Book Reviews/
Critiques de livres

British Literature and Technology, 1600–1830,
ed. Kristin M. Girten and Aaron R. Hanlon
Bucknell University Press, 2023. 214pp. $150. ISBN 978-1684483969.

Review by David Alff, SUNY-Buffalo,
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I once designed a general education course called "Literature and Technology" for STEM majors who might not otherwise have found themselves in an English studies classroom. I wanted these students to recognize what close reading brought to our university's methodological smorgasbord and to appreciate literary writing's participation in material history. Our discussions of Victor Frankenstein and Philip K. Dick, Captain Nemo, and Nnedi Okorafor often turned on the relationship of *inventio* (the discovery of argument) and *invention* (the contrivance of process or device). These terms guided us toward the overlap between a technological realm often staidly reduced to its most visible applications and literary works that sought more than to ornament society.

The essays in this anthology exhibit the capacious idea of technology that my class tried to foster. Looms, lanterns, and telegraphs reveal technē in the collection, as do virginity tests, wax statuary, curvilinear flourishes, and metaphors. The editors, Kristin M. Girten and Aaron R. Hanlon, welcome this inventive variety by defining technology broadly as a "tool—whether physical or conceptual—but not necessarily a tool over which we humans have complete control" (2). This shrewd distillation recalls the epigrammatic renderings of Bernard Stiegler (for whom technology is "organized inorganic matter") and Bruno Latour ("the study of techniques"), while posing questions of agency that felt as urgent to early modern authors as they do to us today (Stiegler, "Elements for a General Organology," *Derrida Today* 13, no. 1 [2020]: 72; and "14. Bruno Latour," http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/P-125-PHIL-TECHpdf.pdf, 126).

That Girten and Hanlon argue for literature as a kind of technology will surprise no one who has followed recent scholarship in the field of science and literature. What makes the collection stand out, rather, is its precise focus on a technological realm understudied for being lumped together with science. By focusing exclusively on humanity's unruly tools, this book opens a compelling "mosaic" view of technology that tiles together everything from the wiles of Jacobean stagecraft to the terza rima utopias of Romantic poets (10). I appreciated the topical solidity and historical breadth even as I wondered if there was a reason

behind the 1600–1830 chronology, or whether this periodization emerged to accommodate the individual essays.

Laura Francis's opening chapter argues that John Webster's 1612 tragedy, *The Duchess of Malfi*, challenged audiences "to distinguish artificial from real" at a moment when taxonomic reasoning sculpted perceptions of nature (26). Where literary critics have long traced technology's impress on drama, Francis shows how *Duchess* stages artifice through faddish techno-diction, detached voices, and wax anatomies. If Webster's play embarrasses human judgment, Thomas A. Oldham shows how deceit stymies technology in *Three Hours after Marriage* (1717). By reading this Scriblerian comedy against a medical history of the obstetric forceps, Oldham offers a fresh reading of Doctor Fossile, a scientist duped by his unchecked faith in a potion concocted to ascertain his bride's virginity.

Theatrical tricksters personified technology's tendency to overturn clear sense and plain truths. Fiction, by contrast, offered tactics for regaining control. Erik L. Johnson shows how Mary Hearne's *The Lover's Week* (1718) and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) reject the finely diced descriptions of time made possible by clocks and watches by harking back to Augustinian notions of infinitude and experiences of relativity of the sort Albert Einstein would later describe. Johnson reveals how even proud instrumentalists like Crusoe never fully inhabited the ontologies of their tools. In a reading of *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Zachary M. Mann examines how Jonathan Swift sized up the cultural significance of textile automation. While one could ask whether the Voyage to Laputa requires yet another historicist frame, Mann uses this critically well-trod episode to show how Smith paid attention to innovations in the mills as well as the Royal Society, offering the collection's most salient differentiation of knowledge-how and knowledge-that.

In a standout essay, Kevin MacDonnell demonstrates how William Hogarth's love of the winding line of beauty informed James Watt's steam engine patent. MacDonnell's history of mechanical linkage makes a powerful case for the complicity of aesthetics in the rise of fossil fuel–driven industrialization and the "conceptual foundations of the Anthropocene" (87). Where MacDonnell uncovers the artistic roots of mechanized propulsion, Emily M. West ponders the possibilities of suspension in her investigation of a stained-glass lantern that hung at Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill House. West ambitiously argues that the lantern's pictorial panes mimic the forms of "explosion, fragmentation, mingling, and remaking" that mangle plots of progeny and succession in Walpole's gothic fictions (101). The phantasmagoric lamp, West shows, models nonlinear emplotment and queer intimacy.

Deven M. Parker plumbs the political affordances of a very different ocular technology, the shutter and semaphore telegraphs that eighteenth-century militaries built to convey coded intelligence. In an essay that could bring welcome historical depth to ongoing scholarly discussions around infrastructure, Parker reads Maria Edgeworth's "Lame Jervas" (1811) as an attempt to "neutralize the disruptive potential of a particular technology" over which France assumed pre-eminence (123). Jamison Kantor likewise considers the ambitions of statecraft in his study of Percy Shelley's engineering imagery. Like Johnson, Kantor considers how technology conditions rhetoric, in this case Shelley's vision of a mechanized government "whose automatic processes exist beyond the consent of the governed but also beyond variation" (153). Shelley's poetics of autonomy offers fit punctuation to a collection that opened by considering technology in degrees of mastery.

Joseph Drury's incisive coda synthesizes questions raised by each contribution in what could double as a pocket history of recent developments in science studies, book history, post-critique, and the new formalisms. Drury, whose *Novel Machines* (2017) offers an excellent companion to this volume, considers the obligations of interdisciplinary inquiry: what it should do, who it is for, and what, ultimately, we can learn from people with different trainings. The essays gathered in *British Literature and Technology, 1600–1830* will hold broad interest for those invested in the critical discourses Drury surveys, and anyone—critic, teacher, student—seeking tools to comprehend human intervention in the world.

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*Old Books and Digital Publishing: Eighteenth Century
Collections Online* by Stephen H. Gregg
Cambridge University Press, 2021. Open Access (December 2020). Online
ISBN 978-1108767415. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108767415.

Review by Tonya Howe, George Mason University,
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Stephen H. Gregg's new entry for the Cambridge Elements in
Publishing and Book Culture series takes up the material and ideological
history of Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), offering
a rich illumination of exactly how the large-scale digitization projects,
which scholars now rely on, came to be—and how they came to be
in these particular ways, as opposed to others. Gregg has given us a
highly detailed sociology of ECCO, one that should prove interesting
to book historians and digital humanists alike. Tracing the development
of ECCO from the late 1970s and 1980s, with the microfilming of
the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue (ESTC), all the way
to the launch in 2003 and from there into the first decades of the
twenty-first century, with the launching of Gale Digital Scholar Lab
and the sunsetting of the original ECCO interface, *Old Books and
Digital Publishing* foregrounds the choices that informed the shape
of the data and how we engage with it. By approaching the subject
from the perspective of a bibliographer, Gregg explores the utility of
bibliographic analysis for the study of digital archives and advocates
for a more sophisticated understanding of our digital resources. Just as
books carry the traces of their creation, so too do digital archives and
the platforms by which we access them.

Gregg is in *his* element when he is excavating the deals and decisions
that led to the ECCO we have all come to know and love. Carefully
charting its development from Robin Alston's (UK) and Henry Snyder's
(US) ESTC, which was deeply influenced both by new technologies in
information management, like Henrietta Avram's MARC cataloguing
system and microfilm, as well as the desire to inscribe a national bibli-
ographic record, Gregg explores the politics and practicalities defining
the digital resource. One interesting note about the prehistory of ECCO
is worth spending time on: the texts that were to be digitally catalogued
and microfilmed were so numerous, given the explosion of printed
matter in the eighteenth century, that limitations had to be imposed.
The nature of these limitations and these technological choices reveal
the shape of the archive—it was from its inception limited by an Anglo-
American vision, even as it sought to preserve knowledge and make it

more accessible: "Technology, it is implied, can save the texts of Western culture" (18). It took almost three decades for RPI to microfilm ESTC, and over those decades, scholarly inquiry was changing dramatically; as the canon changed, so too did the choices about what was microfilmed. From prioritizing all editions by a select few canonical authors—Congreve, Defoe, Fielding, Pope, Richardson, Swift, and twenty-two others—RPI eventually adopted an expanded program that sought to capture a much broader record (23). The initial restriction was a choice, and it was not one made by the company that microfilmed the materials ingested into a slightly earlier archive, Early English Books Online (EEBO). Indeed, the questions of what was being preserved and how it is made accessible form the most pressing structural issues for Gregg's investigation: Are we preserving information or object? Text or book? To what extent can we do both? And how?

Another element of Gregg's book is especially engaging: the development of ECCO as a platform within the context of the techno-commerce of academic publishing of the late 1990s and early 2000s. When Thomson Gale began digitizing ESTC, their choices were constrained by the shape of the late 1990s tech marketplace, which had just witnessed the dramatic collapse of the dot-com bubble. In this context, Thomson Gale was determined to create and cater to new markets, but with an eye toward proprietary investment: while our cultural heritage *might* be free, these points of access are not. The internet was new in the 1990s, optical character recognition was very much in its infancy, and the CD-ROM was still a reliable technology—ESTC was published by CD-ROM, and Chadwyck-Healey also published some archival products in this way. Distinguishing the development of ECCO from that of its competitors, including Chadwyck-Healey, and ProQuest's EEBO, published online and with page images but with searchable metadata only, Gregg notes that Thomson Gale sought a way to distinguish themselves without taking enormous risks that could backfire, and "searchability with scale" was it (55). The distinguishing features of ECCO—being published online with searchable full-text and page images—was a calculated risk. In this context, Gregg explores the hidden workings of the platform, which struggled to capture the idiosyncrasies of twice-remediated, hand-pressed books produced before the nineteenth century. The last sections of *Old Books and Digital Publishing* looks at the nature of the interface, the algorithm, and the integrated platforms of academic publishing that together shape how we search and what results are delivered. Gregg concludes with a more

theoretical discussion of the "ambivalent effects" produced by new digital platforms such as Gale Digital Scholar Lab and Gale Primary Sources, which, while they enable discovery and analysis that can "mitigate biases hidden within the prehistory of individual collections of old books," also emphasize a form of analysis that amplifies text at the expense of book (99).

As a graduate student working with EEBO-TCP as an SGML corrector at the University of Michigan in the early 2000s, I was able to see first-hand a small fraction of how this vast system of large-scale machine-readable digitization happened. I remember vividly the unsettling realization that I was correcting material outsourced to anonymous, dramatically underpaid workers in India, the Philippines, and other countries not known for humane labour practices. While Gregg does not dive into this aspect of ECCO's material history, he articulates implications of choices ranging from minute details, like microfilming instead of photographing, all the way to the competition that brings the academic values of access and openness into contact with the commercial values of profit and licensing partnerships. *Old Books and Digital Publishing: Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* goes a very long way to undoing the naïveté with which we often approach apparently frictionless digital resources.

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Owning Performance | Performing Ownership:
Literary Property and the Eighteenth-Century British Stage
by Jane Wessel
University of Michigan Press, 2022. 228pp. $75. ISBN 978-0472133079.

Review by Leslie Ritchie, Queen's University,
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British laws concerning copyright in print materials, including and following the 1710 Copyright Act, sparked frequent contests between authors and booksellers over questions of authority, authenticity, ownership, and remuneration. Prior to the Dramatic Literary Property Act in 1833, Jane Wessel argues, in *Owning Performance | Performing Ownership,* "dramatists' ability to 'own' performance trailed far behind novelists' and poets' ability to own their printed books" (3). Dramatists had print authors' dilemmas doubled: to preserve their works' economic value and aesthetic integrity, playwrights had to battle claims upon their works made by entrepreneurial publishers and theatrical managers, yet they had to do so without losing access to publication in performance and print, all in an environment that offered them few legal protections. Dramatists turned to performance's lack of fixity for solutions that themselves proved ephemeral, Wessel argues.

Not publishing one's play in print granted a playwright control over its text and the ability to exploit its economic value by limiting its exposure to keep interest and demand for performances high, whereas "widespread print accessibility removed any control [playwrights] had over its performances and continuing remuneration for their labors" in London and other regional theatres (11). For a playwright who was also a performer, withholding a play from print often had the additional financial benefit of preserving their ownership of a role within that play. As Wessel observes, preserving one's personal repertory of roles was important for actors in the context of weakening customs governing part possession, which never had been enforceable legally in any case (26–27).

The first two chapters each analyze the rationale for and results of one playwright-performer's calculated circumvention of print publication. Chapter 1 considers Charles Macklin's litigious defense of his rights to his performed property, including his *Love à la Mode* (1759), a play kept out of legal print copy until 1793 when the aged Macklin was no longer interested in performing the role that he had created for himself: Sir Archy Macsarcasm. In parts he had not written, "Macklin emphasized the creative labor of his interpretation, adopting much of the same language that authors used to argue for literary property" (24), deploying arguments that prepared the way for the 1833 Act. Chapter 2 considers as strategic the ephemerality

of Samuel Foote's performances, formally innovative and improvisatory pieces which depended upon Foote's talent for mimicry of celebrities. As Wessel says, "not only did Foote often reject print publication, but he created works whose very nature evaded that possibility [by] ... making his celebrity presence integral to the performance of his work" (49). Intriguingly, Wessel suggests that Foote's mimicry not only "engaged with anxieties about the singularity and reproduction of identity" but also highlighted "celebrity's increasing value as a form of intellectual property" (65), offering the reader a compelling reason to take mimicry seriously.

Withholding plays' print publication was a scheme employed successfully by playwright-performers like Macklin and Foote until theatrical managers appropriated and adapted the ploy for their own benefit. By purchasing plays' so-called "copyrights" from playwrights directly, theatrical managers could "own" a play for terms that might well exceed the fourteen-year restrictions governing print copyrights. Managers might then insist on their right to exclusive performance in the metropole as well as in regional and Irish theatres, maintaining their valuable theatric property's exclusivity through litigation and other practices. The managerial tactic of keeping a playwright's work "locked up in MS," as a miserable John O'Keeffe put it (quoted on 145), and barring the author from printing diminished the odds of a playwright building a literary reputation or realizing financial gain past the sale of copyright and the author's benefit performances. Wessel's identification of such managerial machinations by George Colman the Elder, George Colman the Younger, Thomas Harris, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan in the brief third chapter comprises one of the book's most insightful and transferable contributions to knowledge, as it will enable scholars to think about how these practices of purchasing playwrights' "copyrights" impacted dramatic repertoire, performance, and literary reputation.

Tate Wilkinson, the subject of the fourth chapter, is in many ways this study's pivotal figure. A renowned mimic—he even mimicked the mimical Foote (93–95)—and regional theatre manager, Wilkinson's attitude toward performing ownership evolved over his career. From staging what Wessel terms "anthologies of performance" or compilations of scenes from various plays performed in the original actors' style, Wilkinson moved to "jumbles" or recreations of popular plays in the absence of authoritative print copy (92–93, 98). Later still, he transitioned to offering "fêtes" premised on the canon-building value of performing select scenes from old English plays (112). Bath, York, and Leeds playbills reproduced in the volume illustrate Wessel's point that Wilkinson altered playbills' typical formatting to educate audiences in such issues as the propriety of seeking playwrights' permission to perform their unprinted

plays (101–5). Wilkinson's playbills assured his audiences of their access to authentic London repertoire and performance practices, which, as Wessel astutely remarks, challenges assumptions that provincial theatres lagged behind the metropole (89).

Chapter 5 instructively contrasts the careers of playwrights Elizabeth Inchbald and John O'Keeffe against the last quarter-century's manager-driven decline in plays' print publication to show the inequities created by differing concepts of theatric ownership (119). Keeping a play's economic value high through controlled performance exposure was an enticement to the production of pirated, inaccurate play texts that might damage an author's reputation by linking the famous author's name to a faulty text. Accordingly, Inchbald, who was anomalous in her consistent pursuit of print publication and was less tied to self-authored roles than Foote or Macklin, willingly sent country managers her plays as a means of elevating and controlling her literary reputation (127, 129). O'Keeffe, whose London playwriting career coincided with the trend in managerial copyright-purchasing, sold most of his plays to the manager for a pittance and had the dissatisfaction of watching his popular pieces make money for the theatre while he "could not grant permission to actors wishing to use his plays for their benefit nights … [and] was unable to make a name for himself in print as a literary dramatist" (141), precluded even from printing several of his plays in his collected works twenty years after selling his "copyrights" to theatres.

By broadening the definition of publication to include not only print but performance, this book expands current conceptions of literary property and shows how, in the gaps around literary property law, the "affordances of performance" were tactically deployed by playwrights and performers (3). Wessel's well-researched book draws on legal cases and performance records to limn a set of paralegal practices concerning theatrical ownership that will aid scholars seeking to understand questions of repertoire and performance in late eighteenth-century British theatre. The book is particularly notable for its foregrounding of performers' creative labour. Likewise laudable, *Owning Performance | Performing Ownership* looks outside the London theatre circuit to demonstrate the consequences of theatrical "copyright" practices for plays' regional dissemination and playwrights' national reputations. Though Wessel's biographical approach focuses on playwrights and performers, her work underscores the cultural power of the period's theatre managers over the dramatists who scrabbled for a place in the playbill and in the public imagination.

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Romantic Medicine and the Gothic Imagination:
Morbid Anatomies by Laura R. Kremmel
University of Wales Press, 2022. 272pp. £70. ISBN 978-1786838483.
Review by James Robert Allard, Brock University,
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When it comes to their health, many people are at best uncomfortable with any kind of uncertainty, even as they have often been equally uncomfortable with the kinds of work—from embarrassing questions to invasive tests to ethically questionable experiments—required to arrive at anything approaching certainty in terms of diagnosis or treatment. *Romantic Medicine and the Gothic Imagination: Morbid Anatomies* examines a key chapter in the ongoing story of that discomfort while drawing attention to the value and possibilities inherent in the attendant uncertainty by stressing the overlap between the medical and gothic imaginations around the turn of the nineteenth century. If Matthew Baillie's influential medical text *The Morbid Anatomy* (1793) is, both in itself and as a kind of culmination, "a collection of unwanted objects considered spectacle as much as education, even among professionals," then Laura R. Kremmel urges us to recognize that gothic texts likewise enhance "the sense of wonder in the material body and [celebrate] its powerful dark mysteries" (24). When we begin to take seriously how often these features collide in the period and, perhaps more crucially, how often too many of us gloss over those collisions in an effort to trace a particular narrative of medical or literary "development," then we can begin to see the potential, the necessity, of a book like this. Kremmel states: "The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries do not exist merely to foreground the later age of medical enlightenment and reform: arriving at the 1840s should not be the goal. I want to make a case for examining the Romantic Medical Gothic on its own. While I do make frequent references to the many transitions during this period, getting past messy Romantic medicine to a more systematised age is not my goal" (13). As Kremmel convincingly argues, in medicine—as in gothic—*messiness*, if sometimes unsettling, is often the point.

The introduction pairs "two anatomists: one an accomplished physician [Baillie] with a background in surgery, the other a fictional malcontent [Victor Frankenstein] created by an author well aware of medical innovations" (1) to talk in fascinating detail about how the medical and gothic imaginations were both engaged in efforts to see the unseeable and to think through the unthinkable: a matrix of things and thoughts that included the body's "macabre interior, ... the abnormal, the unnatural, the morbid" (1). The book's five chapters each treat "a

major topic of debate in Romantic medicine and the ways in which a major trope in the Gothic tradition is used to experiment with that medical concept in representative Gothic works" (22); refreshingly, Kremmel's definition of "representative" is a careful mix of the deeply canonical and the lesser known.

Chapter 1 foregrounds "the Gothic conventions of blood and reanimated corpses and their participation on debates about vitalism" (23) in Matthew Lewis—*The Monk* (1796), of course, but also *Tales of Wonder* (1801) and *Romantic Tales* (1808). Chapter 2 turns "from the dripping corpses of Lewis to the cold and dry skeletons of his biggest fan, Charlotte Dacre" to find "a body without pain, subverting early understandings of anaesthesia as a problematic loss of feeling ... [and to] reconceptualise this loss as benefit well before chemical anaesthesia could be practically realised in the operating theatre" (23). Chapter 3 begins with a summary of persistent arguments against anatomical work and dissection and then connects "the trope of the counterfeit corpse to an active avoidance of empirical engagement with the dead in three seemingly disparate literary forms" (104): the still canonical *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), a selection of then-popular gothic chapbooks, and the Joanna Baillie drama *The Family Legend* (1810). Chapter 4 turns to Joshua Pickersgill Jr.'s novel *The Three Brothers* (1803) and attitudes toward physical deformity, which become "catalysts for the Gothic trope of the Devil [and prompt] a subversive pathological comparison of non-normative bodies and facilitates the disability narrative as a powerful tool to disrupt categorisation" (142). Finally, chapter 5 circles back to a key reminder in the introduction, that gothic was often decried as "a collection of unhealthy tropes that contaminated entire works of literature and, indeed, entire literary careers" (6): Kremmel focuses on Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826)—"not a Gothic novel" but with "its fair share of Gothic elements," and one "lacking strong medical voices"—"in the context of the Gothic trope of the dangerous or cursed narrative," treating the novel as a "safely *controlled* written record ... preventing the narrative-induced plague from spreading to a new generation" (177, 178). Together, Kremmel concludes, these chapters show that "what is notable about the medical Gothic of the Romantic period is its engagement with medical theories independent of medical theorists and practitioners" (211), an engagement that enables and is enabled by a blurring of the popular and professional so deeply characteristic of perceptions of both gothic and medicine, then and now.

While encouraging us to develop a productive appreciation for messiness, and itself joyfully revelling in it, Kremmel's book is the farthest thing from messy and is a model of the kind of scholarship to which

more of us should aspire: it is a carefully focused and organized study, with a serious capacity for making a significant contribution, but one that just as clearly manifests its unabashed love for its subject. I mean this as a profound compliment: I had *fun* while reading this book, and what I learned from it was that much more impactful because of that experience. I was also particularly impressed by the thoughtful way that Kremmel navigates the complex equations manifest when the medical and gothic imaginations overlap: she is always careful not to suggest that "because *this* in medicine, therefore *this* in literature," and instead paints a picture of two modes so deeply intertwined that it is virtually impossible and certainly counterproductive to identify either as dominant. I do admit to brief and few, but still real, moments of frustration when it seemed that, at times, Kremmel was perhaps more interested in stressing the nuances and relying on the repetition of some key terms, notably "Gothic imagination" in the early going, than in engaging with those terms and putting them to work; there was what I saw as some wheel-spinning in the repetition of the phrase that was notably absent when things got moving in the chapters. To be sure, defining one's terms is essential, and Kremmel is undoubtedly right that a phrase like "Gothic imagination" gets tossed around a lot in the scholarship; to be equally sure, writing style is a deeply personal thing, and I am not convinced that other readers will react the same way, or even notice.

What readers will notice, though, is that Kremmel's refusal to privilege either the medical or the gothic imagination results in a deeper appreciation for both as well as for their interconnectedness. The argument is compelling, the prose is smooth and accessible, and this book will be fascinating and important reading among field experts and student readers alike. Anyone with an interest in almost any aspect of medicine, Romanticism, or gothic in any portion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, either alone or in combination, will find *Romantic Medicine and the Gothic Imagination* necessary and deeply rewarding.

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Making Ideas Visible in the Eighteenth Century,
ed. Jennifer Milam and Nicola Parsons
University of Delaware Press, 2022. 240pp. $34.95. ISBN 978-1644532331.
Review by Louise Voll Box, The Johnston Collection,
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This edited volume of eight chapters focuses on visual arts and culture, and it emerged from the fifteenth David Nichol Smith Seminar (DNS XV) held at the University of Sydney, Australia. The DNS conference is the leading forum for long eighteenth-century studies in Australasia and attracts scholars from a range of disciplines, including history, art, literature, architecture, science, theology, musicology, philosophy, and politics. Inaugurated in 1966, the biennial meetings recognize the contribution made by Oxford Meriton Professor of English Literature David Nichol Smith (1875–1962) to the study of the eighteenth century by scholars in Australia and New Zealand. *Making Ideas Visible in the Eighteenth Century* represents contributions to the 2014 conference by authors based in Australia, the US, New Zealand, and Germany.

Together, these essays address visual culture from social, historical, and artistic contexts in an intellectually rigorous yet accessible style that will satisfy specialist and non-specialist readers alike. Drawing on the DNS XV theme of "Ideas and Enlightenment in the Long Eighteenth Century," the premise of this volume is to move beyond textual sources, such as eighteenth-century art writing, to consider how artworks can be integrated into the analysis of Enlightenment ideas. Jennifer Milam and Nicola Parsons's introduction posits that the essays ask "new questions of artworks that are implicated by the need to see ideas in painted, sculpted, illustrated, designed, and built forms" (6). The ideas "made visible" by the authors cover diverse topics: shipping designs, English porcelain manufacture, depictions of aging, Thomas Jefferson's landscapes, ancien régime funerary monuments, images of First Nations peoples, and descriptions of artists' residences in the Louvre.

One of the pleasures of edited collections is the thematic ebb and flow: a readerly journey shaped by editorial decision-making. The clearly stated, overarching structure and the skilfully moderated points of connection between the essays are particularly satisfying features of this volume. The editors have separated the essays into two distinct subthemes that consider coexisting dynamics in the long eighteenth century. First, the development of identity through material objects is addressed, followed by a demonstration of how objects can express or perform intellectual life. These subthemes begin with the individual's

sense of self and radiate into widening "concentric circles of intellectual influence" to conclude with the transnational impacts of technological development (8). The essays offer compelling insights into topics that often fall into the inter-disciplinary gaps between art history, architecture, history, science, and philosophy.

In the first subtheme, David Maskill's fascinating exploration of artists living at the Louvre is adroitly followed by Jessica Priebe's investigation of François Boucher's creative output—"the close relationship between taste and productivity"—during his residence at the Louvre (46). Matthew Martin explores the complex interplay of English and French national identity that underscored design and production at the Chelsea porcelain factory, which he argues was contingent on context and clever marketing rhetoric. This leads into Milam's discussion of nationalism and cosmopolitanism at Jefferson's Poplar Forest, where restyled traditions of European gardens became an expression of American national identity.

Enlightenment notions of time that emerge in Milam's essay link to the second subtheme, which opens with Jessica L. Fripp's analysis, "Growing Old in Public in Eighteenth-Century France." Fripp examines printed and painted depictions of two prominent women in French society: Marie Leszczyńska, Queen of France and wife of Louis XV, and Marie-Thérèse Geoffrin, who was of bourgeois birth but was recognized for her salons that attracted artists and writers. Performing age through portraiture allowed both women to transition to new life stages on their own terms. Wiebke Windorf then describes how immortality can manifest in bespoke funerary monuments that speak to a highly individual expression of artistic solutions and skills resulting from the fusion of commercial, artistic, and familial decision-making. Windorf notes that ancien régime monuments, "promulgate a unique turning point in the history of ideas" (152).

Contested viewpoints of Indigenous cultures feature in Melanie Cooper's investigation of images of Native American and Australian Aboriginal peoples. She suggests that the visual culture of pagan gods and mythical beasts was "revitalised and put to the services of invasion and the practices of colonization" (178). The final essay on the transnational technologies evident in naval design—that Jennifer Ferng terms "technological revisioning" (189)—is a fitting coalescence of the volume's themes. Ferng explores the performative and material aspects of the shipwright's craft, and how the designs for bomb vessels express a combination of tacit knowledge, aesthetic choices, mathematics, intuition, and ingenuity over time and across geographies.

Aesthetic choices also contribute to the overall enjoyment of this edited volume. It has quality production values for which designer Robert L. Wiser is to be congratulated. The appealing cover design features a still life by Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, *The Attributes of the Arts and the Reward Which Are Accorded Them*, 1766 (Minneapolis Museum of Art), a work that celebrates the arts of painting, architecture, goldsmithing, drawing, and sculpture. The publication has warm-toned, quality paper stock, is set in a period-appropriate typeface, Monotype Bell (designed by Richard Austin *fl.* 1788–1830), and includes colour illustrations that are generous in size and number. Combined, these characteristics enhance the idea of "materiality" and contribute to a satisfying reading experience.

Milam and Parsons previously edited another volume of essays gathered from DNS XV, a special issue of *Eighteenth-Century Life* (41.2 [2017]) that brought together a selection of papers from the fields of literary and historical studies. *Making Ideas Visible in the Eighteenth Century*, which the editors describe as a companion to the earlier publication, illustrates the value of selective specialization. Without detracting from the diverse scholarship that makes DNS so successful, the editors have skilfully curated thematically similar research into a new format that stimulates fresh insights. This excellent anthology will appeal to a wide audience interested in new ways of seeing eighteenth-century visual arts and culture.

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Small Things in the Eighteenth Century:
The Political and Personal Value of the Miniature,
ed. Chloe Wigston Smith and Beth Fowkes Tobin
Cambridge University Press, 2022. 328pp. CAD$114.95. ISBN 978-1108834452.

Review by Alexandra M. Macdonald, William & Mary,
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   This collection brings together a multidisciplinary group of scholars to "think through the relations between scale and material culture" in the eighteenth century (1). Owing to what Pauline Rushton terms a "long-established, but largely unacknowledged, hierarchy of materials," ordinary small things have often been overlooked by some scholars and curators (172). Challenging this hierarchy, *Small Things in the Eighteenth Century* takes seriously the stories hidden within items like buttons, coins, and fans. As it shows, small things were a ubiquitous part of both ordinary and extraordinary life events and had emotional, political, cultural, and social resonances.

   Like the fragments discussed by the contributors, the collection is a "series of intricate snapshots" that can be dipped into for a single essay or read in its entirety as a textual example of Freya Gowrley's "assemblages" (10, 109). The editors' choice to use the word "thing" rather than "object" in the title reflects the influence of theorists like Bill Brown, Jane Bennett, and Bruno Latour, who argue for the "liveliness of things and the agency of nonhuman subjects" (2). Divided into four sections—"Reading Small Things," "Small Things in Time and Space," "Small Things at Hand," and "Small Things on the Move"—the seventeen essays show how small things could provoke questions about an individual's place within the vast span of geological, historical, or biblical time; how they could embody physical and metaphorical assemblages that held personal and cultural meaning; and how their small size could enable an intimate sensory experience while also acting as a barrier to full tactile engagement. Throughout the collection, "smallness" is presented as both a material reality and a conceptual framework.

   Some of the most persuasive essays in *Small Thing*s grapple with the tensions between physically small objects and vast conceptual ideas. Kate Smith examines a series of teapots produced in Staffordshire in the late 1750s and 1760s that were decorated with crinoidal limestone, which features the fossilized remains of marine crinoids. Smith argues that it was precisely the juxtaposition of scales that gave these objects their meaning. The fossils invoked permanence or "a temporal span far beyond the human," but the physical object was designed for the human body (108). The contrasting physical and conceptual scales and

temporalities ultimately affirmed human mortality by placing it within a longer geological timeline. Abigail Williams's essay on miniature books similarly explores the "work" of contrasting scales. Though these tiny tomes promised "totality made accessible through compression" (15), their physical constraints meant that no miniature book could contain the whole world, or even the whole original text. Williams shows how for religious books this worked to their advantage, as the tension of miniaturization—of perceived accessibility of religious understanding and physical inaccessibility—made these books "perfectly emblematic of the bigger Christian journey" (28). Other essays of interest to scholars concerned with the tensions between the material and the conceptual are Gowrley's study of "Joineriana," which explores the relationship between small fragments like bits of broken glass and a larger object comprising these bit and pieces (109–24), and Cynthia Wall's examination of the effects of small punctuation changes on how Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) was viewed and understood (47–63).

As Chloe Wigston Smith and Beth Fowkes Tobin note in the introduction, one of the threads running though the collection is the close attention many of the authors pay to "the rich interaction between scale and the body" (2). These essays suggest that an object's size offered a level of intimacy and knowledge that was possible precisely because of the object's diminutive size. Wigston Smith's chapter, in which she uses testimony from London's Old Bailey court to set up her analysis of material knowledge, is a good example of this throughline. She argues that the claims of ownership made in the testimonies were possible because the owners had an "intimate relationship built on repeated handling and viewing over time" (64). While their small size made objects movable and thus easier to steal, their diminutive scale enabled a level of intimacy and careful looking that provided knowledge of the even smaller nicks and mends that could facilitate their identification and return.

Other highlights from the collection include Serena Dyer's study of small, often ephemeral patriotic objects such as fans, and Anna McKay's chapter on small things made by convicts and prisoners of war. Dyer shows how accessories were ideal for patriotic fads because their size made them easily portable, and their ephemerality meant they could be easily discarded when the political winds changed (240–56). Offering a detailed comparison of the objects created by French POWs and English convicts, McKay shows the ingenuity of these men in their use of found materials and argues persuasively that "convict-made objects ... give us a greater sense of the individual" (157). Dyer's and McKay's

chapters are standouts in the collection that move beyond cataloging and description to engage with histories of the senses, the body, emotions, deep time, and knowledge. Further, they are representative of contributions that not only take seriously questions of scale, but also question scale itself. These essays have value beyond the study of small things, for while the authors argue that smallness is a crucial element of *these* objects, their careful thinking may be helpful to scholars interested in a range of scales, from the minute to the massive. Ultimately, this collection skilfully proves that scale is a primary factor in object agency.

The diversity of disciplines, approaches, and material objects brought together for this volume means that even scholars well versed in the literary and material culture of eighteenth-century Europe will find much that is new and exciting. While vast in the scope of objects covered, by focusing primarily on Europe this collection implicitly raises a challenge: what could we learn about relationships between scale and material culture if we looked beyond Europe? As Robbie Richardson's contribution on wampum, Romita Ray's exploration of tea-boxes, and Tita Chico's exceptionally thought-provoking essay on Robert Hooke's squirming ant illustrate, small things "contain the potential to reveal vast scales of geography and their networks of exploitation" (226). Looking beyond Europe could expand our understanding of small things and offer new perspectives on scale by positioning Europe as the periphery—a "small thing"—and the Caribbean and Africa, for instance, as the center. Overall, *Small Things* is a reminder that diminutive objects can tell stories far larger than their size may initially suggest.

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Making the Marvelous: Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, Henriette-Julie de Murat, and the Literary Representation of the Decorative Arts
by Rori Bloom
University of Nebraska Press, 2022. 250pp. $65. ISBN 978-1496222671.
Review by Allison Stedman, University of North Carolina-Charlotte,
Charlotte, North Carolina, United States

Since the publication of Raymonde Robert's *Le Conte de fées littéraire en France* in 1982, fairy-tale specialists have tended to rely on two constants when approaching the large corpus of fairy tales produced by French women writers around the turn of the eighteenth century. The first is that these authors, as women from similar generations and social statuses, in turn had likeminded literary preoccupations and ideologies, resulting in the creation of analogous stock characters, narrative styles, images, and themes. The second is that they collectively sought to challenge the fairy-tale aesthetic of one important male rival: Charles Perrault, a French Academy member who was renowned for the moral clarity and narrative brevity of the tales he composed during the same time period. In considering two of the genre's most well-known *conteuses* in isolation, Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy (1652–1705) and Henriette-Julie de Murat (1670–1716), and in examining their works in relation to the decorative arts instead of in relation to Perrault, Rori Bloom's *Making the Marvelous* imparts a highly original premise that yields compelling and unexpected results. Not only does this study shed new light on the late seventeenth-century fairy-tale movement by presenting an alternative theoretical framework for understanding how the descriptive style functions in the works of two of the genre's most important practitioners, it also exposes the complex ideological stakes of ornamental writing, both in general and in the particular sociohistorical context of late seventeenth-century France.

As Naomi Schor, Gérard Genette, Philippe Hamon, and others have observed, the descriptive is not a narrative mode that has been historically valued by the literary establishment, owing to the perceived potential of such writing to cause boredom, to delay reader gratification, or to monopolize vulnerable imaginations with frivolous ideas. However, as Bloom points out, the ideological stakes of engaging in descriptive writing were arguably even higher in the seventeenth century because such writing was officially decried by Boileau (Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, 1636–1711) and other members of the French Academy who labelled description as a "textual excess," urging instead a return to the concision and linearity associated with the classical literary values so prized by the absolute monarchy. In incorporating lengthy descriptions of castles,

gardens, furniture, clothing, accessories, and other decorative objects into their fairy tales, d'Aulnoy and Murat thus resisted Louis XIV's cultural hegemony on the most basic level of form. But, as the study reveals, the subversive potential of the descriptive mode goes even further than what scholars today might see as an extension of the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns. In destabilizing the classical hierarchy that privileges narration over description—abandoning grand plots in order to marvel over minutiae—d'Aulnoy and Murat in fact created texts so heavy on description that they propose a new way of experiencing literature in general: "[apprehending] a text not as a temporal narrative but rather an ingenious object to be valued for its intrinsic beauty in a space apart from the story" (19). As such, d'Aulnoy and Murat can be said to have experimented with the aesthetic possibilities of descriptive writing to such a degree that their works transcend narrative altogether, becoming decorative objects in and of themselves.

If fairy tales can be considered decorative objects, then paying critical attention to the way in which artistic creations are described within them would appear to be the order of the day. Accordingly, the first three chapters of *Making the Marvelous* take up this angle of analysis. Chapter 1 focuses on descriptions of interior and exterior décor. Chapter 2 gives pride of place to descriptions of portraits, and chapter 3 hones in on descriptions of toys, clothing, accessories, and games. The value in these analyses lies in Bloom's exploration of how d'Aulnoy's and Murat's narrative techniques both resemble and diverge from one another when it comes to using description to critique absolutist sociopolitical policy. In chapter 1, the authors are on the same page, as both describe architecture, furniture, and landscape in a manner that reverses the artistic agency characteristic of contemporary panegyrics about the marvels of Louis XIV's court at Versailles. These panegyrics portrayed Louis XIV as a kind of magician king, responsible for everything from the sumptuous interior décor to the sprawling gardens to the lavish entertainment, making no mention of the artists and craftspeople who laboured behind the scenes. Like the panegyrists who were commissioned to memorialize the spaces and activities of the royal court, both d'Aulnoy and Murat indulge in lengthy descriptions of fairy courts whose palaces, gardens, and festivities resemble those of Versailles and which are associated with supernatural provenance. However, in the descriptions of fairyland, the focus shifts from the beauty of the finished product to the ingenuity of the architects, artists, artisans, and designers whose vision and creativity made the marvels possible. In encouraging the reader to admire the skill that transforms raw materials into beautiful works of art, as opposed to the patron whose wealth provided the raw materials, d'Aulnoy and

Murat transform admiration for the king into admiration for artists and artisans of every type, including those who create meticulously detailed fairy tales.

In chapters 2 and 3, Bloom's analysis makes the disparities between d'Aulnoy and Murat become more apparent, revealing how their descriptions of the same types of objects critique Louis XIV's technologies of power from different angles. While d'Aulnoy's descriptions of portraits appear to problematize the monarchically sanctioned practice of arranged marriages, Murat's meditations involve the potential dangers of allowing representations to act as substitutes for reality, an ideological inquiry that ultimately calls into question the culture of spectacle surrounding the king and his court. In chapter 3, the lavish descriptions of clothing, jewelry, accessories, and makeup included by both authors are shown to counter contemporary critiques of fashion as an exercise in frivolity, elevating it instead to a high art form practised by skilled and cultivated women (and men) who are, again, not unlike those who create fairy tales. However, the authors take up different positions with respect to objects associated with play. In d'Aulnoy's tales, attention to trinkets and toys enjoin the reader to admire the craft of the toymaker as much as that of the storyteller, while for Murat descriptions of play call into question one of Louis XIV's most effective strategies for bankrupting the upper nobility: gambling. The study concludes with two additional chapters, one devoted exclusively to d'Aulnoy and one to Murat. These chapters examine how the descriptive mode serves similar ideological ends in genres where the supernatural is either absent or called into question: d'Aulnoy's 1691 travel narrative *Relation du Voyage d'Espagne* and Murat's novels *Voyage de campagne* (1699) and *Les Lutins du château de Kernosy* (1710).

Late seventeenth-century French fairy tales have long been acknowledged for their value as chronicles of material culture during a time period when France was an apex for the decorative arts due to the production of luxurious, manufactured goods under the direction of Louis XIV's finance minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert. As this study reveals, however, the lavish descriptions contained in d'Aulnoy's and Murat's fairy tales did more than simply reflect the opulent lives of the wealthy and high-ranking. In transforming the narratives that contain these descriptions into decorative objects in their own right and in modelling appreciation for innovation and creativity over power and wealth, d'Aulnoy and Murat sought to actively engage in the ideological debates of their time, offering alternative visions for the relationship between technology and magic, word and image, and art and power. This book is a must-read for fairy-tale scholars, literary

historians, art historians, and anyone interested in learning more about the intersections of literature and the decorative arts at the dawn of the French Enlightenment.

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Techno-Magism: Media, Mediation, and the Cut of Romanticism
by Orrin N.C. Wang
Fordham University Press, 2022. 234pp. $32. ISBN 978-0823298488.
<div align="right">Review by Lindsey Eckert, Florida State University,
Tallahassee, Florida, United States</div>

This book demands as much from its readers as it offers them in return. While the deconstructionist threads of Orrin N.C. Wang's work might be less initially attractive to more traditional, historicist-focused scholars, it is perhaps this very audience of readers who will benefit most from his innovative approach. *Techno-Magism* pushes further both the exciting theoretical trajectory of recent book historical work and ongoing attempts to explore confluences between the Romantic era and today.

As a hotbed of media transition from the hand-press period to the burgeoning industrialization of the machine-press period, the Romantic era has been fruitful ground for comparisons with our own media moment, situated, much like the Romantic era, in a time of rapid technological innovation. Wang interrogates the idea "that before the end of the nineteenth century, which means until Romanticism, there was the book and thus book history; and then starting with the late nineteenth century, after Romanticism, advanced forms of media technology explode and media studies begins" (2). Wang invites us to consider how Romanticism "anticipat[es] and perhaps even ground[s] the concerns of contemporary media theory" (5).

Techno-Magism, then, speaks to "the burgeoning critical moment to think earlier cultural practices in and before the eighteenth century through media theory" (2n2). Influenced by earlier works such as Celeste Langan and Maureen N. McLane's "The Medium of Romantic Poetry," in *The Cambridge Companion to British Romantic Poetry* (2008), and Andrew Burkett's *Romantic Mediations: Media Theory and British Romanticism* (2016), Wang's book joins vibrant, recent studies at the intersection of Romanticism and media studies such as Yohei Igarashi's *The Connected Condition: Romanticism and the Dream of Communication*

(2019), Mike Goode's *Romantic Capabilities: Blake, Scott, Austen, and the New Messages of Old Media* (2020), and J. Louise McCray's *Godwin and the Book: Imagining Media, 1783–1836* (2021). Together with these other monographs, *Techno-Magism* solidifies the importance of a media studies approach in Romantic studies, thereby galvanizing a field-wide trend that seeks to move beyond the traditional, historicist aspects of book history.

For Wang, this disciplinary shift from book history to media studies signals a theoretical one as well: "One can theorize the book, but whether by degree or kind, that is not quite the same as theorizing media" (4). Indeed, what makes *Techno-Magism* especially exciting is its theoretical approach to both Romanticism and media studies, which presents Romanticism, and in particular its preoccupation with mediation, as a trope that extends beyond the temporal boundaries of the period itself.

Wang's arguments about mediation were, for me, the most compelling element of the book. "To theorize media means theorizing what media does," Wang explains. "It means encountering the question of media as that which carries out the act of *mediation*, a nonlocal condition beyond the historical parameters of any one technical medium or object, a term that is unintelligible without either Romanticism's history or topos" (6). For instance, in chapter 7, this approach illuminates connections between William Wordsworth and twentieth-century land art. For Wang, Romantic literature's preoccupation with "mediating the past and future and mediating the mind and the world" appears in a variety of forms, and the book's eight chapters explore works by and adaptations of prominent Romantic figures, including Coleridge, Blake, Byron, Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley, and Austen (8). It will be exciting to see how others might adapt and adopt Wang's theories to Romantic writers further off the canon's beaten path.

Techno-Magism's deep engagement with media studies makes Wang's rejection of Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin's foundational work on remediation especially interesting. For Wang, remediation "assumes one historically stable medium whose readily identifiable practices and procedures then reappear (changed and constant) in another," which he believes clashes with his own focus on "figural volatility" (12). While Wang clearly states his opposition to the notion of remediation, I am curious how another foundational concept in media studies—that of hypermediacy—might coalesce with *Techno-Magism*. Hypermediacy, in Bolter and Grusin's explication, seems less fixed and stable than remediation. For them, hypermediacy offers "a heterogenous space, in which representation is conceived of not as a window on to the world, but rather as 'windowed' itself—with windows that open on to other

representations or media," which together foster a "hyperconscious recognition or acknowledgment of the medium" (Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* [MIT Press, 1999], 34, 38).

This concept seems especially relevant to the second chapter of *Techno-Magism*, "Two Pipers and the Cliché of Romanticism." Here Wang thoughtfully explores how William Blake's and John Keats's poetry meditate on medium so that "the question of piped sound might first appear to have been about medium specificity, but quickly became more about medium *reflexivity*, about how a medium as the act of mediation is mobilized to comment on the claims about the unalloyed character of what mediates" (68, emphasis in the original). Though the chapter points briefly to both Goode's recent work on "meta-mediacy" and Bolter and Grusin's earlier foundational work on hypermediacy, a detailed exploration of the concept of hypermediacy might enrich Wang's account. Relatedly, I wonder if the "acting week" in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814), which Wang analyzes in chapter 6, might be examined as a hypermedia event and, by extension, how hypermediacy might mix with *Techno-Magism*'s other three concepts: media, mediation, and what Wang calls "the cut." If one objective of *Techno-Magism* is to counter New Materialism's tendency to resist distinctions between subject and object, then it may be that hypermediacy embodies a type of preoccupation with what Wang describes as "a divide, break, or split" (9). From this view, hypermedia's heterogeneity anticipates and, indeed, tropes its own possible transition or *split* into other objects. In pointing to splits, divides, and windows that may not yet exist, the concept of hypermediacy seems to align with Wang's rich exploration of the "something out of nothing," which he sees as a tropic element of Romanticism (37).

Rather than suggest the relative absence of a concept like hypermediacy in Wang's work as a limitation, I instead see it as an invigorating invitation. Carrying Bolter and Grusin's metaphor of hypermediacy further, we can see *Techno-Magism* as an insightful, complex window itself—a window that opens outward, encouraging other scholarly representations at the intersection of Romanticism and media studies.

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The Limits of Familiarity: Authorship and Romantic Readers
by Lindsey Eckert
Bucknell University Press, 2022. 258pp. $34.95. ISBN 978-1684483907.

Review by Pam Perkins, University of Manitoba,
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In this fascinating analysis of Romantic-era readership and reading practices, Lindsey Eckert explores the complex meanings of "familiarity" and shows how attention to this concept can illuminate both the practice and the reception of writers including Charlotte Smith, William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, Caroline Lamb, and William Hazlitt. As Eckert demonstrates, the basic concept of familiarity was double-edged: while on the one hand, it might suggest a comfortable, easy sociability (especially within groups connected by relationship or class), on the other hand it could imply an inappropriate or misguided indifference to status and decorum. Likewise, a "familiar" literary style could be either warmly inviting or vulgarly off-putting. An author's creation of an affective bond with his or her audience through the illusion of familiar exchange could lead either to spectacular success—as in the case of Byron—or to critical and popular backlash, as with Smith, Lamb, Hazlitt, and Elizabeth Gunning, whose ultimately unsuccessful attempt to transform scandalous notoriety into a literary career opens and closes the study.

Eckert explores different aspects of familiarity in her analysis of individual authors. The discussion of Smith focuses on the attempt to convey powerful emotion through repetition, a technique that Eckert links to Wordsworth's famous declaration that "repetition and apparent tautology are often beauties of the highest kind" (47). The comparison is well developed, even though I think that Smith's inability to "transcend 'apparent tautology'" in the same way as Wordsworth might need to be explained by more than "gendered double standards" (50). As Eckert shows, when critics objected to the repetitiveness of Smith's work, they were complaining about what they saw as a monotonous expression of a single emotion—despair—across a large body of work, which is not quite the same as Wordsworth's verbal tautologies within a given poem. That said, bringing these two writers together offers an effective illustration of the book's central contention that building a readership through the creation of a sense of familiarity is a delicate task.

The contrast between a canonical male writer and a woman whose critical reputation has never been as well-established works even better in the chapters on Byron and Lamb, which are the heart of the book. In this case, the focus is on the appeal of imagined intimacy. Eckert makes very clear that public exposure of a version of the "private" self

could be a challenging business, even for the most successful of celebrity authors. She offers a shrewd reading of a selection of the fan mail sent to Byron, showing how the genre of the "familiar" letter erodes the social and literary distance between the author and his audience. The letters are startling in the speed with which they slide from the polite formulas used at the time to address a stranger, particularly one of higher rank, to the intimacy of an (imagined) friendship. Fans proclaim emotional kinship, request poetry composed specifically for themselves, and even offer assignations. (Although the young man who proclaims that he is "perhaps <u>romantically</u>" attached to Byron might well be using the word to mean something more like quixotically than lovingly attached [68].) The fans' sense of ownership of or intimacy with the writer points to the potentially radicalizing impact of familiarity and, as Eckert argues, explains the considerable disquiet with which some of the literary gatekeepers of the day greeted Byronmania.

Imagined familiarity was even more risky for women. Eckert's discussion of Caroline Lamb offers a compelling re-evaluation of her literary career, showing how the sort of celebrity that Bryon navigated only with difficulty nearly destroyed her. Even today, *Glenarvon* (1816) tends to be read more as an artefact of Regency celebrity culture than as a work of literature in its own right. At the time, it attracted all the wrong sort of attention, in part, as Eckert demonstrates, because Lamb was less in control of her own story than Byron had been of his. By 1816, she was already all too familiar to the reading public, and gossip left her "less room to flirt with ambiguous autobiographical details than Byron" (88). Even in her later and much less scandalous works Lamb struggled to escape the version of herself that had been circulated during her affair with Byron and which was reinforced rather than complicated by her attempt to harness that celebrity through the publication of *Glenarvon*.

This sense of the dangers and limitations of literary familiarity are explored more fully in the final chapters, one focusing on Hazlitt and the other—in a move from literary analysis and reception history to book history—on the brief vogue for the literary annual. Hazlitt is, in some ways, the odd man out is this study. Although some of his most famous essays grapple directly with the aesthetics of a familiar style, his quasi-novel *Liber Amoris* (1823) is a sledgehammer revelation of personal flaws and distasteful behaviour, one that is very different from the coy hints about the private life of the author in the works of Bryon or even of Lamb. Ironically, complete openness discourages familiarity: readers recoiled from Hazlitt's self-exposure. Likewise, the ersatz version of familiarity cultivated by the literary annuals, as they attempted to evoke in print

the sociability of the manuscript albums that had come into popularity a few decades before, points to the inevitable gap between mass market illusions of intimacy and genuine personal connection. Yet, as Eckert ably demonstrates throughout this book, the illusion that such a gap could be bridged or imagined away was fundamental to much of the writing of this era, and the tensions between "good" and "bad" familiarity illuminate how readers of the day engaged with literature. Nor is this simply a matter of historical interest: as Eckert makes clear in a few brief but deft allusions to current celebrity culture, the issues that she is exploring remain as important in the opening decades of the twenty-first century as they were two hundred years ago.

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American Fragments: The Political Aesthetic of Unfinished Forms in the Early Republic by Daniel Diez Couch
University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022. 288pp. $69.95. ISBN 978-0812253795.

Review by Wendy Lucas, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas, United States

In *American Fragments*, Daniel Diez Couch urges us to examine the role that the fragment played both for readers and writers between 1787 and 1813. Defying genre, Couch pulls from pamphlets, sermons, novels, political cartoons, poems, and essays to illustrate his point that "in our search to create logical narratives that provide a satisfying historical wholeness, we have often missed how these fragmentary elements offer an equally important framework of understanding, one that opens into aesthetic questions in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries" (206). In the infancy of the US republic, these literary fragments captured the potential and progress that seemed to stretch before it while also giving voice to people seldom included in the narrative, namely enslaved people, women, and the wounded soldier. Scholars of early America will find a host of familiar names, such as Thomas Paine, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Susanna Rowson, Lydia Maria Child, Washington Irving, and Mathew Carey. In pulling together authors from politicians to novelists, Couch makes it clear that scholars need to pay more attention to the role that fragments played in articulating the human experience in the early republic.

The book makes several important contributions. First, it asks us to take seriously an oft understudied literary convention: the incomplete

narrative, wherever it appears, including buried in complete novels. Couch argues that these snippets contain a layer of meaning that can be easily overlooked and that they were often used to call attention to groups of people who historians lament left little record of their own experiences. Couch encourages us to find the meaning in these intentional fragments much in the same way that Michel-Rolph Trouillot asked us to look for and find meaning in the intentional (and unintentional) silences in the creation of writing history (*Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 1995).

Historians will find meaning in the chapter on the role these texts played in the political discourse. Couch reminds us that these fragments resonated with readers during the chaotic and tentative atmosphere of the 1770s. In a period when the world seemed especially uncertain, these fragments fulfilled a "pressing need for the audience to take a side in the growing conflict and decide what to do next, yet the texts refrain from providing an easy answer for what will happen in the immediate future" (64). The contrast between fragments and wholeness was an ongoing theme in political discourse. Drawing on famous political cartoons that used images of fragmentation situates these in a larger conversation about wholeness, past civilizations, and societal collapse (31).

As Couch emphasizes, people too could be fragmented and ruined. Building on the work of Cathy Davidson, the chapter on seduction literature highlights the ways in which the ruined woman figured into this narrative. If the proper Republican Man and Woman were to be the pillars and binders of a whole society, then these rakes and fallen women could only be characterized as fragmented ruins. It seems natural that we would find the fragment so commonly used as a device in these novels. While adding this nuance to this genre, readers may struggle with some of the analysis in this chapter. Couch argues that to "be 'ruined' was not to be fully erased, and it certainly did not mean elimination from memory" (99). Couch invokes Edmund Burke to argue that ruined women served as "sublime inspiration" in that "anything that excited the ideas of 'pain' and 'danger,' or anything that operated like 'terror' was a 'source of the sublime'" (107). While he is correct that these novels were meant to be cautionary tales and instructive to young women, it is challenging to see violated, often dead bodies as sublime. Much like white women captives who had born Indian children, there was no redemption for them. Couch argues that the fact that the ruins of their lives were given often posthumous meaning is the source of this sublimity. However, had the women in these novels survived, they could never have retaken their former place in society. A Republican

Woman's virtue was at the center of her contribution to the new nation, and these cautionary tales had value but not the power of redemption.

Finally, Couch's emphasis on how authors such as Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne transformed the fragment "from a form used to represent the lower sort in a politically progressive way, to one that writers employed to convey a sense of authorship, and finally to its subtle integration within the style of a text" urges us to "rethink the careers of American authors and the formation of American literature" (205). Early American historians lament the fragment—the torn pages, the illegible script, the references to letters that do not survive. Couch offers a new way to approach these primary sources, through the lens of the fragment. While we have often done the best that we could to make use of these remnants to recreate a narrative of the past, Couch's work reminds us that there is meaning in the partial, intentionally incomplete silences of these fragments. Early American scholars will find this well-written analysis a thought-provoking addition to our understanding of this tumultuous and transitional period.

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Colonies, traite et esclavage des Noirs dans la presse à la veille de la Révolution 1ᵉʳ janvier 1788-16 juin 1789, par Carminella Biondi
L'Harmattan, 2022, 3 tomes.
Tome I COLONIES. 304p. €35. ISBN : 978-2-343-25682-5.
Tome II COLONIES, TRAITE ET ESCLAVAGE DES NOIRS. 344p. €34. ISBN : 978-2-343-25683-2.
Tome III REPERTOIRE. 320p. €32. ISBN : 978-2-343-25684-9.

Compte rendu par Lise Andries, CNRS-Université de Paris-Sorbonne, Paris, France

Carminella Biondi, qui est professeur émérite à l'université de Bologne, a consacré de nombreuses publications à la question de l'esclavage des Noirs au XVIIIᵉ siècle. Comme elle le dit dans la présentation de cet ouvrage en trois volumes, elle a voulu « par ce travail humble » fournir aux chercheurs une documentation précieuse sur les nombreux débats relayés par la presse de langue française et concernant les colonies, à la veille de la Révolution. Les deux premiers volumes sont des anthologies thématiques et le troisième recense la liste impressionnante des journaux ayant servi à cette étude. Ce dernier comporte également un index des noms de personnes et de lieux.

Biondi rappelle que l'indépendance des colonies américaines a joué un rôle important dans le débat sur le statut des colonies. Il faut d'ailleurs constater que le sujet est beaucoup plus d'actualité en Angleterre qu'en France, qu'il s'agisse des débats au Parlement ou dans la presse. En France, en 1788–89, les colonies ne suscitent pas l'attention du gouvernement et de la Cour, sauf lorsqu'elles sont rentables: ainsi la Louisiane et le Canada ont-ils été négligés au profit des « îles à sucre ». Comme les nouvelles concernant les colonies viennent surtout d'Angleterre, il n'est pas étonnant que l'*Analyse des papiers anglais* figure en bonne place dans cette anthologie. Le journal, fondé par Mirabeau, a pour principal rédacteur Brissot de Warville, l'un des fondateurs de la Société des Amis des Noirs, inspirée de la « Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade », créée à Londres un an plus tôt. Il est particulièrement attentif à l'actualité anglaise et rend largement compte, par exemple, des procès intentés à Warren Hastings, le premier gouverneur général des Indes, accusé de malversations et de despotisme (voir le beau discours d'Edward Burke à la Chambre des Communes). Biondi rappelle à ce propos combien les liens sont étroits en Europe entre le commerce des Indes orientales et celui des Indes occidentales, en particulier par le biais de la traite des esclaves. D'autres journaux francophones sont présents dans cette anthologie: le *Journal politique ou gazette des gazettes*, le *Courrier de l'Europe, gazette anglo-française* qui

relate les plus importantes séances parlementaires anglaises, la *Gazette de Leyde* centrée sur les nouvelles venant principalement de Londres et de Paris. On trouve aussi quelques échos de la vie littéraire. L'*Analyse des papiers anglai*s publie dans le numéro du 7–11 mars 1788 un large extrait d'un *Voyage à l'Île de France* dans lequel Bernardin de Saint-Pierre condamne l'esclavage. Quant au *Mercure de France*, il consacre dans son numéro du 11 octobre 1788 une excellente critique à *Paul et Virginie*, paru la même année.

L'ensemble de ce travail me semble donc très utile. Il complète et éclaire les ouvrages de Marcel Dorigny et de Bernard Gainot, et constitue un excellent instrument de recherche pour tous ceux qui s'intéressent à la question de l'esclavage au XVIIIᵉ siècle, aux colonies et plus largement à la politique internationale de l'Europe à la veille de la Révolution française.

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Great Books by German Women in the Age of Emotion, 1770–1820
by Margaretmary Daley
Boydell & Brewer, 2022. 310pp. £99. ISBN 978-1640140974.
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The debate over the English canon during the past three decades has been productive, particularly with regard to recognizing the contributions of women authors. In the US, the culture wars seemed to fuel both sides of the debate. However, in the field of German literary studies, national identity informed the category of "great literature," as noted by Jeffrey L. Sammons in "The Land Where the Canon B(l)ooms: Observations on the German Canon and Its Opponents, There and Here" (in *Canon vs. Culture: Reflections on the Current Debate*, ed. Jan Gorak [Routledge, 2001], 118). After Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's death in 1832, education became synonymous with German Classicism, even if many modern German-speaking readers have never read Goethe's *Faust* (1808/1832). Goethe and Friedrich Schiller loom especially large for North Americans and other foreigners working on German literature. After all, the company that teaches and promotes German language and culture abroad is called the *Goethe* Institute.

Great Books by German Women in the Age of Emotion, 1770–1820 usefully intervenes in the canon debate by analyzing epistolary novels written by German women authors. The monograph assumes that

many novels by women have been dismissed by a "gender bias" that relegates women's writing to "the old category of the *Trivialroman* (light, trashy novels) and the bildungsroman" (3). The first chapter examines the most famous of these novels: Sophie von La Roche's well-known Bildungsroman *The History of Lady Sophia Sternheim* (Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim, 1771–72). Other novels in this study might be less familiar to Daley's English-speaking readers: Caroline von Wolzogen's *Agnes von Lilien* (1796); Friederike Unger's novels *Julchen Grünthal: A Boarding School Story* (Julchen Grünthal: Eine Pensionsgeschichte, 1784 and 1798), *Albert and Albertine* (Albert und Albertine, 1804), and *Confessions of a Beautiful Soul* (Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele, 1806); Caroline Fischer's *Honeymoon* (Honigmonathe, 1802); Sophie Mereau's *The Vernal Age of Sensibility* (Das Blütenhalter der Empfindung, 1794); and Caroline Pichler's *The Dignity of Women* (Frauenwürde, 1818). Many of these texts were published anonymously. Olms Press has since published many digital reprints (1–2).

Despite its German focus, *Great Books by German Women* is written with an English audience in mind. Translations follow every reference in German, even in footnotes. The introductory chapter provides English readers with a summary of German women's literature around 1800. The author thoughtfully provides two appendices about these novels, one reviewing the novels' plots and the other summarizing novelists' biographies. Readers might consider beginning the book by reading these appendices.

The authors' lives make for fascinating reading, and these biographies would be especially helpful for scholars working on German women writers in the long eighteenth century. During her marriage, Sophie Mereau engaged in romantic liaisons; she divorced and married the writer Clemens Brentano (the grandson of writer Sophie von La Roche). Schiller's sister-in-law Caroline von Wolzogen divorced and participated in a ménage à trois (252). The Austrian-born Caroline Pichler, whose memoir was published posthumously, wrote even more than La Roche. Little biographical information exists about Fischer, who was married to a Danish pastor (228). Daley argues for including authors with less exceptional lives like Friederike Unger "in a revised canon of literary great novels" (252). It would help readers if the plot synopses had been labelled with authors' names and were appended to each chapter or prefaced them.

Great Books by German Women begins with an intriguing suggestion: to use the phrase "Age of Emotion" to replace "Age of Goethe" or the awkward-sounding "around 1800" (3). A novel's ability to illustrate "the impact of emotion on the development of a young German woman" makes it "great" (64). Presumably, Daley means fictional German

women's emotions and German women readers around 1800. She admits that "Unger satirizes Jews and feminists in a way that should make contemporary readers uncomfortable" (65). However, Daley's concept of these novels' emotional impact seems tied to a modern notion of female subjectivity and agency. For example, the author interprets Fischer's *Honeymoon* as central to the history of women's novels "because it contests the expected journey throughout the female life course and replaces the simplistic notion of woman as a mere appendage to man with an idealized, quasi-sublime union of self and other, where the two form a heterosexual pair" (163). In the end, Daley's book seems more concerned about examining gender roles in women's novels than making a case for "the Age of Emotion." The book only gives cursory attention to the rich subject of sensibility.

The term "Age of Emotion" seems to suggest a preference for the style of women's writing. The conclusion notes that women novelists tend to narrate "through a voice of pathos" rather than irony (198). This approach likely stems from the author's aim to build on Deidre Shauna Lynch's suggestion in *Loving Literature: A Cultural History* (2015) to "read literature critically, yet with love" (Daley, 8). The implied argument here is that literary criticism indicates love. According to Daley, a book's ability "to withstand the scrutiny of repeated and rigorous critical interpretation" can make it great (109). Other greatness criteria include narrative techniques and the combination of "ironic discourse and metanarrative" (64). Samuel Richardson's epistolary novel *Clarissa* (1748) serves as a point of comparison, particularly for Wolzogen's *Agnes von Lilien* (116), even though Richardson's novel does not fall within the Age of Emotion (1770–1820). The conclusion explains that Richardson's epistolary novel "achieves world literature greatness" through its canonization, and that Richardson's style of writing "is akin to women's writing" (202), indicating that the canon can accommodate such material. Ultimately, in its own words, *Great Books by German Women* does not aim to make "radical change" to our understanding of literary tradition, but rather proposes the "moderate change" of bestowing canonical status on certain overlooked women authors who have "earned their literary laurels" (205).

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