

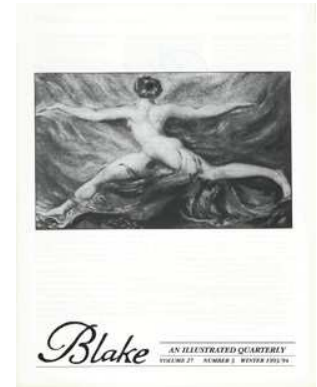
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R E V I E W

Laura Dabundo, ed., *Encyclopedia of Romanticism*; Jean Raimond and J. R. Watson, eds., *A Handbook to English Romanticism*

Nelson Hilton

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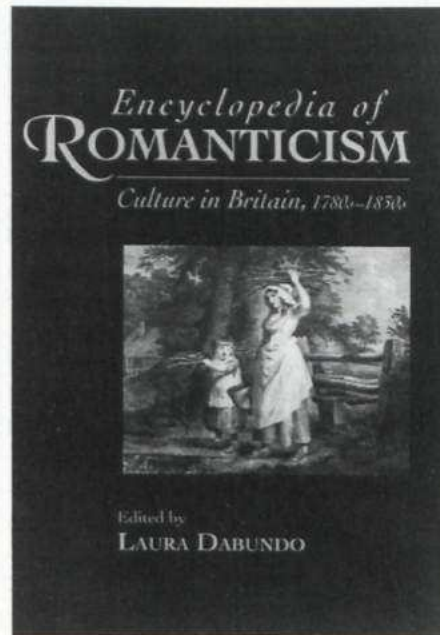


Laura Dabundo, ed. *Encyclopedia of Romanticism*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1992. xviii + 662. \$95.
 Jean Raimond and J. R. Watson, eds. *A Handbook to English Romanticism*. New York: St. Martin's Press and London: Macmillan Press, 1992. xix + 326. \$59.95.

Reviewed By Nelson Hilton

What do the following have in common: the aeolian harp, Jacobinism, *The Anti-Jacobin Review*, the London Corresponding Society, Nature, costume and fashion, divorce, Herbert Croft (*Love and Madness*, 1780), Charles Lloyd (*Edmund Oliver*, 1798), C. F. Volney (*The Ruins*, 1791, trans. 1792, 12th ed. 1804), Edward Williams (a.k.a. Iolo Morganwg), Rousseau, and John Thelwall? Answer: none is entered in the *Encyclopedia of Romanticism*, or even—with the exception of the last two—listed in the volume's index. While "one of the delights" for the editor was the including of "novel topics volunteered by their discoverers [sic], such as hymnody, puns, satanism, vegetarianism, to name a few," some readers will regret to find less novel topics unconsidered. There is an entry for "Middle Classes," but not "Class," or "Working [or, Lower] Class," or "Aristocracy"; Castle-reagh rates a column, but with no mention of his haunting death; "Opium and Laudanum" says nothing about dosages or prices; the Diorama and the Panorama get several pages each, the Phantasmagoria not a word.

In keeping with its intention to be "for everyone," beginning with "undergraduate English majors," the work



includes a fair number of entries on such clichés as "Camelion Poet," "Egotistical, or Wordsworthian, Sublime," "Emotion Recollected in Tranquillity," "Negative Capability," "Organic Form," "Real Language of Men," "Spontaneous Overflow of Powerful Feelings," "Spots of Time," "Willing Suspension of Disbelief," and "Wise Passiveness." The over 4,000 words on Blake (as poet) by Patricia Elizabeth Davis are harmless enough for undergraduates, though *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* goes unmentioned and Felpham is placed on "the eastern coast of England." In this article, as elsewhere (with the exception of Angela Esterhammer's entry on "Natural Supernaturalism and 20th Century Critics"), Blake's best-known work is retitled "*Songs of Innocence and Experience*." Jeffrey D. Parker offers an additional 1,200 words on Blake as an engraver.

Undergraduates are not likely to be troubled with various errors in the book, which has Fuseli going to Rome "in 1800" (212), *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* published "[i]n 1783" (271), *The Monk* in "1795" (558), *Thalaba the Destroyer* in "1797" (593); which has Erasmus Darwin (d. 1802) as "a personal friend" of Sara Coleridge (b. 1802) (113); which suggests that "a considerable impact of Kantian and

Edited by Jean Raimond and J. R. Watson

A Handbook to English Romanticism



other German thought can be seen . . . in Burke's *Enquiry*" (278) and that James Mackintosh's *Vindiciae Gallicae* was "along with Paine's *Rights of Man* . . . the only liberal defense of the French Revolution" in the face of Burke (357); or, which, in an article on "Sabbatarianism" states that "[t]he controversy reached its height in 1677, when the Puritan Parliament passed the Sunday Observance Act" and that "[b]y 1780, various Sabbatarian societies sought legislation that would . . . halt rail service" (506; the same contributor's 200-odd words on "The Bible and Biblican Criticism" forebear any mention of Bishop Lowth, Alexander Geddes, or J. G. Eichhorn). Even undergraduates, though, might wonder at the logic governing "lumbering stage-coaches that rarely exceeded three miles per hour: in 1770, the 176-mile trip from London to Exeter took at least two days" (359). Perhaps if the volume had been "virtually a companion" to the editor for more than "several months," some of these would have been caught—but when she herself can write that Paine "segued into journalism" (432), one can hardly expect editorial strictures on "to hero worship" as a verb (464) or the use of "boss" to characterize James Mill's professional relation to Peacock at the East India Co. (448).

The *Encyclopedia of Romanticism* is then, not one of those books three copies of which "No gentleman can be without . . . one for show, one for use, and one for borrowers"—to appropriate the formulation of the "important collector" Richard Heber reported by Beverly Schneller on "Publishing" (475). But for those who borrow a copy, there is gold to be found. Among others might be mentioned strong entries by Sheila Spector ("Berkeley's Idealism," "Commonsense Philosophy," "Joseph Johnson," "Milton," "Skepticism"), Alexander S. Gourlay ("Richard Cosway," "Lord Egremont," "Thomas Girtin," "Edwin Landseer," "William Hayley"), Esterhammer ("Chatterton," "Insanity and Eccentric Genius," "Kant and Theories of German Idealism"), Frederick Burwick ("Coleridge," "Influence of German Idealism"), Alan Richardson ("Education," "Literacy"), and Jenijoy La Belle ("George Morland"—a discussion memorable not least for the account of the artist's composing, shortly before his death at 41, "his own unvarnished epitaph: 'Here lies a drunken dog'"). The articles on "Children's Literature" (Susan N. Maher), "Ballad" (Robert O'Connor), "Metrical Theory and Versification" (Brennan O'Donnell), "Satire" (Gary R. Dyer), and "Medievalism" (Joseph Rosenblum) stand out with some others—from the last we learn that Christie's first recorded auction of armor occurred in 1789. Fanny Burney may go unmentioned, but the volume recovers a number of women writers, including Agnes Bennett (1750?-1808), who "[t]hrough immensely popular in her own day, . . . is now one of the most obscure of her time."

The discussion of "Music" (Doris A. Clatanoff) will interest anyone thinking about the "glee" of the "Introduction" to *Songs of Innocence*, and it lends a note on which to part with a volume which offers pleasant gleanings:

The glee, a native vocal music form generally written entirely for male voices, was common in England from 1780 to 1860. Set to the lyrics of writers such as

Shakespeare, Jonson, Sidney, John Lily, Nicholas Breton, Dryden, William Shenstone, and Burns, the glee depended on an expressive delivery of its words for successful presentation. Samuel Webbe (1740-1816), a popular and typical glee composer, wrote about 300 glees and published nine volumes of them. . . . From 1787 to 1858, the Glee Club worked zealously to promote glee writing. (395, 396)

Though less than half the length of the volume just noticed, and nearly a hundred words fewer per page, Jean Raimond and J. R. Watson's *A Handbook to English Romanticism* does include entries for some of the items mentioned at the beginning: *The Anti-Jacobin Review*, the Jacobin novel, Nature, and Rousseau. While it omits the "novel topics," lesser-known figures, touchstones, and—unfortunately—such brief bibliographies as the *Encyclopedia* offers, the contributions by an experienced team of Anglo-French scholars combine for a less ambitious but sound and professional overview. Like its competitor, the *Handbook* has its share of howlers and typos (e.g., that Mary Shelley "published a second novel, *Mathilda*, in 1819: [247], "*Sofie*" for "*Safie*" as the name of Keats's friend Reynolds' eastern tale [193]—though the 1814 date listed for its publication does correct the *Encyclopedia's* 1813), and it says nothing whatsoever concerning engraving. Surprising too is a discussion of Coleridge's biography which passes over his sibling situation and the death of his father.

But worth seeking out are Christian La Cassagnère's relatively lengthy articles on the meta-topics of "Dreams" (though Fuseli's 1782 *Nightmare* is "painted around 1790" [102]) and "The Self"; the latter studies the genealogy of "psycho-cosmic space" and the "plurivocal speech fit to give utterance to the plural subject . . . [a] supreme form of lyricism . . . no longer . . . a lyricism of the first person" (240). And David Jasper, most pertinently for Blake though too briefly, discusses "Religious Thought: Wesley, Swedenborg"; he reports that "there were six

communicants in St Paul's Cathedral, London, on Easter Day 1800" (219) and observes that the ideas of Swedenborg and Kant "are often uncannily alike" (220). Bernard Beatty reminds us that "except as the occasion of Shelley's brilliant poem, Peterloo has had more resonance as a political myth in the twentieth century than it had in the nineteenth" (213).

At the price listed, the *Handbook* is another reference whose absence from desks won't be regretted; but if libraries shelve it next to the *Encyclopedia*, one might think of assigning compare-and-contrasts to students just opening new topics.

George Cumberland, *The Captive of the Castle of Sennaar: An African Tale in Two Parts*. Ed. G. E. Bentley, Jr., Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991. 361 pp.

Reviewed by Robert Kiely

HAD George Cumberland (1754-1842) lived in the sixteenth century he might have qualified as a "Renaissance man." Since, instead, he was an eighteenth-century man of parts and of leisure, heir to a modest but sufficient income, neither a courtier nor a soldier, he is thought of as a gifted amateur, a dabbler in many arts and sciences, a dilettante. His interest and talents ranged from poetry to physics, travel writing to geology, political and social reform to painting and engraving. He was an inventor, a collector of natural and artificial objects, a gentleman farmer, and, most of all, a prodigious writer of essays, poems, journals, and narratives. He and Blake were evidently friends as early as 1780, and Blake's last engraving, left un-