

favourite notion.

The book has also some minor flaws. If Hadfield pronounces to be a historicist, he should know that Britomart in *The Faerie Queene* is not a “descendant” (118) of Elizabeth, but an ancestor, and that not Octavian (Augustus) but Mark Antony reputedly ordered the killing of Cicero (104), even though history, as Hadfield says, “can be read in various ways according to one’s perspective” (120).

In the dialogue he had a couple of years ago with Willy Maley, his co-editor of *A View of the State of Ireland*,⁷ on the present state of Spenser studies, Hadfield pointed out that “much recent [Spenser] criticism displays a blithe disregard for any Irish dimension.”⁸ But considering that Spenser spent most of his adult life in Ireland since 1580, ten years before the first edition of *The Faerie Queene*, it is no longer possible to ignore the Irish elements in his work, either in verse or prose. This book explores the possibility of “Irish reading” and far beyond, treading carefully to avoid simplistic conclusion. Though the book sometimes leaves lay readers (myself being one) baffled in face of the complexity of the matter, it surely deserves gratitude of Shakespeareans and Spenserians for preventing both miso-political reading and naïve politicization of the early modern texts.

Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee and Peter J. Kitson, *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era: Bodies of Knowledge*

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. xvii + 324 pp.

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Since the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, now a classic, and other numerous kindred studies following the steps of Said, the relationship between literary discourse and colonial-cum-imperial politics has been one of the most popular and contentious subjects for literary scholars. Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes*, Peter Hulme’s *Colonial Encounters*, and Stephen Greenblatt’s *Marvellous Possessions*, all familiar to those scholars who are engaged in studies of politics and history of colonial and imperial Britain, are only the tips of the iceberg. Compared to other periods, especially those of the Renaissance and the Victorian Age, in which heated debates on cultural imperialism and British colonial rules in relation

⁷ Edmund Spenser, *A View of the State of Ireland: From the First Printed Edition (1633)*, eds. Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

⁸ Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley, “A View of the Present State of Spenser Studies: Dialogue-Wise,” *Edmund Spenser: Essays on Culture and Allegory*, eds. Jennifer Klein Morrison and Matthew Greenfield (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000) 185.

to literary texts have been developed by many critics, the era of Romanticism had been neglected by both literary scholars and historians of colonialism and imperialism. This neglect occurred despite the fact that the Romantic era was one of the crucial stages in colonial history in which the British empire extended its colonial territories further than ever before to establish itself as the most powerful and civilised country in the world. It seems that the turning point of Romantic scholarship in this area was occasioned by the publication in the early 1990s of Nigel Leask's pioneering study on Romantic Orientalism *British Romantic Writers and the East*, although John Barrell's study on De Quincey and imperialism published just before Leask's also marked a watershed in Romantic scholarship. Throughout the 1990s, there came a substantial number of studies concerning Romanticism and its colonial, imperial, and racial contexts, including two memorable collected essays, *Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture 1780–1834* and *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire 1780–1830*; these Romantic studies dealing with colonialism and imperialism culminated in Alan Bewell's *Romanticism and Colonial Disease*, definitely one of the most important studies of this kind.

At first glance, Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee and Peter J. Kitson's *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era* looks like just another contribution to the recent trend of Romantic scholarship. Its premise, according to the authors, is that 'Romanticism' emerged partly as a response to bodies of knowledge collected and analysed in scientific explorations, taken as both geographical voyages and scientific investigations into physical and physiological sciences. Cook's voyage of 1768, among other explorations, brought back fruitful discoveries and specimens (dead or alive) to metropolitan London where they were categorised, catalogued, arranged and collected to provide empirical data to anyone who wanted to explore further over the globe. Following Bruno Latour, a French theorist, the authors call European metropolitan centres the 'centres of calculation' (12). Not only travellers exploited the new 'bodies of knowledge' that were calculated at these centres; literary men, 'Romantics', also quickly responded to, and fully capitalised on, the latest scientific data, knowledge and narratives to form a new poetics, 'Romanticism' (6). Consequently, Romanticism cannot be understood, argue the authors, without addressing the colonial and imperial contexts and networks that scientific voyages helped to create. This argument sounds less innovative and even rather banal among current cultural and literary scholarship; but this false impression evaporates upon discovery of the authors' more challenging contention that Sir Joseph Banks, a gentleman-scientist (or natural philosopher in the eighteenth-century parlance) of the Enlightenment, traveller, botanist, collector, and doyen of the Royal Society, the most influential scientific institution of the era, was an 'unwitting begetter of the Romanticism' (9). Behind all the 'bodies of knowledge' collected, analysed and disseminated for the use and re-use by Europeans in

subsequent quests, scientific or explorative, for their own imperial and commercial benefits, stands Joseph Banks. Surprisingly, historians neglected Banks's influence on colonial and imperial history until quite recently when John Gascoigne critically evaluated his significant roles in his two monumental studies on Banks. Extending Gascoigne's insights to Romantic studies, the authors bring Banks to the forefront of Romantic scholarship. Though his presence becomes more and more shadowy as the chapters go by, Banks rather than Wordsworth or Shelley is the central figure of the book.

The study undertaken in *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era* is divided into two parts: the first part deals with overseas exploration and its effects on scientific and literary writings; the second part is primarily concerned with an examination of the ways in which science and literature are interrelated in the context of colonial expansion. The book contains an astonishingly wide range of topics including travel writings, exploration narratives, botany, Romantic Orientalism, colonialism and imperialism, racial theory, terrestrial magnetism, polar expeditions, electrical science, Jenner's vaccination, and Rumford's heat-saving technology, as well as an overview of the contested relationship of these topics to Romantic writings, both canonical and non-canonical.

In the Introduction, the authors define the aims of the book (Banks's central place both in colonial history and in literary Romanticism) and summarise its content, acknowledging the vast array of related secondary studies by precursors. Then in Chapter 1 'Sir Joseph Banks and his networks', the authors seek to demonstrate the way in which Banks established himself as an authority in the scientific community and as an 'impresario' of the empire. Employing the critical concepts of 'centres of calculation' and the 'cycle of accumulation' from Latour, the authors apply them to their explication of Banks's complex and pervasive network, the very centre of which is Banks's own house where he collected a huge number of specimens and scientific data that had been gathered from all over the world. Indeed, Banks's colossal wealth enabled him to administrate Cook's voyage to the South Pacific at will; Banks took with him a retinue of naturalists, collectors and artists (whose mission was, of course, to draw and paint exotic flowers and animals) resulting in an additional of '30,000 specimens of plants and 1,000 of animals', all carefully preserved and listed in Banks's renowned collection (36). Banks extended his collection to the reading public by publishing gorgeous visual illustrations and fascinating travel narratives whose creation he carefully supervised (38). According to the authors, Banks was also the centre of the 'cycle of accumulation' in that he manufactured assembled fragmentary knowledge of foreign cultures into codified handbooks for explorers, so that 'they became a code that could be used, again and again' to allow natural philosophers and explores to make sense of unfamiliar places and peoples before they set out on

their voyages (39). Banks sent out many other ambitious (read 'imperialistic' and 'colonialist') explorers whose minds were already prepared by the 'virtual experience' made possible by Banks's collection not only to the South Pacific but also to Africa, Australia, China and the North Pole. Banks was, indeed, claim the authors, 'the shadowy impresario of Britain's colonial expansion' (34).

The remaining chapters of Part 1 all concern Banks's shadowy but powerful presence in explorations to Tahiti (chs. 2 and 5), India (ch. 3), Africa (ch. 4) and the North Pole (ch. 7); they also explain the Romantic responses to knowledge brought forth by these voyages. Chapter 2 'Tahiti in London; London in Tahiti' focuses on a real islander Omai (Mai) who visited Britain and then returned to Tahiti; as the only living specimen and 'representative of a culture', he was Banks's 'prize specimen' from his exploration to Tahiti (51). The authors not only examine Banks's exploitation of Omai in London, but also reveal the way in which Omai as an indigenous person used and played on the very 'tools of power' (48) Banks (or Britain) provided him. This chapter further explores literary response to Omai, among which William Cowper's *The Task* is most intriguing. Exposing his own alienation from London, Cowper depicts Omai as an alienated person representing millions of other indigenous people who 'suffer as a result of contact and colonisation by European' (63); Cowper's Omai was neither noble savage (friend of his home country) nor a native Londoner (a member of civilised country) since Omai's uncommercial but refined culture had been spoilt by the metropolitan culture of conspicuous consumption (63).

Banks's network was indeed all-embracing, and he assumed the administration of the East India Company, 'Britain's most powerful colonial body' (71). Chapter 3 'Indian flowers and Romantic Orientalism' examines the way in which Banks operated the Company to obtain colonial benefits constituting of commercialistic and imperialistic knowledge of Indian botany. The chapter also reveals how the writing of Sir William Jones, Banks's friend and the most eminent scholar of the Orient, predisposed Romantics to radically modify epic poetry in a new 'Oriental' style. Unsatisfied with the Linnaean method of classification and preferring Indian names of plants, Jones constructed his own system of Indian botany, which embodied an unexpected hybrid of the European system with Indian culture; his approach was a sharp contrast to Erasmus Darwin's praise in *The Botanic Garden* of imperial botany, the system promoted by Banks (77–80). Even more significant to Romantic writers was Jones's translations from Sanskrit, which caused a sensation among European readers by showing them that 'Hindu civilisation was capable of producing poets as great as Shakespeare' (81). The authors take the case of Robert Southey as the Romantic writer most-influenced by Jones's Orientalism (and especially by the fascinating Hindu myth). Jones's great influence on Southey is shown in Southey's sustained attempt to reinvigorate the apparently exhausted

western genre of the epic. Southey, in writing *The Curse of Kehama*, seriously treated the Hindu myth and culture as a subject matter, regarding them as appropriate for the epic, in effect questioning the supremacy of his own culture (82, 85).

Banks's awful presence continues in the next chapter, 'Mental travellers: Banks, African exploration and the Romantic imagination'. The authors illuminate how the narratives of an expedition to a deadly place, central Africa, and particularly that of Mungo Park, helped to create an essential element of Romantic poetics, what the authors call a quest romance or spiritual journey. It was Banks who sent out Park, one of few explorers who returned alive, to Africa for an imperial mission; it was also Banks that carefully supervised and published Park's narrative, which instantly caused a sensation (94). Park's empirically truthful account of his soul-searching voyage inspired male Romantic poets to rewrite Park's material (geographical) journey into a mental and spiritual one, turning the world outside in (98). Wordsworth, for instance, 'rewrites Park's narrative as a spot of time', making Africa the place where man's hidden and deeper self is to be disclosed (100). Therefore, the central topos of Wordsworthian Romanticism is, according to the authors, heavily indebted to Banks's exploration.

In Chapter 5 'Banks, Bligh and the breadfruit' traces the fluctuating symbolism of breadfruit, a Tahitian natural product initially signifying to Europeans natural fertility and savage liberty in contrast to sugar of the West Indies, a symbol of imperial tyranny. The authors cogently elucidate how Tahiti, a land of freedom and fertility, was configured by some Romantics as the real location for the pastoral ideal that had been placed in the mythical past (109). In fact, Southey and Coleridge in the early 1790s had Tahiti in their minds as a visitable location for their free commune, Pantisocracy, which they imagined as an opposite to imperial and 'civilised' Bristol (119). Under severe pressure from anti-Jacobin backlash, however, their radical ideal was soon to be replaced by the more conservative and rather sinister ideology of evangelicalism with the work ethic as its central tenet. Tahiti was no longer imagined as a radical alternative to imperial Bristol or the West Indies; on the contrary, advocating 'reformed imperialism of laboured righteousness and sweated civilisation', Southey and Coleridge claimed that Tahitians should be Christianised and Anglicised and conform to the evangelical work ethic (121).

The later Romantics' dark vision and conservative ideology (especially that of Coleridge) concerning empire and colonial policy are also the issue of Chapter 6 'Exploration, headhunting and race theory' in which the authors examine how Coleridge's view of race is altered from an anti-imperialist one into a more pernicious (almost racist) one. Illuminating the explorers' contribution to the nascent racial science that gradually loomed large in the Romantic period, the authors argue that the skull (a raw material, not the impressionistic representations

of crania in drawings and painting created by travellers) was the cornerstone for the racial theorists (i.e. anthropologists or comparative anatomists) to substantiate their biased claim that the Caucasian race was superior to other non-European races. For Blumenbach, an avid 'head-hunter' who acquired the largest collection of crania, the skull was the 'ultimate hard fact' and provided more objective and empirical evidence through Europeans' anatomical features of their moral superiority (132–33). The authors note that Banks again stood behind both Blumenbach's collection of skulls and the resultant theory of race, for Banks was Blumenbach's 'principal supplier of skulls' as the 'impresario of scientific discussion of race' (138). The authors go on to examine Coleridge's theorising of race. Developing Blumenbach's theory of race, Coleridge superseded the empirical hard data of Blumenbach with Kantian idealist organicism (143), according to which, racial inequality should be explained by God's providential scheme (145). Contrasting Caucasians with 'inferior Races' who were in the process of 'degeneration', Coleridge set out a pernicious racial ideology on Europeans and their mission to civilise the inferior races of non-Europeans (146). Such racial ideology, continue the authors, would sanctify Britain's colonisation as a divine plan, as expressed in Coleridge's sinister passage: 'Colonisation is... an imperative duty on Great Britain. God seems to hold out his finger to us over the sea' (147).

Romantic retreat from political radicalism to conservatism and modified imperialism, which is most clearly exemplified by Coleridge, is actually one of the side-stories in this book. The authors' contention is that behind this Romantic political recluse from early radicalism stood Banks. This well-wrought assertion is also intelligible in the second part of the book 'British science and literature in the context of empire', although only three chapters are devoted to it. In Chapter 8 "Man electrified man": Romantic revolution and the legacy of Benjamin Franklin' the authors elaborate on how radical and revolutionary energy both circulated and was represented by electricity in the early 1790s; electricity was the legacy of Franklin whose electrical experiment and revolutionary ideas became the symbol of the revolutionary ideal for early Romantics, but was later to be 'insulated' in the difficult situation of anti-revolutionary fervour. Using Humphry Davy as a prime example of a Romantic who retreated away from early enthusiasm for the radical politics associated with electricity, the authors describe how a figure of Romantic genius (experimentalist) was transformed into that of isolated 'scientist' cut off from the social network (191–94). Banks again stood behind the Romantic retreat, for as a doyen of science he helped to destroy the alternative radical scientific-network of dissenters and to create the Royal Institution in London. Banks refused to provide Davy with support because of Davy's involvement in the radical network centred at the Pneumatic Institution of Bristol, where Davy had experimented with his equally radical friend Thomas Beddoes. Therefore, Davy

was destined to go to the Royal Institution in London as a reformed genius.

Edward Jenner was also denied to access to Banks's vast network because Jenner's attempt at dissemination of a vaccine, the latest method to prevent smallpox, was perceived to be dangerous due to its bestial origin and levelling implication. How Jenner overcame Banks's disapproval to spread the gospel of vaccination all over the globe is the subject of Chapter 9 'The beast within: vaccination, Romanticism and the Jenneration of disease'. The authors trace the way that Jenner turned to the help of Romantic poets to gain acceptance of vaccination by the reading public. Noting Jenner's encouragement of Robert Bloomfield, 'a far more popular rural poet than Wordsworth' (211), to write on vaccination, the authors argue that in Bloomfield's poem on vaccination, which won instant success, Jenner was given a god-like status and vaccination was imagined as neither radical nor levelling (that is, it did not lower men to the level of cow). Under the furious atmosphere of the Napoleonic Wars, contend the authors, poetry served to 'solidify the image of vaccination as saviour of public health and of Jenner as imperial hero — both against Napoleon and for ailing millions in the colonies' (223). With the help of Banks's network, Jenner's vaccination ultimately was sent overseas to atone for the sins of colonial politics and to redeem Britain from its imperial guilt. The authors add an incisive remark about the deeper fear of vaccination — its bestial origin (the 'beast within') — haunting Britons, which had uncannily popped up in James Morier's Persian novel (225–26). The last chapter, 'Britain's black boys and the technologies of benevolence', examines in detail Count Rumford's heat-saving technology to save chimney sweepers from working in miserable conditions and his equally relevant technology of benevolence to discipline and indoctrinate the poor labourer into evangelical ('pious and good') Christians. Rumford approached and turned to Banks for planning his new institution, the Royal Institution, one of Banks's 'centres of calculation' (240). Tracing the metaphorical relation between black slaves and equally black boys (sooty sweeps), the authors delineate how technologised benevolence played on this metaphoric relation to treat the lower-class working people as objects 'to be disciplined and machined into usefulness' (259). The authors end the chapter with William Blake's prophetic voice in 'The Chimney Sweeper', by contextualising it in a Rumfordian ruthless technology of benevolence.

Overall, *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era* is well-researched and is full of insightful and cogent arguments that contribute significantly to current Romantic scholarship. Drawing heavily on recent studies of colonial history, as well as the history of science, the authors succeed in showing the ways that a new form of literature called 'Romanticism' partly arose from the response to the latest discoveries made by explorers and scientists, behind whom stood the

draconian Banks. There are many stimulating arguments and eye-opening points that cannot be fully dealt with in this review. For example, the authors perceptively contrast the Banksian metropolitan (conservative) network with the Beddoean (and Priestleyan) provincial network, a radical alternative to the former; they provide an account of how the provincial network finally collapsed in an anti-revolutionary atmosphere, a process in which Banks played a significant part, making the way for (now-reformed) scientists to go to Banks's patronage. The authors then link this collapse with the transformation of young radical Romantics to political conservatives; the authors also link the Romantics' retreat from the radical scientific network into solitary meditation on nature (not unlike a Wordsworthian man of contemplation) to the emergence of the crucial image of the 'modern scientist' (actually, as the authors point out, the term 'scientist' was coined at the end of the Romantic era), a figure of not unlike Victor Frankenstein. But, besides these thought-provoking arguments, what makes this study so original and even sensational lies in the authors' bold assertion that Joseph Banks, the Enlightenment gentleman scientist, was 'a founding father' of the Romantic movement (273).

Is it really so? Some readers might not be fully convinced by the authors' contention. Admitting that Banks manipulated a vast network and reigned over the scientific community for the benefits of imperial Britain, as an 'impresario' of British colonial history, does not mean that the authors' claim about the genesis of Romanticism is valid. For one thing, the authors do not address to the nagging problem of terming and defining 'Romanticism'. Although they touch on the traditional ideas and concepts defining Romanticism including the 'spot of time', quest romance, Orientalism, and radical politics turned to conservatism, these features only constitute part of 'Romanticism'. Why do the authors construe these features as 'essential'? If the authors mean by 'Romanticism' the general writings penned in the era, and it seems that it is the case (as the authors maintain, Coleridge included his *Theory of Life and Journalism in literature* (4)), how do they reconcile the generality of writings to the particularity of 'Romanticism'? Their argument only helps to create a more blurred idea of 'Romanticism'. The second and more fundamental problem concerns the matter of causation — what evidence exists of the extent to which Banks's encompassing influence on numerous areas of scientific activities also served, to a significant degree, to engender a new literary genre called 'Romanticism'? To put it simply, it is safe to say that Sir William Jones's peculiar orientalism exerted a momentous influence on Southey's reinvigoration of the Romantic epic, or that Mungo Park's fascinating narrative of voyage into central Africa provided many (male) Romantic poets with a crucial tool to modify a quest romance into a spiritual journey, or that Blumenbach's largest collection of skulls prompted Coleridge to meditate on his most pernicious

view of race. Banks's influence is evident in all cases discussed in the second part of the book: Davy, Jenner and Rumford. Does that mean that Banks whose 'shadowy' presence and whose magical 'unseen hands' are sometimes barely perceived behind all these profiles also 'caused' and 'founded' the Romantic Movement? It seems that the authors' challenging assertion might be qualified in this respect. Probably part of the problems is to be found in the way the literary texts of Romanticism are treated by the authors, for the literary texts are often discussed fragmentarily and preference is given to historical and contextual accounts. The discussion in Chapter 7 is a case in point, for the authors develop long (and tedious) accounts about theories of terrestrial magnetism and the Polar expeditions before embarking on a discussion about the Romantic concept of polarity and its scientific contexts recounted in the previous section. Is such a long excursion into magnetic research necessary to understand the Romantic idea of polarity in relation to scientific research, especially considering that the relationship turns out to be linked only by a 'metaphorical web' (175)? In addition, the authors' promise in the Introduction that Coleridge will be treated as a central figure of the era (24) is half-betrayed, since the presence of Coleridge is limited to just a few discussions.

This work is the product of three different scholars of the same literary field. It is somewhat unusual in humanities, especially in the literary discipline, for scholars whose research subjects are essentially different to prepare a single work together; ordinarily, these kinds of research are assembled into a volume of collected essays. Considering the irregularity of their approach, the authors of the book succeed immensely in bringing together their divergent research materials into a single coherent work. There might be even greater value in scholars from different disciplines collaborating, especially literary scholars and the scholars of history like Gascoigne to whom some of the authors' arguments are heavily indebted. Such co-working might be extremely difficult to do, but would be tantamount to a truly and purely *inter-disciplinary* enquiry that the scholars of future generations would undertake. This book is worth reading and should be duly appraised. In bringing the hitherto 'shadowy' figure Joseph Banks to the forefront of Romantic studies as well as to the forefront of colonialism studies, this well-informed and well-documented book undoubtedly marks a *tour de force* and will surely compel the reader to think about the relationship between 'Romantic' writings and exploration, science and colonialism.