

M.O. Grenby. *The Anti-Jacobin Novel: British Conservatism and the French Revolution*. Cambridge Studies in Romanticism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 271pp. US\$65;UK£42.50. ISBN 0-521-80351-9.

*The Anti-Jacobin Novel: British Conservatism and the French Revolution* represents a significant contribution to scholarship in the fiction of the late eighteenth century, primarily for the sustained attention it gives to a relatively under-examined group of novels. M.O. Grenby's book contributes to a range of publications that engage with anti-Jacobin fiction, including Eve Tavor Bannet's *The Domestic Revolution*, Gary Kelly's *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, April London's work on Jane West and anti-Jacobin satire, Anne K. Mellor's *Mothers of the Nation*, Eleanor Ty's *Empowering the Feminine*, and Nicola Watson's *Revolution and the Form of the British Novel* (as well as my own *Modes of Discipline*). Unlike these other works, Grenby's monograph focuses exclusively on anti-Jacobin texts, by both male and female novelists. In so doing, *The Anti-Jacobin Novel* helps to reshape our understanding of this important form of political literature and its relationship to the culture that produced it.

Through meticulous archival research, Grenby has uncovered more than fifty novels that can be classified as anti-Jacobin in their overt challenges to revolutionary politics and theory. He reads this group of novels as a body, positioning them in relation to one another and to their political and historical context, in order to support two main arguments: first, that anti-Jacobin novels constitute a distinct genre of British fiction, and, second, that reading the texts in this way works to "clarify the nature of conservatism as a whole in Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (10).

Grenby structures his argument around a set of anti-Jacobin strategies in fiction, exploring the ways in which specific rhetorical and narrative techniques enable a novelistic critique of the principles and texts of British Jacobinism. Chapters 1 and 2 lay the groundwork for subsequent explorations of anti-Jacobin fictional techniques by examining the appropriation and recuperation of the novel as a didactic form and the varied ways in which revolution is represented in anti-Jacobin texts. Most compellingly, Grenby identifies a strategic challenge faced by anti-Jacobin novelists: how to counter Jacobinism without simultaneously valorizing it through critical attention. For this reason, Grenby argues, the Jacobinism represented in anti-Jacobin novels is an empty construction, vague and generalized, depending on stereotypical tropes and characters, and bearing little direct relation to contemporary British radicalism.

Chapter 3 explores various ways that "new philosophers" are represented in anti-Jacobin novels (often as either villainous or misled), and distinguishes these from the more abstract "new philosophy." Chapter 4 identifies a key character in the anti-Jacobin novel, the philosopher-villain, which Grenby categorizes as a "vaurien," taken from the title of Isaac D'Israeli's novel of the

same name (the French “vaurien” translates roughly as “good-for-nothing”). Chapter 5 engages with a central concern of Romantic-era conservatives: social hierarchy, or what the anti-Jacobins referred to as the “established order,” and the challenges presented to it not only by Jacobin “levellers” but also by corrupt aristocrats and the ambitious middle ranks. These chapters usefully examine how plotting and politics are intertwined, so that particular plot trajectories and character traits become encoded political commentaries.

Grenby’s final chapter explores the process whereby the anti-Jacobin novel became the dominant fictional form at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by identifying a “complicity between authors and the nexus of influences exerting an effect on their writing” (182). The chapter provides a constructive model for understanding the relationships among writers, publishers, booksellers, reviewers, and consumers that enabled the development of a conservative orthodoxy in prose fiction. This strategy allows Grenby to avoid the thorny issue of authorial intent, and instead to provide a historically grounded examination of the reciprocal relationship between politics and fiction. Similar theorization could usefully have been developed around the concepts of propaganda and ideology. These terms are used transparently throughout the text, and statements such as “Anti-Jacobinism, insofar as it can be ascribed a coherent identity at all, was more propaganda than ideology” (65) demand elaboration. It is unclear here what versions of ideology and propaganda allow this distinction.

While one of the great strengths of Grenby’s work is its reading of anti-Jacobin novels as a group in order to identify common strategies, assumptions, and techniques, his insistence on regarding these texts “as if they came from the pen of just one aggregate author” (170) leads to some predictable limitations. Specifically, it prevents an exploration of some of the significant differences that exist among the novels. Evangelicalism, for instance, is a key influence on the shape of some anti-Jacobin novels, affecting plotting and characterization. There is a notable difference between Charles Lucas’s *Inferral Quixote* (1801) and Jane West’s *A Tale of the Times* (1799), for example, in that the latter’s plot foregrounds the importance of self-scrutinizing Evangelical virtue, while the former focuses on political and social events. These two texts also suggest the ways in which anti-Jacobin novels might be distinguished by using gender as a category of analysis. Often, though by no means exclusively, anti-Jacobin fiction by women (such as Hannah More and Jane West) is primarily domestic, while novels by male authors (such as Isaac D’Israeli and Robert Bisset) demonstrate a stronger emphasis on political events.

Grenby’s historical and textual research and analysis make *The Anti-Jacobin Novel* a valuable and necessary book. The study makes available to researchers a much more comprehensive body of material than has previously been identified, and the close readings of novels are acute and relevant. Grenby

demonstrates an intimate knowledge of the culture—political, social, and literary—in which these texts were produced, and his exclusive and detailed attention to anti-Jacobin novels as a coherent body of work will help scholars of eighteenth-century fiction towards a clearer understanding of a period during which conservative social and political thought became hegemonic.

Lisa Wood  
Wilfrid Laurier University

Will McMorran. *The Inn and the Traveller: Digressive Topographies in the Early Modern European Novel*. Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre at the University of Oxford, 2002. xi+279pp. US\$55; UK\$35. ISBN 1-900755-64-5.

Readers of early modern fiction are very familiar with the use of the journey as both subject and metaphor and with the ubiquity of digression and interpolation. In a study at times persuasive and at times problematic, Will McMorran links the two. Through a series of close readings, he identifies the relationship of the road to the inn as “a paradigmatic expression of the tension between progression and digression” (1). For McMorran, the inn provides the principal locus for storytelling, and the journey an opportunity for self-conscious reflection on the nature and structure of narrative.

The first part of the book deals with fiction written before the eighteenth century. A brief introductory chapter traces earlier stages in the development of the inn as a key chronotope, with the *Odyssey* establishing a connection between hospitality and storytelling (which impedes the traveller’s progress), *The Golden Ass* localizing the connection in an inn, and *Orlando furioso* using the inn as a means for a different social world to infiltrate the courtly romance. In *Don Quijote*, McMorran argues, both inn and interpolation, and the links between them, are strongly foregrounded. A great deal of part 1 of the novel takes place in and around Palomeque’s inn, where Don Quijote’s adventures provide a burlesque counterpart to the romanesque stories told by the other guests, and where the guests’ adventures are themselves resolved. In part 2, the inn is replaced with the ducal castle, not a site of courtly idealism but a parody of it, given the Duke’s and Duchess’s manipulations of Don Quijote, who, while a peripheral figure at the inn, becomes a buffoonish entertainer here. The contrast is apt, but the lack of attention to the dynamics of narrative in part 2 makes the focus on the castle seem excessive. Scarron’s *Roman comique* similarly features an inn that furnishes a burlesque antithesis to the troupe of actors headed by Le Destin. The inn