

Evan Gottlieb and Juliet Shields, eds., *Representing Place in British Literature and Culture, 1660-1830*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. Pp. 221. £60. ISBN 9781409419303.

Jennifer Phegley, John Cyril Barton, and Kristin N. Huston, eds., Preface by David S. Reynolds, *Transatlantic Sensations*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012. Pp. 278. £70. ISBN 9781409427155.

These substantial essay collections are new additions in two Ashgate series, each of which has the expressed goal of highlighting interdisciplinary inquiry. Together they span 230 years of British and American literature, domestic and foreign settings, circulations, and influences, and a wide gamut of genres and forms. But what draws them together – and makes each volume a useful resource for interdisciplinary researchers of Romanticism – is their committed and persuasive contributions to un-thinking the nation-state as a primary unit of analysis.

Representing Place participates in Ashgate's series devoted to placing British literature of the long eighteenth century more fully in its historical contexts, and as the title suggests, Gottlieb and Shields focus specifically on historicizing Restoration to Romantic writers' understanding of place-based community. In their excellent introduction, the editors unveil the volume's commitment to eschewing current theories of place, nation, and community in favor of exploring what kinds of communities eighteenth-century writers imagined. They argue directly that their essay collection 'challenges the primacy of the nation-state' (8) by revealing the multiple and interdependent local and global affiliations that contributed to eighteenth-century notions of belonging. The volume is intuitively divided into three sections that each push against the nation-state by showing how it was traversed instead of bolstered. The section headings, 'From Local to National', 'From National to Global', and 'Romanticism And The Return To The Local', emphasize movement between, and mutual influence among, categories of place-based community, in lieu of the fixed borders and central status of national belonging that scholars influenced by Anderson's 'imagined community' have lately taken for granted. Grouped conceptually rather than chronologically, then, each section covers a wide span of literary history.

'From Local to National,' for instance, offers essays on Restoration drama, Defoe's fiction, Scots vernacular poetry, and the prose pastoral genre of the Romantic period. But these diverse contributions are held together by their interest in how local attachments, particularly defined within an urban/rural antagonism, pushed back against British national collectivity while also helping to stitch it together out of places understood as distinct. Juliet Shields's chapter on early eighteenth-century fiction employs a devolutionary reading method that pushes beyond metropolitan and center-periphery lenses. Reading Haywood, Aubin, and Defoe, she argues that after the 1707 Acts of Union, authors explored the concept of collective British identity by depicting distinct regional and non-metropolitan communities and that such emphasis on particularity attended the rise of the novel. Similarly attuned to rural/metropolitan dynamics, Paul Westover's chapter on graveyard writing will particularly interest Romanticists; he argues that the prose pastoral's focus on rural graveyards was a reaction against increasingly urban, secular, displaced, and anonymous burial sites that signaled a disturbing alienation of the living from the dead. He shows that literary and touristic mourning for the loss of rural community also nostalgically stitched this very sense of belonging into the national identity.

Evan Gottlieb's essay on the transnational settings of Gothic novels opens the second section, and it also implicitly offers a methodological model for the collection as a whole. Gottlieb reads the late eighteenth-century Gothic novel as growing increasingly cosmopolitan in its global settings and transnational sympathy before retracting into a post-revolutionary xenophobic localism haunted by the global and colonial others it was retreating from. The other two chapters in this section similarly take the scope of the volume beyond the national boundary, and James Mulholland's in particular offers provocative claims about how eighteenth-century writers in India might have broken down the center-periphery model or been able to 'unthink' the nation long before twenty-first-century literary scholars took up the task (120). Just as Gottlieb's essay suggests a certain trajectory of geographic expansion and retraction, so the collection itself returns in its final section (perhaps not rendered distinct enough from the first), revisiting the question of how writers joined the local to the collective. Deidre Lynch's essay returns with a useful difference, arguing that the local 'haunts' of Jane Austen and Mary Russell Mitford's fiction evoke both the particularities of one's known environment as well as the ghostly hauntings of increasingly attenuated communities that stretch across time and space. Readers of this collection will come away with provocative new ways of theorizing place and decentering nation, and Dafydd Moore's insightful coda helps connect such models to broader trends in place-based research.

Transatlantic Sensations begins with the Romantic period and moves forward into the late Victorian, but it works from the same assumption that the nation-state is a category in need of interrogation. The fourteen essays in Phegley, Barton, and Huston's collection (far too many to recapitulate here) make a sizable contribution to Ashgate's series on nineteenth-century transatlantic studies. Each helps build the volume's central and persuasive claim that sensation literature swelled beyond the temporal confines of the 1860s and the geographic confines of national tradition that it has typically been placed within. Expanding to what Barton and Phegley in the introduction term 'a century of sensation' (16) from 1790-1890, the editors aim to show that the popular genre was, as Christopher Apap argues in his chapter on the mutual influence between William Godwin and Charles Brockden Brown, 'transatlantic at its inception' (25). Organized chronologically, the volume allows readers to select essays from a particular era of interest or to read straight through for a substantial transatlantic history of the sensational genre. The contributions give a convincing account of British and American sensation fiction as deeply imbricated across national boundaries and also with related genres including the Gothic, popular crime literature, city-mysteries, and the domestic novel.

Many of the essays, including Apap's, reveal lines of influence, whether between two authors on opposite sides of the Atlantic or between broader British and American notions of each other's (salacious) literary character. David Bordelon, for instance, shows that *Oliver Twist* impacted American culture in ways that ranged from making inroads into vernacular language to being used as an advertising tool to sell other sensational texts. He further claims that Dickens's novel helped inaugurate the American genre of city literature and therefore reveals 'cross-fertilization' within the two national traditions (60). Other essays show how authors used sensation to explore contemporary transatlantic political issues, such as slavery and copyright. Kimberly Snyder Manganelli and Jennifer Phegley contribute two nicely paired chapters on the way that the 'Tragic Mulatta' figure was uncomfortably deployed both in abolitionist and detective fiction (Manganelli), and also became a symbol for the 'enslavement' of British texts by lax American copyright laws (Phegley). One of the volume's more compelling contributions to the field is its expansion of who belongs to the history of the genre, as in Julia McCord

Chavez's persuasive re-reading of Thomas Hardy through venues and reviews on both sides of the Atlantic that understood *The Return of the Native* as a participant in sensation.

Transatlantic Sensations will be a valuable resource to scholars of sensation fiction, genre fiction more broadly, and those who study British-American publishing and literary influence, which are the collection's central methodological approaches. While the essays engagingly reveal such transatlantic roots and routes of sensational literature, they offer somewhat less of the inverse – that is, an account of how sensation fiction might help us theorize and expand the transatlantic. In 2011, Joselyn Almeida's contribution to this same Ashgate series, *Re-Imagining the Transatlantic, 1780-1890*, made good on its title by arguing for greater attention to the multi-lingual 'pan-Atlantic.' While transatlantic studies has helped dismantle the false binary of British and American literature – and this volume is an exemplar – it can often reify a false boundary between what it accounts for (the Anglophone Atlantic) and what it leaves out: Iberian, African, Caribbean, and Latin American communities that helped form the category 'Atlantic' in the first place. Chapters near the end of *Transatlantic Sensations* broaden the collection's geographic scope: Narin Hassan, Tamara S. Wagner, and Ana Savic Moturu link British and American sensation fiction to the activities of empire and the practices of othering. Wagner's interest in the 'transpacific' (221, ff.) depiction of New Zealand is an especially fresh approach. But the collection's commitment to troubling the nation-state is ironically least robust when it travels outside of Britain and the United States, tending to see such migrations as ways that sensation fiction reaffirmed nationalist sentiment over and against the foreign. *Transatlantic Sensations* is a great asset for the study of the sensational mode as it circulated in various forms and national literatures. It is a strong foundation on which more work might build – work that, in keeping with Almeida's call to examine the pan-Atlantic, might continue the process of decentering by seeking out challenges to the nation-state beyond the Anglophone community.

Jessie Reeder
Rice University