WILLIAM JAMES LINTON – A LIFE IN THE COLLECTIONS

On the Formations of Political Art and Wood Engraving

"Linton – A Life in the collections" can count as the probably most comprehensive monographic source related to the history of political art in the 19th century. She comprises more than two hundred articles and commentaries divided into four parts.

IV RECEPTION

***William Abercrombie (with the support of William Harcourt Hooper): A Scrapbook on Wood Engraving*. Ashton upon Mersey, 1880 – 1899**

This voluminous scrapbook on xylography, affectionately compiled and carefully lettered, contains Linton's articles *Art in Engraving on Wood* (Atlantic Monthly, June 1879), *Engraving on Wood* (Scribners, July 1879), and his book *Some Practical Hints on Wood-Engraving* (91 pages, Boston, 1879). Of the embedded letters, a rather meaningless one originates from Linton, the rest comes from William Harncourt Hooper, a xylographer, who was twenty-two years younger. He too had worked for the *London Illustrated London News* and also for some of the Pre-Raffaelites and *Punch* cartoonists. But first and foremost he is known as the artisan who engraved the designs for William Morris´ *Kelmscott Press*. The Morris track finally led to the identity of the author of the scrapbook William Abercrombie, a stockbroker from Manchester and a noted patron and collector of Morris and Rossetti.

The scrapbook mainly consists of a chronological documentation of Linton's dispute with the engravers of the New School on the role of the artisan in times of photographic reproduction. As all these essays where short, with reproductions of referential images, Abercrombie made an effort to illustrate them in a way that makes the arguments much more transparent and traceable. He added seventy engravings by Thomas Bewick and his disciples – often with comments by Ruskin and Linton -, also examples by Linton and his disciple, the novelist and engraver Mary Hallock Foote, and some members of the *New School*, as well as a fine selection of facsimiles and original cuts after Dürer and Holbein.

Yet it is not merely the subject and its careful editing that makes this book so interesting, but the fact that nineteen years later, Abercrombie confronted the person, who had executed all the engravings

for the Kelmscott "Chaucer", the most famous product of the Morris press, with Linton's polemics against the degrading mode of the facsimile cut. Statements by Walter Crane, Arthur Mackmurdo and Emery Walker, who was Morris' typographical advisor, document that Linton was held in high esteem in the Arts & Crafts circles as a scholar of the history of typography and as a veteran of the socialist movement. During his last stay in London in 1889 – two years before the foundation of the *Kelmscott Press* – Linton held a lecture at the *Society of Arts*, in which he reinforced his attacks against the mechanical practice of the facsimile mode of engraving and of photoxylography, which in his view had "degraded and deteriorated" the position of the artisans to mere machines. With his defence of the artisan's individuality in times of "soulless" mechanisation, he took the words right out of the mouth of an audience mouth which mainly consisted of Arts and Crafties. But the criticism he spread was not only directed againt the hyperrealism of photoxylography, but also against the "purist" views of the *Aesthetic Movement* that adored the medieval woodcut like a fetish. To them it must have been a sheer provocation that Linton dated back the spoiled tradition of the mechanical facsimile technique to the early days of Dürer and Holbein: "The earliest of the plank- blocks, on which, before the invention of the moveable types, both picture and lettering were cut, were very rude. Any boy could cut such. When the purists go into ecstasies over the noble engraving-work for Dürer's drawings, they do but ignorantly rave and imagine a vain thing. The designs are noble and the drawing; but the engraving is only mechanism, not always skilled mechanism." (*Some Hints of Wood Engraving*)

Abercrombie, the admirer and collector of Morris, could easily recognize Linton's characterisations as a substantial attack on the fundaments of the "purist" ideology of the *Kelmscott Press*. Not only were the drawings of Burne-Jones for the Kelmscott "Chaucer" executed as facsimile-engravings, but also transferred on the blocks as photographic reproductions. By confronting the person who had executed these engravings and asking him to contribute to his private documentation, he laid his fingers exactly into these wounds. As Abercrombie was an important customer of his bookplates and dies, Hooper took pains to reply generously by inserting comments, proofs and a letter. Therein he reinforced the same objections against Linton, with which the defenders of the New school had already responded. Hooper listed all noted artists and illustrators for whom he had worked and came to the conclusion: "They all approved of my treatment, like Burne Jones. They said that I kept the character and feeling of their work. I hold that the engraver should sacrifice his own individuality and reproduce the artist. Linton's work has his own individuality throughout and the artist does not appear with sufficient difference to be recognized apart. I wonder how he sees white line and nothing else in Bewick and black line only in Dürer. Why does he class such work as the `Annunciation´ and the `Gardener´ as all carpenter's jobs, the last so far better than the first; the same with Holbein; some of the `Dance of Death´ cuts are so much better than others and all are so delicate that Linton when I last saw him came to the conclusion that they were cut on metal! (...) I could write much in dispute of Mr. Linton's white line theory but the work is enough to express my view of the matter." (*W.H. Hooper, London 3rd April 99*)

The statement of Hooper reveals that in the manufacturing process of the *Kelmscott Press* no equal status of the artist and the craftsman was aspired. It was based on subordination and the sacrifice of individuality, a view that Linton used to decry as a slavish attitude. But such a mode of production was not only opposed to Linton's convictions, but definitely also against those principles which the

spiritus rector of Arts & Craft, John Ruskin, had formulated in his tract on the *True Functions of the Workman in Art*. To him, allowing the inferior workman to operate independently had been of essential importance and was decisive for the artistic quality of a product. According to Ruskin, "change or variety is as much a necessity to the human heart and brain in buildings as in books." Morris had granted creative scope only to Burne Jones, not to Hooper. His ideal of a medieval workshop didn't involve a mode of co-operation was based on the autonomy and individuality of the participating forces. The enormous output of the *Kelmscott Press* – fifty-three different works in seven years – was traded off for the prize of a stencilled uniformity and could only be achieved by adopting production conditions of an advanced level of industrialisation.

Hooper's share in this posthumous debate marks a rare and authentic vote within a clash of two opposite views on mechanisation and division of labour, representing also diverse socialist views of two different generations: Linton, the middle-class artisan, as an exponent of the old, stubborn and often idiosyncratic rural radicalism of '48 with its emphasis on liberty and individuality versus the upper-class intellectual Morris, as a representative of a fashionable version of an organised, urban socialism with the romantic ideal of a Ubiquitarian, fraternal community.

George Somes Layard: *Mrs. Lynn Linton Her Life Letters & Opinions.* London 1901

The rear inside cover bears some newspaper cut-outs and a handwritten letter by Mrs. Lynn Linton to Mrs. Claude Webster. Pasted in as well is an original photographic portrait of Mrs. Linton.

Linton had been associated with the former radical journalist and successful Victorian novelist Eliza Lynn after the death of his second partner Emily Wade in a kind of functional marriage from 1858 till his emigration in 1866. Chapter VII of Lynn's biography contains some lively insights into the wild proto-Hippie existence of the multitudinous Linton family in Brantwood. As her biographer states, Mrs. Lynn couldn't endure this anti-authoritarian state of constant "disorder, unthrift, and squalor (...) than she could live in the wigwam of a Cherokee Indian."

The Brothers Dalziel: *A Record of Fifty Years' Work in conjunction with many of the most distinguished artists of the period 1840-1890.* London 1901

George and Edward Dalziel were the owners of the most profitable and prolific engraving workshop in Victorian England. In their autobiography, they mention rivals in business like Joseph Swain and Linton only marginally. But the book nevertheless provides some valuable insights into the conditions of Victorian xylographic mass production. Although Linton himself had sometimes been on their payroll he didn't think much of their standardized engraving manners. In his essays on xylography, he scornfully referred to the "Dalziel factory," where "the engraver was degraded (...) and became a mere mechanic."

Not without mawkishness, the brothers looked upon the triumphal procession of the half tone: "When we think of the vast mass of wonderful illustration given to the public, week by week of every conceivable class of subject, direct from the camera, in which the draughtsman has no part at all, and this work is of general beauty and truth, we feel that our occupation is gone."

Max Osborn: *Der Holzschnitt.* Bielefeld / Leipzig 1905

The book gives a valuable overview of the international development of xylography from medieval times onward. It includes many examples of the American *New School* and stresses the leading role of Friedrich Juengling in developing a new surface-related kind of reproduction graphic. The author, an influential German art critic, mentions the heated reactions against this new mode of engraving, which was stirred by some conservative members of the craft and finally provoked the breakthrough of the *New School* with an exhibition in Boston in 1881. The survey ends with an account of the extensive influence of the coloured Japanese woodblock print on artists like Felix Valloton and Emil Orlik and with the awareness that the rise of artistic freedom in woodcut and engraving was due to the new possibilities of photomechanical reproduction technologies. With this thesis, he paved the way for Paul Westheim's famous *Holzschnittbuch*, which promoted the new expressionistic woodcut.

Arthur Hayden: *Chats on old prints.* London 1906 / 1909

The print collector Hayden counts Linton among the prominent followers of Bewick and emphasizes the crucial influence of his "masterly use of the white line" on the development of the craft. He also mentions the impact of the editorial experiments of Linton's disciple William Luson Thomas, publisher of *The Graphic,* on the American *New School*.

Walter Crane: *An Artist's Reminiscences.* New York 1907

Chapter three of Crane's memoirs is about his apprenticeship to Linton from 1858-62 as a draughtsman on wood. Crane refers to his teacher as "the head of his craft and (...) an ardent champion of political freedom."

Richard Garnett: *The Life of W.J. Fox, Public Teacher & Reformer 1786-1864.* London 1910

The author of this valuable biography, which was published posthumously, was a prolific biographer of the literary traditions of radicalism, among them works on Milton, Blake and Shelley. William Johnson Fox had achieved considerable fame as a stirring orator and a prolific journalist and pamphleteer. To Linton, Fox was of vital importance as a campaigner for a democratic culture and as a lively and powerful example of republican commitment. Linton is cited referring to Fox as "the virtual founder of that new school of English radicalism, which looked beyond the established traditions of French revolution, and more poetical, escaped the narrowness of Utilitarianism."

Frank Weitenkampf: *American Graphic Art.* New York 1912

The chapter about *American Wood Engraving* is mainly based on Linton's survey, whereas the sections on *The New School of Wood Engraving* and on *Painter – Wood-Engraving* predominantly reproduce the analyses of Sylvester Rosa Koehler, the curator of prints at the *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*. Weitenkampf characterises Linton's technique as "firm and honest", exemplifyng "to a certain degree his theory that the engraver should draw with the graver. It illustrates also his devotion to the expressiveness of the line." In terms of the *New School* dispute, Weitenkampf accords with Koehler's opinion that "wood-engraving must adjust itself to the character of contemporary art," meaning to the current "reign of technique and color," but in the "one-sided striving for tonality (...) the textures of the materials represented are but too often entirely overlooked. Koehler's conclusion is that all these efforts eventually bore good fruit. The final impression that he gives is that in the belief in certain

underlying eternal laws of fitness and beauty, and of the necessary integrity of the line, he and Linton are, after all, on common ground, Linton ends his *History* by saying of the men of the *new school*: `Notwithstanding all my censures, the revival of wood-engraving is in their hands. They will outgrow their mistakes.´ The fact remains that the 'new school' did its work and did it well."

Max Beer: *Geschichte des Sozialismus in England.* Stuttgart 1913

The still suitable survey on the formation of English socialism by the Austrian historian Max Beer was issued in Stuttgart by the noted radical publisher Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Dietz. Beer mentions "the famous xylographer and poet W.J. Linton" in connection with the publishing programme of James Watson and refers to his activities as a member of a Chartist delegation in Paris in 1848.

Henry Wolf: Album. New York, ca. 1880 – 1916

This original scrapbook was hand signed by its author on the cover.

Shortly after the German taking of his homeland in 1871, the Alsatian wood engraver Henry Wolf had emigrated to New York and became one of the most distinguished engravers of the *New School*. He was highly esteemed for his utmost refined interpretations, and in the first decade of the 20th century he was regarded together with coeval Timothy Cole as one of the last survivors of artistic xylography. His personal scrapbook consists of thirty-five pages, which are densely filled with a total of four hundred and sixty five articles and press clippings, including also many documents on the conflict between Linton and *The New School*. It serves not only as a documentation of his exhibition activities, but can also be regarded as a unique document of the popularity and the surprising international reputation of the last xylographic dinosaurs of the hyperrealistic school.

Eduard Bernstein: *Sozialismus und Demokratie in der großen englischen Revolution.* Stuttgart 1919

Second revised edition. It was first published in 1895 in a rather rudimentary form as a part of Karl Kautsky's groundbreaking anthology of early socialism, "Die Vorläufer des Neueren Sozialismus."

Eduard Bernstein's survey was the first substantial examination of the ancient egalitarian roots of English radicalism. It was this Puritan communitarian tradition which had shaped Linton's concept of an English Republic decisively. The German social democratic politician and theorist Bernstein was no educated historian, but he managed to open up with his pioneering piece a range of hidden source materials like the writings of the communist Leveller Gerrard Winstanley.

Bernstein's survey was first published in Stuttgart by Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Dietz in 1895 under the title *Kommunistische und demokratisch-sozialistische Strömungen während der englischen Revolution*. In England it became accessible only in 1930 in the translation by H.J. Stenning, titled *Cromwell and Communism*. It was reprinted twice, in 1963 and 1980, and became seminal for the work of the *Communist Party Historians Group*, especially for the studies on the origins and the progress of the English Civil War by Christopher Hill and Brian Manning.

Paul Westheim: *Das Holzschnittbuch.* Potsdam 1921

In his *Holzschnittbuch*, which can be considered as the bible of German woodblock expressionism, Paul Westheim dignified Linton's role as a precursor. Linton, he says, "had a clear-sighted view for

the situation by coming in his 1889 published history to the conclusion, that the woodcut could only be retrieved by the artist becoming xylographers themselves. A prophetical word, which was confirmed by the development, although in a quite different way, than Linton had expected. The artists turned back to the woodblock at the verge of the century but only to abandon the whole business of woodengraving entirely as a complete aberration." In fact Westheim did not grasp the specific qualities and the inherent creative possibilities of Bewick's white line technique. But his theses were in accordance with the modernist doctrines of nativeness. He contrasted the earthy simplicity of the new woodcut with the assumed artificial and decadent approaches of 19th-century graphics. Westheim held the romantic vision, that by going back to the origins of the craft, xylography would become a real people's art again.

Wassili Nikolajewitsch Masjutin: *Thomas Bewick. Sein Leben und sein Werk. Eine Untersuchung über die technischen Grundlagen des Holzschnittes nebst einer kritischen Würdigung des Schaffens Th. Bewicks.* Berlin 1923

This excellent study by the Russian sculptor, illustrator and stage designer Wassili Nikolajewitsch Masjutin, a workmate of Vladimir Majakowski, is a committed effort to elevate the reputation of graphic arts and to enthrone an artisan like Thomas Bewick in the canon of fine arts next to a William Turner. Masjutin had read his Ruskin and, even more, his Linton. Although he did not agree with the latter's evaluation of the issues of Bewick's apprentices as being partly superior to their master, he substantiates Linton's expressive imperative, that the only technique of worth is to draw with the graver. Moreover he emphasised Linton's view of the creative superiority of the white line technique and compared the status of Bewick's discovery with that of Newton's law of gravitation. The carefully illustrated publication provides evidence of Linton's influence on the Russian wood engraving revival, which had started shortly after the October Revolution with the work of Vladimir Andreevich Favorski.

Douglas Percy Bliss: *A History of Wood Engraving.* London 1928

Douglas Percy Bliss, a Scottish painter and director of the *Glasgow School of Art*, refers to Linton as "a most independent and lofty mind" and recommends the reading of his various discourses on wood engraving, although he finds them lacking a consistent aesthetical theory. He dedicates a whole chapter to the fundamental influence of William Blake's late wood engravings on the modern schools of British xylography, which started with Blake's disciples Samuel Palmer and the Ancients and went forth to the private press tradition of William Morris and the works of Eric Gill and John Nash.

Will Ransom: *Private Presses and their Books.* New York 1929

This first edition was limited to 1200 copies and printed by the Lakeside Press.

The voluminous account, compiled by the American book designer and typographer Will Ransom, consists mainly of the catalogues of the various English and American presses and short biographies of their owners. The European tradition is ignored throughout. The pioneering history includes an entry on Linton's production, but whereas Ransom's successor Roderick Cave in his 1983 publication *The Private Press* also considers Linton's early Brantwood productions, Ransom conveys a rather distorted picture of Linton's relevance by taking into account only his American issues. In addition to that, his catalogue of the *Appledore Press* can only be viewed as rudimental. It consists of nine objects,

and the chronological dates he provides are accordingly very indefinite. Whereas the historical survey takes peripheral and whimsical productions such as Benjamin Franklin´' Passy issues in consideration, Ransom manages to ignore William Blake's groundbreaking corpus of illuminated books completely. But nevertheless, this unreliable account became a very influential classic and played a decisive part in the canonization of the Morris Press genealogy and also in the marginalization of Linton's editorial merits. An evaluation of the *Kelmscott* press against the background of the achievements of the Blake and Linton presses would of course have been quite a different one, in aesthetical as well as in intellectual respects.

Ralph Clifton Smith: *Gustav Kruell. American Portrait Engraver On Wood.* New York 1929

The author was a curator of the *Division of Graphic Arts and Photography* of the *Smithonian National Museum of History and Technology*, which was founded by Sylvester Rosa Koehler in 1886. Ralph Clifton Smith, who had also published valuable bibliographies of the oeuvres of Timothy Cole and Henry Wolf, repeatedly cites Linton's appraisals of Kruell's expressive mode of portrait engraving. Kruell had been trained in Germany in the Düsseldorf workshop of Richard Brend'amour, he had founded his own firm in Stuttgart and was forced to emigrate because of his socialist commitments. He became the founder and president of the *Society of American Wood Engravers*. Because of his free artistic graver manner Linton doesn't count him to the *New School*.

William Fowler Hopson: *Side Lights on William James Linton, 1812-97* (reprinted for private circulation from the Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America. Vol. XXVII). 1933

The small publication has a bookplate of the Grolier's Club, New York.

The biographic account comes from a devotee of Linton. William Fowler Hopson was a painter, engraver and illustrator himself and had lived nearby Hamden /CT. He refers to Linton as "one of the most interesting, many-sided characters of his day and generation (...) and no less prolific and pronounced than his great forerunners, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Dürer. I am not seeking to place Linton on a pedestal beside these great ones of the art world – he would not have wished it himself; but the time will surely come when this not unfair likeness as regards accomplishment will be appreciated, and some writer, sensing the fact, will produce a monograph rich in interest, charm and art value." The time would not come. Quite to the contrary, the following decades would witness Linton's rapid fall into oblivion.

Alphaeus Cole and Margaret Ward Cole: *Timothy Cole. Wood-Engraver.* Boston / New York 1935

Limited edition, hand signed by the authors.

The very witty and lively biography of the best known exponent of artificial photoxylography came predominantly from the pen of his son Alphaeus. He witnessed his father's numerous quirky efforts of life reform and tried out his strange diets. Whereas his father died in 1931 at the age of seventy-two, Alphaeus would prove his father's diets a full success by deceasing at the age of –112, verified as the world's oldest living man. In chapter four, he gives an account of how the young engraver Cole had improved his style by "studying the works of the leading engravers of the day, especially those of the famous W.J. Linton." Chapter six is about the famous conflict *Cole against Linton*.

William M. Ivins: *How Prints Look. Photographs with A Commentary.* New York 1943

Ivins was the founder of the Prints Department at the *Metropolitan Art Museum* and the first theorist of printing techniques as a means of communication and knowledge, a precursor of media theorists such as Marshall McLuhan. In this commented picture book, he compares the different modes of xylography by showing extremely magnified details of works of the most distinguished artist-engravers and comes to the conclusion: "Of all the virtuoso wood engravers W.J. Linton was perhaps the most brilliant and expressive in his use of the engraving tool, as well as the freest and least subject to any established routine of linear system."

Francis Edward Mineka: *The Dissidence of Dissent. The Monthly Repository 1806 – 1838.* Chapel Hill 1944

Only little is known about the literary historian Francis Edward Mineka, who with this substantial scholarly survey on the radical Unitarian periodical had paved the way for all subsequent examinations. The study starts with a short history of organized Unitarianism and the tradition of English religious periodicals from the Civil War period on and provides analyses of all of the various phases of the magazine under the four editorships of Robert Aspland, William Johnson Fox, Richard Hengist Horne and Leigh Hunt. The most distinctive and prolific contributors such as Harriet Martineau, John Stuart Mill, Ebenezer Elliott and William Bridges Adams are introduced in the form of biographical sketches. As the great majority of contributions were anonymous or signed only with pseudonyms or initials, the extensive list of identification of authorship, which Mineka provides in the appendix, proves to be of substantial support for the contemporary reader of the magazine.

The author emphasises the precedence of Fox's editorship, in whose "hands the magazine broke away from its sectarian connections and became an important organ of the radical party." He also discusses the influences of Jeremy Bentham's *Unitarism* and of Comte de Saint-Simon's *New Christianity* on Fox's editorial concept. Like Thomas Carlyle, the pugnacious Unitarian minister had been "tremendously attracted" by the Saint Simonians' social gospel, but unlike the Tory socialist Carlyle, he always kept a very critical distance to their hierarchical system of a privileged aristocracy. Young Linton only entered the Fox circle when *The Monthly Repository* declined. He never contributed and congruously Mineka doesn't mention him in the study, but he used his biography as a major source for his appraisal of Fox's and Horne's editorships.

William M. Ivins: *Prints and Visual Communication.* Chicago 1953

Ivins' reflections on the printing techniques of the 19th century in chapter five of this pioneering examination of print culture owe much to his close study of the conflict between Linton and the *New School*. Although Ivins illustrates his thesis of a "broken tyranny" of standardized linear structures in the course of the 19th century with an enlarged detail of an engraving by Linton as an example of a graphic free-style, he doesn't mention him or any other exponent of the late artistic xylography in the text. The omission of the refined state of xylographic culture proves evidence of the modernist paradigm shift that had taken place in the last decade and that finally led to the complete extinction of the highly complex medium of wood engraving from art historical remembrance. Moreover, someone like Linton with his ominous political background and his ambiguous imagery wasn't bearable anymore as an artistic example in the times of the *Cold War*.

David V. Erdman: *Blake. Prophet against Empire.* Princeton 1954

Erdman's groundbreaking study on the political background of Blake's art and writings was able to shift the focus of future research from the artist as an unworldly mystic to the contemporary witness who "felt the cannonfire and the mud of Valmy almost more acutely than did Goethe, who was on the scene." The image, which is drafted from Blake's conception of republican art and from his radical surroundings, was deepened and amplified by a series of seminal studies that followed, such as Iain McCalman's *Radical Underworld. Prophets, Revolutionaries, and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (1988), David Worrall's *Radical Culture. Discourse, Resistance and Surveillance, 1790 -1820.* (1992) and Jon Mee's *Dangerous Enthusiasm. William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s* (1992). But whereas the impression of the radical cultures of the "heroic" Jacobean and Regency periods became increasingly precious and vivid, the prospect of the subsequent revolutionary phases remained shallow and their culture in artistic respects undervalued.

Yuri V. Kovalev: *An Anthology of Chartist Literature.* Moscow 1956

This anthology, published by the *Foreign Languages Publishing House Moscow*, was announced as "the first attempt at a representative collection of Chartist poetry and prose to be published in any country." The introduction and the comments by the noted lecturer at the University of Leningrad are in Russian, but the texts are not translated, so that "the British student of his own country's past may well benefit from these researches of a foreign scholar." The pioneering work is divided into four sections: poetry, novels, literary criticism, and speeches. Linton is represented extensively i.a. with an article on Russian republicanism from his *English Republic*, his poem from 1848 *The Dirge of the Nations* and some pithy examples of his cycle *Rhymes and Reasons against Landlordism.*

It is telling that the foremost political artist of the 19th century had his initial comeback with greetings from Moscow. But it would take another seventeen years until this return took on a more distinctive shape, this time with greetings from Canberra, Australia.

Cyril Pearl: *Always morning. The life of Richard Henry "Orion" Horne.* Melbourne 1960

Cyril Pearl's biography is highly recommendable although it doesn't meet some academic standards. It has no index or bibliography but is nevertheless based on excellent research. Its valuable precedence over Ann Blainey's subsequent work lies in that the versatile Australian journalist, who apparently led a similarly varied life as his subject, meets him without the scholarly bias of a canonical ranking. He is thus able to provide a rather fresh and empathetic approach to Horne's diverse literary work.

Ray Watkinson: *Thomas Bewick, 1753–1828: Artist, Naturalist & Radical (Our History Pamphlet No. 25)*, London 1962

The pamphlet consists of eleven hectographed pages, stapled, which were originally sold for 1s. 6 d. The "Our History" series was published quarterly by the History Group of the Communist Party.

Raymond Watkinson was a Marxist art historian and teacher, specialised in the Pre-Raphaelites and the *Arts & Craft* movement. In this pamphlet he challenged Ruskin's romantic image of the artist who had popularized wood engraving as being an "untaught instinctive genius, the unlettered country boy with a flair for drawing beasts and birds and charming rustic scenes." Instead, Watkinson detects

Bewick as a member of various radical debating clubs in his hometown Newcastle, a city that "was not only important for its coal industry, but as a principal centre for the whole Border country, and a stage on the journey to and from Scotland." Newcastle had been a hotbed of British radicalism from the times of the Jacobite revolts. Jean Paul Marat had lived there for some years and published his *The Chains of Slavery.* Watkinson sleuths Marat's traces to the various radical debating clubs, in which Bewick and his friend Thomas Spence had been involved. "Whether Bewick himself met Marat we are not likely now to know; but it is clear that many of his immediate seniors and associates did; and the engraver's later comments on the French and American Revolutions, and on social and political institutions generally, show that he had deeply absorbed the ideas Marat propagated." The list of Bewick's radical friends, which Watkinson provides, is long. Besides the notorious proto-communist Thomas Spence, who was the most influential figure in the history of British Jacobinism next to Thomas Paine, he also refers to the radical bookbinder Gilbert Gray and the lawyer and Unitarian reformer James Losh.

"Clearly Bewick was not only a Radical, but a convinced one, and a leader of progressive thought in his home town. Like Cobbett, of whose *Political Register* he was a faithful reader, he had a deep vein of nostalgia for a peasant past; he was suspicious, too, of the idea of universal suffrage (though he pays warm tribute to Major Cartwright). Yet he would have rejoiced at the Reform Bill, which was passed four years after his death." Although Watkinson sometimes obviously overstrains Bewick's radical impetus, his research had provided expedient material for a revaluation of the politics of wood engraving. But unfortunately the sticking power of modernist debasement seemed to have been strong enough to prevent this, and what is more, the image of Bewick as a politically aware artisan, which Watkinson had revealed, couldn't stand up to the public need for nostalgia. Only recently, Bewick was newly discovered as a reflective contemporary of the French Revolution.

Edward Palmer Thompson: *The Making of the English Working Class.* London 1963

A German translation "Die Entstehung der englischen Arbeiterklasse" was published in two volumes in Frankfurt in 1999

The most remarkable fact in terms of Linton is that he isn't mentioned in this extremely influential historiography of the English working class culture. One wonders why the late Blake and Morris scholar Edward Palmer Thompson, who had a far reaching reputation as "the greatest Marxist historian of the English speaking world," completely ignored this solitary Chartist artist, since Linton was precisely the example of the working-class artist he had been looking for, an author who had managed to thread together the discourses of artisan radicalism and romanticism. Even such a crucial promoter of working-class culture such as William Johnson Fox is mentioned by Thompson merely in a footnote. Only on the babasis of such embarrassing omissions could Thompson's marrowy conclusion that "after William Blake, no mind was at home in both cultures, nor had the genius to interpret the two traditions to each other" remain undisputed. Even in his late publications, Thompson did not find the courage to adjust his simplistic views on 19th-century culture and the development of interventionist art, which had been extremely tailored to his hero worshipping of William Morris.

Ann Blainey: *The Farthing Poet. A Biography of Richard Hengist Horne, 1802–1884. A lesser Literary Lion.* London 1968

Although Blainey's biography appeared only eight years after Cyril Pearl's pioneering study, she managed to ignore him completely. Instead, the Australian literary historian refers to the papers of Eri J. Shumaker of Denison University Granville, Ohio, who wrote an unpublished dissertation on Horne in 1934. Although Anne Blainey's views are often blocked by canonical prejudice, this well researched biography on the neglected author is still worth reading, as it provides a lot of information on those radical circles of "angry young men", that also had shaped Linton's cultural and political views; it thus adds another valuable perspective of a deeper understanding of Victorian radical culture to Francis Barrymore Smith's Linton biography that followed only five years later.

Deborah Dorfman: *Blake in the 19th Century. His Reputation as a Poet from Gilchrist to Yeats.* New Haven 1969.

This influential study traces the gradual recognition of Blake's crucial role as one of the foremost poets and artists. Although Deborah Dorfman examines the circumstances of the writing and editing of Alexander Gilchrist's Blake biography in great detail, she completely passes over Linton's participation as a pictorial editor and engraver completely over. She doesn't even mention his function as a co-editor of the popular *English Verses* anthology, which granted Blake's poetry a prominent position alongside Robert Burns as a people's poet. So this otherwise very accurate study is only one more telling document of the state of oblivion, in which Linton remained in the fifties and sixties.

Donald Drew Egbert: *Social Radicalism and the Arts. Western Europe. A Cultural History from the French Revolution to 1968.* New York 1970

Why this fundamental scholarly work on the interrelationships between the arts and modern radical politics is until today disregarded to such an extent is hard to comprehend. That Linton is not mentioned here, nor the whole Foxite circle of expanded Utilitarianism, is hardly surprising, as Egbert's account of British radicalism is mainly based on the distorted history of Edward Palmer Thompson. But Egbert's extensive knowledge manages nevertheless to give a notion of the wider context, in which the cultural milieus of Linton were able to unfold.

Francis Barrymore Smith: *Radical Artisan. W. J. Linton 1812-97*, Manchester 1973

The book has an appendix with excerpts from Kineton Park's edition of "The English Republic"

This substantial biography is based on an intense and far-reaching study of sources and in this regard cannot be praised enough. Smith's vast horizon of knowledge, which ranged from British radical politics to the social history of medicine, enabled him to follow Linton in the numerous bifurcations of his versatile ambitions and concerns. The dense amount of information that Smith provides is mainly addressed to students of the Chartist movement and not appropriate to convey an idea of Linton's solitary position as a political artist nor of the far-reaching consequences of his xylographic polemics. Instead, he gives the impression of a rather idiosyncratic networker on the fringes of the labour movement who had incidentally practiced an artistic technique, one which was doomed to fail. In this regard, Robert Gleckner's criticism of Smith's biography can only be considered as acceptable in that it refers to it as "an excellent book", which for art enthusiasts and students of engraving would be rather "disappointing for, as the title makes clear, Smith focuses on Linton's considerable

involvement in political affairs (...) with less comment on what Linton himself considered the center of his life, his art." In art historical respects, Smith indeed left the subject of his research where he had sought to pick him up, "at the edge of the remembered nineteenth-century world."

Geoffrey Wakeman: *Victorian Book Illustration.* Detroit 1973

This survey on forgotten modes of reproduction includes a short paragraph on Linton's relief printing process *Kerography.*

Stanley Harrison: *Poor Men's Guardians. A Record of the Struggles for a Democratic Newspaper Press, 1763-1973.* London 1974

This survey on the history of the British radical press landscape and its fight against the stamp-tax and other restrictions was written by the former sub-editor of the *Morning Star*, the sole English-language socialist daily. The section on the Chartist's press refers to some papers which Linton had edited or in which he was involved such as *The National* or *The Red Republican*.

Edward Royle: *Victorian Infidels: The Origins of the British Secularist Movement, 1791-1866.* Manchester 1974

Edward Royle's survey traces Linton's role in the formation of the secular movement. Quite in contrast to those of his friend and later opponent George Holyoake it had been a rather marginal one.

Martha Vicinus: *The Industrial Muse: A Study of Nineteenth Century British Working Class Literature.* London 1974

Martha Vicinus's groundbreaking social study situates Chartist literature in the broader context of the working class's creative literary achievements, ranging from broadside culture, worker union's propaganda literature, dialect literature, up the mass entertainment of the music halls. The chapter on Chartist poetry and fiction concentrates on the "four best-known writers: W.J. Linton, Ernest Jones, Gerald Massey and Thomas Cooper. Their poetry and writing mirror many of the strengths and difficulties of pioneering a written working-class literature. They were most skilful in adapting a variety of poetic forms to their political subject matter."

Estelle Jussim: *Visual Communication and the Graphic Arts: Photographic Technologies in the Nineteenth Century.* New York / London 1974 / 1982

Using William Ivins' and Marshall McLuhan's pioneering media theories as starting points, Estelle Jussim examines the impact of photography and its related technologies on the graphic arts of the late 19th century. The main merit of this study, which was then highly acclaimed by the critics, was the revaluation of the hybrid imagery of this era. Jussim sought to rescue its central subject, the engravers of the *New School* of photoxylography, with a series of convincing arguments from complete oblivion. But unfortunately her engagement for artist-engravers such as Timothy Cole and Elbridge Kingsley and their forward-looking media-reflective experiments fell on deaf ears, as the sphere of influence of this publication was confined to historians of photography and design specialists. It didn't reach the reinforcements of art history, although photo- or hyperrealism, the latest shaping of Pop art, just had their popular breakthrough.

Linton, as the formative critic and opponent of the *New School*, of course had to play the role of the diehard conservative in Jussim's perspective of photographic history. She had coined the term *Lintonesque* for an old obsolete tradition of engraving. *Lintonesque* meant a standardized vocabulary of structural codes for certain predictable contents and a characteristic mixture of black- and-white line syntax, against which the exponents of the *New School* had rebelled. When Jussim speaks of him as a "dean of American wood engraving," who by 1872 had established "the decorative conventions of wood-engravings," she largely distorts his trendsetting influence and seriously misinterprets his ambitions. Linton himself never had practiced a style which could have been called *Lintonesque*. To have examined the history of wood engraving not only from the North American perspective and to have studied Francis Barrymore Smith's Linton biography would have contributed much to come to a more careful evaluation. But in view of the fact that the whole domain of reproduction graphics of the late 19th century was at this time in total disrepute, the pioneering impulses, which still arise from this study, cannot be praised enough.

John Lucas ed.: *Literature and Politics in the Nineteenth Century.* Essays. London 1975

This series of essays explores the political implitations of noted Victorian writers such as Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Thomas Hardy and William Morris, as well as of some lesser known poets including Matthew Arnold and Arthur Clough. It thus prepared the ground for more specialised studies in this field which followed in the nineties, such as Isobel Armstrong's *Victorian Poetry*. Although John Lucas, a scholar of Victorian literature with much taste for hierarchy, had excluded Chartist poetry for not being "important political literature,"" the collection is of interest also in terms of Linton as it includes some notable members of his literary environment including Richard Hengist Horne and Ebenezer Jones.

Nancy Carlson Schrock ed.: *American Wood Engraving, a Victorian History by William James Linton, New York, 1882*. Reprint: New York 1975

Because of the moderate reproduction quality, this reprint of Linton's *History of American Wood Engraving* is not really recommendable. But it contains a valuable scholarly introduction to Linton's efforts in the development and the promotion of the craft, written by Nancy Carlson Schrock, a librarian and art historian experienced in book restoration and binding.

Albert Garret: *A history of British Wood Engraving.* Speldhurst 1978

The author of this history was president of the *British Society of Wood Engravers and Relief Printers*. His study places emphasis on the modern expressionist period up to the 1970s. The controversy between Linton and the American *New School* is rendered only in a very simplified and mistakable way.

Phyllis Mary Ashraf: *Introduction to working class literature in Great Britain. Part I and II.* Oberlungwitz 1978

The two-volume work is both a detailed anthology of working class literature and a critical study on the subject. The first part deals with poetry while the second focuses on prose.

Phyllis Mary Ashraf had been a researcher at the *Institute for Marxism-Leninism* in Moscow, where she had stepped into the footprints of Yuri Kovalev. She then took on a university post in East-Berlin,

where she established herself as the one of the foremost scholars of British working-class culture with publications on Thomas Spence and on Afro-English radicals. Here, she refers to Linton as a *spiritus rector* of James Watsons's forward-looking publishing programme. As a poet she considered him to have changed sides after the frustrations of 1848, from proto-communist radicalism to a variation of romantic republicanism.

Phyllis Mary Ashraf: *Englische Arbeiterliteratur vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zum ersten Weltkrieg. Entwicklungstendenzen im Überblick.* Berlin–Weimar 1980

The German translation of Ashraf's substantial survey *Introduction to working class literature in Great Britain* was published in a small edition of 1200 copies.

Eric de Maré: *The Victorian Woodblock Illustrators.* London 1980

The author was one of the foremost architectural photographers of his time and an avid print collector. His richly illustrated survey on the Victorian wood-engraving business includes a few examples of Linton's graver work and some gossipy comments, which imply a rather superficial reading of F.B. Smith's biography.

Robert N. Essick: *William Blake. Printmaker.* Princeton 1980

Robert N. Essick published this scholarly reference work to "fulfill the need for a study of Blake's graphic endeavors – his commercial copy prints, his original line engravings, his special methods of color printing, and his invention of relief processes for publishing pictures and words from the same plate." He examines the development of Blake's special relief printing method, to which he himself referred to as `woodcut on copper´, in the broader context of early metal cuts like those of Elisha Krikall's Aesop illustrations. "As is so often the case with innovations in the arts, Blake's relief plates are a return to, and improvement upon, forgotten processes. At the same time that Blake's contemporary, Thomas Bewick, was restoring an ancient medium to its former stature through his new means of wood engraving, Blake was returning to the legendary art of metal engraving."

It would have been useful to expand upon this Bewick parallel, particularly for discussing Blake's blend of white line engraving and relief etching, which he used in some of his Continental Prophecies and late illuminated poems. To engross and explore this contemporary xylographic context would have also been helpful in respect to an appraisal of Blake's own experiments with wood engraving. To view his Virgil illustrations of 1821 as a pure opposite to the "careful craftsmanship" of the Bewick School and to transfigure these experiments to a method of "bold exploitation of the properties of wood", which had its true followers in the expressionist woodcuts of the likes of Gaugin and Munch, means to ignore the paradigm shift, which the medium had undergone from the early woodcut approach to the phase of copper engraving imitation. The early Bewick approach, to which Linton referred as the best example of expressive engraving, had been well aware of those "intrinsic properties of relief and white-line media," which Essick scrutinizes in Blake's xylographic illustrations. The roughness of Blake's manner proceeded from the expressive white line approaches of the early Bewick School instead of being opposed to them.

Robert F. Gleckner: *W.J. Linton, a Latter-day Blake.* In: *Bulletin of research in the humanities. Vol. 85.* New York 1982

Bound copies of pp. 208-227

Blake scholar Robert F. Gleckner was obviously not satisfied with the sober evaluation, which Francis Barrymore Smith had provided regarding Linton's indebtedness to Blake. "It would be pleasant," wrote Smith in his Linton biography, "to be able to add that Linton recognized in Blake a fellow engraver, poet, patriot, and visionary Londoner, a republican sprung from the people: indeed, a spirit more akin to his own than any other in English history. But he disregarded Blake's rich, exhilarating wood-engravings from Thornton´s *Virgil* and excluded Blake from his later *Masters of Wood engraving*. Blake's poetry he dismissed as incoherences."

Without providing new evidence, but only by gathering all Blake-related facts from Smith's biography, Gleckner hopes to convince the reader of his very general and indistinct conclusion that "it is difficult to imagine a more Blake-like man and career." Linton, of course, was very Blakeian in his self-conception as a printer-poet who runs his own press and uses pictorial quotations from Blake's works. But these excerpts were only few and he applied them amongst numerous others. He acknowledged Blake's "artistic imagination" mainly in his visual art. The only poems of Blake that he appreciated were the *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, which are of similar simplicity and beauty as the plebeian lyrics of Burns. In his own writings, Linton is much more indebted to the likes of Herrick, Milton and Shelley, and in his art theories much more to Mazzini and Ruskin than to Blake. So there is no reason to mistrust Linton's depreciatory statements concerning Blake's mystical incoherences. From the perspective of 19th-century Blake reception, Linton represents an important link between the mystic exponent of radical Romanticisms and the generation of *art noveau*, a fact that Smith already noted. But to judge Linton as a Blake satellite doesn't do justice to the complexity and inventiveness of his work. To refer to him as a late Blake should logically lead to respecting him as an early Bertolt Brecht or, even more accurately, as an earlier John Winston Lennon. Only then can one agree with Gleckner's appraisal that Linton "deserves better as an artist."

Horst Roeßler: *Literatur und Arbeiterbewegung. Studien zur Literaturkritik und frühen Prosa des Chartismus. (=Bremer Beiträge zur Literatur- und Ideologiegeschichte Bd. 1).* Frankfurt / M 1985

This study analyses the various components which were involved in the formation of early working-class literature, especially Chartist fiction, by examining two novels of Thomas Doubleday, which were published in Feargus O´Connor's radical weekly *Northern Star* and Linton's series of parables *Records of the World's Justice*, which he wrote in 1839 for his journal *The National. A Library for the People*.

Ian Hamilton Finlay with Kathleen Lindsley: *Jacobin Definitions.* Little Sparta 1991

The late publications of Finlay's *Wild Hawthorne press* – booklets, folders and cards – doesn't only prove evidence of his indebtedness to the British Jacobins' publishing campaigns and the aesthetics of the Bewick school, but also to his close examination of the various issues of Linton's *Appledore Press*.

Brian Maidment: *The Poorhouse Fugitives. Self-Taught Poets and Poetry in Victorian Britain.* Manchester 1992

This anthology of working-class poetry comes from a noted social historian with a specific interest in early Victorian print culture. It is divided into three sections: one which represents actual Chartist literature, then a more ambitious "Parnassian" strand and finally a poetry of rather regional character, mainly steeped in dialect. The collection fuses examples of better known radical writers such as Linton, Gerald Massey, Thomas Cooper and Ernest Jones with those of numerous neglected autodidacts and their reflections in the reviews of authors including Thomas Carlyle and Friedrich Engels. Included is Linton's title-lending poem *Bob –Thin or Poorhouse Fugitive* and some excerpts of his poetic cycle *Rhymes and reasons against landlordism*.

Isobel Armstrong: *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poets and Politics.* London 1993

This comprehensive re-reading of Victorian poetry in terms of its political implications combines for the first time the familiar mainstream of the literary establishment with examples of radical working-class poetry. Through this approach, Isobel Armstrong paved the way for all following studies in this field. Linton is introduced as the author of *Bob-Thin*, a satirical and burlesque form of working-class poetry and as a poet, who had "developed a remarkable form of secular hymn." In Armstrong's discourse on the definition of manhood in Chartist poetry, he is distinguished as an "exemplary writer of great integrity," who had invoked an image of manhood that enforced optimistic solidarity without a smack of "violent militarism and phallic power."

Denis Mack Smith: *Mazzini.* New Haven and London 1994

Denis Mack Smith mentions Linton repeatedly in his authoritative biography of the Italian revolutionary as a friend and follower. Although Giuseppe Mazzini constantly failed during his lifetime with his guerrilla tactics and attempted coups in his homeland, he can be considered in a wider historical perspective as one of the most influential and successful ideologists of the 19th century. He was not only the architect and *spiritus rector* of Italian unification, but also one of the driving ideological forces of the republican insurgencies of 1848, which changed the Eurasian map on the long term. In the end, his central vision of a Europe of democratic republican nations became reality.

Sue Rainey: *Creating "Picturesque America." Monument to the Natural and Cultural Landscape.* Nashville / London 1994

Sue Rainey, a historian of American graphic arts, examines in this comprehensive study how the remarkable publication *Picturesque America*, in the production of which Linton had been involved as a leading engraver and critic of the craft, had reinforced and promoted the Americans' perception of progress, nature, and their own country in the era of Reconstruction. "As the first publication to celebrate the entire continental nation, it enabled Americans, after the trauma of the Civil War, to construct a national self-image based on reconciliation between North and South and incorporation of the West."

Doris Bickford-Swarthout: *Mary Hallock Foote: Pioneer Woman Illustrator.* Deansboro 1996

The book focuses on the illustrative work of the famous novelist Mary Hallock Foote, who had introduced the American readership to the everyday life of the settlers, miners and engineers that were

peopling the Wild West. In the early seventies, Mary Hallock had studied three years at the *Cooper Institute* in New York in the class of Linton, who taught her drawing on wood and engraving. Linton had also played a crucial role in her career by procuring her initial commissions as an illustrator. He had also engraved numerous drawings of his former disciple. After George Sand, Harriet Martineau and Eliza Lynn, Mary Hallock Foote was the fourth in a series of prominent emancipated women, with whom he had collaborated.

Anne F. Janowitz: *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition.* Cambridge 1998

Anne F. Janowitz, an American scholar of eighteenth-century literary culture, traces in this publication the legacy of Romanticism in the radical literature of the 19th century, from Chartist poetry up to the lyrics of the socialist movements. In a series of case studies, she analyses how political poets such as Thomas Spence, Allen Davenport, Thomas Cooper and Ernest Jones were infected by the Romantic tradition. The final chapter focuses on the works of Linton and William Morris, "of two poets within whose political poetics the dynamic engagement of romanticism is again played out, but in the changed circumstances of the post-chartist world. (...) Linton and Morris barely knew one another, but they are interesting mirror figures. Both men were poets and artist-artisans, and both also devoted energy as well as their callings as political activists, writers, and journalists. (...) They were both influenced by Shelley, and between them, they were responsible for assimilating Blake to the radical poetic tradition." The section on Linton provides a substantiated abstract of the formation of his political poetry.

Michael Scrivener: *Seditious Allegories. John Thelwall & Jacobin Writing.* Pennsylvania 2001

There are numerous studies on the era of British Jacobinism and its religious dissenter background. The most influential being Iain McCalman's *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries, and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (1988), Jon Mee's *Dangerous Enthusiasm* (1992) and David Worrall's *Radical Culture. Discourse, Resistance and Surveillance* (1992). All these surveys are centred around the reclusive existence of William Blake and his outgoing counterpart, the Jacobin pamphleteer Thomas Spence and his followers from the *London Corresponding Society*. Michael Scrivener however portrays a less noted character from the Spencean precincts, the Jacobin orator, speech therapist and poet John Thelwall. In terms of literary scope and inventiveness, Thelwall was the figure in this early stage of British Radicalism who had been most similar to Linton. Comparable to him was also Thelwall's role as an agent between the separated circles of political activists and the literary and artistic establishment. The fact that there are barely outspoken references of the Chartist generation to their Jacobin precursors, especially from the Spencean circles, is conspicuous and requires further investigations.

Remi Blachon: *La Gravure sur bois au XIXe Siècle. L´age du bois debout.* Paris 2001

Blanchon criticises the chauvinistic approaches of former French histories of xylography and acknowledges the pioneering role of British wood engravers such as Charles Thompson, a disciple of Robert Branston, who introduced Thomas Bewick's new mode of graphic reproduction to Paris engravers in 1823. Blachon mentions William James Linton as one of the leading practitioners and

theorists of the profession and expresses his surprise about the fact that his histories of wood engraving are nowhere to be found in any French library.

Shirley Dent & Jason Whittaker: *Radical Blake: Influence and Afterlife from 1827.* London – New York 2002

Linton is the key reference of this *stimulating* history of Blake reception. In a series of astute and entertaining analyses, Shirley Dent and Jason Whitacker come to a similar valuation as Robert F. Gleckner in his *Latter day-Blake* essay: "In Linton's career we can trace a developing interest in Blake, not only as an artisan engraver, but also as a political symbolist." His growing interest and interaction with Blake would "develop throughout the century, from careful copist to innovative facsimilist to creative assimilist, cut-up artist at large." Although Dent & Wittacker's survey is much more detailed and substantiated than Gleckner's, they. too, miss in many cases to evidence the indebtedness of Linton's poetry (*Bob-Thin, Famine* or *Broadway Ballads)* to Blake. Seduced by Blake's present monumentality and Linton's use of some of his designs, they present an extremely distorted image of Blake's influence both on Linton's writings in particular and on Chartist culture in general.

Much more convincing than their overall assumptions are Dent & Whittacker's analyses of Linton's pictorial appropriations: "Linton's `Blakes´ are not dead but resurrected: they are the `choir invisible´ of hope beyond nation. Blake and Linton take the metaphysical and ontological *angst* of death and produce symbols of a new world. They turn religious apocalypse into social and political apocalypse. Linton's use of Blake's designs in his work creates a continuum of political symbolism, which has specific meaning of the secular, particularly Republican politics of the 1870s. In Linton's work, the material presence of the book recognises the indivisibility of art from politics."

Ian Haywood: *The Revolution in Popular Literature. Print, Politics and The People, 1790 – 1860.* Oxford 2004

Ian Haywood examines the role that radical politics played in the transformation of popular literature from the Jacobin miscellanies of the 1790s to the mass-circulation fiction and popular journalism of the 1840s. Linton is represented as "the Chartism's most distinguished artist," whose "career is indicative of the ways in which Chartism participated in and interacted with a broader literary-political culture, which was constantly widening the base of popular politics and culture in Britain." Haywood is currently working on a scholarly online edition of Linton's *Bob Thin*-poem.

Stephanie Kuduk Weiner: *Republican Politics and English Poetry, 1789 – 1874.* New York 2005

The author traces a strand of writers who "connected republican thought to the canonical tradition of British art and letters. (...) Politically, republicanism was a marginal movement marked by repeated failures and disappointments; intellectually, it was a powerful stream running through the main currents of culture." Stephanie Kuduk Weiner's revision of Victorian literary culture is based on a series of case studies that starts with Blake and Shelley and their strategies of demystification. She examines how republican poetry approached the mainstream in the middle of the 19th century via the works of the likes of Walter Savage Landor, Thomas Cooper and William James Linton. Furthermore she studies how the republican agenda was reflected in the oeuvres of established authors such as

Arthur Hugh Clough and George Meredith. She comes to the conclusion that republican poetry "was a particular kind of discourse that did not simply record previously constituted ideas but shaped them." She finds a "remarkable self-reflexivity" in republican poems, as they "continually justify their own existence as poems," carrying with them "a theory of poetry and poetic agency." The thesis is backed by the lexical strategy of some of Linton's poems, which depart from the republican conviction that it is first and foremost the correct use of language that makes communal understanding possible.

Joan Allen / Owen R. Ashton: *Papers for the People: A Study of the Chartist Press.* London 2005

This collection of essays examines the role of the Chartist press in the formation of working-class culture and, more generally, in the development of British print culture. Although many Chartist publications were short-lived, their influence was far more long-lasting, as it encouraged working-class self-awareness and, beyond that, paved the way for the later mass Sunday newspapers.
Two journals of Linton are more closely examined: Edward Royle contributes a piece on *The Cause of the People*, which Linton edited in 1848 together with George J. Holyoake. According to Royle, it supported the awareness of communitarian responsibility of citizenship. In her article on 'The late-Chartist press in North-East England, 1852–1859', editor Joan Allen takes account of Linton's *The English Republic*.

Josuah Brown: *Beyond the Lines. Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crises of Gilded Age America.* California 2006

Linton plays only a marginal role in Josuah Brown's survey of pictorial reporting in early American press, using the example of *Leslie's Weekly*. Brown refers to him as the head of the engraving department of this very popular and widespread journal. In this context, he also mentions Linton's polemics against the mechanisation of his craft.

Salvo Mastellone ed.: *Mazzini e Linton. Una democrazia europea.* Firenze 2007

This study, which explores the relationships between Giuseppe Mazzini and Linton from the early 1840s to the late 1850s, is mainly based on the collection of Linton's political correspondence in the *Instituto Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, Milano*. It provides a lot of valuable source material, also on the ideological conflicts between Mazzini and Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx. A central focus is placed on Linton's journal *The English Republic*, which published a series of important manifestos by Mazzini and the *Central European Democratic Committee*.

Christopher Alan Bayly, Eugenio F. Biagini ed.: *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalization of Democratic Nationalism, 1830 – 1920.* Oxford 2008

The series of essays examines Guiseppe Mazzini's crucial role in the popularisation of democracy in the 19th century. Their analyses reveal how his writings and reputation influenced nations and leaders across Europe, both Americas, and India. Of major significance in the context of his devotee Linton are Mazzini's views on art and politics, which are investigated by Carlotta Sorba. In his critical writings, Mazzini had proposed "a new form of interaction between art and politics, one which was consistent with the expectations of an age characterised by the widening expectation in the spheres both of citizenship and of political participation." In Mazzini's opinion, the special mission of the arts

was “to spur men to translate their thought into action.” Accordingly, the real artist would a have to be “at the same time educator, priest and prophet.” In this sense, Linton was perhaps the most paradigmatic Mazzinean artist of the time.

Colin Barr refers to Linton in his essay on Mazzini and Irish Nationalism as the only genuine Mazzinean to contribute to *The Nation*, the newspaper of the Irish republicans. In Eugenio Biagini’s article on Mazzini’s English exile, he appears as an active follower of Thomas Carlyle, which in fact he had never been. In Christopher Duggan’s essay on Mazzini’s role in Britain and Italy, Linton is recognized as the secretary of the *People’s International League*. Oddly enough, the crucial role he had played in the detection of the illegal observation of Mazzini’s correspondence by the British home secretary Sir James Graham, this Victorian Watergate scandal, is left unnoticed.

Gerry Beegan: *The Mass Image: A Social History of Photomechanical Reproduction in Victorian London.* Houndsmills / New York 2008

The author of this substantial study on the hybrid and ambiguous imagery of the illustrated papers in the final decade of the 19th century combines, as a writer, curator, and designer, hands-on experience in the print media in an almost unique way with an elaborate kind of historical research and a trained analytical mind. He demonstrates that photomechanical reproduction, rather than bringing a neutrality and clarity to the printed image, produced a nervous polyphony of mixed and fragmented, assembled and retouched images.

The third chapter of Gerry Beegan’s history of reproduction graphics is devoted to the structural changes from a linear to a tonal code, which the medium of wood engraving underwent during the phase of its mechanisation. Beegan argues, that “the increasingly detailed network of lines in the engravings of this period has less to do with the communication of greater amounts of information (...) and more to do with the changing structure of the wood engraving industry and its response to photographic techniques and images.” His main references in terms of the industrialisation of this craft are the theories of John Ruskin and Linton’s polemics against the *New School*.

William H. Brandt: *Interpretive Wood-Engraving: The Story of the Society of American Wood-Engravers.* New Castle, Delaware. 2009

This first monograph of the *Society of American Wood Engravers* is the industrious work of a professional botanist and print enthusiast. It provides readers with a series of fifty prints, finely reproduced in full size and duo tone, and detailed information on its history, its technical conditions, numerous members, and a list of their collective exhibitions and the prizes, they won. In an additional chapter, Brandt explains what one would have to consider if one intended to collect wood engravings. In his press release, the commendable *Oak Knoll Press* reckons with the nostalgic and patriotic need of its audience by envisioning “the warm glow of a remarkable era” and the pride, which the readers will take “in this little-known period of American art history.”

What this long overdue work on artificial photoxylography does not achieve, is to work out the specific features of the American School in contrast to its European competitors and to reflect its accomplishments in terms of media theory. It takes account of Linton’s dispute with the *New School*,

but fails to get to the bottom of it; it even fails to discuss the key term of *interpretation*, which is used in the headline, on a proper level. Brandt refers to *interpretative engraving* as somehow synonymous with *reproductive engraving*, but somehow complementary to *imitative engraving*. If the hyperrealism of the *New School* were only about interpreting coloured originals on the level of black and white, it would never have caused such a sensation and would never have tempted Linton to accuse them of self-annihilation and mechanical slave work.