

Teresa Barnard, ed., *British Women and the Intellectual World in the Long Eighteenth Century*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. Pp. 183. £60. ISBN 9781472437457.

Teresa Barnard's edited collection, *British Women and the Intellectual World in the Long Eighteenth Century*, seeks to demonstrate British women's contributions to scholarly production in the period. The strength of this book lies in its heterogeneity. Nine chapters focusing on various scholarly fields, several examining multiple eighteenth-century women, allows for a powerfully nuanced approach. Indeed, it may be that an edited collection is ideally suited to this area of study. Since women in the period had to negotiate a more complex path to professional life than their male counterparts, the strategies they adopted to achieve this were perhaps necessarily more contingent upon personal circumstances and individual personality. As such, what might work for one woman might not for another, and perhaps an interdisciplinary study such as this is able to paint a more accurate historical picture of the relationship between women and the intellectual world than a discipline-specific monograph.

Daniel J.R. Grey's study of Mary Wortley Montagu in the opening chapter shows how Montagu negotiated the medical academy as a woman, and drew on her own experience and personality, to contribute to the introduction of the small pox vaccine in England. Teresa Barnard reveals how Anna Seward and Eleanor Anne Porden Franklin exploited a trend for disseminating scientific knowledge through poetry in order to participate in the scholarly fascination with the volcano in the eighteenth century. Focussing on Mary Wollstonecraft, Malini Roy demonstrates her 'hermaphroditic, double alliance with the male writers on childcare and her own, female subjective reception of their ideas' (65). By marrying participation in the dominant, male-centric debates on paediatrics with evocations of her own practical experience as a mother, Roy shows how Wollstonecraft made a lasting contribution to childcare theory and practice. Taken together, these opening chapters reveal multiple strategies adopted by women to make important scientific interventions.

While recognising the overall conservatism of Hannah More, Susan Chaplin nevertheless shows how More's writing can be seen to give spiritual and moral authority to women. Maintaining the religious angle, but focussing more on the particular historical conditions of English society, Kaley Kramer's reading of Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story*, shows how the text "educates" the reader on the subtle exchanges that enable a peaceful coexistence between Catholics and Protestants' (105). Natasha Duquette examines the theological interventions of dissenting women, and identifies a collaborative female dissenting literary community. In a move that mirrors the strategies of women who used poetry to contribute to scientific debates about volcanoes, Duquette shows how women dissenters couched their religious reasoning in aesthetic forms deemed suitable for female writers. Inchbald's use of the novel to make religious commentary could also be considered in this light. As such, a major contribution of the book is in showing how women writers exploited culturally acceptable forms of literary production to comment on traditionally masculine subjects, such as geology and theology.

Laura Mayer's essay stages a convincing rethink of the history of Elizabeth Percy. Specifically, Mayer argues for the aesthetic value of Percy's restoration of Alnwick Castle, done in the Gothick style (a lighter, less historically accurate form of the 'Gothic'). In addition, Mayer highlights Percy's contributions to the local economy and society. In an examination of Joanna Baillie, Louise Duckling highlights how Baillie's *Plays on the Passions* received high critical praise when published anonymously, only to see an immediate and severe negative shift in critical opinion when Baillie identified herself as the (female) author. Moving forward, Duckling shows how Baillie adopted several strategies in her

writing which shielded her from the worst of gendered criticism when tackling subjects seen as unfeminine. Another prevailing theme of the collection is the relationship between individual personality and gender ideology, and how this could affect women's participation in the intellectual world. The idiosyncrasies of both Montagu and Percy are highlighted as key elements in their struggles by Grey and Mayer, respectively. The final essay in the collection, a discussion of sisters Harriet and Sophia Lee by Imke Heuer, continues this theme, arguing that the Lee sisters moved in a 'male-dominated literary market' (156) with 'unquestioning confidence' (156). The literary readings offered support Heuer's claims, revealing women that fearlessly entered into current social and political debates, despite their status as women.

British Women and the Intellectual World in the Long Eighteenth Century makes useful contributions to various scholarly fields, including social history, literary criticism, the medical humanities, religious history, and interdisciplinary studies in the long eighteenth more generally. Moreover, many of the chapters incorporate an element of critical biography, giving this book a broader appeal to anyone interested in learning more about the lives of intellectual women in the period.

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