

The Shuttering of Bucknell University Press

A SPECIAL FEATURE
OF THE ASECS NEWS
CIRCULAR
FALL 2025

JEREMY CHOW

GREG CLINGHAM

KEVIN COPE

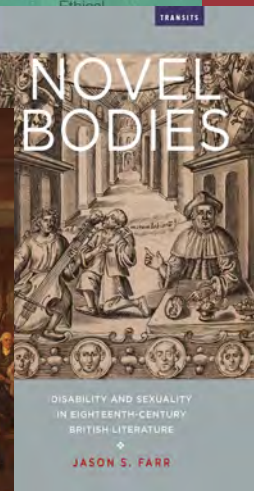
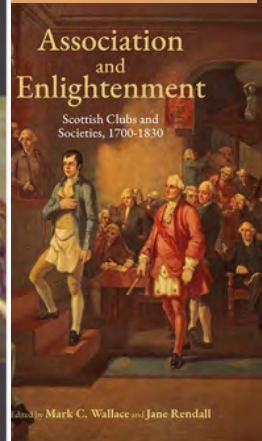
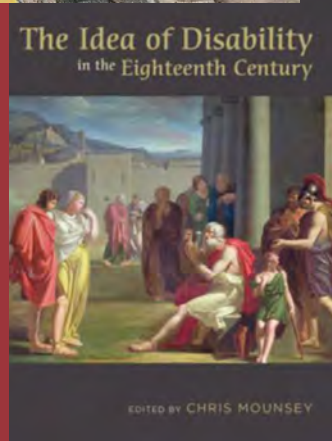
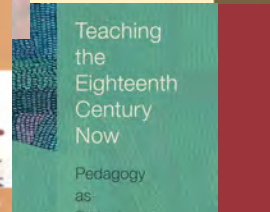
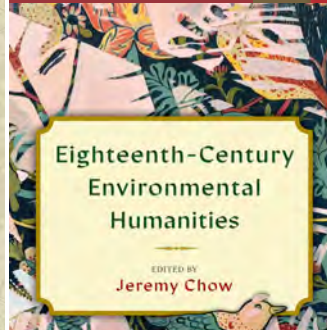
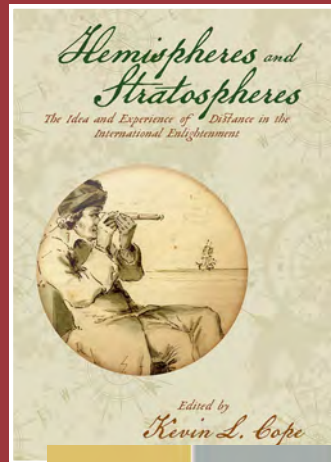
JASON FARR

EMILY FRIEDMAN

SUZANNE GUIDO

CHRIS MOUNSEY

MIRIAM WALLACE
& MONA NARAIN



Members Respond

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Preface:

Member Voices. A Special Feature

Benita Blessing

Executive Director, ASECS

In August of this year, Bucknell University's provost informed the university's faculty and staff that the Press would close at the end of the fiscal year.¹ Communities reacted swiftly to express concern: Members of the American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) responded with an open letter to Bucknell University President Bravman and Provost Sternberg; to date, 125 members have signed the letter. Other groups have launched similar initiatives, amplifying our collective voices.²

Bucknell University Press has been a driving force for cutting edge eighteenth-century scholarship. In this Special Feature of the Fall 2025 ASECS News Circular, members respond to the planned shuttering of Bucknell University Press. Their stories describe the ways in which Bucknell University Press gave voice to a vibrant community of authors and editors whose passion for teaching and writing about the long eighteenth century represents the best of academic pursuits in and beyond the classroom.

Thank you to Jeremy Chow, Mona Narain, and Miriam Wallace, for conceiving of this project and helping make it happen.

¹Aníbal González-Pérez, "[Bucknell University Press to Close](#)," Letter to the Editor, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Aug. 15, 2025; Sam Spratford, "[Bucknell University Press to Cease Operations](#)," Sept. 4, 2025, *Publishers Weekly*.

²"[AUPresses Responds to News of Bucknell University Press's Planned Closure](#)," n.d.; "[GSNA response to Bucknell University Press Closure](#)," Sept. 15, 2025; Catherine Cocks, Jeremy Chow, and Annette Windhorn, "[Bucknell UP Closure Would Also Mark End of Vital Student Internship Program](#)," H-Net, Sept. 24, 2025.

³"[ASECS Member Letter to Bucknell University](#)," Aug. 28, 2025.

Members Respond: The Shuttering of Bucknell University Press

Greg Clingham, Prof. of English
Emeritus, Director of BUP (1996-
2019)

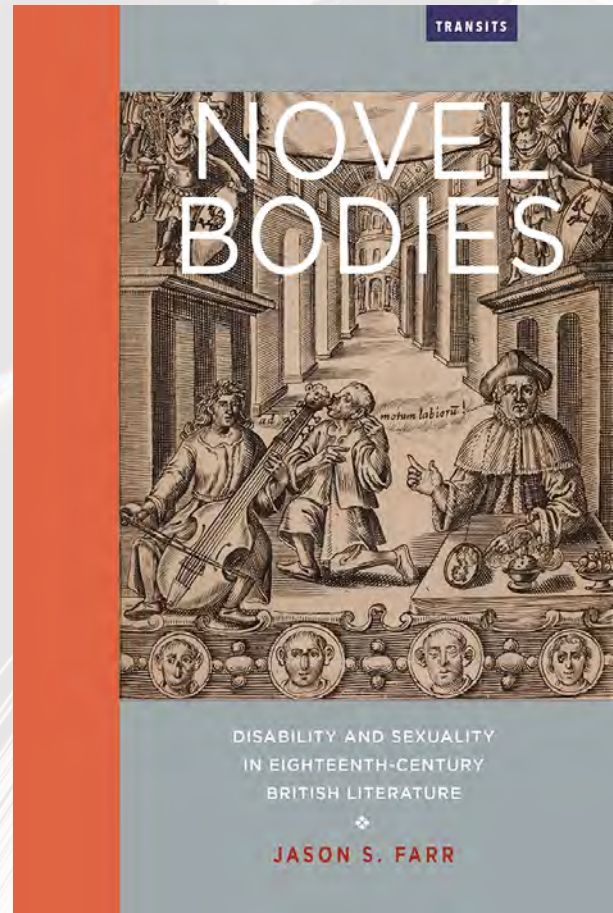
There have been two moments in the last twenty-five years at which I thought Bucknell University might be forced by circumstances to close the press – the 2008-09 market crash and Covid lockdown, 2020-21 – but on both occasions the university's sound fiscal policies were able to weather the storms. Little did I imagine that what Wall Street and a pandemic could not bring about would be arbitrarily accomplished overnight by an ultra-ambitious, uninformed, unimaginative new Provost (Prof. Wendy Sternberg), who seems to have decided that this is the easiest way of making a big splash so she can quickly move on to bigger and better things. The imminent demise of the Bucknell University Press will, as many people recognize, be a devastating blow to a wide range of interdisciplinary eighteenth-century studies (among other disciplines).

For me, as the director who devoted twenty-two and a half years (1996-2019) to establishing BUP as a serious scholarly enterprise, there are mixed emotions. Dismay at the willful ignorance of a fine university in embracing the paltry notion of the University's purpose that underpins this decision; shock at their callous indifference to the wellbeing and morale of Bucknell's faculty, staff, and students; sadness at the termination of a thriving entity into which I had poured so much energy and time. Small as BUP is, its reach has been wide and its influence deep, and these achievements are in no small part due to the extraordinary involvement of the global community of eighteenth-century scholars in its work, not only in becoming authors, editors and contributors, but in the remarkable generosity with which they have read, advised, suggested, and supported. I shall never forget this. I'm deeply grateful for having had the opportunity to work with so many – and so many different – fine scholars. Each book taught me something new, and in many instances, I found that I had made a friend and not just acquired an author.

Jason Farr, Associate Professor of English, Marquette University, BUP Author and BUP Advisory Board Member

BUP's *Transits* Series has been central to eighteenth-century studies for decades. The series editors—including Greg Clingham, Kate Parker, Mona Narain, and Miriam Wallace—have helped generations of scholars to revise and improve their books and put them out in the world. The Press has recently been in the hands of an incredibly gifted editor, Suzanne Guiod, whose keen vision and kindness underscore her sound leadership. The scholarship that has come out of the *Transits* Series spans sub-fields including gender and sexuality studies, LGBTQ+ studies, disability studies, postcolonial studies, the environmental humanities, health humanities, and studies of race and empire. *Transits*, in addition to being a flagship publication venue for eighteenth-century studies, has been a place for scholars working in these underrepresented and emerging fields to take risks, develop their research, and push vital scholarly conversations forward.

At a time when history itself is being disavowed, undermined, and skewed for nefarious political intent, the loss of BUP and *Transits* is inestimable. At this moment especially, a more

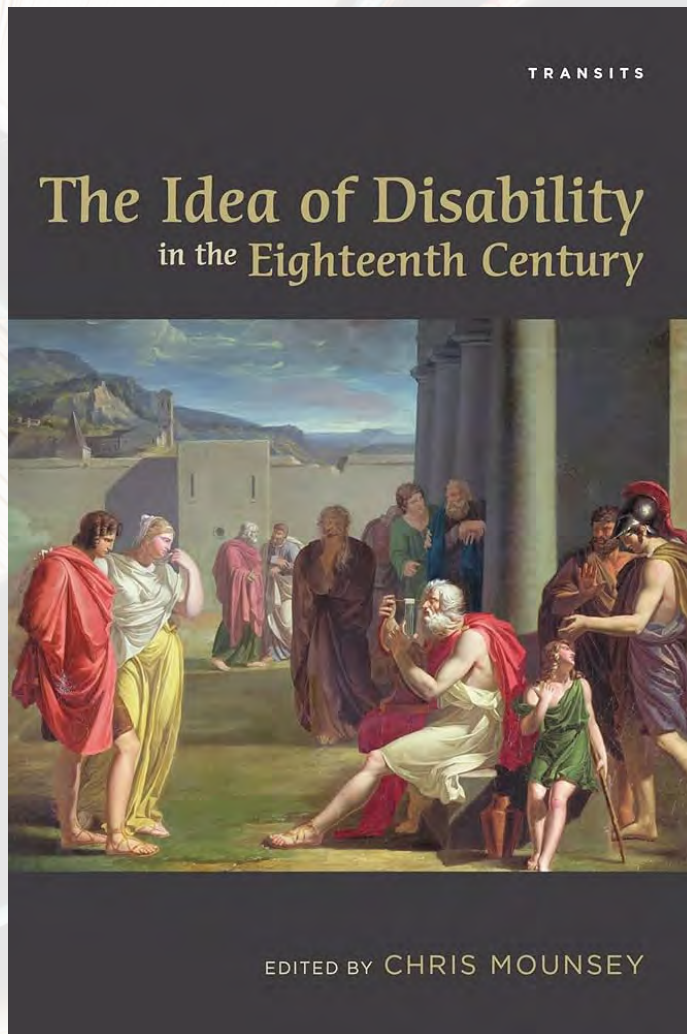


capacious understanding of the eighteenth century would give us the historical perspectives needed to address our current political impasses, and to contend with the precarity of higher education. Overall, the decision to eliminate the press only destabilizes the mission of higher education that Bucknell espouses. As advisory member and regular contributor to the *Transits* Series, I hope Bucknell University's leadership can understand how significant this loss is—not only for the exemplary people employed at the Press, but

for the world outside of the institution—and reconsider their decision.

Chris Mounsey, Professor of English, Winchester University

Bucknell University Press is a vital lifeline for young scholars beginning on their journey to publication, academic security and a great career. BUP was all these things to me, publishing my first monograph and several collections of essays.



More than this, BUP was clear that it was a starting ground for scholars, who were encouraged to go on and work with international publishers, with the experience of working with a caring and small house, where everyone knew everyone else.

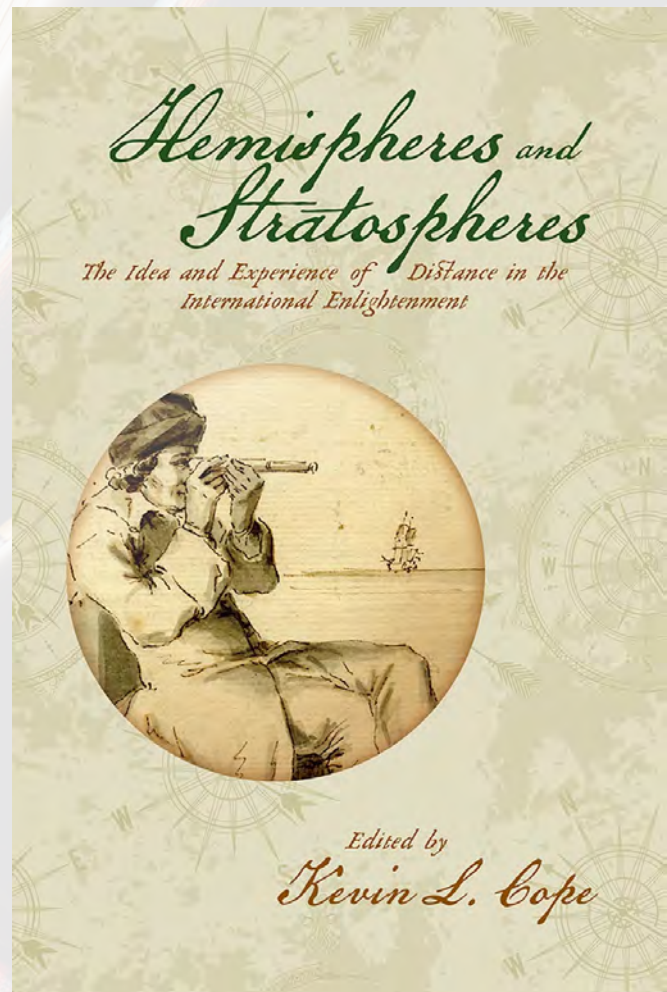
The world of eighteenth-century studies will be a poorer place without BUP.

Kevin Cope, Professor of English Emeritus, Louisiana State University

Clever inventors and cagey entrepreneurs like Johannes Gutenberg and William Caxton introduced the machinery of mass media to amazed audiences, but the long eighteenth-century printing industry—the Curlls, the Tonsons, and the Crouches—created the modern press, with its concerted, sometimes concierge, acquisition-to-distribution handling of book production and with its eager customer base. How strange it is that so few university and commercial presses have concentrated on studies of the period that made them! Preeminent among those few worthy publishers who celebrate their origin era is Bucknell University Press. Far from getting pushed into a corner as a specialist academic outlet that

dabbles in minuets and Menippean satires, BUP has showcased scholarship revealing the astounding variety, rich diversity, and unending inventiveness of our favorite era. The recently announced, ill-advised closure of this unrivaled press must surely count as a scholarly disaster as well as an adverse judgment on over-professionalized academic administration.

Although pessimistic Samuel Johnson tells us that the studious life revolves around “toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail,” I account myself extremely fortunate to have enjoyed a jovially productive association with BUP. Owing to good luck, a series of semi-picaresque scholarly adventures extending, if not from China to Peru, then from Budapest to Singapore, led me first to acquaintances and then to friendships with two of the greatest press directors in the history of Enlightenment studies, BUP’s Greg Clingham and Suzanne Guidod, along with their long-serving and brilliantly helpful adjutant, Pamela Dailey. With the benevolent sponsorship and patient assistance of these editors and their aide-de-camp, I had the pleasure of publishing four volumes of essays on important but peculiar topics such as the idea of distance, the profusion of information, and adaptive internationalism in the long eighteenth century, topics that other



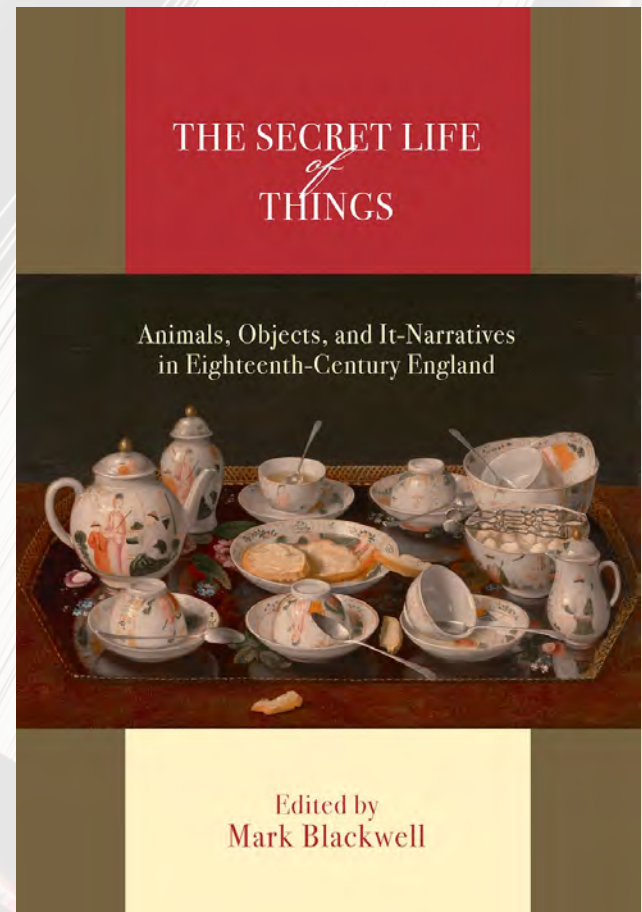
presses with mainstream mandates would neglect. It would be preposterous to pretend that I didn’t enjoy the career benefits emerging from projects that were only 90% altruistic, but it would also be falsely modest to neglect the favorable consequences for the nearly four dozen colleagues who published essays in those volumes or to overlook the scholarly impact of all those essays addressing all those unusual themes. And then there were the eight volumes of my annual journal, 1650–1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era. Spared from the closure of AMS Press

by Clingham, 1650–1850 continued to flourish under the leadership of Guiod, offering a dozen or more essays and a similar number of reviews per year and thereby providing a podium for 100 authors, multiple special feature editors, 100 reviewers, and a very great number of authors whose books received thoughtful, full-length reviews.

Those of us who live in (or ardently study) the past can easily forget what a modern-day economic and administrative wonder BUP has become. Under the leadership of Greg and Suzanne, heroic as well as ingenious efforts have allowed the press to remain economically viable while maintaining its unique character and admirable accessibility—while living the legacy of a university rather than trade press. BUP leadership has experimented with multiple production partners, pioneered partnerships with manuscript preparation firms, developed laudable production and distribution arrangements, and, in sum, found ways to keep the machinery operating while focusing on scholars and their investigations. BUP has remained the most collegial of all presses while responding to the challenges that the modern world hurls upon not only publishers but upon all of academe.

I opened these remarks with comments on two fifteenth-century mechanic-entrepreneurs: two ambitious fellows, Gutenberg and Caxton, who, to use an eighteenth-century idiom, kept their

eyes on the main chance. The decision by the Bucknell University upper administration to shut down their award-winning press masquerades as an act of efficiency or even survival. It may seem to fall in the Caxton-Gutenberg tradition of sound



See full series Bucknell Studies in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture edited by Greg Clingham [HERE](#)

business decisions. Yet it really has nothing to do with business. Having served for five years on the Budget Committee of a much bigger university than Bucknell, I know well that the typical university press accounts for only a small fraction of one percent of

the institutional budget. Cutting such a “unit” will not make a significant difference in institutional economics, even if the press were running deep in the red ink. This decision is about profiling: about a new administration sweeping into town, doing something dramatic, looking like forceful leadership, and then moving on to the next job before the end of the average four-year tenure of a provost-level officer in an American higher education institution. Let us hope that scholarly, alumni, and even public reaction proves so severe that the new regime at Bucknell decides the blowback is not worth whatever imagined gain might come from playing tough with a precious organization—a press that is the greatest asset of the distinguished university in Lewisburg.

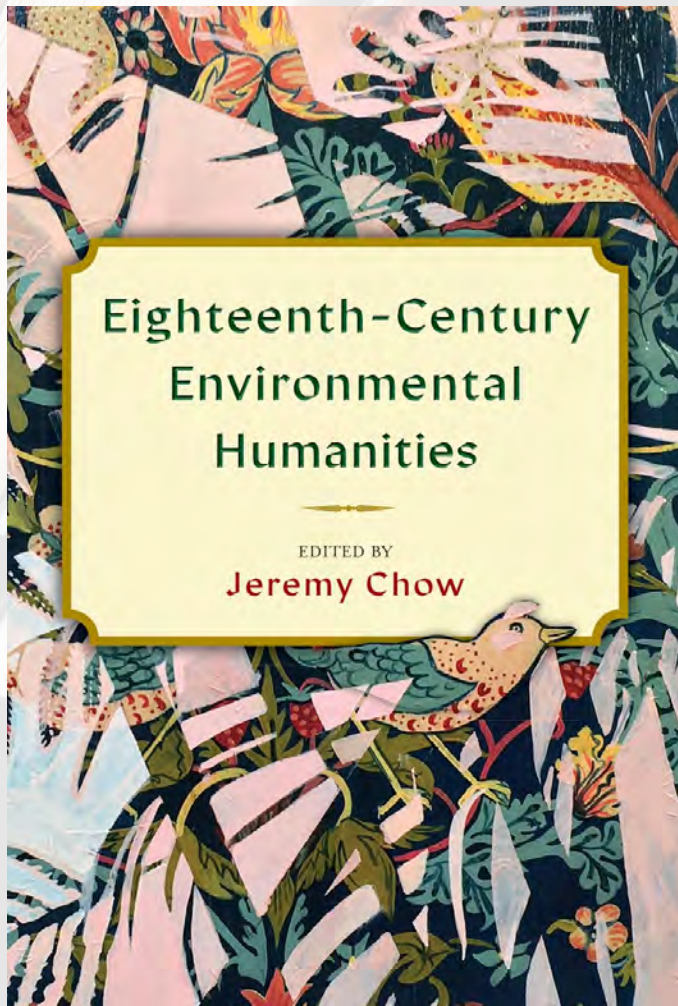
Jeremy Chow, Associate Professor of English and NEH Chair in the Humanities, Bucknell University, BUP author and current chair of the BUP Editorial Board

Like many of us, I first came to know Bucknell University only through the path-forging work of Bucknell University Press. So when a position in eighteenth-century studies was advertised, I felt that a commitment to the field and indeed the interdisciplinary humanities that infused the spirit of BUP would likewise be represented by the institution (about which I previously

knew little) which gave its name to a press (about which I knew a great deal). Even with my short time at this institution, I realize my naïveté.

Though I initially hesitated to share my own testimonial of BUP—enmeshed as I was and remain in the politics of the decision on campus, through ASECS, and even the wider academic/publishing community—I was encouraged to also respond to the prompts we shared with the colleagues gathered here. Greg’s retirement coincided with my arrival at Bucknell, and despite the misfortune of beginning a position in the pandemic, the silver lining was that Suzanne and I joined Bucknell in the same semester. Green, still naïve, and ecstatic with the possibility of contributing to a Press and series, *Transits*, that I held in high esteem, in one of our first conversations, Suzanne welcomed me to imagine what ultimately became the first edited collection I organized. As a new editor/author, the process could not have been more supportive or smooth, not because I was a Bucknell faculty member, but because Suzanne, Miriam, Kate, and then Mona, fostered a publishing ethos in which conversations about interdisciplinarity, pedagogy, and reading against the grain were appreciated and encouraged. Though rural, isolated central Pennsylvania did not feel like home in pandemic, the BUP team and *Transits* editors

ensured that my ideas could find a home. To be a place of safety and respite in today's world of academia is, in my experience, rare. But BUP has accomplished this despite the menial budget on which they operate because of the championing



work of a staff of three and a network of support from those invested in the work of BUP.

This spring, I was invited to serve as the chair of BUP's faculty editorial board. Little did I know that my acceptance of the volunteer position—which coincided

with the start of my first sabbatical—would entail an ongoing and now public battle with the current administration to ironically justify the benefits of the liberal arts and the necessity of humanistic scholarship at an institution that purports to uphold the liberal arts. And while I have entered brambly territory in this role, what stands out to me (perhaps another silver lining) is the community engagement and vocal support that has surfaced in the face of BUP's imminent and foolhardy closure. Through these conversations and advocacy work, I have been enfolded into communities that make me even prouder of what BUP has accomplished over the past sixty years. And though I am wary of the rhetoric of what Rebecca Solnit calls "a paradise built in hell," I am honored to be comrades in arms with colleagues, here and elsewhere, still unflinchingly committed to intellectual pursuits, a common good, and justice in the face of institutions that seek to foreclose and silence the work we do. It is difficult to find a home in such places, but as I have written elsewhere, "We will not be dispossessed."

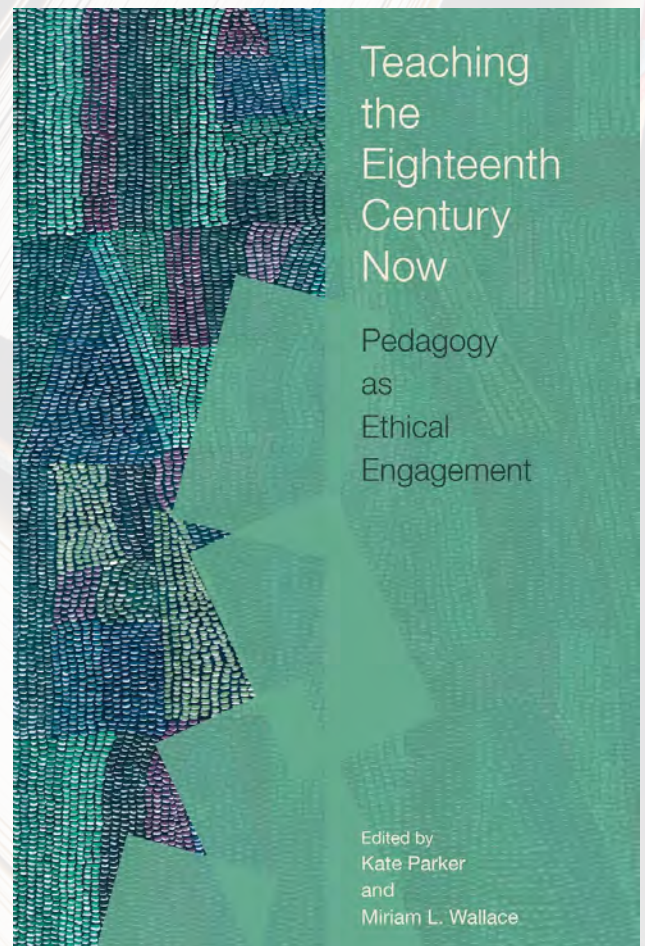
Miriam Wallace, Dean of College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, University of Illinois, Springfield, and Mona Narain, Professor of English, Texas Christian University, co-editors of BUP *Transits* Series

It's difficult to know where to begin to speak about what Bucknell University Press, and particularly the *Transits: Literature, Thought, and Culture* series has meant to both of us.

Miriam remembers boldly responding to an open invitation by then Director Greg Clingham on C-18th List to discuss her book-in-progress at ASECS. Newly encouraged by an NEH College Teacher grant, she sent that email off—and arranged to meet. When the meeting rolled around, Greg calmed her nerves by buying her a glass of wine—and while it wasn't the smoothest presentation, he invited her to submit a proposal. That project was published by BUP in 2009—the nuanced, critical, but also generous reading of the original manuscript, Greg's steady guidance, all made this a richly positive experience.

So, in 2017 Miriam was deeply honored to be invited to join Kate Parker as co-editor for *Transits*. In 2020 Mona Narain joined as co-editor as Kate stepped back. Many of us remember conversations with Greg at ASECS that balanced sharp stimulation with warm encouragement—and led to many first-time authors seeing their books into print. Suzanne Guiod, who became Director after he retired, has carried on the tradition of speaking directly with potential authors and shepherding projects through to beautifully produced and carefully edited volumes of

consistently high quality. While we also publish seasoned and well-known authors, part of our mission has been to elevate new voices in edited collections and monographs. A balance of contributors from varied positions—institutional, geographic, disciplinary or interdisciplinary, is something we and the editorial board consider in each proposal. One of the particular joys of this work has been seeing new authors bring forward excellent and cutting-edge work, work that often changes the shape of the wide field of eighteenth-century studies.

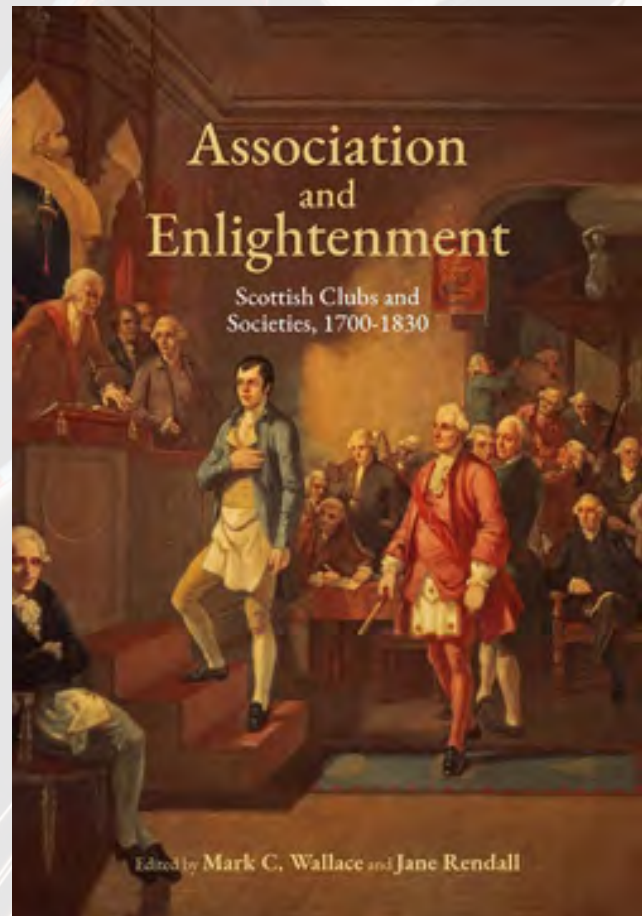


In the last five years *Transits* has added temporal depth, publishing books specifically on Romanticism, recognizing it as an important, though not exclusive, era of study. We have actively sought scholarship that is geographically expansive, encouraging books that find new connections between the Americas, Asia, and Oceania with Europe and the Middle East. *Transits* has particularly encouraged projects that highlight connections between the natural sciences and the medical humanities, postcoloniality and the decolonial, and new intersections between race, gender, disabilities, and sexuality. In this moment, these approaches remain vital for scholars, teachers, and students of all levels, and general readers.



Click [HERE](#) for an interview with *Transits* co-editors Miriam Wallace and Mona Narain

And while the scholarly monograph remains of critical importance for the Press and our field, we recognize that like our readers, we are and have always been teachers. Among the things we ask reviewers to comment on is potential readership is whether a book, a chapter, or an essay might be useful in the classroom, and at what level. *Transits* has especially supported collections that support undergraduate pedagogy to assist both very new and experienced instructors.



See full series *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* [HERE](#)

The recent collection on *Teaching the Eighteenth Century Now* grew out of such a conversation—with contributions from many who are part of our intellectual community but may not be primarily charged with teaching “eighteenth-century studies” or even housed in a conventional academic department. More traditional scholarly monographs also impact teaching—sometimes when portions are assigned, but also of course in how they shape our plans for teaching content whether literary, historical, biographical, or in any range of interdisciplinary

approaches to the constructions of race, gender, sexuality, the environment, the natural and human world, and cultural encounters. Some of the most exciting presentations we've heard at ASECS over the years have made their way into *Transits*—in more polished, final form. Looking at the shelves of BUP books in our offices, it's hard to understate their impact across time and across institutions. Perhaps most importantly, they are the signposts of a community—of debate, influence, mentorship, and vibrant conversation. Some are signed by colleagues and friends. Others are tangible artifacts of those who are no longer with us, except that by the miracle of this ancient technology, they continue to speak to and with us, here and now.

For both Miriam and Mona, *Transits* has been a labor of love, creating a space for new forms of concerns and questions in our field, and to contribute to reshaping the direction of our discipline and that seeks to address old erasures and is more inclusive, provocative, as well as far-sighted.

**Suzanne Guiod, Director of BUP
(2019-Present)**

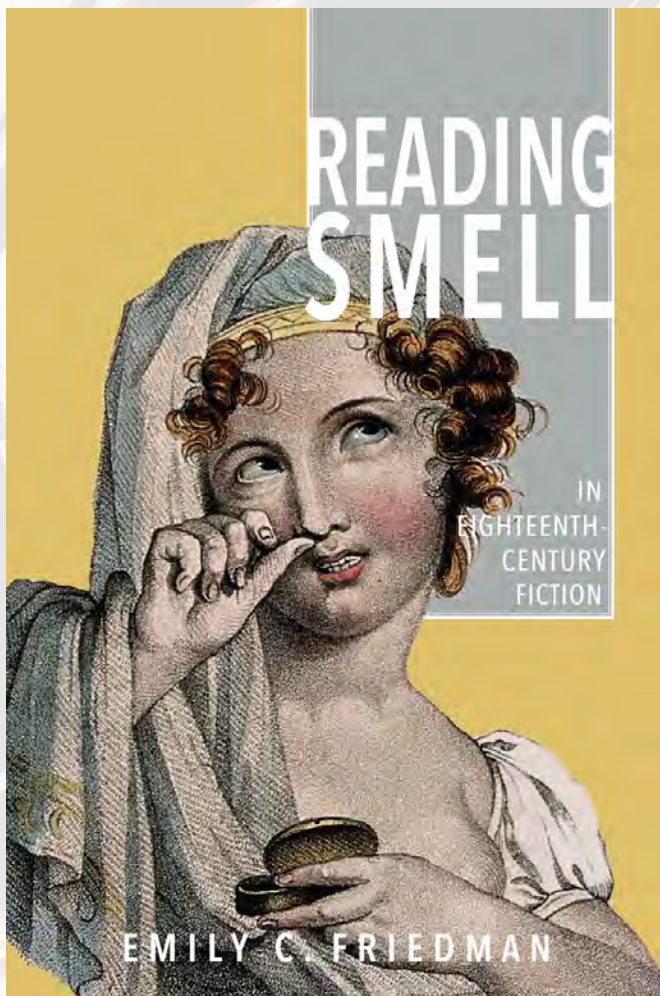
Bucknell University Press has been my professional home for more than six years. It was my privilege to step into the role vacated by Greg Clingham on

his retirement, and to find when I arrived here orderly operations, a beneficial business partnership, new office space, supportive administrators, and a lush backlist of thoughtfully curated book series led by prestigious series editors. What quickly became clear to me was that the eighteenth century was the Press's beating heart. This wasn't the eighteenth century of my graduate school years, but something much more vital and provocative. The *Transits* series had already laid the groundwork for expansive interpretations of classical texts and made room for understudied authors and daring new approaches to examining their work. Books like Manu Chander's *Brown Romantics* and Jason Farr's *Novel Bodies* are now foundational, touchstone texts for younger scholars seeking new entry points to the study of global Enlightenment-era subjects.

What also became clear to me was that the vitality of the list directly reflected the spirit of the community of scholars behind the books. While my first chance to attend the ASECS annual meeting was delayed by two Covid years, I was charmed at the 2022 Baltimore gathering when, with Camden Yards in the windows behind me and a table of BUP books in front of me, I watched a sea of masked eighteenth-centuryists — obviously overcome

by the pleasure of seeing each other in person again – let the constraints of social distancing fall away. It seemed to me then – and seems to me now – my exceptional good luck to have been welcomed into your midst, and to have been entrusted with so much of your work.

I hope we have done justice to that trust through careful attention to editorial quality and the details of good book-making, and have returned to you your ideas and arguments in the form of beautiful physical objects.



BUP's success results directly from the support and friendship of so many of you: the incomparable Miriam Wallace and Mona Narain and the *Transits* advisory board members; my valued Bucknell colleague Jeremy Chow, BUP author, editor, and editorial board member; esteemed journal editors Kevin Cope, Jack Lynch, John Scanlon; colleagues at peer presses Julia Oestreich and Angie Hogan; and every author, editor, contributor, confidential reader, and endorser who has given and continues to give their time, talent, and labor. When BUP's history is written, ASECS will be among its most prominent chapters. On behalf of Bucknell University Press, you have my everlasting thanks.

Emily Friedman, Associate Professor of English, Auburn University, BUP Author

I'm still so proud of my first book, which made its way into the world in no small part because I got flustered during a panel at ASECS and without me popping off at a session at ASECS and Greg Clingham's support and enthusiasm, I don't know where I'd be in the profession. BUP has a long history of taking on experimental and innovative books, especially first books – the lifeblood of our field.

AMERICAN
SOCIETY FOR
18TH·CENTURY
STUDIES

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