that are defined as political rather than to a knowledge of politics, with the former grounded in an understanding of critique or trial as an activity that reason imposes on itself. Here, in his first chapter, Michael is consonant with recent Kant scholarship by Onora O'Neill, Susan Meld Shell, and others, though none of this scholarship is cited. It's also perhaps because of this understanding of actively reflective reason that another surprisingly prominent, venerable identification of Romanticism with an "inward turn" (Isaiah Berlin is cited several times throughout this study) is read sympathetically here as a search for a kind of inner peace that is needed in order for political knowledge to happen.

After an opening chapter grounding this neo-Kantian reading of Romantic political thought, Michael analyzes Burke's "critique of metaphysics" and its reliance on rhetoric, especially paradox (though nothing is said here of Burke's own Ciceronian reading of Stoic paradox in the *Reflections*); the turn to an inward and yet active mind in Wollstonecraft and Godwin; Coleridge's mapping of the faculty of understanding onto social relations. The book subsequently covers Wordsworth's political prose, where Michael sees a "poetics of human nature" (p. 164) that understands knowledge and freedom together; the pleasure of tranquillity or repose in the *Preface, Home at Grasmere*, and *The Excursion*; and P. B. Shelley's "sceptical idealism," which for Michael is the period's most ambitious attempt to match the structures of human thought with political and social institutions.

While this book makes clear its affiliations to the disciplines of intellectual history and philosophy for its reading of Romanticism's epistemological claims, some readers may be put off by the long preliminaries to any sustained reading of the poetry (p.184). So, too, others might be mildly surprised by the somewhat idealist reading of Shelley's idealism, given the powerful recent readings of Shelley's materialism offered by Paul Hamilton, Amanda-Jo Goldstein, and others. So, too, much stunning recent work has gone into Wordsworthian idleness, stasis, and repose—Michael takes up the theme of pleasure in *Home at Grasmere* that is central to the, for this reader, unavoidable reading of those issues in Rowan Boyson's recent study (in the bibliography, but never engaged). What we have here instead is a skewed account of Romanticism's "inward turn." A book on Romanticism and the French Revolution, absent for too long, is welcome; but this argument, despite its clear erudition, does not break much new ground.

University of Geneva Simon Swift

Radical Orientalism: Rights, Reform, and Romanticism. By Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. ix, 261. Cloth, $103.00.

During his maiden speech in the House of Lords in 1812, Lord Byron protested, in defense of the Luddite frame-breakers, "I have been in some of the most oppressed provinces of Turkey, but never under the most despotic of infidel

governments, did I behold such a squalid wretchedness as I have seen since my return in the very heart of a Christian country." In this dense but insightful study, Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud identifies Byron's argument as a species of "radical orientalism," a highly effective satirical strategy employed by liberals to undermine hegemonic claims that the British constitution enshrined its subjects' rights to liberty and property. Cohen-Vrignaud argues that orientalist abuse of the government "was the equivalent of the 'Jacobin' label applied to radicals: an exoticizing discourse that stigmatized its political opponents as 'foreign' in their 'designing' ambitions" (p. 74). The book's scope is generous, addressing periodicals, pamphlets, parodies, reformist tracts, and political philosophy, as well as literary works by William Thomas Beckford, Byron, and the Shelleys. It thus builds on Marilyn Butler's suggestion that literary orients in this period were often "lightly allegorized, defamiliarized versions of the British state" (p. 2–3).

With the book's subtitle, "Rights, Reform, and Romanticism," Cohen-Vrignaud suggests that orientalist tropes "served reformers to convey specific political and economic critiques and advance particular rights" (p. 17). Chapter 1 is concerned with the right to protection from arbitrary state violence, proposing that Oriental and Gothic fictions supported a call for a constitutional framework to protect the citizen: the argument is developed in a fine reading of Byron's *Corsair*, whose hero Conrad is faced with the terrible Ottoman punishment of impalement. Chapter 2 examines the right to peaceful mass protest, especially fraught in the era of Peterloo, and of "oriental" atrocities committed by "British janissaries": much of the chapter focuses on Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam*. Chapters 3 and 4 turn to property rights and economics, developing an argument about oriental excess and fiscal imprudence, with fine readings of Shelley's *Swellfoot the Tyrant* and Byron's *Sardanapalus*. These latter chapters reveal a gulf opening up between the normative and critical concerns of radical orientalism and its more ambivalent literary articulations: for example, perverse (or sometimes "queer") enjoyments of "cruel and unusual romance," such as eroticized subjugation or the "effeminizing" Ottoman punishment of impalement. Chapter 4 examines Mary Shelley's gloomy narrative of an oriental plague that ravages the world, which, in the end, follows Byron's *Sardanapalus* in demurring "from the masculinist model of economic individualism" (p. 22). The final chapter focuses on Byron's "infidelity" as an extreme form of liberal individualism. For conservative contemporaries, Byron's "satanic" threat lay in spreading infidelity among working-class readers, by rejecting political loyalties as well as by promoting "an eroticism detached from sanctified and contractual monogamy," including "nonheteronormative erotic options" (p. 190). The book concludes with a fascinating queer reading of "infidel sexuality" in *Lara*, in which an account of the Turkish *Icoglan* (catamite) sheds light on the enigma of the page Kaled's gender and identity. Cohen-Vrignaud leaves us pondering the case of Byron as "the Grand Turk of Parnassus," the problematic association between Byronic hedonism and despotism, and the reverse colonization of

western liberalism by "oriental" values.

In returning to a "metropolitan" reading of Romantic orientalism, Cohen-Vrignaud consciously distances himself from prevailing accounts, especially my own and Sari Makdisi's, both of us influenced by Edward Said's linking of orientalism to imperial designs. Such readings, Cohen-Vrignaud argues, "neglect the East's domestic role" and ignore the fact that "radical orientalists" often manifest sympathy for the oppressed eastern subjects of vilified sultans, pashas, and deys. True, but this assertion overlooks the fact that such sympathy was a significant element in the "liberatory" claims of much colonial discourse, what Marx called its "sharp philanthropy." Citing Eric Lott's work on American blackface and working-class audiences, Cohen-Vrignaud rightly cautions that "more might be said about the 'theft' of ethnic difference than that it enacts racial domination" (p. 6). However, in an era of Brexit and Trumpist chauvinism, perhaps we need to be especially careful about privileging "the cultural logic animating the stylized images of Eastern politics and economics dreamed up by dissenting Britons of the Romantic period" (p. 6). The problem is that the alterist vehicle employed by oriental satire is after all a racial stereotype of the kind that feeds prejudice; is it excusable because employed for emancipatory purposes? It would be more interesting to address the diversity of orients addressed by radicals (Ottoman, Magrebi, Persian, Indian, Chinese, etc.), and in a study of radical culture, there's a lot more to be said about Hellenism, especially of the Philhellenistic variety, which was important to second-generation reformers and utilitarians, and which underlies so much of Shelley's "orientalist" writing, as I have elsewhere argued. Despite these caveats, *Radical Orientalism* is an impressive achievement, offering a thought-provoking study of an aspect of Romantic culture that has growing importance in our troubled contemporary world.

University of Glasgow Nigel Leask

Natures in Translation: Romanticism and Colonial Natural History. By Alan Bewell. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017. Pp. xvii, 393. Cloth, $60.00.

In this field-altering study, Alan Bewell shows how the rich nature writing of the Romantic period was shaped out of experiences with a diverse range of natures, some of which were emerging while others were slipping away. Arguing that there are many natures, each of which is a product of its particular time and place, Bewell recovers the multiple ways that British writers engaged with the fluctuations of material nature at a moment when Europeans carried their biota to colonial environments and in so doing gave rise to newly hybrid natures. Readers of Bewell's book will no longer be able to see nature in the singular, as a kind of static ground against which human activity may be figured. Nor will it be possible to assert that nature was a singularly Romantic discovery, something newly apprehended at the moment it began to be degraded by