

the rape of Proserpine serve as an allegory for the process of oxidation. According to Darwin and others of an abolitionist and atheist mindset, Egyptian hieroglyphs epitomized this pictographic foundation, which degenerated thereafter into the temporally constituted lives and deeds of Greek and Roman gods. These interests fed into Darwin's affiliation with Freemasonry, with its emphasis on recuperating ancient, esoteric, pictographic truths via elaborate ritual movements between carefully measured points on the floors of Masonic lodges or temples. *The Poetry of Erasmus Darwin* captivantly asserts that Freemasonry's attempt to overcome degenerative temporality via journeys through highly formalized spaces was essentially an effort to spatialize time.

Romantics, of course, would see things differently. But this transformation was not wrought overnight, and Priestman points to significant areas of overlap, from William Blake's eye for mental and material symmetry, to the Darwin-inspired scientific poetry of Eleanor Porden, and even Darwin's own unpublished foray into the temporal domain of human history (which Priestman includes as an appendix). Then again, these imbrications also hint at the potential shortcomings of what the author himself admits is a hard-and-fast 'distinction between "space" and "time" which risks its own distortions' (p. 257), albeit one advanced in the name of Darwin's own overdetermined binary world view. The book's recuperation of Enlightenment abolitionism, radicalism and proto-feminism also appears to come partly at the expense of acknowledging spatiality's less salutary aspects, not least the role of the concept of *terra nullius* in British imperial expansion, or that of Linnaean tabulations in marginalizing indigenous knowledge and cultures.

On the whole, however, Priestman's space-time schema underpins an illuminating and provocative study of the social, political and epistemological implications of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century patterns of thought. What is more, *The Poetry of Erasmus Darwin*'s Enlightenment-centred line of inquiry vitally rescues Darwin from being seen as 'the "before" aspect of a kind of "before-and-after" commercial for Romanticism' (p. 217). The book is also augmented by extensive engagement with pertinent scholarship in-text, references to which are copiously footnoted and (most helpfully) indexed. All this adds up to a soon-to-be-standard work of reference in the field of Erasmus Darwin studies, and a volume that warrants careful consideration among scholars of Enlightenment and early Romantic culture.

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EFRAM SERA-SHRIAR, *The Making of British Anthropology, 1813–1871*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013. Pp. xi + 255. ISBN 978-1-84893-394-1. £60.00 (hardback). doi:10.1017/S0007087415000394

In the early twentieth century, anthropologists keen to professionalize their still relatively novel discipline and ensure their own intellectual status depicted their nineteenth-century predecessors as merely sedentary 'armchair' speculators who lacked experience of fieldwork and cleaved to amateurish methodologies. Efram Sera-Shriar's *The Making of British Anthropology, 1813–1871* endeavours to go, as the author puts it, 'beyond the armchair', and to provide a historical counternarrative to the disciplinary self-fashioning of modern anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski (p. 187). In this closely argued book, Sera-Shriar contends that the 'so-called armchair period' in the study of human variation, roughly between the publication of James Cowles Prichard's *Researches into the Physical History of Man* in 1813 and the foundation of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain in 1871, was characterized by observational practices that were much more systematic, rigorous and reflexive than has previously been recognized (p. 10). Deploying Steven Shapin's influential arguments in *A Social History of Truth* (1994), Sera-Shriar maintains that even if many nineteenth-century exponents of the science of man (it is anachronistic to simply label them anthropologists) relied on second-hand testimony received from agents in the colonial periphery, this does not necessarily vitiate the scientific validity of

their conclusions. For one thing, most of these practitioners were trained in the strict observational methods of either medicine or natural history (and sometimes both), and so could apply sophisticated standards of assessment to the data they were sent. In any case, the self-serving binary established in the twentieth-century between field and armchair was never as firm as the rhetoric of Malinowski and others implied, and many of the earlier putative 'armchair' practitioners that Sera-Shriar discusses, including Robert Knox, Thomas Henry Huxley, Charles Darwin and Edward Burnett Tylor, had extensive experience of observing human variation in the field, albeit generally at an early stage of their respective careers.

*The Making of British Anthropology* works through five studies that, for the most part, draw parallels, as well as contrasts, between the careers and observational practices of two representative practitioners. The opening chapter pairs Prichard with William Lawrence, examining how the training required by their day jobs, as a physician and surgeon respectively, informed the observational methods that they used when, supplementary to their medical careers, they embarked on ethnological studies. Knox, infamous both for his involvement in the Burke and Hare murders and for his flagrant racialism, is paired with Robert Gordon Latham, whose ostensibly populist models of different human races at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham in fact afforded, as Sera-Shriar proposes, an important 'ethnographic training site' for both lay and learned audiences (p. 95) (in doing so, Sera-Shriar confirms and supplements an argument originally made in Sadiyah Qureshi's *Peoples on Parade* (2011)). Perhaps most intriguingly, Huxley is paired with James Hunt, the slavery-supporting speech therapist whose polygenism and abrasive anti-Darwinism seem to put him at odds with Huxley's evolutionary monogenism and apparent concern with black emancipation in America. In reality, as Sera-Shriar shows, Huxley actually had little sympathy for the black slaves and instead his principal concern with slavery was its moral and economic consequences for southern whites, with whom he had close family ties. Huxley, moreover, actually agreed with many of Hunt's plans to reform the methodology of ethnological research, and their public dispute was largely a professional competition for control of the nascent science of man between the new Anthropological Society, which Hunt founded in 1863, and the older Ethnological Society, of which Huxley was elected president in 1868. The last pairing brings together Darwin and Tylor, whose respective 1871 tomes, *The Descent of Man* and *Primitive Culture*, both utilized earlier research practices and methods of collecting data, including *in situ* observation and sending out carefully tailored questionnaires. Ironically, both books were published in the same year that the dispute between the Ethnological and Anthropological societies was finally resolved with the formation of the ecumenical Anthropological Institute, which signalled the beginning of the discipline's professionalization.

While often illuminating, particularly with Huxley and Hunt, the joint-biography format, giving equal billing to each person, can make the chapters seem a little forced and formulaic. And it does not fit Chapter 2 at all, which instead adopts an institutional focus to examine the devising and collecting of ethnographic questionnaires, and, as a consequence, seems rather at odds with the rest of the book. The book's central argument regarding the sophistication of the observational practices deployed by so-called 'armchair' theorists is also rather overplayed, and at times becomes unnecessarily repetitive. These caveats aside, *The Making of British Anthropology* is a welcome addition to recent historical work on nineteenth-century anthropology that, as with Qureshi's *Peoples on Parade*, develops and refines the territory first mapped out in George W. Stocking's seminal *Victorian Anthropology* (1987).

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