CHRISTINA LUPTON. *Knowing Books: The Consciousness of Mediation in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Material Texts. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. Pp. 200. $55.00 (cloth).
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This is a welcome addition to the ambitious and stimulating series Material Texts produced by the University of Pennsylvania Press. Lupton takes as her subject the self-reflexive nature of much of eighteenth-century fiction, intrigued by the possibility that perhaps Laurence Sterne was not such an anomaly when one reads eighteenth-century writings more widely, venturing outside the traditional canon of the novel based on Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding that highlight the pursuit of realism. This in itself will not come as much of a surprise to those who have worked on late seventeenth-century prose texts, in particular those by women, whose awkward fit within the expected norms of traditionally defined novel practices initially was a stumbling block but now provides the opportunity to reexamine our notions of fiction, nonfiction, and narrative. Lupton's focus, however, is not on gender but on issues of empire and class in three decades, the 1750s, 1760s, and 1770s. She briskly and intelligently argues that what Bruno Latour has theorized as what makes us modern—the ability to understand and socialize technology—is indeed the hallmark of writers during this earlier period. While Latour has focused on our relationship to contemporary media, Lupton is gazing steadily at the way the eighteenth-century page seems to be functioning in ways resembling a screen on a Kindle.

Lupton is interested primarily in texts stamped with what she describes as a life of their own, self-conscious of being written, of being printed, and of being read, and done so within a specific context of class. To explore this, Lupton grounds her study more in Bill Brown's Thing Theory and contemporary media theory than in classic Marxist critiques, turning to the writings of Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin for the term "remediation," or the ways in which parts of the construction of the text draw attention to themselves, permitting other aspects to slide into invisibility. She also uses her eighteenth-century texts throughout her study to interrogate deconstruction's construction of the author. The impressive range of texts selected from the thirty-year period covers magazine, popular novels, sermons, and even inscriptions left behind by eighteenth-century window cleaners.

Narrators in commercial novels such as the anonymous *History of Charlotte Summers, the Fortunate Parish Girl* (1750) frequently do the equivalent of nudging, rebuking, and applauding the reader in the acting of reading it. The narrators imagine the boredom of their readers rather than their pleasure, and how they literally wrestle with the texts on the page: the readers of *Adventures of Capt. Greenland* (1752) by William Goodall are assured that it is perfectly understandable if they tear out irritating passages or "if it should better please them, by throwing the Whole Book into the consuming flames" (22). Lupton explores the appeal of such self-conscious novels and what she terms "impotent narrators," bringing the analysis back to Sterne, arguing that by the time he produced *A Sentimental Journey*, commercial fiction had established the convention of the reader of a novel as being self-consciously taken for a ride, in a medium that constantly announces its limitations in relation to the reader.

One chapter is devoted to it-narratives, such as Charles Johnstone's *Chrysal, Adventures of a Guinea* (1760), Edward Philips's *The Adventures of a Black Coat* (1760), *The Adventure of a Quire of Paper*, published serially in the *London Magazine* (1779), and *The Adventures of an Author* (1767). The last might initially be supposed to be an autobiography of a young man struggling to succeed as a commercial writer, but it evolves through a series of shifting points of view to be the tale told by the young man's pen. The following chapter turns from clamorous objects to philosophical texts by David Hume and James Beattie and their strategic deployment of the paper and surfaces on which they write as not only a means of establishing a theory of empirical reality but also the grounds for skepticism.

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The final two chapters look at sermon literature and the novels of Henry Mackenzie in the context of Thomas Gray's elegies. Although her analysis of William Dodd's literary career as a clergyman and the publication of his writings while awaiting execution for forgery is fascinating, anyone familiar with the culture of print operating a century earlier will take issue that it was a new combination of professional authorship and a culture of reading for pleasure that made the publication of sermons so popular. I found the final chapter on Gray and Mackenzie and sentimental writing with what Lupton calls an homage to inscription to be much more compelling in its argument. Continuing the point made in the previous chapter about the ways in which in print the handwritten object became associated with manual labor and sincerity, Lupton builds convincingly on the work of Juliet Fleming in *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001). Looking at examples of "abandoned writing" that frequently appear in sentimental writing—manuscripts left behind to be discovered later, poems scratched on glass, and gravestones—Lupton concludes that "the fascination of eighteenth-century readers and writers with making the process of mediation visible comes at the cost of underplaying the fundamental ability of people to own that process and use words to shape the world they live in" (150).

Lupton's often challenging and provocative theoretically driven analysis makes an important and valuable contribution to the material history of the book. Her choice to concentrate strictly on three decades makes her book a rich study (even if it sometimes frustrates those of us working in earlier periods) and opens up inviting new paths for further exploration and deepening the possibilities for the field in general.

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Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar. *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558–1713*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 304. $65.00 (cloth).
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This cultural history by two of the foremost scholars of the early modern Anglo-Islamic encounter synthesizes over two decades of scholarship in the field. Matar brings his expertise on the Turks and Moors of the early modern Mediterranean, and Maclean expands into the Islamic empires of the Ottomans, Mughals, and Safavids. Together, they craft a synoptic view of the primarily English engagement with a vast and diverse Muslim world at a time when the marginal British archipelago was becoming the center of a global empire.

Roughly establishing the parameters for their investigation as the beginning of Elizabeth I's reign, when formal relations with Islamic polities were renewed for the first time since the Crusades, to the Peace of Utrecht, which saw the decline of the Spanish empire and the advance of the British, Maclean and Matar assert two main theses: (a) that the unprecedented dispersion of mostly Englishmen to Muslim lands as traders, diplomats, and captives decisively shaped British identity in the early modern period; and (b) that the British articulated a range of responses to Islam depending on whether they traveled to the Ottoman empire and the Maghreb or farther afield to the Persianate world of the Safavids and Mughals. The Ottomans appeared as a militant and expansionist threat to Europe throughout the seventeenth century, including the more removed British Isles. The Mediterranean, particularly after the mass expulsion of Moriscos from the Iberian Peninsula, became even more dangerous to the British and other traders as a result of rear-guard guerrilla actions by the Barbary corsairs. With the bulk of English writing on Islam in the period about these regions, the overall image of Muslims remained negative, even if numerous British men and some women had positive experiences among Ottomans and Maghrebis.

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