

ABSTRACTS

Charles Michael Pawluk, “Almost a Savage”: The Rhetoric of Comic Violence in Ignatius Sancho’s *Letters*

This article suggests that the comic means by which Ignatius Sancho represents the quotidian violence of slavery in *The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African* avoids the traditional problems of the sentimental “spectacle” of slavery, including the objectification of the Black body and the fetishization of Black suffering. Sancho is not simply a comic writer—he is a self-referential analyst of comic traditions—and the *Letters* showcase complex instances of comic violence as Black performance in eighteenth-century England that critique both the slaveholding society and the sentimental abolitionist for their shared reliance on rhetorical strategies that objectify slavery as they spectacularize it.

Carrie D. Shanafelt, “A World of Debt”: Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, *The Wealth of Nations*, and the End of Finance

Although not usually listed among critics of Adam Smith, in his 1787 *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evils of Slavery* Quobna Ottobah Cugoano described a causal relationship between corporate financing of national debt and the perpetuation of slavery that anticipates more recent analyses of cyclic economic crisis by Thomas Piketty and David Graeber as a legacy of labor abuse. Cugoano argued for economic discourse that retains its connection to morality and theology at the moment that the dehumanization of economics by profiteers of slavery and industrialization inhibited a reckoning of moral and financial debts.

Satit Leelathawornchai, How Utility Pleases: Sentiment and Utility in *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*

Discussions of the rhetoric of sensibility in Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative* have had little to say about Equiano’s frequent appeals to utilitarianism, which seem out of keeping with his appeals to the humanitarian feelings of his readers. I argue that these two aspects of Equiano’s rhetoric are mutually reinforcing, following an eighteenth-century tradition that often conflated appeals to the feelings with considerations about utility. Sensibility, as is well known, was indebted to a moral discourse that located feeling as the source of moral recognition, but this same discourse also held that utilitarian considerations informed moral judgments. In line with this tradition, I argue, Equiano invokes the utility inherent in the abolitionist program as an integral part of his endeavor to heighten his readers’ sympathy for enslaved Africans.

Aidan Collins, Bankrupt Traders in the Court of Chancery, 1706–1750

Throughout the eighteenth century, bankruptcy procedure in England was restricted to merchants or traders who made their living through buying and selling. This article analyzes two cases in Chancery in order to highlight how witnesses from the trading community engaged with statutes, legal distinctions, and each other, within the court. Undertaking a social analysis of bankruptcy and the trading distinction can illuminate contemporary perceptions of trade, as those involved in a legal dispute sought to clarify vague definitions surrounding buying and selling in relation to the expansion of the economy, and the utilization of credit in wider society.

Anna Jamieson, “Comforts in Her Calamity”: Shopping and Consumption in the Late Eighteenth-Century Private Madhouse

This article analyzes archival material documenting the spending habits of Dorothea Fellowes during her incarceration at an English private madhouse between 1791 and 1817. Exploring Dorothea’s financial, material, and emotional world, it situates her experience within debates on eighteenth-century psychiatry, consumerism, material culture, and the history of emotions. It identifies a range of consumer choices available for madhouse patients and their families, reframing the madhouse as a permeable space within which one’s former habits might continue. Ultimately, it argues that Dorothea gained a sense of identity, even agency, through the buying, wearing, and collecting of items from her unusual home.

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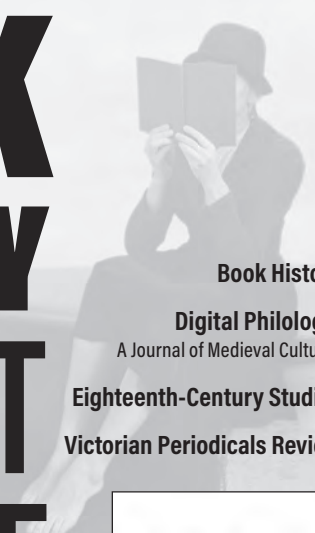
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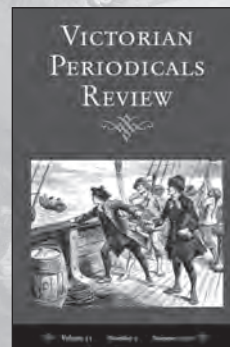
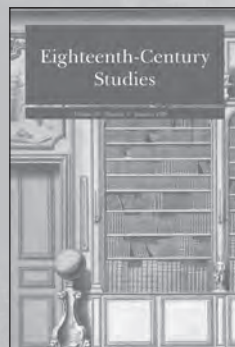
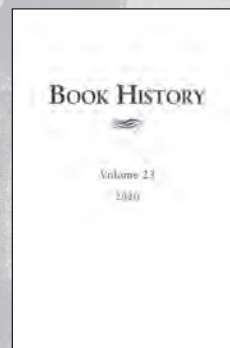
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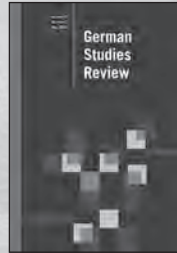
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