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MAUREEN MCCUE. *British Romanticism and the Reception of Italian Old Master Art, 1793–1840*. Studies in Art Historiography. Burlington: Ashgate, 2015. Pp. 204. $109.95 (cloth).
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Maureen McCue's *British Romanticism and the Reception of Italian Old Master Art, 1793–1840* was deservedly short-listed for the 2015 British Association for Romantic Studies First Book Prize. As McCue writes, despite the "excellent" existing scholarship on romantic visual culture, medieval and Renaissance Italian artworks have featured relatively little in our understanding of Romantic taste; "perhaps, by a strange paradox, [their] very pervasiveness has made [them] easy to overlook" (162). The first three chapters of McCue's cogent, extraordinary, concisely written monograph establish the ways in which appreciation of Italian old master art was integral to romantic self-fashioning: in creating a transnational Anglo-Italian identity that formed influential authors and coteries, in creating a new framework of connoisseurship that valued an innate "aristocracy of taste" over exclusive education, and in forging a new language of criticism that applied equally to literary and visual works. The final chapter narrows its focus to one primary text, Samuel Rogers's *Italy*, and showcases the new insights that McCue's approach, which synthesizes travel theory, visual culture, and print culture, can generate.

One culturally vital, much-discussed effect of the Napoleonic Wars was to redistribute artworks across continental Europe and the United Kingdom. The eighteenth-century Grand Tour brought British aristocrats to Rome and gave them direct exposure to classical statuary and to old master paintings; however, it did not create significant collections of Italian old master paintings in the United Kingdom itself. Nor did it make Italian Renaissance art familiar or accessible to a broader audience. The French Revolution was indirectly responsible for this change in romantic visual culture; to liquidate their assets, French aristocrats auctioned their family collections. McCue uses the auction of the Orléans collection to powerful effect, explaining how its "commercial … acquisition … helped break down longstanding social and economic barriers that had circumscribed the middle-class experience of Italian art," and later quoting Hazlitt's rapturous recollection of "'a new sense com[ing] upon'" him as he saw the Orléans Gallery for the first time (31, 100). Auction house displays, the opening of aristocratic collections to the public, and displays at the British Institute, the Angerstein collection, and eventually the National Gallery ensured that bourgeois Britons could see Italian paintings in person. A powerful new element had entered British culture. Within Europe, Napoleon's military triumphs in Italy brought a stream of classical statuary and Italian Renaissance paintings into the Louvre. In 1802, the Peace of Amiens permitted the British to visit France for the first time since the French Revolution, and to visit the Louvre, which furthered the British love of Italian Renaissance art.

McCue argues persuasively that romantic print culture had an equal role to play in creating a taste for these newly accessible artworks. Affordable, technically advanced prints and engravings ensured that middle-class Britons could gain an intimate familiarity with old master art, even if they lacked access to the art collections and exhibitions of London, let alone Paris. Furthermore, from the early 1820s, literary periodicals claimed a public role in educating their readers aesthetically and creating a national taste, through regular series on art collections and exhibitions. Even Pierce Egan's picaresque *Life in London* provided a model for how to view and speak of art. When continental travel became possible again following Waterloo, British travelers to Italy knew exactly which sites and artworks they wanted to visit—and their itinerary was markedly different from those of the "Grand Tourists" of previous generations. McCue ably constructs the politics of the changing artistic canon. In the new, romantic historiography, Florence under the Medici stood for a more democratic sensibility than did

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imperial Rome. Furthermore, those excluded from public school or university education found it easier to learn Italian than Latin, making the language of Renaissance art and history the more accessible. One no longer needed a classical education to appreciate the most highly valued visual art, to act and to be seen as a well-informed, authoritative, feeling connoisseur.

McCue deftly combines current criticism with primary sources. She roots her polemic in traditional literary criticism, in art history, and in print culture, and she takes a thoughtful historicist approach to romantic debates such as the possibility of progress in the fine arts and the best ways to nourish national schools of painting. As a result, she draws on a great variety of secondary sources, from John Barrell's *The Birth of Pandora and the Division of Knowledge* to Luisa Calè's *Fuseli's Milton Gallery.* McCue scrupulously positions her text with respect to other scholars' work, grouping herself with scholars like Sophie Thomas and Christopher Rovee in that her work is more concerned with romantic authors and art viewers than with collectors. She happily acknowledges scholars' great debt to Maria Schoina's *Romantic Anglo-Italians*, while extending Schoina's argument significantly into the visual arts.

Mary Shelley on Anglo-Italians, William Hazlitt's art criticism, Madame de Staël's *Corinne*, and Anna Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée* seem to weave their way through the text, always appearing as telling examples to buttress McCue's position. McCue also uses less familiar authors, such as William Roscoe, the Liverpool banker, abolitionist, art collector, and seminal Renaissance historian, and Charles Molloy Westmacott, "a journalist and a notorious blackmailer," to make powerful contributions to her arguments, alongside a plethora of authors of guidebooks. Their impact is magnified by McCue's sensitive attention to print culture and to the contributions that the nature of publication—whether appearing initially in periodical magazines or in a single, lavish volume—could make to the meaning of a text. McCue reads canonical texts, like Lord Byron's *Beppo: A Venetian Story* and Percy Shelley's *The Cenci*, through the language of romantic art criticism, generating striking new insights and opening these texts to fruitful new analyses. In her final chapter she dusts off Samuel Rogers's bestseller, *Italy*, to tell us new things about the romantic illustrated book and the medleys of genres that achieved great commercial success in the literary marketplace, and to illustrate the unmatched power of Renaissance Italy in the romantic imagination. By showing us how *Italy* influenced major Victorian authors such as John Ruskin, McCue shows how the romantic reshaping of Italy continues to resonate with us today.

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David Reynolds. *The Long Shadow: The Legacies of the Great War in the Twentieth Century.* New York: Norton, 2014. Pp. xxix + 514. $17.95 (paper).
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David Reynolds is a fine historian, with a host of prize-winning publications to his name, and *The Long Shadow* is a fine book. It is both a synthesis and a reinterpretation of his subject—the legacy of the First World War—in transnational context. But this book is primarily written for a British audience, a fact that fundamentally shapes Reynolds's argument and perspective. For as he readily concedes, despite its international and comparative cast, this book focuses disproportionately on the legacy of the war for Britain. It is the dominant, negative, and very narrow perception of the war among the British general public on the eve of the centenary commemorations of the war that is the main target of the book. (The BBC recently aired a documentary series under the same title with Reynolds elucidating his theses onscreen). Reynolds wants the British to understand that for Britain (as opposed to some of the other combatant nations) the

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