

matters of public, political debate” in both her fiction and her even more copious journalism (208). Her best-known novel, *Clan-Albin* (1815), had the misfortune to be published the year after *Waverley*; instead of apologizing for this, Johnstone used her preface to issue a quasi-satirical challenge to the author of *Waverley*, offering to pit her novel against his in “an ‘equal combat of the Fingalians’” (212–13). Most critics and readers have not judged this much of a contest, but Perkins makes a strong case for returning this novel (as well as its late successor, *Elizabeth de Bruce* [1827]) to greater critical prominence.

*Women Writers and the Edinburgh Enlightenment* condenses a great deal of material into three lengthy chapters on each of its primary subjects, a structure that is eminently logical but makes for some protracted stretches of reading. (The use of section titles within chapters helps somewhat.) But this is a minor quibble with a book that, especially when paired with Ian Duncan’s *Scott’s Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (2007), significantly enriches our appreciation of the major roles played by female authors in and around Edinburgh at a time when that city, however improbably, temporarily occupied the centre of English-language literary production. Given that at least one text by each of these women is now available in a scholarly paperback edition (several edited by Perkins herself), this book underscores how much we (and our students) have to gain by returning these women writers to the positions of literary and cultural prominence they originally occupied.

**Evan Gottlieb** is associate professor of English at Oregon State University. His current book project, “Walter Scott and Contemporary Theory,” will be published by Continuum.

Chris Roulston. *Narrating Marriage in Eighteenth-Century England and France*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2010. xii+240pp. US\$99.95. ISBN 978-0-7546-6839-8.

Most eighteenth-century novelists considered married life a topic unworthy of narration because of its stasis and perceived tedium, devoid of climactic narrative energy. Few eighteenth-century novels engage the new bourgeois model of companionate marriage advocated in the advice literature of the day. Chris Roulston seeks to demonstrate how some English and French novels actually did attempt to go beyond the seduction plot in order to engage the topic of marital life. She argues that the topic challenged authors to find new, less climax-driven forms of narrative, and concomitantly forced the marriage narrative into the old novelistic patterns of “conflict, disruption, and reconciliation,” thus interjecting instability into the depiction of the institution charged with societal permanence (6). Roulston asks whether the novel served to

bolster the institution of the bourgeois marriage or helped to destabilize it; her analyses clearly point to the latter.

In her first chapter, “Advice Literature and the Meaning of Marriage,” Roulston examines the changing definition of marriage. While advice literature generally upheld the traditional values of the institution, it is nonetheless difficult to distinguish a clear chronological development of social attitudes towards marriage over the century. This is due, in part, Roulston argues, to the tendency of publishers to reprint or plagiarize the same material. Roulston seeks to bring out important debates surrounding eighteenth-century marriage by drawing on a wide array of critics. She addresses the move from wifely obedience to spousal mutuality; the relationship between the private and public space of the home; the debates around divorce; the male fear of effeminacy within the home; the shift from a passionate relationship to an amicable one in marriage; and general anxieties about shifting gender roles. Ultimately, Roulston finds that both the English and French, even with their differing emphases on the sentimental and sexual aspects of marriage, began to engage the topic of marital life in all its messy complexities in the eighteenth century.

In chapter 2, “Accounting for Marriage,” Roulston examines two idealized representations of marriage—Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela 2* and Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *The New Heloise*—to explore how the novel attempts to persuade readers of the advantages of matrimony in a narrative that lacks the momentum of the seduction plot since these novels “tell a story that has no endpoint” (57). Both novels promote a bourgeois ideal of marriage that depicts the virtuous wife as the moral compass of the family who, Roulston adds, bears the burden of rendering the marital narrative worthwhile within its daily repetitiveness and stability. Both fictional heroines exist within an “ideal of accountability” in which they must perform their exemplariness as wives; Pamela displays her virtue to justify Mr B’s unconventional choice of her, and Julie must redirect the passion of her past indiscretion with St Preux to embrace the political ideal of a stable, orderly, and productive married life. Paradoxically, the claim to personal fulfillment in these ideal fictional marriages for women is belied by the heroines’ ultimate discontent as they sacrifice their individual subjectivities to a social institution.

In chapter 3, “Marriage and the Colonial Imagination,” Roulston builds on the critical insights of Felicity Nussbaum, Lisa Moore, Rachel Bowlby, Anne McClintock, and others, to examine how the marriage narratives of Sarah Scott’s *The History of Sir George Ellison* and Isabelle de Charrière’s *Letters of Mistress Henley* incorporate the imagined threat of colonial empire (as the exotic other) to the circumscribed domestic spaces at home increasingly charged with embodying national identity. These colonial lands, she argues, “both enable and destabilize domestic ideology, and ... affect the process of narration” (96). While the colonial “other” posed an external threat to the notion of marriage, in chapter 4 it

is the disruptive wife who may undermine the stability of the bourgeois family. Roulston analyzes the figures of rebellious or destructive wives in Samuel Constant's *Le Mari sentimental*, Jane Collier's *An Essay on the Art of Ingeniously Tormenting*, Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*, as well as in a variety of visual forms. While these wives articulate their opposition to the dominant bourgeois ideology of marriage, Roulston shows how the heroine's critiques are nonetheless muted though depriving the disruptive wife of her own narrative voice or by relegating her objections to a subplot. Ultimately, the private power women gained through the narrative representation of marriage does not extend to the power to refuse to participate in the institution itself.

In chapter 5, "Narrating Wife-Abuse," Roulston moves from narratives of resistance to those of violence and imprisonment. She demonstrates how the marriage plot gains narrative traction by describing its slow dissolution. Marital violence transgressed the ideology of the domestic novel, not to mention prevalent notions of bourgeois civility, in which husband and wife were bound in a relationship of mutual affection and respect within a safe, familiar, and nurturing home. Roulston thus examines "a trajectory between sentimental and gothic narratives of wife-abuse, examining in particular how questions of boundary formation—between genders, national identities, or social classes, among others—generate sites of conflict that dismantle the terms of the marriage contract" in Eliza Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*, Stephanie-Félicité's "The History of the Dutchess of C——," and Nicolas-Edme Restif de la Bretonne's *Ingénue Saxancour ou la femme séparée* (161).

The last chapter, "Having it Both Ways? The Eighteenth-Century Ménage à Trois," looks to those unusual representations of marriage in which a third term, in the form of the wife's female friend, challenges the exclusivity of the married couple. In Charles Brockden Brown's *Ormond; or, the Secret Witness*, Sarah Fielding's "Caelia and Chloe," Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*, Jane Barker's "The Unaccountable Wife," and Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Roulston considers the variety of novelistic reactions to the marital threesome. Roulston writes that "as a narrative tool, the threesome is an invaluable reminder of the potential limitations of binary relations, but it is also defined by a domesticity that adultery lacks, ... thus creating a disruption of the institution from within" (207).

Roulston presents a rich study of how eighteenth-century English and French authors grappled with the challenge of turning the mundane quotidian dramas of married life into compelling, readable narratives. Her original focus on the "crisis of representation" that married life posed for the novel opens new ways to think about many of the canonical texts that she addresses here. Roulston is at her best in the close readings of the novels themselves and the way she is able to utilize the critical insights of a wide array of scholars to illuminate her topic. More than simply

examining the technical problems of narration, however, *Narrating Marriage* provides an in-depth look at the debates surrounding marriage in the eighteenth century both as an institution and as a lived experience between two individuals. This work is a welcome addition to eighteenth-century studies.

**Aurora Wolfgang** is professor of French at California State University, San Bernardino, and author of *Gender and Voice in the French Novel, 1730–1782* (2004).

Stephen Shapiro. *The Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel: Reading the Atlantic World-System*. University Park: Pennsylvania University State Press, 2008. vii+372pp. US\$34.95. ISBN 978-0-271-03291-7.

Stephen Shapiro proposes a new paradigm for understanding the early American novel: as the logical form to arise when a major economic shift changed the way in which “America” operated as a player in the global marketplace. Why, Shapiro asks, were so many novels published in the United States in the 1790s, only to fade from the literary marketplace until the late 1810s? Shapiro first posits that the explanatory rubrics structuring many of the most widely accepted literary histories of the period are inadequate to explain the outburst of novel writing in 1790s America, such as the rise of the middle class in America—because class and the novel in America are different from the European models; a revolutionary mindset—it had faded by the 1790s; the rise of liberalism or republicanism—terms too imprecise to be useful; classic accounts of gendered domesticity—anachronistically nineteenth-century; or the New Atlanticism—that remains enmeshed with the nation-state. To understand the emergence of “novelism” in the 1790s or at other historical moments, Shapiro proposes that we see the novel as one of the material products that help to make sense of transitions from one economic model to another.

The novel, Shapiro argues, offers writers familiar language and narrative forms through which to understand a new economic reality. Both before and after the American Revolution, the colonies’ economies rose and fell with “the boom-bust cycles of English imperial militarism” (99). After a period of prosperity that accompanied Britain’s military buildup in the late eighteenth century, the new republic was plunged into post-war depression in the 1780s and early 1790s as the shipbuilding industry collapsed, British goods flooded the American marketplace, and restrictive trade policies excluded American ships from potentially lucrative markets, especially in the Caribbean. In the 1790s, however,