

nuanced readings of a wide range of texts. Readers inclined towards the discussions of the novel and narratology will find Clingham fruitful, while those seeking a rich rendering of the historical particulars that defined the Age of Johnson and its impact will find much of interest in Hudson. For those who simply wonder why so much fuss continues to be made, both books provide eloquent testimony to the perennial endurance of Samuel Johnson.

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Ashley Tauchert. *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Accent of the Feminine*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002. ix+169pp. US\$52. ISBN 0-333-96346-6.

The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft, ed. Claudia L. Johnson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. xxi+284pp. US\$22. ISBN 0-521-78952-4.

The Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft, ed. Janet Todd. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003. xxxiii+478pp. US\$49.50. ISBN 0-231-13142-9.

The appearance of these three books within a short period suggests a resurgent or perhaps an ongoing high interest in Mary Wollstonecraft since the women's movements of the 1970s. Wollstonecraft, of course, is read today not simply for her feminist views but also for her comments on education, on politics, and on the French Revolution. And she is studied not just as a philosopher but also as an essayist and reviewer, a letter and travel writer, and a novelist. It is virtually impossible to teach a course in late eighteenth-century British or Romantic literature today without including a work by the famous vindicator of the rights of woman. Since the nineteenth century, her biography has captivated readers because such notable literary and artistic figures intersected her life at various points—William Blake, William Godwin, Henry Fuseli, publisher Joseph Johnson, and Mary Hays—and because she gave birth to Mary Shelley. These three books are, in many ways, responding to the continuing appeal and market for scholarship on Wollstonecraft's life and works.

These books all attempt to capture the energy, vitality, and range of Wollstonecraft as an intellectual and as a writer. But they are very different in terms of genre, intended audience, and scholarly approach. Ashley Tauchert's monograph is an academic study that approaches Wollstonecraft's life and

works through the lens of feminist psycholinguistic and philosophical theories. The book is strongly influenced by the theories of Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, and other feminist philosophers. Claudia Johnson's collection of essays, published in the "Cambridge Companions to Literature" series, covers almost all the genres in which Wollstonecraft wrote and the important issues in Wollstonecraft scholarship. Like many of the other companions published in the series, it has an impressive list of contributors and well-chosen topics. For a bibliophile, Janet Todd's collected letters is the handsomest of the three, a comprehensive gathering with painstaking annotations to historical personages and events, literary allusions, and Wollstonecraft's personal references.

Tauchert's book is based on the premise that males and females have different relationships to language and discourse. Following Irigaray's argument that, in Western culture, the speaking subject is male, Tauchert argues that, in order to speak, women "are forced to adopt one of three diminished routes: silence, irrationality, or imitation of masculinist forms (hysteria)" (5). For women to write intelligibly, they must write as "imperfect, defected, 'castrated' men" or as hysterics (5, 6). What cannot be articulated in masculine discourse comes out as excess, lack, or what Tauchert calls an "accent of femininity" (6). Tauchert is interested in finding traces of this female-embodied writing in Wollstonecraft, and her book follows Wollstonecraft's career from her early writings, to her political *Vindications*, to her later historical writing, travelogue, and novel. For Tauchert, Wollstonecraft manifests a movement from "Athenic (marked by the 'violent foreclosure' of the castrated maternal body) to Matrilineal (marked by an attempt at inter-subjective exchange through a recognition of shared morphology with the potent and creative maternal body)" (15).

Though Tauchert uses recent books by feminist philosophers such as Christine Battersby, Tamsin Lorraine, Margrit Schildrick, and Michelle Boulous Walker to back up her claim that women enter symbolic space differently because of the shared morphology between daughter and mother, I did feel a sense of déjà vu when I read her argument about the suppressed maternal in Wollstonecraft's writing. It seems to me that this approach had its heyday in the late 1980s and early 1990s, at the moment before gender studies rendered feminist theories more complex. In those days, there was much more talk about writing the maternal, writing the body, and the feminine voice. Mary Jacobus's essay "The Difference of View," first published in 1979, already foreshadows Tauchert's argument about the difficulty of articulating female desire in a masculine mode. Mary Poovey's *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer* (1984) and my own *Unsex'd Revolutionaries* (1993) also deal with the question of female subjectivity and Wollstonecraft's struggle to use a male discourse while attempting to express female sensibility.

What is different about Tauchert's work is the sustained way it examines Wollstonecraft's works through feminist psychoanalytic terms. In her reading of *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters, Mary: A Fiction*, and *Original Stories*, Tauchert uncovers "a series of engagements with maternal authority, with

female-embodied same-sex desire, with renegotiated relations between mothers and daughters, and with corporeal symptoms of loss and melancholia that recall and replay the apparently unresolved loss of the subject's mother and female lover" (25). In her reading of the *Vindications*, Tauchert points out the tensions that result when Wollstonecraft attempts "masculine (unadorned, rational) writing" and repudiates Burke's and Rousseau's "rape paradigm" (56, 57). In the last part, called "matrilineal writing," Tauchert links Wollstonecraft's pregnant body and the production of *Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution*. She notes, for example, that "the revolution itself is represented as a female, labouring, productive body in contrast to the diseased and lax body of the aristocracy it replaces" (87). Her chapter on *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark and Wrongs of Woman: Or, Maria* highlights the "feminine" syntax (99) and the incoherency and flux of the texts, which Tauchert sees as manifestations of "the shifting relationship between the writing subject and her embodiment" (112). This is a book for those who are passionate about feminist psychoanalytic theory and want to see the ways the feminine erupts and disrupts the oeuvre of an important woman writer.

In contrast to Tauchert's book, which has a specific theoretically sophisticated audience in mind, *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft* has a much more general scholarly audience. It contains a useful chronology and a short, select bibliography. The chapters are organized carefully and intelligently. Some focus on specific published works by Wollstonecraft, such as Chris Jones's essay on the "*Vindications* and Their Political Tradition," Anne K. Mellor's on *Rights of Woman*, Claudia Johnson's on the novels, and Mary Favret's on *Letters Written During a Short Residence*. Others deal with topics that provide readers with the socio-historical context of Wollstonecraft's writing. For example, Tom Furniss's essay "Mary Wollstonecraft and the French Revolution" deals not only with her *Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution* but also with representations of the Revolution by Burke, how the *Vindications* were Wollstonecraft's way to respond to the Revolution, and even the way a book such as *Letters Written During a Short Residence* provides commentary on the effects of the Revolution. Chapters like Barbara Taylor's "The Religious Foundations of Mary Wollstonecraft's Feminism" and Susan J. Wolfson's "Mary Wollstonecraft and the Poets" present refreshing ways to look at familiar texts by Wollstonecraft. Taylor demonstrates the "centrality of religion to Wollstonecraft's worldview" and points out the basically Christian origin of her utopian optimism (102). Wolfson examines Wollstonecraft's references to Shakespeare, Milton, and a number of eighteenth-century poets and notes that Wollstonecraft's ways of using the poets she reads are various: "she may call on poets to elevate and fill out her own voice; she may put their words and phrasings in a revisionary syntax; she may read against the grain; she may cite their texts in a general critique of the cultural text" (164).

The volume goes beyond the needs of the undergraduate in its inclusion of studies on genres not normally read at the junior level: literary reviews and

advice literature. Mitzi Myers points out that literary reviews “are a valuable resource for and index to [Wollstonecraft’s] opinions during perhaps the most decisive and yet also the most neglected period of her career,” and that the hundreds of reviews “helped her to formulate her own special feminist stance, that peculiarly Wollstonecraftian blend of rational radicalism and precocious romanticism” (82). Vivien Jones provides a nuanced reading of Wollstonecraft’s relationship to advice literature. Unlike Poovey and Nancy Armstrong, who see conduct literature as mainly repressive instruments for the “proper lady,” Jones says that “the best strategy ... is to see ‘conduct books,’ educational writings, and in some cases proto-feminist tracts, as part of a wider tradition of advice literature dedicated to personal and social improvement, but within which the particular textual and ideological allegiances of individual examples must be carefully teased out” (122). Jones suggests that Wollstonecraft’s feminism was surprisingly close to “the moralized literature of advice and conduct” (120, 119). In the penultimate chapter, Andrew Elfenbein looks at Wollstonecraft’s thoughts about sexuality by considering her ideas about genius: “Wollstonecraft’s project was less to be homosexual or heterosexual, feminine or masculine, than to understand the consequences of linking the category of genius to the category of woman” (229). Finally, Cora Kaplan examines Wollstonecraft’s mixed reception and influence in the twentieth century, noting that the rehabilitation of her reputation, in the second part of the century, was “painfully slow” (249). Like many of the essays in this volume, Kaplan’s survey is enlightening and perceptive, making this book a very worthwhile “companion” to have.

Janet Todd’s *Collected Letters* will be an indispensable tool for scholars of Wollstonecraft and for those interested in the socio-cultural history of the late eighteenth century. The collection contains letters from Wollstonecraft’s juvenile rhyming days with her friend Jane Arden, around 1773 when she was fourteen, to the poignant last letters written to William Godwin when her labour began in August 1797. In between these epistles are many letters about the vexations of family life, the need for money, illness, unfulfilled longings, romance, melancholic spirits, and other matters. Her correspondents include her sister Everina Wollstonecraft; George Blood, the younger brother of Fanny; her friend and publisher, Joseph Johnson; and her lover, Gilbert Imlay. What is also fascinating and unfortunate, as Todd has noted, are the letters that have not survived. There are no letters between Wollstonecraft and her friend Fanny Blood, of whom Wollstonecraft had written in 1780, “I enjoyed the society of a friend, whom I love better than all the world beside, a friend to whom I am bound by every tie of gratitude and inclination: To live with this friend is the height of my ambition ... her conversation is not more agreeable than improving” (24–25).

Todd points out that Wollstonecraft’s letters were not written in a public manner, but neither do they describe a domestic private world, with details of interiors, gardens, consumer objects, dresses, and materials, like those of Austen and Burney. “Wollstonecraft’s letters, often sent from the same

fashionable locations, reveal mostly her thoughts, sensations and emotions” (xi). They are often spirited, frank, passionate, despondent, expressive, and, at times, very moving. The letters reveal her strength of mind, the intensity and volatility of her nature, her quickness and perceptiveness. Todd’s annotations are thorough, well researched, and meticulous. I only wished there was a chronology at the beginning, because, even with the running titles, I kept wondering what the author was doing at this point and with whom. On the whole, in editing this collection, Todd has done us a great service. There are many letters worth discovering and a number worth rereading. I end with Wollstonecraft’s words, a passage written in 1796 when Wollstonecraft, grieving over Imlay, encourages Mary Hays, who was lamenting over the loss of a failed relationship, not to dwell on painful feelings. Wollstonecraft writes, “it is wisdom I believe, to extract as much happiness, as we can, out of the various ills of life—for who has not cause to be miserable, if they will allow themselves to think so?” (344).

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Caroline Warman. *Sade: From Materialism to Pornography*. SVEC 2002:01. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2002. 178pp. US59;UK39; 66euros. ISBN 0-7294-0773-X.

Depuis plus d’une vingtaine d’années, les travaux de Jean Deprun, Ann Thomson, Annie Le Brun et Michel Delon, pour ne nommer que ceux-là, ont ouvert la voie à une lecture épistémocritique de l’œuvre du marquis de Sade. Du rationalisme aux sciences de la vie et de l’idée d’énergie à la réécriture sadienne des textes matérialistes, la critique actuelle a eu l’immense mérite de relire le divin marquis au regard de l’histoire des idées. À l’occasion d’un ouvrage intitulé *Sade: From Materialism to Pornography*, Caroline Warman prolonge avec profit cette approche. L’auteur se propose ainsi d’examiner la relation entre Sade et les savoirs de son temps et, en particulier, la philosophie matérialiste, estimant que « [the] French eighteenth-century materialism did contribute at a fundamental level to Sade’s pornographic oeuvre and that it provides a theoretical and stylistic skeleton that he fleshed out into full-blooded libertine fiction » (2).

Après un bilan assez complet de la critique consacrée à la place de la philosophie dans l’œuvre de Sade, depuis Pierre Klossowski jusqu’à Lucienne Frappier-Mazur en passant par Simone de Beauvoir et le Groupe Tel Quel, Warman remarque que la tradition matérialiste n’est à chaque fois qu’effleurée, son étude cédant vite le pas à des interprétations qui réduisent considérablement la compréhension de la dimension matérialiste du corpus