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British Masculinity in the 'Gentleman's Magazine', 1731 to 1815, by Gillian Williamson. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016. 296 pp. ISBN 9781137542328 (hb) 9781137542335 (e-bk)

Read in lieu of contemporary feminism-obsessed literary multiculturalism, *British Masculinity*, with its strikingly fragmented chapters against the promise of thematic investigation, encapsulates the spirit of prevalent gender comparisons. As a candid narrative of intellectual repetition, it succeeds to portray an example of female critics' growing thirst for rewriting historical clashes which have gendered literary competition amongst men and women. Offering, at the outset, a parallel text for comparative significance, the author invites her readers to consider Kathryn Shevelow's *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodicals* (1989) for its analysis of feminine attributes. However indirect yet untactful this readerly instruction appears in its positioning within the introductory chapter, there is no doubt, as Gillian Williamson asserts, that the *Gentleman's Magazine* provides a robust source for literary scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By way of unabashedly conventional reading and chronological evaluation, *British Masculinity*, in short, chronicles the theoretical backdrop of eighteenth-century "gentlemanliness" as Williamson categorically summarizes certain ideas and ideologies on politeness, anxiety, and private and public spheres, rather than expanding on the magazine's acceptance in public literary and non-literary circles. In her expansive thematization of eighteenth-century masculinities, Williamson momentarily discusses the diversity of cultural qualities that bring us to her literary engagement with British manliness historiography.

Even so, much careful analytical work has gone into two other particularly interesting areas in this book, namely the social practices of the magazine's readership and its literary cultural approach to masculinity. Williamson's choice of the masculine "middling-sort" men, that of those espousing self-restraint while being involved in active and economically productive industry, goes some way towards hypothetically instructing the reader where to look for—in periodicals—for cultural definitions and poetic identifications with "ideal" British masculinity of the pre- and post-Enlightenment eras. In her more strategic than literary manoeuvre, Williamson demonstrates the core counter-argument to eighteenth-century feminine frailty, exposing masculine "power" as the centre-subject through numerous issues of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. She has recognised the magazine's take on the idea of gender and its subdivisions in eighteenth-century masculinities as hierarchically and "socially constructed" power rather than its engagement with observed manliness and practiced gender norms of the time.

Despite the author's attempt to clarify manliness as portrayed in the magazine, a want of adequate debate—surrounding diverse literary behaviours of eighteenth-

century male and female writers—is manifest. For instance, one hardly notes any mention of "maternal authority", as discussed throughout by Davies (2014), written in conversation between male and female writers or presented in works of fiction and poetry of the time, while also being advertised and mentioned in the same magazine. Given the expansion of Williamson's introductory themes, one would have expected to see further examples of contextual gender roles as the realistic background for what emerged in actual volumes of the magazine. Sarah and Henry Fielding, for instance, would have been befitting literary figures for such conversational and contextual understanding of gender roles within literary circles. Several questions arise, in the face of missing mention of such close-knit literary families, one being whether Sarah Fielding's female characters were discussed with male writers—concerning their assertive and active roles rather than presenting eighteenth-century frail femininity. Or were these female characters ever objected to by the magazine's editors and literary confidantes? As different works were incorporated into commonplace lists of recent publications in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744) appearing in volume 23 attests to such acknowledgement of, and empowering stances behind, women's literary productions. Yet, Williamson does not reiterate the multidimensional aspects and the wider scope of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Reading on through the introductory to middle chapters, one gets the impression that men and women writers lived in separate chambers with no occasion for conversation about their gender roles. However, the magazine included such diversity of subjects, in so much as occasional articles were toned against "the tight-lacing of young women" (Porter, 1985, p. 153). But, in this claustrophobic vision of masculinity—depicted in Williamson's views on men's "benevolent control over women"—a recognition of much eighteenth- and nineteenth-century masculine support for feminine expression is altogether lost.

Nevertheless, Williamson is very good at suggesting the turning points concerning "gentlemanliness" by returning to relevant religious takes on the subject from 1731 to 1815, a continuous overabundance of reproducing fatherly figures through inheritance and divine vocations. However, where "value" is established as a foundational subject alongside gender roles, eighteenth-century discussions call for an in-depth reading of David Hartley (1705–1757), whose theories and major works such as *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* (1749) are more relevant. Many male poets and novelists followed his doctrines on values as well as human nature irrespective of gender. However, Williamson has not addressed this aspect of masculinity in the long eighteenth century and in connection with the value-based spectrum of *The Gentleman's Magazine*.

On the other hand, her reading of eighteenth-century masculinity through this particular magazine is mal-represented for its lack of aesthetic and scientific examples of men's articles, which take neither men's nor women's sides, but only prove to showcase men's contributions to general knowledge. One example in this range is the case of early neurophysiology which is entirely overlooked. We know that Edward Cave, the magazine's founder, had managed to bring together many diverse articles, including specific works on electricity. Such diversity of topics only testifies to the magazine's encompassing aims to offer the public the latest news on scientific breakthroughs as well as literary and cultural productions. To conclude that the magazine was drawn upon the controlling power of men is to misunderstand and misrepresent one of the most outstanding periodicals in the modern sense.

Ostensibly, then, Williamson's *British Masculinity* revolves more around our current obsession with what women may have missed out during the eighteenth century than what dimensions of masculinity the magazine's readers and writers identified with. In this sense, the book proves phenomenally repetitive for its re-ordering of the theoretical and historical conceptions of British masculinities. It offers, nonetheless, much satisfaction if readers aim to learn about the magazine's history in connection with eighteenth-century plethora of ideas on gender. Moreover, in order to be deemed convincing, Williamson's initial suggestion of comparative cases for femininity and masculinity could be understood as both enticing and encouraging, even more so for scholars of cultural studies than historians of gender.

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The Men's Shed Movement: The Company of Men, edited by Barry Golding. Champaign, IL: Common Ground Publishing Co., 2015. 433 pp. ISBN: 978-1612297873 $40.00

The Men's Shed Movement started in Australia, originally in small cities and rural areas, for and among working class men. The need was felt especially given higher mental health problems/issues and suicides among older men, often retired and with a felt loss of the masculine provider identity previously provided by their jobs. Barry Golding estimates there are now 1,800 men's sheds today with a new one opening each day around the world. This is not one of the branches of what was commonly called the contemporaneous men's movement of the 1980s and 1990s, however. Men's sheds evolved informally as places where men could meet, variably in sheds, garages, dens, and sometimes unoccupied buildings, as their activities grew and needed more space, while using their hands to build things, which they were used to doing as part of their work. It has also been a place for men who were unemployed, to work with their hands and feel useful.

Men's sheds spread from Australia to New Zealand, UK, Scotland, and Ireland. Canada has seen the latest organization activity, often in collaboration with various community partners, which in Canada include Movember Foundation, the University of Manitoba, and the Men's Depression and Suicide Network of the University of British Columbia School of Nursing. The men's sheds movement does not come out of any of the branches of what might be called the contemporary men's movement, which has pro-feminist, mythopoetic, fathers' rights, and men's rights divisions, and whose branches were rarely made up primarily of working class men coming together on the basis of a grassroots ethos. The former is more of