

**A. D. Cousins and Geoffrey Payne, eds., *Home and Nation in British Literature from the English to the French Revolutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. 302. £64.99. ISBN 9781107064409.**

This collection is a timely reminder of the complexity of debates about what houses, homes, and spaces meant to individuals in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as the ways by which they conceived their relationship with the divine, the nation, and the world. While Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation* (1992) has long been a core text on 'inventing' the British nation, no single volume has addressed the way that fractured national identities were represented in literature. These are the 'patterns of disagreement' (1) which the book aims to track, highlighting the contested nature of home and nation in a period which covers invasion, foreign wars, rebellions, revolutions, political and religious unrest, but also acts of union.

Home and nation are addressed in a variety of authors from Marvell to Scott, with a number of different approaches. It is not possible to do justice to all seventeen chapters in this extensive volume, authored by some of the most prominent scholars on seventeenth and eighteenth century literature and culture, and divided into three chronological parts. Several themes emerge throughout the volume: the notion of home and homeland as safe retreats, but also places of control or confinement, and therefore inconsistency; the importance of homes, families and households as metonyms for the changing state of the nation and the empire; the search for and attachment to a 'promised land'; and anxiety over fractured nations, dysfunctional homes, and the progress of modernity. As Cousins and Payne suggest in their introduction, the volume shows how writers imagined home and nation in both 'innovative' and 'iterative' ways, recognising the need to develop new ways of talking about the nation, but also reappropriating recognisable tropes to new ends.

Several chapters stood out for their sustained engagement with the book's main themes. In her chapter on the diaries of Samuel Pepys and Ann Clifford, Helen Wilcox explains the significance of the time, money, and passion expended on private homes, and the space accorded to them in life-writing, as a different way of understanding property ownership. This important process of home-making was threatened not only by political events, but by disasters such as the Great Fire of 1666, which destroyed private property, but also had a significant impact on the perceptions of nationhood that reverberated through the rebuilding efforts of the following decades.

While home and nation are presented in many of the literary works considered here as some form of idealised 'promised land', such a notion of futurity is often bound up with ideas of a spiritual or rightful 'homecoming'. Thus, A. D. Cousins shows how Andrew Marvell's 'Bermudas' creates a contrast between 'Old' and 'New' Worlds, and bodies politic. Moreover, Abigail Williams suggests how both Charles II's return from exile, and William of Orange's successful conquest, were presented in print culture not as unexpected regime changes, but as divinely ordained and politically anticipated homecomings or restorations.

While home provides us with roots or origins, as well as offering a refuge from the outside world, many chapters engage with homes which fail to act as safe havens. Geoffrey Payne's chapter opens up the possibility of home as a site of incarceration, showing how Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) and *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) subvert this expectation by presenting home as the site of infection and quarantine, or a reminder of captivity. Similarly, Catherine Ingrassia demonstrates how women's poetry articulated the 'conceptual inconsistency' of the home. It is 'a space of labour and rest, comfort and loss; a site of control yet potential dispossession; a location for private desires, thoughts and actions that simultaneously invites scrutiny and constructs public identity' (154).

Gary Kelly's chapter argues for 'the home as a battleground of contending modernities' (227) in Jane Austen's novels. Kelly situates homes as central to Austen's chosen genre of 'identity-mystery romance' (219). Her female protagonists are often displaced, or risk displacement, and must discover their own identities through the process of integrating into different homes and households, before eventually settling in an ideal home which embodies the best of all worlds.

While the essays in this volume are loosely connected by the idea of home and nation, they take very different approaches and perhaps miss the possibility of greater collaboration and comparison between authors and contexts. The book's diversity serves to highlight the multifaceted nature of these concepts in the period under consideration, but sometimes lacks a sense of a 'bigger picture' which would be useful to literary students and scholars. The central themes of home and nation are certainly more evident in some chapters than others, and despite the book's considerable length, I wondered whether a concluding chapter might have been useful.

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