

# 1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era

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## Front Matter

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**1650–1850**

**Ideas, *Æ*sthetics, and Inquiries  
in the Early Modern Era**

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1650–1850

Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries  
in the Early Modern Era

*Volume 18*

Kevin L. Cope  
*Editor*

Scott Paul Gordon  
*Book Review Editor*

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# 1650–1850

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## CONTENTS

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	ix
<i>Foreword from the Editor</i>	xi
 RYAN J. STARK, <i>Corban University</i> <i>Paradise Lost</i> as Incomplete Argument	 3
 LAURA THOMASON WOOD, <i>Macon State University</i> “An Answer from <i>Horace</i> ”: Ambiguity and Paradox in Pope’s Imitation of Satire 2.1	 19
 PATRICK SPEDDING, <i>Monash University</i> Eliza Haywood at the Sign of Fame	 29
 STEPHEN CLARKE, <i>London</i> “All Ardour, All Intrepidity”: William Beckford at the Strawberry Hill Sale	 57
 BRIJRAJ SINGH, <i>Hostos Community College, SUNY</i> Patriotism and Its Discontents: The Poetry of Sir John Malcolm	 109
 JULIA KARK CALLANDER, <i>University of California, Los Angeles</i> “Attended by a Whole Nation”: The Americas in <i>The Female American</i>	 129

- SOPHIE BOURGAULT, *University of Ottawa*  
Of Ancients and Moderns: The Sociopolitical  
Significance of Rousseau's Musical Caricatures 151

- MIRCEA PLATON, *Ohio State University*  
Why Did Robespierre Write an *Éloge de Gresset*? 185

### *Special Feature*

## **METAPHOR IN THE POETRY AND CRITICISM OF THE RESTORATION AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY**

**Edited and Introduced by  
Mark A. Pedreira, University of Puerto Rico**

- SPECIAL FEATURE INTRODUCTION 221

- GREG CLINGHAM, *Bucknell University*  
Translating Memory: Dryden, Oldham,  
and Friendship 233

- JACLYN GELLER, *Central Connecticut State University*  
A Lock without a Key: Satiric Metaphor in  
Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* 255

- DAVID VENTURO, *The College of New Jersey*  
Swift's Style, the Nakedness of the  
Houyhnhnms, and the Deceits of Rhetoric 285

- PHILIP SMALLWOOD, *Birmingham City University*  
Not the History of Ideas: Laughter, Music, and  
Metaphor in Pope's Definition of Criticism 313

## *Research Methods Update*

DAVID HILL RADCLIFFE, <i>Virginia Tech University</i> On the Road with Digital Humanities	331
--	-----

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

Robin Darwall-Smith, <i>A History of University College, Oxford</i> Reviewed by Anne Barbeau Gardiner	341
--	-----

Charlie Huenemann, ed., <i>Interpreting Spinoza: Critical Essays</i> Reviewed by Florian Vauléon	345
---	-----

Dan Edelstein, ed., <i>The Super-Enlightenment: Daring to Know Too Much</i> Reviewed by François Pépin	346
---	-----

Anne Betty Weinshenker, <i>A God or a Bench: Sculpture as a Problematic Art during the Ancien Régime</i> Reviewed by M. G. Sullivan	349
--	-----

Kirsten Saxton, <i>Narratives of Women and Murder in England, 1680–1760: Deadly Plots</i> Reviewed by Hal Gladfelder	352
---	-----

Anja Müller, <i>Framing Childhood in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals and Prints, 1689–1789</i> Reviewed by John Morgenstern	356
---	-----

Bridget Keegan, <i>British Labouring-Class Nature Poetry, 1730–1837</i> Reviewed by Jeannie Dalporto	359
---	-----

Sophie Gee, <i>Making Waste: Leftovers and the Eighteenth-Century Imagination</i>	
---	--



Reviewed by Erik Bond	362
Roger L. Emerson, <i>Academic Patronage in the Scottish Enlightenment: Glasgow, Edinburgh, and St Andrews Universities</i>	
Reviewed by Richard B. Sher	366
Mary Helen McMurrin, <i>The Spread of Novels: Translation and Prose Fiction in the Eighteenth Century</i>	
Reviewed by Brian Michael Norton	370
Mona Scheuermann, <i>Reading Jane Austen</i>	
Reviewed by Nora Nachumi	373
Miriam L. Wallace, ed., <i>Enlightening Romanticism, Romancing the Enlightenment: British Novels from 1750 to 1832</i>	
Reviewed by Evan Gottlieb	376
Mike Sanders, <i>The Poetry of Chartism: Aesthetics, Politics, History</i>	
Reviewed by Janette Martin	379
April London, <i>Women and Property in the Eighteenth-Century English Novel</i>	
Reviewed by Catherine Craft-Fairchild	382
Greg Clingham and Philip Smallwood, eds., <i>Samuel Johnson after 300 Years</i> ; O M Brack, Jr., ed., <i>Sir John Hawkins, "The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D."</i> ; Thomas M. Curley, <i>Samuel Johnson, the Ossian Fraud, and the Celtic Revival in Great Britain and Ireland</i>	
Reviewed by Anthony W. Lee	385

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Title Page, <i>The Equity of Parnassus</i> (1744)	37
Detail, <i>The Equity of Parnassus</i> (1744)	38

# FOREWORD

*From the Editor*

Contrary to received opinion, parts are often greater than the sum of the whole. Anyone who has attempted to assemble a complicated patio accessory directly from a hardware-store carton suspects that the barbecue grill or the patio swing is likely smaller than the apparent amalgam of its pieces. Anyone who has relished the mechanical pleasure of probing a motor, assembling a radio-controlled airplane model, or simply reading the catalogue of any supply house will recognize the amusing pleasure of disassembly, inventory, and parts perusal. Cultural history, as any bookworm knows, is full of choice scraps, of collectible objects and assembly-ready data that easily outnumber the words in a published study or the hobby-years in an enthusiast's lifetime.

The vivacity and the persistence of parts could be regarded as a de facto theme of this volume of 1650–1850. Whether the incompleteness of the argument in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* or the complicated spottiness of Eliza Haywood's publishing career or the difficulty in navigating a multinational periodical, the essays in this volume evidence a relish for detail that marks a new turn away from broadly generalized theoretical claims. Time and again the authors in this volume return to the building blocks of cultural traditions. Mark Pedreira, for example, has assembled a set of four essays that examine the fundamental trope of metaphor, a trope from which almost all expressive acts or utterances emerge. Pedreira's feature is itself a part of a two-segment series that will show how a single technique can color, change, or otherwise compound with all the major idioms of an era, indeed may itself come to characterize that age.

In the spirit of generalizing particularity, this volume also includes a full complement of reviews, each of which encompasses one of the plurality of eighteenth-century worlds. Among the reviews is a multipart, triple analysis of three major books on Samuel Johnson, a parts-aware author for whom an aphorism often substituted for an encyclopedia. “Review” suggests a second look—a return engagement in which one small piece of eighteenth-century studies is allowed to amplify meanings missed on the first perusal. All the parts of this issue of 1650–1850 bode fair to merit a literal review—a second or third or fourth reading—as they piece together a period that is as often organized and evocative in its detail as it is in systematic compositions or putatively big pictures.

**1650–1850**