
This deceptively slim volume contains no fewer than seventeen chapters, in addition to the Introduction, each of which explores the social, cultural, or textual construction of masculinity. Some seek to develop strategies for articulating a gay male critical perspective; some blend autobiographical and personal criticism with textual analysis; all set out to expose the debilitating personal and cultural effects of heterosexism, or at least to critique heterosexual ideology. In short, this is a collection of timely, sophisticated, and theoretically up-to-date essays about, as the title suggests, how language and society construct the gender category "men."

Given that this kind of inquiry is very new, it is perhaps churlish to complain that "men," in the context of these essays, are all English speaking men who lived and wrote during the last three hundred years. If it were not for the essay by Jacques Lezra on the 16th-century English rhetorician George Puttenham, and for Wayne Koestenbaum’s essay on Oscar Wilde, they would all be American. And were it not for Marcellus Blount’s essay, "Caged Birds: Race and Gender in the Sonnet," they would all be white. In saying this, I'm leaving out the essays about women writers, and have made Andrew Ross—to the extent that he writes about himself—an American, but the point is surely clear that a very specific tradition of masculinity is at issue here.

For readers who are not specialists in American Studies, finding slightly more than half the essays to be on topics from this field might prove daunting; and there sometimes seems to me to be rather too strong a whiff of the oak-panelling and stale cigar smoke of Ivy League clubbism. Foucault’s name generates the longest entry in the Index, but we hear nothing substantial about masculinity in the classical or pre-modern West. Whole hosts of masculinities simply don’t show up.

A focus on what I have been calling “American” masculinity is, of course, a sensible way of organizing a collection of essays such as this. So it might be more productive for me to hope that Engendering Men inspires future work on masculinity from postcolonial and native American perspectives than to complain about their absence here. All the same, studies like Walter L. Williams’s The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986) are significantly absent from the suggested list of further readings. And it is unfortunate that, throughout the book, “America” is used to mean the anglophone United States. So much for the engendering of non-anglo “American” men.

A second conceptual problem comes with the subtitle, and I am not the only one to be concerned by it. Mark Seltzer, in a note, declares that his own contribution “is not, by the way, about ‘the question of male feminist criticism’” (306). That rhetorical gesture, “by the way,” may seem rather casual, and the disclaimer itself might have appeared to better effect right up front, perhaps in paragraph four or five amidst the methodological introduction to his essay. But at least Seltzer understands what he is about, and wants to be clear about what his essay is not about. Ross too ends by declaring that his essay is about “engendering men” (101). How do the other chap-
ters negotiate a position under the question of the subtitle, "the question of male feminist criticism"?

In "Engendering F. O. M.: The Private Life of American Renaissance," Michael Cadden offers an elegiac account of the life and times of Francis Otto Matthiessen, a gay Ivy League academic whose *American Renaissance* (1941) not only "helped create and legitimize the field of American Studies," but also remains in use today "throughout the country" (27). Cadden suggests that Matthiessen's personal struggles with his sexual identity, revealed by his posthumously published letters, are as important for understanding the achievements and limitations of his scholarship as they are for understanding his suicide in 1950. Active in left political movements, Matthiessen committed suicide "shortly before he was to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee about his political sympathies" (27). But, and here Cadden is entirely convincing, Matthiessen's despair was inseparably bound up with accumulated grief over the death in 1945 of his life-long lover and companion, Russell Cheney, and with emotional and intellectual crises arising from the pains of his "closeted position" (33).

The implicit villain of the piece is a particular moment in the history of (middle-class, white) US homophobia, one which compromised the integrity of Matthiessen's treatment of women and sexuality in his influential scholarship, and which so excluded the possibility of connecting personal and political life as to generate tragic suffering and suicidal despair. Cadden, however, cleverly avoids offering the tragic version of Matthiessen's story with its predictable and potentially disempowering political message, and prefers instead to end with "a fantastic and utopian note, borrowed from the imagination of Virginia Woolf" (34). Instead of a fantasy of Shakespeare's sister, we are offered one that playfully rewrites the autobiographical opening of the essay by imagining how different Cadden's life as an undergraduate at Yale would have been, had he been taught by Matthiessen's brother, Michael, "the great gay critic." The fantasy and essay both close with the dream of "the best course I ever took . . . the one he co-taught with a feminist colleague based on the book they cowrote—*The Other American Renaissance*" (35). Beyond the specific use of Woolf to model his story of Michael, Cadden's fraternal-bonding fantasy engages forms of autobiographical and personal writing that have been developed, though not exclusively, within feminist literary criticism of recent years (see Nancy K. Miller, *Getting Personal: Feminist Occasions and Other Autobiographical Acts* [New York and London: Routledge, 1991]).

If the achievements of Cadden's essay rely on a double debt to feminism, the "question of male feminist criticism" seems to be about how much men owe to feminists for charting ways of understanding how male identity and masculinity enter into and help determine the conditions of academic life and production, including the writing of homosexuality into history, and the construction of critical strategies, tropes, and conventions suitable for use in gay male cultural criticism such as Cadden's. This is how the editorial introduction positions the collection: the writings of a generation of male literary and cultural critics who have been taught how to do their job by feminist scholars and feminist theory.

In the terms of this rationale, with which Cadden's essay is congruent, the collection represents literally a "post-feminist" criticism, what Tania Modleski
has recently called *Feminism Without Women* (her book is subtitled *Culture and Criticism in a 'Postfeminist' Age* [New York and London: Routledge, 1991]). One presumption of postfeminist criticism is that feminist theory has now moved so far beyond the question of women's oppression that it can dispense with women entirely; once "woman" has been thoroughly problematized as a cultural construct, an effect of gender coding, then it becomes a subject position that can be inhabited by men. Modleski shrewdly points out that this isn't altogether a good thing for women, or for feminism. However sympathetic and pro-feminist the men who want to move in may be, and however necessary it might be for men to support feminist causes, this presumption that feminist criticism can proceed without women comes dangerously close to legitimating a sense that feminism no longer has any specific political content, that the women's movement is over, all the battles fought and won. And for the generation entering colleges and universities in the early nineties, the belief that women's oppression has ended in some victory for the goddess Equality can be a dangerously compelling turn of mind.

What happens when women begin disappearing from feminist criticism? How does "woman" figure in "the question of male feminist criticism"? In Cadden's essay, as we saw, she becomes equal but subordinate. She now has a job at an Ivy League University, where the equality of opportunity continues since she gets, with a famous male colleague, to cowrite a book and co-teach a course that have been specifically designed to undo the mistakes of that colleague's famous brother. But she's clearly subordinate too; she is not only allowed no name, but she might not even be a woman. All we are told is that Michael's colleague is "a feminist"; and all that suggests is that Michael isn't. And if the colleague turns out not to be a woman, well, so much for that two-faced goddess Equality.

To suggest that these problems would not arise were the collection to have been subtitled "Criticism and the Question of Male Sexual Identity" is not simply a gesture of political rectitude since it would be to describe better the rationale outlined in the editorial Introduction. Here we are told that "feminist theory" has made possible the "perspectives on gender and sexuality featured here" (1), and that "feminism has foregrounded sexuality" for textual analysis (2). This is as far as the Introduction goes in outlining a relationship to feminism, which is one of indebtedness for learning how to analyse texts in terms of gender and sexuality. This formula accurately focusses the kinds of questions and topics addressed in several of the essays themselves, and there is every reason for male critics to be tackling questions of gender and sexuality. Since it is no news to feminists that patriarchal ideology wants us to think of women when we think of sex, finding feminism being reduced to sexuality in this way won't be as much of a surprise as a cause for concern. What about class? and what about race? In the Introduction, though this is not true of all the essays, the reach and turn of feminist critical theory over the last twenty and more years has been reduced to questions of gender and sexuality.

Framing the collection under the name "Feminist Criticism," however much control we allow the qualifier "Male," comes dangerously close to transforming an act of *hommage* into an appropriation that disregards women and questions of female subjectivity. Wayne Koestenbaum offers us a bold
definition: “Male feminist criticism means to articulate maleness as strange, outcast, and impermissible; gayness is outcast, and so I may discuss my reading of Oscar Wilde without apologizing for its partiality” (176). I like the idea of reading a man, not just a text or a work or a life, but everything the name allows us to imagine. I bet it was fun writing that, “my reading of Oscar Wilde,” almost as much fun, perhaps, as reading Koestenbaum’s generally stylish, witty, and intelligent study of strategies for gay reading. Wilde himself would, I suspect, sometimes have groaned at the style—“De Profundis is a liminal, revolutionary document, a primary invocation to a historically constituted gay reader” (181)—but he would surely also have admired it for being so earnest. What worries me, and it would surely have perplexed Wilde too, is what that “feminist” is doing in Koestenbaum’s definition?

The disappearance of women from some versions of academic feminist criticism clearly has a lot to do with the institutionalization and commodification of feminist theory in recent years. In terms of the commissioning and marketing of academic books, everyone concerned knows that “feminism” sells. And that is by no means a bad thing since it has enabled many women to develop intellectually and professionally, and it has led to the development of a considerable body of politically and intellectually serious feminist work that has insisted on the importance of analysing the socio-cultural construction of female subjectivity. And the methods, strategies, and techniques developed on behalf of feminist analysis have helped promote studies, like the essays in this collection, which seek to develop analyses of masculinity. The problem is that commodification can entail appropriation.

Modleski praises studies by Christopher Newfield and David Leverenz, male critics not represented here, for “show[ing] a real concern and knowledge about how male power frequently works to efface female subjectivity by occupying the site of femininity” (7). By examining, respectively, how texts by Hawthorne and Emerson outline a process of heroic male-feminization these critics expose how this very process supports the subordination and effacement of female subjectivity. In Newfield’s words, identifying with the female position “enables men to evade the one-directional dominations of stereotypical masculinity, to master the non-confictual, and to occupy both sides of a question” (cited Modieski, 7). No where in Endgendering Men is this problem addressed. In one essay it is largely exemplified.

As its title suggests, Robert K. Martin’s essay “Hester Prynne, C’est Moi: Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Anxieties of Gender,” reproduces the first stage of the argument; Hawthorne represents masculinity as a site of conflict, one marked by “anxieties” that “bespeak a desire to speak both to and through women, a desire that might have allowed him to say, along with Flaubert, “Hester Prynne, c’est moi” (139). Martin’s essay offers us an elegantly historicized account of how Hawthorne’s artistry struggles with and often overcomes dominant heterosexual ideologies, and he is sensitive to how “the construction of male heterosexual identity” at the time “meant the increased sequestration and limitation of women” (138). But he leaves us with an image of what, to many women, might look like a dangerous kind of literary drag in which all the women’s parts are already taken by men.

When women disappear from feminist criticism, strange things can happen. Writing of this collection, Modleski notices the construction of strange
and novel ironies: "In an unusually strong postfeminist irony, the final essay of this volume which banishes women from its list of contributors is a complaint about the way heterosexual men have become invisible within feminism!” (12). On behalf of Robert Vorlicky, whose essay voices this complaint, let me say that he does take notice of what some women say when they write to and about male feminists. At least, he openly engages with Toril Moi’s essay “Men Against Patriarchy.” And that is more than can be said for the co-editor Joseph Boone, who reprints his own essay, “Of Me(n) and Feminism: Who(se) Is the Sex That Writes?”, without troubling to mention Moi’s essay—a detailed critical response to his essay—except in a self-styled “silent” note (292). These two essays, Boone’s and Moi’s response to it, appeared together in Linda Kauffman’s Gender and Theory: Dialogues on Feminist Criticism (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989). Here we have yet another strange irony, this one turning upon denial. “In the end, then,” Moi concludes, “Boone’s paper is structured as much by his obsession with (predominantly male) professional hierarchies, fame and prestige as by his quite genuine feminist engagement” (ed. Kauffman, 188). Ignoring Moi’s point about institutionalization, Boone reissues the essay without significant revision, confessing that it was “originally written in 1987,” and then admitting that the question it addresses “now strikes me as perhaps less urgent than measuring the degree of commitment to a feminist politics demonstrated in these men’s newly engendered methods of analysis” (11, head-note). Professional obsession has surely overcome feminist engagement when the urgent task appears to be measuring how much the other guys have got.

Reading these essays under the name “feminist,” and measuring them in terms of their contribution to feminist theory is both to misconceive and severely to limit their actual range, focus and achievement. Too many of them, like Seltzer’s “The Love Master,” a fascinating and deeply-learned materialist analysis of the physical culture of masculinity in turn-of-the-century America, don’t address the “feminist” in the question posed by the subtitle. Lee Edelman’s “Re redeeming the Phallus: Wallace Stevens, Frank Lentricchia, and the Politics of (Hetero)Sexuality,” has another go at Lentricchia’s already overdiscussed style of manliness in a lively example of contemporary academic debate, a genre in which “politics” often means disagreement among living academics of a certain eminence. Measuring this essay in terms of its contribution to feminist debates would be missing the point. Readers interested by recent debates among feminists will want to look elsewhere, to Nancy Miller’s Getting Personal, and to Conflicts in Feminism, edited by Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), for a start.

Similarly, reading the essays by Michael A. Cooper, Walter Hughes, Ed Cohen, Michael Warner, Christopher Castiglia, and Andrew Ross, for the degree of their political commitment to feminism, seems to me an odd thing for an editor to invite. Cooper’s “Discipl(in)ing the Master, Mastering the Discipl(in)e: Erotomories of Discipleship in James’ Tales of Literary Life,” examines the sometimes agonized and often satiric play of multiple sexualities across the surfaces and within the depths of Henry James’s textual reconstructions of how nineteenth-century literary culture demanded personal loyalty from those who wished to be thought in the know. Hughes’s “Meat Out of the Eater: Panic and Desire in American Puritan Poetry,” excavates impor-
tant strains in 17th-century American puritan belief in order to contextualize the remarkable writings of Wigglesworth, and in doing so reminds us how little historians have told us about homosexuality in the early-modern period.

Cohen’s coming-out piece, “Are We (Not) What We Are Becoming? ‘Gay’ ‘Identity,’ ‘Gay Studies,’ and the Disciplining of Knowledge,” autobiographically explores the possibilities of intervening on behalf of gay and lesbian interests within the contemporary US academy, thereby embodying, as it were, his argument that recent developments in theories of subjectivity can assist solving problems with the construction of identity politics. In arguing that the AIDS crisis has made the gay and lesbian position especially difficult to negotiate, Cohen mentions other identity-based academic fields—specifically women’s studies, black studies, Chicano studies, Native American studies, and Asian studies (173)—that do not share the problems posed by the AIDS crisis. And that’s where he leaves us, with identity politics fractured, set apart in separate spheres, as often happens when subjectivity is modelled psychoanalytically. Katie King’s “Local and Global: AIDS Activitism and Feminist Theory” (forthcoming in Provoking Agents: Theorizing Gender and Agency, ed. Judith Kegan Gardiner [University of Illinois Press]) argues that this critical move, which leaves identity politics in fragments and disabled, must be reconceptualized in terms of a politics of alliance that, in a previous essay, she terms “remapping” (“Producing Sex, Theory, and Culture: Gay/Straight Remappings in Contemporary Feminism,” in Conflicts in Feminism).

Warner’s “Homo-Narcissism: or, Heterosexuality” investigates the sexual identities of what we might call the subject of modernity; that is to say, it analyses how the construction of sexual identity theorized by de Beauvoir, Freud and Lacan symptomatically replays the various heterosexual crises of modernity. Castiglia’s “Rebel Without a Close,” describes contrasting triangulations of male desire in Nicholas Ray’s Rebel Without a Cause (1955), and two TV films, Consenting Adults (1985) and Welcome Home Bobby (1986), then ends with a postscript on the representation of homophobic violence in Nightmare on Elm Street 2 (1985). Castiglia also uses a psychoanalytic model to analyse subjectivity—we hear of fathers and sons, of being the other man, and of male-bonding jokes analysed according to Freud—which enables him to by-pass historical questions of class and genre. The history of thirty years becomes chronology: “When I wrote [this essay] in 1986, I was comfortably convinced that representation of gays in the media were changing for the better. My optimism was, of course, ludicrous . . .” (218). This essay makes me want to know more about the post-war US history it covers, more about the class-specificities of gay culture, and more about the historical and class differences between Hollywood and the TV Networks. Although not concerned with articulating a gay perspective, Andrew Ross’s “Cowboys, Cadillacs and Cosmonauts: Families, Film Genres, and Technocultures,” examines how the interplay between film and TV culture in the US has assisted the construction of masculinity in recent years. Ross is one of the best critics of contemporary culture writing today, and this is an exemplary study—shrewd, stylish, and provocative.

The specific and valuable achievements made by each of these essays are more considerable than can be grasped in terms of their commitment to feminist politics. Other essays, however, are on topics or exemplify methods that
will appeal directly to feminists engaged with articulating women's concerns alongside debates over discourse, class, and race.

In "Homelessness at Home: Placing Emily Dickinson in (Women's) History," Thomas Foster provides an exciting account of how Emily Dickinson used writing to resist the material contradictions embodied in the cult and ideology of domesticity. Foster demonstrates a sophisticated grasp of diverse arguments within materialist feminisms as exemplified by the work of Gayatri Spivak, Sheila Rowbotham, Martha Vicinus, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Mary Kelley, Lynn Segal, and Hilary Wainwright.

Robert L. Caserio's "Celibate Sisters-in-Revolution: Towards Reading Sylvia Townsend Warner," argues with Toril Moi over the political stakes of Woolf's modernity and Warner's Marxism. Where Woolf projected an identity between "mental chastity" and intellectual liberty, Caserio suggests, Warner's representation of celibate sisterhood more powerfully politicizes women's refusal of sexual-production. Alongside other novelists of the time, Warner was intent on turning male ideals of chastity back upon the social and material practices which enforced them; in her case, by developing a sometimes visionary, but always feminist critique of classical dialectical materialism that comprehended the complicities of capitalism with male power. Celibate sisterhood offers women a vision of revolutionary agency, one that, by denying sexual reproduction as usual, necessarily undermines the family and other social structures without which capitalism would collapse.

Jacques Lezra's "‘The Lady Was a Little Peruerse’: The ‘Gender’ of Persuasion in Puttenham’s Arte of English Poesie," traces how Puttenham's rhetorical figurations of "woman" and gender identity contributed to the linguistic and ideological construction of sexuality in early modern discourse. Lezra writes elegantly in a high-style blending of Yale deconstruction with feminist theory, an approach coming largely out of Paul de Man by way of Barbara Johnson rather than, say Gayatri Spivak. In other terms, Lezra's essay makes a valuable and important contribution to the development of what we might call a feminist grammatology of rhetorical forms, while the political focus of the argument remains tropological rather than historical.

Marcellus Blount's "Caged Birds: Race and Gender in The Sonnet," also takes women and feminism seriously, in this case with a view to providing "real alternatives for black men as we redefine our notions of black masculinity" (227). In exploring those alternatives, he offers symptomatic readings of poetry by Afro-American men and women—Henrietta Cordelia Ray, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Claude MacKay, Gwendolyn Brooks—who all found deploying the formal languages of the sonnet useful for interrogating the traditional gender-roles available to black men.

Taken together, these essays achieve more and different things than the packaging, title, and Introduction suggest. The quality of writing and standard of engaged, critical analysis is exceptionally high for a collection with so many contributors. Some of the essays will be of interest to many feminist cultural critics; many of them will probably become important points of reference for scholars and fans of American Studies; and many of them provide a politically-nuanced account of the cultural construction of masculinity that will be of importance to literary scholars, social historians, and cultural critics. Yet I seem to have been doing what I suggested won't work; measuring
the essays in terms of their commitment to feminist politics. For, and here I of course agree with Boone, one of the things men can do on behalf of feminism is challenge the sexual politics of other men. That is one arena where feminism without women can certainly make sense, though I am not so sure what it means for feminism when women disappear and we are left, in the imagery of Joaquin Sorolla’s *Children at the Beach* which graces the cover of this book, with boys tossed by waves.

*Wayne State University*  
Gerald MacLean


Quite a lengthy bibliography could be and probably will be written on those works published in 1989 that dealt with the events in France of 1789. Not all will merit a citation; the book under consideration here will since, to the best of my knowledge, it is the only one that offers such a comprehensive survey of the cultural history of the French Revolution. Culture, as defined by Kennedy in his Introduction, has a very broad meaning; culture includes “any symbolic representation of value, particularly of values that are perpetuated in time through the educational process” (xxii). This definition allows him to discuss such diverse topics as the peasant’s almanac and a treatise on metaphysics.  
Kennedy writes that the idea for this work came from an interview with the French historian Fernand Braudel, who encouraged him to “think ambitiously and test his [Braudel’s] categories of the ‘long duration,’ or historical permanence and inertia, in a decade characterized by rapid transformations” (xvii). To examine the topic over this *longue durée*, Kennedy divides his book into three sections.  

The first section, entitled “Long-Term Structures,” is also the shortest, comprising less than fifty pages. After studying the Paris milieu, the corporate hierarchical structure of culture, and Masonic lodges and salons, the author concludes that the Revolution changed very little in France in terms of such areas as economic and social structure. Despite the upheaval of the Revolution, Paris remained basically the same well into the nineteenth century. Although literary salons and masonic lodges disappeared during the Revolution, they reappeared under the Directory and the Empire. Cultural institutions, or corporations such as the church, universities and colleges, the press and theaters remained, but in a changed form. Since more than three-fourths of the population of France lived in villages, rural life along with its popular culture is also treated in Part I. On the whole city-dwellers were much more literate than those in the countryside and the most used book in both the popular and elite milieux was the almanac; traditional values were reinforced by what the peasants read and their readings did not favor revolution.  

Part II surveys those cultural and intellectual movements of medium duration: the Enlightenment, neoclassicism, and sensibilité. It is perhaps in his treatment of sensibility (chapter 5) that readers of this journal may find Ken-
nedy particularly interesting. He considers the cult of sensibility as a long cultural continuity from Young's *Night-Thoughts* (1742–45) to Ducray-Duminiel's horror novels of the 1790's which remained popular into the mid-1800's. Kennedy views two kinds of sensibilité: one, generally associated with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, which led to goodness and virtue; and another of horror and terror linked to the marquis de Sade and characterized by amorality. As a counterpoint to the reason of the Enlightenment, emotion began to dominate. Extreme sensations were sought as an end to themselves and the "sweet pain" of Rousseau gave way to the terror of other writers such as Ducray-Duminiel in his *Coéline, ou l'enfant du mystère*. In the decade of the 90's melodramas emphasized shipwrecks, assassinations, brigandage, and other forms of extreme sensations and terror. Kennedy concludes that this literary esthetic was a source of the Terror of 1793–94.

Whereas the culture on the first two parts has been called culture of the revolutionary epoch, Part III, which comprises more than half of the book, takes up the short-term history of the culture that resulted from the Revolution itself. Institutions such as the church, schools, theaters, and academies are examined. The influence of the Revolution on music, art, drama, communication, and education are all studied here. Perhaps the most fascinating chapter in this section is the one entitled "Vandalism and Conservation." While the Revolution destroyed remnants of the Old Regime in order to create a new society, the Revolution also tried to preserve works of art representative of the old for artistic and historical reasons. The artistic patrimony was wrested from the privileged classes and given to the nation. The Louvre came into being with the Revolution and was one of its few lasting products.

In the Epilogue, the cultural consequences of the Revolution are considered; it is determined that they were not very numerous or particularly effective. In fact, besides the Louvre, Kennedy can only indicate the metric system and the Napoleonic code as lasting by-products of the Revolution. If the Revolution did not leave a culture of its own behind, says Kennedy, it is because culture had become too involved with social and political interests and passions. Culture, he contends, must transcend the immediate in order to pass on something universal to generations that follow. The one cultural continuity with past and future the Revolution did possess was a religion of humanity and this was "symptomatic of a more general Western immanentism in which God is sought in man, nature, and society rather than in any transcendental order" (391).

Just under one hundred illustrations are interspersed throughout the work. The back matter includes two appendices with statistics on music and theater and a "Prosopography of the Cultural Elite," and more than forty pages of notes. Unfortunately, the lack of a bibliography and a rather incomplete index detract from the painstaking research that has gone into the writing of this work.

Wayne State University

Donald C. Spinelli

Peter Manning's second book—his first being the remarkably subtle and nuanced application of psychoanalytic ideas to literature, Byron and His Fictions (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1978)—is a collection of thirteen essays mostly on Byron and Wordsworth, ten of which have been published earlier (1976–86, most in journals: Studies in Romanticism, Criticism, Studies in English Literature, ELH, and Journal of English and Germanic Philology), grouped under four headings: Texts and Subtexts, Texts and Textual History, Texts and Contexts, Texts and History. If one can trace a movement in Manning's more recent work, it is toward New Historicism, with a subdued psychological focus and a more intensified socio-historical focus. The essays, early and later, are of a very high quality and can endure republication without embarrassment. Indeed, I had forgotten how good some of the essays are. For example, "Don Juan and Byron's Imperceptiveness to the English Word" (ch. 6—1979) is a superb defense and explanation of Byron's use of language against T. S. Eliot's criticism.

There is indeed a unity of sorts among the different essays. In the introduction Manning describes his project in the following terms: he wishes to "join formalism with wider concerns" and to "reconnect literature with the motives from which it springs and the social relations within which it exists" (3). His essays attempt to fuse "psychoanalytic insight, textual criticism, and historical scholarship" (3). By "formalism" he means paying close attention to the formal aspects of the Romantics' writing, not a programmatic Formalism. He describes his use of Freud as "critical" rather than "psychobiographical" (4). In general, he aligns himself with Romanticists opposed to the "Romantic Ideology," who provide a critique of "transcendentalizing" idealism. A Manning essay typically focuses on an interpretive crux—Wordsworth's revisions of a poem, a poem's intertextual affiliations, the uniqueness of Byron's style, the notion of a poet's authorship or career—which is then explored by reading closely the poets' writings through one of various lenses—psychological, historical, generic, and so on. Most essays are dominantly one thing or another—psychological or social or generic. Some essays, however, fuse the psychoanalytic and the socio-historical: "The Nameless Broken Dandy and the Structure of Authorship" (ch. 7—new) explores a social phenomenon, the notion of authorship as experienced by Byron, with psychoanalytic insights.

I want to explore some of the parallels and constrasts between the psychological and historical poles of his criticism. The rhetoric and conceptual logic of key terms, like repression and displacement, operate in central ways in Manning's criticism whether he is writing under the sign of psychology or history. His use of textual criticism—tracing the revisionary process and the different versions of literary works—highlights those painfully truthful points in the text which the poet cannot accept, so that he tries to hide from himself the truth he has uncovered. In the essay on Wordsworth's revisions of the Margaret and Pedlar narrative (ch. 1—first published in 1976), Manning constructs a metanarrative within which the poet represents and discovers the psychic wounds of abandonment and guilt in the "Ruined Cottage" and related manuscripts; the power of this discovery so disturbs Wordsworth that it
necessitates the repressive revisions embodied in *The Excursion*, Book 1. Similarly, the essay on the “Solitary Reaper” (ch. 11—new) focuses on those acts of repression and displacement whereby the dangerous but powerful material—in this case, revolution, industrialism, class conflict—is transmuted into safely transcendental and timeless truths. The master metaphor in both essays is the structuralist’s verticality, so that a literary work is depicted as a “surface” whose configurations are determined by the forces issuing from the “depths.” Unconscious is to conscious as base is to superstructure, or to use his own words, as context is to text, or as subtext is to text. Manning is aware enough theoretically and astute enough as a close reader to steer his criticism past the banalities of reductivism. Indeed, he pays such close and careful attention to literary conventions, genres, influence and intertextuality, and the overall specificity of the literary works he discusses that structuralist fallacies rarely mar his criticism. Nevertheless, although he pays much attention to aesthetic surfaces, his criticism rarely grants any decisive importance to aesthetic determinations.

I think few readers prefer the *Excursion’s* version of Margaret’s story to the earlier narrative in the “Ruined Cottage,” but many readers prefer the 1850 version of the *Prelude* to the 1805. One can concede numerous acts of repressive revision in both cases, but in the one instance the poet has weakened his writing, and in the other, he has—so many would argue—strengthened it. Are not some of a poet’s revisions governed by aesthetic motives? Furthermore, does not poetry have an aesthetic dimension to which we as readers respond aesthetically? It is possible to grant to psychoanalytic insights a great deal without eliminating entirely the aesthetic realm. Similarly, one can welcome attention to context and historically contingent factors without at the same time conceding to the realm of ideology everything that would otherwise be aesthetic. Assuming there is indeed an aesthetic dimension connected to but in some sense relatively autonomous from other factors like the deeply psychological and the ideological, the extraordinarily difficult task for the interpreter is drawing the lines, separating the realms, and showing their relations and mutual interactions. Perhaps today the aesthetic dimension is criticism’s embarrassment, as though to concede anything to the aesthetic is to sacrifice everything to a transcendentalizing formalism.

Manning has been if anything a cautious structuralist, who has used psychoanalysis and historicism with great respect for the particularities of the poetic works. Chapter 12, for example (first published in 1985), looks at the later Wordsworth not as a failed Romantic who has repressed the most powerful sources of his creativity, but as a Victorian contemporary affected by the High Church revival. The book also concludes not with the hard-edged, polemically tough chapter 11, which is an extended critique of Romantic transcendentalizing, but the more skeptically positioned inquiry into New Historicism’s value and limitations, “Placing Poor Susan: Wordsworth and the New Historicism.” Though published first in 1986, the last chapter in a volume like this acts like the *Lyrical Ballads*’ “Tintern Abbey” or “Michael,” and thus receives weighted attention. The last chapter refuses to fix the meaning of Wordsworth’s “Poor Susan” as a socially determined text and instead stresses the instability of any such semantic determination. Ambiguity and polysemy dissolve the certainties of ideological criticism. “Susan’s seeing
in the poem is a microcosm of the reading process, and questions about the status of her vision play out questions of the status we accord texts. The truncated encounter places us in the position of the speaker: as he gazes at Susan, so we gaze at the poem, our certainties fading like her vision, and his comprehension, in the elisions and gaps of the text" (318).

The deconstructive note on which chapter 13 ends is quite different from the tone and approach of chapter 11. "Will No One Tell Me What She Sings?: The Solitary Reaper and the Contexts of Criticism" is a very able instance of New Historicism, as Manning documents in stunning detail the socio-historical context of "The Solitary Reaper." The context is described, however, as a subtext which Wordsworth covers over and displaces, in typical New Historicism fashion. Moreover, the entire essay is pointedly directed against Hartman's reading of Wordsworth, easily the most influential reading of the poet in the last thirty years. Hartman hardly needs defending, but I think that a comparison between Hartman's Wordsworth and the New Historicism’s Wordsworth requires more than just the poles of transcendental and materialistic. For one thing, Hartman's Wordsworth was our equal, another "consciousness" that had faced the metaphysical terrors of mortality and isolation, that was tempted by illusions and apocalyptic intimations. Reading this Wordsworth, we were reading about ourselves, perhaps ourselves at our most intellectually ambitious moments, but nevertheless a figure whose writing could become a part of our lives. The New Historicism’s Wordsworth, however, is certainly not ourselves. Even if, for example, "Tintern Abbey" is an exquisitely beautiful poem, we are made to admit also that its beauty is purchased at the price of severe socio-political repression (Marjorie Levinson). Manning’s example is "The Solitary Reaper": however lovely, the poem’s loveliness is a consequence of excluding realities, of repressing truths. The poem’s beauty is indeed constituted by its blindness to historical contingency. Wordsworth was deluded; we are not. He clung to fairy-tales of eternal beauty; we know better. Either he was blinded by ideology and did not know better, or he knew better and is trying to blind us. In either case, we are on guard.

Although psychoanalysis, like New Historicism, turns literary works into texts governed to some degree by subtexts, Manning’s own psychoanalytic criticism at least represented writers whose work, even if marked by displacement and repression, was certainly not "other." Who is without an unconscious? (I think only Sartre was arrogant enough to claim he had no unconscious). For example, reading Manning’s Byron and His Fictions is to experience a complex drama which few readers, I suspect, can feel utterly above, as if they were immune to similar conflicts. Is the vogue of New Historicism to some extent shaped by the guilty conscience of literary intellectuals who have recently discovered political commitment? Or perhaps it is another version of the recurrent cultural impulse of anti-self-consciousness, relegating to the lowest level the concerns of an introspective, divided self? Beauty and the pleasures of reading are then suspect, something akin to a Yuppie’s BMW. If we enjoy literary beauty, we are expected also to feel bad about it. Moreover, contrary to Keats's formula, beauty is not truth. Just the opposite is the case. Equally suspect is the focus on problems and concerns if not unique to literary intellectuals then characteristic of them. Hartman’s Wordsworth was a
fellow literary intellectual, and Manning’s Byron was a fellow neurotic. However, if we only feel superior to the writing we are reading, there is finally a diminishing motive for continuing to read such texts. Manning’s book seems aware of New Historicism’s dangers as well as its opportunities for discovery. As Manning’s last chapter acknowledges, a literary work’s meaning cannot be exhausted or fixed by New Historical procedures that establish the literature’s ideological valence.

Manning’s book, then, is a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate over the way Romantic literature is to be read. Manning’s work, early and later, whether the theoretical impulse derives from Freud, Marx, or Derrida, is carefully researched, well written, and responsive to the subtle shifts of meaning embodied in the poetry. In an enterprise so marked by reductivism, Manning has managed to produce criticism that is largely free of mechanistic determination.

Wayne State University

Michael Scrivener


Technoculture’s hybridized title is aptly suggestive of its dual purpose: to offer a sustained examination of the interface between new technologies and contemporary culture; and to negotiate the divide between extremely dark and excessively affirmative critical models that has persistently riven intellectual maps of contemporary culture. Given that the stakes for development and use of technoculture have too often been set by government, military, and corporate agencies, Constance Penley’s and Andrew Ross’s attempt to present cultural accounts that bypass “the tradition of left cultural despair and alarmism” seems understandable, indeed admirable (xii). Although the editors claim equal suspicion of “postmodernist celebrations of the technological sublime,” the tenor of nearly all the volume’s pieces falls slightly to the “optimistic” side of the divide, as the critics represented seek productive reformulations of the relations between technology, media, and culture.

As a film specialist, I was initially surprised by the absence from Technoculture of any traditional close readings of film or television texts. Indeed, the book’s chapters reflect cultural studies’ predilection for exotic cultural artifacts and topics—e.g., Japanese pornographic comic books, rap music, teenage hackers, Star Trek fan literature, and cyberpunk fiction. However, the editors have been guided by more than a mere penchant for novelty: their choices have apparently been designed to develop new research domains that exhibit real possibilities of popular appropriation and resistance, in the spirit of Michel de Certeau’s concept of tactical maneuvers exercised by cultural consumers. The book thus favors accounts of technological appropriation by both activist and protopolitical groups, operating in resistance against the powerful producers and disseminators of technoculture.

Technoculture opens with Penley’s and Ross’s interview with Donna Hara-
way, the historian of science whose writings on nature, culture, and technology have clearly provided the impetus for this anthology. The interview is interesting on a number of levels, particularly when Haraway is asked to reflect upon her seminal "Manifesto for Cyborgs," published in the Socialist Review in 1985. As the interview unfolds, a pattern develops in which Haraway describes past attempts to "pin" her meaning (attempts echoed by the editors' own questions), while she has persistently defined her project as one of telling new stories, selecting new metaphors capable of rendering the old binaries—nature/culture, techno-/organic, human/animal, etc.—inoperable, and finally obsolete. Haraway's apparent evasions are consistent with her overall project of pulling up traditional stakes of knowledge via repeated returns to liminal or hybridized figures—the cyborg, the primate, the coyote. However, she sounds a warning for cultural critics when she wonders how she can act as cultural bricoleur, taking up various figures such as the trickster from Native American stories, without also becoming a colonizer: "How do you avoid the cultural imperialism, or the orientalizing move of sidestepping your own descriptive technologies and bringing in something to solve your problems"? (3–4). Haraway pinpoints what has become a major point of difficulty in cultural studies—that cultural critics may be drawn by the sheer fascination of donning masks of "otherness" as a means of rejuvenating their research. Although Haraway displays acute sensitivity in acknowledging the problem, she offers no resolution.

Paula A. Treichler's "How to Have Theory in an Epidemic: The Evolution of AIDS Treatment Activism" provides a lucid and detailed account of AIDS activist struggles over drug trials and treatments. AIDS activists have had to acquire detailed knowledge of drugs, treatments, and federal research and development guidelines, in order to force action from conservative, profit-oriented government and corporate agencies. Treichler's piece thus functions as a chronicle of "the uses and consequences of technology and biomedical theory in everyday life" (58). The article ranges in coverage from challenges to FDA guidelines for drug approval (widely regarded as dangerously slow and cautious), to tactical maneuvers of protest from AIDS patients. In the latter case, AIDS patients have rejected the traditional testing method of administering placebos to selected patients by having their drugs tested, throwing away the placebos, and sharing the real drugs. Treichler thus inaugurates a concern that recurs frequently in Technoculture: neither activists nor intellectuals can afford the romanticism of "grass roots" politics, if it means continued suspicion of new technologies. The story of AIDS activism provides an urgent example of the political stakes involved in acquisition of new levels of technical and medical sophistication.

Although most cultural critics would accept the account of AIDS activism as one of the most "authentic" instances of political protest in the 1980s, many would regard political action via such "mega-events" as Live Aid or "We Are the World" with deep suspicion. Yet Reebee Garafolo's "Understanding Mega-Events: If We Are the World, Then How Do We Change It?" provides one of Technoculture's most compelling essays, exhibiting considerable knowledge of the institutional structures of the recording industry, while contemplating the political possibilities of popular music in ways that cannot be dismissed. Garafolo restages the traditional opposition
between folk art and mass art by contrasting the organic romanticism of Woodstock with the “high tech” proclivities of Live Aid, which offered “an unabashed celebration of technological possibilities” (247). He proceeds to problematize this opposition—the folk art as connotative of presence and authenticity, mass art of “fakery” and corruption—by showing that even as rock production has become increasingly governed by mass mediatization, simulation, and commodification, it has also become more explicitly political. Although popular music artists rank as the wealthiest stars of any entertainment sector, stars such as Sting and Bruce Springsteen have become associated with almost every major social issue to arise during the past decade.

Some of the statistics on mega-events, which enable hundreds of millions to attend the same concert simultaneously, are staggering: although Bob Geldof anticipated raising $35 million from the Live Aid telecast, the ultimate take was $67 million. Garafolo is careful to address the numerous limitations of mega-events, such as the marginalization of black artists at Live Aid. He also acknowledges that mega-events, while useful for “priming the political pump,” cannot ultimately substitute for a sustained political movement (269). Yet he persuasively argues that an inability “to embrace mass culture as mass culture” has often blocked our ability to assess the political potential of media events (251). In addition, his essay displays a firm grasp of the recording business as culture industry that is not as apparent in Technoculture’s other essays on popular culture.

Andrew Ross’s “Hacking Away at Counterculture” represents one of Technoculture’s several accounts of protopolitical resistance—in this case, the challenge posed by teenage hackers to established views of property and corporate security. Opening with the highly publicized “viral” attack engineered by Cornell University hacker Robert Morris, Ross’s chronicle demonstrates a cultural shift from figuring hackers as “rebels with modems” (a phrase coined by New York Times journalist John Markoff) to increasing efforts to demonize and criminalize them. Ross argues that corporate and legal actions against hackers must be seen as attempts to thwart the fundamentally democratic potential of information technology; a technology of copying, replication, and simulation “does not recognize the concept of private information property” (112). Ross suggests that cultural critics might profitably draw upon a countercultural hacker ethic, “organized around outlawed libertarian principles about free access to information and communication,” in order to rethink the relations between countercultural fantasy and technology (120). Like Treichler and Garafolo, Ross concludes that the romantic cultural politics of the sixties, with its demonization of “abject hardware structures,” is simply obsolete (120).

Another example of the book’s focus on protopolitical technocultural sects is Constance Penley’s “Brownian Motion: Women, Tactics, and Technology.” Penley studies a specific strain of the Star Trek fandom inclusive of the women creators and consumers of “K/S” or “slash” porn, defined as fictions that fantasize a homoerotic relationship between Kirk and Spock. When analyzing fandom (a current trend in cultural studies), cultural critics often tend towards excessive idealization of imaginative fan practices. Penley successfully avoids this tendency by showing that through their various creative productions (fanzines, novels, songtapes, etc.), Trek fans erect a kind of
"technology of entertainment," which grows up in parallel to the mainstream entertainment industry, departing from its methods and values in certain respects, supporting them in others. Penley tries to render the complexity of the fans' relationship to technologies: to sustain their "renegade" uses of Star Trek's masculinist fictions, the fans must debate such issues as whether or not to emulate professional models in their work, and how to make use of available technologies, such as desktop publishing and video recording. Penley thus proffers the "K/S" fandom as exemplary of how non-feminist women fans "manipulate the products of mass-produced culture to stage a popular debate around issues of technology, fantasy, and everyday life" (137).

Penley's analysis of the gendered implications of "K/S" porn might be compared to Sandra Buckley's findings in "'Penguin in Bondage': A Graphic Tale of Japanese Comic Books." Buckley analyzes the bishonen manga, Japanese pornographic comic books produced by and for women, which extensively play out fantasies of male homosexual love. Both Penley and Buckley find liberatory potential in these erotic same-sex fictions: Buckley, by playing the bishonen manga off against straight male pornographic comics; Penley, by speculating that "K/S" fans use male bodies of the future to figure a "retooling" of contemporary masculinity (pun apparently intended). Yet Penley ultimately seems more sensitive to the difficulties posed by what might be construed as a colonization of male homosexuality. A reading of the two essays leaves one to wonder whether this insertion of male homoerotic scenarios into women's romance fictions is in any way analogous to straight male porn's conventional incorporation of lesbian scenes; and if so, whether the utopian possibilities of these popular forms demands further qualification.

Technoculture's other essays include Valerie Hartouni's "Containing Women: Reproductive Discourse in the 1980s," which covers the growing contestation over discourses of mothering in the advent of new reproductive technologies; Dee Dee Halleck's "Watch Out Dick Tracy! Popular Video in the Wake of the Exxon Valdez," which is devoted to the activist potential of video; the Processed World Collective's "Just the facts Ma'am: An Autobiography," which charts the history of one San Francisco magazine's efforts to provide a forum for "malcontent office workers"; Jim Pomeroy's "Black Box S-Thetix: Labor, Research, and Survival in the He[Art] of the Beast," which considers how artists have taken advantage of technology in their work; and Peter Fitting's "The Lessons of Cyberpunk," which analyzes the themes and political potential of one of the touchstones of postmodernism.

The anthology is rounded out by a noteworthy piece on popular culture—Houston A. Baker's "Hybridity, the Rap Race, and Pedagogy for the 1990s," which offers a rhetorically stylized introduction to the conventions of rap. Against the impression that rap has become increasingly "mainstreamed" (e.g., Hammer's appearances in Taco Bell commercials), Baker insists on its status as a fundamentally disruptive form, "a domain of the improper" (204). As evidence, he provides a lively account of his own use of rap to teach Henry V to British school children. These products of a post-colonial age recognized the king as an eloquent rapper, but they also sensed that "[p]atriotism . . . is a 'hype' if it means dying for England" (208). Although Baker passes rather quickly over protests against rap's sexism and homophobia, he persuasively discounts commodification theories by suggesting
that when this popular form is inserted into certain pedagogical contexts, its unsettling, subversive edge can be restored.

Much of the strength of Technoculture lies in its readability; as a woman beset by technophobia, I found the volume pleasurable accessible. The book will be of interest to readers engaged in a range of disciplines and area interests, including gender studies, popular culture, postmodernism, and more. One can think of certain venues from which to criticize some of the essays: for example, one might wish for more detailed coverage of economics and industry, as proffered in Garafolo's piece, and to a lesser extent in Buckley's. The force of consumer tactics is best understood when situated against the backdrop of institutionalized structures that delimit technoculture's production and use. On the whole, however, Technoculture represents a highly successful attempt to introduce new vistas of cultural investigation. Although a quick glance over the book's table of contents might initially suggest a kind of wild eclecticism, a close reading ultimately reveals a remarkable coherence of purpose and design in tracing out the meshed destinies of technology and culture.

Wayne State University

Cynthia Erb