Book Reviews/ Critiques de livres

Besieged: Early Modern British Siege Literature, 1642–1722
by Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson
McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021. 336pp. $80. ISBN 978-0228005407.
Review by Neil Ramsey, UNSW Canberra,
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Besieged offers an innovative and highly detailed study of British literary writing on sieges from the late seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries. The book contributes to a trend in military historical research that considers the significance of sieges alongside the more spectacular battles. Sieges were not only central to the course of a great deal of military history, especially in the early modern period, they also represent a central contact point between military and civilian worlds. Requiring massive work forces and enormous resources, sieges gave rise to complex engineering problems and had wide-ranging implications for the law and political authority. The siege even appears integral to the broader history of urban development if we accept that life in cities has always been shadowed by the threat of a siege.

Not surprisingly given the period covered, the book's primary focus is on the sieges of the English Civil War (1642–51), which prompted considerable literary responses. Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson propose that this writing enabled those living in the aftermath of the wars to come to terms with the suffering and social consequences engendered by the conflict. The 198 sieges conducted during the conflict represented some of the fiercest and most horrific fighting of the war. Sieges were especially brutal because they often ended with the sacking of a town or fortification and the indiscriminate slaughter of its inhabitants. The siege, in this sense, represents a microcosm of total wars and the genocidal logics that accompanied imperialism.

The opening chapter concentrates on representations of sieges in the era's war memoirs. The authors engage with Yuval Noah Harari's argument that the early modern military memoir was a largely factual record of events and that more personal or intimate forms of war writing only began to appear in the wake of the cult of sensibility and Romanticism in the eighteenth century. By drawing on recent work in the history of emotion, they posit a more nuanced approach to this timeline. Examining select memoirs of sieges, for example Nathan Drake's diary of the first and second siege of Pontefract Castle (1644–45), they argue that the period did give rise to affective responses to sieges concerned with the frustrations of activities and a consciousness

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of the physical horrors of combat. While this writing conveyed a neostoical belief that emotion must be controlled, it nonetheless registered the centrality and significance of emotion as a response to warfare.

In the chapters considering the history of siege drama, the authors commence with Shakespeare, which takes them somewhat out of their time frame, but the effect is highly illuminating. Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* is set during the siege of Troy and offers a new kind of examination of the siege concerned with the brutality of war's violence. The play, in part, does this through its restaging of the violence of Homer's *Iliad*, turning attention from the heroic glory of this foundational story of Western literature to a concern with cynicism and murder. In Shakespeare's play, Hector is not killed in a duel with his rival Achilles, but by an unruly mob acting on Achilles's orders. Obviously, this study does not have sufficient room to consider Shakespeare's writing on the siege in more detail, although several other of his plays are touched upon. A companion piece to this present study can be found in Adam N. McKeown's *Fortification and Its Discontents from Shakespeare to Milton: Trouble in the Walled City* (2019) that tackles this earlier period in more detail.

Alongside memoir and drama, *Besieged* considers a range of poetry, from ballad to epic. It is understandable that poetry was included, as the study is attempting a comprehensive coverage of siege genres. But while this inclusion is entirely worthwhile, some of the illuminating interventions made earlier in the study fall away somewhat toward the end as the poetry tends more toward heroic patriotism and so is a little closer to what we might expect from war writing in this period. The book nonetheless offers insightful readings of this material by drawing on Kate McLoughlin's work on the tropes that have defined war literature throughout history. In addition, the concluding chapter mounts a cogent argument that John Bunyan's *The Holy War* (1682) can be read not only as a response to his contemporary siege pamphlets, but also as a formative influence on subsequent writing on urban space.

Throughout the book, the authors repeatedly raise the question of how literature deals with the question of space. The siege, they observe, provides a very particular kind of space, a space that has attained a considerable degree of cultural potency and has been put to a variety of uses. This history of spaces is a fascinating question, but perhaps they might have gestured a little more toward how the siege develops as a space during and beyond their period. They only mention Vauban twice, but the French military engineer was responsible for transforming the conduct of sieges during this era, rendering them into the epitome of mechanical rationalism. The authors also open the book with a well-

placed reference to Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759), and in particular Uncle Toby's obsession with sieges, but do not return to the novel in their concluding discussion of how writing about the siege developed throughout the eighteenth century. *Tristram Shandy* could be seen to offer a decisively new conception of war space and the site of the siege and would have made a useful contribution to this history.

But overall, this compelling study is an extremely well researched contribution to our knowledge of war and literature.

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Sister Novelists: The Trailblazing Porter Sisters, Who Paved the Way for Austen and the Brontës by Devoney Looser
Bloomsbury, 2022. 576pp. $40. ISBN 978-1635575293.

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The claim at the heart of this fascinating, eminently readable joint biography is a compelling one: that Jane and Maria Porter, whose novels attained global popularity in the first half of the nineteenth century, are crucial yet neglected literary antecedents to some of the most canonical writers of the same era. The subtitle of the book connects the Porter sisters to Jane Austen and the Brontës, highlighting Devoney Looser's assertion that these later women novelists followed the template for female authorship first pioneered by Jane and Maria. Given the prominence and popularity of the Porters in the early nineteenth-century literary world, it seems clear the sisters formed a model that the Brontës could not have failed to benefit from. The influence that Looser's duo had on Austen was of a more diffuse variety. After all, Jane Porter and Jane Austen were the same age (both born in December 1775) and the Porters, who were fans of Austen, seemed to have been influenced by her in return, although they began publishing their work earlier. To this point, Looser notes intriguing parallels between the sisters and their now much more acclaimed and famous contemporary. For instance, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, the sister heroines at the heart of *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), bear more than a passing resemblance to Jane and Maria, suggesting that Austen may have had the Porters in mind when writing her first novel. This comparison shows the vagaries of literary fame of which the Porter sisters have been such unfortunate victims; Jane and Maria were much more famous in the early nineteenth century than Austen, and they sold many more copies of their novels.

However, the most tantalizing contention that this biography tenders does not concern the women authors named in its subtitle. Throughout the book, Looser suggests that Walter Scott used the Porters' novels as the blueprint for his massively popular *Waverley* series—most especially, Jane's two bestsellers, *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) and *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810)—and failed to acknowledge this influence to the sisters' detriment. Even now, Looser notes, scholars credit Scott with originating the historical novel genre, when it was Jane and Maria Porter who first introduced this new form to the reading public (442).

In making this claim, Looser is not stating anything that the Porter sisters themselves did not believe. In their letters to one another and even in some of their published writings, Jane and Maria articulated how they felt wronged by Scott, especially since he credited other women novelists as influences even though their work seemed only distantly related to his own. The Porters complained to one another that "these poets play the vampire with our works" (316); Maria wrote of the matter, "I do not say he steals the thing itself … but the idea & the fashion of it, and if he had the honesty to show that he thought well of our writings, by a word or two of such commendation as he liberally gives to works that have no resemblances to his own, I should say the conduct was fair and allowable. But I quarrel with the self-interestedness of valuing the hints we give him, yet never owning that he does" (318–19).

In personal interviews with the sisters, Scott was polite and even gracious, but he never gave them what they sought: an acknowledgement, oblique or otherwise, that their works served as essential inspiration for his *Waverly* novels (317). The desire for this acknowledgement was not just a matter of ego for Jane and Maria; as Looser details throughout *Sister Novelists*, the Porters were nearly always staving off financial ruin, and their writing was their only means of supporting themselves. An endorsement from Scott, given the enormous popularity of his novels in the 1810s and 1820s, could have meant extra sales and a boost to the Porters' literary reputations (308); that Scott never acknowledged their work may have been because—cash-strapped and deeply in debt himself—he did not want to provide help to his competitors in the historical novel market space. The only satisfaction that Jane and Maria ever received on this point was second-hand. When Jane visited the Carleton House library in 1821, she met Andrew Halliday, an author and the physician to the King's brother, the Duke of Clarence. He relayed to Jane his own conversation with Scott, in which he pressed the author—then the suspected but unconfirmed author of the Waverley novels—to acknowledge that "the foundations

of them all, were laid by Miss Porter in her Scottish chiefs" (357). Scott replied with an evasive affirmation: "I grant it ... There is something in what you say." Looser suggests that Scott was aware of his literary debt to the Porter sisters, but that he knew acknowledging it could possibly harm the persona of the solitary (and, for a long time, anonymous) male genius behind the *Waverley* novels. To present himself as following in the footsteps of two women writers of humble origins could do nothing for what we might now call Scott's "brand."

With this connection to Scott, Looser makes her most compelling literary genealogical case for the Porter sisters' importance. While some critics may resist this intervention, preferring to read Scott as still primary in his contribution to the development of the historical novel, this reader at least believes that including Jane and Maria Porter within this history of the genre would make it richer. However, Looser makes clear that the Porter sisters' significance should not rest on their importance to the historical novel genre alone: "the simple fact that Jane and Maria published twenty-six books, separately and together, should itself have earned them a more prominent place in literary history" (442). Most of *Sister Novelists* concerns not the influence that Jane and Maria had on other writers, but the lives and careers they led as popular and acclaimed women authors of limited means in early nineteenth-century Britain. This record is fascinating in its own right and will surely interest scholars concerned with women, authorship, and the novel in this period. The offspring of an army surgeon and an innkeeper's daughter, Maria and Jane—along with their brother Robert—used their talents to rise above their initial station in life. Throughout their long careers, they met most of the literary luminaries of the day and acquired many friends in high places; to conserve funds, they both spent extended periods at the country estates of wealthy and titled friends, a practice that helped them save money but interfered with their constant need to write. Their brother's immense debts were often a drag on their literary earnings. Looser does not shy away from highlighting their political inconsistencies and complicities with slavery and colonialism; while the sisters saw themselves as supporting abolition, they nevertheless accepted financial help from wealthy friends who were enslavers and had large property holdings in the Caribbean (407–8). Looser uncovers many instances in which the Porter family's progressive sensibilities dimmed in the face of financial desperation and personal convenience. This account of the Porter sisters' lives shows the complicated sociopolitical position of white British women writers seeking recognition and financial independence in this era; Looser reveals how, for the Porters, their

compromises with power included complicity with global systems of human exploitation that they understood as horrific and immoral.

Sister Novelists provides a useful corollary to Austen's life, in particular showing how her relative privilege insulated her from the pressures experienced by the Porter sisters but also led her to a more isolated existence than the lifestyle they enjoyed. Austen never experienced the keen economic deprivation that Jane and Maria struggled with, but the strictures of respectability that the sisters disregarded due to financial need also allowed them to function publicly and socially in ways much more in line with modern authorship. Because the Porter sisters published under their own names from a young age, they became literary celebrities: they attended social functions with most of the significant authors of the Regency era, including Lord Byron, William Wordsworth, Maria Edgeworth, and Anna Letitia Barbauld (313). Their failed romantic entanglements also make for gripping reading and reveal the ways in which courtships proceeded and—overwhelmingly—fizzled in the lives of genteel women with few economic resources. In painting this portrait of the Porters' lives and times, Looser pulls heavily from the sisters' vibrant correspondence with one another and suggests at turns that these letters may be, more so than their novels and other works, the most valuable literary artifact they left behind. The value of their letters is substantiated by how affecting and absorbing *Sister Novelists* is from beginning to end. It is hard not to empathize with the struggling, talented sisters, even with their flaws and hypocrisies, nor is it difficult to marvel at how they achieved so much while always remaining economically precarious. Through her seamless narrativization of the Porter sisters' papers, their literary productions, and a vast array of other resources from the period, Looser shows that Jane and Maria Porter deserve greater attention from scholars today. Hopefully, *Sister Novelists* will spark a renewal of critical interest in their lives and work.

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Familial Feeling: Entangled Tonalities in Early Black Atlantic Writing and the Rise of the British Novel
by Elahe Haschemi Yekani
Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. 300pp. OA online. ISBN 978-3-030-58641-6.
Review by Alpen Razi, Cal Poly SLO,
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The concept of "entanglement"—a metaphorical borrowing from the realm of theoretical physics—has offered a rich methodological and conceptual framework in recent literary, cultural, and historical studies of the transatlantic world. The migration of entanglement from scientific to humanistic inquiry may be credited to the "hybridizing" work of the late Bruno Latour as well as the critical (if often underacknowledged) role of feminist technoscience in the development of modern cultural studies. Yet its finding a home in the study of the Black Atlantic world undoubtedly owes a debt to the work of the Martinican theorist Édouard Glissant, who influentially described Caribbean history as a "point of entanglement" with modernity (*Caribbean Discourse* [1989], 26). While neither of these traditions is explicitly engaged in *Familial Feeling*, Elahe Haschemi Yekani's development of entanglement as both an object of inquiry and a set of methodological commitments extends the rich conceptual possibilities of this now-familiar framework in novel and powerful ways. Breathing new life into the (by now) "usual suspects" of early Afro-British authorship by reading them in conversation with their (still) more canonical white British counterparts (32), *Familiar Feelings* critically reconsiders a variety of well-trod conceptual grounds commonly found in the literary and cultural analyses of the long eighteenth century: the rise of the novel, antislavery discourse, and sentimentalism to name a few. In the course of this work, Yekani has produced a marvelous monograph that proves to be in equal measures insightfully, originally, indispensably, and (as befitting her object of inquiry) confoundingly entangled.

For Yekani, an approach that centres entanglement cuts a dynamic path forward in the cultural analysis of British imperialism, eschewing the field's frequent overreliance on approaches that either critically interrogate the metanarratives of British imperialism or emphasize the counter-discursive resistance strategies of colonial and racialized subjects. In contrast, Yekani cultivates a more nuanced framework that moves beyond the interpretive impasses of post/colonial analyses via three important methodological registers: (1) a view of British literature as a global network of entangled modernities; (2) a more complex notion of inclusion and exclusion via the affective entanglements of marginalized

and dominant subjects; and (3) a bringing to bear of the political and interpretive ethics of postcolonial and queer theory to transatlantic studies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (4-6). Moreover, an entangled approach helps clarify, in turn, three key conceptual commonplaces of the study of long-eighteenth-century literature (and their relationship to the high imperialism of the century that followed): affective engagements around family and kinship that were used to cultivate notions of political and racial belonging in writings of the era; considerations of the rise of the novel; and the aesthetic distinctions of tone between Georgian and Victorian literature and culture that render these periods simultaneously distinct and glancing toward each other (7–41). At each point, Yekani eschews received metanarratives in favour of "entangled" frameworks and relations—between colony and metropole, inclusion and exclusion, belonging and otherness—that productively functionalize these tensions rather than aim to reconcile or reify them.

After a lengthy introduction in which these stakes are outlined, Yekani's monograph then moves roughly chronologically, periodizing across an age cleft by the ending of the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and the Indian Rebellion of 1857. While these historic markers signal an important shift from the tenuous and conflicted imperialism of the long eighteenth century toward the more triumphalist British imperial voice that crystallizes in the century that followed, *Familial Feeling* does so less as stark periodizing oppositions or progressions and instead as more interrelated cultural turning points—from a "sentimental" to a more "domestic" tonality in the expression of British imperial culture, aesthetics, and discourse (11). The first half encompasses the period 1719–1807. Chapter 1 pairs the *Interesting Narrative* (1789) of Olaudah Equiano with the fiction of Daniel Defoe in order to trace a "foundational tonality," in which Defoe's founding of a fictional colonialist "white English masculinity" is set against Equiano's more inclusive "Oceanic" Black British subjectivity which, while more "welcoming of difference ... is not necessarily less invested in a form of imperial capitalism" and thus remains entangled with the former (108). Chapter 2 pairs the letters of Ignatius Sancho with the fiction of Laurence Sterne to trace a "digressive tonality" in which the accusations of mimicry and appropriation between the two authors are reconsidered in light of their mutual tendency to "divagate" and "push the boundaries of sentimentality" in their aesthetic articulations of British belongingness (158). The second half surveys the period between 1807 and 1857. Chapter 3 pairs the anti-slavery pamphlets of Robert Wedderburn and the fiction of Jane Austen to trace a "resisting tonality,"

in which the latter's novel *Mansfield Park* (1814) demonstrates "an incongruity between an ultimately conservative narrative voice and the supposed authenticity of the focalizer's agitated mixed emotions" that produces a form of resistance which echoes Wedderburn's development of a "sentimental pathos" in tension with a "new" and "unrespectable" tone in his antislavery activism (193, 196). Chapter 4 pairs the memoirs of Mary Seacole with the novels of Charles Dickens to trace a "consolidating tonality," in which the latter's novel *Bleak House* (1852–53) asserts a "nationalistic conception of reform" that resonates with the ways in which Seacole's Black Victorian maternity is marshalled toward support for the abolitionist British empire over and against the former American colonies and their continued entrenchment of slaveholding society—tracing a sense of high Imperial Britishness that is also at "once welcoming of Otherness and expansive in global reach" (225, 258). Finally, a concluding chapter gestures toward how postcolonial literary and cultural approaches might adopt a "non-celebratory approach to the (entangled) official archive [that] can be both queer and reparative" in its interpretive ethics of reading archival material of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (277).

While the ultimate strength of Yekani's work resides in its commitment to reading through entanglement in order to attain a "non-celebratory" approach that refuses an oversimplified (and binately racialized) "'good' versus 'bad'" evaluation of the legacies of slaveholding colonialism and counter-discursive achievements across the Atlantic world, it is also precisely here that the attempt at developing a politically and ethically conscientious approach to eighteenth-century writing falters, despite an admirable effort to draw upon queer and affect theory's so-called "negative turn" in the conclusion of the work (39). Yet if there exists an unresolved tension between the first and third methodological registers of this study, this only foregrounds the tension at the heart of cultural studies of the early Black Atlantic—a tension born of the stubbornly irresolvable (and, perhaps, irredeemable) fact of the archive of early Black writing coming into existence both despite and because of the "entangling" engine of transatlantic slavery and its myriad horrors. In its most sophisticated moments, which are abundant, *Familial Feelings* is less a guide for the (still-necessary) work of developing politically oriented critiques and ethical evaluations of the knotty historical processes of transatlantic modernity, but instead offer an exemplary illustration of the enormous complexity of such a task in the present.

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Stoic Romanticism and the Ethics of Emotion by Jacob Risinger
Princeton University Press, 2021. 264pp. $35. ISBN 978-0691203430.
Review by Julie Murray, Carleton University,
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The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries offer a rich vein for scholars studying the history of emotion and feeling. Major studies of sympathy and sensibility, such as Adela Pinch's *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (1997) or Julie Ellison's *Cato's Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion* (1999), although published roughly twenty-five years ago, still shape conversations in the field today about the ethics, politics, and social life of feeling. More recently, the influence of Sianne Ngai's work on affective ambivalence has been visible in major studies of eighteenth-century insensibility, unfeeling, and what Wendy Anne Lee, in *Failures of Feeling: Insensibility and the Novel* (2018), calls the "Bartleby problem." For eighteenth-century scholars, feeling is unfinished business.

Jacob Risinger's erudite and elegantly argued *Stoic Romanticism and the Ethics of Emotion* belongs to this current cluster of scholarship interested in the impassive or unmoved, in those unable to be swept away by intoxicating passion or the warm glow of fellow-feeling. Not precisely about the problem of too much or too little feeling, which is arguably the remit of most of the scholarship about emotion in the last several decades, *Stoic Romanticism* is unique in that it must first contend with Stoicism's intractable image problem. Suffering as much from bad marketing as anything else, Stoicism's eighteenth-century reception was truly a public relations disaster. In an era organized according to the terms offered by "sentimentality and sensibility," Risinger observes, Stoicism's "greatest moments of visibility in literary culture are those ironic ones in which it is unmasked as stupid, hypocritical, egotistical, and unnatural" (4). The punchline of too many jokes to count, from Jonathan Swift's "scathing account of the Houyhnhnms," which Risinger calls one of the "most prominent Stoic takedowns of the century," to Edmund Burke, who "deployed Stoic caricature to ridicule French politicians," Stoicism is undeniably ripe for sober second thought, and Risinger is a sympathetic and assured guide (27, 66). Perhaps his first challenge is definitional: the Stoicism he rehabilitates "looks more like a discipline of attention than a disavowal of affective capacity" (10). Stoic "self-culture" is, moreover, "less a form of abandonment than a radical commitment, an impulse toward world-making" rooted in the everyday (12). Working to dislodge tenacious assumptions that Stoicism is a "rearguard affair," a "nervous shoring up of the citadel of the rational self" (14), Risinger

admittedly has his work cut out for him, especially since his focus is the Romantic period, the age most thoroughly identified with emotional expressiveness, even extravagance.

But *Stoic Romanticism* is evidence that Risinger is more than up to the task: at every turn, he demonstrates that, far from belonging to the realm of cold indifference or stony abstraction, Stoicism lives and breathes in common, ordinary life. So utterly effective is Risinger at showing that "Romantic Stoicism is a corollary of the period's 'gravitational pull toward feeling' rather than a blinkered rejection of that force" (13), that one is left wondering, as with any fine book, how this never occurred to anyone until now. *Stoic Romanticism* opens with a chapter on the Stoic inflection of the moral sentimentalism of Shaftesbury and Adam Smith, including a coda on Stoic cosmopolitanism in Mary Wollstonecraft, to lay the eighteenth-century background for what is to come in subsequent chapters. The reading of Smith corrects for a critical tendency to emphasize sympathy and sociability in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), and draws attention to the fact that Smith's revisions to the book over the course of several decades had as their aim the sharpening and clarifying of its Stoicism and the attenuating of its theory of sympathy. A chapter that rethinks Wordsworth's response to William Godwin's Stoic radicalism is striking in its counterintuitive suggestion that the Stoic with the most influence on William Wordsworth was not, say, Seneca, but, in fact, Godwin. Risinger is witty: "an entire chapter on Coleridge's Stoicism might seem an ill-advised extravagance," but this proves ultimately untrue, as Risinger makes a stunning case for the harmony between Stoic introspection and lyric "self-practice" or "*askesis*" (92, 106). A chapter on Byron—another figure who, at first glance, might seem to be out of place in a book on Stoicism—is a revelation for how it reframes Byronic performance by seizing on Byron's insight that, under certain conditions, Stoicism can look more like "self-fashioning than self-culture" (128). Arguing that Byron grounds his Stoicism in characterological arts of living, this chapter claims for Byronic self-culture the ability to avoid abstruse philosophical abstraction. A chapter on Stoic futurity in Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall* (1762) and Mary Shelley's *Lodore* (1835) is perhaps an eclectic, unexpected pairing, but only until one recalls the character of Fanny Derham, a "Wollstonecraftian figure" who "resembles the ladies who flock to Millenium Hall" (177). Stoicism in women is not a good look in the age of sensibility, and so Shelley's novel has a distinctly prophetic quality. *Stoic Romanticism* concludes with a brief chapter on Ralph Waldo Emerson that returns Stoicism to the critical conversation about American Transcendentalism.

As with any book, of course, there are omissions. Where is poet and playwright Joanna Baillie? Many Romantic-period writers engage with Smith, but none perhaps more explicitly than Baillie. Her ingenious concept of "sympathetic curiosity" torques Smith's "sympathetic imagination" and nudges it in the direction of a decidedly more liberal (though perhaps a bit too nosy) art of self-government. While reading this book, finally, I was aware that in different hands, the temptation to exploit the undeniable presentism of the argument might have been (for a less disciplined thinker and writer) too much, given how urgently the world today could use some remedial reading in the Stoics. Happily, Risinger shows impressive restraint while simultaneously illuminating the incalculable cost of our distorted, caricatured history of emotional regulation. The attentive reader will connect the dots.

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Domestic Captivity and the British Subject, 1660–1750
by Catherine Ingrassia
University of Virginia Press, 2022. 314pp. $39.50. ISBN 978-0813948096.
Review by Cynthia Richards, Wittenberg University,
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Metaphors of freedom and captivity have long been, to purposefully mix my metaphors, the bread and butter of eighteenth-century literary criticism. A cursory glance at any list of eighteenth-century scholarly publications will reveal a high number featuring one or both terms, or some equivalent phrase that points to the significance of emerging individual rights happening alongside rampant imperialism and historic levels of enslavement. Feminist literary criticism of the eighteenth century is unimaginable without these twin poles of the Enlightenment, as the middle-class female subject officially starts to tell her own story, and have those stories mass produced, at the same time as the individual's story becomes paramount in literature. The popularity of seduction narratives further enforced this correlation as a woman's ability to resist the entrapments of her seducer becomes the marker of her value and symbolic of middle-class enfranchisement. As many have argued, the pursued heroine becomes the quintessential modern subject even as female subjecthood is written out of the period's revolutionary political project. Catherine Ingrassia's *Domestic Captivity* intervenes, at a crucial moment, to encourage reflection on this critical history by asking explicitly what it means to read through "the lens of captivity" and how we might read differently if we foreground "domestic captivity's intimate

connection to Britain's investment in the enslavement of Africans and their use as unfree labor in colonial sites" (1). The text implicitly raises questions about how we read responsibly as feminist critics in the wake of Black Lives Matter and knowing how deeply the trauma of the transatlantic slave trade remains with us. It suggests that we cannot leave unexamined the relationship between these narratives of female empowerment and the imperialistic and dehumanizing development of widespread, racially based chattel slavery.

Asking this question makes revisiting Linda Colley's *Captives* (2002), which Ingrassia cites as "deeply informing" her work (201), a lesson in how readily these metaphors can obscure these important considerations. Colley's book provides a nuanced and nearly encyclopedia reading of how both the language and experience of captivity existed alongside the language and practice of imperialism, particularly for white British subjects, yet race-based chattel slavery barely surfaces in that text as a complicating factor; other forms of more provisional captivity dominate, such as that practiced by Barbary pirates or experienced in colonial America. In an early footnote, Ingrassia makes explicit reference to the limits of Colley's book and makes two moves in the early pages of her prologue to correct them. First, she distinguishes her term "domestic captivity" from the more general one of captivity, acknowledging that the confinement experienced by white British subjects, including women, does not "equate" with "the permanent and inheritable status of people who endured a system of racially based enslavement" (2). At the same time, she argues that racially based enslavement functions as the defining backdrop for any discussion of female entrapment: "Domestic captivity cannot be understood separately from England's substantial involvement in the systemic enslavement of kidnapped Africans or the wealth accumulation realized from those actions, even as early fictional narratives elide or ignore the experience of enslaved people" (2). To illustrate the difference this disclaimer can make, Ingrassia quietly revisits two of Colley's grounding texts, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), to argue not that one protagonist is more "vulnerable" than the other—Colley's position—but that both "secured their resources through their connection with slavery (while failing to reflect fully on their own experiences of captivity)" (20). Ingrassia finds in her selected readings neither male nor female subjects cognizant of the cruel ironies of lamenting a state of captivity while profiting from enslaved peoples. Yet the context of slavery does serve to heighten the significance of domestic captivity for women subjects, and keeps their stories, for good and bad, at the heart of the Enlightenment project.

In the opening chapter, this dualism is made vivid in a reading of the thirty-year correspondence between the poet Judith Cowper Madan and her husband, Colonel Madan, a plantation owner in the West Indies. Both husband and wife complain about their respective subjugations, his to his superiors and his economic ambition, and she to him. Both also prove equally "unreflective" about lamenting their respective confinements while profiting from "unfree labor," yet Judith's protests take a complicated turn (26, 31). She uses the persona of a favourite slave to try to secure her husband's affections in a marriage that she experiences as a prolonged domestic captivity, this persona serving to heighten her pleas for his affections and, interestingly, to create a more stable relationship. Richard Steele's *Conscious Lovers* (1722) proves even more complicated, as this popular play, which elevates the emotional sensibility of the merchant class, also obscures how grounded in the brutality of slavery this new-found wealth is. Yet at the same time, the quest for liberty of his women characters, "domestic surrogates for the captivity undergirding the text," accrue greater meaning through this implicit context (91). Like Madan, a plantation owner, Steele's investment in the normalization of this means to wealth cannot be ignored, as Ingrassia skillfully illuminates. Indeed, "domestic surrogates" prove common. Penelope Aubin, in *Noble Slaves* (1722), uses capture by Barbary pirates to show how comparatively brutal the slavery of marriage is in her own country; Eliza Haywood and Edward Kimber use real-life stories of indentured servitude to expose the contingency of British "idealized, imperial masculinity" (167). Ingrassia's last two chapters return to the "vulnerabilities" of British agency—Colley's position—but the difference is that the ironic context for that discussion is well-established by this point.

Ingrassia's work moves us in the right direction, but ultimately does not go quite far enough. As I argue in *Early Modern Trauma* (2021), materialist and formalist approaches do not provide sufficient tools for delineating an eighteenth-century history infused with trauma. Without a richer psychological lexicon, we may end up right where we started, as evinced in both the title of this book and its cover art, an image from William Hogarth's *Marriage A-la-Mode* (1743–45) series, which fail to convey this text's engagement with a history of slavery. Or the chapter on Aphra Behn, where the new historicist term "anxiety" becomes a catch-all phrase for reckoning with the complexity of Behn's relationship to captivity. Trauma is something we are condemned to reproduce unless we properly name the loss; Ingrassia gets us closer, but there is still work to do.

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Eighteenth-Century Environmental Humanities, ed. Jeremy Chow
Bucknell University Press, 2022. 262pp. $38.95. ISBN 978-1684484287.
Review by Charlee Bezilla, George Washington University, Washington, DC, United States

In recent years, scholarship exploring early modern and eighteenth-century subjects through the wide lens of the environmental humanities has rapidly proliferated. Some studies focus on the "ecologies" of these literary texts, such as Vin Nardizzi and Tiffany Jo Werth's *Premodern Ecologies in the Modern Literary Imagination* (2019) or Pauline Goul and Phillip John Usher's *Early Modern Écologies: Beyond English Ecocriticism* (2020). Others take environmental humanities approaches centered on landscapes, waterways, animals and other nonhumans, or vegetal life, such as Miriam Jacobson and Julie Park's *Organic Supplements: Bodies and Things of the Natural World, 1580–1790* (2020), which was recently reviewed in this journal by Cass Turner (*ECF* 35, no. 1 [2023]: 181–84). This multidisciplinary scholarship continues to expand in fruitful ways, and Jeremy Chow's edited collection is a welcome and important addition to the field. Bringing together eleven tightly argued essays in a cohesive, innovative, and approachable volume, *Eighteenth-Century Environmental Humanities* embodies the deeply generative possibilities of envisioning how the fields of eighteenth-century studies and the environmental humanities can mutually inform, enrich, and interrogate each other.

This collection joins a burgeoning field of work that aims to broaden the scope of ecocriticism and the environmental humanities, writ large. Scholarship engaging with these critical frameworks has predominately trended toward the modern and contemporary. As Chow notes in the volume's introduction, only 1.6% of articles published in the field's top five journals as of 2020 focus on the eighteenth century, with similarly miniscule percentages for earlier periods (10). A casual perusal of these same journals' issues from the last two years suggests they still skew heavily toward modern subjects, and the incidence of pre-modern topics appears to have remained steady, if not increased very modestly. In addition to filling this lacuna in environmental humanities scholarship, *Eighteenth-Century Environmental Humanities* aims to cultivate "transdisciplinary and transhistoric inquiry" (11), combatting charges of "presentism" that sometimes deter the productive application of seemingly modern critical tools to past periods.

The volume thus makes several key interventions in these fields. Of particular interest is its explicit aim to create "a diverse, equitable, and

inclusive environmental humanities" and foster "parity, cooperation, and reciprocity" through both its form and content (6). Edited volumes by their multi-authored nature tend to pose challenges for coherence and flow, but *Eighteenth-Century Environmental Humanities* surmounts these obstacles through its thoughtful organization and pedagogical orientation, and instead foregrounds collaborative thinking as an integral component of its praxis. The volume is divided into five sections, each containing two to three chapters, focusing on climate change, new materialisms, blue humanities, decoloniality and Indigeneity, and green utopianism. However, the contributors' essays also branch over and across these categories, enriching the volume's discussions of themes key to the environmental humanities, particularly the question of human responsibility and culpability in a rapidly changing world. Several essays provide illuminating close readings of long-form poems, including works by Erasmus Darwin (chapter 1), Phillis Wheatley Peters (chapters 2 and 4), William Gilbert (chapter 9), James Grainger and Philip Freneau (chapter 10), and John Thelwall (chapter 11). Others draw on a fascinating variety of sources: theological writings (chapter 3), natural history (chapter 5), cartography (chapter 6), buccaneer journals (chapter 7), and theatre (chapter 8). Each essay concludes with a brief pedagogical section, or "conversation starter," proposing methods of teaching its primary sources and incorporating environmental humanities methodologies in the classroom (17). These pedagogical supplements underline the many connections between environmental concerns of the eighteenth century and today—changing climate, catastrophic disasters, disease, air pollution, and environmental and social justice—highlighting the salience and urgency of incorporating these texts and frameworks in the classroom.

The volume's commitment to inclusion, collaboration, and colloquy extends beyond these pedagogical sections. Starting from Chow's introduction, which includes four lucid "axioms" to help readers understand the environmental humanities, the book's accessible organization and clear analyses will make it valuable in and outside the classroom as a model for advanced undergraduate and graduate students. The contributors' engagements with the work of theorists such as Kathryn Yusoff, Karen Barad, Timothy Morton, and Christina Sharpe provide enlightening examples of how theory can be brought into practice, in addition to providing entryways into these theorists' works.

By embracing scholars at various points in their careers and from a variety of institutional backgrounds, the volume also foregrounds

the importance of recognizing how the juxtapositions and combinations of the contributors' "situated knowledges" shape the plurality of eighteenth-century environmental humanities (16). For example, Ami Yoon's attentive reading of William Gilbert's *The Hurricane* (chapter 9) convincingly illuminates the tension between this poem's anticolonial argument and its form, echoing what Annette Hulbert calls the climate's "imperfect" justice in her essay "Storm Apostrophe" on the poetry of Wheatley Peters and Equiano (42). Yoon's essay on Gilbert also provides a striking counterpoint to the eco-imperial colonial futures envisioned in texts such as Erasmus Darwin's *The Botanic Garden* or John Dennis's *Liberty Asserted*, the foci of Elliott Patsoura's and Matthew Duquès's essays (chapters 1 and 8, respectively).

This collection's deep commitment to colloquy, diversity, and inclusion in its content and praxis should be considered a model for the field. Arcing across the Atlantic world, from Britain to the Caribbean to New England and Nova Scotia, the collection's essays cover a wide geographic territory and push the boundaries of periodicity delimiting the "long" eighteenth century. While it is beyond the scope of a single volume, this commitment to inclusion and collaboration could only be further enhanced by expanding the range of the eighteenth-century environmental humanities' cultural and linguistic work, such that the "eighteenth-century environmental humanities" does not automatically equate with a primarily Anglophone phenomenon. The volume lucidly demonstrates, as Chow insists in the introduction, that neither eighteenth-century studies nor the environmental humanities is a "monolith" (1). Yet there remains further work to be done to more fully "break down the guarded silos of our fields" (223) and realize an evermore capacious eighteenth-century environmental humanities.

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Political Affairs of the Heart: Female Travel Writers, the Sentimental Travelogue, and Revolution, 1775–1800
by Linda Van Netten Blimke
Bucknell University Press, 2022. 238pp. $34.95. ISBN 978-1684484058.
Review by Leah M. Thomas, Virginia State University, Petersburg, Virginia, United States

In *Political Affairs of the Heart*, Linda Van Netten Blimke explores four women's political perspectives through their late eighteenth-century sentimental travelogues. In the eighteenth century, women's stationary role at home was perceived as crucial to British national stability. For this reason, women's travel and travel writing were viewed as destabilizing and implicitly political, as Van Netten Blimke argues. She posits that Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768) provided an entrée for women's political discourse through sentimental travel writing. She situates the woman travel writer and persona in resistance to Sterne's satire of the sentimental, self-centered, and goal-oriented male travel accounts. Reading women's travel writing as a vehicle for political discourse through emotional expression as sensibility—"the capacity to feel"—and as sympathy—"the communication of that feeling" (10)— Van Netten Blimke cogently describes women's travel writing as engaging "in the circulation of feelings ... to attempt to remake the British nation" (15), which "was increasingly imagined as masculine" (24). Thus, women's sentimental travelogues generated a space for women's political discourse within this masculine public sphere.

Within this discourse, *Journal of a Lady of Quality* (1774–76) by Janet Schaw and *A Journey to the Highlands of Scotland* (1777) by "A Lady" demonstrate Schaw's and the anonymous author's attitudes toward national unity as antisympathetic to the American Revolution. Schaw, a native of Scotland, writes about her travel in Antigua, St. Christopher, North Carolina, and Portugal, while the Lady writes about her travel in Scotland. Schaw's travel to Antigua and North Carolina elicits her sympathy with the British Empire through parallel fluctuating sympathies that align with those who reflect and sanction imperialism. Schaw manipulates the trend in sensibility that accorded sympathy for the oppressed to those who have power over the oppressed. While Van Netten Blimke offers that Schaw sympathizes with colonial women "regardless of their nationality" (76), Schaw appears to accept that enslaved women were part of the colonial project (63–66). Schaw expresses this lack of sympathy for enslaved people in her juxtaposition of herself as ridiculous in "silk shoes in such a place

[North Carolina]" and the "black wench half naked" (Schaw quoted in Van Netten Blimke, 72) to convey Schaw's vulnerability. Women travel writers employed self-deprecating humour and, as Schaw reveals, at times "aligned themselves with masculine subject positions" (Sara Mills, *Gender and Colonial Space* [Manchester UP, 2005], 62). Though Schaw employs sensibility as an acceptable feminine mode, she adopts a masculine subject position that aligns her with men of her social class to distinguish herself from the enslaved Black woman's circumstance (Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670–1834* [Routledge, 1992], 6–9). Schaw's and the enslaved Black woman's juxtaposition places them relationally in vulnerable circumstances, precariously separated by race, class, and clothing. Like Schaw, the anonymous Lady illustrates women's vulnerabilities and desires for paternalistic protections. The Lady's travelogue evokes a connection between the passion of young lovers and that of reckless revolutionaries through her travel "to Gretna Green—Scotland's premier destination for clandestine weddings" (89). At the same time, the Lady sympathizes with the Scottish people and is critical of Samuel Johnson's portrayal of Scotland because of his stated and implied English superiority. As she engages in political discourse, the Lady strategically disengages "herself from the figure of the female politician," disparagingly referred to as a "petticoat pedant" (113). Sensibility maintains a guise of femininity that veils both Schaw's and the Lady's writing in a feminine-appropriate manner.

Van Netten Blimke also addresses sensibility in relation to freedom from oppression conveyed in ideas related to the French Revolution. Like the Lady's travelogue, Mary Morgan's *A Tour to Milford Haven* (1795) was written during the decline of sensibility. Morgan correlates emotion to morality and perceives "the nation as an extended community" (123). In this aspect, her sympathy for the Welsh is similar to the Lady's sympathy for the Scottish. Morgan's travel to various estates informs her thinking of the nation as an estate inspired by Elizabeth Montagu's estate that functioned as a protective economy for the community while affording intellectual commerce for women. Morgan equates sympathy with social stability and perceives Welsh peasantry as civil because of sympathy, unlike the English peasantry for whom sympathy as a political discourse had declined. Morgan, like Helen Maria Williams's narrator in *A Tour in Switzerland* (1798), must defend herself as a political writer as sympathy navigates "masculine aggression ... to create the possibility of a cohesive national community" (158). Williams, in her travelogue of Switzerland, invokes "sentimental language" to appeal to "her British

audience to reverse the nation's increasingly counterrevolutionary mood" (160–61). Van Netten Blimke argues that, like Morgan's travelogue, Williams's sensibility discourse is intended to curtail violence. Williams's *Tour* reveals that Switzerland was not "the home of liberty" as it had been represented (179). Switzerland's vulnerability to France intersects with Ireland's vulnerability to England, implying that people of neither nation are free. Unlike the other writers in this volume, Williams is less concerned with national identity and unity than she is with liberty.

Concluding with an epilogue that introduces readers to women's twentieth- and twenty-first-century travelogues as a continuation of the sentimental tradition, Van Netten Blimke reflects "that the sentimental travelogue survived the demise of the culture of sensibility and continues to flourish as a literary mode" (192). She observes that the sentimental travelogue corresponds to the author's personal experience, the changes the self undergoes, when one travels (193). Sensibility is a means "to mystify political engagement," which is a way of stating that it disguises the political nature of the writing (194). Sterne's sentimental travelogue offered and continues to offer women writers a feminized discourse to communicate their political perspectives through "self-realization" in a masculine world (194). In *Political Affairs of the Heart*, Van Netten Blimke insightfully analyzes the discursive challenges in women's travel writing. This book is helpful for thinking about such challenges that women travellers like Elizabeth Marsh encountered within the context of the colonial contest (see Linda Colley, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History*, 2007; and *Transatlantic Women Travelers, 1688–1843*, edited by Misty Krueger, 2021).

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The Natural Laws of Plot: How Things Happen in Realist Novels
by Yoon Sun Lee
University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022. 264pp. $65. ISBN 978-1512823400.
Review by Alexander Creighton, UC Berkeley,
Berkeley, California, United States

As a narratological category, plot has struggled to recover from twentieth-century structuralist accounts that sought to reduce it to a predictable grammar. In this new book, Yoon Sun Lee defends plot as an enduring way of understanding the realist novel because plot is always grounded in scientific understandings of how the world works. Linking novelists from Daniel Defoe through Walter Scott to branches of natural philosophy (the eighteenth-century term nearest what we today call "natural *science*"), Lee shows how the eighteenth century's evolving understanding of the world influenced the plots of realist novels. *The Natural Laws of Plot* adds to a growing slate of new materialist accounts of the eighteenth century and of the novel, yet it does so in a way that excitingly resuscitates plot—too often ignored or reduced to mere human action at the exclusion of the uncountable actions and reactions of the world. In grounding plot in the eighteenth century's evolving notion of objectivity, Lee offers a fresh and convincing perspective on the capaciousness and complexity of plot.

The Natural Laws of Plot is about how realist novels frame objectivity—here referring not to a detached perspective (that is, an "objective" third-person narrator), but to the idea that actions and events in these novels are bound by the laws of nature. Robinson Crusoe's finding a footprint on the beach suggests "a material foot that pressed into the sand, at a particular moment between tides," provoking questions of who stepped there and when (3). Ann Radcliffe reveals that those strange noises were not, after all, ghosts, but pirates sneaking through hidden passageways. Beyond framing objectivity in terms of natural laws, Lee shows how objectivity *itself* evolves in tandem with scientific discoveries, from Isaac Newton's laws of motion to chemists' efforts to change a substance's being, to the question of what constitutes the "true" self in a world made of restless molecules. In Lee's account, objectivity is not just about distinguishing "the novel as a genre and realism as a mode" (33). Objectivity also pushes back against narratological accounts that insist on categorical differences between plot and setting. How, for instance, can we read Jane Austen's novels without a consideration for the seemingly inconsequential furniture of a scene—a park bench, a steep bank, a hot day—that end up making a big difference? Or the works of Frances

Burney without seeing London as a kind of living catalyst that shapes its populace? If we understand plot as embedded within a world constantly in motion and constantly subject to change, we see that plot encompasses so much more than human action alone.

The book can be roughly divided between natural philosophy's external investigations (how bodies interact with one another and get classified) and its internal ones (what constitutes matter in the first place). Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century experimental science inaugurated an ontological shift toward what historian Peter Dear calls the "event-experiment"—an understanding of the world based on repeatable experiments rather than assumed universal principles. Lee shows how Newton, John Desaguliers (Newton's protégé), Adam Smith, Robert Boyle, and others sought through such experiments to explain how the world worked but importantly *did not* claim to find the root cause of phenomena, such as gravity. This is important for authors such as Defoe, the subject of chapter 3, who was familiar with experimental science and whose novel worlds passed for true accounts in part because they followed the rules of the natural world. In chapter 4, Lee argues that when the novel and natural history encounter one another, "what results is a narrative deeply committed to the idea of order, and to the realm of the visible" (84). In novels by Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson, plot is more than a chain of causes and effects; it is a way of differentiating people based on the accrual of their actions and decisions.

The second half of the book focuses on natural philosophy's investigations into what constitutes matter in the first place. Chapter 5 links chemistry's distinctive queries—"Can it dissolve? Does it burn? How does its color change?" (114)—to notions of interior change in the works of Tobias Smollett, Burney, and Radcliffe. This chapter refines the reductive categories of "flatness" and "roundness" by imagining plot as a kind of chemistry experiment, the testing and retesting of characters' inner substances. Chapter 6 zooms down to the molecular level, linking Austen's novels with early atomic science. Atoms suggest a world constantly in motion; so too, our usual language for describing plots—in terms of decisions and actions—overlook the little events that end up having big consequences. In chapter 7, Lee considers plots that showcase a kind of "mechanical objectivity"—plots, that is, invested in stripping away subjectivity to find one's secret, inner truth. As quixotism became "the scientist's enemy" by revealing the fallacies of human impressionability, female quixotes, including Arabella in

Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752) and Lady Delacour in Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801) show how failures in self-perception have become "internalized and endemic" (161). Chapter 8, finally, reads Scott's historical novels through the lens of Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia* (1794–96), exploring how history is a force that displaces, changes, and moves people through social, political, and economic upheaval.

Aside from its robust grounding in natural philosophy and the impressive range of novels it considers, *The Natural Laws of Plot* establishes an exciting (if at times coy) methodology. Sometimes the book makes historically grounded arguments (such as, this author was influenced by X branch of natural science); arguments by analogy (this plot *resembles* something from X branch of natural science); or arguments by a something in between: natural philosophy as "a kind of ground floor," a collective knowledge that licensed forms of belief and disbelief (134). This methodological fabric is so fresh that I wish there were a little more theorization behind it—not to legitimize the method but rather to show that operating between our dominant methodologies opens up genuinely new interpretive pathways. On the other hand, we might think of *The Natural Laws of Plot* as itself a groundwork for a new approach to plot and objectivity. In this sense, we would do well to follow the dictates of eighteenth-century chemist William Lewis who, after turning glass into porcelain by applying heat, seeks "to discover whether a continuance of the process would be productive of any further changes" (110).

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British Women Satirists in the Long Eighteenth Century,
ed. Amanda Hiner and Elizabeth Tasker Davis
Cambridge University Press, 2022. 276pp. $114.95. ISBN 978-1108837361.
Review by Katherine G. Charles, Washington College,
Chestertown, Maryland, United States

The arrival of a new satire studies, long anticipated, might now, with the recent publication of edited collections by Oxford and Cambridge, be considered officially here. One of the benefits of what Andrew Benjamin Bricker has called the "new-school approach" to satire, once a redoubt of finicky rhetorical dogma, has been how the explosion of its organizing definition functions to open up a more capacious archive (Bricker, review of *The Oxford Handbook of Eighteenth-Century Satire*, ed. Paddy Bullard, *ECF* 34, no. 3 [2022]: 381–84). Somehow, despite the fact that we have been talking about women and satire for at least a generation, the place of their diverse contributions to that archive remained as yet uncatalogued. *British Women Satirists* is the first book-length effort to collect a body of evidence to document and theorize women's satirical writing as a category. Fourteen essays and several invaluable appendices offer a descriptive survey that centres women satirists who were once considered marginal, misrecognized, or excluded altogether. Here, they emerge as an eclectic group of artful practitioners whose writings can be analyzed to provide accounts of gender as it relates to an array of social, ethical, and historical topics. As an act of recognition and organization alike, this book is both overdue and welcome.

British Women Satirists testifies to its Big-Tent vision by staking as its central claim the diversity of satire by women, with its many iterations of "imaginative, witty, and pointed social critique" unfolding over a "broad range of genres" (4). Editors Amanda Hiner and Elizabeth Tasker Davis balance that exemplary dedication to breadth and inclusion with two competing interests: the pragmatic desire to present readers with a portable text and the scholarly desire to make a case for the distinctiveness of women's satire. Three sections are chronologically and thematically arranged around broad concepts during the early, mid, and late eighteenth century: "Traditions and Breaks," "Publicity and Print Culture," and "Moral Debates and Satiric Dialogue." Most chapters focus on a single author, ranging from Aphra Behn and Jane Collier to Charlotte Lennox and Jane Austen, while a few tackle how a set of authors respond to a shared topic or antagonist, such as Juvenal or the literary marketplace. Among this motley assemblage of eighteenth-century authors working across genres, verse satire is the first among equals, as syntactically implied in the introduction: "The essays in this

collection explore women's satire in poetic forms, as well as in novels, drama, fables, and ephemeral genres, including periodicals and letters" (4). Some of the finest examples have an intriguingly one-off quality, as in Melinda Alliker Rabb's chapter on the anonymous publication of a "Lady's Dressing Room" precedent, in fact written by the teenager Mary Evelyn before her death of smallpox in 1685 (46). Great attention is paid to amatory fiction, fables, and the poet Anne Finch, the subject of two essays; mid- and late-century novels, writing for the stage, and nonfiction prose are also explored, though less fully. Mitigation for these would-be shortcomings is amply made by the robust bibliography, index, and particularly by the twenty-one-page appendix, "Selected List of Eighteenth-Century Women Writers and Their Satiric Works." This catalogue of 58 names and intriguingly unexplained determination of satirical status is a potent scholarly tool doubling as a parlour game, "Satire or Not Satire?" The editors deserve great credit for taking such a doughty stand against skimpy index syndrome, the prevailing order of the day, and for assembling a resource that manages to be both handy and extensive.

If this book were to have a statement of counterargument, it would be "the clichés about satire being a male form are legitimate" (23). In the effort to dismantle that cliché, Hiner and Davis fuse two claims that are persuasive, in my view, if unequally so. Claim one: "We contend that the prevalent critical association between satire and aggressive masculinity has produced a critical blind spot that obscures the presence of a vital, diverse group of women satirists" (4). The existence of women satirists, first overlooked and then underattended, is now all but inarguable thanks to the evidence collated in this book. Its argument is most compelling when it emphasizes the diversity of that evidence, in terms of genre, political orientation, relative position of social advantage or disadvantage, and publication context and history. Where it sometimes loses purchase is in attempts to shoehorn that diversity into a distinctive type of women's satire. Claim two construes the "kairos of the British Enlightenment as a historical era in which the identities of satirist and woman could naturally converge in their roles as social critics and moral exemplars" (4). On occasion, overly yoking the roles of "social critic" and "moral exemplar" can present problems not limited to an oddly pietistic tone; its implicit valorization of moral reformers, purportedly above indelicacy and lampoon, can lead to some Procrustean close readings. At these moments, one might wish for more levity or more barb, but elsewhere the volume self-corrects. Some chapters directly explore the dicey category of female satirists (Behn, Delarivier Manley, Mary Robinson) who managed to decouple the roles of social critic and moral exemplar, while others track

the rhetorical gambits developed by unscandalous authors to provide cover for less palatable authorial motives, including female aggression, revenge, and the satisfaction of reversals of power.

Across the eighteenth century, there were many inducements for women operating in print to stake out the moral high ground, but that is not to assume a blanket sincerity activated their public claims. Chapters by Sharon Smith and Michael Edson do a particularly fine job of revealing how moral constructions of satire can prompt creative workarounds like disingenuous irony. In "The Pleasures of Satire in the Fables of Anne Finch," Smith introduces her subject as first huffily "anti-Lampoon" and then embracing the term, along with outright invective, in "Lampoon at Tunbridge," a poem that Smith interprets as dispensing with the polite fiction that satire is innately reformative. According to Smith, "when a woman wrote satire in the eighteenth century," in addition to negotiating the relation between satirist, satirical object, and reader, she was further "obliged to construct her 'subject position' in relation to a fourth entity as well—namely, satire itself" (103). The pressure to disavow satire, or to differentiate "between the satirist and satire," becomes visible as "a strategy that would allow a woman writer to engage in satire without seeming to do so" (103). Edson performs a similar unmasking in "Satire as Gossip: Lady Anne Hamilton's *The Epics of the Ton*," which, in documenting the kinship between satire, gossip, and scandal, divests satire of the rhetorical fig leaf of didacticism and moral justification. Edson's caution is apt: while we are familiar with the critical dicta that satire "must seek to reform," plenty of contemporary critics had room for the "aimless," "gossipy," and "immoral" within their designation of satire (210). For both Smith and Edson, it is women satirists, with their particularly contracted ground of public speech, who had and have much to gain from such stripped down, potentially amoral re-evaluations of satire.

Nimble and inclusive, *British Women Satirists* charts a navigable map of an emerging field and lays groundwork for future investigations. It should cashier certain moldy assumptions about satire as an inherently masculine form that, despite an unwholesome persistence, are long past their expiry date. This book, thanks to the intellectual rigor of its essays and the generosity of its scholarly apparatus, merits a long and healthy shelf life.

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The "Lady's Magazine" (1770–1832) and the Making of Literary History by Jennie Batchelor
Edinburgh University Press, 2022. 320pp. OA online. ePub 978-1474487672; PDF 978-1474487665.

Review by Bethany E. Qualls, Independent Scholar, California, United States

We should be thankful Jennie Batchelor faced the many challenges that the *Lady's Magazine* (1770–1832) presents to scholars and then met them head on. Right from the introduction, this book provides a thorough overview of the long-running periodical, listing said challenges and demonstrating the many ways the *Lady's Magazine* "puts conventional narratives about Romantic literary history under irrevocable strain" (11). By taking the magazine and its contents on its own terms instead of following the tendency of some earlier scholarship to dismissiveness, Batchelor successfully maps out new pathways for understanding not only this periodical, but also late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century Anglophone print culture more broadly.

This is the first book-length study of the *Lady's Magazine*, a popular periodical with more than 40,000 pages printed over its six-decade run (4). Beyond the difficulty of navigating the sheer volume of material, no publisher archive exists, and no library owns a complete run. Even more complicated is that many libraries do not distinguish between the two versions of the periodical published in direct competition from 1771 to 1772; Batchelor notes that most library volumes for this period include John Wheble's version (which ended in 1772) instead of George Robinson's longer-running version (68). Then there is the magazine's miscellaneous nature—it includes "fiction; poetry; essays on subjects such as science, history and education (sometimes in and translated from foreign languages); life-writing; reviews; advice; and news," all of which is a mixture of reprints, excerpts, and original content (5). Its pages are chock full of anonymous contributors, often only named by initials or pseudonyms (141). Furthermore, its multimedia format incorporating song sheets, embroidery patterns, fashion plates, and printed ornamentations further confounds any proposed, neat categorization or sense of completeness, since many of these "extras" were "frequently excised" before or after the binding of issues into volumes (5).

Batchelor deftly navigates these many challenges as the book moves from its macro-level claims—such as the centrality of the *Lady's Magazine* to literary history—to detailed close readings and archival synthesis. Her incorporation of background and historical context turns what could easily become impenetrably dense scholarship into seamless reading, interrupted

only by marveling over the wealth of information in the comprehensive endnotes. With all this grounded support, Batchelor makes arguments so crystal clear they can at times feel obvious. For example, while many scholars refer to magazines as a genre in themselves, Batchelor sees the label of genre "as a red herring" for eighteenth-century magazines; instead, she focuses on "miscellaneity" as their "most important formal characteristic" (81). She concludes, "Indeed, the most notable generic feature of 'the magazine' is its *unfixing* of genre, and with genre often voice, perspective, authorship and import," demonstrating yet again the importance of exploring materials on their own terms and the further complications that remediation brings (82–83). This method involves reading magazine contents synchronically and diachronically, as Batchelor aptly demonstrates with examples of fashion coverage (84–85). Her later discussion of miscellany as a form and its role in the magazine's interactive conversations further support these claims (122–23). Batchelor offers reasons why the *Lady's Magazine* has been sidelined for so long in the scholarly community. One is its "unRomantic" culture of authorship that explodes the myth of a "named solitary male composer of works of original genius" as the only authors of "literary value" (126). Batchelor shows how authorship worked in magazine publishing in this period, providing "a putatively more democratic and accessible medium and outlet for writers of both sexes" regardless of their "professional" status (161).

The incredible archival work and close readings from across the *Lady's Magazine* are two of the book's paramount strengths. Chapter 2 particularly impresses with its coverage of two dueling, identically named magazines being published at the same time by Wheble and Robinson, which, as mentioned above, are often catalogued without any distinction (256–57). Although complex and dense, Batchelor's meticulous archival work shines through in her research into *Lady's Magazine* founder John Coote, its first publisher John Wheble, and bookseller publishers George Robinson and John Roberts, who bought the periodical from Coote in 1771 (44–45). Sources are clearly documented, and extra biographical details are given in the endnotes, providing as thorough a picture of the magazine's producers as possible. This thoroughness continues throughout: the note about printer Samuel Hamilton is a prime example (273n8). Excellent close readings abound and allow for grounded conjectures about the *Lady's Magazine* readership and authors, demonstrating its complexity. Batchelor also uses content from the *Lady's Magazine* itself to ask and answer questions like "What is a women's periodical anyway?" (30). Archive-driven close readings also direct chapter 5's coverage of the long fight for readership between Robinson's *Lady's Magazine* and Alexander Hogg's *New Lady's*

Magazine (1786–95). Batchelor uses an anonymous pamphlet to give context for the Robinson/Hogg clash, then the chapter moves to other rival magazines and to the format and content changes that all this competition fostered in the early 1800s (162–66).

This highly accessible book also points to multiple avenues for future scholarship. The precis of periodicals throughout the 1800s and their subsequent scholarship in chapter 1, "Origins: The Birth of the Women's Magazine," will be useful to those new to periodical studies or looking for a thorough overview of the field. This chapter is just one of many sections that could be useful to include when teaching eighteenth-century courses, both broader surveys and more specialized seminars. Relatedly, Batchelor's work offers possibilities for scholarship across genres and time periods, including the role of translation in periodical culture, how to handle pseudonymous authorship, understudied figures such as Radagunda Roberts, and Catherine Day Haynes's gothic novel *The Castle of LeBlanc*, a presumed "lost text" that the *Lady's Magazine* published in nineteen installments (1816–18) (54–55, 143, 147–49, 159). Batchelor's own case study of R, a regular pseudonymous contributor to early issues, offers a model for doing such recovery work that moves beyond texts written by named authors (143–49). Also of note is her analysis of the women writers "the magazine remembered and celebrated" to trace a more robust literary landscape, and the *Lady's Magazine*'s function as a kind of "coterie" in print (215, 222–27).

The coverage of the *Lady's Magazine* illustrations argues their inclusion was "a material articulation" of the publisher's desire "to bring culture and the arts to a wide readership" (171). Beyond pointing to their importance and the need for further scholarly attention, the book features thirty-five good quality illustrations, many as full pages, including what is probably "the first mass-produced, hand-coloured British fashion plate" and an incredibly detailed map of England as a needlework pattern (69–70, 121). Unfortunately, these images are solely available in black and white in both the print and ebook editions. Batchelor provides a thorough overview of the many contradictions in fashion coverage, from questions of agency to the role in women's "self-fashioning," and the impacts of fashion plates on readership for other magazines such as the *Lady's Monthly Museum* (1798–1828) (181–93). Building on this wide archive, she compellingly argues that the *Lady's Magazine*'s shift to fashion plates coupled with the end of its embroidery patterns in 1820 demonstrates a move to more passive consumption of fashion as dictated by experts, rather than giving readers the means to self-fashion (193).

Chapter 5 covers so much content that all the threads can be difficult to track, but it rewards readers with quick histories that include

reviews as a periodical inclusion and publication type, and the role of short vs. serialized fiction. By this chapter's end, I was just as baffled as Batchelor that the *Lady's Magazine* finally merged with other publications, which it had been warring with for years, and transformed almost beyond recognition.

It is a shame that we had to wait until 2022 for an entire book devoted to such a clearly popular and influential literary object, but current and future scholars are incredibly lucky that Batchelor was the one to write it. Hopefully, Open Access availability means many will read it. The field will be well served to take up her call for interventions beyond the recovery of the *Lady's Magazine*, following the wider move toward inclusivity in eighteenth-century and Romantic studies. I cannot wait to see the results.

Bethany E. Qualls, PhD, is an independent scholar, teacher, and editor. Her current book project explores gossip's role in shaping new media forms (including novels, periodicals, and engravings) in the long eighteenth century.

Motherless Creations: Fictions of Artificial Life, 1650–1890 by Wendy C. Nielsen

Routledge, 2022. 262pp. $170. ISBN 978-1032231679.

Review by Sibylle Erle, University of Lincoln, Lincoln, England, United Kingdom

This book identifies many "misconceptions about how life began" (3), casting a wide net across the literatures of the Western world to explore notions of fertility. It analyses narratives in play not only in shared, cultural histories but also in collective hopes for the rise of AI and ALife. The vistas of ALife, to repeat a resounding promise, are within our grasp: everything can be fine-tuned to our desires. We can have perfect children. What impressed me most about this book is its prospicience, its boldness to position itself in the discursive field between posthumanism and transhumanism. In Nielsen's words: "the book's larger argument [is] that fictions of anthropomorphic Alife belong to the literary prehistory of transhumanist visions" (199). Nielsen reclaims some of the most fascinating subjects to explain how modern technologies project imagined scenarios and why these aspirational futures are grounded in stereotypes and come at a huge cost: the oppression of women and ultimately of all human beings. The stories Nielsen plots are stories full of warning. So why, indeed, does so much of speculative fiction do so well without mother figures?

Motherless Creations starts with the Enlightenment and progresses through the satirical turn of the Romantic period into Victorian

literature, never losing sight of contemporary critical debates about procreation and constructs, such as "maternity," "parenthood," and "family"; Nielsen explores ideas related to "the human" and "the humanoid" as circulating themes in World Literature. Following on from Stefani Engelstein's *Anxious Anatomy* (2008), Nielsen extends the discussion by asking big questions and reaching into the present, alert to biases in the pursuit of "control in a changing world" (209). The blurring of geographical boundaries is strangely satisfying in Nielsen's competent hands, except perhaps for the odd moment where the master narrative of the international context seems to bulldoze the nuances of national culture to make it all fit. The book is in three parts with connected but self-contained chapters and vastly interesting endnotes and literature reviews. Hand in hand with much useful defining of terms, this book shines through its historical research on innovative thinkers, inventors of creative technologies, and many male authors' compelling fantasies about "women's poor control over the imagination" (3). Male creation held the promise of perfection (no disabilities, only beauty and health), but Nielsen diligently excavates the falsities of wishful thinking.

Part 1 presents French and British philosophical debates to focus on (pseudo)scientific justifications of motherless creation. The uncertainty about the origins of life, unfortunately shall we say, generated convincing narratives about preformation and monogenesis in medical writing until the eighteenth century. Nielsen traces residues of old-fashioned beliefs and gendered power struggles to visual images (engravings). Once "released" from their purpose and conceptualized as "visual paratexts," these images develop a counterweighting argument as they cast the womb as a "tomb" (40, 24). More generally, figures such as the homunculus or automaton never were what they were described to be. Rather, transhuman embodiment but also figurative language was used to demonstrate "human physiology" as well as comment on human relations (35). And yet, mothers, according to Nielsen, maintain a persisting ideological presence; they haunt the narratives of scientific validation because something is all too likely to go wrong. Nielsen unravels the net of analogies and metaphors. Explaining French Pygmalion adaptations, she notes that the story is exemplary in that it manifests "recurring characteristics of the motherless creation: flatness, infertility, and disposability" (53). The statue is an object of desire, possibly a target of incest, and certainly no longer a mother.

In part 2, Nielsen pursues the phenomenon of male inventors or creators to reveal the perceived potentials of motherless creation and investigates creatures as heroes or monsters with superpowers. Moving between German and British literary contexts, Nielsen juxtaposes readings

of Goethe's *Faust*, Hoffmann's *The Sandman*, and Shelley's *Frankenstein* to explore the implications of literary figures' loss of "reproductive rights" (70). The advancing advantages of technology are then expanded with more "parallel stories" about the Golem, a possible inspiration for Shelley (71). While scenes of creation "remain opaque" (76), Nielsen continues to accumulate comparisons that illuminate human fears and desires. She draws attention to the dangers of the "inability to differentiate fact from fiction" as in *The Sandman* and enlists Freud's "The Uncanny" and Masahiro Mori's "Uncanny Valley" (92, 95, 96). Many of the inventor-creators in this section are professors, and Nielsen comments astutely on what went wrong, emphasizing the productive scepticism of Romantic writers and perhaps hinting at make-believes in Higher Education today: "a masculine-dominated practice that resists outside feedback" (118). In any case, *Frankenstein* is the pivotal text as it "offers the strongest critique of the notion of man being a machine" (130). Nielsen diligently builds analogies to argue for connections: "*Frankenstein* reads like an inverse of the Pygmalion legend" or "Like *Faust*, Shelley's novel moralizes about the redemptive power of love" (111, 122). When discussing the science of "breeding" and the bride of *Frankenstein*, Nielsen's approach brings the female creature to life. In the novel, however, the making and unmaking of this creature remains a word-creation. We never meet her. Of this section, the creature's "in-betweenness" in status and appearance as well as the Golem legend's emphasis on human "mastery over technology" prepare the topics of race, slavery, and colonialism in part 3 (125, 141).

In the last three chapters on French and American texts, Nielsen moves from Villier's *Tomorrow's Eve*, via sex dolls, statues, corpses, and passive female figures discussed previously, to instances of treating women like metaphors to "control and dominate their bodies" (169), on to Melville's *The Bell-Tower* and finally Ellis's *The Steam Man*. Here, Nielsen maps how human functions become part of machines (literally and metaphorically), while identifying these authors' responses to "the looming threat of industrial progress" and association of "black bodies with machines" (191, 198). This time, Nielsen exposes white American fantasies about technology alongside the continuing "figurative assault on the American West" and Native Americans (207).

With *Motherless Creations*, Nielsen offers long overdue explanations about the genesis of motherless creations in American, British, French, and German literature. The interpretations of Pygmalion's statue, Frankenstein's monster, homunculi, automata, androids, golems, and steam men are presented in effortless prose, blending facts with existing fictions and scientific contexts. The impetus to make complex ideas

relevant to the present is honest and reflected in Nielsen's continual efforts to probe deeply into the artistic mechanics of fictionality. What is floating in the footnotes is Nielsen's sense of where research might lead: to more investigation of the dangerous, seemingly shrouded myths in the growing influence of ALife.

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The World of Elizabeth Inchbald: Essays on Literature, Culture, and Theatre in the Long Eighteenth Century, ed. Daniel J. Ennis and E. Joe Johnson

University of Delaware Press, 2022. 270pp. $42.95. ISBN 978-1644532560.

Review by Willow White, University of Alberta, Augustana, Camrose, Alberta, Canada

This volume of essays serves as a tribute to the late Annibel Jenkins (1918–2013), a scholar of the eighteenth century and a founding member of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) and the Southeastern American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (SEASECS). Jenkins's final project was a study of the eighteenth-century London newspaper *The World*, which covered important matters of the day relating to politics, society, arts and culture, and current events. This collection honours Jenkins's final, unfinished project by mirroring the structure of the eighteenth-century newspaper in its breadth of topics, while also nodding to Jenkins's expansive influence on modern eighteenth-century studies.

Further tethering the essays in this collection is Jenkins's definitive biography of eighteenth-century English playwright, novelist, and theatre critic Elizabeth Inchbald, *I'll Tell You What: The Life of Elizabeth Inchbald* (2003). This robust biography helped to correct the often patronizing and limiting studies of Inchbald written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries beginning with James Boaden's *Memoirs of Mrs. Inchbald* (1833). Jenkins sets the record straight that Inchbald was a fiercely independent woman and a shrewd manager of her own successful career; she coined the phrase "Inchbald Woman" to refer to the sorts of empowered and independent female characters that she was known to write and embody. As editors Daniel J. Ennis and E. Joe Johnson write in their introduction, "it was Jenkins's pioneering work that revealed

in full the enormous web of influencers, collaborators, theatrical antecedents, and literary descendants that made up Inchbald's world" (3). Not all essays in this collection engage explicitly with Inchbald's life and works; rather, the essays share the goal of "deepen[ing] the texture of Inchbald's world" and offer an expansive exploration of Inchbald's vast influences, dynamic networks, and cultural milieu (3).

While Inchbald never travelled beyond France, she had a global imagination, and a number of essays capture her literary explorations of Britain's place in the world. In "Narratives of Emerging Markets and Mercantilist Mappings in Defoe's London," Mita Choudhury draws on Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) to explore the "the mechanisms that legitimized mercantilist ventures," convincingly demonstrating that "when framed as narrative and thus fiction, maritime criminality masks the pervasive cultural inclination for expansion in eighteenth-century Britain" (47, 61). In a similar vein, Randa Graves, in "'My Business Ashore': Libertine Conduct and Maritime Context in *The Rover*," considers how Aphra Behn—Inchbald's playwriting foremother—revised Thomas Killegrew's *Thomaso* (1664) in a maritime context in order to establish a unifying sense of British identity in *The Rover* (1677). Cynthia J. Lowenthal's chapter on orientalism within Restoration tragicomedies set in America and Morocco offers potential connections with Inchbald's own colonial comedies *The Mogul Tale* (1784) and *Such Things Are* (1787).

Other essays nod to Inchbald's identity as an independent woman and writer. In "Speaking through the Prophets: Anne Finch, Politics, and Religion," Claudia Thomas Kairof writes about the way Anne Finch drew on the biblical figure of Deborah to "exemplify women's former power" (125). Inchbald also drew on her faith as a Catholic woman to guide her writing of strong female characters, best exemplified in her novels *A Simple Story* (1791) and *Nature and Art* (1796), and her play *Lovers' Vows* (1798). There is much to think about here in relation to eighteenth-century women writers' connections to their spiritual and religious identities as a source of their empowerment.

Two chapters that bracket this volume deal with the contemporary staging of eighteenth-century plays. Misty G. Anderson's superb opening chapter, "Inchbald for our Time," is necessary reading for anyone looking to stage an eighteenth-century play today. Anderson offers an analysis of a variety of contemporary productions of Inchbald's plays, demonstrating that Inchbald "remains a linguistically available, playable, and politically vital playwright for our times" (9). Near the end of the volume, John A. Vance, in "After the Great War: The Restoration and Eighteenth Century on the London Stage, 1919–1929," describes the

resurgence of eighteenth-century plays, particularly comedies, in the early twentieth century. These two chapters combine to remind readers that eighteenth-century drama continues to have a rich afterlife.

Some essays drifted from the collection's goal of encapsulating Inchbald's world. In reading the third chapter on Thomas Jefferson's interest in revolutionary politics and architecture, I found myself wondering how Inchbald, known for her interest in radical politics, might have critiqued this "gentleman scientist of the Age of Enlightenment" who was also an enslaver and whose "beloved Monticello" was a forced labour camp (69, 68). Inchbald was opposed to slavery, criticizing the practice in overt and subtle ways throughout her oeuvre but most notably in *Such Things Are*. Bringing in Inchbald's perspectives, even briefly, would have helped complicate Jefferson's relationship to classical architecture while better tethering this piece to the goals of the collection.

The volume ends with a word from Jenkins, as editors Ennis and Johnson skillfully weave together fragments of her final, unfinished manuscript on *The World* and her 2006 plenary address on the same topic at the annual meeting of SEASECS in Athens, Georgia. The collection concludes with a heartfelt tribute to Jenkins in the form of an afterword by Paula R. Backscheider and a poem by Don Russ, "Her Worded World: A Tribute to Annibel Jenkins." This collection achieved its goal of providing a deep sense of Inchbald's world. Not only was Inchbald at the centre of eighteenth-century literature, theatre, and popular culture, this volume is a testament to how Inchbald's life and works remain a highly productive site of inquiry for modern scholars of the period.

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What Pornography Knows: Sex and Social Protest since the Eighteenth Century by Kathleen Lubey
Stanford University Press, 2022. 312pp. $28. ISBN 9781503633117.

Review by Jason S. Farr, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, United States

In *What Pornography Knows*, Kathleen Lubey refutes common understandings about pornography—that it is all about sex, for example, and that it inevitably objectifies and subordinates passive women (cis and trans) and nonbinary persons. On the contrary, she argues, feminist and queer *refusals* of heteropatriarchal sexual mandate are organizing features of pornography's long literary history. Tracking republications of *The History of the Human Heart* (1749) to the Victorian period and the 1960s pulp era alongside an impressive range of pornographic texts covering these same time frames, Lubey narrates an enthralling, unanticipated literary history that demands we revise and deepen our understanding of pornography as well as sex, gender, and feminism.

What Pornography Knows offers a counternarrative to heterosexual cis-male ascendancy that develops with unexpected twists and turns over the preface, introduction, four chapters, and coda. Each chapter leaves you wondering what will happen next, making this a true cover-to-cover read that at times has the feel of a detective novel. The way that Lubey narrates her argument is as much determined by her research journey (in the preface) as it is by historical trajectory and the cast of historical figures who play a part in the story: the authors and editors of the primary texts under examination, but also women, nonbinary persons, and feminists of colour.

Relatedly, another feature of this book is its scope and attention to detail: sweeping but specific, focused and expansive, and foregrounded by core principles. In terms of this last point, Lubey anchors her study in *sexual justice*, or, as I understand it, an unwavering endorsement of capacious sexualities, genders, and bodily autonomy for women and nonbinary persons along with their liberation from rape, assault, and all forms of patriarchal control. Lubey's theorization of sexual justice is rooted in an abiding political conviction that sex work is labour. She acknowledges that nonbinary and trans persons and women of colour play a central role in the feminist intellectual history she relates, even if the texts she examines are (as she reveals in the introduction) mostly about white, British heterosexuality. As Lubey demonstrates through

sustained engagement with trans theory and women of colour feminisms, however, there is space for intersectional improvisations.

Lubey's theorization of sexual justice is facilitated by an introduction that generously surveys the critical terrain while offering readers a way into content through clear distillation of key terms. Lubey defines pornography as "accounts of genital activity that are embedded within narrative and that connect to a social world beyond the immediate action being described" (2). She later adds, "pornography isn't consistently erotic ... it does not contain an unwavering imperative to arousal, nor is it monomaniacally focused on penetration for its own gratuitous sake" (13). In this, the eighteenth century has much to teach us since its prose narratives and images reveal a convergence of "genital sexuality" with "philosophy, ideology, and culture" (15).

The first two chapters reveal the contours of this legacy. When eighteenth-century pornographic texts do not portray heterosexual penetration, they make room for feminist and queer pleasure and speculation. The erotic women dancers depicted in the first edition of *Human Heart*, for instance, simultaneously masturbate into a wine glass that they drink before passive male onlookers. This scene highlights women's self-governance and harmonious gratification while deferring expected heterosexual intercourse. What is more, this scene is included or deleted in textual republications over the following two centuries, one of several examples of bodily autonomy and social-sexual disruption that offers vital clues into male attempts to eradicate pornography's feminist past. Other depictions of dildo use in the eighteenth century similarly prompted a philosophical query for women and nonbinary persons: "Are penises necessary?" (85). In this sense, Lubey contends that pornography marks the "difference between a body's genital parts and the person believed to be in possession of these parts" (3). Lubey's transfeminist conception of pornography is demonstrated through analysis of 28 primary texts in chapter 1 alone, providing sound evidence for the book's arguments about self-governance.

I was also struck by Lubey's deft historicizing of feminist theory. Even as the eighteenth-century countertradition to male penetrative prerogative was eroded by male book editors in the countercultural era, second-wave feminists "misread" what pornography had become: "As the genre was being poorly historicized by men to reflect straight phallocentrism, feminists were carrying the eighteenth-century energy of pornography's discourse and critique into their theoretical writing"

(194). While Lubey's understanding of eighteenth-century pornography as feminist theory may seem surprising, her transhistorical book history supports this provocation. The epigraphs that frame chapter 4, for instance, clearly show the "streamlining" of feminist resistance from 1749 to 1844 and 1968 (188). Later, Lubey explains the impasse between sex positive and anti-pornography second-wave feminists by attending to "the indeterminacy of sexual narratives" through highly original reparative readings (203–4).

What Pornography Knows culminates with stirring reflections about porn in the digital age. Lubey calls for a "mindful pornography" that aligns with the spirit of the eighteenth century's "capacity for resistance and disruption" (214). Viewers of short digital videos, for example, momentarily depart from the demands of labour productivity. When porn consumers "hear, acknowledge, and comprehend the statements of the person who inhabits the performing body" they too can participate in feminist countertraditions (219). Like Lubey, I am not a digital media specialist, but I wonder what other shapes a mindful pornography might take. In both queer and straight contexts, the creation of *alts* allows for an anonymity that we might also consider. Further, as masturbatory practice, edging extends pornographic viewing across hours, days, and even weeks. Could such deferral and erotic reciprocity between consumers and digital sex workers disrupt the rhythms of productivity and promote sexual justice for women and nonbinary persons? One of the lasting impressions of this book is that its staunch commitment to sexual justice promotes deep scholarly and ethical reflection.

With respect to impact, *What Pornography Knows* is bound to spark wide-ranging conversations. For those of us working in disability and sexuality studies, we might similarly examine the long history of pornographic depictions of disability, a challenging proposition given how, historically, disabled persons have been oversexualized or left outside of sexuality altogether. I can also imagine similarly framed studies focusing solely on same-sex or queer pornography. Like the straight pulps that Lubey assesses in her study, lesbian and gay pulps could be paired with texts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to untangle disruptive legacies of queerness. Further, Lubey's contention that pornography is often *not about sex at all* adds significant historical dimensions to what asexuality studies scholars have identified and critiqued as "compulsory sexuality." Lubey is similarly suggestive about how the eighteenth century figures into the social constructions of transness and transsexuality, threads which scholars are bound to assess

in future studies. Finally, book history scholars will learn from Lubey's original methodology. *What Pornography Knows* is sure to animate such conversations across periods and subfields for years to come.

What Pornography Knows is a rare achievement in that it balances serious archival acumen and book history with theoretical sophistication and, in the end, a consequential presentism which left me thinking differently about a period and topic that I have long researched. It is as much a virtuoso literary history as it is a roadmap for the exciting directions that eighteenth-century scholarship can take.

Jason S. Farr is Associate Professor of English at Marquette University. His book, *Novel Bodies: Disability and Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century British Literature*, was published in 2019 and his research appears in such venues as *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, and *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*.

Voices from Beyond: Physiology, Sentience, and the Uncanny in Eighteenth-Century French Literature par Scott M. Sanders

University of Virginia Press, 2022. 236pp. $85. ISBN 978-0813947327.

Critique littéraire par Nathalie Vuillemin, Université de Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel, Switzerland

S'il fallait citer un essai original dans sa manière d'interroger à nouveaux frais la littérature et l'histoire des idées du XVIII^e^ siècle, celui de Scott M. Sanders mériterait de toute évidence une mention spéciale. C'est sous l'angle de la voix que le jeune chercheur examine les œuvres d'auteurs tels que Rousseau, Richardson, Diderot, Baculard d'Arnaud ou Cazotte; une voix « d'au-delà », *from beyond*, parce qu'elle exige qu'on examine comment ses manifestations matérielles mettent en jeu bien davantage qu'une série de mécanismes corporels. Il s'agit en effet de montrer comment la tentative de représentation des qualités acoustiques de la voix pointe vers une approche à la fois « vitaliste », basée sur des phénomènes physiologiques complexes qui interrogent la structure de toute matière animée, et sentimentale, la voix étant alors perçue comme un vecteur essentiel des émotions et, plus largement, des interactions sociales. Ainsi focalisée, pour l'essentiel, sur les différentes stratégies mobilisées par les auteurs pour *incarner* la voix dans les textes, l'enquête met également en relief la fascination de la seconde moitié du siècle pour les voix désincarnées, mystérieuses, étranges (*uncanny*), suscitant aussi bien l'effroi que la stupéfaction curieuse ou même, parfois, le désir.

Si l'analyse des textes littéraires constitue le noyau de l'étude, celle-ci brasse un grand nombre de travaux philosophiques de l'époque, qu'il s'agisse de s'interroger sur les mécanismes physiques, voire mathématiques de la voix, sur les possibilités (et la nécessité) de la travailler, sur son lien avec l'ensemble du corps, sur les vertus thérapeutiques de l'exercice vocal ou encore, dans le dernier chapitre, sur les débats relatifs aux sons non-reliés à des entités corporelles. L'ouvrage offre ainsi une synthèse passionnante sur le sujet, peu connu des dix-huitiémistes même. Sanders se montre particulièrement virtuose dans sa capacité à vulgariser ces théories souvent complexes, sans pour autant les simplifier à outrance. Il les lie aux textes et aux réflexions des auteurs de manière très convaincante, et parvient à montrer la centralité de la voix, bien au-delà du seul motif, dans l'écriture romanesque.

Les problèmes descriptifs soulevés par la représentation de la voix sont évidemment essentiels dans ce parcours: comment écrit-on un son? Comment en identifie-t-on l'origine humaine? Comment traduit-on en mots l'identité d'une voix, son effet sur ceux qui l'entendent? Sanders postule que ces questions ne peuvent être envisagées sérieusement qu'à la condition de sortir d'une lecture silencieuse des textes: car il s'agit certes pour les auteurs d'évoquer des voix, d'illustrer ou, dans certains cas, de détourner ironiquement des considérations théoriques (notamment dans *Les Bijoux indiscrets* de Diderot [1748]), mais surtout de contraindre le lectorat à vivre subjectivement l'expérience auditive, en revenant à sa source vocale. Sanders, lui-même chanteur, développe et illustre cette hypothèse en déployant une méthodologie extrêmement originale, basée sur deux types de procédés: il convoque en premier lieu des outils spécifiques à la pratique du chant ou à l'analyse du spectre vocal. Afin d'imaginer une signification possible des termes utilisés par Rousseau dans l'*Essai sur l'origine des langues* (1781, posthume) pour qualifier différents types de voix (« éclatante », « chantante », « douce », « sourde », etc.), Sanders se rapporte ainsi à une carte élaborée par Victoria Malaway pour représenter les qualités du son chanté (*A Blaze of Light in Every Word: Analyzing the Popular Singing Voice*, 2020). Auparavant, pour comprendre la référence aux « voix du nord » convoquées par Rousseau dans le même essai, Sanders recourait aux considérations développées par Nina Sun Eidsheim sur la correspondance entre une performance vocale et l'idéal mental qui la guide et la modèle (*Sensing Sound: Singing and Listening as Vibrational Practice*, 2015). La démarche suppose de s'essayer à la production concrète de cet idéal vocal. Il s'agit là de la seconde façon, utilisée de nombreuses reprises dans l'ouvrage, de « faire entendre » ce que le texte tente de représenter lorsqu'il évoque un chant ou une voix: exécuter, au sens performatif du terme, la description.

Mentionnons ici deux exemples: Richardson, dans *Clarissa* (1748), lie intimement la pratique musicale aux différentes épreuves traversées par les héroïnes du roman. La musique peut être simple distraction, moyen de séduction, on peut l'assimiler à une activité hautement morale ou, au contraire, subversive, visant à se soustraire aux contraintes sociales tout en donnant l'impression de s'y soumettre. Lorsque Clarissa, recluse dans ses appartements, entonne au début du deuxième volume « Ode to Wisdom » en s'accompagnant au clavecin, elle le fait en s'assurant de ne pouvoir être entendue de l'extérieur. La musique, tout en permettant à la jeune femme de trouver une forme d'apaisement, ouvre ici à une séance de réflexion sur la condition féminine et l'indépendance. Sanders analyse cette scène à la lumière des « propriétés acoustiques » (67) que donne à saisir sa mise en action. Il s'agit de comprendre concrètement, *physiquement*, comment le poème chanté agit sur la protagoniste, en se montrant particulièrement attentif aux phénomènes de résonance, de réverbération et de mise en valeur de certains sons projetés dans la pièce.

Ailleurs, l'auteur propose de relire la scène du *Neveu de Rameau* dans laquelle le neveu interprète des pièces composées par son oncle, en général très appréciés du public contemporain, mais déclenchant ici une réaction horrifiée du public. Sanders déploie une lecture très minutieuse de la manière dont le neveu exécute certaines phrases, d'une part, et dont il lie, d'autre part, les partitions de deux airs issus respectivement de *Castor et Pollux* et de *Le Temple de la gloire*. Il met ainsi en évidence les lourdeurs de l'interprétation, mais également les incohérences mélodiques de la performance, les dissonances qui émanent du réarrangement, l'ensemble de la scène donnant lieu à une représentation grotesque, excluant toute émotion.

Bien que très convaincante, la démonstration nécessite ici des compétences musicales sans lesquelles la lecture de Sanders pourra paraître fort technique et abstraite. A cette première réserve face à cette « méthodologie performative », on pourrait également ajouter le caractère sinon aporétique, au moins paradoxal, par endroit, de la démarche: car s'il s'agit de montrer que les textes littéraires déjouent les limites de la représentation de la voix et des sons en suggérant une lecture « en acte », Sanders est contraint lui aussi de mettre en mots ses tentatives d'entendre le texte. Sons émis, effets vocaux et acoustiques doivent être décrits pour être transmis; or si l'expérience en tant que telle est très bien explicitée, elle reste évidemment inaccessible au lecteur—sauf à s'y essayer! Enfin, même en restant dans le contexte de réception d'origine, on peut se demander si le lectorat était réellement en mesure de s'adonner à ces performances, et ce même en présence des partitions au sein des textes. Le fait d'introduire dans une œuvre littéraire un

media exigeant des compétences spécifiques pour le comprendre est-il uniquement une invitation, pour ceux qui le peuvent, à s'en emparer? Ou ne s'agit-il pas de penser les limites de la représentation et l'opacité de certaines expériences?

Ces interrogations n'enlèvent rien à l'intérêt de l'ouvrage et à la richesse des analyses de Sanders. La volonté de comprendre le texte au plus près de l'événement sonore qu'il relate pose de réelles questions herméneutiques. Jamais d'ailleurs l'étude ne donne l'impression de proposer des interprétations définitives: elle suggère des pratiques de lectures étendues, toujours respectueuses de la lettre première (on apprécie tout particulièrement le fait que tous les textes soient cités dans la langue originale). L'exercice d'interdisciplinarité proposé dans ces pages est stimulant: quelles qu'en puissent être les limites, il ouvre à une compréhension élargie des œuvres, et nous rappelle que la littérature, au XVIII^{e} siècle, nous invite toujours à une lecture philosophique, à savoir active et investie.

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Le Cinéma des Lumières: Diderot, Deleuze, Eisenstein
by Marc Escola
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Review by Guy Spielmann, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, United States

In his 1943 essay "Diderot Wrote about Cinema" ["Дидро писал о кино" / "Didro pisal o kino"], noted Russian director Sergei Eisenstein claimed that the French polygraph's project *Le Fils Naturel* (1757) was a proleptic conceptualization of filmic representation. For those not yet familiar with this provocative argument, since then revisited and amplified in numerous studies, Marc Escola's short book provides a handy conspectus. To some extent, *Le Cinéma des Lumières* is a commentary on Eisenstein's analysis of Denis Diderot's work, both being quoted at length, but Escola also brings to bear further commentaries by various scholars, notably Bazin ("Théâtre et cinéma," 1951), Barthes, ("Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein," 1973), and Bonnet ("Diderot a inventé le cinéma," 1995). The nature of Escola's own contribution is only partially revealed in the title, which lists Gilles Deleuze as a major source even though he did not explicitly partake in the "Diderot all but invented cinema" tradition. Escola enrolls Deleuze's writings *Cinéma 1: l'image-mouvement* (1983) and *Cinéma 2: l'image-temps* (1985) in an attempt to better ascertain Diderot's radically innovative conceptualization of the relationship between representation and time.

The inquiry begins with a riddle: why would Diderot, allegedly seeking to "reform" theatre circa 1757, produce a play that was not in itself particularly original, and in fact not meant to be performed, but rather published with a series of discussions (*entretiens*) between the author and Dorval, a man who had supposedly penned a play about an episode in his own life? Dorval's play was also not meant to be shown publicly, being performed by family members playing themselves (except for the father, now dead) as a kind of private memorial ceremony; only Diderot was allowed to witness the performance while remaining hidden. The show was cut short when the stand-in for the father—the only actor not playing himself—broke down in tears. The incident, Escola argues, reveals that the others were not in fact acting out a stage play, but rather were involved in something more akin to cinema: if Diderot's attempt at formulating a new kind of theatre went nowhere in the mid-1700s, it is because what he had in mind could only be realized on film, not through a live stage performance. Hence his famous dictum (in *De la poésie dramatique*, 1758) that actors should play as if in front of a closed curtain, as if there were no spectators.

Yet, other forms existed that would also eventually lead to cinema, notably slide projections ("transparents") perfected by another dramatist, Carmontelle—experiments to which Escola devotes a sizeable "interlude" (57–86). The general line of reasoning is that while, technically, the motion picture remained a faraway prospect, the necessary conditions for cinema to emerge as a new form of expression were already present in an aesthetic and intellectual dimension cultivated by Diderot, Carmontelle, and other Enlightenment creative types. Unlike many of those who have floated a similar hypothesis, Escola remains careful not to succumb to anachronism, and he presents "cinema" as a particular frame of mind in the process of representation, waiting for the suitable device to be invented by some engineer.

Escola's most substantive contribution resides in his discussion of the representation of time, with reference to Diderot's writings not only on theatre but also on painting (the *Salons*). A still picture, a novel, drama, and cinema reflect different modes of temporality that Diderot attempted to reconcile. Escola finds a clue in Deleuze's concept of "cristal," a kind of image that reveals a temporal depth underneath an apparently flat surface. Thus, the performance of *Le Fils Naturel* witnessed by Diderot, while inscribed in the present and in representation, also functions as a re-enactment of a lived experience by the actors—except for one, who proves unable to play his part because he is merely playing a part. "It might be that Diderot tried to

dramatize not the representation of an action, but that relationship between the actual and the virtual that is time itself," concludes Escola (109, my translation).

There are two advantages to re-envisioning cinema from this perspective. The first is to disengage the medium from its alleged nature as "motion picture" and bring out its unique capacity for representing the passing of time rather than a series of actions. The second is to disengage theatrical experiments by Diderot and others from the narrow confines of early modern dramatical theory. Escola convincingly shows that the point of a play like *Le Fils Naturel* could not simply be to establish a new genre, the "drame," a type of realistic, serious fiction involving ordinary people (which, I would add, had already been accomplished over two decades previously by George Lillo in his "domestic tragedy" *The London Merchant*, 1731). Diderot wrote an "unperformable" piece as a test of his "fourth wall" principle, which Escola describes as a staging configuration that in essence negates theatrical performance and ushers in cinematic performance later to be realized by filming.

Le Cinéma des Lumières is a brief but very dense essay that will engage anyone eager to explore the complex relationships between various media (theatre, narrative prose, painting, cinema), especially when it comes to the implicit temporal dimension, too often neglected in favour of the more obvious visual dimension. My only real qualm with this essay is that it almost exclusively references sources in French, except for Eisenstein's 1943 text (and, alas, one of the most misguided theoretical works in the field of visual arts, Michael Fried's *Absorption and Theatricality*, 1980). Surely studies in other languages could have been brought to the discussion; if Deleuze did derive his "image-cristal" concept from Henri Bergson's *Matière et mémoire* (1896), what of, for instance, Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927)? While such a selective referencing strategy in no way invalidates Escola's arguments, the non-francophone reader may wish that he had cast a wider net.

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