

her she recaptured much of the pleasure of her girlhood, exploring English Bay and Burrard Inlet. She made many other friends in Vancouver and her death from breast cancer in 1913 occasioned the sincere and moving tribute of a public funeral. She was buried at her favourite spot in Stanley Park where her memorial stands today.

Charlotte Gray has given us this present memorial, one which will stand for decades as a faithful portrait of this complex, talented, and gallant woman.

## **WOMEN, NATIONALISM AND THE ROMANTIC STAGE: THEATRE AND POLITICS IN BRITAIN, 1780-1800.**

Betsy Bolton  
Cambridge: Cambridge University  
Press, 2001

## **WOMEN IN BRITISH ROMANTIC THEATRE**

Catherine Burroughs, Ed.  
Cambridge: Cambridge University  
Press, 2000

### **REVIEWED BY KYM BIRD**

Beginning almost fifteen years ago with Jacqueline Pearson's *The Prostituted Muse* (1988), women's drama and theatrical activity in England during the romantic period has flowered into a variegated field of study. Such works as Sandra Richard's *The Rise of the English Actress* (1993), Ellen Donkin's *Getting into the Act* (1995), Catherine Burrough's *Closet Stages* (1997), and Judith Pascoe's *Romantic Theatricality* (1997) have constructed a canon of women writers, generic propensities, and dominant political conditions

that revise the literary/dramatic history of this field. Two new books have joined the conversation: *Women in British Romantic Theatre*, and *Women, Nationalism and the Romantic Stage*. Each, in its own way, questions central precepts underpinning romanticism, including conventional periodization, genres, and definitions of drama, theatre, and performance. Each argues that women's relationship to dramatic/theatrical activity, whether as actress, playwright, critic, or manager, expresses ideological ambivalence: at once subversive and emancipatory and at the same time reaffirming patriarchy and the status quo.

*Women in British Romantic Theatre* is a rich compendium of essays that expand the conventional parameters of theatrical studies and elaborate the nature of women's conflicted relationship to the art and business of theatre. Jeffrey Cox considers the social and cultural power held by playwright Joanna Baillie, actress Sarah Siddons, but also Anna Margareta Larpent, wife of the Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays between 1778 and 1824. He asserts that, while the individual gender politics of these women was liberatory, it was "most often exercised . . . in support of a conservative ideology." Greg Kuich reflects upon the reviewing industry and what he calls the "conflicting postures of welcome, containment, and threatened resistance" that distinguished its response to the work of women dramatists like Baillie, Hannah Cowley, Elizabeth Inchbald, Mary Robinson, and Jane West. Katherine Newey discusses how the construction of dominant discourses of national identity and the nation state are formed in the historical tragedies of Hannah More, Ann Yearsley, Frances Burney, and Mary Mitford, a subject that is refocused in Jeanne Moskal's chapter on Marianna Starke's *The Sword of Peace*. Susan Bennet argues that Baillie's dramas reconstitute the genre of closet drama and examines the ways in which they were "deeply

invested in matters of public performance." Marvin Carlson interprets Inchbald's biographical-critical prefaces, concluding that in the act of critical writing she "dared to enter a domain traditionally reserved for men," though she buttressed her authority by confining her critiques largely to moral concerns associated with women. Thomas Crochunis explicates what he calls the "performance of authorship" in Inchbald and Baillie and how this performance was conditioned by gender. Jane Moody looks at how translations of plays by Inchbald and Anne Plumptre dramatize female identity, exploring in particular "the constraints and liberties of female authorship in translation." Three essays specifically examine the construction of gender in individual plays: Marjean Puritan is attentive to the means by which Baillie's *The Tryal* challenges gender roles while participating in a social system that commodifies women as objects of marriage; Jane Scott's collectively written essay on the production of "Camilla the Amazon" reveals how the play "reinforces and disrupts conventions articulated in her female characters." Julie A. Carlson analyzes plays on remorse by Baillie and Inchbald and "their efforts to reform love and female beauty in the theatre."

*Women, Nationalism and the Romantic Stage* focuses its polemic on the "interrelation among genre, gender, and anxiety. The first chapter introduces the authors and their political and intellectual environment, the changing critical fashions with respect to didactic fiction, and the methodologies and terminology for the study. The subsequent chapters explore the authors' experiments with the novel form until ultimate abandonment of it in favour of nonfictional moral and religious writings, which most had previously pursued together with fiction, as well as conduct literature and philanthropic activities.

In the introductory history and historical context. She also gives signifi-

cant critical quarter to the ambivalent position women occupied as they moved into the arenas of theatre and politics and how, under their pen, generic conventions were disrupted.

Both books are well worth the read. Taken together, they represent a significant contribution to the field of British romantic literature.

## **MODES OF DISCIPLINE: WOMEN, CONSERVATISM AND THE NOVEL AFTER THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**

Lisa Wood  
Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2003

### **REVIEWED BY GISELA ARGYLE**

Lisa Wood's study adds substantially to current scholarship on the intersections of gender and genre. Aiming at a revisionary, inclusive literary history, she discusses seven British women novelists who belonged to Mary Wollstonecraft's generation but unlike her to the anti-revolutionary camp in the "war of ideas." The authors are Hannah More, Jane West, Mary Hays, Laetitia Mathilda Hawkins, Mary Brunton, and Jane Porter. Unlike their radical colleagues, they readily found publishers, a sympathetic public, and approving critics for their didactic fiction. However, the appeal of their reactionary didaxis became obsolete even in their life-time when after the final defeat of Napoleon Britain seemed safe from the spread of revolutionary ideas. Moreover, literary taste and critical theorizing were changing in favour of "objective" narrative without overt didaxis, such as Jane Austen's fiction. Wood's thesis contradicts the

common evaluation and dismissal of these conservative authors by finding agency even in their complicity with patriarchal power structures. She presents her approach as that of cultural studies rather than literary scholarship. This permits her to disclaim any attempt, otherwise frequent in revisionary histories of "underread" fiction, to recover their once popular novels from readerly neglect and to engage in the question of canonicity.

The study contributes to three major critical enquiries. First, female voice and authority: Wood explores the paradox constituted by the condition of conservative women who fulfilled their prescribed feminine nurturing role as writers of "medicinal" didactic fiction, which requires an authoritarian, that is, "masculine" authorial voice. Secondly, the problem of periodization, in this case of Romanticism: these authors are best described as "Anti-Romantics" as they rejected and campaigned against the Romantic values of 'individualism, solitude, passion, imagination, nonconformity' in favour of "political, social, religious, and literary conformity." Wood rejects any extension of the term "Romanticism" to include her authors, for instance, in a "feminine Romanticism" proposed by Anne Mellor, since that would diminish her authors' explicit opposition to what they saw as "romantic" values. Thirdly, British critical debates on the genre of the novel: the didactic novel and critical concern with the moral message in fiction enjoyed a short dominance to give way to a general rejection didacticism and to critical emphasis on aesthetic rather than moral criteria. In her discussions of individual authors Wood renders these generalizations more complex.

For methodologies, she turns to Foucault's theory of discipline, in *Discipline and Punish*. The title of her book alludes to this debt as well as to the subtitle of a novel by one of her authors. Foucault's third "technology of power," "coercion," which

institutes self-discipline, is "most in evidence in didactic fiction, which takes as its focus the reform of both characters and readers." However, Wood's subsequent conclusions tend towards a conception of her authors as agents as much as subjects of the ideologies of their time, in accordance with Foucault's positive meaning of power, in *Power/Knowledge*. More distinctively, she makes expert and thorough use of Gérard Genette's narratological methodology for close analysis of aspects of the novels in order to produce a nuanced and persuasive account of her authors' diverse and complex negotiations of the political and social power structures. For considerations of the moral effect on the reader, in the absence of such scholarship on publishers, readership, and the market as is so richly available for the Victorian period, she focuses on the "narrate" (Genette) or the "implied reader," in Wolfgang Iser's reception aesthetics, rather than on the historical reader. However, she complements this method with references to periodical reviews. The first chapter introduces the authors and their political and intellectual environment, the changing critical fashions with respect to didactic fiction, and the methodologies and terminology for the study. The subsequent chapters explore the authors' experiments with the novel form until their ultimate abandonment of it in favour of nonfictional moral and religious writings, which most had previously pursued together with fiction, as well as conduct literature and philanthropic activities.

In the introductory chapter, Wood suggests that her study of the anti-revolutionary women authors may extend to a critical understanding of the rhetorical gambits of current neo-conservative women, such as the Canadian Real Women. For this purpose and generally for the non-specialist reader, wider reference to better-known women authors and their practices would be helpful for the sake of comparison. For a longer view, the debate about women and