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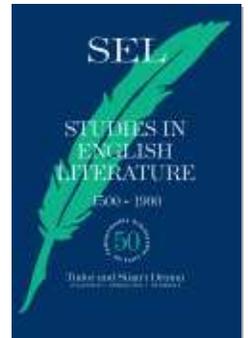
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Recent Studies in the Restoration and Eighteenth Century Books Received

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Recent Studies in the Restoration and Eighteenth Century

JONATHAN KRAMNICK

Sometimes I wonder what it is that we do. Like every *SEL* reviewer before me, I have been impressed by the sheer range and diversity of books that have arrived in the mail. The studies I read for this review reached from book history to cognitive science, material culture to verse satire, single author studies to chunks of literary history, diaries of wig makers to the letters of Laurence Sterne. Ours is a moment of eclectic heterogeneity. Nevertheless eclecticism is not exactly my concern, although perhaps it comes at it from an angle. I am curious about what we *do*. What grounds eighteenth-century literary study as an intellectual practice? At their best, the books I read were learned, instructive, surprising, and innovative. As I read them, I grew increasingly curious about how the critics oriented themselves to written artifacts, moved their arguments from one point to the next, and presented their ideas in relation to others in the vicinity. In short, I became interested in how the field presented its own rationale. What counts as a contribution to the field? How do critics imagine the field to which they are contributing? In recent years, the dominant answers have made reference to what we have learned to call historicism: an interest in the “archive,” in detail and chronology, combined with a wariness of anachronism, conceptual speculation, and literariness alike. The closer I looked, however, the more I began to think that historicism had perhaps run its course. Not only did it fail to provide a rationale for what we do, as opposed to what others do, but also some of

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the most innovative work seemed in several ways to be thinking against the historicist grain.

To set this diagnosis in a proper light, let me ask again, what is it that we do? I cannot imagine one could ever have come up with a single answer, or not without telling some folks to stop what they are up to, and I would not advise that, or not exactly. But there are signs that literary study is at a kind of crossroads and perhaps some taking stock of how we make and evaluate arguments would be in order. Consider for example the shrinking appeal we seem to have to the major university presses. Every one of them is cutting back. The studies I read were likely under some sort of contract before the economic meltdown of 2008–09, and yet the situation was already quite bleak. The result: no books from Chicago, Cornell, Columbia, Harvard, Penn, or Yale; only one apiece from Princeton and Oxford; two from Hopkins and Stanford; three from Cambridge. Compare these numbers to years past. The drop-off is staggering.¹ To be sure, academic time is glacial, and panics tend to be a recurrent feature of our life. Even so, the news is certain to get worse before it gets better. At the very least, we should be caring for the assistant professors looking to publish their manuscripts. While the willingness of presses to toss the dice on junior faculty appears to have diminished, the requirements for tenure have not. With more urgency, however, we should care for our broader appeal. By all accounts, the decline in interest is not just an economic problem. How exciting and novel is work in literary studies to editors of presses or to undergraduates considering a future in the humanities? In this year's *SEL* review of work in the English Renaissance, Gordon Teskey complains that "a deadly conservatism has taken hold" (p. 205). I think this overstates the case, but I understand what he means. So when I ask, what is it that we do, I mean what is it that we do that others don't do or that students, editors, and readers find gripping, or that makes us happy in our field of study?

The following pages take the usual *SEL* form; they group books under thematic headings while taking notice both of emergent concerns and evolving patterns within perennial topics. I pay particular attention, however, to the method, style, and personality of the critical mind at work. That is the only way I can see into answering my question.

FICTIONS OF THE MIND

The title for this section comes from the early pages of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651), at the point where the philosopher

attempts to figure out how a physical world could have a place for seemingly elusive things like thoughts, ideas, and impressions, especially of objects and events not directly before us. Imagination presents us with “fictions of the mind” because somehow the mind is able to re-create absent things and put them in places where they weren’t before. Since the world is made only of matter, Hobbes is a little puzzled how this might be so. The phrase reappears about fifteen years later in Margaret Cavendish’s genre-bending *Blazing World*, where the narrator states at the outset that the rational parts of matter also give rise to states of fancy along with more humdrum searches after truth. Like Hobbes, Cavendish wonders how matter can find a place for fictions and fancy, for things that are not currently at hand, or that may never have happened. And she does so in the preface to what is and is not what we now call a novel.

I have dipped back into the start of the (very) long eighteenth century because it helps to set a confluence of concerns that have in some sense always been with us but that also get an interesting turn in this year’s collection of books: fiction, materialism, philosophy, and, finally, psychology. We are for good reason continually preoccupied by how our period gave rise to a new kind of fiction, and we have for a long time thought hard about how this fiction was related to a new kind of philosophy and how both were interested in self or subjectivity or the person. So much has come to define how we understand our period to be modern. The novel presents in both content and form a new way of understanding the self in relation to others, the mind in relation to objects, and art in relation to a public. I am going to feature three books in this section that come at this cluster from quite different angles and that offer distinct, and in some ways opposed, perspectives to the long-standing concerns it raises. I begin with Sandra Macpherson’s sinuous and intensely argued *Harm’s Way: Tragic Responsibility and the Novel Form*, turn next to Blakey Vermeule’s wide-ranging and jaunty *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters?*, and wind up at the end with Julie Park’s *The Self and It: Novel Objects in Eighteenth-Century England*. Each has a different story to tell about fiction, mind, and matter. Macpherson’s antipsychological formalism homes in on the “centrality of accident and injury to the realist novel” (p. 4) while Vermeule’s antiformal cognitivism describes how novels engage our evolved interest in the mental lives of other people. The one turns away from interiority, the other shows us how strange interiority really is. Park in some ways stands between both. She thinks hard about both the period’s interest in the mental lives

of literary characters and its proliferation of mechanical instruments, simulated models, and personlike ephemera. She argues that the two are closer together than we might have otherwise assumed.

Harm's Way examines the importance of laws of "strict liability" for the novel, joining case law, jurisprudence, and legal reasoning to works by Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson, and Frances Sheridan. This is to describe the book by a threadbare minimum, however, as Macpherson bears down intensely on several hard-won and difficult abstractions, including cause, intention, and meaning. To the degree to which we are accustomed to thinking through our most important literary-theoretical categories via a history of the novel, *Harm's Way* is a must read. Case by case, novel by novel, Macpherson weaves the sort of reasoning that would assign blame for one or another deplorable act to the forms of narration that would connect one event in a story to another. Novels assign responsibility by joining characters to actions, often despite what these characters claim to think about what they have done. The law decides blame and, like literature, does so by putting actions into a kind of form. The type of law that Macpherson chooses to examine is in this respect quite significant. Her study begins by distinguishing itself from the traditional concern with marriage laws and other forms of contract. Our emphasis on this kind of law has come hand in hand with a certain version of literary history. Both would say that the private lives of individuals precede and accommodate themselves to external forms such as the state or the conjugal unit. Macpherson says—and I applaud her for saying so—that this story about modern interiority and the novel gets it all wrong. Thinking hard about criminal and civil *liability* means "abandoning the axis of modernity, interiority, and companionate affiliation along with the premise upholding this obdurate alliance: the premise at once historical and conceptual, that modernity moves from status to contract" (p. 4). What Macpherson aims to show therefore is the endurance of status in a wholly new regard. Although laws of strict liability and the novels that circulate in their midst decide who is blameworthy or culpable, they do not do so by attending to mental states. Rather, they do so by constructing narratives that place agents in some sort of quasi-causal relation to harm, harm they may or may not have intended or may or may not have realized they were involved in. The result is a kind of formalism and also a kind of behaviorism, each aiming for a "detachment of blameworthiness from intentionality" (p. 12). Macpherson

executes this desert landscape with great artistry. “Abandoning the claims of the person” means looking closely at the narrative and legal forms that situate one person in relation to another (p. 16). Persons believe, think, desire, and above all have intentions. Forms do none of these things. Forms are indifferent to everything but relation and cause.

Like Hobbes and Cavendish, Macpherson conceives of the person as “matter in motion” (pp. 15, 40). Unlike them, she is not concerned with states of mind, even though she is interested in harm, blame, and responsibility. I want to underscore what a strange, fascinating, and counterintuitive move this is. Consider this. I am writing the lines on this page with the intention of having something to say about *Harm’s Way*. At the same time, it is my intention to visit my grandmother late in the summer. These are two uses of the word “intention,” both clearly in some sense correct, yet each pointing in a different direction. The one describes an ongoing action, an intention “with which” my writing is done. The other describes some future set of actions, an intention “to do” something in August. Intentions “with which” something is done and intentions “to do” some future thing are both states of mind. One is carried along with the actions at hand; the other shapes actions not yet done (and thus subject to being thwarted or forgotten). Novels and laws would seem to be very interested in parsing the distinction between the two: Did Clarissa move her feet with the intention to run off with Lovelace or avoid harm to her family? Did Roxana intend to kill Susan or did the plan belong wholly to Amy? Where was the intention with which these actions were done in conflict with intentions to do something else? Macpherson argues that (strict) liability and (some) eighteenth-century novels think that these sorts of questions are irrelevant. This is a tough argument to make and watching it unfold is a lot of fun.

Each chapter pairs a legal innovation with a single author: Defoe with laws making masters liable for servants, even in cases of murder; Richardson with felony liability for effects well beyond what anyone could have intended or anticipated; Fielding as the rule-proving exception who responds against the formalism and externalism of the new strict liability; Sheridan with “deodand” or liability for nonhuman things. Each shows the mind of the critic hard at work. Each follows its premises—and those of the legal and narrative forms at hand—to their logical and often surprising ends. The chapter on Defoe, for example, asks why Roxana is responsible for a murder she never intended nor had any knowledge of, and points to the innovations in the law of agency that

make masters responsible for the actions of their servants when such actions can be shown to serve the master's interest. The analysis is an example in miniature of the book's way of thinking. As she attends to the arc and argument of her laws and novels, Macpherson shifts questions of responsibility from psychology to form: Roxana's claim that she has occasioned the murder "asks us to think of responsibility as something that can be disseminated across bodies, space and time. It asks us to think of responsible persons as causes rather than agents. And it asks us to think of causality in terms of remoteness rather than proximity" (p. 57). So we are not to assign the responsibility to some sort of conscious intention that presides over the action. In its best moments, this reading is in dialogue with Terry Castle's classic essay on the novel's Gothic doublings. For Castle, the doublings amount to a careful evasion of a responsibility located in agents, while for Macpherson they register how "responsibility is profoundly accidental" (p. 57). "Criticism is about taking sides," Teskey argued in the review I quoted earlier, "but not without forgetting that there is another side, which we should be thankful for because it makes us better for the contest" (p. 244). To read Castle's sentences next to Macpherson's is to see critical conversation of the highest order. We are reminded of what is best about what we do and what is best in the history of our field. Surely we all would like to see more of this.

Macpherson understands responsibility to be managed by form. Narratives put agents in relation to outcomes they never considered by stretching causation across a network of "bodies, space, and time." In the *Clarissa* chapter, this network goes by the name of plot (both Lovelace's and the novel's). Clarissa comes to accept responsibility for at least some of what has befallen her because she sees her place in the composite order of things, in a plot that has made her intentions "irrelevant" as Macpherson would say. And where is the place for mental states in this austere and majestic terrain? It is Richardson's achievement, Macpherson writes, to "have moved beyond" the tying of "questions of responsibility and personhood to practices of interiority" (p. 84). We witness this achievement when Clarissa comes to "own" accidents she did not cause (p. 95). We should therefore "confront what it means for Clarissa—and for *Clarissa*—to be tragic" (p. 96). Reading this sentence, I think I sense something of the mental within the strenuously formal carapace Macpherson erects. Meaning is no less a mental term than intention; thus when Clarissa comes to own the responsibility, the responsibility

comes to have meaning *for* her, just as *Clarissa* has meaning *for* Richardson and his readers, including us. (I confess I cannot get meaning to have meaning without a preposition.) The world may only be matter in motion, as Hobbes and Cavendish say, and yet sometimes matter has thoughts, and sometimes those thoughts are about things: QED, meanings are in some sense separate from the objects and events that have them. I would guess that eighteenth-century novelists and philosophers and legal theorists understood this too.

Or so Vermeule might argue. Vermeule's *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters?* would bring back to life the very ghost Macpherson exorcises. Where the one sees intention as irrelevant and interiority as overstated, the other sees intention and interiors as the order of the day, although in so doing as much odder and more elusive phenomena than we might ever have guessed. Along with Lisa Zunshine and G. Gabrielle Starr, Vermeule is a major voice in the effort to bring the insights of cognitive science (especially evolutionary psychology) to bear on topics in eighteenth-century literary studies. Her new book looks closely at our interest in the mental lives of literary characters: the attention we pay to minds on the page, the use writers make of our capacities to attribute mental states to self and others, the ordinary social intelligence characters exhibit, strain, or put in contest. The question contained in Vermeule's title is elaborated, restated, nuanced, and massaged over ten chapters of varying length. Each takes us from very recent work in the science of mind, back to eighteenth-century writing, and then forward again into the contemporary literary scene. The style is jocular, pleasant, amusing, and droll. At the end of the book, Vermeule describes her method as "palpitational"—an attempt to "hew closely to the phenomenological feeling of mind reading in the texts [she has] chosen and in the imagined worlds of their authors" (p. 249). And this seems just right. One gets the sense throughout of a writer pulling down books from her shelf and guiding you through the bits that seem most arresting.

I emphasize the lightness of Vermeule's touch not just because it makes for a pleasant read (although it does), but also because Vermeule is so committed to pursuing her question wherever it may take her. She does not settle. As with Macpherson, therefore, we arrive at a new and exciting take on the familiar terrain of the eighteenth-century novel. We get there through a subtle and pervasive rephrasing of the question. Vermeule does not ask, what *are* literary characters (an ontological question) or how does

literary characterization *work* (a narratological question). Rather, she asks a psychological question: Why do we care about literary characters? “To care means to be anxious and to exert mental energy” (p. 12). “It means expending charity, even passion. These are not easy states to conjure. What, then, tempts us to spend mental energy on people we have never meet and never will meet, on people whom we know to be fictional?” (p. 12). Caring for literary characters tasks our emotional and cognitive reserves, so like the classic case of altruism it poses a hard problem. It makes no sense. So why do we do it? Vermeule’s quick answer is gossip. We care about literary characters for the same reason that we care about real people, especially real people with whom we are not intimate. We want to know “who and who’s together” as John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester’s Aretimiza wrote to her friend Chloe. From this simple insight, Vermeule launches her variegated study. We cannot answer the “why do we care about literary characters” question without first answering the “why do we care about people we don’t know” question, and to answer *that* question we need to look hard at three things: the research done by scholars in cognitive psychology; the historical context for reasoning about other minds in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (when literary characters took on a profoundly new shape); and the devices used by writers of literary fiction to evoke, slake, and challenge our dispositions to care about other people. Behind all three lies a sense that we experience the world in psychological rather than formal terms. Vermeule’s approach in this respect presents a neat obverse to Macpherson’s: “The concept of person, basic and irreducible, gives rise to the idea of mental life. From this logical primitive the ideas of agency, of authorship, of ownership, of selfhood, and of being flow” (p. 23). In *Harm’s Way*, persons emerge from the forms that would make them responsible; in *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters?* persons precede the forms that would capture them. Or at least our minds are programmed to see things this way. “The human intellect,” Vermeule continues, “is extremely well-suited to thinking about other people, their problems, and the situations they get themselves into. The problems we care about come packaged in human form” (p. 23). We care about what other people are up to and therefore infer from their visible actions to their hidden states of mind. The eighteenth-century novel, with its newfound attention to the lives and minds of characters, provides a unique opportunity to see how this works.

We care about literary characters because we are predisposed as a species to attend to the minds of others, and to infer back-

ward from what people say and do to what people think and feel, to “mind read” or “mentalize” them as the expression goes. Vermeule’s argument about the innate and universal procedure of mind reading applies to eighteenth-century fiction research in the cognitive sciences loosely grouped under the rubric of “theory of mind.” Theory of mind is a technical term describing the process in which one agent attributes mental states to another. Ordinarily, children develop this capacity around age three or four, when they are able to understand that others have mental states different from their own and so can interpret other people’s behavior accordingly. (Gulliver watches a female yahoo crouch over and assumes she *desires* to mate with him. Lovelace drinks some ipecac so Clarissa *believes* he is ill, and so on.) As elsewhere, the science is largely about how the capacity is acquired and the way that it works. The idea is that while most humans are not particularly adept at quantitative reasoning beyond rudimentary math, all seem to come equipped with a kind of innate social reasoning capacity. One question this sort of theory raises is why should it have any special relevance for the eighteenth century. If the cognitive mechanisms are innate and antediluvian, why should they be of any greater significance to eighteenth-century literary scholars than, say, to scholars of Byzantine art or Japanese sociology? Vermeule’s answer lies in the twin revolutions of information and finance in the late seventeenth century: “For many urban Britons,” Vermeule writes, “commerce was the engine of unprecedented social mixing, and they worried about extending credit to people they didn’t know. They were at the leading edge of a trend. Modern culture has made trusting strangers a daily trial, dilemma, and obsession” (p. 7). So the newly born institutions of civil society recruited innate features of the human mind and required of them brand new tasks. At the same time, new works of fiction paid increasing attention to the mental lives of characters and readers alike. Vermeule folds the two together into a continuous story about how the period transformed the use made of our cognitive repertoire. “Fiction gives people the chance to practice their emotional connections with other people,” and so reading fictions allowed one to practice—risk free—the kind of mind reading tasks newly important for a commercial culture (p. 165).

The literary history Vermeule would tell accordingly moves in two separate directions. On the one hand, Vermeule is interested in the strategies by which writers learn to evoke mental processes on the page. This part of the story tracks the development of free indirect discourse, with special attention to Jane

Austen (naturally) but also eighteenth-century antecedents like Frances Burney and William Godwin. On the other hand, Vermeule is interested in the strategies by which writers and other artists learn to disavow and strategically limit the portrayal of mental processes. This part of the story concerns the use made by satire of “mind blindness,” the condition in which one does *not* interpret a person’s actions in terms of mental states (in clinical discourse, this is the unlucky fate of autists). Each depends upon our capacity for mind reading and theory of mind. In the second case, satirists—from Jonathan Swift to William Hogarth and well beyond—cleverly move the marker of mindedness around so as to achieve effects of irony and distancing. This chapter was perhaps my favorite in the book. Like Macpherson’s rule-proving exception chapter on Fielding, Vermeule’s chapter on satire works so well because it shows the other side of what she views as the dominant trend during the period. Rather than evoking our care for (or curiosity about) the inner lives of characters, satire surprises us by showing that some characters are just moving sacks of meat, mere matter in motion: thus the bulging eyes of Swift’s frenzied materialists in “Mechanical Operation of the Spirit” (p. 201); the mad projector of the *Tale of the Tub* who witnesses a “woman flay’d” (p. 207); and the Huguenot boy in the second of Hogarth’s *Four Times of the Day* series, “impervious to the failed play of eye contact around him” (p. 213). We do not approach these scenes mind blind ourselves, of course. Rather, we are surprised and fascinated to discover the absence of minds precisely where we expect to find them, an experience Vermeule identifies with the best effects of literary irony.

According to Vermeule, eighteenth-century writing exhibits in sharp form our tendency to animate the world around us, to find intentions and feelings and beliefs behind the external trappings of matter in motion. Satire works in part because it frustrates this innate tendency. According to Macpherson, eighteenth-century writing evokes intentions only to discover they are irrelevant to responsibility and the causes of harm. Park’s *The Self and It* examines how the objects, forms, and “things” cluttering the eighteenth-century cultural landscape were in an intimate dialogue with “the psychological interiority and reflexivity that became the novel’s distinguishing features” (p. xvii). For Vermeule, interiority is ultimately what distinguishes humans from the rest of the world. For Park, the rest of the world inescapably defines what it means to have an interior. Eighteenth-century writers discovered in a variety of ways that to be a subject was to see oneself reflected in

a great variety of external objects. That discovery both helped to fuel the development of the novel as a new literary genre and created some interesting sources of anxiety and stress. One strength of Park's study is to present this intricate movement together and to do so—what we *do*, after all!—through careful and exciting attention to the forms of narration and description.

Park's book partakes of our field's recent interest in objects, things, trinkets, baubles, and the like. This broad area of concern has occasioned one of the liveliest critical discussions of the past decade, including contributions from Mark Blackwell, Lynn Festa, Jonathan Lamb, Theresa Braunschneider (discussed later), and others. Like these scholars, Park is interested in the "strange and newly-object-laden world" of the eighteenth century and, like them, she joins these new objects together with the writing, thinking, and acting subjects who develop "fanciful and intense relationships" to them (p. xxi). Park is unique, however, in paying such close attention to objects that are human or human-like—dolls, waxworks, puppets, automata, and so on. This is a most interesting addition. Like others, Park is concerned to include consumer culture and things one might purchase (either to own, like a piece of china, or to see, like a puppet show or a visit to James Cox's museum) in our picture of eighteenth-century fiction. But she pays special attention to mechanical or physical replicas of the human, and (this is the even bolder part) argues that novels are also replicas of human form and feeling. So novels are things of a double sort. They are physical objects—printed sheets of paper, bound often in duodecimo—and imitations of experience. In the first sense, a novel is like a musket or teapot. In the second, it is like Jacques de Vaucanson's duck, seemingly alive yet obviously mechanical.

To remain with the present series of contrasts, we might say that Park is close to Macpherson in her interest in the objective, thing-like, and formal, and like Vermuele in her interest in the subjective, internal, and psychological. The study ends, in fact, with a movement into the twentieth-century afterlife of eighteenth-century psychological things in Sigmund Freud's theory of the uncanny. Like Macpherson, Park opens with *Oroonoko* and *Roxana* and moves to *Clarissa*, a novel shared with Vermeule. She then turns to a wonderful chapter on Burney and automata, and another on Charlotte Charke and puppets, before closing with psychoanalysis. Throughout the book she runs three arguments roughly in tandem: the novel is a thing-like imitation of experience; the novel is a thing in the world; eighteenth-century subjects were obsessively interested in things.

The book's central and eponymous category nicely straddles all the three arguments. In eighteenth-century as well as contemporary usage, the self can refer to an object or subject. The word is irreducibly bimodal. As is often the case, John Locke captures this ambiguity in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), where he writes that "Self is that conscious thinking thing." Every state of consciousness implies a self and every self implies a physical entity. The problem of finding a place for the mind in the physical world begins to seem different therefore when we switch to a concept that is at once material and mental. For example, when Park argues that the novel gives rise to the self, she means to point out that the novel is not just words on the page but also the whole complex of novel objects and ideas. These include both the physical simulation one finds in dolls and automata and the semantic simulation one finds in sentences in a book. Reading Park's study, I could not help but think of Sterne's starling, whose sentence "I can't get out" is at once a "mechanical" imitation of feeling and at the same time the cause of Yorick's sentimental flight into concerns about slavery (what's more, the bird itself becomes a commodity bought and sold among the English aristocracy). In any case, one of the many virtues of *The Self and It* is that it helps to reframe works outside the borders of the study. Within the borders, I was perhaps most captivated by the chapter on Burney, which in many respects anchors the book. Here Park brings together Burney's remarks on her own writing, remarks she and others make about her gender, the psychology of abject externalization, the interest in automata and the automatic, and the development of third-person prose style. Park joins some of the fascinating references to Cox's museum and the surrounding culture of mechanical objects at once to Burney's often-painful treatment of psychology as thing-like and to her partial discovery of what will later be called free indirect discourse. All of this is done to tremendous effect. The abject, the automatic, and free indirect discourse, Park argues, are cognate forms of turning the inside to the outside and putting in external forms what we expect to find in the internal. It is once again a testimony to the finely suggestive argument Park makes that I wanted to hear more about the role of free indirect discourse, which is left as a kind of tantalizing suggestion throughout the chapter. Like the self, free indirect discourse hovers between objective description and the subjective idiom. Like the moving and animated objects Park places in the foreground of her story about the novel, it renders personality in the impersonal grammar of narration. The develop-

ment of this technique is surely one of the great novelties of our period. Park makes us see it anew.

A COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING

The title for this section comes from the first pages of Locke's *Essay*, where the philosopher announces that "the Commonwealth of learning, is not at this time without master-builders, whose mighty designs, in advancing the sciences, will leave lasting monuments to the admiration of posterity." And so they did. Critics and historians did not start referring to eighteenth-century Britain as a period of Enlightenment until well into the nineteenth century. All the same, we commonly use the term as both noun and adjective when describing the modernity of our chosen field and its various artifacts. Some of the most exciting and influential criticism written in the past twenty years has recast and reconsidered the meaning of the Enlightenment: from the invention of the "fact" to the proliferation of writing technologies to the carving of spheres of knowledge to the creation of a public sphere to (recently) an event in the history of mediation. The rest of the passage from Locke is instructive in this regard. Locke does not see himself as among the scientists. Rather, "'tis ambition enough to be employed as an under-laborer in clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish, that lies in the way of knowledge." The job of philosophy according to Locke was to present to readers the achievements of science in language they could understand. At the same time, it was to build for science a common set of references so *it* could understand where it had arrived and what remained to be discovered. Looking at what followed, we can see several developments in tension. Locke at once celebrates the achievement of the scientists and worries that they have become remote from the concerns of the everyday world. His goal is to bring them back to this world and to discover thereby what it is we can know and what remains on the outside of knowledge. In the coming century, Locke's double project would unfold across an intellectual culture he could hardly have imagined. The period saw the proliferation of new centers and topics of learning. At the same time, it saw a variety of debates about how far learning should go, what should count as contributions to knowledge, how scientific, historical, and philosophical explanations should be worded, and who should write and read them.

As in past years, some very interesting works of criticism have been written about this project, deepening our sense of what the Enlightenment was, where it happened, and who its varied players were. I am going to begin with perhaps the most wide-ranging of them, Robin Valenza's *Literature, Language, and the Rise of the Intellectual Disciplines in Britain, 1680–1820*. Like other scholars before her, Valenza understands the long eighteenth century to be the moment when the modern systems of knowledge were established in both institutional and theoretical form. She also understands the period to be a turning point in the creation of our own disciplines of study, as philosophy became distinct from natural science and both from literary practice and literary study. Rich in detail and eloquent in statement, Valenza's story focuses on both the public and the technical language of discipline making. Her concise study follows the disciplinary formation of three areas of knowledge over the course of the period: physics, philosophy, and literature (conceived as literary production, not criticism). She defines a discipline as a formal mode of study linked to a supporting institution and interested public (a claim she has to modify somewhat, for obvious enough reasons, when she arrives at the end to literature proper in the form of poetry). The historical argument traces a similar arc across all three areas of knowledge: a separation of manual from intellectual pursuits; a cultivation of a language for experts; a reaching out—however pained and anxious—to a public audience from which expertise has been divorced. Against this backdrop, Valenza moves deftly in and out of close reading and schematic exposition. The chapter on physics follows attentively the career of Isaac Newton and the popularizations of his new kind of physics. The chapter on philosophy looks chiefly at David Hume, but also at Joseph Addison and Dugald Stewart, to show how the oldest discipline ideally shuttled between what Hume calls the learned world of technical discussion among experts and the conversable world of polite and amiable conversation with a literate public. Across the chapters, Valenza argues that expertise was understood to come at some cost. For some, the technical languages of the sciences were worrisomely far away from the ordinary language of everyday life; for others, the carving of intellectual activity into specialized domains sacrificed an older and more integrated style of knowledge; and still for others, achieving a recognized status of expertise was a value to be defended at all costs. The final chapter on Romantic poetry shows how literature became a specialized pursuit paradoxically to overcome the problems of specialization. Here Valenza

provides a new context for some old concerns, including William Wordsworth's critique of poetic diction and attempt to return in the *Lyrical Ballads* to "the real language of men."

Valenza is interested throughout her study in how arguments are mediated by style. The way that scholars write goes considerable distance to mark where they stand with respect to the experts and the laity. This is clearest perhaps in the chapter on philosophy, where Valenza charts Hume's effort to wrestle his prose from the rarefied difficulty of the *Treatise* to the more everyday familiarity of the two *Enquiries* (pp. 92–115). But style is equally important for the physicists, who need to translate from one system of formal notation to another. Intelligent readers of English may not know Latin and even intelligent readers of Latin may not know mathematics, especially the new system of calculus. So the Newtonians had to produce an accompanying body of literature for the interested layperson, including a whole cluster of writings designed to make Newton palatable "for the ladies" (pp. 78–86). However, the result was not a bridge between science and the everyday world, as if the layperson and "ladies" could become Newtonians themselves; rather, "physics' success in gaining this recognition as the most exact method of describing and explaining the world depended on the early emergence of a gap between those who could learn to participate in these mathematical disciplines and those who could only be taught to admire and appreciate the hard sciences at a great remove" (p. 90). Inscribed in the language of explanation itself is a notable moment in the long history of the disciplines: "The modern popularizer of science reports on science and scientists, so that the spectator can learn *about* science—at a remove" (p. 91). The fate of literature is similar but also distinct, as of course the language of literary practice could never be translated into the formal notation of mathematics. Valenza's quite ingenious argument in the chapter on literature is to show that "the practice of the English romantics represents a shift from thinking about poetry as consisting of a *specialized language* to consideration of poetry as common language *used in a specialized way*" (p. 146). Poetry on this view is under the pressure of discipline formation but is not itself a discipline, since it does not aspire to its own vocabulary so much as to moving ordinary words into extraordinary circumstances. Valenza's account of this move is scrupulous, as is her placement of it in the longer, eighteenth century history of contrary attempts (from John Dryden through Thomas Gray) to define poetry as something special and quasi-technical in its idiom and form. Valenza's own style is in the high

tradition of the company she keeps: essayistic and plain in the best sense of the term.

Valenza's view of the Enlightenment creation of disciplines takes as its first model the separation of the sciences from other kinds of thinking. Physics understands the natural world in terms of fundamental laws and concrete events: once we put the first in place, the second is subject to prediction and control. No other domain of life is like this. So one way of conceiving of the Enlightenment—and there are many—is that it tracked two different pictures of the world. On the one hand, there is the picture provided by fundamental physics, in which the universe is made up of particles and the laws that govern their interaction. On the other hand, the universe is made up of people, societies, and the laws (or tendencies, habits, or proclivities) that govern their interaction. So while Valenza charts the establishment of physics as fundamental science, she also looks at the creation of what we would now call the “special sciences” in the wake of physics, sciences that look at behavior at the higher level of psychology, sociology, history, and finally (with notable tension) literature.

Karen O'Brien's erudite and informative *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain* cuts a different path through similar terrain. Like Valenza, O'Brien takes in the entire chronological sweep from, say, Newton to Catherine Macaulay, and again like Valenza, O'Brien looks across various zones of intellectual activity and traces lines of affiliation and divergence between them. Her unique take is to follow both the treatment of “women” as a category of Enlightenment reflection and the intellectual production of women writers themselves. She asks two related but distinct questions: How did Enlightenment social, historical, and political theory account for the status of women across time and place? How did women writers contribute to the intellectual culture of the British Enlightenment?

O'Brien's conspectus covers several kinds of Enlightenment in two broad centers of intellectual activity over more than a century. She begins with the Anglican, Latitudinarian, and Whig Enlightenment of the early part of the century, turns to the subsequent theoretical ferment in Scotland, and comes back to England for the dramatic change in history writing and political theory that culminates with Macaulay and Mary Wollstonecraft. The story concerns throughout the way that moral philosophers, theologians, social theorists, and historians understood the treatment and role of women to be an indicator of moral and social progress, and the role that women writers had in theorizing social and moral

exchange. This two-part analysis more or less remains in place across the study's major figures and topics. The first chapter is particularly interesting in this respect because, unlike recent accounts of early-eighteenth-century women intellectuals, it does not focus centrally on Tory feminists like Mary Astell, Aphra Behn, or Delarivier Manley, but rather examines the "Anglican Whig feminism" of Catherine Cockburn, Damaris Masham, Elizabeth Burnet, and Catherine Talbot (p. 35). Anglican Whig feminism, on O'Brien's view, was part of a "Latitudinarian English Enlightenment" that "endorsed the values of religious toleration (very limited in the case of Roman Catholics), free rational religious enquiry, undogmatic, generally non-mystical faith based on reason and scripture, and salvation open to all" (pp. 35–6). One central theme in all of this writing was a modification of Locke's epistemology, so that knowledge was not dependent on the physical world and so motivation was not dependent on the passions. O'Brien is wonderfully detailed and scrupulous in this respect, and demonstrates clearly how early-eighteenth-century moral philosophy extended beyond the more-familiar writings of Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury and Samuel Clarke to, say, Masham's quite moderate defense of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. For writers like Masham and the later Bluestockings, the point of a modified Lockeanism was that moral behavior really ought to be understood as an intrinsic desire to act virtuously, and nowhere was this question to be more decisively settled than on the question of women's moral agency.

O'Brien's "Whig Enlightenment" puts women writers at the center of moral theory. Her discussion of the better-known Scottish Enlightenment does the same for the historical and sociological presentation of women's lives. Here the topic is not so much women writing about moral theory as it is moral theorists writing about women. That chapter and the subsequent discussion of English historiography both look at the discovery of women's history and the evolving social roles that women were understood to have in a history arranged in stages and subject to collective agency. Scottish conjectural history, as variously practiced by Henry Home, Lord Kames, James Beattie, Stewart, and John Millar sought to write "a normative (at times, admonitory) account of modern commercial society, a prescription for future liberation, and a naturalistic, even ethnically specific, account of European female sensibility" (pp. 103–4). History would now attend to domesticity, family arrangements, and the place of women in the social order. Later writings on the gothic prehistory of modern

commercial society—the various medievalisms from the midcentury onward—take a contrary look backward to the expired norms of chivalry subsequently attacked by Wollstonecraft at century's end (the subject of the penultimate chapter of the book).

“The great discovery of the British Enlightenment,” O'Brien writes on the first page of her book, is “that there is such a thing as society, that humans are principally intelligible as social beings, and that society itself is subject to change” (p. 1). This is a fabulous way to begin, and is both a lucid and stirring account of what will be argued. To be sure, the Enlightenment will always be in the eye of its beholder, and I for one would not want to give up Valenza's insight that the natural sciences played an integral role, perhaps even in ways we might be surprised to discover. Nevertheless, O'Brien's reconstruction of the language world of eighteenth-century social theory is meticulous and the story it tells compelling. Everyone working on the topic or nearby will have to consider and respond to her arguments. O'Brien describes her project at the beginning as a work of “intellectual rather than cultural history,” and very good intellectual history it is (p. 2). I couldn't help but forgetting from time to time, however, that it was written by an English professor, and when I remembered, I couldn't help but want a little more of the literary history that runs in tandem with, indeed is part of, the story O'Brien tells. We are treated to just two tantalizing pages on Austen. But the question is not really one of texts, since after all Locke, Edward Gibbon, Hannah More, and Wollstonecraft (and others) now belong to literary study as much as to history. Rather, the question is one of style, argument, and interpretation. In writing such good intellectual history, O'Brien seems to have imposed on herself a restraint that I would have liked to have seen loosened, so that the argument could engage not only *what* these authors had to say but *how* they went about saying it. I found myself wanting O'Brien to slow down some and perhaps trip over arguments or discoveries that were unexpected.

The final study in this section is exemplary in this regard. John Bender and Michael Marrinan's *The Culture of Diagram* is sumptuously produced and printed, with eight pages of full-color plates, and page after page of reproduced figures, drawings, and illustrations. The book proceeds as a series of virtuoso treatments of images and texts, all set against the background of a larger historical narrative, in which “diagrams were increasingly adapted to represent complex processes uncovered by scientific investigations or instantiated by mechanical inventions” (p. 8).

At the heart of the study is a long consideration of Denis Diderot and Jen Le Rond d'Alembert's *Encyclopedia*, including especially the plates and the article on "description," subject to a four-part debate carried out over twenty years on the theoretical underpinnings of diagrammatic notation (pp. 73–85). From this center, Bender and Marrinan's analysis then moves outward to Diderot's writing on the theater, the paintings of Jacques-Louis David, the engravings of Hogarth, and at the end the development of quantum mechanics. The examination is quite unlike anything I have ever read. For one, it is a product of joint thinking across literary study and art history, with the kind of attention to form that only comes from a career of thinking very hard about verbal and visual artifacts in their specificity. It is also a sustained act of conceptual and theoretical reflection, at once historical and philosophical, on the very category of the diagram itself.

Whereas Valenza and O'Brien present different yet equally synoptic views across the Enlightenment, Bender and Marrinan write centrifugally from the diagram to the larger cultures of science and technology. So what is a diagram? Their definition will give you a clear sense of what the book is like: "A diagram is a proliferation of manifestly selective packets of dissimilar data correlated in an explicitly process-oriented array that has some of the attributes of a representation but is situated in the world like an object" (p. 7). The sentence is a coiled spring, each clause and phrase filled with argument, meaning, and portent. But what exactly does it mean? I offer by way of an answer an imaginary diagram of my car's engine. The diagram is "proliferated" in parts, from the fuel injector to the carburetor to the cylinders. It has some "attributes of a representation," since although it is not a picture of my actual car engine, it does pick out parts of the hunk of metal under the hood. It is "manifestly selective," however, because it only picks out units of a process. The point of the diagram is not to show you the engine; it is to describe the process in which fuel mixes with air, vaporizes, and moves the pistons. Were I to consult the diagram, I would learn how the carburetor gets the mixture into the pistons. Whether the carburetor is to the right or the left of the battery, colored black or grey, shaped like a rectangle or square, wouldn't really matter. Two features I have plucked from Bender and Marrinan's tightly written sentence are therefore central: first, the schematic rendering of fuel injector, carburetor, and pistons *correlates* to the process of internal combustion; second, the diagram is not so much a representation as an *object*. Representations show me something. Objects allow me to do things.

Correlation and object-hood are at the center of every aspect of Bender and Marrinan's intricately woven study. A diagram is not a picture of a thing; it is a thing itself, and yet it brings together various elements of a process to which it refers. Bender and Marrinan call this bringing together a correlation because it sustains the independent existence and efficacy of each side of the diptych. "Correlation is a search for relationships among variables, and its success is measured when convergence of data is recognized" (p. 17). So while diagrams are *of* things out in the world, they elicit our powers of bringing together parts set out in some sort of display. And in this way diagrams are objects more than pictures. Whereas pictures specify or control the way they are beheld or seen, objects afford multiple angles, may be picked up, put down, turned around or over. Bender and Marrinan set up this distinction through a nice contrasting of a still life by François Deportes to the *Encyclopedia's* plate of a pastry shop. In the former, "every element is returned to a single point of view" (p.17). In the latter, "[c]onventions of rendering appear to capture the object's three dimensionality, but without displacing any measurable volume: there is no place to stand before the kneading station and it casts no shadows onto the surrounding white surface. The paradoxical notation signals to an attentive viewer that the white of the page is neither a void nor a space but simply a material whiteness" (p. 23). This is criticism written with rigor, élan, and a bit of flamboyance. The better we are for it. The whiteness is material because it affords the bringing together of elements of the diagram by whomever is viewing. Were there to be a shadow, or anything else suggesting a fixed position with set angles of light, the parts would not be able to be moved. "Material whiteness" of this kind reappears across the study as a way of threading and anchoring its heterogeneous materials.

One place this whiteness appears that will be of particular interest to readers of this review is in Hogarth's *Satire on False Perspective*. Hogarth's engraving splashes together figures of diverse size and place in a sustained trick on our expectations. Yet, the engraving "does not fracture into visual chaos because strategic patches of whiteness link the parts in a virtual space of bemused correlation. Like the plates of the *Encyclopedia*, Hogarth's use of multiple perspectives in the 'Satire' is analytic and is governed by the variable scales and shifting points of view of visual catalogues" (p. 63). Like the plates, in other words, Hogarth's engraving uses an inert and solid whiteness to enable the object-like mutability of the image as diagram. Readers of

this review will also be interested to read Bender and Marrinan's thoughts on free indirect discourse, a topic about which Bender has had influential opinions for some time. (Bender, Park, and Vermeule all have interesting things to say about free indirect discourse, and one pleasure of this year's reading was learning so much about the mode.) "The impersonal narration of thought in free indirect discourse" is like "the eruption of whiteness within the pages of the *Encyclopedia's* plates" because both "disclose a space for the emergence of users, working objects and the making of knowledge" (p. 71). Free indirect discourse—the rendering of first-person thoughts in third-person grammar, on Bender and Marrinan's definition—generates a kind of diagram, one that leaves to the reader (not the character or narrator) the correlation of contents into a stable thought (p. 73). On this view, sentences in a novel are things in the world, just like the objects found in the *Encyclopedia. The Culture of Diagram* once again moves outward from its ostensible subject and reframes items at an intriguing remove. One could say it correlates them.

THE EXPERIENCE OF CHANGE

One line of continuity in eighteenth-century literary studies for the past twenty-five years has been to emphasize the novel pace of change in the eighteenth century. The battle between the ancients and the moderns may have been won by the ancients, but that was in response to a modernity as present as it was multiform: in the expansion of the print market, the revolution in finance, the revolution in consumption and consumer goods (of the kind Park and others discuss), the encounters with cultural difference abroad, the fragmentation of religious argument and experience at home, and, again, the advent of empirical philosophy and experimental science. George Sainstbury once said that the period heralded a "Peace of the Augustans" after the dynastic and religious wars of the seventeenth century. Eighteenth-century studies persistently relegates this view to oblivion. I am going to focus in this section on three books that come at the question of the modern or change from different angles, which, while not adding up to whole, give a kind of snapshot in triptych of a period understanding itself to be in a moment of flux: Sophie Gee's *Making Waste: Leftovers and the Eighteenth-Century Imagination*; Theresa Braunschneider's *Our Coquettes: Capacious Desire in the Eighteenth Century*; and Mark E. Wildermuth's *Print, Chaos, and Complexity: Samuel Johnson and Eighteenth-Century Media Culture*.

Gee's *Making Waste* looks closely at the process of leaving things behind: feces, dead bodies, refuse, used objects, tears, coins, paper, and so on. The culture that sprung from the ruins of the Plague and Great Fire confronted a several-staged problem of urban waste, first in heaps of bodies, then in the ruins of buildings, and then finally in the urban detritus that swelled the new and crowded city, all the sweepings from butcher's stalls, dung, guts, and blood one just tripped over in a London shower. At the same time, British intellectuals of all kinds (as I discussed in the first section of this review) were intensely concerned with the status of matter, not only radical materialists like Hobbes and Cavendish who wanted to know how matter could think, but even those old-fashioned dualists who just wanted to know what happened to bodies after the resurrection, how host could become flesh, or how nonphysical souls could inhabit physical things. Gee focuses throughout on the confluence of literal waste—the gross stuff left behind—with these larger theological and philosophical issues. She adds to them, however, “a type of leftover best described as literary,” namely, the residue left behind when objects in literary texts take on some sort of extra significance or *meaning* (p. 4). Gee's study coordinates throughout these three levels of analysis, or kinds of waste, and returns time and again to the question of the symbolic: how certain kinds of matter could take on certain kinds of significance, how the matter arranged in one way could become matter arranged in another way, and so come to acquire or lose value.

For a book concerned largely with filth, *Making Waste* is stylistically pristine. Gee writes with an elegance and fluency that buoys her thinking from one topic to the next. Like Bender and Marrinan, Gee is economical and sparse. Each word seems deliberately chosen. Yet where Bender and Marrinan's sentences are tightly wound so as to communicate everything they want to say at once, like a jack-in-the-box, Gee's move from one idea to the next is effortless parataxis. Rarely does criticism read so well. Gee's sentences curl in and out of the writing she examines, and pursue their argument by picking out, rephrasing, and reframing the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century materials with which they are concerned: *Annus Mirabilis* along with Samuel Pepys's *Diary*; *A Tale of a Tub* along with the dressing-room poems; *The Dunciad* along with the *Spectator*. So while the argument is expansive—attending to matters of historical, philosophical, and theological complexity—the method is sharp. Gee draws one point to the next by possessing the language to which she attends.

Making Waste advances an argument that is at once, but also separately, historical and formal. The historical argument has to do with the changing representation of material leftovers from the Restoration to the middle of the eighteenth century, the moment of the Plague and Great Fire to the moment of Sophia Western's muff. The formal argument has to do with how literary texts create meaning by leaving things behind. So the history begins with Dryden's great poem and the rebuilding of a city that subsequently confronts newfound urban density and proliferating detritus, moves to the eighteenth-century worry about Grub Street, the city poor, and (for Swift) the Irish, and ends with Addison's tear-stained, sentimental, and yet sanitized public. This is the sort of cultural history that has become the common currency in the field. The ingenuity, originality, and energy lie in the weaving into the cultural history a philosophical story about matter and then, within that story, an analysis of literary history and literary meaning. That is where the heart of the book lies.

The philosophical story concerns the persistence of seventeenth-century debates about matter into the very different thought-world of the eighteenth century. Gee has a lot of interesting things to say about this debate and subtly works its main issue into her discussion of John Milton, Alexander Pope, Swift, and others. Let me attempt to draw out the salient points. Earlier in this review I cited Hobbes and Cavendish on "fictions of the mind" and said that their curiosity had to do with the capacity of mere matter to have thoughts and imaginings, to form pictures, to create fictions. I did not mention that, while both materialists, Hobbes and Cavendish held very different ideas about what matter was like. Hobbes understood matter to be at base particulate and only acting when acted upon, a kind of atomism and determinism. Cavendish understood matter to be one whole thing and to be self-moving, a kind of monism and vitalism. Atomism and vitalism were both radically revisionist ontologies, insofar as both rejected the soul-body split common to almost all versions of Christianity. Hobbes's atomist materialism fit with his royalism because, on his view, the cause of things could always be traced back to earthly and divine authorities. In contrast, vitalism and monism were attractive to republicans like Milton because they located the beginning of actions in self-willing agents. Like others, Gee finds in Milton's description of creation and Chaos the kind of vitalist monism that would see the world created out of one self-moving substance. So the angels and God are a higher or better arrangement of the same basic stuff as men and marbles. Gee's

Milton chapter takes this insight at once into the Dryden-like vision of a wasteland from which all future things are made and the literary ferment that will be a constant source for later writers, especially Pope. The Pope chapter thus returns—in her reading of *The Dunciad*—to Milton's Chaos, here fashioned for the secular matter of Grub Street hacks. The intellectual history gives way to or is enclosed within a sustained, line-by-line literary history. The point is not exactly that Pope—a Catholic and dualist—turns out to be an unlikely monist, although Gee hints at the possibility. It is more that Pope's poem is engaged throughout in a translation of Milton's conception of active, self-moving matter to the everyday world of dirty, grubby, and chaotic London. A similar two-way commitment to telling cultural history through philosophical and theological history and philosophical and theological history through literary history underlies the Swift chapter too. For obvious enough reasons, Swift fits extremely well into the broad thematic alley that Gee explores. "Nobody relished leftovers like Jonathan Swift" (p. 91). Gee explores this dynamic with relentless precision in her discussion of the "Modest Proposal," the dressing room poems, and the controversies over credit and coinage (leavings of another sort).

Gee remarks in passing in the Swift chapter that his "vision is Protestant in its nature. It rejects the Roman Catholic doctrine that base matter can be made divine, and it adheres to the logic that where glorious meaning arises it leaves a leftover, a kernel of material reality" (pp. 99–100). Gee poses this relation between leftovers and meaning at various points in her study. It forms the core, formal or literary-theoretical question of her study. Gee writes that waste indicates meaning. This is no mere toss away line. Her point is a serious and provocative one, and obliquely gets at what the philosopher Hilary Putnam once called "The meaning of meaning." Nothing happens without leaving a residue. What we call meaning—the meaning of meaning—is the transforming of one thing into another. Mutability always leaves something behind as one thing comes to mean something else, for someone else. This is the culmination then of Gee's three-part definition of waste: "it is literal, manifest in material culture; it is philosophically charged, meaningful by virtue of its role in intellectual debate; and it is literary, which is to say that it is created by the very text in which it appears" (p. 5). Waste is "literary" because it "marks the spot where a troubled process of making has occurred ... and all that remains is a leftover figured as abject matter" (p. 9).

I like this part of Gee's book a lot. It gets at questions of permanent interest and difficulty for all varieties of literary study and

locates them squarely in the literary history of the long eighteenth century. It takes on the very hard problem of meaning (a topic we have seen in Macpherson too) and it does so through a fine-grained attention to the waste products that had meaning for the eighteenth century and for us.

Among the waste products swelling early-eighteenth-century London are the discarded consumer goods of a culture coming to terms with newfound luxury: the items on Belinda's toilet, say, or scattered throughout the lady's dressing room. Eighteenth-century studies has long been interested in the various aspects of what Neil McKendrick long ago dubbed the "consumer revolution" and this year is no exception. Our interest in "things" and "its" is in some ways the latest permutation of a sustained and fruitful research project. One increasingly important dimension of this research project has been to thread conceptions of the internal or the psychological through the period's proliferation of the external or the objective. Thus for Park, consumer goods and things are one means by which British writers came to understand they had a self. Theresa Braunschneider's lucid and compelling take on this dynamic focuses on the evolving figure of the *coquette* in English literature and culture. The coquette is for her the consummate artifact of an "emergent consumer culture"—a "quintessential modern consumer," one "shaping and shaped by discourse about a range of pressing interrelated developments, including the advance of consumer capitalism in England; the expansion of international commerce; increased urbanization and domestic travel; the development of new sorts of public space and modes of assembly; and the changing nature of marriage in relation to the ascendancy of liberal political philosophy" (pp. 5, 7). In short, the coquette is a figure of modernity. But what exactly is a coquette? On this as much else, Braunschneider is both clear and shrewd. The coquette is a figure that emerged as if from nowhere on the English cultural scene in the aftermath of the Restoration, remained a topic of constant fascination for sixty or so years, only to be domesticated by the middle of the eighteenth century. Coquettes are a type. They are young women who desire too much without quite ever losing their honor, who have short attention spans, and who seem more than naturally mobile, always here and there and always speaking, both in and out of turn. Like the type it draws, the literature of coquetry is multiform and ubiquitous. Coquettes appear in plays and poems, journalism and engravings, and everywhere else. The "age" was seemingly obsessed with the coquette. Braunschneider's book attempts to chart how and why this is so.

Our Coquettes presents a literary history of this type set against the background of worries about consumerism and the new world of which it was a part. One difficulty in this sort of work is providing a crisp definition of the type you are following. There are risks on either end of the spectrum. Carve too close to the joint of the word, and you could end up with a catalog of usage. Swing too wide of the concept, and everything starts to look like what you're after. Braunschneider is very good at providing a clean definition to which she sticks in ever-more-interesting contexts, across a boisterous history. She follows closely the evolution of the word—in a kind of cultural philology—while at the same time including the wider meaning of “any woman who resists any constraint upon her choices” (p. 2). Coquettes say yes to coffee and to tea and to fans and equipage and, finally and most outrageously to suitors. The story Braunschneider tells takes us from the importing of the word into English to the heyday of early eighteenth-century worries and celebrations (sometimes worried celebrations, sometimes celebratory worries), to the reforming of the coquette and beyond. The second chapter on “the people that things make” contains in some respect the heart of the study, as it examines both how the period’s “fixation upon the figure of the coquette can only be understood in relation to the emerging culture of consumerism” and how ideas and representations of the coquette “struggle with the apparent tensions between virtue and consumption” (p. 63). The chapter follows this two-part move through close attention to works by Anne Finch, Pope (*The Rape of the Lock*, naturally), John Gay, and others. I was particularly struck by the reading of Gay’s seldom-discussed *The Fan*, a mock-epic cousin to Pope’s more-famous poem that contains a history of the object’s origins and a satire of the way it empowers (or doesn’t) its women-consumer-soldiers.

I was most intrigued, however, by the third chapter on the coquette as a figure of motion, travel, and distance. This chapter expands the context of consumerism and consumption in unexpected directions and assembles a diverse panoply of texts, from Pope (*The Rape of the Lock* and the *Epistle to Miss Blount*) to various anonymous or forgotten poems on the topic. Along with capacious desire and vanity, the coquette is a figure of spatial instability. Coquettes move. We see them one place and then discover a minute later that they have flitted somewhere else. This chapter slides the trope of movement from small spaces, like one side of the room to another, to travel across cities, countries, and continents. In so doing, the chapter pursues two basic types of mobility: the

movement across town and country and the movement across the globe. In both cases, the figure of the coquette carves up the symbolic meaning of different kinds of places. So for example in such city poems as the 1736 "Rake of Taste," coquettes at once distinguish the country from the town (out-of-it-ness from high fashion) and partition the town itself (the fashionable West End from the dreary financial center of the city, a dichotomy that spans the Restoration to the middle of the century and beyond). All of this is mapped as it were by the flitting, fleeting, "buzzing" movement of the "veriest coquette, always asking what's next, where to, who else" (p. 67). So too, the acquisitive, open-ended, insatiable desire of the coquette for luxury goods looks outward and maps the rest of the world, "from China to Peru." Braunscheider's argument in this section depends upon the thesis developed by Laura Brown that women consumers became the emblem and excuse for "mercantile capitalism" at an early stage of its inexorable development (hence, in Brown's influential reading, Pope's attention to "India's glowing gems" on Belinda's toilet). Braunscheider extends Brown's argument by showing how "women of fashion construe the whole navigable earth as a social space governed by an economy of coquetry" and by making her argument through attention to such interesting texts as James Ralph's anaphoretic *Clarinda; or the fair libertine* (p. 82). Seen this way, the coquette is not only a sign of cultural anxiety or stress—the excitement and fear brought about by the consumer revolution—but also a way for the critic to piece together the period's sense of place and space. I suspect that this section of the book strained the model Braunscheider was in the process of using the most, and it is intriguing to watch how the argument moves outward from the sense of an ever present consumer economy to more delineated and specified spots of motion.

Both Gee and Wildermuth place the idea of Chaos as the center of their studies. For Gee, Chaos is a dense literary topos reaching from Milton's monism to Pope's dullness and beyond. For Wildermuth, Chaos refers to the larger culture of epistemological and moral instability after the Restoration. Modernity is chaotic because it has put shared meanings and values under some pressure, and it has done that because of the new media technologies of print. Wildermuth's *Print, Chaos, and Complexity* shares the interest in print culture that has been with the field for some time, but incorporates recent historical research to revise (for example) Alvin Kernan's older techno-determinist account of Johnson. More than this, Wildermuth uses contemporary media

theory—from Friedrich Kittler and Paul Virilio, among others—to help set up the idea of information and complex systems he brings to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His story begins with the Restoration, moves to Pope, and then gets to the heart of the matter in Johnson, who emerges as a canny media theorist in his own right. “Print and mediation connect our culture with Johnson and his age materially,” Wildermuth argues, and thus also connect us “conceptually and philosophically” (p. 17). So when Wildermuth moves to “discuss Johnson’s poetics not only in their original eighteenth-century context but also in relation to our own postmodern milieu” he means to bring Johnson into the present as much as to bring today’s media theory into the past (p. 135). The important similarity, or the relevance of Johnson, according to Wildermuth, lies in his implicit theory of complex systems: “Out of the turbulent flow of print, life, and experience, emerges, unexpectedly, the stability of truth—but it is a truth that is not fixed nor Platonic, but rather reflective of the rich erudition to be found only in the realm of textual instability” (p. 149). So for Johnson as for us, tentative patterns emerge from the mess of chaos. How this happens is a hard problem: what are the chains of causation that take us from “turbulent flow” of events at one level to regularity and stability at another? I’m not sure that Johnson had a better handle on this than anyone else, although watching the case made raises the question in evocative form.

COLONIALISM, EMPIRE, AND THE SLAVE TRADE

This year featured only two books entirely focused on the imperial or global eighteenth century, and only one that was a traditional scholarly monograph. These numbers are considerably lower than in years past. Even so, the centrality of the concerns to the field may be seen in their importance this year to topics we might have mistakenly thought were of another kind entirely, such as Braunschneider’s coquettes.

Suvir Kaul is among those who have been thinking very hard for a very long time about the importance of empire and colonialism for eighteenth-century literature, and especially for eighteenth-century poetry. His studies of the poems of Gray and of the poetry of British nationalism are classics in the field. This year brings a shorter and more informal work, *Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Postcolonial Studies*. Kaul’s new book is part of a series from Edinburgh University Press on Postcolonial Literary Studies, which will include titles from all

periods in the discipline. Kaul's audience therefore is not really eighteenth-century specialists so much as students and general readers. His presentation of the imperial history and context is nevertheless bracing, even if it sometimes (of necessity) reads like intelligent head notes to an anthology. The book is an overview of literature and empire from Restoration drama to late-eighteenth century Romantic-era representations of India and the South Seas. Whereas Kaul's previous work has tended to be on poetry, moreover, the chapters here are largely about drama and prose (both fiction and nonfiction), and range from discussions of Behn's *The Widow Ranter*, to *The Spectator* (prominently featured), to Defoe and Tobias Smollett, to an evocative reading of John Keats at the very end. You will want to recommend this book to your students and consult it yourself.

Srividhya Swaminathan's *Debating the Slave Trade: Rhetoric of British National Identity, 1759–1815* in contrast cuts deeply into the debate on abolition and follows its evolving relation to the making of British cultural identity. Her argument begins with the Quaker abolitionism of figures like Anthony Benezet and Granville Sharp, turns to literary figures at the century's end (from the very familiar, like Olaudah Equiano and Phyllis Wheatley, to the less well-known like Ukawsaw Gronniosaw and Ottobah Cugoano), moves to the active and vigorous response from the proslavery camp, and closes with the final fight that ended the slave trade for good. Swaminathan's goal throughout is to show how each side of the debate called upon and created a notion of British moral community. Readers were asked to understand that they were part of a nation of Britons considering the important question of slavery. As the debate continued over the course of fifty years, Swaminathan argues, it helped to define what it meant to be British, an idea that was then used (after the slave trade had ended) to create the cultural backbone for the second stage of empire in the nineteenth century. "British identity came into being through an unintentional amalgamation of the abolitionist and regulationist positions and the Briton who emerged was well-suited for imperial ends" (p. 210).

Debating the Slave Trade is meticulously researched and argued and works hard to reconstruct the tenor and feel of both sides of the debate. Swaminathan's archive ranges from poetry to sermons to pamphlets. Her historical reconstruction quite thoroughly accounts for where and when—in the colonies, at home in Britain—the texts circulated and how and by whom they were read. Since the attention throughout is to rhetorical structure,

moreover, Swaminathan pauses to nice effect on the questions of audience and affect, and does so (again) on each side of the debate, the poets and pamphleteers who sang *of* as well as against slavery. In both cases, the point of the readings is to show how the question of slavery involved writers in thinking about what Britain and Britons *were* after all. Thus for the antislavery writers, “The institution of slavery represented a double failing with respect to national character: one, that the country ‘where the soul of freedom reign’d’ would tolerate such an affront to freedom; and two, that the nation would model such uncivilized behavior before less advanced societies” (p. 109). Abolition called upon a notion of intrinsic human liberty, fashioned out of an idea of Britishness, and held up this idea as part of the civilizing mission of Britain in the world. The advocates for slavery meanwhile responded with their own ideal of national character. “First, they had to underscore the contribution of commerce, specifically mercantilism, to the prosperity of Great Britain. Second, they had to find an entry into humanitarian discourse and its powerful claims for ‘rights’ and ‘liberty’ ... Third, [they had] to create a clear and rigid distinction between themselves and their slaves” (p. 158). So proslavery writers played up the rights and liberty of the planters, extolled the commercial power of glorious Britannia, and elaborated a nascent race theory according to which Africans were naturally cursed and barbaric. Swaminathan’s careful presentation of the back and forth of debate does a wonderful job of synthesis, mindful of genre and location and of the uneven pace of the momentous argument as it lurched into the nineteenth century. Her conclusion that antislavery in some sense provided the rhetorical armature for empire is bound to be unsettling and provocative. The Britons who “now viewed themselves as exemplars for the rest of the world,” Swaminathan writes in her haunting last sentence, “required little inducement to move from judging the world to owning a large part of it” (p. 217).

LIVES

The books in this section cross over the hazy border of biographical and autobiographical writing and criticism that seems more than usually interested in bringing the life into the work. Eighteenth-century scholars have long understood and written compellingly about how vexed the category of “life” was during the period, both as a way of organizing experience and as a topic for the sciences. Felicity Nussbaum’s work on biography along

with J. Paul Hunter's and Michael McKeon's work on life writing in the early novel comes to mind. Jenny Davidson's and Denise Gigante's more recent work on the literature of the life sciences does too. Was every moment of a human's existence part of its life or should the record of one's life focus on the distinguishing marks and moments? How does life spring from non-life? Both questions ask, admittedly in a different register, how lives are made, how they take on the form they receive and impart to the world.

Teresa Barnard's *Anna Seward: A Constructed Life: A Critical Biography* presents at once a biography of the late-eighteenth-century poet's life and a restoration of the posterity the poet wished for herself. Barnard notes that her subject's life was carefully orchestrated and yet also split in two or perhaps three: Seward as she carefully presented herself in poems and letters; as she was later packaged and published by her literary editor, Walter Scott, and publisher, Archibald Constable; and finally as she actually lived, apart from or before the life created in writing. Barnard is most interested in the first of these three lives and in contrasting the portrait Seward laboriously created of herself with the portrait left to posterity by Scott and Constable. "With a confident awareness of the fascinating life she lived, [Seward] decided that her correspondence would be her autobiography" (p. 1). Seward rewrote and collected six volumes of her letters in addition to those that made up her youthful journal. "The image Seward created for herself in her letters is of the independent, self-sufficient writer, an intellectual who constantly searches and challenges, exploring numerous and varied aspects of culture and society" (p. 1). Scott and Constable leached much of the content and vitality from the letters. They excised nearly two thirds and censored the whole. They took out stories of romantic intrigue and the marriage market along with "Seward's thoughts on the gendered inequalities of female education and career" and finally the politics, animus, gossip, and anecdote (p. 3). A work of painstaking reconstruction, Barnard's biography attempts to tell the story of Seward's life as Seward wanted it to be told and to interleave this telling with readings of the letters and the poetry. The last chapter concludes, fittingly, by printing the entirety of Seward's last will and testament.

Like Barnard's *Anna Seward*, Caroline Grigson's *The Life and Poems of Anne Hunter; Haydn's Tuneful Voice* is a careful reconstruction of the life of a female poet who crossed over intellectual culture and the arts at the end of the eighteenth century. The sometime lyricist for Joseph Haydn, Hunter was an intimate

of the Bluestockings (Elizabeth Carter especially), the aunt of Joanna Baillie, and a full-time poet. Grigson's *Life and Poems* is part critical biography and part edition, and in both respects the first of its kind. Sixty of Hunter's two hundred or so poems were published anonymously in an 1802 collection, others had appeared in anthologies, music books, or broadsides, and many lay unpublished in manuscripts. Grigson has brought these together and printed them along with a seventy-odd page biography. A great deal of sleuthing and hunting went into putting together the verse. While I might have liked fuller annotation or a record of variants—textual notes are quite slim and line numbers nonexistent—this nevertheless is a fine act of recovery and assembling.

The scholarly project of the Seward and Hunter books hovers around literary biography, edition, and the presentation of life writing. The next three books are literary-critical monographs that pay special attention to the lives of authors. The first is Emily Hodgson Anderson's *Eighteenth-Century Authorship and the Play of Fiction: Novels and the Theater, Haywood to Austen*. Anderson's fine study of drama and the novel aims to "challenge, even as it takes seriously, the conceptual divisions that remain between literary and biographical study" and thereby to return "us to the author and to the specific historical circumstances of authorial experience" (p. 3). In order to make this provocative argument, Anderson looks closely at the life and work of four women whose careers straddled printed prose fiction and performed theatrical works in ongoing and complicated ways. She begins with Eliza Haywood, covering the entire working life of this recent object of disciplinary fascination, from drama such as *The Wife to Lett* (1723) to such late fiction as *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751) and beyond. From Haywood, she turns to Burney, a writer whose life is better known than Haywood's and whom Anderson accordingly tracks in and out of the playhouse from youth through the mature fiction. A chapter on Elizabeth Inchbald begins with *The Mogul Tale* (1784), an early play Inchbald both wrote and acted in, moves to *A Simple Story* (1791), and then turns back to the theater for *Wives as they Were, Maids as they Were* (1797) and *A Case of Conscience* (1800). From these public theatricals, Anderson shifts into the domestic, with Maria Edgeworth's pedagogical theories, her home theatrical *Whim for Whim* (1798), and her major novel, *Belinda* (1801). She then concludes with an excursus on Austen's theatrical style in *Mansfield Park* (1814).

Among its other strengths, *Eighteenth-Century Authorship and the Play of Fiction* provides compelling testimony to how insepa-

rable drama was to the literary history outside the playhouse. Anderson argues that the novel's move from anxiety about its status as not literally true to an embrace of its status as fiction at midcentury involved taking on terms and strategies first developed by writers for the stage. So the epistemological traffic, as it were, between prose fiction and performed drama should be seen as ongoing and continuous across the period. Most intriguing to me however was Anderson's critical dedication to individual experience and personal biography. From start to finish, her book has an outré commitment to what Anderson calls "self expression" (especially pp. 2, 5). These are literary-critical fighting words, and I was happy to see Anderson use them, if only to challenge my sense that we no longer talk that way and for good reason. (One thing we do, it seems to me after reading Anderson and the other fine critics in my pile of books, is to challenge each other's presuppositions and arguments and see if they stand up to the test.) It turns out of course that Anderson has a sophisticated and unusual understanding of both the self and its fictional and dramatic expression. She *does* want to turn away from our skepticism about authors, interiors, intentions, and the like. At the same time, she wants to argue that "feelings could be both staged and sincere, at once personal and performed" (p. 7). The selfhood "understood and described by the authors in this study," therefore, "is neither consistently superficial nor interior, but instead contingent upon a dynamic oscillation" (pp. 7, 10). Initially these kind of statements seemed to me to want to have it both ways, to argue that plays and novels express the experience and feelings of their authors while also leaving a remainder for culture or history or ideology to do their work. The further I got into Anderson's book, however, the more I understood the consistency of her position. The oscillation is part of the intention and helps to secure the expression of the self. According to Anderson, theater provides a way for authors to express themselves through the (deceptively) simple procedure of creative performance. By focusing and perfecting this procedure, theater provided methods and materials for novels: "To recognize fiction as a form of theatrical performance is to recognize that fiction may reflect on its author without becoming autobiography; indeed it is to recognize that fiction conveys authorial sentiments by maintaining its discrete fictional nature" (p. 15). Once again, when I read this sentence for the first time, I thought it was a perfectly reasonable case of hedge betting, until reading further and discovering how Anderson's commitment to the biographical individual as the final locus

of meaning is meant to work. Plays and novels express the self as an author of forms. The mistake is to think one could ever escape biography. The dramatic or novelistic forms one attends to when viewing a play or reading a novel simply *are* the expressions of the authorial self, even or especially when these expressions are indirect, mediated, put into the intricacies of literary language, dramatic convention, and so on.

The closer we stay to the meaning of the drama or fiction therefore the closer we are to the author's intentions and the facts of her biography. Anderson's chapter on Inchbald, for example, never travels far from the language of the plays and novels but attends all the while, on Anderson's view, to the life of the author, who is introduced to us, as it happens, as an actress in one of her own plays. The chapter tracks what Anderson calls "emotional mediation," by which she means the indirect expressions of one person's feelings by another (p. 78). The term has a kind of three-point, folded importance for her argument. Often in *A Simple Story* and the later plays, a character's feelings are indirectly expressed on the face or by the body, rather than directly through speech acts. Someone else infers the emotion and then carries out the character's intentions. At the same time, the indirect communication of felt-emotions is a kind of allegory for authorship itself, which after all is an indirect expression through the characters one creates. So emotion extrudes onto the exterior surface of the story through events and speech or setting while at the same time emanating from the internal psychology of characters (Elmwood, Millner, etc.) and the author herself: "Inchbald crafts psychological depth not through her emphasis on internal or consistent character traits, but through descriptions of external and varied traits *that lend freedom and continuity to the act of expression*" (p. 80, emphasis added). I have added the emphasis to the final clause of Anderson's sentence to show how it threads back finally to the biography. The dispersal of the emotion gathers its coherence in the woman to whom all the feelings ultimately belong, inflected and indirect as these feelings may be. Anderson's biographical work, her mapping of events from the life to the novel and the plays, is itself oblique and often offstage, and yet that procedure remains true to her quite compelling argument. She shows us how "Inchbald simultaneously associates herself with and distances herself from her various personae," and how she "presents role playing—fragmentation—as essential to self-expression, even as this role-playing results in self-reflexivity and coherence" (p. 99). In all the chapters, Anderson follows the "act of expression"

at once to the thing expressed and to the individual doing the expression.

The relation between lives, individuals, and works has a different sort of feel in Thomas M. Curley's *Samuel Johnson, the "Ossian" Fraud, and the Celtic Revival in Great Britain and Ireland*. I have included Curley's study in this section because Curley's method is above all biographical and because the historical question turned on whether there was a biographical author Ossian in the first place. Curley's study comes after twenty years or so of revisionist, slightly postcolonial, attempts to look beyond or aside the authenticity question and revive Ossian/James Macpherson as an interesting piece of Gaelic or crypto-Gaelic or simply philo-Gaelic culture. In this kind of work, the question of forgery or fraud gives way to one of internal colonialism and national literatures. Maybe Macpherson discovered something after all. Curley will have none of it. Macpherson was a fraud first and foremost because he tried to pass his own freely invented pseudo-Gaelic poetry as translations. Samuel Johnson was onto him from the beginning and was centrally involved with uncovering the trickery. Curley's study begins then by retracing the argument about the forgeries and presenting a case for Macpherson's guilt. Perhaps there were sixteen or so sources, but these were not translated so much as rewritten and expanded. "The evidence of Macpherson's creative process from first to last suggests a consistent preference for making up his material rather than for letting Gaelic antecedents control his literary productivity" (p. 36). Curley then moves to Johnson's larger interest in questions of authenticity and forgery and his extensive involvement in uncovering the Macpherson scandal. Curley's originality and energy lies in the second two-thirds of the book, which detail Johnson's cooperation with Irish anti-Ossianists, including his close collaboration with William Shaw with whom he produced a long anti-Ossian pamphlet at the end of his life. The book concludes by reproducing and annotating the entire pamphlet as an appendix.

Curley's book is learned, clear, and passionate. It will certainly be a must read for participants in the revived Ossian controversy. I was a bit puzzled however by the status of Johnson himself as at once object of study and presiding moral authority. If the partisans of Ossian tell their story with less-than-modest slant and opinion, so does Curley—a lover of Johnson if ever there were one. And yet, at the very least, we know what we are signed up for at the get go: "Johnson ... cared deeply about deception"; "Johnson was the arch-enemy of falsehood"; "Johnson would

have answered that truth in literature and life is a perennial human concern inextricably tied to the survival and fulfillment of the race" (pp. 3, 4).

The last example of life writing and biographically inflected criticism is Kirsten T. Saxton's *Narratives of Women and Murder in England, 1680–1760: Deadly Plots*. Saxton's book is about the "figure of the murderess in eighteenth-century England," and examines "stories of homicidal women" in order to show "the centrality of the female criminal subject to the rise of the British novel" (p. 1). Her study begins with the lavish and over-the-top murder plots of late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century "amatory fiction"—Behn's *History of the Nun* and *Fair Jilt*, Manley's *The Wife's Resentment*—turns next to cases of real-life murderesses, and concludes with Defoe and Fielding's separate interest in women who kill. Although Saxton does include relevant details of her novelists' biographies, especially Manley's and Fielding's, the pieces of life writing I found most interesting in this study were the criminal biographies in Saxton's third chapter. There she focuses on four criminal sensation stories from various points in the century: husband decapitators and father poisoners; killers of bystanders and torturers of apprentices. Saxton details how lives of real criminals circulated alongside works of fiction in the eighteenth-century market of letters, as Newgate biographies, accounts of the ordinaries, ballads, trial reports, and the like. The bulk of the chapter is designed to show how "female homicides demonstrate the ways in which what was on trial in eighteenth-century cases of female homicide was not simply the individual woman, but her symbolic relation to, among other things, attitudes about women's roles and natures" (p. 57). Saxton's project in this respect has a kind of nice, obverse symmetry with Anderson's. Both are interested in the life. Where Anderson wants to show, inventively, that veiled or dissimulated versions of the self always track back to authorial intentions, Saxton wants to show how biographical personae (her killers) reveal the intentions or attitudes of someone else or whole cultures. The chapter is intelligent throughout and does a wonderful job of bringing the discussion from the early eighteenth-century material to the midcentury fiction and juridical writing of Fielding.

ANTHOLOGIES

I will begin this section with Paula R. Backscheider and Catherine E. Ingrassia's long, comprehensive, and indispensable

British Women Poets of the Long Eighteenth Century: An Anthology. This is certain to be the standard anthology for course work, replacing Roger Lonsdale's *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* (Oxford, 1989). The editors are perfect for the task. Bakscheider and Ingrassia clearly work well together, having coedited the massive *Blackwell Companion to the Eighteenth-Century English Novel and Culture* only three years ago. The book follows on the heels of Bakscheider's Lowell prize winning *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry* (2005). *British Women Poets* collects 368 poems by 80 poets, including major and minor works from Behn to Anna Barbauld, Jane Barker to Charlotte Smith, and well beyond. Bakscheider and Ingrassia arrange the poems chronologically under types, within three large groupings: "Genre and Kind" (sonnet, hymn, fable ...); "Life Writing" (friendship, war, love ...); and "Writing about Writing" (alternative traditions, determination, plagiarism ...). They introduce the anthology with a long and lucid guide for the student on how to read eighteenth-century poetry. The three major sections have separate introductions of some length and consideration; each group also gets a judicious and crisp head note. The editorial hand is light, preserving the eighteenth-century feel, and the selections are admirably capacious. Bakscheider and Ingrassia write of their anthology, "ours is a response to what we see as a persistent need to document the history of women's poetic expression during the long eighteenth century and to rewrite the literary history of the period, a history from which women have been largely excluded or, in effect, ghettoized" (p. xxviii). It is quite something that one could still feel the need to say this in 2009, well after the canon wars have come and gone. To the degree to which the assessment is true, Bakscheider and Ingrassia have taken a great stride toward its remediation. With *British Women Poets*, the editors have done the field a tremendous service.

Cheryl L. Nixon has also done the field a tremendous service by compiling and editing *Novel Definitions: An Anthology of Commentary on the Novel, 1688–1815*. (Perhaps this is a moment for a general shout out of praise for Broadview Press, the publisher of the volume. I am quite sure none of us could teach without their books anymore.) Packaged and priced for coursework, this volume brings together more than a century of writing *about* the new species of writing we call the novel as it appeared to eighteenth-century audiences in all its novelty and strangeness. Nixon's book should replace Ioan Williams's *Novel and Romance, 1700–1800: A Documentary History* (1970). Her anthology is more

deeply researched and wide ranging. It brings together prefaces, critical essays, general cultural commentary, book reviews, and finally literary histories. Longer works are judiciously excerpted, and the various sections intelligently introduced and presented. The result is essential reading in both the culture and theory of novel writing and reading during the eighteenth century. Our courses on the eighteenth-century novel and our writing about the novel will be much the better for its appearance.

Joseph E. Harmon and Alan G. Gross's *The Scientific Literature: A Guided Tour* brings together three centuries of scientific writing, loosely grouped under the idea of the "scientific article." The collection begins with the late-seventeenth-century ferment in experimental science and moves into twentieth-century biology and physics. The heft of the anthology comes from writings in our period, and catalogs the excitement with which natural scientists of all kinds communicated and described experiments, theory, and research. The anthology runs the gamut from major players such as Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton to the anonymous reporters who recorded the transactions of the learned for the new periodical press.

Boswellians and anti-Boswellians everywhere, finally, will be pleased to see the publication of Lyle Larsen's *James Boswell: As His Contemporaries Saw Him*. Few figures have inspired such fandom or enmity over the history of eighteenth-century studies as a professional enterprise. (Is he a great biographer or do we need to protect Johnson from the errors of the *Life*?) Larson's gambit is to trace controversies over Boswell back to the eighteenth century itself by providing a documentary compendium of everything that was said about him by friends, acquaintances, and strangers. The book is arranged chronologically and has the structure of a biography recorded in palimpsest by the letters, diaries, journal articles, and reviews of others.

EDITIONS

The most noteworthy scholarly editions this year were the 7th and 8th volumes of The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne. With these volumes, the Florida edition of Sterne's writing—the standard for the field—has now moved from the fiction and sermons to the letters. Volume 7 covers 1739–64, and Volume 8 covers 1765–68. Edited by Melvyn New and Peter de Voogd, the volumes should replace Lewis Perry Curtis's Clarendon edition of Sterne's letters from 1935. New and de Voogd have discovered

twenty-five new letters, fleshed out the annotation with information from Arthur Cash's two-volume biography (Methuen, 1975, 1985), and paid vigorous attention to the vagaries of Sterne's hand. The editorial principles are scrupulous, the scholarship impeccable. We are in debt to New and his various collaborators for putting together a scholarly Sterne for our age.

Equally impressive in a different register is Valerie Rumbold's edition of Alexander Pope's 1743 "*Dunciad*" in *Four Books*. This is the first and only edition of the 1743 *Dunciad* to appear in a single, affordable, and teachable paperback, and the first at all since James Sutherland's fifth volume of the Twickenham Edition nearly fifty years ago. It is designed and priced to appeal at once to students and scholars. Editing Pope always presents the problem of annotating annotation as well as verse. The editor's footnotes come under and in many cases gloss Pope's, with the possibility of endless regress and ironic entrapment always seeming to rear their heads. Rumbold grabs this bull by the horn and presents us with a genuinely twenty-first century *Dunciad*. Her introduction is finely pitched for the scholar and the student. Her notes are learned and lucid, drawing on just how much we have learned since Sutherland about the circumstances of Pope's poem and the density of its allusions. The trouble anyone would confront is the suffocation of the lines of verse by the mass of surround. And true to this difficulty, some pages contain only one line of verse, followed by Pope's gloss and then Rumbold's gloss of the gloss and of the line itself. This is at moments entertaining. One imagines that Pope would have thought so. We can hope our students agree. It is in any case *the 1743 Dunciad* to teach and to own and is quite an achievement.

John Hawkins's 1787 *Life of Samuel Johnson LL.D.* has been reissued and edited by O M Brack Jr. The edition is a major accomplishment and clearly a labor of love by Brack, a member of the board of the Yale Johnson edition and curator of last year's Huntington Library tercentenary exhibition on Johnson. The volume is lushly produced and extensively annotated, with copious references to the changes that Hawkins put in as the biography was going to press. This is an act of recovery and celebration and, dare I say, identification. The Johnsonian hostility to Boswell—"worst biography ever!"—is smuggled in via the celebration of the unheralded Hawkins, from whom Boswell allegedly plagiarized and whose oblivion to posterity Boswell allegedly orchestrated.

This year's crop was livened finally by the presence of *The Diary of Edmund Harrold, Wigmaker of Manchester, 1712–1715*.

Scrupulously edited and annotated by Craig Horner, the diary is fascinating and strange and difficult (written in a crabbed vernacular, often filled in by the editor). Here is a representative slice: "This was a hard morn for wormw[oo]d and scurvy. Shaved 3 heads, drest 9 wigs and worked close. All perswades me not to meddle with widdow and children, [remain?] a batchalor with some money, etc." (p. 63).

OUR TEACHERS

One way of taking stock of what we do is to reflect on what we have done. The past year saw the publication of three festschriften celebrating the achievements of three pillars of eighteenth-century literary studies: Maximilian E. Novak, John Richetti, and Patricia Spacks. Each has had an immense role in creating the world we write about and teach to our students, the world that defines our professional lives. Our eighteenth century would be unrecognizable without their collective efforts. The volumes assembled in their names are fine testimony to the importance of their careers.

Defoe's Footprints: Essays in Honour of Maximillian E. Novak, edited by Robert M. Maniquis and Carl Fisher, brings together a clutch of penetrating, searching, and altogether fascinating essays on various aspects of Defoe's life and work. Each exhibits a triangulation unique to this sort of volume: a bringing together of the mind of the critic, of Novak, and of Defoe. The result is consistently riveting. J. Paul Hunter remarks at the beginning of his essay on Defoe's poetry that "[t]hose who seek to honour Max Novak's career by pacing his own fully explored turf, the writings of Defoe face a ... quest: not so much trying to catch Max in an oversight as trying to find an opening where his work points to important matters that he has touched on only briefly" (p. 55). The essays by Stuart Sherman, Jayne Lewis, Hunter, Richetti, Robert Folkenflik, Roxanne Wheeler, Brown, Fisher, Manuel Shonhorn, Michael Seidel, and Bender crisscross this turf in fine style. Every one of them repays close attention. Readers will of course follow their own interests. Mine were drawn to Sherman's essay on silences in Defoe, Lewis's essay on air and atmosphere in *Robinson Crusoe*, and Hunter's on poetry. Each begins with a Novakian insight and then turns its attention to some unexpected and surprising part of Defoe: whether the conjoining of represented silence and realism; air and philosophies of mind and matter; or finally the strange typicality of his poetry. The editors remark

in the introduction that the essays are “more than a bouquet of academic civility” (p. 6). That is true. Even so, they are also a bouquet of academic civility in its brightest form.

Rivka Swenson and Elise Lauterbach’s *Imagining Selves: Essays in Honor of Patricia Meyer Spacks* covers a broad range of territory, from mid-seventeenth-century conduct books to late twentieth-century memoirs, Restoration drama to eighteenth-century poetry to Romantic era fiction. This is of course a fine tribute to the catholicity of interests of Spacks herself, author of some nineteen books over fifty years. The title for the collection distills Spacks’s variegated concerns—boredom, privacy, the supernatural, the unusual, and experimental—into a far-reaching toggling of the literary and the extraliterary. “Repeatedly,” the editors write, “she shows us how closely the forms of selfhood, narrative, and lived experience are intertwined, as she patiently, persistently, and elegantly unpacks their reciprocal dynamism within their historical and cultural contexts” (p. 11). The essays in this collection remain true to the dynamism of their subjects and thereby to Spacks herself. Spacks’s colleague Cynthia Wall, for example, tightly weaves Hume’s *History* with Sophia Lee’s historical romance *The Recess* in an essay that had me rethink entirely Hume’s professed “love of literary fame.” Wall observes that Hume’s *History* is at turns “factually unstable, historically wobbly, or stylistically novelistic” and then argues that these properties make the work “a sort of generic sister, an inspirational mirror, for Lee’s *Recess*” (p. 23). Later in the collection, two fine essays bring Austen into unusual and fascinating frames of reference. The first by David Marshall looks very closely at two episodes in *Pride and Prejudice*—Elizabeth reading Darcy’s letter, and then the tour of Pemberley—alongside theories of the picturesque, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Augustine. A quote from the conclusion will supply the flavor: “Austen superimposes the rhetoric of Augustinian conversion on the rhetoric of aesthetics to depict a point of time in which *turning away* is transformed into *turning back*, in which *avoiding sight* is transformed into *turning back to look again*” (p. 226). The second, by Deidre Lynch, looks at the Victorian revisiting of the Austenian quotidian, its taking notice of “the Austen novel’s way with everyday eventlessness, its accentuation of the resident as well as the incident and accident, and of the stabilities as well as dramas” (p. 238). This is keenly worded and evocative stuff, and coming near the end of my “reading marathon,” as Lynch put it in her *SEL* review of several years ago, I went at it with great relish (p. 723).

It is testimony to Spacks's productivity, finally, that no sooner had her festschrift appeared than its assertion that she had written eighteen books was out of date. This year saw the publication of a new Spacks volume, *Reading Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, a book designed for the specialist and general reader alike. *Reading Eighteenth-Century Poetry* groups a wide range of eighteenth-century poems and verse forms loosely under the topic of how to live. The book moves in and out of close reading and broad thematic survey, and includes nicely slowed-down attention to John Dyer, William Cowper, and Mary Robinson. A treat.

Richetti's essay in the Novak festschrift is about the particularities of British realism as a kind of missing chapter in Erich Auerbach's majestic overview of European literature. It pays attention to the distinctive forms and preoccupations of *Moll Flanders*, *Tom Jones*, and *Love in Excess* and "highlights what might be called our own far less confident sense of the real or the actual ... a radically different perspective on the nature of actuality as it is represented in narrative" (p. 73). Following the form of *Mimesis*, Richetti cites a long passage from each novel and then patiently unravels the distinctive realism he knows so well. Defoe's "demotic" inserts the reader into a modern social order deflected—slightly, artfully, and only partially—by the eros and comic symmetry of Haywood and Fielding (p. 94). The essay is virtuoso close reading and literary history folded in one and therefore a fitting example of the critical practice that has defined the long and distinguished career celebrated in this year's double issue of the annual *Eighteenth-Century Novel*. The volume has essays by Richetti's former students—Robert DeMaria Jr., Lynn Festa, Susan Greenfield, Kate Levin, Jack Lynch, Adam Potkay, and Juliet Shields—along with colleagues at Penn and the wider community of eighteenth-century scholars, including Backscheider, Bender, Brown, Hunter, Folkenflik, Kaul, McKeon, and Wall. The result is a horn of critical plenty. Richetti's early work on popular fiction finds a late response in Backscheider's arresting reflections on eighteenth-century and contemporary popular culture and in Lynch's provocative consideration of the oddness of *Tristram Shandy*. The literary critical habits and strengths Richetti exhibits in his essay on *Mimesis* parry evocatively with Hunter's essay on form in *Tom Jones* and Bender's essay on the novel as modern myth. Richetti's philosophical interests—everywhere in evidence, but especially in his book on *Philosophical Writing* (1983)—are reflected in McKeon's long and supple excursus on drama, science, and the origins of aesthetic discourse and in Potkay's sharply

focused and nuanced discussion of Humean compatibilism in *Amelia*. Finally, Richetti's materialism and politics find themselves differently taken up in Festa's discussion of property and personhood in *Mansfield Park*, Wall's finely grained description of the spatial economy of London Bridge, Kaul's reconnoitering of empire and British poetry, and Shields's examination of Irish and American literary transactions.

The pleasure in these volumes lies not just in homage paid, but also in active conversation. Each presents *in situ* the method and language specific to our discipline: a mode of sophistication and a way of placing oneself in relation to texts. It would likely be impossible to say what this language is like, other than we come by it in our training, and so repay in our practice those who have taught us.

I began this review by asking what it is that we do. Any answer risks hubris. Even so, I think there is perhaps a greater risk in allowing evidence and the archive to fill the void of field-wide conversations, distinctive methods, or points of style. So it is partly as an attempt to find some space apart from or alongside historical orthodoxy that I looked hardest for shared problems and emerging polemics. The work that stuck around for me, that I continued to think about, challenged my hardest-held preconceptions about authorship or form or the borders between text traditions or the uneven pace of literary, political, intellectual, and social histories. I was happiest, I think, when I heard a certain wavering or crack in the smooth delivery of expected notes: the sound of discovery or zeal. Let's hear more of this. We are lucky to work in this line of business and should make the most of it.

NOTE

¹This count includes new books of criticism about the (long) eighteenth century. It does not include anthologies, editions, reprints, or paperbackings. It is worth noting that commercial academic presses, prominently Ashgate this year, seem to be taking up the slack.

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