

Juliet Shields, *Nation and Migration: The Making of British Atlantic Literature, 1765-1835*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 195. £56. ISBN 9780190272555.

The thriving area of Atlantic literary studies investigates spatial convergences around migration, race, gender and sexuality, ecologies, and other significant ideological crossovers in the Atlantic world. Scholars in this field have, recently, expanded their geographical scope beyond the North Atlantic to encompass the mass movements of peoples, ideas, and reform campaigns; indicative of a determined effort to open up the field beyond the well-trodden paths of Anglo-American studies pioneered by Robert Weisbuch's *Atlantic Double-Cross* (1989) and Richard Gravil's *Romantic Dialogues* (2000). Juliet Shields's *Nation and Migration: The Making of British Atlantic Literature, 1765-1835* deepens our understanding of the Atlantic world by confronting the engrained habit of taking Britain to be synonymous with England, and foregrounding instead Scotland, Ireland and Wales and their complex relationships with America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Andrew Hook and Susan Manning have already provided crucial insights into Scottish-American relations (*Scotland and America: A Study of Cultural Relations, 1750-1835* [1975]; *Fragments of Union: Making Connections in Scottish and American Writing* [2002]) but Shields's book covers new ground and marks out the differing cultural traditions that Scots, Irish and Welsh migrants brought to the American colonies and, likewise, the influence of discourses around US liberty on the efforts of asserting national distinctions, for those nations, from England itself.

This remapping of the British Atlantic, focusing on writing by and about migrants from Ireland, Scotland and Wales, lends *Nation and Migration* a curious but effective structure, with chapters 2 through 4 offering accounts of Irish, Scottish and Welsh migration through a literary-critical approach cushioned with helpful historical detail. Chapters 1 and 5 frame these literary connections by suggesting that what unites literary accounts of Irish, Scottish and Welsh migration to the US has been their second-tier status in transatlantic studies until now. Chapter 3 presents an unexpected comparative study of Samuel Johnson's *Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland* (1775) and J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) to examine accounts of Scottish migrants' departure from the Highlands and Islands and arrival in the American colonies. Next the chapter examines James Fenimore Cooper (known as the American Scott) and *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) to contemplate the neglected Scottish descent of primary non-Native American characters. Chapter 4 focuses on the twelfth-century Welsh Madoc myth. For Shields, 'Wales offered British migrants the legend of Prince Madoc, who, in the twelfth century, left his home in war-torn Wales and sailed to the Gulf of Mexico, where his people subdued, and in some tellings, mixed with, native tribes' (91). Given the small populace, Shields does concede that the idea of a Welsh diaspora in North America is debatable, but gives rewarding attention to the circulation of the Madoc myth in the Atlantic world.

Perhaps, the most original part of *Nation and Migration* comes in chapter 2, on the Irish uncanny and the American gothic, which reinvigorates gothic studies. Shields reminds us that Irish sympathies lay with the Patriots in Britain's war against the colonies and brings into focus those Irish-American political connections: many Irish worried that the economic restrictions that Britain were placing on the US could be extended to Ireland. Shields observes: 'the success of the American Revolution inspired the United Irishman to seek the reform, if not the end, of British rule of Ireland' (41). This chapter brims with important historical detail about the connections and differences between Irish radicals and American Patriots: Shields offers nuanced accounts of US and Irish writers' persistent use of 'the language and conventions of the Gothic novel to represent Irish migrants' (43) to examine

American fears about Irish immigration. Just as Irish radicals were travelling to the US in the 1790s, Americans began to ‘express anxieties about political radicalism and distrust of foreigners’ (41) in the wake of the French Revolution. Shields glosses this by recalling Irish belief in liberty and opposition to British rule (like their American Patriot counterparts) and the simultaneously threatening and Othering of Irish Catholicism. Skillfully probing readings of Charles Brockden Brown’s *Wieland* (1798) and *Edgar Huntly* (1799) follow as examples of the earliest American Gothic novels concerned with Irish uncanniness, where the presence of Irish migrants in rural Pennsylvania coincides with occult events. This is finally bolstered by an original comparison with the *Munster Cottage Boy* by Irish novelist Maria Regina Roche (1820).

This is an ambitious project and, consequently, there is potential for the reader to lose sight of the overarching connecting narrative. Shields’s achievement lies in identifying many varied literary relationships that further scholarly work will almost certainly develop. *Nation and Migration* is an inventive and, at times, impressively original study that advances the burgeoning field of Atlantic literary studies, which will have broad appeal to scholars of nineteenth-century British and American literature.

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