to *Captain Rock*, the critical initiative is switched to the Irish from their English rulers, the onus of proof, as it were, is shifted from the subject to the law to which they are subject. Nersessian returns to the Kantian sublime, in Bruce Robbins' 'sweatshop' version (188–9), to question exactly those concepts invented to keep our Utopian aspirations in a sublunary place. If they don't compass a better place we can be in and sustain, their actual utopianism is diminished rather than adjusted. Truths 'universally acknowledged' turn out to be interested 'political' (191) economies, rather than matters of neutral logic. Somebody's hand, not an 'invisible hand' (190, 194), writes them in an insidious, free indirect style typical of Harriet Martineau's version of the dismal science. Did Ricardo, a true liberal and Marx's target, not provide an earlier, more serious intervention? But it's only because Nersessian gets so much into this book that she keeps you wondering, actively.

PAUL HAMILTON
QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

James Grande and John Stevenson (eds.), *William Cobbett, Romanticism and the Enlightenment*

pp. xiii + 210. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2015. Cloth,
£95.00

There are some startling statistics in the opening pages of James Grande and John Stevenson's collection of essays on William Cobbett. The book brings together work on Cobbett's influence and influences, his thoughts on currency and the countryside, his status as a radical then and now, and ultimately makes an argument for his formidable presence in nineteenth-century culture and his continued relevance to ours. It is partly through statistics that his importance can be gauged. With Cobbett, numbers matter. There are two reasons for this. As a polemicist, he cared about numbers: Gregory Claeys's essay "'Are We in England? Or are We in Hell...?': Cobbett and Utopia' includes the detail that Cobbett 'counted empty church pews' (22) as a means of proving his anti-Malthusian views (which included what Craig Calhoun calls, later in the book, a 'misguided' anxiety about depopulation, as well as more rigorous objections 'to the 1834 Poor Law Malthus helped to inspire' [163]). Grande and Stevenson write in their introduction that Cobbett looked for empirical data to back up his arguments as a matter of course:

Cobbett cited statistics [...]. Facts, where he could find them, were deployed in support of his views in almost every argument he conducted. He believed himself a shrewd man of business who could deal with the nation's finances on equal terms with anyone and also knew the best way to construct a farm gate. (11)

Stevenson's essay, 'William Cobbett: Dimensions of Patriotism' reiterates the centrality of numbers to Cobbett's rhetorical and ideological method, wherein he combined his own experiences as an observer of 'the rural poor' with 'material that would otherwise have been buried in state papers': 'What he had witnessed first-hand was confirmed for him by reading the parliamentary report of 1804 on the Poor Laws, which revealed that England and Wales had a million paupers' (35). Cobbett seems to have had his own distinctive brand of number-crunching, and this is one ingredient contributing to his status as 'the greatest and most effective political journalist of his day' (5).

But it's Cobbett's own numbers that confirm this, and that provide a genuinely eye-opening start to *William Cobbett, Romanticism and the Enlightenment*. Because what first impresses the reader becoming acquainted with Cobbett via this collection of essays is the staggering volume of writing he produced. In the opening paragraph of their introduction, the editors calmly point out that we are talking about 'an estimated twenty million words over his career, a figure unrivalled in the history of British letters', adding, with some understatement:

'Indefatigable takes on a new meaning with Cobbett' (1). More important than the amount he wrote, though, is the amount he was read. Cobbett was prolific but he was also popular. His *History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland* sold '700,000 copies' in two years (4). The *Political Register*, his unstamped weekly paper, 'brought him a genuinely mass audience' (4). What several of the essays here bring out is the necessary diversity of such a mass audience, and the consequent diversity of Cobbett's legacies and afterlives. In 'The Feast of the Gridiron is at Hand: Chartism, Cobbett and Currency', Matthew Roberts considers a specific strand of Cobbett's thought and its influence on Chartism: his hostility to paper money. Discussing the economic climate of the 1830s, Roberts finds that

Chartists attributed these financial crises to the same causes identified by Cobbett: the over-issuing of paper money, which, in turn, had led to reckless speculation and inflation – a never-ending cycle that Cobbett had laid bare in *Paper Against Gold*. (111)

In the following chapter, 'Cobbett, his Children and Chartism', Malcolm Chase investigates Cobbett's place in Chartism beyond the currency question. Chase considers the way Cobbett's posthumous reputation within Chartism waned as a result of the vexed political careers of two of his sons, James Paul Cobbett and John Morgan Cobbett, but concludes that Cobbett continued to have symbolic value for the movement. Chase writes that by the mid-nineteenth century 'for the Chartists, William Cobbett was primarily a totemic figure. Though valued for the robust clarity of his political writing, Cobbett was revered first and foremost for what he seemed to represent: a working man' (134). This essay also includes a remarkable and rather tantalizing quote from Cobbett's youngest son, Richard, expressing in indirect terms the view that he would have quite liked to shoot his father (127). This is one of a number of places in the collection where I was curious to learn more about Cobbett's relationships with his family and his attitude to domesticity.

Something of Cobbett's own childhood does appear in James Grande's essay, 'A "Birth of Intellect": William Cobbett and Jonathan Swift'. This includes Cobbett's account of the formative moment when, aged eleven and working as a gardener, he discovered a copy of Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* – which he bought even though it meant he wouldn't be able to afford to eat that evening: 'I had the 3d. but, then, I could have no supper' (47). Grande's account of the significance of Swift to Cobbett's political identity illuminates both Swift and Cobbett: 'in Swift, he had stumbled upon an author who could guide him in both the anti-Jacobin and radical phases of his career' (47). Swift becomes an instructive example for understanding Cobbett's contradictions.

In 'Cobbett's Return to England in 1819', John Gardner describes Cobbett as 'a man who was always a radical, Tory loyalist at heart' (69). This is an essay that tells the story of a terrible year – Cobbett unsuccessfully stood as an MP, went bankrupt as a result of his failed campaign, was imprisoned for debt, suspected by other radicals of spying for the government, and sued twice when he came out of debtor's prison. But this is also a story of peculiar allegiances and unlikely

friendships, in the year that ‘Cobbett became speechwriter to Queen Caroline of Brunswick’ (61). The rallying of radicals around Queen Caroline is surprising enough, but Cobbett’s involvement is a bigger surprise. Gardner writes: ‘That the son of a yeoman farmer could become the Queen’s address writer, and at the same time subvert her cause to his own radical agenda, is something that had never occurred before this moment’ (70). One consequence of the ‘partnership between Cobbett and Caroline’, perhaps not fully appreciated by either Cobbett or Caroline, is that ‘Cobbett’s work for Caroline had an impact on women readers [...]. Although Cobbett’s interest in the Caroline affair was often selfish, he did help to politicize women who had so few rights’ (73–4). The ways Cobbett was perceived by women writers and readers during his lifetime is a subject hinted at by a few of the essays here, and suggests new angles to Cobbett studies that might be pursued.

The issue of Cobbett’s political inconsistency, and whether it even makes historical sense to regard his set of beliefs as inconsistent, is addressed in some form by all of the authors in this collection. In ‘Radicalism on the Crossroads: William Hazlitt and William Cobbett’, Ruth Livesey investigates the symbolic value of the mail coach for Cobbett and the very different set of meanings it held for Hazlitt. While ‘the mail coaches, and the turnpike roads along which they rolled, represented a corrupt system to Cobbett’ (82), the same system ‘is for Hazlitt [a] means of communication between the tactile sway of a particular locality and an abstract, metropolitan community of ideas’ (88). Hazlitt and Cobbett, good haters both, are nevertheless very different sorts of radical – with very different attitudes to tea-drinking as well as mail coaches. Livesey tells us, in a footnote, that Cobbett ‘denounced pedlars, along with tea and potatoes, as one of the curses of English rural life’ (188). The denunciation of tea strikes me as a point of serious disagreement with Hazlitt, notoriously fond of the beverage.

What looks like Cobbett’s ‘pettier prejudices’ are sometimes a result of his larger views (7). In ‘Scotland Under the Scotch System: Narratives of Resistance From Cobbett’s Tour in Scotland’, Alex Benchimol addresses ‘Cobbett’s justified Scotophobic reputation’ (96) with a study of *Cobbett’s Tour of Scotland*, which is read as ‘a campaigning text [...] responsive to the new Reform legislation of 1832’ (105). Benchimol finds Cobbett staunch in his objections to ‘the Scotch system’, which encompasses ‘the elite Scottish Whig brand of early nineteenth-century liberal political economy, and the agenda of legislative reform championed in the pages of the [*Edinburgh*] *Review*’ (95). Both of these are closely connected, in Cobbett’s mind, with ‘a corrupt and unrepresentative state that, for him, [has] facilitated a fundamental transfer of wealth and power from smaller agricultural communities to the industrial and financial elites of Britain’s cities’ (95). In the *Tour*, Cobbett does some backtracking on his Scotophobia, arguing that his problem with Scottish ‘feelosofers’ didn’t extend to ‘the people of Scotland’ (97), and if it did, that was in the past – things are different in 1832. For Benchimol, Cobbett does not abandon ‘English patriotism’ in the *Tour*, but attempts

to extend what he perceived as the freedoms, natural entitlements and moral worth of Englishmen [...] across the Border to those in Scotland, who he now understood to be the first (and more oppressed) victims of the 'Scotch system' he had been battling for so many years as an alien and malign presence in the English countryside. (106)

The English countryside has itself meant different things to different people at different times, and Clare Griffiths's essay 'Rural Riding: Revisiting Cobbett's Countryside in the Twentieth Century' looks at the afterlives of Cobbett's 'best-known work, *Rural Rides*' (5) as a way to begin to sift those changing meanings. As others find throughout *William Cobbett, Romanticism and the Enlightenment*, Griffiths notes that 'Cobbett's legacy' as represented by *Rural Rides* 'continued to speak to right as well as left' (155). Griffiths unearths homages to Cobbett's book in conservative magazines as well as *The Guardian*, although intriguingly, the most recent of these seems to have appeared in 2001. It would be interesting to know whether there is anyone whose current journalism on the countryside acknowledges a debt to Cobbett, or whether this tradition, persuasively traced by Griffiths, has itself died out.

What has not died out is the interconnectedness of finance and politics. This is a nexus that Cobbett railed against more than any other, as it manifested in the form of 'an unholy alliance of financiers, debt holders and politicians [...] manipulating the [...] requirements of war finance to enrich themselves and remain in power' (3). Using what Livesey calls 'a gothic flourish' (84), Cobbett called this system 'the THING'. Both the opening and closing essays in this volume make clear that Cobbett's critique of 'Old Corruption' in the form of 'the THING' remains valuable as an example of resistance. For Claeys, in the essay that opens the volume, 'what we lack today is the sense of anger which so intensely animated and drove Cobbett', and he argues that we can look to Cobbett for his 'fearlessness' (30). For Calhoun, at the close of the volume, Cobbett can remind us that 'There are always alternatives' (171). Politics does not get less complicated after Cobbett, and no one has ever agreed with him about everything, but this collection suggests that both the manner and the message of his writings contain enduring lessons.

CLAIRE SHERIDAN
UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH

SURVEY OF HAZLITT STUDIES, 2009–2014

Philipp Hunnekuhl

The following is a survey of articles on William Hazlitt published in other journals, and of books and book chapters on Hazlitt not reviewed in *The Hazlitt Review*.¹ It does not claim comprehensiveness, but rather aims to give an idea of the many ways in which Hazlitt has featured, and the many people whose attention he has drawn, in a variety of research outlets in recent years. The survey begins with the year 2014, and subsequently works its way backwards until 2009, the year following the scope of *The Hazlitt Review*'s last survey.²

Amanda Louise Johnson's *European Romantic Review* article entitled 'William Hazlitt, *Liber Amoris*, and the Imagination' examines the 'somasochistic nature of the royalist imagination' in Hazlitt's 'On the Spirit of Monarchy' alongside the 'psychological violence of *Liber Amoris*'.³ Johnson's central claim is that Hazlitt's notion of the 'expansive imagination, though driven by antisocial impulse,' represents 'a regulating force that enables sociability in a society held together by print culture' (743). The imagination as advanced in *Liber Amoris* thus proceeds from an impulse of narcissism, yet this 'aggrandizing' projection onto someone more powerful matches, Johnson proposes, the royal subject's projections onto the sovereign in Hazlitt's political writing, simultaneously pleasing and debasing that subject. The conclusion Johnson draws from this is that, in Hazlitt, 'the monarchical state itself is an affective construct – one that originates in the royal subject, rather than the monarch' (744). Or, we project the hierarchies we occupy, and therefore also have the power to alter or undo them. Johnson, overall, does not fail to elaborate on the underlying role of the passions in this process. Disinterestedness, as 'tendencies and delusions' within oneself (747), hence gains a new dimension through Johnson's essay, and 'a sovereign that embodies the principles of a liberal democratic state' becomes a possibility in Hazlitt's thought (753).

1 Parenthetical references in the text refer to the page numbers of the title cited in the preceding footnote.

2 'Survey of Hazlitt Studies 2008', *The Hazlitt Review* 2 (2009), 75–7.

3 Amanda Louise Johnson, 'William Hazlitt, *Liber Amoris*, and the Imagination', *European Romantic Review* 25, 6 (2014), 743–56: 743.

James Ley's book *The Critic in the Modern World* contains a chapter entitled 'Fire from the Flint: William Hazlitt (1778–1830).'⁴ Ley, a literary critic himself, is the winner of the 2014 Pascall Prize for criticism, thus earning the title of Australia's 'Critic of the Year'. In Ley's overall 'paratactic' design, where six critics stand exemplarily for their own age, in one uninterrupted diachronic line until the present day (7), Hazlitt is treated as the Romantic critic par excellence. And yet, what defines Hazlitt's criticism as strikingly modern, and what thereby sets him apart from other Romantics, is, for Ley, the 'toughness and directness' – Hazlitt's unsparing sincerity – that does not stop short of 'confronting the paradoxes of his own character' (60).

Heather B. Stone, in her 2013 article entitled 'William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb and the *London Magazine*, 1821', examines the contrast between Hazlitt's and Lamb's 'two different ways of interpreting and comprehending the world' as they emerge from Hazlitt's 1821 editorship of the *London Magazine*.⁵ In the April and May issues of the periodical, Stone argues, Hazlitt's and Lamb's essays 'repeatedly explore the contrast between instinctive responses and dogmatic or "mechanical" understanding' (42). One such example is, according to Stone, both authors' 'conflicted attitude to Burkean ideas' (43). In Hazlitt's case, this consists of his outright rejection of the political legacy that Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* upholds, as opposed to his favourable attitude towards Burke's stress on instinct and irrationality in human nature (43). Lamb, in a similar but more comical vein, responds to 'Burke's argument that people inherit an instinctive attachment to the idea of monarchy' by developing 'the idea of instinctive prejudice to justify regicide' (43). Stone's discovery and clear analysis of such thematic strands thus sheds compelling new light on Hazlitt's editorial skill and principles.

Another 2013 *Wordsworth Circle* article, by Katie Homar, discusses 'William Hazlitt's *Eloquence of the British Senate*'.⁶ After a short introduction to her subject matter (the 250 House-of-Commons speeches from 1625 to 1802), Homar proceeds to argue that although Hazlitt's *Eloquence of the British Senate* is portrayed as a "'blunt, uncouth" reminder' that 'pre-Romantic modes of authorship and textual production' endured beyond the turn of the century, it was Hazlitt's recourse to this material for later literary projects that 'helped him turn into a Romantic author' (127). In this, Homar acknowledges her debt to Tom Paulin's *The Day-Star of Liberty*, before moving on to a careful analysis of Hazlitt's paratextual practice, so as to make 'a bid for a form of authorship rooted in the refraining of others' words' (128), a practice that laid the foundation for much of his later work.

4 James Ley, *The Critic in the Modern World: Public Criticism from Samuel Johnson to James Wood* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014). For the chapter on Hazlitt, see 35–65.

5 Heather B. Stone, 'William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb and the *London Magazine*, 1821', *The Wordsworth Circle* 44, 1 (Winter 2013), 41–4: 41.

6 Katie Homar, 'William Hazlitt's *Eloquence of the British Senate*', *The Wordsworth Circle* 44, 2/3 (Spring/Summer 2013), 127–30.

The fourth issue of the 2013 *European Romantic Review* contains a contribution by John Savarese on 'Reading One's Own Mind: Hazlitt, Cognition, Fiction.'⁷ Savarese here concerns himself with the *Essay on the Principles of Human Action* 'as a bridge between eighteenth-century theories of sympathy and social feeling and more recent philosophical and scientific discussions of "theory of mind", often shorthanded as "mindreading"' (437). Subsequently, Hazlitt is invoked not only as a 'timely reminder', in our 'age of neuroimaging', that activity in certain brain regions does not explain psychological phenomena (437), or that scientific observation does not equate to full psychological truth, but also as the anticipator of 'recent approaches to the imagination in philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience': Savarese explains that "'Inward" capabilities like remembering the past, anticipating the future, and imagining unreal events seem to be closely related to the outward-directed process of putting oneself in another's shoes' (438). Overall, Savarese's essay is a gripping thought experiment about Hazlitt's *Essay* as concerned with 'mindreading' rather than 'transmutation of memory' (439), and concludes that, in the course of the *Essay*, the "'mindreading" imagination went from being a remarkable faculty to an effortless, even automatic process, thus linking literary 'genius' to the operations of 'common sense' (448).

Daniel Cook's article 'On Genius and Authorship: Addison to Hazlitt' develops the argument that '[c]ritical interest in literary genius did not escalate in the early Romantic period as a response to the Augustan investment in the rules of art', elaborating that, for instance, '[f]or Percival Stockdale, William Hazlitt and others, Pope remained an eminent model of modern genius well into the [nineteenth] century.'⁸ Cook invokes Hazlitt's *Lectures on the English Poets* to suggest that 'genius as a critical term had fallen into disrepute precisely in the period when it had gained its widest currency' (612), and has Hazlitt explain, in the *Champion*, that 'wherever there is true genius, there will be true labour' (618). Cook discusses Hazlitt's multifaceted engagement with the term 'genius' primarily in relation to Pope, Wordsworth, and Shakespeare. Ultimately, Hazlitt emerges from Cook's article as a key voice stipulating continued attention to the intricacies of that very term.

Kim Wheatley's book *Romantic Feuds: Transcending the 'Age of Personality'* contains a chapter entitled 'Hunt, Hazlitt, Lady Morgan, and the *Quarterly*: Creative Reprisals.'⁹ These three writers, Wheatley contends, 'can each be seen as granting the *Quarterly* the power to police more effectively, while displaying unique capacities to "escape" the antagonisms of literary warfare and the culture of "personality"' (97). Wheatley calls into question the label of 'masterpiece of invective' for Hazlitt's *Letter to William Gifford* (see, for instance, Wu and Burley, below), and instead argues that 'if Hazlitt breaks free from the "age of personality" in his feud with Gifford, it is not because of the power of his theoretical explanation,

7 John Savarese, 'Reading One's Own Mind: Hazlitt, Cognition, Fiction', *European Romantic Review* 24, 4 (2013), 437–52.

8 Daniel Cook, 'On Genius and Authorship: Addison to Hazlitt', *Review of English Studies*, new series 64, 266 (2013), 610–29: 610.

9 Kim Wheatley, *Romantic Feuds: Transcending the 'Age of Personality'* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013). For Wheatley's chapter on Hazlitt, see 97–137.

but because his representations of Gifford enact the workings of the disinterested imagination' (119–20). Or, as Wheatley puts it elsewhere, 'the same "illusion of the brain" that allows Hazlitt to project himself confidently into the future also indicates that the *Quarterly's* apparently endless power may be illusory' (126), thus drawing a parallel between power and the imagination not dissimilar to Johnson, above.

Jillian M. Hess's article entitled 'Reframing Poetry: The Romantic Essay and the Prospects of Verse,' examines those particular instances where Hazlitt's prose has recourse to verse.¹⁰ Hess argues that Hazlitt thus 'stylistically challenged the boundaries of genre,' and 'defined prose as a hybrid form' (343). She places particular emphasis on the complexity of the 'material culture' of 'friendship albums and commonplace books' in relation to Hazlitt's practice (343): examples of Hazlitt's dislike of commonplace books (as dull accumulations of meaningless phrases for bad writers) and his dissatisfaction with his 1827 entry in Isabella Towers's album are thereafter, in Hess's line of argument, contrasted with Hazlitt's preference for quotation from memory and the primarily stylistic function of quotations, frequently for the purpose of commandeering his own content.

In 2012, Quentin Bailey published an article on 'Hazlitt, Haydon, and the Elgin Marbles' in *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*.¹¹ Bailey here argues that 'Hazlitt's early writings about the Marbles reveal, perhaps more clearly than any other aspect of his art criticism, the vital role political determinations played in his artistic judgments' (59). The controversy and political reverberations surrounding the British government's purchase of the marble sculptures from the Parthenon that Lord Elgin had obtained, by permission of the Ottoman rulers, between 1801 and 1812 is subsequently explicated, alongside Benjamin Haydon's immediate, and Hazlitt's initially hesitant and never uncritical support of the cause, as well as the two men's disagreement on the progressiveness of art. The most intriguing revelation in Bailey's argument then follows as he claims that Hazlitt 'saw an opportunity to reconsider the terms of the debate and [...] sketched out a perspective from which the Marbles could, in defiance of Elgin and the Select Committee, be understood as an extension of the Napoleonic ideal' (67–8). Bailey further elaborates on this point by adding that:

Situating the Marbles as vagrants liable to be deported, according to the Statutes, to 'the place from whence they came,' Hazlitt linked the Parthenon fragments to the masterpieces in the Louvre which, in 1816, had just been returned to their previous owners. (68)

Napoleon had indeed been keen to get hold of the statues, and the British government's acquiring them thus constituted the survival of Napoleonic and

10 Jillian M. Hess, 'Reframing Poetry: The Romantic Essay and the Prospects of Verse,' *European Romantic Review* 24, 3 (2013), 343–51.

11 Quentin Bailey, 'Hazlitt, Haydon, and the Elgin Marbles: Aesthetic Values and "the true spirit of Jacobinism"', *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*, new series 155 (Spring 2012), 58–72.

revolutionary ideals, a success all the more sweetened to Hazlitt (especially in the light of the wider political developments following the Battle of Waterloo) by their exhibition in the British Museum.

The last chapter in Melynda Nuss's book *Distance, Theatre, and the Public Voice* concerns itself with 'Creative Spectacle: Hunt, Hazlitt, De Quincey'.¹² Nuss here develops 'a theory that catches the ingenuity and imaginativeness of the [illegitimate theatre's] spectacles themselves' (152). Her argument covers some thirty years, from Hunt's 'criticism of the hippodrama craze around 1811–1812', via Hazlitt's 'attempt to distinguish "art" from mere "spectacle" in "The Indian Jugglers"', to De Quincey and Greek drama in 1840 (152). Nuss emphasizes the wide variety in the character and subject matter of such spectacles, and concludes that the critics she treats share an 'interest in creating a theory of spectacle that rejects the idea that spectacle overwhelms the viewer and turns its watchers into mindless and vacuous subjects'; instead, spectacles transcend political sectarianism, advocate progress, and consolidate the nation (152). Nuss's particular attention is directed to the various kinds of the sublime that these writers use to make their cases: Leigh Hunt's 'Animal Sublime' (153), De Quincey's 'Political Sublime' (159), and Hazlitt's 'Creative Sublime' (165). The claim that 'Hazlitt has, in his own way, created a sublime as inhuman as that which he sought to avoid' – a sublime that renders '[b]oth artist and audience [...] involuntary spectators to a power that is beyond them both' (169) – may, I imagine, spark some debate in Hazlitt scholarship.

Timothy Whelan's 2011 *Coleridge Bulletin* article on 'William Hazlitt and Radical West Country Dissent' situates Hazlitt and his family in the radical dissenting tradition of the area 'that predated the arrival of the Romantic poets and their notions of Pantisocracy'.¹³ One key figure in this tradition emerging from Whelan's work is Benjamin Flower, editor of the *Cambridge Intelligencer*, which was then 'the most widely disseminated and politically provocative provincial newspaper in England' (112). Whelan traces Flower's connection to Coleridge in the mid-1790s, prior to Hazlitt's acquaintance with the authors of *Lyrical Ballads* in the West Country, and finds that 'Flower was as vituperative and unforgiving as Hazlitt would later become' when it came to, for instance, opposing the war with France, advocating political reform, and censuring apostasy of such causes (113–115). Whelan then delves deeper into the dissenting circles of the region, unearthing and analysing the connections between, among others, the Baptist minister Robert Hall, Joseph Cottle, the essayist John Foster, Mary Steele, the poet Mary Scott, the London trader Thomas Mullett, the sugar merchant Anthony Robinson, Henry Crabb Robinson (no family relation), and, ultimately, William Hazlitt. Eventually, Whelan adds to Duncan Wu's placing of Hazlitt, in *William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man*, 'at the centre of a coterie of radical journalists', a

12 Melynda Nuss, *Distance, Theatre, and the Public Voice 1750–1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). See 151–70 for Nuss's chapter on Hazlitt. For an earlier version of this chapter, see Melynda Nuss, 'Creative Spectacle: Hunt, Hazlitt and De Quincey', *European Romantic Review* 21, 2 (2010), 143–59.

13 Timothy Whelan, 'William Hazlitt and Radical West Country Dissent', *The Coleridge Bulletin* 38 (2011), 111–27: 111.

less well documented but very plausibly reconstructed network of West Country radical dissent whose tradition was ‘shared by William Hazlitt’ and ‘grounded in the political ideals of equality, political reform, and individual liberty’ (127).

The sixth and final chapter of Jon Mee’s book *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762 to 1830* bears the title ‘Hazlitt, Hunt, and Cockney Conversability’.¹⁴ The chapter examines Hazlitt’s position within the ‘cultural formation’ that is “‘Cockney’ culture’ and its self-definition ‘against the hierarchies of the patrician elite, the atomism of commercial society, and the defensively introverted aesthetics [...] associated with the Lake School’ (239). Mee uses the metaphor that reverberates in Ley, borrowed from Hazlitt’s ‘Aristocracy of Letters’, to characterize Hazlitt’s conversability, distinguishing Hunt’s and Lamb’s open-ended, conversational essay-writing on the one hand, from Hazlitt’s additional, incendiary ‘desire to strike flint with flint in the cause of truth’ on the other (241). Mee concurs with Burley (and Duncan Wu) when he labels Hazlitt’s *Letter to William Gifford*, invoked to illustrate this claim, as ‘one of his greatest pieces of writing’ (243), and goes on to elaborate that the ‘key to Hazlitt’s valorization of conversation is the resistance it offers to tendencies that abstract from mixed imperfect being (even as he acknowledged the tendency within himself)’ (259). For Hazlitt, conversation sustains truthful manifoldness and complexity, however painful, uncomfortable, or contradictory. Against this backdrop, Mee explains Hazlitt’s ‘insistence that human relations must be created in the hazardous conjunctions between subjects’ and against the shallow prescriptiveness of ‘cavalier smooth simpering indifference’ (277).

The final chapter of James Mulvihill’s book *Notorious Facts: Publicity in Romantic England, 1780–1830* goes by the title ‘Celebrity Turns: William Hazlitt and the Reverend Edward Irving’.¹⁵ The chapter features a double tripartition, as it were, first examining Hazlitt’s writing on publicity between ‘Whether Actors Ought to Sit in Boxes’ (for Mulvihill’s preceding work on this essay, see below), *Liber Amoris*, and *The Spirit of the Age*, before moving on to the further subdivisions of ‘Hazlitt on Irving’, ‘Ministry and Media’, and ‘Dangerous Preaching’. This tripartition also encompasses a gradual build-up and denouement, with Hazlitt’s chapter on Irving in *The Spirit of the Age* re-enacting the notable life-time fame of the now neglected Irving, before tracing the roots of that fame back into Irving’s life and work in the remaining two sub-chapters. Mulvihill’s conclusion is that ‘Edward Irving wielded [...] a power’ that resonated with Hazlitt in a kind of dynamic irritation, since ‘this same power [...] exposed its workings in [Hazlitt’s] own celebrity’ (152).

Sarah M. Zimmerman, in her chapter ‘The Thrush in the Theater: Keats and Hazlitt at the Surrey Institution’, scrutinizes Keats’s literary legacy for a response to the ‘question of what he learned’ from Hazlitt’s 1818–19 lectures through an examination of their ‘material culture, and specifically the consequences of

14 Jon Mee, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762 to 1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). For the chapter on Hazlitt, see 239–77.

15 James Mulvihill, *Notorious Facts: Publicity in Romantic England, 1780–1830* (Newark, Del: University of Delaware Press, 2011). For Mulvihill’s chapter on Hazlitt, see 111–52.

[Keats's] assuming the auditor's role in this animated forum' (218).¹⁶ Zimmerman argues that 'Keats sharpens his sense of how another's unanticipated words can injure, elate, or transform an auditor' (218), while his engagement with Hazlitt's lectures in 'silence and solitude' emerges in detail in the course of this chapter (223), as well as the gradual but profound impact that this engagement had on the poet. The culmination of this latter point occurs in Zimmerman's meticulous close reading of passages from Keats's poems, most notably his 'What the Thrush Said' (227).

Charles E. Robinson's publication entitled 'Four New William Hazlitt Letters' is the latest in a series by Robinson that gradually aims to complement H. M. Sikes's incomplete 1978 edition.¹⁷ All letters are densely annotated, guiding even the novice Hazlittian reliably through the circumstances of their contents. The first letter printed here, Hazlitt wrote to his father, the Reverend William Hazlitt, from New College Hackney on 20 October 1793 (67, fn. 5). It grants an insight into Hazlitt's life and essay writing at the college. The second piece of correspondence is a fragment of a letter from Scotland to the publisher Henry Colburn, written in late March or early April 1822 and discussing the completion of the second volume of *Table-Talk* (70). Letter three is an undated letter to 'Gentlemen', 'either creditors or publishers [possibly Taylor and Hessey] that was most likely written in 1823 or 1824' (66). Here, Hazlitt promises to repay his debts through 'a new volume of Essays from the London Magazine', quite likely those of his works that were included in *The Plain Speaker* (73; 72 fn. 30). The fourth letter was sent on 5 October 1828, probably to the publisher Rowland Hunter (66). It announces the imminent resumption of work on the *Life of Napoleon* (74).

Stephen Burley's 2010 article 'The Lost Polemics of William Hazlitt (1737–1820)' establishes William Hazlitt Sr. 'as a figure of considerable importance within dissenting literary circles of the late eighteenth century and also as a crucial formative influence on his son's mature work'.¹⁸ Burley accurately probes the Unitarian circles of the 1770s that Hazlitt Sr. became part of before the Hazlitts moved to America, and in the process ascribes three anonymous anti-ecclesiastical pieces to him: *The Methodists Vindicated* (1771), *Letters to the Reverend Doctor Benjamin Dawson* (1771), and *Letters on the Worship of Christ* (1776). The 'aggressively adversarial qualities' of these pieces, Burley claims, 'are revisited in Hazlitt Jr.'s *A Reply to Malthus* (1807), *A Reply to Z* (1818), and *A Letter to William Gifford* (1819)' (273), hence exerting a prevailing, familial influence of radical dissent on his literary career long after he had abandoned New College Hackney and disappointed his father's hopes in his career as a minister.

16 Sarah M. Zimmerman, 'The Thrush in the Theater: Keats and Hazlitt at the Surrey Institution', in *A Companion to Romantic Poetry*, ed. Charles Mahoney (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011). For Zimmerman's chapter on Hazlitt, see 217–33.

17 Charles E. Robinson, 'Four New William Hazlitt Letters', *The Keats-Shelley Review* 24 (2010), 66–75. *The Letters of William Hazlitt*, ed. Herschel Moreland Sikes (New York: New York University Press, 1978).

18 Stephen Burley, 'The Lost Polemics of William Hazlitt (1737–1820)', *Review of English Studies*, new series, 61, 249 (2010), 259–75.

The spring 2010 issue of *The Wordsworth Circle* contains a Hazlitt quadruple bill. Matthew Scott opens this mini-series by investigating the ‘continuities in [...] aesthetic thought’ between Hazlitt and Ralph Waldo Emerson ‘that grow from their shared Unitarian heritage.’¹⁹ Scott argues that for Hazlitt, on the one hand, ‘aesthetic power [...] is that which draws him to ask about the grounds of his own engagement with the commonplace, the real’ (100). For Emerson, on the other hand, poetry “‘clothe[s] every thing ordinary and even sordid with beauty’” (102). This theme unites Hazlitt and Emerson (although their answers differ with respect to the transcendental power of art), as it arises, according to Scott, from their shared Unitarian upbringing.

Jon Cook concerns himself with ‘Hazlitt and Ventriloquism’ – in particular Hazlitt’s admiration of the comic actor Charles Mathews’s ‘capacity [...] to populate a stage with a multitude of different voices and characters’ and occasional ventriloquism.²⁰ Cook then compares Mathews’s mechanical talents with those of the Indian jugglers in Hazlitt’s eponymous essay, and concludes that Mathews’s achievement, like the jugglers’, featured no ‘inner structure’ that would elevate them to the artistic feats of Titian or Reynolds (105). But, of course, Hazlitt salvages the Indian jugglers’ mechanical talents through his unequivocal admiration of Cavanagh the fives player at the end of the essay, and Cook, with further elaboration on Shakespeare and the imaginative qualities of ventriloquism, claims that the ‘infinite possibility’ of Mathews’s stage performances similarly salvages him from being merely second-rate (106).

James Mulvihill then discusses Hazlitt’s commentary on the charge of adultery brought against Edmund Kean in 1825 – and the public’s ‘passive aggressive’ reaction to it – in relation to Hazlitt’s 1822 *Table-Talk* essay ‘Whether Actors Ought to Sit in the Boxes.’²¹ Hazlitt negates his rhetorical question – Mulvihill explains that, for Hazlitt, the too-obvious exposure of an actor in a theatre box equates to a wardrobe malfunction on stage (110) – whilst Hazlitt allows ‘latitude’ only for the aforementioned Charles Mathews in his *At Home* (111). Mathews, Mulvihill claims, here ‘fail[s] to observe the fine line between acting and acting out’ (113), thus detaching the artistic truth of a stage performance from the performance of his own nature. This absolves Mathews from the consequence that his spectators ‘pile millions of associations’ originating in his stage role onto the actor’s person appearing in the theatre box (111).

Quentin Bailey then concludes the *Wordsworth Circle*’s Hazlitt special with his contribution entitled ‘Hazlitt and the “Old Pictures”: Westmacott, Patmore, and the Role of Art Criticism.’²² Bailey puts forward the claim that, although Hazlitt’s

19 Matthew Scott, ‘William Hazlitt and Ralph Waldo Emerson: Unitarianism, the Museum, and the Aesthetics of Power’, *The Wordsworth Circle* 41, 2 (Spring 2010), 99–103: 99.

20 Jon Cook, ‘Hazlitt and Ventriloquism’, *ibid.*, 104–9: 104.

21 James Mulvihill, ‘Hazlitt on “Whether Actors Ought to Sit in the Boxes”’, *ibid.*, 109–13.

22 Quentin Bailey, ‘Hazlitt and the “Old Pictures”: Westmacott, Patmore, and the Role of Art Criticism’, *ibid.*, 114–19.

more personal account of the place of art [...] might privilege the individual over the public, [...] its import is nonetheless profoundly radical: by locating the experience of art in the intersection between memory and principle, Hazlitt allowed for an emotional encounter that retained its independence and intensity in the face of either the monarchical appropriation delineated by Westmacott or the bourgeois detachment advocated by Patmore. (114)

Hazlitt's stance on the establishment of the National Gallery by Lord Liverpool's acquisition of the Angerstein collection in 1823 – his fear of the sovereign's appropriation of art for self-glorification (115) – is then invoked in order to contrast Hazlitt further with Charles Molloy Westmacott and Peter George Patmore. Having shown Hazlitt's outright rejection of Westmacott's 'Tory propaganda' in his essays on art, the remainder of Bailey's article then examines Hazlitt's and Patmore's art criticism in greater detail, for instance their differing judgements on William Beckford's collection at Fonthill Abbey. Hazlitt treated the collection perfunctorily in his 1824 *Sketches of the Principal Picture-Galleries in England*, because it had 'no picture of remarkable eminence', but Patmore, parroting Hazlitt whilst tailoring the meaning of Hazlitt's words to his own agenda of flattering the collection's proprietor, compared it to the Louvre (116–17).

Michael O'Neill's book chapter on 'Shelley, Hazlitt, the West Country, and the Revolutionary Imagination' examines the fraught relationship of Hazlitt and Shelley in the light of the former's encounter with Wordsworth and Coleridge in Somerset in 1798, as well as the latter's summer months in Lynmouth in 1812.²³ O'Neill argues that Hazlitt, 'with a Proustian subtlety, [...] gives us a picture of the complex of feelings induced in him by reflecting on his first, unforgettable acquaintance with poets' (258). Hazlitt's dismissal of Shelley's optimism is invoked as one point of friction between the authors (262), although viewed throughout in the light of the intricate, enduring influence of Hazlitt meeting Wordsworth and Coleridge as recollected in his 1823 essay 'My First Acquaintance with Poets'. O'Neill concludes his chapter with a criticism of Hazlitt, stating that Shelley 'was more various in his poetic endeavours, more dynamic in his vision, and more wide-ranging and far-seeing in his political and spiritual vision than Hazlitt was able to discern' (269). Still, O'Neill assuages this intervention by adding that Hazlitt's notion of the revolutionary imagination as perpetually inviting contest for betterment helps us to appreciate – and, first of all, to understand – his treatment of Shelley.

Jack Barbalet's study entitled 'Disinterestedness and Self-Formation: Principles of Action in William Hazlitt' is unusual insofar as it makes Hazlitt interdisciplinary by introducing his *Essay on the Principles of Human Action* to contemporary debates in sociology and economics.²⁴ Barbalet labels Hazlitt's essay, over two

23 Michael O'Neill, 'Shelley, Hazlitt, the West Country, and the Revolutionary Imagination', in *English Romantic Writers and the West Country*, ed. Nicholas Roe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 257–70.

24 Jack Barbalet, 'Disinterestedness and Self-Formation: Principles of Action in William Hazlitt', *European Journal of Social Theory* 12, 2 (2009), 195–211.

hundred years after its first publication, a ‘unique contribution to action theory’ (195), and proceeds to analyse Hazlitt’s severing of present and future self, and the implications that this has for the establishment of disinterestedness over self-interest, in the light of contemporary debates in his discipline. Barbalet’s findings are as bold as they are intriguing: Hazlitt constructs a ‘sociality that preserves the integrity of action theory’, while explicating ‘a more fine-pointed understanding of the self and its transformation through action’, thereby ‘highlight[ing] change and variability’ (209).

Terry Eagleton, the Hazlitt Society’s Annual Lecturer in 2012, contributed a short piece – half journal article, half review of Duncan Wu’s *William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man* – to *Harper’s Magazine* in April 2009.²⁵ Eagleton defines the man of letters of some two hundred years ago as ‘an intriguing combination of critic, sage, scholar, journalist, and dilettante’ (77), going on to lament the shameful neglect that Hazlitt had endured in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and to put this down to Hazlitt’s political outspokenness just as much as his ‘foul-mouthed and belligerent’ style (78). This then becomes the only concession that Eagleton makes in his praise of Wu’s biography as overall excellent and ‘impressively learned’ (82): it could have done with a little more of Hazlitt’s ‘swashbuckling stuff’, verbatim, in order to convey just how ‘[u]nafraid to pronounce unpalatable truths’ Hazlitt really was (78). Ultimately, though, this bit of criticism may boil down to the question of the different kinds of readership that Eagleton and Wu had in mind: if it was one of Wu’s key intentions to popularize, and kindle curiosity about, Hazlitt by intentionally withholding some of his most belligerent prose, then Eagleton’s essay, in a magazine of the standing and circulation of *Harper’s*, certainly adds to this (very welcome) goal by addressing its readership – in the most Hazlittian sense of the term – more explicitly.

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25 Terry Eagleton, ‘The Critic as Partisan: William Hazlitt’s Radical Imagination’, *Harper’s Magazine* 318 (Number 1907, April 2009), 77–82.

REPORT ON THE 14TH HAZLITT
DAY-SCHOOL AND 2015
ANNUAL HAZLITT LECTURE
‘HAZLITT AND JOURNALISM’
University College London, 10 October 2015

Philipp Hunnekuhl

Each year, the Annual Hazlitt Lecture and Day-school take place on the Saturday closest to 18 September, to commemorate Hazlitt's death on that day in 1830. In 2015, exceptionally, the date was moved to 10 October, to accommodate Professor Kevin Gilmartin from the California Institute of Technology, who delivered the Annual Lecture. His most recent monograph *William Hazlitt: Political Essayist*, hot off the press just then, seamlessly situated Gilmartin's latest research within the wider topic of the day – ‘Hazlitt and Journalism.’ To anticipate the conclusion of this report: despite an altogether outstanding line-up on the day, it is only fair to state that Gilmartin not only headlined the 2015 Hazlitt Day, but that his presence permeated and shaped the entire event, and more than justified sacrificing tradition to topicality. Without any scholarly airs and graces (nor susceptibility to jetlag, it would seem), Gilmartin was among the first people to turn up for the Day-school, became a lively and constructive participant in all of its plenary discussions, and remained stimulating company afterwards, in the pub and at the dinner table. This, of course, is not even to mention his main reason for joining us on the day – his Lecture entitled ‘Hazlitt's Political Hatred’ – of which I shall have more to say in due course.

I should perhaps note that I myself am an uncomfortable if not irritable aeroplane passenger and, unlike Gilmartin, susceptible to even the most minimal of jetlags. The exertions of my ninety-minute flight from Hamburg to London the night before the Hazlitt Day must have given my early-morning attempts to shift the copies of the 2015 *Hazlitt Review* to UCL's Council & Committee Room such an air of helplessness that our first speaker of the day, Professor Ian Haywood from the University of Roehampton, insisted on helping me with this menial task before he moved straight on to his key intellectual contribution to our event. His morning plenary lecture on ‘Hazlitt and the Monarchy’ was so

clear and conclusive that even the jetlagged mind of a junior backbencher such as myself could follow it, and at the same time so inspiring that it drew a host of keen questions from more alert minds afterwards – one, from David Higgins, on the monarchy’s narcissistic worship of self-projections, and another from Gilmartin, who expressed an acute interest in the visuality of caricature. Haywood was happy to elaborate further on Hazlitt’s portrayal, in the 1823 essay ‘On the Spirit of Monarchy’, of George IV as an ‘arbitrary king [...] besotted with power’ who was ‘[b]linded with prerogative, an alien to his nature, a traitor to his trust, and instead of being the organ of public feeling and public opinion, [...] an excrescence and an anomaly in the state, a bloated mass of morbid humours and proud flesh.’ What emerged there and then, in all its eloquent explicitness, from Hazlitt’s words and under Haywood’s guidance, was what could be inferred from George Cruikshank’s bought abstinence from caricaturing the king and his Huntian lampooning of the Prince Regent as Coriolanus in 1823, one of the many visuals that supported Haywood’s invocations of Hazlitt very effectively indeed.

After the first coffee break of the day, David Higgins from the University of Leeds spoke on ‘Hazlitt and Englishness,’ drawing on his latest research on Hazlitt, published in his 2014 monograph *Romantic Englishness: Local, National and Global Selves, 1780–1850* (reviewed in *The Hazlitt Review* 8, 2015). Higgins had, in fact, for some years been on the oratorical wish-list of the Day-school organizers, who were particularly delighted to be able to welcome him this year. In a centrifugal intellectual move paralleling that of Hazlitt in his *Essay on the Principles of Human Action* – refuting self-interest by detaching one’s present from one’s future self and dissolving the latter amidst the countless other selves that one’s imagination may encompass – Higgins viewed Hazlitt in the context of his national and transnational communities. Accordingly, the inwardness of the right-wing press – the ‘full length of the malice, the lying, the hypocrisy, the sleek adulation, the meanness, equivocation, and skulking concealment, of a *Quarterly Reviewer*, the reckless blackguardism of *Mr. Blackwood*, and the obtuse drivelling profligacy of the *John Bull*, as invoked by Higgins – received its fair comeuppance. This kind of intellectual outreach prevailed even in the most overtly masculine of Hazlitt’s works, such as ‘The Fight’, thus severing his masculinity as a writer from the inward, chauvinistic masculinity of the *Blackwood’s*-men. More still, one of the most interesting points made by Higgins was his remark on an essentially liberal print-culture in England that was nonetheless ‘susceptible to corruption,’ and at its liveliest ‘only when half dead’ – when, in Hazlitt’s words, it was ‘stung with wounds and stunned with bruises.’ The liveliness of such fallibility, as opposed to the obscuring pretensions to perfection of the likes of *John Bull*, made Hazlitt’s journalism emerge as truthful to nature in a manner similar to his appreciation of Shakespeare and Hogarth.

Ruth Livesey (Royal Holloway, University of London) then picked up on such notions of centrifugality – on ‘nationhood through locality,’ in Livesey’s words – and extended them in her paper entitled ‘William Hazlitt and the Mail-Coach Nation.’ Livesey shrewdly distinguished between, on the one hand, the stage coach’s literal function as a vehicle of the monarch and, accordingly, its appropriation as

a means of consolidating power, and, on the other hand, the mail coach as the metaphorical – the literary – vehicle of modernity, disseminating ideas through periodicals and thus connecting localisms. Here, in the progressive outwardness between London, the centre, and the countryside at its periphery, Livesey drew the key parallel between William Cobbett's *Rural Rides* and Hazlitt's idea of the centrifugal, active, mind. Nonetheless, Livesey did not fail to point out the pitfalls that Hazlitt discerned in this trajectory, namely the risk of reaching out too far into the universe at once – of feelings 'evaporating in huge space' instead of being shared by an expanding community. Especially these last of Livesey's fascinating insights prompted an animated discussion – which was opened by Jon Mee from the University of York enquiring into the function of the mail coach as a proxy for dissolving distances in a manner anticipating Facebook. Livesey responded with a reminder of the continuing materiality of the travelling word, however ephemeral it may appear. Gilmartin gave the discussion a new turn through a question on Cobbett and his investment into a system of journalism whose downfall he was predicting, and David Higgins provided a valuable counterpoint in his remarks on De Quincey and a reactionary Empire exercising control by means of accelerated communication. The following lunch break by no means put an end to the inquisitive vigour of all participants – it only set it aside to ferment in an atmosphere of warm joviality.

It was then Lucasta Miller's turn to speak on her chosen topic: "This matchless conjunction of vulgar sensuality and Cockney affectation": *Liber Amoris* and *The Literary Gazette*. It was clear from the start that Miller is not *only* (in the most complimentary and complementary sense of the term) a writer and a journalist but also a fully-fledged academic, as her scholarship and eloquence were on par with those of her predecessors. She even managed to continue and develop many a topic from the previous papers – for instance through her elaborations on the Tory cant of the *Literary Gazette* which, in a striking contrast to Hazlitt and his *Liber Amoris*, cast an altogether untrue and dishonest gloss over the personal shortcomings of its editor, William Jerdan. The digital image accompanying Miller's explications was Daniel Maclise's watercolour of Jerdan, now in the National Portrait Gallery, and it was one unidentified audience member (please come forward and claim credit!) who sharply spotted the similarity in looks between Jerdan and a certain Jeremy Clarkson. This observation generated loud laughter around the seminar room, but, most importantly, it served to accentuate and visualize Miller's line of argument – for who could imagine a twenty-first-century Hazlitt speeding in luxurious status symbols across foreign countries, stopping only to insult the local populace or bully a colleague? It is simply inconceivable. Hence, however embarrassing and painfully misogynistic the parallels between Hazlitt's infatuation with Sarah Walker and Jerdan's affair with Letitia Elizabeth Landon, as set out in Miller's paper, the masculinities of these two men differed decisively in their treatment of truth and social outlook: the one, Hazlitt's, candid and ready to submit himself to public scrutiny, the other, Jerdan's, mendacious and glib, painting a picture of himself permeated by self-interest whilst keeping up the hypocrisies of social convention. And with that, we entered into the most animated

discussion of the day. Susan Stokes-Chapman, who is currently writing a historical novel based around the subject matter of *Liber Amoris*, weighed in repeatedly and adamantly: her questions and elaborations came from a fresh perspective, namely the novelist's, and they were all the more welcome for that. They drew, in fact, a range of constructive responses from a number of people already mentioned, and the discussion had to be adjourned to the coffee room and, eventually, the pub. I am not the only one who is very much looking forward to finding out in what ways Miller's paper, especially, and the ensuing discussion will come to inform Stokes-Chapman's intriguing work. Her genuine enthusiasm in the debate promises, to use Hazlitt's famous word, 'gusto': the 'power or passion in defining any object'.

Finally, it was time for everyone to make their way up to, and meet a number of new arrivals at, the Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre for Gilmartin's Lecture on 'Hazlitt's Political Hatred'. Gilmartin soon outlined how Hazlitt wrested the term 'good hater' out of Samuel Johnson's hands and appropriated it for his prevailing Jacobin agenda – especially where that agenda was being contested in the journalistic altercations with John Stoddard from *The Times*, Hazlitt's brother-in-law. These altercations culminated in Hazlitt's 1819 *Political Essays*. In particular, William Cobbett resurfaced repeatedly in relation to Hazlitt's 'good hating' – in his transformation of the 'I hate' into the 'we hate' – with Gilmartin carefully differentiating between Hazlitt's admiration for Cobbett and his *Political Register*, his discernment of a 'lack of principle' in Cobbett's all too 'systematic opposition' to power, and his resolution not to let the latter interfere with the former, in any case. Hazlitt's choice of journalistic targets – his 'radical demonology' encompassing the likes of Castlereagh and Sidmouth in politics and Malthus and Southey in philosophy and literature – subsequently emerged as closely paralleling those of Cobbett, albeit with a maintained emphasis on Hazlitt's distrust of antagonism for its own sake. Nihilism would otherwise loom in the absence of political resistance – or, worse, the prospect of radicals turning against radicals. Then what ought to be done with any such undirected excess hatred? Perhaps turn it against oneself, as 'On the Pleasure of Hating' ultimately suggests, in order to rekindle the political hatred that has not yet been cast on the world to its fullest extent – and thus keep that hatred alive, against divine-right legitimacy, against the enemies of liberty.

At the end of this wonderful and in many ways extraordinary day, tradition, too, was revived with the adjourning of all unresolved debates to the Marlborough Arms. A great deal more happened there and then, I believe – more questions, further answers, subtler humour, and warmer sociability – but it seems to have eluded the mind and notebook of this air-travel-weary hypochondriac.

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The Hazlitt Society grew out of the project to restore Hazlitt's long-neglected grave in St Anne's churchyard, Soho. It was restored by public subscription and the renewed gravestone, in black Lakeland slate, was unveiled by Michael Foot on the 225th anniversary of Hazlitt's birth, 10 April 2003. The committee which was formed for the purpose of the restoration established the Society to encourage appreciation of Hazlitt's work and to promote his values.

Each year there is a lecture by an eminent Hazlitt scholar on the Saturday closest to 18 September, the day Hazlitt died. A newsletter, sent out in the spring of each year, alerts members of the Society to this lecture, which is free of charge, and any other events that may be of interest to admirers of Hazlitt.

The Society is closely associated with the annual Hazlitt Day-school that takes place on the same day as the annual lecture in London. Members qualify for concessionary rates.

The Society publishes *The Hazlitt Review*.

hazlittsociety@gmail.com

www.ucl.ac.uk/hazlitt-society

