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## P. G. PATMORE'S VIEW OF ROMANTICISM THROUGH THE PARODY OF LITERARY REVIEWS IN *REJECTED ARTICLES* (1826)

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### RESUMEN

Este estudio ofrece la visión del ensayista Peter George Patmore sobre el Romanticismo a través de la parodia a reseñas en *Rejected Articles* (1826), una obra esencial para entender un Romanticismo paralelo al canon más tradicional. Partiendo de una introducción contextual del autor y la obra, se centra metodológicamente en la discusión sobre la naturaleza y estrategias paródicas de la obra. El resultado muestra una mejor comprensión del desarrollo de la crítica literaria romántica del momento, y una visión del Romanticismo poco convencional en torno a los procesos de publicación de la época. Asimismo, se logra un retrato indirecto y original de estereotipos de importantes escritores románticos, a merced del mercado editorial, demostrando así la necesidad de recuperar el valor crítico y literario de la obra de Patmore.

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### PALABRAS CLAVE

P. G. Patmore, parodia, imitación, Romanticismo, reseña literaria.

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### ABSTRACT

This study offers the essayist P. G. Patmore's view of Romanticism through the parody of literary reviews in *Rejected Articles* (1826), an essential work for understanding a Romanticism that ran parallel to the more traditional canon. Starting with a contextual introduction of the author and his work, it methodologically focuses on the discussion of the nature and parodic strategies of the work. The result provides a better understanding of the development of Romantic literary criticism of his time, and an unconventional view of Romanticism in terms of the publication processes of the time. It also provides an indirect and original portrayal of stereotypes of relevant Romantic writers at the mercy of the publishing market, demonstrating in that way the need to retrieve the critical and literary value of Patmore's work.

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### KEYWORDS

P. G. Patmore, parody, imitation, Romanticism, literature review.



## I. PATMORE, LITERARY JOURNALS AND SPOOF REVIEWS

Few critics have studied Peter George Patmore (1786-1855), author of the parody collection *Rejected Articles* (1826)<sup>1</sup>. One of the exceptions is *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004) which only includes his name as a columnist for the *New Monthly Magazine*, mentioning his various pseudonyms and his three-volume autobiographical work—*My Friends and Acquaintance: Being Memorials, Mind-portraits, and Personal Recollections of Deceased Celebrities of the Nineteenth Century; with Selections from their Unpublished Letters* (1854). Curiously, his *Rejected Articles* was not echoed for a long time, even though it is an important volume for the study of a type of Romanticism that ran parallel to the traditional canon and that shows many essential features of the literary parody of the time.

In fact, Patmore's name is often recognised as the father of the celebrated Victorian poet Coventry Patmore or for his friendship with important essayists such as Hamilton Reynolds, Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt. These aspects are mentioned before his astute skill as a parodist. Another reason for his lack of notoriety was the fact that in 1821 he acted in a duel as second of John Scott—editor of the *London Magazine*—after which Scott died.<sup>2</sup> Directly connected with the scandal, Patmore fled to France and although he escaped unscathed from the trial, his reputation was forever tarnished.

Sources such as the afore mentioned *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* record the incident, the prosecution and subsequent acquittal of Patmore, and note that Thackeray nevertheless continued to refer to him twenty-five years later as «that murderer» (2004, p. 44). His friendship with Hazlitt did not help his reputation either. He was the person to whom Hazlitt confessed his adulterous relationship with Sara Walker and referred to in *Liber amoris* (1823) as «C.P.». Surprisingly, among so many personal details, this biographical dictionary does not mention *Rejected Articles*.

Patmore's witty parodic work has been slow to be recognised, Gregory Dart (2006) being one of the few voices to confirm its worth by equating *Rejected Articles* with William Frederick Deacon's *Warreniana* and describing both works as «two of the most brilliant collections of the age» (26). *Rejected Articles* is understood within the context of the so-called «literary magazine culture» of the nineteenth century as defined by David G. Stewart:

1 For the study and quotations taken from this work, the edition of Graeme Stones and John Strachan *Parodies of the Romantic Age* (1999) has been used—specifically volume 5 edited by Strachan.

2 Interestingly Rolf P. Lessenich notes the normality and number of duels in the Romantic period: «Coleridge, Leigh Hunt, Keats, and Hazlitt, as well as Lockhart, John Wilson, James Hogg and John Scott all at one time or another received, issued, or threatened to issue a challenge to duel» (2012, p. 95).

[...] magazine culture is divided between two bitterly opposed factions: the liberal, reformist, poetically inventive writers of the Hunt school, and their political and cultural opponents at Tory journals like *Blackwood's*. The bitterness of the opposition finds its perfect expression in one of the most commonly discussed incidents in magazine culture, the Scott-Christie duel of 1821 (2006, p. 202).

The writer was aware of the value and importance of the literary press of his time and, no doubt, of its impact on the reputations of Romantic writers and literary figures of the day. As he reveals in *Letters on England* (Strachan 1999, p. XIII), he was well acquainted with all the intricacies of the journalistic publishing world. Patmore was aware of the various and enriching possibilities of the literary journals and reviews of the day, and had first-hand knowledge of the profession, among many others, with Henry Colburn—a publisher known for his promotional techniques.

His work reveals not only London life in journalistic terms. Patmore was a Londoner by birth and clearly shows his attachment to and knowledge of the context he controls. But he also showed that his work was clearly a product of his journalistic career and experience. *Rejected Articles* cannot be understood without explaining the relationship of the treatment of Romantic themes and authors in the most relevant newspapers of the time, nor without explaining Patmore's experience as a review writer—especially of theatre in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.

He worked not only for the most important literary journals of the late 1810s and early 1820s—*Blackwood's*, *London*, *New Monthly*, *Retrospective Review* and *Westminster Review*—but also with important intellectual institutions, such as the *Surrey Institution* where he was secretary and met Hazlitt in 1817 as a result of the latter's lectures on English poets. Through these lectures he became acquainted with their subjects and personalities, especially with the Lake poets—Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey—and wrote one of his first reviews for *Blackwood's* in 1818, even though this newspaper was Hazlitt's declared enemy.

His early endorsement of Hazlitt was later complemented by his work under the editor John Scott in the *London Magazine*, a magazine that supported Cockney poets. As a successful reviewer of plays—a position Hazlitt had previously held—he received the pejorative appellation «Tims», and because of his friendship with Hazlitt, insults such as «Cockney», especially from the conservative *Blackwood's* who considered Hazlitt a threat to the established order. Thus, in the summer of 1820 Patmore «was firmly established as *Blackwood's* 'Tims', «the empty-headed Cockney youth, friend of 'pimpled Hazlitt' and 'Signor Le Hunto'» (Strachan, 1999, p. x).

Patmore was thus a victim, like many, of the struggles between newspapers and the public. A large number of his works are published anonymously or under pseudonyms<sup>3</sup>. It is therefore not surprising that the opening quotation he chose for the first two editions of *Rejected Articles* dealt with the concept of truth and its exposition:

But be these verities, master Steward?—  
 —Nay, good Alice, now thou questionest less wisely than is thy wont.  
 They are that they are; and as that I tell them to thee. If they like thee,  
 well; if not, it would not make them, though they were ten times verities.  
 Old Play

The period from 1820 at the *New Monthly* revived his taste for literary contributions and he wrote following Southey and his taste for travel books, later expanding his interest to subjects such as art criticism—*British Galleries of Art*, 1824. In 1826 he wrote *Mirror of the Months*—a calendar of rural and urban life in London—the same year in which he published *Rejected Articles* and when he met Lamb.

The importance of his work *Rejected Articles*, moreover, defines him as one of the great representatives of the «spoof review», the parodic exercise that imitated book reviews and criticism and which he masterfully carried out thanks to his experience as an author, journalist and editor. It is necessary to take into account his years as an author on *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, *London Magazine*, *New Monthly*, *The Retrospective Review* and *Westminster Review* and, above all, his experience as editor of the *New Monthly* between 1841 and 1853. Thus, his first-hand knowledge of the literary journalistic press and the context of the period allows us not only to understand the evolution of Romantic literary criticism of the time in a parodic key, but also to discover an unconventional image of Romanticism in terms of the publication processes of the time.

## 2. PRECURSORS OF *REJECTED ARTICLES*

George Kitchin pointed in 1931 to Deacon as the immediate model for *Rejected Articles*, but in fact this work is a skilful imitation of the collection of verse parodies by the brothers Horace and James Smith, *Rejected Addresses: or the New Theatrum Poetarum* (1812). Patmore pays homage to these authors whose work

<sup>3</sup> Among others «Victoire de Soligny», the pseudonym under which he published *Letters on England* (1823) and «M. De Saint Foix», used in the *New Monthly Magazine*.

he knew well. He creates a similar collection but now in prose where he focuses on the world of the literary journals and reviews of the day. He himself admitted this connection in *My Friends and Acquaintance*, boasting of its origin in *Rejected Addresses* and defining it as a game of wit and insisting on its benevolent aim: «a *jeu-d'esprit* of mine, which aimed at being, to the prose literature of the day, something like what the 'Rejected Addresses' was to the poetry,—with its marked difference, however, that my imitations were in a great measure *bona fide* ones» (Patmore, 1854, vol. I, p. 3).

It was precisely this concept of «*jeu-d'esprit*» that was used in the United States in *The North American Review* (1840) when the Smiths' work was reprinted, praising the comic potential and sense that Patmore undoubtedly pursued in his own creation. This American review of *Rejected Addresses* justified its reprint by referring to its «good-humoured wit of the imitations» and praised its fame and value (534). The review noted that the first edition was out of print and how it was desirable to produce a second edition for the delight of future generations: «The book was wholly out of print here, and the republication will be welcomed, as well by those who laughed over the pages of the work on its first appearance as by the younger generation of readers, who have only heard its fame» (1840, p. 535).

In 1826 Patmore became a visionary when he appreciated the work of the Smith brothers and created his own concept and style of parody from them, based on the repetition of an imitative pattern that detailed the style of a well-known literary author or reviewer. His interest lay more in reproducing recognisable themes and stylistic peculiarities than in ridiculing his chosen figures, among whom he had included the Smiths themselves. The result was so good that Horace Smith himself had acknowledged the value of the work in 1840, in the second volume of his brother's biography—*Memoirs, Letters, and Comic Miscellanies in Prose and Verse, of the Late James Smith, Esq., one of the Authors of the 'Rejected Addresses'*—calling it «one of the luckiest hits in literature» (25).

The point of union with the Smith brothers' work lies in the reason why it came into being. Graeme Stones has explored the origins of *Rejected Addresses* by relating it to the fire at *Drury Lane Theatre* in 1809 which necessitated its reconstruction. A commemorative address was required for its reopening, and the organising committee received an avalanche of proposals, which it rejected in favour of Lord Byron as the most suitable speaker. In response to the dissatisfaction of the rejected authors, the Smith brothers wrote *Rejected Addresses*, a work in which they claimed to collect some of the speeches submitted (Stones 1994, p. 135). This original literary creation, based on an actual event, brought together verse supposedly written by such well-known personalities as William Thomas Fitzgerald, Wordsworth, Lord Byron, Cobbett, Moore, Southey, Scott, W. R. Spencer, Matthew «Monk» Lewis, Coleridge, George Crabbe, George Colman the young-

er and Theodore Hook, with a contribution by Horace Smith himself. This fact was also recorded in the *Cyclopaedia of English Literature; A History, Critical and Biographical, of British Authors, from the Earliest to the Present Time* (1844) where allusion was made to the fortuitous origin of the work and the enormous scale of its success: «Mr Ward, secretary to the theatre suggested to the witty brothers the composition of a series of humorous addresses, professedly composed by the principal authors of the day. The work was ready by the opening of the theatre, and its success was almost unexampled» (Chambers 1844, p. 430).

Based on this model, Patmore anonymously published *Rejected Articles* in May 1826, the year in which his *Mirror of the Months* was also published, with the help of John Colburn. There was a second edition in August of the same year, which appeared under the author's name, and a third edition in 1834 in which the title was changed to *Imitations of Celebrated Authors; or, Imaginary Rejected Articles*, emphasising the imitative key of the work. The fourth edition in 1844 was the last one. Curiously, the text was not recovered until Strachan's edition in 1999<sup>4</sup>. Used for this study it incorporates in its appendix two important contributions that were included in the August 1826 edition, which parody Byron's style—«Demonicals»—and Horace Smith's—«Dining Out»—and which replaced another composition called «The Review of Tremain». Both parodies are curious exercises in the effect of parody, revision and exaggeration of Romantic traits and themes that have underpinned the whole work. Logically, they would count on the complicity of the reader who would recognise well the keys of the imitated authors and the ingenious imitation of their styles.

Patmore, like the Smiths, succeeds in his work in visualising the important process of acceptance and rejection of contributions in the publishing market of the time, especially in literary journals. By collecting prose contributions purportedly written by famous authors, he exposed the lack of rigour, objectivity or personal sympathies in the selection of publishers, but above all he reviewed the patterns of Romantic writing at the time, thus offering an indirect and original portrait of the stereotypes of important Romantic writers, indirectly pointing to the hardships and difficulties of authors at the mercy of the publishing market.

### 3. THE NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF *REJECTED ARTICLES*

*Rejected Articles* and its parody keys highlight the role of publishers in the reception of contributions and, above all, the reality of the concept of “reputation” at the time, which has been extensively studied by Ashley J. Cross (2001) and which analyses the pressure exerted by the system: «Its substance was determined from outside by critics and reviewers, by readers and market demands and by the

<sup>4</sup> Another later online edition is offered by GALE Group's *Nineteenth Century Collections Online: European Literature, 1790-1840: The Corvey Collection* (July 2017).

literary tradition. It often had little grounding in a writer's sense of his/her own value, though it was nonetheless essential for continued publication» (2001, p. 571).

Thus, Patmore's work acts as a mirror in which the relevance of the writer's public image, fundamental to understanding the Romantic movement, is exposed. Cross's reflection is along these lines: «Such continual self-defence suggests that any reputation was always also misrepresentation, any sense of original genius was embattled, even illusory» (2001, p. 572). Hence, the traditional concept of «genius» attributed to Romantic writers was in a permanent state of «dispossession», depending on many occasions on the reviews and representations of them and their works, as well as on the economic difficulties in the sales market.

Patmore takes advantage of this context to respond with the collection of his articles, presenting them as the rejected creations of prominent essayists and authors such as Charles Lamb, William Cobbett, Horace and James Smith, John Wilson, William Hazlitt, Francis Jeffrey, Leigh Hunt and Byron. The work, in fact, is a personal manifesto against the style and politics of the newspapers that constituted the network of literary culture in early nineteenth-century Britain—*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, *Edinburgh Review*, *London Magazine*, *New Monthly Magazine* and *Register*. A very brief preface to the first edition of 1826, collected by Strachan, justified the vindictive nature of the collection: «[...] the Editor of the present Volume states, that it is the joint production of several gentlemen who have long been distinguished for the piquancy of their Periodical writings, and that every Article it contains has been 'Rejected' from at least one celebrated Journal of the day» (1999, p. 1).

All parts of *Rejected Articles*—with the exception of the parody of Byron with «Demonicals»—are prose contributions in a total of twelve supposedly rejected. Including Patmore's own, the names of the imitated essayists, as in *Rejected Addresses* or *Warreniana*, are listed in recognisable acronyms in the table of contents of the work, showing the variety of the chosen styles. Moreover, with very different themes, the compositions were coherently united as samples of literary criticism which, both for readers of the nineteenth century and for readers of our contemporary period, are of interest for reviewing literary themes and styles with the keys to the *intelligentsia* of the time. Patmore highlights the importance and relevance of the critical commentaries on Romantic authors or written by them, demonstrating the essayistic richness of the movement and the informative and powerful character of the publishing houses and the press to praise or denigrate creative minds. Thus, bearing in mind how the speeches for the opening of the *Drury Lane Theatre* were once rejected, Patmore offered a peculiar homage to other potential «displaced writers» and found in this the reason for a humorous vindication of authors as victims of the publishing system. The Preface ironically questions the action of editors and their unscrupulousness by mentioning the «re-



morseless pens of the Periodical Editors» (Strachan, 1999, p. 1) and manages with his sustained parodic exercise to examine the essential and not always fair part of the editorial and journalistic process. His parody is essential in the tradition as a link between the Smith brothers and the line that Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866) would also mark in his influential parodic essay *The Four Ages of Poetry* (1820) where, by parodying Hesiod, Peacock reviews the poetry of the different ages focusing on Romantic Poetry, exposing with no little irony the different poetic expressions of his time<sup>5</sup>.

### 3.1 PARODYING LITERARY REVIEWS IN REJECTED ARTICLES

#### 3.1.1 *Blackwood's magazine and novel reviews*

«Review of Tremaine» is a parody that imitates the cruel style adopted by *Blackwood's* newspaper against the Cockney school and its signatory, Patmore himself, whom they called «low-bred and ignorant cockney' Tims» (Strachan 1999, p. XIII). It is a tough composition which Patmore in successive editions decided to replace with two others, the Horatio Smith imitation «Dining Out» and Byron's «Demonicals», and which Strachan includes in his edition as an appendix.

With «Review of Tremaine», Patmore openly parodies the style of *Blackwood's Magazine* and one of the newspaper's typical devices, the so-called “spoof review” which, in Strachan's words, was «a fundamental and entirely intentional misreading of the book under discussion» (53). The technique of reviewing the novel is thus parodied by imitating *Blackwood's* attack on Robert Plumer Ward's novel *Tremaine, or the Man of Refinement* (1825), to show that it is the work of an ignorant writer of the «Cockney» school and that it is notable for its vulgarity and immorality. The imitation is signed by Christopher North, the pseudonym adopted in 1826 by John Wilson (1785-1854), one of the newspaper's best-known critics. The essay is full of typical *Blackwood's* attacks from the first line and in general against the representatives of the Cockney school —who it denigrates with expressions of the calibre of «these 'crisp' Cocknies at their dirty work» (57), «this low rabble» (58), «their exploits» (58), «their vagaries» (58), «coxcombical cocknies» (70). But also in a particular key, against Hazlitt and Patmore himself, who is included among those criticised: «What, for example, can be more ludicrous than to see a couple of cocknies, like Hazlitt and Tims, snivelling over the decline of the Fine Arts, as they would over a fish upon a hook» (58).

The essay abounds with quotations from Plumer's novel in sustained criticism. The novel is even referred to as a «manual of cockneyism» and a systematic attempt is made to recreate the abusive tone of the newspaper in its devastating

<sup>5</sup> See García Ramos (2003) for more details about Peacock's analysis on Romantic poetry, and Joukovsky (2017) for more details on Peacock's use of the essayist Jeffrey's voice in this essay.

critique. Thus, the novel is disparagingly referred to as «important new work»(75) and even proposes a different title, “Life and Adventures of a Cockney” (75). All of this is done in order to show a complete rejection of the main romantic character, Tremaine, who is ironically referred to as «the man of Refinement» throughout the essay, echoing the title of the reviewed novel. Imbued with a romantic spirit, the character is ridiculed and Patmore recreates the cruel tone of the paper by arguing that Tremaine devotes almost 650 pages to declaring his love. A declaration that is further marred by an incident, «the OVERSETTING OF A TEA-URN» (74), which, being absurd, is exaggeratedly recreated as a cruel and dangerous accident. The narrator further comments sarcastically: «Now, we put it to the most candid of readers, whether any being but a cockney, could have conceived the idea of bringing a long-standing love affair to a crisis, by means of such a catastrophe as this?» (75).

Overall, Patmore shows that he knows how to recreate and imitate *Blackwood's* style. He adopts a jovial but sarcastic tone of malicious superiority. There is an abundance of direct *ad hominem* attacks that abuse personal reproach. The value of the work reviewed is belittled in line-by-line criticism, taking paragraphs out of context and in an unhealthy enjoyment that accentuates specific passages to denigrate them for playful effect. Patmore further copies *Blackwood's* continued use of many exclamatory phrases or the use of italics to emphasise with disdain any observation. The author, in his parody of content and style, repays with harsh parody the shattering effects of the original newspaper, showing the fearsome face of the mockery taken to its extremes.

### 3.1.2 *John Wilson and his Shakespeare reviews*

In «Letters on Shakespeare. Romeo and Juliet», Patmore again parodies the style of exacerbated criticism of the aforementioned John Wilson who used to sign his well-known «Letters on Shakespeare» in *Blackwood's* with the acronym T. C. The original essay «On Hamlet» is parodied and allusions are made to another work by Wilson—*The Isle of Palms*. Patmore poses as a fake famous professor who reviews and criticises *Romeo and Juliet*, which although he describes as a «divine drama», he touches on various almost absurd aspects in his systematic attack on Shakespeare's work, such as the fact that the death of the characters is not sufficiently tragic: «The catastrophe was not *tragic* enough, forsooth; and they must have the lovers meet face to face, and die in each others' arms by lingering torments: the one torn to pieces in body by the physical effects of the poison, and in mind by the still more terrible poison of rage and despair at seeing his lady after he has killed himself to be with her [...]» (91-92).

Patmore plays the role of a devastating critic who dares to attack all the elements of the famous tragedy—plot, characters, ending, etc.—and who dares to describe Shakespeare's play as a shoddy melodrama. The interest of the parody lies

firstly in the mockery of Wilson's style of criticism, which he presents through a fictitious critic, demeaning his level of authority and calling into question his actual knowledge of the play. Secondly, the parodic text is a clear demonstration of the interest and fixation that the figure of Shakespeare and his work still held in Romanticism, which systematically intrudes on literary and non-literary works whose reviews are exposed through the literary press.

### 3.1.3 *James Smith and Travel Literature*

In the sixth essay, «Grimm's Ghost. The Culpeppers on the Continent», Patmore shows his admiration for the author James Smith in a peculiar and parodic homage based on the author's well-known work, «Grimm's Ghost». Patmore's starting point was what had been the greatest success of the elder of the Smith brothers: a series of comic sketches published between March 1821 and December 1825 in the *New Monthly*. They revealed English bourgeois life in satirical prose with forays into the epistolary genre. As Strachan (1999, 97) notes, they were part of an existing tradition that went back to the eighteenth century with Christopher Anstey's *New Bath Guide* (1766) and repeated the technique of Smith's contemporaries such as Thomas Haynes Bayley's *Rough Sketches of Bath* (1817) and Thomas Moore's *The Fudge Family in Paris* (1818). All of these works followed patterns of English good humour and satirical criticism. Based on characters living in London previously created by Smith—the Culpepper family and the Dixon family—he goes a step further and through a narrator portrays their adventures on a trip to France, completing the record of their wanderings with three letters written by one of the daughters, Clara Culpepper, to her friend Belinda Binks of Bucklersbury, repeating the device of the *sham letters*, a constant motif of romantic parody<sup>6</sup>. The reader recognises the whole earlier tradition, not only because of the title clues and the clear indication of the author, but because it is expressed «See *New Monthly Magazine* passim» (99), showing with the Latin particle *passim*—from beginning to end—the imitative character of the whole document.

Patmore imitates Smith's benevolent satire, a version with «Horatian tone» as Strachan (1999, p. 97) points out, but his parody is concerned with the revision of the lifestyle of English bourgeois families, paying particular attention to their vain pretensions and fashions of the Romantic era. In a brief first part, the narrator comments on the Culpeppers' absurd passion for fashion, especially their exaggerated taste for the French. He describes the moment when they have decided to change all their habits, including the use of furniture, for the French, experiencing in the house what he calls «an entire 'French Revolution'» (101),

<sup>6</sup> *Blackwood's* went so far as to call the *New Monthly* «the New Misses' Magazine» (Stewart 2006, 207), mockingly pointing to its excessive sentimentality and large female readership.

of which he repeatedly gives details: «a French clock and French china on the mantle-piece; a French glass over the fireplace; French lamps on the French-fashionable card-tables; and French polish on everything in the room, except in its inhabitants.» (101). This leads them and the Dixons to want to experience French culture at first hand on a trip to Boulogne.

Patmore parodies Smith's familiar style by showing his abundant use of puns. Hence, in describing domestic changes—carpets or seats—he combines words that adopt the supposedly French sound—seat/settee or city/cittee: «The furniture has also undergone a no less radical reform. The grim old Kidderminster is discarded in favour of a brilliant Brussels of a kaleidoscope pattern [. . .]—to say nothing of a *settee* in each window, the like of which, as Old Culpepper facetiously observes, was never seen in the *Cittee* before» (101).

Similarly, the Dixon family's pretensions to undertake a journey simply to copy the habits of other families or their total ignorance of places are also exposed in puns used by the characters. Thus, in explaining their motivations for travelling, the Dixon family's comments indicate their total ignorance and limitations in terms of local references to new places to see. The father of the Culpepper family, hearing that his wife wants to copy the steps of other English families, thus connects the sound of the word for the Rhine River in Germany—Rhine—with the word «rind», which reminds him of the cheese rinds in his friend Dixon's shop in England:

I raily do think the young folks ought to see some'at of foreign ways. Why there's them Hincks's gals have been to Rome, and Italy, and the Rhine, and' —[. . .] this mention of the Rhine roused him (elder Culpepper) from his chin-on-elbow-supported attitude, in a moment. 'The *Rind!* reiterated he with a good humoured chuckle —«ha! ha! the Rind! they needn't go far to see that. They've only to step into our friend Dixon's shop in Fenchuch Street, and they may see plenty of *Rind*, and smell it too, for that matter» (102)

The colloquial tone, the lack of grammatical correctness, and the father's laughter give a glimpse of the humour that Patmore was so struck by in Smith's work. Patmore transforms it by creating a narrator affected by the novelties of progress who politely withdraws before the boat trip begins: «Having, in my present state of being, a mortal or rather an immortal antipathy to anything in the shape of smoke, the reader will not be surprised to learn that I decline accompanying our travellers any farther than to see them safe off from the Tower stairs. I must therefore consign to another pen the task of communicating the events consequent on the voyage» (103).

This gives way to Clara's voice, with which Patmore shows that she knows the tradition of women's sham letters to perfection. Vain, light-hearted and obli-

ous, Clara records the family's steps in France while still thinking of herself and a frivolous and pretentious bourgeois life. In her letters to her friend Belinda, negative comments abound, indicating the conceited superiority of this social class, based on its own well-being and its inability to adapt. In addition to the many comments about the bad voyage in the first letter, there are traces of the young woman's exaggerated and banal speech, which Patmore intensifies with key words in italics:

[...] and all in a moment I began to be *so* sick, and *so* frightened, and Pa was *so* cross about having consented to come, and Ma was *so* angry with Ned and me for having persuaded her to persuade him, and Ned, (who didn't seem to mind it a bit,) was *so* provoking, and everything was *so* disagreeable, that I can't bear even to think of it now it's all over; so I shall only say that the nasty sea water has quite annihilated my sweet green Spencer, and turned Ma's crimson pelisse all over as black as the chimney (103-104)

Clara's concerns are undoubtedly centred on her physique and her belongings, and the reader—who would expect a travelogue with details of French life—receives just a recounting of banal details alternating between misunderstood French character traits, a spoiled child's experience, and an obsessive attention to the appearance and clothing of those she sees. Through her letter, Clara represents a romanticised and caricatured female sector that pursues men like the character of Captain Thackeray, who consistently ignores her and her noisy, whining family. Patmore captures Smith's comedy well and turns it on its head, imitating it in a new episode of these families with burlesque intent and verbose style, full of digressions, which never quite finish what they announce: «I have filled my paper cram full again, without getting to the end—or rather hardly to the beginning—of our adventure with the Captain» (111). The exaggeratedly frivolous character of the young woman, her conceptions of life according to the French sentimental novels she reads—such as Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* of 1788—and her excessive superficiality, give a jocular and mocking tone to her vision of London society, far removed from the political demands, for example, that we see in the parody of Cobbett. It thus shows the genius of manipulating parody in different genres with a critical sense. In these cases, the support in the main work is fundamental as part of the work and not so much as the focus of the parody's attack. Patmore thus offers here another kind of parody that plays at rewriting the style of the admired author with the sequel to the *Culpeppers*.

### 3.1.4 *Francis Jeffrey and the reviews of foreign novels*

In the ninth essay, “Brother Jonathan; or The New Englanders. Rejected from the Edinburgh Review”, Patmore reviews John Neal's American novel *Brother*

*Jonathan: or, The New Englanders* (1825) in imitation of Francis Jeffrey's style in the *Edinburgh Review* and showing the importance of the vogue for American literature among readers. It is an interesting document of a peculiar Romanticism in that it marks Jeffrey's cosmopolitanism in imitating an American author/work and above all because it is generated at a time when the literary boundaries between British and American are still very clear.

Neal tried to offer the quintessentially American novel by including American dialect and speech patterns. However, in the review whose style Patmore parodies, the novel is described as chaotic and over-imaginative on the part of the author. To this end, Patmore abuses quotations from the novel in his article, in turn mimicking this aspect of Jeffrey's criticism. At the beginning of the essay, in a note, Patmore tells us why the article was rejected by the *Edinburgh Review*, «the writer of *Brother Jonathan* has neutralized his American title to the patronage of the 'Prince of Critics', by becoming a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*» (175), the rival journal.

The essay ironically considers *Brother Jonathan*, «the most extraordinary work of its kind which this age of extraordinary works has put forth—in Great Britain, we mean» (176), criticising its length and the fact that the plot takes place in a single year but in three long 450-page volumes. He also mentions shortcomings in the plot, unoriginality and uniqueness, for example in having three heroines—Edith Cummin, Olive and Emily—instead of one. He also criticises the novel's reliance on mere observation, or its poor punctuation, which is sometimes the cause of its inconsistencies. To this end, he resorts to long quotations from the novel, imitating Jeffrey's style. The essay ends by once again criticising Neal: «In short, if this is a first production in its way, and its author is young, we should be accused of extravagance if we were to express the extent of our hopes as to what may follow it. But its author has written two or three such works, we almost despair of his ever writing a better» (202).

It shows that romantic reviews of foreign books predominate at the time, which shows an important transnational dimension of the romantic movement. On the other hand, they reveal the severe criticism of Romantic production. And finally, it shows the kind of criticism that abounded on literature itself.

### 3.1.5 Leigh Hunt and the rewriting of Italian literature

In the tenth and last essay—«Boccaccio and Fiametta. A Tale of the Greenwood-Shade»—Patmore parodies Leigh Hunt's style by exploiting the excessive theoretical burden of the well-known author and critic but, above all, his interest in Italian literature which he had demonstrated by translating Boccaccio in *Foliage; or Poems Original and Translated* (1818).<sup>7</sup> This interest in Italian culture is

7 In his conception of the Romantic poet not only as an individual but as a member of groups,

well captured by Jeffrey N. Cox (2003), who has emphasised the interest in his literature in Renaissance Italy. In fact,

As the Italy of Dante and Boccaccio replaced the Rome of Horace, so the «four great Masters of our Song»—Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spencer, Milton, and presumably Byron—became great through an engagement with Italian literature. (II. 34-5, 64). Hunt modifies the received pattern of cultural history, replacing the line from Greece to Rome, neoclassical France and England with a different one that moves from Greece to Renaissance Italy to England, so linking three cultures dedicated to imaginative poetry and political liberty (quoted in Roe 2003, pp. 65-66).

Patmore transforms the title of Hunt's original 1820 work—*Amyntas: A Tale of the Woods*—and recreates the plot of Boccaccio's love for Fiametta, daughter of the King of Naples, in a bucolic setting in a Neapolitan setting. However, it mixes many elements, and justifies in one of the editorial notes, «I am a little puzzled by the paper myself» (205) by asserting that although the essay is written by the author of the initials L. H.—which clearly allude to Leigh Hunt—it has other styles. This is why Strachan has detected only a few echoes of Hunt and more quotations from Keats and describes the composition as «a whimper rather than a resounding imitative bang» (Strachan 1999, p. 203).

The essay however, exemplifies a literary review, marking the Romantic parody in all its details. The basis of the play is detailed, a clandestine, bucolic love that arises from the lovers' meeting in the forest, when she—beautiful plagiarist (210)—steals some verses—«Fugitive Pieces» (208)—that he writes on the bark of trees. This idyll ends when the king calls Boccaccio to Naples to present him with his secret treasure, his daughter, who turns out to be Fiametta. The poet returns to Florence while she marries the «Prince of Arragon» (225). Parodied above all is the reflexive charge with which the supposed Hunt tries to justify the experience of frustrated youthful love: «Let us believe that if Boccaccio had not, in his early youth, met with this ill-starred 'affair of the heart,' he would have kept aloof from those scenes into which his sad thoughts threw him, and the world have been without that famous 'Decameron' which those scenes at once impelled and qualified him to write» (225).

schools or circles, and because of the influence and reflection of the cultural interaction between the members of the Cockney School on Foliage, Jeffrey N. Cox (2003) considers the work already in the title of his study «A Cockney Manifesto» (58). According to Cox, Hunt's circle—Keats, Shelley, Hazlitt, or Lamb, and Moore and Byron as allies of the group—is not simply the external context of the work but an inherent part of the texts. Referring to the social sonnets in the play, Cox adds: «Taken together, the sonnets in Foliage recreate the people, settings and ideas that comprised the Cockney School; they do not record private preferences, but shared commitments» (62).



Patmore also pays homage to Byron with this parody. He takes the title of the first collection the author wrote when he was 14 years old—«Fugitive Pieces»—and in doing so alludes to another thwarted experience, as it was unsuccessful and was never published. As Antonio Ballesteros states: «El volumen no alcanzó difusión alguna, pues, siguiendo el consejo del reverendo Thomas Beecher, amigo del poeta, que consideraba que algunos poemas eran excesivamente explícitos en su exposición de los sentimientos amorosos, Byron quemó los ejemplares» (2011, p. 243).

The connection between Hunt and Byron that Patmore uses is not accidental either, as these two authors shared a residence in Livorno in the early 1820s, while collaborating on the edition of the magazine *The Liberal*. The parody therefore offers winks to the reader while imitating a review of the time, taking Hunt as the main author and giving the clues to understand the romantic elements that he brought to bear on his compositions.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Patmore's collection of parodies reuses details from the style of each imitated essayist and author, often including their personal details. Simultaneously, it revisits social, cultural and literary issues, especially in features of the journalistic format. In so doing, the collection, in fact, offers an example of the variety of the literary press of the first two decades of the nineteenth century, functioning, in David G. Stewart's words, as a «magazine of magazines» (2006, p. 209).

Patmore defined his work as a «jeu-d'esprit of mine» (Strachan 1999, p. xi), as a divertimento from which today we can obtain invaluable information about the development of Romanticism, in a style and format that allows us to recognise keys to the movement that are very different from those associated with conventional Romanticism. However, it can be affirmed that this unconscious tone of the parody game contained a profound knowledge of the imitated authors. The author is capable of adopting the style, themes and pressures to which the writers were subjected. Thus, his creation is closer to pure imitation than to parody and seems to be a personal project in which the sorrows and difficulties of the imitated authors are known—whether they were friends or enemies.

Patmore's contribution evidences his relevant role in the world of literary publications of Romanticism, because of his interest in and reflection of aesthetic rather than its conflicting political styles. His benevolent parody reveals the process in which the journals were read: their gestation, reception and rejection. It establishes the affinities and differences in the way literature was treated and used as a bridge for social and political commentary. His parody is basically imitation and starts above all from admiration for the authors whose works and styles are parodied, such as the Smiths or Hazlitt, or the cruelty with which they are treated, such as the style of *Blackwood's*, or his respect for intellectual work, as shown



in his copy of Professor Wilson in his commentary on Shakespeare. He does not conceal his overt intention, for he takes exactly the name of the imitated plays, which are easily identifiable. He produces an intelligent parody with a witty result that makes the reader smile, especially because it shows that he is capable of following the thread that the original author had already started, as in «Tremaine», in his composition on Shakespeare—which is presented as n. 2 of the already existing *Letters on Shakespeare*—or in «Grimm's Ghost», where he indicates that he follows the series already started in the *New Monthly Magazine*.

If his role as a journalist had predominated until now, his important and original use of the parody of the Smith brothers should be considered and revalued. His work is fundamental in that it offered the reading public of the time a *vade mecum* of the different types of romantic essay in existence, emulating to perfection and with a great sense of humour the different aesthetic styles of some of the best-known authors of his time.

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