

important addition to any collection concerned with the history of botany, science and the people connected to Cook's voyages.

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EMILY B. STANBACK, *The Wordsworth–Coleridge Circle and the Aesthetics of Disability*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Pp. xv + 337. ISBN 978-1-137-51139-3. £90.00 (hardcover). doi:10.1017/S0007087418000845

The very well-documented book *The Wordsworth–Coleridge Circle and the Aesthetics of Disability* focuses on the relationship between Romantic medicine and culture, mainly poetry. The historical framework of the study is focused on the pre-Victorian period, from 1790 to 1810. The scope of the literary study analyses the cultural environment around the Wordsworth–Coleridge circle. It is a work included in the prestigious series of studies in literature, science and medicine edited by Sharon Ruston, Alice Jenkins and Catherine Belling and published by Palgrave Macmillan. It is a very well-curated edition with an excellent treatment of text and images.

One can situate the content of the monograph somewhere between the boundaries of the fields of literary studies, history of medicine and disability studies, in which the author is an expert. For this reason, it is an interdisciplinary work. Stanback proposes to introduce the history of medicine into the very diverse field of disability studies, dominated by a very different group of scholars, artists and activists. The author presents her research's viewpoint in the first chapter, defining her theoretical categories. She refers the term 'disability' to the interpretation of non-normative body and mind 'as they are interpreted by medicine, science, and culture' (p. 8). The bodies in which the author is interested as non-normative are those considered unhealthy (p. 12), as represented in the figures of the chapter (pp. 13–35).

According to Stanback, the pre-Victorian era was a period where medicine had not yet become established as a solid discipline. This fact created a diversity in the generation of medical knowledge which allowed other traditions to enter into a dialogue with the medical corpus and, specifically, with the category of 'non-normative body'. The author describes this context in Chapter 2, with the help of leading historical figures in medicine such as John Thelwall and Thomas Beddoes. Both medical doctors had political connections with radical movements of the period. This fact seems clear after reading the analysis of different texts related to medicine and non-normative embodiment, but also to political government, which the author analyses, such as the parodical poem 'The Surgeon's Warning' (1798), by Robert Southey, or the letter that Beddoes addressed to Joseph Banks (1808). For this reason, Chapter 3 is focused on politics with the help of the study of Beddoes's pneumatic medicine. The author thoroughly analyses the consequences of pneumatic medicine and its relations to inhalation and to the sublime. Considered one of the most important aesthetic categories of the period, the sublime engaged a famous controversy between Immanuel Kant and Edmund Burke. However, in my opinion, there is a lack of analysis of relevant political documents in the study. In favour of the author, one should say that in case the analysis of political documents was abundant, we would be talking of another book with a different purpose, not that addressed by Stanback. In any case, the cultural context of pre-Victorian science is very well crafted in the study.

The second part of the book includes Chapters 4 and 5. They are centred on the conception of the body for different members of the Wordsworth–Coleridge circle. Chapter 4 is focused on Thomas Wedgwood, and Chapter 5 on Samuel Coleridge. Backed by exhaustive research in the personal correspondence of the mentioned authors with other writers, such as Jeremy Bentham and William Wordsworth, Stanback dialogues with different topics of the period related to the concept of disability. Apart from being related to the aesthetics of Romantic

literature, pain, pleasure, emotion, feelings or drugs were related to the concept of non-normative embodiment (p. 187).

Stanback reserves the last part of the book for literature in Chapter 6 and the conclusion between literary analysis and the intellectual statements, presented with the help of queer theories, in Chapter 7. The analysis of Coleridge's literary works, and especially of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, is very detailed. Stanback's viewpoint on disabilities and non-normative bodies is based on this analysis and on the excellent use of queer theories to reshape the concepts she proposes.

To sum up, obviously, this work opens the field of disability studies to other gazes, perspectives and points of view, such as politically related studies; to other critical theories such as race studies or intersubjectivity; and to other periods and literary fields. However, Stanback's book is an excellent touchstone for this new emergent field. Well documented, well written and well crafted, *The Wordsworth–Coleridge Circle and the Aesthetics of Disability* is a good work not only in disability studies, but also in the analysis of the relations between poetry, medicine and politics. Related to my expertise in science-and-literature studies, I think that this is an exemplary study, especially in the content exposition. Furthermore, it is also very convenient for scholars interested in the history of Romantic medicine in the UK. In both cases, I would recommend it.

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HENRY A. MCGHIE, *Henry Dresser and Victorian Ornithology: Birds, Books and Business*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017. Pp. xxiv + 341. ISBN 978-1-7849-9413-6. £25.00 (hardcover).  
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Anyone with prior knowledge regarding the practices of nineteenth-century ornithology will be aware that it was a particularly blood-soaked episode in the history of the life sciences. At times, the litany of birds shot by Henry Dresser (1838–1915), this book's subject, and his peers can make for difficult reading, notwithstanding the countless eggs plucked from nests by zealous collectors. Perhaps the most provocative aspect of Henry McGhie's book is the short epilogue in which he makes an impassioned case for the continued relevance of museum specimen collections, the bulk of which were amassed through the exertions of Victorian naturalists. It may seem somewhat paradoxical that many of these same individuals, Dresser included, lent their support to the nascent bird conservation movement, resulting in the formation of the Society for the Protection of Birds, and it points to their complex legacies in current environmental issues.

In his role as head of collections and curator of zoology at Manchester Museum, McGhie has direct access to Dresser's specimens and associated correspondence. The author successfully marshals his sources into a coherent narrative covering the entirety of Dresser's life, and also seeks to chart the development of ornithology across this period. Historians of nineteenth-century natural history have demonstrated that there was no such thing as a 'typical' naturalist, with practitioners as varied in their circumstances as the animals and plants they studied. Henry Dresser was not a man of independent wealth, but rather made his money in the iron trade (after various other ventures in his youth). Throughout his whole life, Dresser's ornithological activities were carried out in whatever spare time he could afford away from his pressing business concerns.

The subtitle of *Henry Dresser and Victorian Ornithology: Birds, Books and Business* is therefore a very accurate summation of Dresser's life. Dresser was fortunate in that his work took him to places of great ornithological interest, including Finland – where he became the first Englishman to collect eggs of the waxwing – and Texas during the American Civil War (he was a supporter of the Confederacy). As his specimen collections grew, so did his publication record, and his reputation within scientific circles. Among his greatest achievements was the *History of the Birds of Europe* (1871–1881), a lavishly illustrated, multi-volume work that was