

ABSTRACTS

James Bryant Reeves, “Antislavery Literature and the Decline of Hell”

This article argues that the afterlife was a central component of antislavery literature throughout the long eighteenth century. Surveying antislavery writings by James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, Hannah More, William Cowper, Ignatius Sancho, and others, it contends that slavery led many abolitionists to reconsider the requirements for salvation and to afford heaven to non-Christian Africans enslaved across the globe. The article therefore revises scholarly narratives of hell’s decline, insisting that it is best understood not simply as an idea in European intellectual history but as a complex set of responses to global oppression and political injustice.

Jamie Bolker, “Lost at Sea: *Robinson Crusoe* and the Art of Navigation”

This article traces the connections between Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and the religious and practical navigational literatures (the “art of navigation”) that flourished at the time the novel was published. The first two sections argue for how fluid the boundaries were between spiritual and physical navigation in the transatlantic eighteenth century through an explication of navigational print culture and an analysis of maritime-themed religious works. The final two sections show how this rich conception of navigation works in Defoe’s novel. Crusoe uses a series of guides—textual (navigation books) and religious (Bible)—before finding Friday as the ultimate guide to aid with his spiritual and physical senses of lostness.

Sonia Gollance, “Dancing to the Court Jew’s Tune: Joseph ‘Jud’ Süß Oppenheimer and the Politics of the Ballroom”

Joseph “Jud” Süß Oppenheimer was the most famous eighteenth-century court Jew, and one of the most prominent Jewish figures in German literary history. This article argues that the many literary and film adaptations of Süß’s life use masquerade ball scenes to convey his privileged yet vulnerable position at the Württemberg court. Süß’s participation in these court festivities blurs the social boundaries between himself and Christian elites, and reveals Süß’s perceived complicity with the darker side of these entertainments. Ball scenes are a much more pivotal plot element of texts about Süß than has previously been acknowledged, which reveal anxieties about Jewish male sexuality and use of power.

Sarah Irving-Stonebraker, “Enlightenment Ethnography on the Global Periphery: The Case of the *Duff* Missionary Voyage to the South Pacific, 1796–1798”

This article contributes to the recent scholarly efforts to take seriously the kinds of scientific work undertaken by missionaries to the South Pacific in the eighteenth-century Anglophone world. It explores the ethnographic and natural historical work undertaken by Captain Wilson and his missionaries on the *Duff* voyage to the South Pacific in the 1790s. It argues that not only was Wilson practicing science in the form of ethnography and natural history, but that his theology was, in fact, central to his scientific work. Wilson put the theological concept of idolatry to new, ethnographic, use on the colonial periphery, against the backdrop of the increasingly global exchange of people, goods, and ideas.

Colum Leckey, “Imagining the Urals: Academic Travelers and Russia’s Europe-Asia Divide”

This article examines the idea of the Urals as the boundary between Europe and Asia. First proposed in the 1730s, the idea was tested in the 1760s when the Russian Academy of Sciences sent four geographical expeditions to the region. While expedition members regarded the Urals as geologically significant, they also acknowledged the permeable nature of the region and the capacity of its indigenous peoples to assimilate into Russian culture or to resist it. Their conclusions suggested that the Europe-Asia divide was determined less by physical geography and more by the actions and choices of local communities.

Whitney Mannies, “The Periodical as Transnational Salon: Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier’s *L’Erudition Enjouée* (1703)”

One of the earliest examples of a French periodical written by a woman, Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier de Villandon’s *L’Erudition Enjouée* highlights the ways in which one early eighteenth-century *salonnière* adapted to print, drawing on the culture and literary conventions of the salon to push women’s intellectual, cultural, and political authority further into the public, printed sphere. Lhéritier was also politically savvy, using her transnational journal to promote the diplomatic aims of the Bourbons in Spain while at the same time subtly undermining prejudice against women rulers.

Amy Milka, “‘Preferring Death’: Suicidal Criminals in Eighteenth-Century England”

Suicide was a crime throughout the eighteenth century, but was not always punished as such, and some self-murders were treated with lenience and sensitivity. This article discusses suicidal criminals in eighteenth-century England who challenged state power and the legal process by taking their lives before their arrest or punishment. It also introduces several understudied cases of judicial suicides: people who deliberately committed crimes in order to receive the death sentence. These cases provide new insights into the process of prosecution, punishment, and pardon in the eighteenth century. This article argues that the treatment of suicidal criminals in the eighteenth century was shaped by changing moral, spiritual, and emotional standards, but also by popular literature and press reporting.