

ABSTRACTS

Hannah Doherty Hudson, “‘Botany Bay’ in British Magazines, 1786–1791”

This article analyzes the numerous discussions of the “Botany Bay” colony printed in eighteenth-century British magazines in the first five years after the plan for the settlement was announced (1786–1791). Examining a range of characteristic genres, including informational articles, letters from readers, poems, and images, it argues that magazines’ distinctively miscellaneous forms have a powerful effect on the material they present. Even as magazines highlight diverse viewpoints and emphasize the novelty and reliability of the information they provide, their continued reuse of old materials, and the striking contradictions between different pieces published within in each magazine, compromise their ability to serve as sites of meaningful debate about colonization or penal transportation.

Laura M. Stevens, “‘Their Own *Happiness*’: The Ownership of Enslaved Africans’ Emotions in William Warburton’s SPG Sermon”

This essay examines the condemnation of chattel slavery that William Warburton delivered in the anniversary sermon of 1766 for the Society for Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. This sermon, which was the first in the SPG’s history to express outrage, rather than just sorrow, over slavery, merits attention for its contributions to abolitionist rhetoric, philosophies of feeling, and anti-racist thought. One of the most important contributions Warburton made was to assert enslaved Africans’ ability to know their feelings, using those feelings to make decisions conducive to their own welfare. The sermon shows how Locke’s writings on mental perception, emotions, and individual liberty combined with an Anglican missionary agenda and British imperial vision after the Seven Years’ War to attack not only slavery but also assertions of Africans’ mental inferiority.

Kevin Bourque, “Heady Similitudes: Kitty Fisher, Mezzotint Culture, and Material Narratives of Celebrity, ca. 1750”

This article positions the mezzotint—typically studied as derivative of the portrait, rather than as a narrative form in its own right—as a primary site for the development of eighteenth-century celebrity. By perpetually reissuing images of duchesses as demi-reps, courtesans as countesses, the mezzotint erased the visual difference between noblewomen and public women, such as courtesans and actresses. Such heady similitudes between “edgy” and socially prominent women gave rise to celebrity, a system by which women of distinct classes and reputations were newly defined in terms of public presence, and simultaneously, thanks to their material embodiment, treated as roughly equivalent and eternally replaceable.

Natalia Zorrilla, "The Reinvention of Pythagoreanism during the Eighteenth Century: Sade's Libertine Strategy"

In Sade's *Histoire de Juliette*, the libertine pope Braschi develops a dissertation on Nature and murder in which he displays a materialist and atheist view of the universe. I propose to understand Braschi as the embodiment of the philosopher Pythagoras, the main source of his characterization being Pythagoras's portrayal in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. I argue that Braschi reclaims Pythagoras's naturalist spirit while refuting some of his "extravagant" immaterialist beliefs: metempsychosis, the immortality of the soul, and the ensuing prohibition against murder. Accordingly, I examine the historico-philosophical implications of Sade's libertine strategy: was he a radical *philosophe*, or a figure of the Counter-Enlightenment?

Roger Maioli, "The First Avowed British Atheist: Lord Hervey?"

Historians of atheism have long agreed that the earliest published avowal of atheism in Britain came out in 1782. The present article resets the timeline for the history of avowed atheism by discussing a previously unknown atheistic pamphlet. Published anonymously in London in 1745, *The Origins of Moral Virtue and Religion Assigned* is not only the earliest explicitly atheistic tract known to date, but also one of the most radical documents in eighteenth-century intellectual history. It advocates for a return to a state of nature in which there would be no vices or virtues, and actions such as incest or murder would be seen as morally neutral. I make a cautious attribution of authorship to John, Lord Hervey, on the basis of biographical and stylistic evidence as well as philosophical affinity.

Benjamin Hoffmann, "Voltaire's Understanding of Buddhism"

While Voltaire's interest in religious expressions beyond the boundaries of Christianity has been the object of numerous studies, his reflections on Buddhism have attracted little interest so far. Buddhism is nonetheless the object of numerous observations made by Voltaire, from his 1756 *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations* to the *Lettres chinoises* of 1776. This article appraises the content and limits of Voltaire's comprehension of Buddhist ethics and metaphysics and retraces the evolving role played by the description of this foreign creed in his rhetorical war against Christianity.

Célia Abele, "Rousseau's Herbaria: Leaves of Self, Books of Nature"

In this essay, I examine Rousseau's surviving herbaria as a unique archive of his real botanical practices. The introduction briefly sets up Rousseau's botanizing in the context of his late life writing and philosophical thought, especially in the *Rêveries*. I contrast two of the herbaria, one addressed to a man and one to a woman, so as to draw out how these herbaria are ordered and the kinds of knowledge collection they involve, including their implications for Rousseau's views on gender and education. I argue that the herbaria's organization is connected to the principles of the natural history cabinet, stressing the "curious" and "agréable" qualities of the plants and drawing on the concept of the microcosm and its closely related rhetorical twin, synecdoche; these ideas were key to the *Wunderkammer*, which itself bridged aesthetic ideals and erudition.

Nicholas K. Mohlmann, "'Pass the Bounds of Verse': Arthur Blackamore's 'Expediitio Ultramontana,' the Transmontane Expedition, and Forms of Territory in Alexander Spotswood's Virginia"

This article examines the intersection of the 1716 Transmontane Expedition across the Blue Ridge Mountains and the formal dimensions of configurations of authority in colonial Virginia during Governor Alexander Spotswood's administration, 1710–1722. Through an analysis of the text and circulation of a poem commemorating the expedition, "Expediitio Ultramontana," the article argues that the poem extends Spotswood's efforts to reinforce territorial claims in and around Virginia, thereby revealing the complex interrelation of land and identity in early Virginia.