

as an Orientalist epic that strives to represent and critique the Orient without fully succumbing to Oriental style. Southey attempts to depict the Orient as a unified whole but not "the self-contained totality of Islam's 'mythological imagination,' but rather a constant and uneasy process of distantiating, denegation, and cultural translation which posits a possible totality" distinct from the West (p. 57). Southey unintentionally fails by revealing the false disjunction between Europe and the Orient. It is upon this unstable ground that the Young Romantics locate their critiques of extant Orientalism.

The real strength of Warren's work lies in his readings of second-generation Romantic poetry, each of which demonstrates the poet's negotiation of the "porous border between self and other, autonomy and influence, action and reflection" that Orientalism sought to reinforce (p. 22). In Chapter 2, Warren reveals Byron's critique of Orientalism in *Lara* (1814), a text often identified as Oriental despite its Spanish setting. It is precisely Orientalism's haunting of the Spanish locale that reveals the false border between East and West that Byron's poem makes evident. *Lara* establishes the "philosophical, ethical and socio-political matrix" upon which Shelley formulates his critique of Orientalism in *Alastor; or the Spirit of Solitude* (1816) and *Epipsychidion* (1821), the subjects of Warren's third chapter (p. 123). Chapter 3, the first of two on Shelley, focuses on how the poet believes Orientalism might be challenged through "sustained ... ethical care" (p. 151). In particular, Shelley uses the adjectival "human" to demonstrate how a reevaluation of human sympathy could undermine Orientalism, which is inherently solipsistic. Chapter 4 moves from Shelley's ethical to political arguments against Orientalism. Within Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam* (1818), Warren perceives not only a continued attempt to deconstruct an East/West dichotomy, but also a new accusation that the British political imaginary relied upon the very "discourse of the solipsistic Oriental Despot" that Orientalism sought to critique (p. 186). Shelley's poem demonstrates that "despotism is not so much Oriental as Orientalism is despotic" (p. 133). For this reader, the most intriguing of Warren's chapters is the final one dedicated to Keats's poetics. Warren contends that despite his relatively few direct references to the Orient, Keats's poetry is deeply entangled within Orientalist discourse. Warren attributes much of this entanglement to the critical reception of Keats's poetry by figures including Leigh Hunt and Francis Jeffrey, who often "couched [their critiques] in the day's terms for describing both Eastern verse and Oriental tales" (p. 243). Keats's poetry engages with not only his eighteenth-century and first-generation Romantic influences but also contemporary critical interpretations of his work. It is with Keats's multifaceted engagement with Orientalism that Warren concludes by surmising that it is the complexity of Orientalism's networks that fuels "our current preoccupations with it" (p. 257).

Warren's detailed analyses of several underexplored aspects of canonical Romantic texts makes for a stimulating read. From his astute attention to *Thalaba's* footnotes and poetry, to his careful avoidance of biographical criticism in *Lara*,

to his keen discernment of *Lamia's* Oriental hauntings, Warren provides readers with innovative analyses that make postcolonial studies all the more relevant to a study of the Romantic era. Though Warren is clearly indebted to Nigel Leask's *British Romantic Writers and the East* and Saree Makdisi's *Romantic Imperialism*, he offers a distinctly new interpretation of Said's assertion that Orientalism provides more insight into the Orientalizing culture than the culture under scrutiny. Warren demonstrates how the Young Romantics perceived the faults of Orientalism as reflective of Western society's own ideological flaws. Warren's focus on the ideological repercussions of eighteenth-century solipsism allows him to bring his study of Romantic Orientalism to bear on not just the British nation but also the British individual, particularly the poet.

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*The Artistry of Exile: Romantic and Victorian Writers in Italy.* By JANE STABLER.  
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xix, 272. Cloth, \$85.00.

Jane Stabler's book is a new journey in a familiar area: the Italian experience of the Romantic and Victorian authors who were exiles rather than mere tourists in the peninsula. Today, in a time of mass migration, "exile" is a word brimming with pathos. In the introduction, Stabler discusses the problematic definition of the term, pointing out how hard it is to establish a clear distinction between exile, refugee, emigrant, expatriate, and tourist. It is certainly impossible in the case of the two groups of writers analyzed in the book, the Byron-Shelley circle and the Brownings, who played each of those roles at various times. Stabler acknowledges that they were privileged exiles, despite the challenges involved in living abroad.

The focus of the book is, in fact, not life but art: that is, how exile shaped these authors' poetics and writings. Nineteenth-century critics argued that the style of these writers changed for the worse as a result of their long residence in Italy. As the argument went, the influence of Italy accounted for the un-English character of *Don Juan* or *The Ring and the Book*, be it the cynical wit of the former or the arcane subject and intricate style of the latter. Challenging this idea, Stabler documents the notion that exiled writers often develop a poetics of hybridity, both in style and subject matter. In particular, the foreign linguistic context modifies their sense of their mother tongue—a fact that she partly illustrates in Chapter 7, focusing on the music and sounds of Italy. It is one of the most interesting parts of the book, and more examples from the poems would have made it even more intriguing.

The other chapters focus on some significant aspects of the various experiences of exile, beginning with how the younger Romantics and the Brownings organized, in practical and literary terms, the early phases of their lives on the continent. The comparison with two scandalous exiles and outcasts, Caroline of Brunswick and Lucrezia Borgia, puts the experience of these writers in an inter-

esting historical perspective, of which they were fully aware (Chapters 1 and 2). Life in Italy was not always what the English imagined. Classical ruins, fine weather, and low prices were indeed available as promised, but on the other side of the coin there was political repression, social inertia, and poverty. Roman Catholicism was perhaps the prickliest issue. It is significant that several British exiles were drawn to it aesthetically while they deplored it ideologically, an attitude that characterized their response to other aspects of Italy, too (Chapter 3).

With the exception of Byron, the other exiles left England with the intention of establishing isolated utopian communities, and had no real interest in integrating into a backward and, to them, awkward society. On the contrary, these utopians found in the merry company of Boccaccio's *Decameron* an inspiring model for a freer society, which was an aestheticized, elitist version of what was left of revolutionary ideals after the Congress of Vienna (Chapter 4). Dead things are easier to deal with, if only because they cannot answer directly.

History, in the individual-centered form of *Plutarch's Lives*, was their next concern. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the intricate ways in which Byron, Landor, and Browning used history to criticize contemporary politics and society. Their undertaking was complicated by the conflicted relation they established with their public, which they sought to both attack and allure at the same time. One might argue that they were the first to discover how the modern bourgeois reader is attracted by writers who attack him or her. The nature, methods, and aims of these assaults should perhaps be investigated anew once we have recognized the complicity between the two supposedly hostile parties.

"Exile" is a word that endows a writer with a halo of moral superiority. In such cases the liberal consciousness automatically assumes that there must be a struggle between good and evil, between a progressive rebel on the one hand and an obtuse, repressive society on the other. This is a central narration in modern literature that began with the Romantics and continues today with the writers who protest against social injustice or flee China, Iran, and other dictatorships or para-democracies like Egypt and Russia. This was not the central subject of the book, but it would be worth reflecting on the complacency and ambiguity, both of writers and readers, that lies concealed in a *topos* on which much of the moral and social value of literature is assumed to rest.

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*Unquiet Things: Secularism in the Romantic Age.* By COLIN JAGER. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. Pp. viii, 344. Cloth, \$75.00.

At many moments in his brilliant new book, Colin Jager returns to the image of the film fluttering at the fireplace grate in Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," the "sole unquiet thing" that inspires Jager's title. But Jager never does a complete reading of the poem. He lingers over the fluttering film and doesn't get beyond

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