

Compère Mathieu, « roman de la route », qui, au dire des Goncourt, est « d'un romancier qui a mené *Gil Blas* à *Jacques le Fataliste* ». Quant à la fuite « philosophique » de Dulaurens, Pascau émet ce jugement que l'on pourrait facilement appliquer à tout le corpus des textes à l'étude. « Ce diable d'auteur, écrit-il, explore tous les systèmes possibles, allant jusqu'à mêler dans une même équipe d'aventuriers philosophes, les représentants des modes de pensée les plus disparates ou les plus opposés. Aucune règle de conduite ne semble cependant obtenir sa faveur » (95). À la lecture de tels passages on est tenté d'ajouter à la liste des fuites la « fuite anarchique »! Il est cependant fascinant de relever chez Dulaurens la réception des grands textes classiques. Voltaire y est certes bien représenté, mais Rabelais aussi dont Dulaurens s'est largement inspiré. Or c'est sans aucun doute dans le domaine de la réception littéraire qu'il reste bien des choses à dire sur le compte de ce « moine défroqué nommé Laurent », à qui Voltaire s'amusait à attribuer *L'Ingénu*.

L'étude de Pascau comprend une excellente bibliographie thématique. Y est énumérée l'intégrale des ouvrages relevant de la vie et de l'œuvre de Dulaurens. Le volume comporte également une notice biographique détaillée ainsi que des planches d'illustrations et des fac-similés.

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Laura J. Rosenthal, ed. *Nightwalkers: Prostitute Narratives from the Eighteenth Century*. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2008. xxxii+230pp. CAN\$32.95. ISBN 978-1-55111-469-9.

Laura J. Rosenthal's edition of eighteenth-century prostitute narratives offers a fine introduction to a fascinating subgenre that could have emerged only in the "hot" literary and sexual climate of the eighteenth century. Blending strategies employed in fiction, autobiography, and, sometimes, spiritual memoir, prostitute narratives captured the imagination of the reading public. As Rosenthal explains, "they offered sensual and sentimental journeys, glimpses into high life and low life, and relentless confrontations with the explosive power of money and the vulnerability of those without it" (ix). Readers of this anthology, however, should not come to it expecting to find any narratives actually written by prostitutes themselves. What we have here is a valuable introduction to the subject and well-chosen and compelling texts that reveal the variety of ways in which the prostitute and prostitution was framed, fictionalized, and moralized during the century.

The excellent introduction provides the critical foundation, with Rosenthal pointing out the popularity of the genre and speculating

as to how it satisfied seemingly opposite groups of readers, those who were looking for erotic entertainment as well as those who were seeking spiritual or religious confirmation. As she defines it, prostitute narratives can be libertine, sentimental, reformist, “or somewhere in between,” but they all, with “varying degrees of sincerity,” ultimately issue warnings to their readers that they should not get caught up in the life itself or in engaging prostitutes for sex (xxiii). Rosenthal’s delineation of the characteristics of libertine, sentimental, and reformist narratives is concise and smart. The narratives in this anthology reveal the complicated relationships the writers and, presumably, the audience had with women who operated as sexual agents, sometimes powerfully so. Not surprisingly, these authors did not have simple approaches to or judgments of their subjects; some of the prostitutes are admired, others are damned. However, there seems to be a uniform recognition that the women fell into the trade out of necessity, and while it is true that some pursued it with more gusto than others, all the women are seen as unfortunate to some degree. Rosenthal’s comparison of prostitute narratives and canonical works of fiction where prostitutes are portrayed is especially interesting. Her discussion on how and why prostitute narratives are episodic rather than linear is enlightening and convincing.

Prostitution supported many professions in eighteenth-century Britain, not the least of which was the publishing industry. Rosenthal’s prefatory notes are helpful in placing the individual narratives into appropriate historical and literary context. Five narratives or parts thereof are included in the anthology:

- (1) Captain Charles Walker, *Authentick Memoirs of the Life, Intrigues, and Adventures of the Celebrated Sally Salisbury* (1723);
- (2) *The Juvenile Adventures of Miss Kitty F[isbe]r* (1759);
- (3) From *The Histories of Some of the Penitents in the Magdalen-House as Supposed to be Related by Themselves* (1759);
- (4) Martin Madan, *An Account of the Death of F.S. Who Died April 1763, Aged Twenty-Six Years* (1763); and
- (5) *An Authentic Narrative of the Most Remarkable Adventures, and Curious Intrigues, Exhibited in the Life of Miss Fanny Davies, the Celebrated Modern Amazon* (1786).

The range of these narratives can be seen in a brief discussion of two that reveal the wide spectrum of attitudes and literary treatments articulated and employed by the authors.

Celebrated throughout London in the mid-century as a great beauty and talented courtesan, Catherine Maria Fisher was one of the few who managed to escape the sex trade and marry into a respectable family.

The thinly veiled fictional persona employed in *The Juvenile Adventures of Kitty Fisher* was meant as a cover for her aristocratic clients, but fooled few readers. Published first in 1759, this is, as Rosenthal writes, a “Fielding-esque comic appreciation” (69) of what was in reality a harrowing period in a life that somehow had a happy ending, albeit one cut short by an early death at age 26 and just months after her marriage. The tale is told skilfully and, at times, teasingly, in relation to sex itself; this Kitty is a gallant and graceful survivor who wins the admiration of both her male suitors and her readers.

There is nothing gallant or comic in Martin Madan’s account of the deathbed reckoning of Fanny Sidney, a prayerful prostitute, who is, most likely, a composite character drawn from the patients he counselled as chaplain of the Lock Hospital: “Thus did this Young Creature lie on her Sick-bed; praising and blessing GOD, and filling all that came to see her with Wonder at the Triumphs of her Faith over the Enemies of her Soul” (196). The Lock Hospital, created as a charity hospital in January 1747 specifically to treat men, women, and children afflicted with venereal disease, often had exit interviews with patients and penitents before discharging them. The details of Fanny Sidney’s life as related in the narrative might well have come from such occasions. Surely, Madan gave himself the license to add the melodramatic exaltations of faith, which would have won the approval of a far different readership than those who sought out Kitty Fisher’s adventures.

The volume ends with a helpful appendix listing prostitute narratives written during the long eighteenth century. Rosenthal does not seem anywhere to refer to the Pickering & Chatto series *Whore Biographies, 1700–1825* (2006–7), edited by Julie Peakman, with Alex Pettit and Patrick Spedding serving as consulting editors. These volumes, prohibitively expensive, even for rich university libraries, do include some of the narratives appearing in Rosenthal’s work and, in a least the case of the Fanny Davies narrative, the shorter 1786 edition. Importantly, the Pickering & Chatto series publishes whore autobiographies, among them those by Margaret Leeson, Julia Johnstone, and Harriette Wilson.

Night Walkers is an affordable and useful anthology that would be a fine addition to libraries and classes dedicated to exploring how constructions of women and prostitution were rendered in the long eighteenth century. These narratives quite convincingly prove that the subgenre of the prostitute narrative is an important one to consider.

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