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The Rise and Fall of English: Reconstructing English as a Discipline by Robert Scholes. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998. Pp. xi + 203 \$20.

Robert Scholes's new book has just arrived, from Yale University Press, with the portentous main title, *The Rise and Fall of English*. Is it a major work, likely to define discussion in the field? No, it simply comes too late in the game for that, the game being the ongoing "crisis" that afflicts English studies, or at any rate the crisis that afflicts the way people in the profession prefer to talk about it these days. Is this a book worth discussing nevertheless? Yes, for at least three reasons. First, because of who wrote and published it. Second, because of what Professor Scholes has to say. Third, because of the way he has written his book. At the very least, *The Rise and Fall of English* is a congenial combination of academic critique and personal apologia written by a distinguished, senior scholar who has played no small part in shaping the "fallen" profession he now deems in need of "reconstruction."

As anybody who has studied "English" since the 1960s is probably aware, Robert Scholes is one of the discipline's major players. He is presently Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Humanities at Brown University. His books—like his career generally—offer a paradigmatic commentary on what it has meant to profess literature in America since the end of New Criticism; among his major titles: *Structuralism and Literature* (1974), *Semiotics and Interpretation* (1982), *Textual Power: Literary Theory and the Teaching of English* (1985), *Protocols of Reading* (1989). Scholes' most recent work provides a provisional epilogue to this ongoing, scholarly mediation, and like his previous works, *The Rise and Fall of English* comes well recommended, and handsomely produced, by a distinguished, academic publisher, Yale University Press. "An engaging, delightfully readable book by one of the leading commentators and theorists in the field," Michael Bérubé is quoted as saying in his cautious dust jacket blurb.

And that's where the interest begins, with regard to the "field" that this "leading" work fits into, and the fact that a work's being "readable" is worth noting. Which is of course unfortunately true, given what self-indulgent and undelightful writers most academics turn out to be, in this field, as in most others. (Whatever else its faults may be, *The Rise and Fall of English* is, as Professor Bérubé suggests with his guarded praise, an engaging and readable book.) As to the specific field in question here, both Professors Bérubé and Scholes are practitioners in what might be referred to generally as crisis intervention studies. Ever since "theory" passed into its revisionist dotage, and probably before, academic workers have been involved, supposedly, in one kind of crisis or another: cultural (il)literacy, the canon wars, cultural studies, multiculturalism, and interdisciplinarity. They all address the same, all-too-familiar question, paraphrased neatly by an old Hank Williams song. "Why don't you love me like you used to do?" with the *you* in question being the funding agents and tuition-paying customers who used to believe that what English professors had to sell was crucial to the construction of a meaningful identity and/or job resume. Despite the fact that expensive books continue to be published by distinguished academic presses, as

written (and praised) by prominent and (presumably) well paid professors, it's a crisis we're in. Or so the story goes.

This is a claim not wholly without merit, as Professor Scholes makes clear; and that is the second reason for being interested in his book. His case—if not precisely news—is still far from being irrelevant. The argument, as developed in five independent essays, is easy to summarize. The first essay provides the historical background. "The Rise of English in Two American Colleges" deals with the curricular advent of English literary studies at Brown and Yale universities, which Scholes knows firsthand (as student and faculty member respectively), and which he claims to be typical. The method of exposition is to develop his thesis based on lengthy quotation of primary sources, leading to the conclusion, here, that English rose because dedicated faculty members believed in what they were doing and could explain their belief to others, namely their students: "What is important here is that, for this representative figure of the professional high-water mark of English as a field of study [William Lyon Phelps, who taught at Yale from 1892 to 1933], there is absolutely no tension between teaching and preaching. They are aspects of the same calling" (15). In an interesting connection, Scholes reads deconstruction as a last, if self-defeating, attempt to keep hope alive: "the disciplinary shift from New Criticism to the American form of deconstruction should be seen as a still more desperate and constricted attempt to keep the transcendental aura of literature alive" (28).

The second chapter, "No dog would go on living like this," develops at some length the reason for the "fall" of English, which is the abandoning of claims to "truth" by those who profess the subject. There is about this discussion a distinct feeling of "same old same old," but Scholes goes about his work ably and with clarity, and for readers who encounter his thesis for the first time here, this is as good an introduction as any. In the third essay, he turns to the subject of professional training, "What Is Becoming an English Teacher?" He concentrates on the role of writing, and the false (and professionally harmful) distinction that exists in English departments between literature and rhetoric or composition. The advice, basically, is of the "don't do that" variety, with which one can sympathize readily enough, if not be deeply moved by because Scholes's critique seems to comprehend so little of the politics and economics of English as corporate production. (English departments are first of all businesses, at least administratively, with employees, and executives; they are supposed to break even, if not make a profit, in terms of student credit hours, with that "profit" intended to cover the losses of other, less profitable university undertakings.)

The fourth essay, "A Flock of Cultures," represents a turning in the collection from largely negative critique toward a program of positive recommendations, in this case recommendations based on the historical origin of English studies. "I propose to go back to the roots of our liberal arts tradition," Scholes writes, "and reinstate grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric at the core of college education" (120). Each element of this new/old trivium gets a contemporary updating, with the emphasis on "process" rather than canonical, textual study: "texts would not be studied simply 'because they are there' but rather as the means to an end of greater mastery of cultural processes by the students themselves" (126). This leads to Scholes's final essay,

"A Fortunate Fall?" Here, he proposes the new trivium as a basis for a reformed English major that will benefit from the historic fall from prominence by incorporating a new attitude (and humility) toward outmoded ideas of canon, and new approaches toward literacy as ongoing process—a process that will embrace "media" generally, not merely "great books." "What I have been proposing," he concludes, "is a discipline based on rhetoric and the teaching of reading and writing over a broad range of texts" (179).

Interspersed among the five essays are four "assignments" each of which recycles work previously published or presented, but relates to the present book by virtue of questions raised or problems being addressed. These are the most overtly autobiographical pieces in the book, and anyone interested in Professor Scholes's life in letters will probably find them interesting.

Which is all well and good, and I don't mean to imply that Robert Scholes isn't entitled at this point in a long and distinguished career to reflect on the work he has done and the direction his—and my—profession is headed. It is difficult, in fact, to be critical of a book that is so openhanded, so honest, and so "readable" (not least, as I've suggested, because so many others are not and don't intend to be). Nevertheless, there is an important question to be addressed here, which to some extent is taken up by *The Rise and Fall of English*, but which one cannot, at the same time, expect any author to deal with satisfactorily on his own. The question is *why*? Why does this book exist in the first place, and what does its existence have to say about the larger question at hand, which is the status of a beleaguered and much maligned profession?

With all due respect, I'd like to propose that *The Rise and Fall of English* would not exist, in its present form (with lengthy quotations and much recycled material), if it were not for the prominence of the author, whose ideas might more forcefully and usefully be presented in a brief article. That the book does exist is not Professor Scholes's "fault," because there is no fault to find. What can be deduced here is the existence of an academic establishment organized by publication, with the only operating principle being the "more is better" rule. If publication is how we who practice English have decided to judge one another, then the more of it we do, the better and more worthwhile we become (and the more likely to command big salaries, attractive grants, nice jobs, etc.). Inasmuch as "we" have created an academic publication industry in our own image, this industry must obey the same rule, always publishing more, in a kind of egghead version of capitalism's perpetual need for growth. Every year there are new academic book series, new journals, new conferences. More and more and more articles, books, presentations, papers, reviews (including this one). And for what? To show how much smarter we have become? To demonstrate our sudden proliferation of humanity? To demonstrate anything that couldn't have been demonstrated before, with fewer articles, conferences, books, and reviews? Of course not. The reason for all this growth is the same reason that capital needs to grow. This is a business, and that's how it works; and the responsible parties are all of us (regardless of how little we are willing to accept responsibility). To his credit, Professor Scholes touches upon these matters himself.

So, what then? Again, to his credit, Scholes acknowledges that most academic work in the crisis intervention field is heavy on the crisis narrative

and weak, if not altogether lacking, when it comes to practical intervention and advice. While he tries to provide useful suggestions himself (give up the false division of comp. and English, abandon the canon in favor of a process oriented degree, reinstitute a new "trivium"), his recommendations are general and ungrounded in political reality, as I've suggested. If he—or anyone else—were really to take seriously the intervention part of the task at hand, it would be refreshing to have them simply discard the crisis part of the story altogether. "Yes, yes, yes," one wants perpetually to say, "of course English is screwed up, everyone knows that, has known that, will keep on knowing that as long as books like this keep getting published." So jettison the "fall," and take your own good advice. "Do the right thing" for two or three or four years. Then write a self-help article about it, providing syllabi, samples of student assignments, relevant planning documents, records of curricular implementation problems, and so on. But that's not going to happen (at least not in English, though it might in "comp.") for the simple reason that it is not profitable as a publishing strategy. First of all, it would absorb too much time for too little return; and second, as anybody knows, pedagogical pieces such as the one I have proposed are comparatively valueless professionally. (Scholes comes close to doing what I've suggested in his fourth Assignment, "Pacesetter English," where he briefly describes a program of study he helped develop for high school students.)

Which gets back to the question of the rise and fall of English, and a necessary corrective to Professor Scholes's title. It is not English that rose and fell, it is English departments and professors. And that is a different matter entirely. There are two dimensions to this correction that are consequential. First is the fact that most Americans do not go to college, and of those who do, most do not major in English. They may take an English course, but chances are they will not be taught by a professor but by a graduate student or part-time worker. Old news, of course, but still important to consider when one talks about a "fall," since strictly speaking there hasn't been one. What has happened is that professors with Ph.D.s in English have preferred to absent themselves from the majority of college students. And also (even more consequentially) from the training of public school teachers, who typically take their own English courses, taught not by English professors, but by Education School faculty. What this means is that the public schools, where every student does take English, lots of it, are entirely out of our hands, because that's the way we want it. More Americans are taking more English courses right now than at any time in the nation's history, and often of precisely the media literate sort Professor Scholes recommends. But these are courses about which English professors know nothing, except on rare occasions when they've been hired by institutes or other granting agencies to show interest in the schools.

The second, necessary corrective to the "fall" of English has to do with the populace generally, and the relation of English professors to it (a relation often addressed in either more or less hysterical terms by reference to the lack of "public intellectuals"). As it turns out, illiteracy is in no danger of breaking out. Book sales in America are at an all-time high, as is the proliferation of book stores. Counter to all the dire predictions, the "booboisie" imagined

by Mencken (and a lot of academics) have gone out, bought books (and a caffe latte too, maybe), and then returned home to read. And when they wanted guidance in their reading, they've turned not to us (big surprise), but to Borders or Amazon.com or Oprah, who has her own book club, her own programs devoted to discussing and evaluating books, talking to authors, visiting relevant historical sites and archives, engaging readers in back-and-forth discussions. The work of literary scholarship and critical inquiry is getting done, in other words. But not, by and large, by professors. And this has been a matter of choice, "theirs" and "ours" both. When it comes to the non-student, reading populace, "we" professors have fastidiously not cared about "them," and now "they" do not care remotely about "us." (In the few rare cases where this has not been the case, such as E. D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy*, which was about the schools, not the university, or Alan Bloom's rant about the degradation of teenagers, and his subsequent discovery by then Secretary of Education William Bennett, the public has reacted with significant enthusiasm and interest.)

But most of the time, the professors couldn't be bothered because we were too busy getting our work done, writing the articles that few of our peers and none of the public will ever read, meanwhile letting the teaching of the citizens of this republic go to the lowest bidder (not us). Again, old news. So, what then? In one sense, this is a sad situation to be in. Our own pettifogging, and arrogance, and exclusionism have made us almost wholly irrelevant to the broader life of the most media-driven culture in human history. And perhaps most damningly, we have become irrelevant because of the way we have chosen to write and speak, and the fetishistic attitude we hold toward "academic" publication, as opposed to popular journalism, teaching, or just plain talking. Given what we've done to the "English" in our care, why would anybody trust us to advise them about their English? Well, they wouldn't. That much is clear. Again, Professor Scholes is clear about this dereliction. But his cure, which is to propose more academic work, is not likely to change much of anything.

If the problem is an academic economy based on writing, then the first thing we ought to do is stop writing. Everybody. Students, teachers, everybody. Just say NO to writing, for a couple of years at least. (Demonstrably, academic and/or economic success in this society has nothing to do with writing of our sort anyhow, so no harm done. And this is where we might start turning our sow's ear into a silk purse, our lemons into lemonade.) Instead of writing, we might just talk to each other about the pleasures of the imagination. That—per Professor Scholes's historical review—is what professing practitioners of English used to do, and they found a wide, general audience doing it. So we ought to try it again. (We might even talk to the Ed. School.) It might turn out the best work of all. For the traditionalists, we'd be making a great return to the Horatian virtues of pleasure and utility. For those given to subversion, what could be more subversive to late capital than teaching a bunch of Americans how to have unsupervised pleasure all on their own, out of reach of TV, film, beepers, cell phones, and the

Internet? It's worth a try, at least. Given how irrelevant we have made ourselves appear to the majority of thinking adults, we could probably get away with it, since nobody thinks we matter anyhow. So, why not?

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Common Ground: Eighteenth-Century Satiric Fiction and the Poor by Judith Frank. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996. Pp. ix + 230. \$39.50.

Judith Frank's *Common Ground: Eighteenth-Century Satiric Fiction and the Poor* is the most recent contribution to a growing body of work focusing upon the relationship between cultural form and the spectacle of poverty in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain. Like Elizabeth Helsinger's *Rural Scenes and National Representation* (Princeton University Press, 1997), Tim Fulford's *Landscape, Liberty, and Authority* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), and Celeste Lanban's *Romantic Vagrancy* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), Frank's *Common Ground* sets out to demonstrate that the cultural productions of the dominant classes are fully imbricated within the socioeconomic transformations which in this period made it impossible for those who were not poor to deny a troubling identity with those who were. As Frank puts it, invoking Peter Stallybrass and Allon White's *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* and Bruce Robbins's *The Servant's Hand*, her readings of Fielding, Sterne, Smollett, and Burney "are driven by the insistence that the presence of the poor exerts a formative pressure upon the consciousness and the literary expression of the dominant classes" (3). In tracing an increasingly urgent contest between satire and the discourse on leisure and labor from *Joseph Andrews* to *The Wanderer*, Frank argues that the satiric novel incorporates the dominant classes' ambivalence about their constitutive affiliation to labor (and its Other: poverty) as a formal strategy of denial. To avoid the troubling recognition that the "gentle" and the poor share a common ground—a common psychological, economic, and social precariousness defined in relation to labor, leisure, and poverty—fiction in the late eighteenth-century follows, according to Frank, a "de-hybridizing logic" (24) that tries to segregate the high from the low under the guise of a democratizing form—the satiric novel. This logic, however, seems doomed to failure, for by the time Frances Burney publishes *The Wanderer*, the novel has finally failed "to ward off the processes of the division and reorganization of labor" and has acknowledged that labor—an economic necessity—grounds social and personal identity in the brave new world of industrial capitalism.

Offering provocative readings of *Shamela*, *Joseph Andrews*, *A Sentimental Journey*, *Humphry Clinker*, *Cecilia*, and *The Wanderer*, Frank shows that these novels to varying degrees and with varying strategies concern "the ways the poor were despised and denied on the political and social level over the course of the century: the curtailing of popular festivity, the shift from a paternalist to a contractual model of service, the social dislocations attendant upon enclosure, the reorganization of labor practices" (5). Puzzled by and

anxious about the presence of increasing numbers of the poor, whose precarious relation to the economy in some ways mirrored their own, those who were not poor struggled to come to terms with the appropriate measure of their affective response to poverty, as well as to their social obligations to the poor. Moreover, these novels register ambivalence in eighteenth-century culture about the authenticity of feeling as it circulated somewhat too freely throughout the social body. This ambivalence toward feeling, Frank argues, folds into a similar ambivalence about leisure and labor; feeling, labor, and leisure, once legible as signs of distinction between classes, in the eighteenth century came to blur those distinctions. "The gentle," as Frank insists upon calling those who were not poor, thereby blurring important distinctions between the aristocracy, landed gentry, and middle class, "were peculiarly susceptible to identification with the poor, because theirs too was a status group defined in relation to labor—specifically, lack of labor" (7).

As members of a social group that once grounded its identity in literacy, refined feeling, and independence from labor, the novelists discussed here struggled to preserve their sense of distinction in a literary form that depended precisely upon the collapse of those former guarantors of social status. They found a means to engage this contradiction, according to Frank, in a new form of comic satire that exploits the identification with the poor as a means to avert any direct confrontation with "the potentially devastating effects of social changes formative of the poor and of the gentry alike" (8). As she puts it, "satire is the genre in which the gentleman gets too close to the poor, in an act uncertainly figured as one of desire, misapprehension, exploitation, salvation" (22). Yet, satire protects the gentleman from the shock of recognition, for it arrests or prevents the gentle reader from recognizing clearly the object of its loss, the source of its feeling of sorrow; that is, satire, like melancholia, prevents the reader from recognizing and responding to "the devastating social [and psychological] effects of economic 'progress'" (8).

The five chapters of *Common Ground* divide into two parts, as Frank's argument shifts attention from what she describes as the self-constituting literary identification with the poor in Fielding and Sterne to a melancholia that stops short of such identification in Smollett and Burney. In the novels of the first two writers, the imaginary identification with the poor tends to shore up the ideological subject position of the dominant class: this identification, constitutive of "personhood or identity" (8), takes place at the level of genre in Fielding, and at the level of character and characterization in Sterne. Fielding, according to Frank, is concerned with the potential for the rise in literacy among the poor to obscure distinctions between the classes, and so the preface to *Joseph Andrews* worries about the way works of fiction might impregnate a lower-class reading public with inappropriate desires. Similarly, Sterne is concerned with maintaining within the economy of feeling distinctive boundaries between the polite and the lower classes; thus, *A Sentimental Journey* polices the feelings and utterances of the poor, even as its gentlemanly narrator "voluntarily and self-consciously inhabit[s] the position of the lower classes" (28) in order to free himself from similar restrictions.

By contrast, in the novels of Smollett and Burney melancholia complicates the identification with the poor. Rather than firming up the boundaries be-

tween poor and "the gentle," these novels lead to a kind of aporia: a mental paralysis before what one might call the traumatic spectacle of poverty. Melancholia in these novels functions as a means to "arrest affect" (8); that is, basically to evade the psychological consequences of recognizing the dispossession of the poor. While Smollett and Burney also are concerned with maintaining social boundaries, their novels more directly measure appropriate affective and social responses to the loss of customary relations between the landed and the landless. *Humphry Clinker* and *Cecelia* both worry "about the excessive nature of grief" (29) which arises in characters who have internalized the dispossession of the poor, and *Cecilia*, in particular, thematizes charity as a social act that tempers excessive feeling and links the "domestic woman" to the poor. From Frank's discussion of these novels emerges a complex portrait of a society deeply fraught in contradictions over its moral and social responsibilities to the poor, and of a cultural system permeated with a discourse on poverty attempting to deny the catastrophe from which it devolves.

Chapter 1: "'What You Seek Is Nowhere': The Comic Novel and Lower-Class Literacy" describes Fielding's *Shamela* as a work anxious about the novel's "power to shape subjectivities and to act as an agent for cultural change" (31). Fielding's work is especially concerned with his ambivalence over lower-class literacy, given that Fielding owes his success as a writer in part to the growth of the reading public, and yet aims to preserve distinctions within the social hierarchy. Frank reads the "trajectory" of Fielding's career from *Shamela* to *Joseph Andrews* as a move from "popular—that is, theatrical—entertainment to literary representation" (32), from an aural/visual form to the written text. Frank aims to show that this shift is bound up with the efforts to regulate and even eliminate popular forms of festivities in the eighteenth century. Furthermore, Fielding's aesthetic shift is bound up with "an anxious reflection on the potential immorality of written representation, and a concomitant meditation on the types of pleasure to be banned from comic writing" (33). Frank is at her best when analyzing the class implications of Fielding's Preface to *Joseph Andrews*, in which Fielding transfers Aristotelian categories of comedy to the novel in order to "legitimize its attention to the poor" (33). It is surprising that Frank does not invoke Bakhtin's theories of the novel in this chapter, for she wants to show that Fielding's Preface defines the novel, in contrast to romance, as a hybrid genre that regulates the intermixing of high and low cultural forms: "The dignifying of the comic—a mode of representing those of inferior rank and manners—into a classical literary genre intended for a cultural elite entails an abstraction from the cruder and more bodily pleasures of the burlesque" (37). The "cross-class imitation" or hybridization that takes place in Fielding's new form also anxiously reflects upon the increasing difficulty to draw neat boundaries between social ranks, as the rise of literacy, the growth of the middle class, and the circulation of money and commodities promoted an unsettling fluidity into British society. Aligning himself with the landowning classes, Fielding's impulse is to discipline those discursive elements aligned with what Frank, following Stallybrass and White, calls the "low-Other"; yet, the new comic novel Fielding describes utterly depends upon embracing these elements. Hence, "as a social practice, the work of novel-making entails both the ap-

propriation of the poor and the containment of their mimetic voices" (46). In Frank's reading of *Joseph Andrews*, she demonstrates how Fielding's own anxiety over lower-class literacy, which he feared and upon which as a professional author he was partly dependent, is caught up in the same kind of contradiction, leading Fielding to burlesque lower-class literacy in an attempt to strip it of its desire—the desire for social mobility: "By decathecting literacy in the transition from burlesque to novel, Fielding creates an egalitarian fantasy of social mobility while wishing that fantasy inaccessible to those perhaps most eager for it" (60). At the same time, and this is a point Frank elaborates less clearly, Fielding's Preface and novels betray a melancholy nostalgia for the loss of the popular.

Chapter 2, "'A Man Who Laughs Is Never Dangerous': The Gentleman's Disposition in 'A Sentimental Journey,'" argues that Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* appropriates the poor as a means to constitute the subject position of the gentleman. Reading Sterne's novella as a metonymy for the discourse on sensibility, Frank shows how the negotiation of class difference, here grounded in feeling, draws the bourgeois subject to the brink of identification with the poor only to reinforce its difference. Frank begins her argument by analyzing Parson Yorick's speech on the Inquisition in *Tristram Shandy* as a meditation upon the "crisis of legibility"; for Sterne, and for English law, "the prisoner on the rack . . . is subjected to a torture whose primary purpose is to render it visible; once the body becomes permanently visible . . . knowledge can be obtained about it" (73). Sterne's emphasis upon the corporeality of pathos in *A Sentimental Journey* registers another version of the crisis of legibility. Frank shows how the captive starling episode figures captivity as a disciplinary probing of the docile body and blurs the distinctions between genuine pathos and its nemesis: parody: "While Yorick's fantasy servants remain 'flesh and blood,' the starling represents the possibility of a human lament that would be somehow inhuman, a pathetic utterance on the part of the lower class that would upset the distinction between affect and the imitation of affect, pathos and parody" (79). An example of the sentimental novel as a "form of social control" (80), *A Sentimental Journey* ultimately subverts its authority, according to Frank, by generating figures, such as the starling, of marginalization—figures of the novel as a commodity circulating freely in a marketplace that offers no guarantees for authenticity. Indeed, Yorick himself is a figure for a troubling fluidity, a human commodity whose value rises and falls through a course of events that subjects him to discipline, surveillance, punishment, and poverty. As Frank notes, "his status as a gentleman is constituted in the movement back and forth between the fantasy of policing the poor and the fantasy of being policed by the French monarchy" (87). The outcome of Yorick's masquerade as a "pathetic victim" of monarchy is "to become a better reader of others' characters, a better connoisseur of sensibility" (89). Thus, *A Sentimental Journey* takes Yorick into the underworld of poverty so that he can return more confident of his destiny in life, with his gentlemanly status confirmed by his survival, his taste and sensibility improved by his acts of sympathy. He emerges as what Frank calls "a virtual imperialist of sensibility" (89).

In Chapter 3, "The Satire of Melancholia: 'Humphry Clinker' and the Agricultural Revolution," Frank shifts focus from literary identification with the

poor to the means by which later novels deny the suffering of the poor. *Humphry Clinker*, despite Matthew Bramble's apparent sympathy for the hardships of the poor, attempts "to absorb, mute, and deny 'the real origins of the misery of [its] time'" (90). Tracking the bifurcation of the marriage plots in the novel and the "improvement" plot, Frank shows how Matthew Bramble's benevolent paternalism, a vestige of an English rural economy based on customary rights and mutual responsibility, contradicts the novel's ideological affinity with the politics of improvement. Introducing Freud's distinction between mourning and melancholia, Frank attempts to show that melancholia in *Humphry Clinker* is "constitutive of the gentry's experience of improvement" (101), an argument that relies primarily upon reading Baynard's grief over the loss of his wife and his subsequent improvement of his estate as representative of the gentry's experience of the politics of landscape. In an ingenious reading of Bramble's meditation on the superstition of the Highlander's and his encounter with the dispossessed "admiral" as parallel meditations upon loss, Frank suggests that the "melancholia that pervades the novel has something to do with the alienation of property" (109). Hence, "The category of melancholia allows us to posit a relation between the dispossession of the poor and a gentle mentality that has the fear of dispossession at its center" (111). While I can agree that the landed gentry may have felt some anxiety about the possibility of dispossession, I am less persuaded that melancholia characterizes this relation through the society at large. Indeed, one of Frank's stated objectives is "to demonstrate how psychic and aesthetic practice emerge in dynamic interrelation with economic ones" (27); yet throughout the book Frank provides primarily literary evidence upon which to base her claims. While her theorizing of this relation seems plausible, I am less convinced than intrigued by her argument, which proceeds by aligning general observations about socioeconomic transformations with their echoes in the particular novels she reads so well.

A good example of the way the various threads of the argument might be woven more tightly and bolstered by a more deliberate engagement with material culture appears in the concluding two chapters on Frances Burney's *Cecilia* and *The Wanderer*. Chapter 4, "'This Dream of Fancied Sorrow': Female Affectivity and the Laboring Poor in Frances Burney's 'Cecilia,'" claims that "the current of melancholia that runs through *Cecilia*—as well as its related affect, shame—emerges . . . out of the reorganization of labor practices in the late part of the eighteenth century" (131). As they take up the affective labor of charity, middle-class women, like Cecilia, are burdened with expressing the loss incurred by the poor (131): "the figure of the gentlewoman stripped of her property and left with her affect alone may be regarded as analogous to one of the great accomplishments of the eighteenth century: the divorce of workers from ownership of the materials of production, leaving them with their labor power as their sole form of property" (131). The key phrase here is "analogous to"; for while it is plausible that some affiliation or analogy exists between the pathos of the satirical novel and the transformation of agricultural and rural social life upon which the novel to various degrees attends, Frank presents no compelling evidence that the surplus of sorrow she finds in *Cecilia* represents the pathos of the culture as a whole. Moreover, with respect to the rural poor, upon whom the burden of im-

provements and the industrial transformation of the countryside fell particularly hard, ownership of the materials of production was the exception rather than the rule. What they lost, as E. P. Thompson has documented exhaustively, are the customary rights to the use of the commons.

Frank is much more convincing in analyzing the "circular logic of charity" that operates in *Cecilia*. While we readily accept the notion that charity depends upon grief or sorrow of the poor "as its indispensable precondition," we are less likely to recognize that in the late eighteenth century charity was also "figured as a cure" (147) for the middle-class woman's own grief. Governed by a discourse on labor, women's charity functioned as a cure for both benefactress and the recipient of charity. More importantly, though, because the practice of charity puts the middle-class woman into a sort of illicit circulation, the practice of charity produces a surplus of shame. As Frank puts it, in *Cecilia* "charity is nothing less than the occasion to disastrously confuse an economic issue with a sexual one" (154). Hence, the novel demonstrates that in the late eighteenth century, a time when women were enjoined to practice acts of charity, it was "the condition of femininity to have one's character assassinated at the very moment one is performing the duties of feminine virtue" (155). The charitable woman, then, suffers shame that originates in her act of making amends for the rupture that has taken place in the socioeconomic sphere and that has produced the indigent characters she is obligated to relieve. The reorganization of labor thus produces a hopelessly flawed version of the domestic woman, whose overdetermined character—reflected in *Cecilia*—is subject to the disciplinary gaze of satire throughout the novel. Since her hypocrisy—the self-serving character of her charity—has been constituted by the commercial transformation of British society, these moments of satire have a utopian function—in that "taking aim at the domestic woman" amounts to a critique of the socioeconomic forces that produce her in the first place.

This final point leads to the conclusion of *Common Ground*: "Labor and Satire at the Century's End," which reads Burney's *The Wanderer* as the eighteenth century's "most extraordinary novel about labor" (165), in that it figures the apparently fortunate fall of a gentlewoman from "leisured accomplishment" (171) into labor as a deracinating catastrophe. Thus, the novel exposes the ideological contradictions inherent in the discourse on labor and leisure, particularly that which assigns moral value to labor at the same time that it shows labor to be "numbing and degrading" (171). Just as *Cecilia* compromises her moral integrity and social status by circulating within the economy of charity, *Ellis/Juliet* compromises hers by being forced to support herself financially though she is marked as a woman of accomplishments. Doubly marked by labor and accomplishment, *Ellis/Juliet* becomes a figure in which "the conflicting urges about labor and leisure in English culture of the 1790s catastrophically collide" (178). Winding the thread of leisure/labor back into the question of satire, Frank concludes by visiting the scene—for Frank a "satiric interlude"—where Sir Jaspar takes *Ellis/Juliet* to Stonehenge (179). Ingeniously reading Sir Jaspar as a figure for Augustan satire and Stonehenge as a sublime figure of labor, Frank reads the encounter between the two as a sign of "a culture on the threshold of industrialization" in which Augustan satire is rendered impotent and anachronis-

tic, while labor—at once “magnificent and debilitating”—is shown to be timeless and universal. The tremendous spectacle of “manual art and labour” (Burney’s phrase) that Ellis/Juliet witnesses in the huge stones evinces a moment of surrender to the inevitability of labor, its necessity, and marks the failure of satire to arrest the economy’s drive for dominion over the social body of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain.

While one might want a more direct engagement with the social texts and material practices of this period to get a better grasp of the insistence of the discourse on leisure and labor through cultural formations other than the satiric novel, *Common Ground: Eighteenth-Century English Satiric Fiction and the Poor* helps us to see the way the novel is bound up with the developing market economy throughout the latter part of the eighteenth century. In particular, this book gives us a purchase on the contradictions inherent in the discourse on labor and leisure that saturates the ground of identity and the structures of feeling portrayed in the satiric novels of Fielding, Sterne, Smollett, and Burney. At the same time, *Common Ground* suggests that we may be rewarded from revisiting questions about the function of satiric and comic elements in the novel, for the satiric or comic moment may register most fully or effectively the hybridization of the novel and harbor its deepest anxieties and contradictions about the socioeconomic processes underpinning its own formal development.

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Gary Harrison

Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen by Adela Pinch. Stanford University Press, 1996. Pp. viii + 240. \$39.50.

In “The Decay of Lying,” Oscar Wilde advances the extravagant theory that life imitates art: that is, literary characters like Hamlet determine the emotions—indeed, the emotional *Zeitgeist*—of the human world, which, as Wilde puts it, “has become sad because a puppet was melancholy.” Adela Pinch’s book, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen*, conducts an absorbing investigation of such claims about the origin, transmission, and naming of emotions, focusing on literary culture of late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in England. The book’s title puns on the apparent misfitting of emotions to causes in this period, and is meant to signal an historical unease about feelings as “difficult and wayward” (15), evidenced by the work of Hume, Charlotte Smith, Wordsworth, Radcliffe, and Austen, among others. Pinch is interested throughout in a handful of fundamental questions that haunted these authors: where do emotions come from? to whom do they belong? how do we go about naming them? how much emotion is too much? Further, she investigates what the answers to these questions reveal about ideologies of gender, aesthetics, empiricism, and psychology. This approach opens onto a surprising vista of topics in the heartland of Romantic-period studies, including sympathy, sensibility, theatricality, nostalgia, suffering, and melancholy.

Pinch recognizes that the book's topic may at first seem old-fashioned among contemporary Romantic criticism, which "still seems afraid of seeing romanticism as being in any way about emotion—as if to do so would involve believing that poetry really was the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling" (11). However, by foregrounding epistemological concerns—by focusing on the discourse of emotion and what it reveals (about gender in particular)—she avoids naturalizing or privatizing emotions and thus makes them available for formalist and poststructuralist rhetorical study. This is a history of a concern about emotions, rather than a history of emotions (or an emotional history); and that concern is identified in its particulars by what writers of the period talk about when they talk about feeling. As the author puts it, "I do not assume in this study that emotions are inherently difficult to know; my goal is to explore how and when it became productive to know feelings as difficult and wayward" (15). While the illustrating evidence for the history Pinch constructs is a bit scant (Hume's *Treatise*, a handful of lyrics by Smith and Wordsworth, Radcliffe's *Udolpho*, and Austen's *Persuasion* are the only texts examined at any length), and its presentation fairly episodic, the book's contours and terminology will doubtless provide readers with new lenses through which to see other familiar constellations. Like most good books of criticism, this one has untapped reserves of explanatory power.

After an evocative introduction, the book's first chapter on the *Treatise of Human Nature* navigates an explanatory way through Hume's complicated text by following the light of formalism. Pinch's abundant skill as a close reader is evident here, as she locates strange passages and figures ("a plagiarist," "an exile," "a person in a painting" [21]) in order to unpack their relation to Hume's ideas of emotional transmission. Yet the chapter is not merely an occasion for local cleverness, as it presents a striking, overarching thesis: in Hume's view, passions galvanize or even create the self, and yet passion is frequently transsubjective, caught through encounters with others. In other words, we learn how to feel and thereby become selves in the world. Unlike Adam Smith for whom it was also the basis of moral philosophy, Hume makes sympathy the basis of the empiricist project as a whole. Yet such an operation offers to undermine the idea of individual, original emotions so crucial to the Romantic lyric mode, in that it suggests we can only have emotions that we've taken from others, and only know emotions by way of conventional forms and figures. Pinch's remarks on eighteenth-century personifications of the passions, and Wordsworth's anxious objections to the practice in the 1800 *Preface*, confirm the truth of this line of analysis.

After the section on Hume, gender issues move to the foreground of the book and remain there until its close. The chapter on Charlotte Smith reads her poetry in terms of contemporary debates over women and sensibility, beginning with the always-collapsing distinction between emotion as the result of personal experience ("the accidents of life" [52]) and emotion as experienced aesthetically through artistic objects. In short, women were told to use books to channel and moderate their supposedly unruly emotional responses by way of cultivating their taste for literature. Yet Smith's poetry is forever raising doubts about the separability of these categories, and

emerges through Pinch's discussion as a site of contestation between literary convention and personal experience: the very stuff of sentimentality. Further, Pinch sees "sentimental poetry as *enabling* a political discussion about personal feelings" (71) because it figures forth this conflict as it "gives voice to women's suffering and reveals the dependence of that voice on traditional forms" (70). Smith's sonnets are "like echo chambers" (60) of English poetry (written by men), forever turning to quotation—Anna Seward called it plagiarism—at moments of emotional stress. Pinch makes the startling suggestion that not only does this imply that emotions have a kind of impersonal conventionality to them, but that Smith's reading of literature "may be responsible for, may be writing in, the very feelings she expresses" (64). Thus, Smith's continual claims about the personal authenticity of her feelings are always met by a counterclaim of their impersonality and alien origins.

Pinch turns to Wordsworth's poetry through the figures of suffering women that determine a number of his early lyrics. Using Freudian structures of the masochistic imagination (in particular the essay on female masochism, "A Child Is Being Beaten") as a "heuristic analogy" (15) for exploring the poet's work, she argues that Wordsworth's reception and use of literary forms is mediated by his figuring the reception of female pain and woe, through a process similar to introjection. Three poems bear the weight of this claim: "On Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress," "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," and "Poor Susan." Pinch conducts the most interesting and convincing readings of these poems that I've seen, and she closes the chapter with a subtle take on the poem that gives her book its title; yet one does perhaps wish for more. The book makes it clear that "emotional extravagance" is central to Wordsworth's reception, and even to his own conception of his project: feelings represented in his poetry often seem either out of proportion to their apparent causes, or else wandering, vagrant, unmoored. But regarding this idea, the reader may in vain expect a discussion of Wordsworth's solitaries (the leech-gatherer, the discharged soldier, even the "vagrant in the houseless woods" of "Tintern Abbey") or of his own self-representations as an impassioned peripatetic observer. Still, the chapter doesn't aim to explain Wordsworth comprehensively; and it does provide a set of useful ideas others may adopt. Further, its claims about his literary relation to women's pain are scrupulously focused through the discourse of psychoanalysis in a way that illuminates Freud as well as Wordsworth and the literary culture of which he was a part.

Two strong chapters, on Anne Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udulpho* and Austen's *Persuasion* respectively, round out the bulk of this volume. Here Pinch demonstrates most fully her great strength, also evident in her work on Hume, which is to catch texts at key moments of distillation, fixing on images and terms that hold entire structures of imagination in solution. The chapter on Radcliffe essentially centers on a few recurring images—a fading tapestry, lovers reading one another's books, and tears falling on hands—as a way of getting at the complexities of melancholy and "anticipatory nostalgia" (123) that shape the text. As Pinch puts it, "The characters' emotional lives turn out to be occupied territory" (125), always filled in by incursions of the emotions of others. The close readings are stunning, but Pinch doesn't stop there, as this chapter's argument feeds into a discussion of the politics

of emotion during the Revolutionary era, particularly as related to gothic terrors and the naturalness of one's emotional responses to them. The discussion of *Persuasion* proceeds according to a similar set of figures—of familial claustrophobia, of book reading, and of blows to the head(!)—all of which Pinch unfolds to reveal the various external pressures (that is, means of persuasion) applied to the female mind in the novel of manners. She has fine things to say about Anne Eliot's frequent moments of absorption as signifying a kind of radical impermeability to outside influences or knowledge, romantic or otherwise. In short, the reader will return to *Persuasion* energized by Pinch's observations.

The book ends with brief glances at the use of quotation (mainly of Shakespeare) in Wordsworth and DeQuincy, and at the public response to the death in childbirth of the Princess Charlotte Augusta in 1817. Both sets of phenomena again illustrate the central aspect of Pinch's thesis, the "tendency of affective life" as represented in Romantic-era writing "to get located among rather than within people, . . . arising as much from rhetorical or fictional situations as from the mind's own motions" (166). Further, both sets involve the self-conscious mediation of written texts in the processes of grief, and both show how the issue of emotional transmission itself was overtly problematized—with aesthetic and political consequences—in nineteenth-century English culture. Her analysis of the discourse of national grief after Charlotte's death clearly demonstrates the interrelation of politics and emotional epistemology, a line of explication with particular relevance to our own recent public response to the death of a princess.

In general, Pinch takes grief as the baseline emotion of the Romantic age, the one that established the *lingua franca* of emotional circulation that she examines. This makes sense, given the strong associations of sympathy with mourning, and the preponderance of Romantic-period verse written in a melancholy spirit. One might wonder about other, less sympathetic emotions which get little notice here: the more aggressive passions generally, and anger in particular. But as indicated, the best virtue of this book is that it sends its reader back to Romantic-period literature with a new set of questions, a fresh attention to the complex discourse of concern over emotions that shaped that literature and that culture so profoundly.

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Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century by Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. Pp. 192. \$39.50 (cloth); \$15.50 (paper).

This excellent book continues the work of Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, Laura Brown, and a number of other recent scholars in demonstrating the central place of the "consumer revolution" in eighteenth-century British history, literature, and culture. Like Brewer, Plumb and McKendrick's *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, Brown's *Ends of Empire*, and Brewer and Roy Porter's collection, *Consumption and the World of Goods*, Kowaleski-Wallace argues that

individual identity became more and more defined by what one could buy (and sell) during this period. More specifically, however, she looks at the way the female body became an important site in this revolution. Kowaleski-Wallace claims that eighteenth-century British culture projected onto the female body "both its fondest wishes for the transforming power of consumerism and its deepest anxieties about the corrupting influences of goods" (5). While this book does not engage explicitly with the long-running debate over the motivating socioeconomic causes of the consumer revolution, it does offer a feminist argument about what we can do with its legacies.

Consuming Subjects is organized in three sections: one on the tea table—subdivided into discussions of tea, china, and sugar; a second on shopping—examining women's relationships to a number of commodities, including pornography; and a third on business—both the business of prostitution and more "legitimate" concerns. The sections are linked in that they all investigate both the disciplining of the female body in these new, disparate sites of commercial culture, and its seeming resistance to such new codes of "civilized" consumer practices. This means that even as the tea-drinking woman became an exemplar of restrained, properly domesticized femininity, the sugared tea she drank from fragile, luxurious, china cups retained a disturbing connection to a more transgressive, because leaky, version of her sexed body. Similarly, just as commercial sales were becoming a matter of decorous, rationalized discourse, the spaces in which they took place seemed to be threatened by the potentially voracious and disruptive behavior of "lustful" female shoppers; and the anxiety surrounding the prostitute arose in part from the cultural imperative to exile women from all business that didn't have to do with the female body. In these ways, the commercialized spaces of eighteenth-century England—from the private realm of the tea table, to the publicity of the shop, to the commodified intimacy of prostitution—"confront a feminine presence that proves most resistant precisely at the moment when it seems most under control" (128).

Kowaleski-Wallace has written a succinct book, which makes its points clearly and elegantly. This study will be useful to a broad audience, to readers with a general interest in eighteenth-century culture or the history of femininity, as well as to specialized scholars and students. The author illustrates each of her main points with two or three literary examples; these are well-distributed both chronologically and generically, and include Frances Burney's *Camilla*, Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, Anne Finch's "Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia," and Lillo's *The London Merchant*, among others. These readings are generally quite brief, as is appropriate to the breadth of the project, though one does at times want them to go on longer. Complementing this literary evidence are skillful analyses of visual material from the period, including satirical prints by Hogarth and Rowlandson, and Wedgwood's medallion of a kneeling slave. In addition, Kowaleski-Wallace spends some time tracing out the etymologies of key words like "shopping" and "commodity." The latter word proves particularly important to the book's argument, as its changing meaning resonates with changes in the status of women; "just as the modern sense of *commodity* depended on a cultural shift in concepts of use-

fulness and luxury, so too did the modern definition of female subjectivity depend upon changes in the concept of women's usefulness and superfluity" (74).

All these literary readings are well-contextualized with historical materials. The first section, on the tea table, is particularly well-served by references to the extensive eighteenth-century commentary on relations between British consumerism and colonial expansion: the process that brought tea, sugar, and china so pervasively into British homes. Kowaleski-Wallace uses these materials to make some excellent points about the discursive formations which forged subterranean connections between white, middle-class British women and colonized racial others, the products of whose labor they enjoyed. The other sections shift their focus to English culture itself, and draw on discussions of commercial culture by Mandeville, Swift, Defoe, and others; with the exception of a brief analysis of orientalist depictions of prostitution they move away from the broad parameters of the first section. One remains curious, however, to see what would happen if that international context were extended into the later portions of the book. As Felicity Nussbaum demonstrates in her recent book, *Torrid Zones*, the commodification of women as prostitutes in England can be understood productively in terms of the status of nonwhite women in the rest of the empire. It might also have been interesting to see how England's self-image as a commercial nation was articulated in relation to its European rivals.

Consuming Subjects concludes by pointing out the persistence of the discursive structures linking women to consumer culture in our own time. Battles over the meaning of commodities and consumerism, it argues, continue to be fought over the surface of a feminine body (whether that body is biologically female or not). The book begins with a reading of the figure of Squinkinacoosta, the Native American princess in Smollett's *Humphry Clinker*, relentlessly satirized for her voracious and unruly modes of consumption; it ends with a consideration of Venus Extravaganza, a poignant drag artist from the film *Paris Is Burning*, who believes that the right consumer practices will bring her middle-class, suburban femininity (but which instead bring her death at the hands of gay bashers). In the troubling and tragic figure of Venus Extravaganza, the book confronts one of its own central questions: how and why does it make sense to consider women "subjects" of consumer culture, rather than the passive vessels of economic drives beyond individual control? Are female consumers merely blank screens onto which the fantasies of a male-dominated culture are projected? Or is there some agency, some empowerment for women to be wrested from consumer culture? Kowaleski-Wallace argues that it is too easy to see women as the dupes of consumerism, driven by the carrot of illusory choice, and the stick of a threatened loss of gender and class status for violating the codes of consumer practices—and futile for feminists to disavow the structures of consumer society altogether. Instead, we should see the pervasive anxiety about

feminine resistance to discipline located at the heart of "civilized" commercial culture—from the tea table to the clothing shop—as evidence of the power women have to gain from turning consumerism to our own ends. Perhaps, in a post-consumer-revolution world, we cannot pretend to access an idea of femininity outside of commercialism and commodification; still, in recognizing the kinship between proper, white, middle-class women, Squinkinacoosta (not-white, not-proper), and Venus Extravaganza (not biologically a woman), both in the eighteenth century and today, we can begin to subvert the forces that use consumer culture to delimit and police female political agency.

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Charlotte Sussman

Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture, 1780-1834 edited by Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996. Pp. vii + 400. \$39.95.

In recent years the publication of new collections of Romantic texts—including *Romantic Women Poets: An Anthology* (1997) and *Romanticism: An Anthology* (2nd ed., 1998), by Duncan Wu, and *British Literature, 1780-1830* (1996) by Anne Mellor and Richard Matlak—provides evidence of students and established scholars joining in a reexamination of Romantic canons and discourses, with a view to stretching the intellectual boundaries of this fascinating period. The same may be said of scholarly articles, monographs, and collections of essays, particularly in the areas of gender studies, and the critique of imperial and colonial ideology. It is in precisely these areas that this volume attempts to make a contribution, and provides a significant impetus towards further reading and research.

The editors acknowledge that while both eighteenth-century and Victorian scholars have been relatively quick to see the implications of Said's *Orientalism* (1978) for their fields of study, Romanticists have been slower to incorporate such considerations into their own area—and this despite the fact that such landmarks as the slave trade and the growth of empire, in many ways, provided impetus for literary expression in the Romantic period. While they acknowledge that the associations between Romanticism and literary exoticism, primitivism, and Orientalism have long been recognized, Richardson and Hofkosh believe that paradigms drawn from the current interest in colonial discourse and postcolonial theory may be used effectively to fill in the gaps in our knowledge of imperial culture in the Romantic age. By demonstrating a willingness to move away from an intense concentration on the individual mind, and the creative, questioning, interiorizing imagination, and by offering a "new centrality for writers, movements, and genres long held marginal to Romantic studies," the editors believe that "the intersecting modalities of gender and race inscribed in the elaboration and empowerment of Romanticism as imperial culture" may be disclosed (8, 9).

The way for such an endeavour has, of course, already been paved by the early—though largely ignored—work of Schwab (1950) and Yaounac (1975), as well as the more recent endeavours of Kabbani (1986), Barrell (1991), Suleri (1992), Leask (1992), and Mellor (1993), and also by the work of Said (1978, 1993). Many of these names—particularly Said—recur throughout this study, and assist in informing the critique which the contributors wish to initiate or extend. Indeed a stimulating engagement with gender issues is evident in Anne Mellor's contribution, entitled "'Am I Not a Woman, and a Sister?': Slavery, Romanticism, and Gender." The title is taken from the inscription on an abolitionist roundel, itself echoing the Wedgwood Medallion, which reads "Am I not a man and a brother?" Mellor uses the image on the roundel—a female African slave appealing to a white British woman—to investigate their common humanity, coupled with their shared sexual slavery. She then proceeds to examine questions of political ability and moral responsibility, showing how British female abolitionist writers give a voice of moral authority to the black slave—a positioning which does not occur in the writings of canonical male Romantic writers. The study then examines Baillie's *Rayner*, Edgeworth's *The Two Guardians*, and Opie's *Adeline Mowbray*, in order to show how black characters demonstrate a moral integrity that functions to reveal—and implicitly denounce—the hypocrisy and corruption of male-dominated European society.

A far less successful examination of gender, race, and imperialism is Joseph Lew's study of *The Giaour* and Nineteenth-Century Imperialist Misogyny" which claims to discuss "gender, genre, geography, and the significance of the fragment form for Orientalist poetry" (175). Some of the observations are interesting, such as the fact that the bodies of Oriental women characters serve as "battlefields" on which conflicts are fought, and from which children rarely emerge (197). Lew also observes that from 1789 onward female characters die more frequently in literary texts, particularly those written in the Orientalist mode—though he provides no supporting statistics. This lack of care in research is also evident in Lew's analysis of Byron's misogyny; he says: "That a man as promiscuous as Byron should harbor a deep dislike of and fear of women should no longer surprise us. Pop psychiatrists explain this syndrome regularly on daytime talk shows" (p. 183). He then enters into speculation about Byron's early years, when he was under the supervision of women—whether his mother or a servant—and concludes that "abused children can grow up to become abusers themselves" (184). Lew's lack of precision is further evident in his referring to Arthur Wellesley (later the Duke of Wellington) by the name of his brother Richard (182)—an error perpetuated by the editors, who cite "Richard" in their index.

In other essays gender issues are examined more carefully and judiciously. There is, for example, Kajani Sudan's useful assessment of Mary Wollstonecraft, in which this writer's position in relation to national and cultural identity is examined. Sudan highlights the problematic representation of women and mothers as figures of national identity in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, and perceptively shows how in a novel like *Mary*, national identity is naturalized and rewritten as religious affiliation, thus demonstrating that the political subjecthood of women does not, in this case, depend upon foundationalist reasoning. Also of interest is Nancy Moore Goslee's analysis of

Felicia Hemans's "Red Indian" poems. She considers, for example, Hemans's ready extension of emotion as "emotional or spiritual colonizing" (239), and her interest in this particular subject as an opportunity to develop "toleration for racial difference" (241). Goslee offers some good close readings of poems, including "The Isle of Founts," as she moves towards her conclusion that Hemans's shaping of genres and themes transforms her perceived "recolonizing" into a critique of exploitation based on race and gender differences.

The experiences of travellers to Africa are also featured in this volume. Ashton Nichols's examination of *Travels in the Interior of Africa* (1799), published posthumously from notes made by the Scottish explorer Mungo Park, identifies him as a contributor to Romantic ideology in the 1790s, owing to his "Rousseauistic assumptions" about the origins and potential of human society (100). Unfortunately the essay fails to distinguish adequately between colonial and precolonial experiences of Africa: Nichols believes that the point of demarcation is the exploitation of the continent's commercial potential—an endeavour in which Park never participates, but initiates, through his allusions to geography, trade, and astronomy. Especially since the rise of postcolonial studies, the complexities involved in deciding when the advent of the colonizer or explorer becomes invasive need to be teased out further. Nevertheless, Nichols is correct in stating that "the textual construction of European 'Africa' was as much a Romantic creation as it was a Victorian one" (104). More successful is Moira Ferguson's chronicle of Hannah Kilham's visits to West Africa between 1824 and 1832; it discusses her innovative educational strategies for the liberated African population, and demonstrates how her spiritual goals challenged the dominant mercantile mentality of the European colonists. While she was, in the final analysis, placed in a "conflictual position" (135), she managed to foreground the importance of African languages, thereby encouraging Africans to develop a "linguistic self."

The essays by the two editors are also worthy of notice. Richardson's comparative study of Helen Maria Williams's *Peru* and Walter Savage Landor's *Gebir* discusses the condemnation of British imperial endeavor in these works, noting their Virgilian echoes, as well as their "generic hybridity," "disruptive temporality," and "studied failure as imperial epics" (279). Hofkosh's interesting study of Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* emphasizes the inseparability of the political and personal in the progress towards freedom. She also usefully points out that if one of Romanticism's defining characteristics is the will towards self-possession, then Equiano's narrative recalls for readers that this desire is neither a universal value, nor the exclusive territory of a few white male writers, and that this model is embedded in an economic system that operates at the level of contrition as well as commerce.

As readers will readily appreciate, there is significant value in some of the contributions in this volume. Others provide the impetus for future debate, such as Alison Hickey's treatment of Wordsworth's "imperial imagination," purportedly evident in Book 7 of *The Prelude* (lines 227-43), and Book 9 of *The Excursion* (lines 437-51); Saree Makdisi's treatment of the East in Byron's *Childe Harold*, cantos 1 and 2, and Shelley's *Alastor*; and Laura Doyle's attempt to isolate racial aspects of the sublime. There are, however, difficul-

ties, which arise partly—as indicated above—from making easy assumptions about the nature and purpose of imperial endeavor, but more significantly from the formation of unsubstantiated associations between the terms of colonial discourse, and the more recent—and emotive—characteristics and concerns of postcolonial literature and theory, with their strong political dimension. There is, for example, Balchandra Rajan's hastily considered association between Elizabeth Hamilton and Salman Rushdie, by way of their common transcending of the "awkwardness of fact" (183). Yet the most contentious concatenation of nineteenth-century intentions and twentieth-century questions occurs in Deirdre Lynch's essay on Edmund Burke's *Reflections*. While Lynch does offer some interesting points concerning Burke's presupposing and advancing "an epochal sexualization and oedipalization of domestic space" (45), she also demonstrates a profound ignorance of Irish culture and history when she writes of Burke's "bizarre conjunction of domestic fictions and nightmares about insurrectionary journeys taken by commodities and mobile mothers," and then proceeds to compare this to the 1992 case of a young Irish girl who had been raped and then prevented from travelling to England for an abortion. Misunderstanding "the pronatalist regulation of reproduction that is written into Ireland's post-colonial constitution" (56), Lynch proceeds to argue that this may be seen as a reinscription of Burke's ambivalence concerning mobile mothers. She concludes: "What has changed for Irishwomen in an age of globalization and Common Markets is that they're no longer apt to fall under suspicion because of goods they might smuggle into the country, no longer incriminated by an association with contraband tea or lace. They fall under suspicion now because of the fetuses they might smuggle out" (57).

Clearly the scope of this volume indicates the potential for viewing Romanticism through the lenses of colonial discourse, imperial expansionism, and emerging racial and national ideologies. If critics can successfully negotiate between the impetus given to this debate by contemporary theoretical considerations, and the ideologies embodied in the texts themselves, then scholarly endeavor in this area will continue to grow.

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Leon Litvack

The Politics of Motherhood: British Writing and Culture, 1680-1760 by Toni Bowers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. xiii + 233. \$54.95.

Mapping the complex relays between the corporal, figural, and social bodies continues to produce compelling scholarship in a number of critical arenas and disciplines. In literary studies, it is the maternal body that has generated both the most complex and the most numerous texts. Psychoanalytic critics, Marxists, feminists, cultural materialists, and new historicists have taken up the mother's body as a way of reading the moment in which a text is embedded and of which it is an exemplar. It is this maternal body

which grounds Toni Bowers's study of the discourses of virtuous British motherhood in the Augustan era.

In her critically sound, occasionally deft, and at moments graceful investigation of a number of texts produced during the years named in the title, Bowers makes two central and explicit claims for this text. First, she claims that "the struggle to define maternal virtue, authority, and responsibility was critical to the construction of models for legitimate power and allegiance to Augustan England" (14). She argued that the Glorious Revolution and subsequent abdication, or perhaps usurpation, of the throne of James II combined with emerging philosophies that argues for human grounding of authoritative legitimacy and threw the British realm into a crisis of authority. Queen Anne and her counselors sought through various means to secure to some kind of natural anchor, tying themselves to the symbolically weighty figure of the maternal queen. In her second line of argument, claims that "the increasingly narrow definition of maternal virtue that emerged during the first half of the eighteenth-century was vital to the containment of matriarchal authority at a time when patriarchal authority was undergoing radical reconception and was therefore particularly vulnerable" (14). Bowers seeks to show that the normative discourses of motherhood attributed to the later eighteenth century were actually shaped in this earlier era, and gathers together a refreshingly eclectic collection of texts as evidence. She explains, however, that in spite of their collective persuasive force, none ever succeeds in achieving complete hegemony, that resistant voices still emerge, interrupt, and offer personal and political alternatives.

Bowers, in a lengthy prelude, opens with a reading of multiple texts describing and evaluating practices of motherhood—William Hogarth's twin graphic pictures, *Gin Lane* and *Beer Street*, news miscellanies describing unmarried pregnant women who die in childbirth for want of shelter, documents soliciting support for the establishment of what becomes London's Foundling Hospital, maternal figurations adorning its seals and walls, a growing body of conduct literature aimed at those aspiring to middle-class sensibility and security, and novelistic discourse which responds and in many cases, elaborates it. Her effort here is to establish the grisly conditions of childbirth and motherhood for the poor and laboring classes obtaining in these years and to set them against the growing "technologies of motherhood," a term she borrows from Foucault, to reveal the discrepancy between the middle-class norms being established as timeless and classless and the contingent, class-based differences that mark the actual practice of motherhood. This discrepancy, she argues, sets the terms for a cultural understanding of "maternal failure" that makes deviant those women who, regardless of the overdetermination of their choices, either "abdicate" their maternal role to strangers who can feed their babies when in poverty they cannot, or those whose motherhood is usurped by social conditions which rob them of their offspring. It is in this reading of maternal failure as a vexed relation-

ship between abdication and usurpation that she makes the connection to the broader political crisis of the legitimacy of the monarchy in these years following the revolution. It is this connection she seeks to establish in the first of the three sections which organize the corpus of the book.

In this first section, Bowers examines the attempt Queen Anne makes to legitimate her authority, always in question because of the uncertain abdication/usurpation of her father's throne, by naming herself the mother of the realm in a publicity move styled after Queen Elizabeth's successful symbolic use of motherhood to stabilize her own questionable legitimacy. Queen Anne fails in this attempt, Bowers claims, for two overarching reasons. First, Elizabeth was able to make the figure of the mother powerful for herself because she inhabited it as "essentially unlike" other women. As the "royal exception," Elizabeth could "prove the patriarchal rule in society at large . . . Elizabeth inhabited a cultural space much like the Virgin Mary's in the Roman Catholic tradition: her representation constituted an impossible fantasy of maternal power" (72). Because Anne's motherhood, conversely, was constructed on what she shared with other women, her attempt to derive authority actually proved a greater threat to patriarchal systems. Second, the construction of maternal authority had been in a constant state of revision since Elizabeth's time and by Anne's reign, that authority had been much more narrowly defined as mothers were more and more considered subordinate to fathers and their reproduction as less valuable than economic production. While this section is rich with insightful explanations of the machinations of legitimating and naturalizing heirs to the throne, Bowers's case for Anne's failure of representation, which concludes this section, is less successful because whether or not Anne can be said to have failed as monarch remains questionable even after Bowers's presentation of evidence that her handling of the war with Spain and her dependence on her ministers was criticized and questioned for years after her death. What she more successfully argues here is that "In her problematic self-representation as symbolic national mother, Anne was unintentionally complicit in the construction of a normative definition of maternity as a kind of failure, entailing loss of position, voice and participation in the (male) public world" (89).

Just how those norms are delineated is the work of the second section. Bowers reads Moll Flanders and Roxana in league with various pamphlets, broadsheets, and news miscellanies that tell tales of monstrous mothers. Through these, Bowers shows how these explicit representations of mothers who murder their infants, abandon their toddlers, and sell their children into servitude imply norms of unwavering maternal tenderness and self-sacrificing love. She layers this with considerations of how class differences are denied in efforts to construe motherhood as a monolithic category outside of history and with an examination of the attempt to reconcile two uneasily reconciled values—a unique, coherent, personal identity and sacrificial mother-

hood, opposing Defoe's mothers to expose the contradictions between the values. Reading Roxana's uncertain agency in her daughter's uncertain death as participating in the era's multiple tales of infanticide, Bowers argues that for these Augustan mothers, the paradox cannot be resolved in their favor. Of Roxana she says, "Damned whether she does or does not, cornered by motherhood, Roxana punctures Moll's fantasy that competitive individuation can work for mothers and exposes the costs of imagining subjectivity as necessarily predicated upon the denial of others as subjects" (121). Bowers then sets these readings against Eliza Haywood whom, she claims, provides resistant tales that attempt to imagine publicly authoritative motherhood, but this is an attempt that only succeeds as long as motherhood remains isolated from the public and patriarchal sphere.

In the concluding section of the book, Bowers opens with a reading of conduct literature which she claims precedes and shapes the much more familiar texts of the later eighteenth century. She provides here readings of Richardson's *Pamela*, *Pamela, Part II*, and *Clarissa*, performing them through the series of paradoxes she has previously identified. She argues compellingly here that increasingly, maternal disenfranchisement goes with the territory of the sexually transgressive, culturally fallen woman. To illustrate, she recounts and analyzes Lady Sarah Pennington's conduct book, *An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to Her Absent Daughters*, written and published to subvert a divorce decree that severed her relations with her children. Bowers claims for this text perhaps more liberatory weight than it can bear, but succeeds in making the point that in spite of the increasingly narrow and stable consensus about what makes fit mothers achieved during this period, resistance then (as now) was still possible.

While overall Bowers succeeds in her claim that modern conceptions of motherhood are taking shape early in the eighteenth century rather than later, some of her best work inhabits the margins of her text. Buried in her introductory prelude is an important justification of her method of using but subordinating documentary texts of motherhood to fictional texts. She explains that the point of her work is to "recapture *imaginable* Augustan motherhoods . . . to understand how Augustan maternal mythology served particular cultural interests . . . and to make visible many alternatives present at various levels [rather than decide] what 'really' happened" (20). She also offers psychoanalytic feminist critics a deft blow, claiming that understanding literature through a lens that regards relations between mother and child as intensely personal and private depletes the possibility of a historical explanation and robs motherhood in important ways of a public voice. The text's weaker points are more centrally located. Her argumentation, as in the claim to Anne's failure as monarch, lacks enough evidence to be persuasive, and other arguments get started and then abandoned, as in her never-quite-complete description of a discourse of monstrous motherhood.

These drawbacks are few and far between, however, and this book fits nicely into several niches. Scholars of eighteenth-century British literature will find much of use here in the readings of miscellanies and broadsheets as well an inventive and redemptive interpretation of *Pamela, Part II*. Material feminists will find congenial interpretations of the ways in which class compromises agency and class consciousness is suppressed by a gathering consensus of what is universal and natural to the state of motherhood. Literary scholars will find well-considered the section delineating the difference between Elizabeth's abstract and sacred maternity and Anne's literal and failed maternal body. Cultural scholars in numerous disciplines interested in the history of the body, particularly in its shaping during these early moments of modernity, will find both the texts Bowers reads here and her way of reading them critically sophisticated and a valuable contribution to this emerging field.

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Andy Warhol, Poetry, and Gossip in the 1960s by Reva Wolf. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. Pp. xv + 210. \$70.00, cloth; \$27.95, paper.

Reva Wolf's rigorous, scholarly account of the New York underground art scene in the 1960s is a welcome addition to avant-garde studies—a field that has traditionally thrived on paradox, partisanship, and, not infrequently, self-destruction. Paul Mann's 1991 *The Theory-Death of the Avant-Garde* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press) may have been the apogee of that tradition. In it, Mann articulates the foundational hypocrisy that has long kept avant-garde theorists like himself in work: "The avant-garde consistently defines itself both in terms of and against the definitions imposed upon it" (9). Mann's text weaves a fugue on this basic dialectical theme: "The avant-garde is first of all an instrument of attack on tradition, but an attack mandated by the tradition itself" (11); and continues, "The discourse of the death of the avant-garde is the discourse of its recuperation" (15); and most damningly, "The avant-garde is not a victim of recuperation but its agent, its proper technology" (92).

As the embodiment of the "always already" motoring the late capitalist discursive economy, the avant-garde is merely a synecdoche for the total mechanism of culture, rather than an actual wrench in the machine. The neat circularity of such a model prompts two questions: Why do artists and writers continue to engage in avant-garde practice? and, Why do scholars and theorists, who certainly ought to know better, continue to study them? Reva Wolf's implicit response in *Andy Warhol, Poetry, and Gossip in the 1960s* is to decenter the theoretical quandary in favor of a densely documentary approach. That she never explicitly addresses the paradox of the avant-garde is part of what makes her book, which traces Warhol's socioartistic entanglements with the Lower East Side poetry scene, such convincing evidence of

its continued existence in late twentieth-century America. If a defining goal of the historical avant-garde was to reconfigure existing relationships among artists, the marketplace, critics, and the public, then the poets, artists, and filmmakers with whom Warhol worked were its direct descendants, radically integrating networks of production, distribution, and consecration normally kept separate in the highly stratified artworld economy. Warhol was an artist with roots in commercial design who, by 1965, was already a celebrity commanding large commissions and shows in major galleries. Wolf's discovery—that he was at the same time devoting significant energy to collaborating with poets at the margins of mainstream art institutions—troubles the image of Pop as a crass, commercial cousin to the more genuinely radical movements of the period. Collaging letters, phone interviews, archives, documentary photographs, artworks, and material from several of the period's important coterie publications, Wolf fleshes out a cultural subfield more incestuous than polarized, motivated as much by personal desires and animosities as world-changing aesthetic agendas. It's a living avant-garde, caught in action.

Wolf's goal for her book is relatively modest: to counter the view of Warhol as an impersonal, voyeuristic Pop machine by showing how he used his art to "communicate with people he knew" (1). His poetic contemporaries provided ready models for this sort of practice. In the tight-knit downtown scene, Wolf documents, social (often sexual) and artistic exchanges were transacted along the same channels. Mimeograph publications such as Ted Berrigan's *C: A Journal of Poetry*, Diane di Prima and LeRoi Jones's *Floating Bear*, and Ed Sanders's *Fuck You: A Magazine of the Arts* transmitted gossip and/as new literary works; for the extended community who read them, the little magazines functioned as a kind of group epistolary romance. The fast-paced intimacy of these productions appealed to Warhol, who worked to integrate these attributes of the mimeograph medium, as well as the personalities who populated the journals, into the production and distribution of his early films. Wolf traces the circulation, for instance, of what she calls the "haircut motif" from *Floating Bear*, which ran a piece entitled "Billy Linich's Party" about a series of bawdy hair-cutting parties attended by many of the journal's insiders, to the three *Haircut* films that Warhol made with many of the same players and screened at the American Theater for Poets (run by di Prima and her husband), to *Sinking Bear*, a parodic "zine" distributed by artist Ray Johnson, which ran a spoof on "Billy Linich's Party" only two months after its initial publication. Here self-historicizing happens at the speed of gossip. Wolf shows how "the haircut as a motif functioned like a secret password that identified members of a particular social world" (43). It was also a networking device; Billy Linich, introduced to Warhol during the filming of one of the *Haircut* movies, soon changed his name to Billy Name and became the lighting designer and a notorious fixture at the Factory.

The artistic significance of some of Wolf's material may well be slight; after all, the role of avant-gardes has always been, as John Ashbery maintained in his founding article on Pop, to "call attention . . . to the ambiguity of the artistic experience, to the crucial confusion about the nature of art" (85). Wolf makes her own values abundantly clear; for her, it is the "fullness of

relations between people that makes art a vital, human thing" (15). Her subject is the "direct personal interactions between members of communities, as those interactions manifested themselves artistically" (4). Her work is far more interesting, however, when she is analyzing the aesthetic transposition of social behavior than when she is uncovering personal interaction for personal interaction's sake. An example of the latter is her account of the rivalry between Warhol and Frank O'Hara and the way it led Warhol to position a photograph of the poet Gerard Malanga kissing dance critic and O'Hara friend Edwin Denby on the cover of C. Wolf's discussion revolves around Warhol's exploitation of Malanga's reputation for promiscuity and Denby's venerated position in O'Hara's circle. Her conclusion, that Warhol used "visual gossip" to "be one of the in-group" seems a bit thin after the care she takes to trace the photograph's sordid history (25).

Chapter 4, "Artistic Appropriation and the Image of the Poet as Thief," is much more convincing. There she explores the techniques of cut-up, collage, ready-mades, and misattribution as they descend from Duchamp into the crowded intertextuality of Berrigan, Malanga, Ron Padgett, Ashbery, and Warhol. These practices, Wolf shows, "raised compelling questions about copying (or stealing) words and images, about authorship and about identity," even as they cemented friendships and professional associations (81). In one fascinating portion of the chapter, Wolf traces the idea of poet as thief from an analysis of Berrigan and Warhol's play with Duchamp's *Wanted: \$2,000 Reward* (a work which featured "mug shots" of the artist), through an account of the financial circumstances that actually led some of the poets to petty larceny, into a discussion of Warhol's allusions to Jean Genet in such works as the *Most Wanted Men* mural, and the *Flower* paintings. It's a rich melange; Wolf's associative method brings a wide variety of works and lives into illuminative interrelation.

Andy Warhol, Poetry, and Gossip in the 1960s helps to correct the misapprehension that displacing the Romantic subject—a goal of so many of the postwar avant-gardes' procedures—necessitates an "impersonal," mechanistic alternative. Wolf shows that formal experimentation went hand-in-hand with the invention of community; the breakdown of the heroic "I" made room for more genuinely social forms of artistic production. But though she is committed to recovering the "human element" in Warhol's work by returning it to its dialogic context, Wolf's more basic desire to salvage her subject's character, and, perhaps, to have her work be recognizable within the disciplinary constraints of the "Warhol studies" industry, leads her to reinscribe the figure of the artist as exceptional individual, if only a genial and engaged one. The photograph on the book's cover is a case in point: Warhol, full-lipped and still boyish-looking in his early thirties, holds a phone to his ear while looking meditatively off camera—a portrait of the artist in the age of communication. On the back cover, the credit states that this image is actually a detail from a photograph that included Malanga, posing with Warhol on his first day working as the artist's assistant. The uncropped picture, featured within the text, reveals the foregrounded Malanga to be the object of Warhol's now much more furtive-looking gaze. Wolf's excision of Malanga—who, as her text amply shows, was Warhol's main emissary among the downtown poets—points up the contradictory impulses of her project.

What's missing from Wolf's text is a reflection on the boundaries—between biography, art history, literary criticism, and the sociology of art—that it so gracefully treads. In its interdisciplinary approach alone, the book goes a long way towards decentering, and thus clearing a space to analyze, the cult of personality with which the name of Warhol is virtually synonymous. But its packaging—from the cover photo to the narrowly biographical way in which its (in fact much richer) argument is framed—ends up elevating the 1960s Warhol to superstardom and reducing the poets to supporting players.

Wolf summons Warhol's connection to more marginal figures such as Malanga and Berrigan as a way of giving the architect of our still-current model of fame a kind of "street cred"—not just as an avant-garde, but as an artist. In *Andy Warhol, Poetry, and Gossip in the 1960s*, poetry comes to stand in for all that is artistically genuine, in the most traditional, humanist sense. It is ironic that urbane, postmodern poets should be mobilized in this fashion, and their hipness suffers a bit as a result. But what survives such ironies, apparently inevitable in discussions of the avant-garde, is the optimism of their innovation, and for that Wolf deserves a good deal of credit.

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