

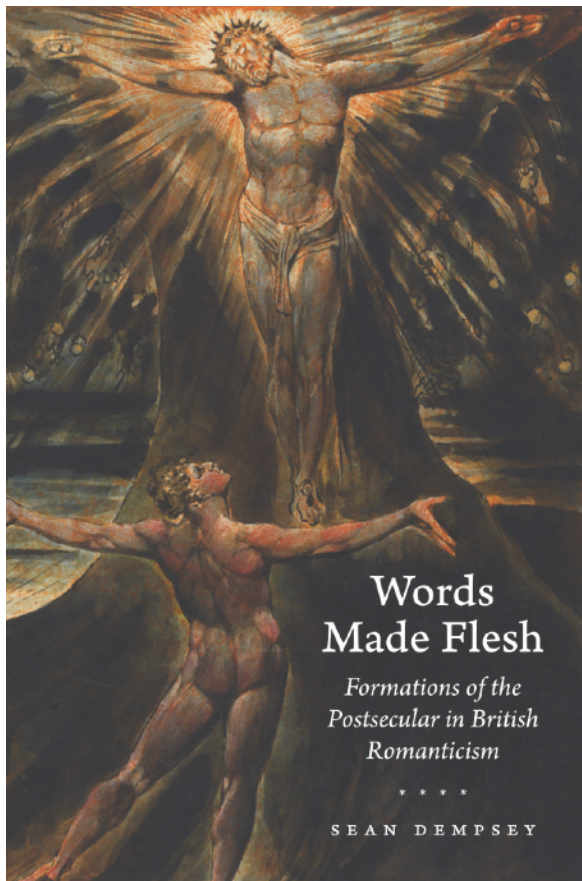
NASSR NEWSLETTER SUPPLEMENT

north american society for the study of romanticism



Members' News

Sean Dempsey (University of Arkansas) is pleased to announce the publication of *Words Made Flesh: Formations of the Postsecular in British Romanticism* (University of Virginia Press, 2022). *Words Made Flesh* explores how both religion and literature can suggest not only different modes of thinking but also new forms of embodiment. Some of the best Romantic literature can be understood as experimental attempts to access and harness infrasensible energy—affects and dispositions operating beneath the threshold of consciousness—in the hope that by so doing it may become possible to project elusive affects



into the practical world of conscious thinking and judgment. *Words Made Flesh* demonstrates how the Romantic poets Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, and Percy Bysshe Shelley and the novelist Jane Austen affect, mediate, and ultimately alter our very sense of embodiment in ways that have lasting effects on readers' affective, political, and spiritual lives. Such works, which unsettle habitual ways of seeing, are perennially valuable because they not only call attention to the dispositions we normally inhabit, but they also suggest ways of forging new patterns and forms of life through the medium of embodiment. Drawing on the work of these writers, Dempsey argues that Romanticism's contribution to our understanding of the postsecular becomes clearer when considered in relation to three timely scholarly conversations not previously synthesized: secular and postsecular studies, affect theory, and media studies. By weaving together these three strands, *Words Made Flesh* clarifies how Romanticism provides a useful field guide to the new geography of the self ushered in by secular modernity, while also pointing toward potential postsecular futures.

See further: <https://www.upress.virginia.edu/title/5666>

A Greeting of the Spirit
Selected Poetry of John Keats with
Commentaries

By **Susan J. Wolfson**

(Harvard University Press, 31 October 2022)

<https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674980891&content=reviews>

\$35.00 / ISBN 9780674980891 / 480 pages / 16 photos

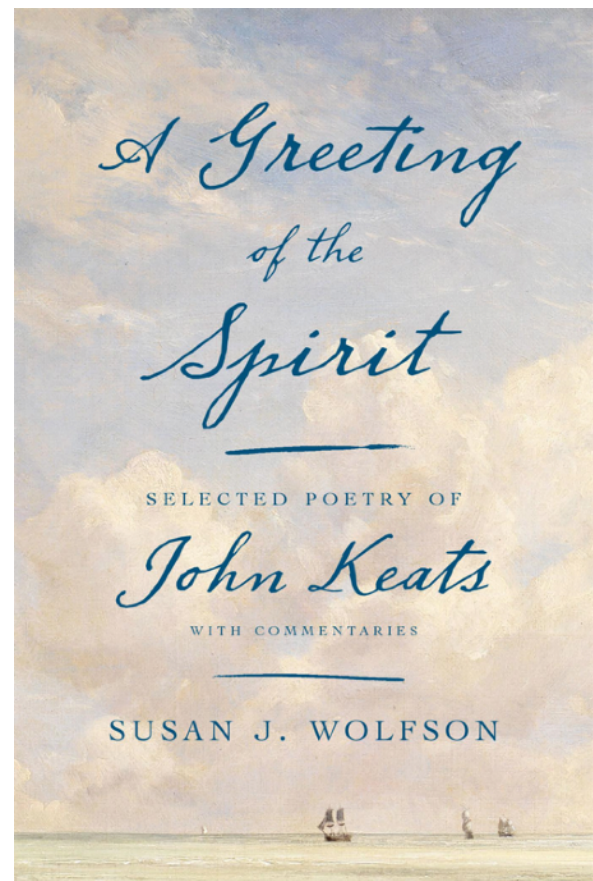
More information [here](#)

The cover, a detail from Constable's *Lighthouse*, alludes visually to the source of my book's title: "Things semireal such as Love, the Clouds &c which require a greeting of the Spirit to make them wholly exist"

— John Keats to Benjamin Bailey, 13 March 1818.

A renowned Keats scholar illuminates the poet's extraordinary career, in a new edition featuring seventy-eight verse selections with commentary.

John Keats's career as a published poet spanned scarcely more than four years, cut short by his death early in 1821 at age twenty-five. Yet in this time, he produced a remarkable—and remarkably wide-ranging—body of work that has secured his place as one of the most influential



poets in the British literary tradition. Celebrated Keats scholar Susan J. Wolfson presents seventy-eight selections from his work, each accompanied by a commentary on its form, style, meanings, and relevant contexts.

In this edition, readers will rediscover a virtuoso poet, by turns lively, experimental, self-ironizing, outrageous, and philosophical. Wolfson includes such well-known favorites as *Ode to a Nightingale*, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *To Autumn*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, and *The Eve of St. Agnes*, as well as less familiar poems, several in letters to family and friends never meant for publication. Her selections redefine the breadth and depth of Keats's poetic imagination, from intellectual jests and satires to erotic bandying, passionate confessions, and reflections on mortality.

The selections, presented in their order of composition, convey a chronicle of Keats's artistic and personal evolution. Wolfson's revealing commentaries unfold the lively complexities of his verbal arts and stylistic experiments, his earnest goals and nervous apprehensions, and the pressures of politics and literary criticism in his day. In critically attentive and conversational prose, Wolfson encourages us to experience Keats in the way that he himself imagined the language of poetry: as a living event, a cooperative experience shared between author and reader.

"A generous, expertly chosen selection of Keats's greatest poems, accompanied by commentaries which are learned and lithe, brilliantly perceptive, extraordinarily informative, and infectiously full of delight. Really, you could not imagine a better companion to guide you through these endlessly marvelous poems."

—Seamus Perry, editor of *Coleridge's Notebooks*

"Wolfson's is the book on Keats: a stirring feat of participatory stylistic insight and creative empathy. The rare idiomatic flair of her prose brings back Keats, man and craftsman, in his historical and mortal moment, tracked through impeccably re-estimated verses. With no stone left unturned, even settled gems are rubbed more brilliant by context. Metaphor, metrics, textual history, notes in Keats's margins and letters, his inexhaustible word play, his philosophical ruminations on the horizons of poetry: all the varied facets of genius and aspiration are seen together in their glinting refraction as never before."

—Garrett Stewart, author of *The Ways of the Word*

"A fine selection of Keats's work, richly analyzed and contextualized by a scholar

whose formal attention to detail brings poetry to life on the page. Wolfson guides the reader step by step through both the best-loved and least-known of Keats's poems, in an anthology that also becomes an enjoyable and thought-provoking tutorial."

—Angela Leighton, author of *Hearing Things: The Work of Sound in Literature*

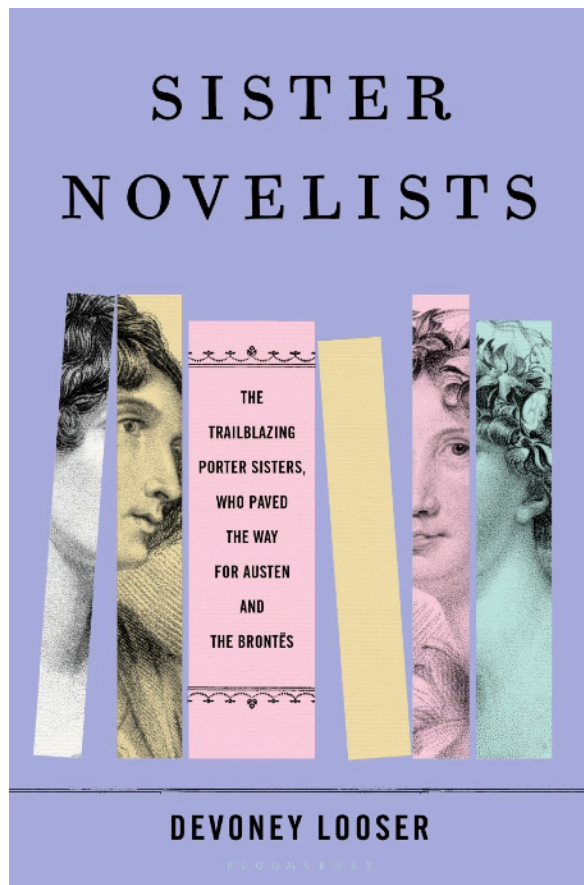
"Susan Wolfson's *A Greeting of the Spirit* generously tracks Keats's 'experiments with words,' exercising the depth and breadth of her expertise to make his verses newly available to readers. Her commentaries, fresh and incisive, invite us to participate in the poet's heady way of concentrating the resources of language."

—Frances Ferguson, author of *Solitude and the Sublime*

"Susan Wolfson offers a series of superb commentaries on Keats's poems, opening up the verbal energies, complexities, peculiarities, and imaginative capacities of his writing. This book is an invitation for us all to read and reread Keats, accompanied by one of his most brilliant modern critics, who reveals him as a poet for everyone ready to be enchanted by genius."

—Nicholas Roe, author of *John Keats: A New Life*

Devoney Looser (Arizona State University) has published *Sister Novelists: The Trailblazing Porter Sisters, Who Paved the Way for Austen and the Brontës* (Bloomsbury). Before the Brontë sisters picked up their pens, or Jane Austen's heroines Elizabeth and Jane Bennet became household names, the literary world was celebrating a different pair of sisters: Jane and Anna Maria Porter. The Porters—exact contemporaries of Jane Austen—were brilliant, attractive, self-made single women of polite reputation who between them published 26 books and achieved global fame. They socialized among the rich and famous, tried to hide their



family's considerable debt, and fell dramatically in and out of love. Their moving letters to each other confess every detail. Because the celebrity sisters expected their renown to live on, they preserved their papers, and the secrets they contained, for any biographers to come.

But history hasn't been kind to the Porters. Credit for their literary invention was given to their childhood friend, Sir Walter Scott, who never publicly acknowledged the sisters' works as his inspiration. With Scott's more prolific publication and even greater fame, the Porter sisters gradually fell from the pinnacle of celebrity to eventual obscurity. Now, Professor Devoney Looser, a Guggenheim fellow in English Literature, sets out to re-introduce the world to the authors who cleared the way for Austen, Mary Shelley, and the Brontë sisters. Capturing the Porter sisters' incredible rise, from when Anna Maria published her first book at age 14 in 1793, through to Jane's fall from the pinnacle of fame in the Victorian era, and then to the auctioning off for a pittance of the family's massive archive, *Sister Novelists* is a groundbreaking and enthralling biography of two pioneering geniuses in historical fiction.

"Buried for 200 years, the story of the indomitable Porter sisters comes to light. Household names in their time, these forgotten Regency novelists have gained an effective champion in Jane Austen biographer and scholar Looser . . . A triumph of literary detective work and storytelling, this is a must-read for the Austen and Brontë crowd."

—*Kirkus Starred Review*

"Before the Brontës introduced us to Heathcliff, before Jane Austen's wit made her famous, two best-selling 'sister-novelists' captivated readers and scandalized society. Today, their names have been forgotten. But, as Devoney Looser shows in this groundbreaking biography of Maria and Jane Porter, their works and legacy are still very much with us." —*Tilar Mazzeo, New York Times*

bestselling author of IRENA'S CHILDREN and THE WIDOW CLICQUOT

"Clever, compassionate and compelling, Devoney Looser is my favourite person to read on the subject of writers. The Porter Sisters have found the perfect biographer to uncover their scandalously neglected story."

—*Lucy Worsley, author of JANE AUSTEN AT HOME and IF WALLS COULD TALK*

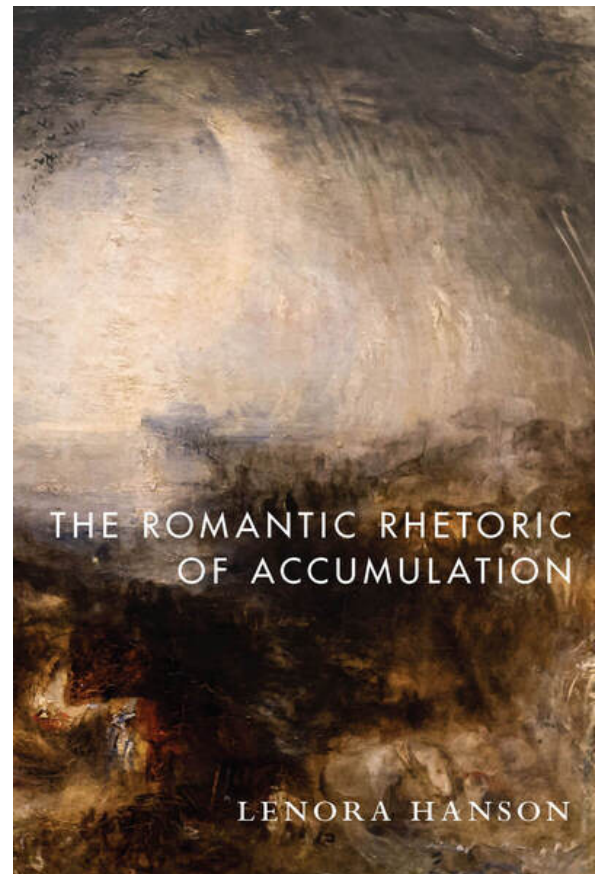
"Reading Devoney Looser's *Sister Novelists* is like stepping into an Austen novel where one can vividly participate in the world full of love and angst that sisters, friends, lovers, and family endure only to realize that this is not a novel, but reality. Surely a mini-series need to be created about these genius, yet unknown women. I can't wait!"

—*Damianne Scott of Black Girl Loves Jane*

The Romantic Rhetoric of Accumulation (Stanford UP) provides an account of the long arc of dispossession from the British Romantic period to today. **Lenora Hanson** (NYU) glimpses histories of subsistence (such as reproductive labor, vagrancy and criminality, and unwaged labor) as figural ways of living that are superfluous—simultaneously more than enough to live and less than what is necessary for capitalism.

Hanson treats rhetorical language as an archive of capital's accumulation through dispossession, in works by S.T. Coleridge, Edmund Burke, Mary Robinson, William Wordsworth, Benjamin Moseley, Joseph Priestley, and Alexander von Humboldt, as well as in contemporary film and critical theory. Reading riots through apostrophe, enclosure through anachronism, superstition and witchcraft through tautology, and the paradoxical coincidence of subsistence living with industrialization, Hanson shows the figural to be a material record of the survival of non-capitalist forms of life within capitalism. But this survival is not always-already resistant to capitalism, nor are the origins of capital accumulation confined to the Romantic past. Hanson reveals rhetorical figure as entwined in deeply ambivalent ways with the circuitous, ongoing process of dispossession.

Reading both historically and rhetorically, Hanson argues that rhetorical language records histories of dispossession and the racialized, gendered distribution of the labor of subsistence. Romanticism, they show, is more contemporary than ever.



"For Lenora Hanson, careful attunement to rhetorical and poetic figuration in the age of Romanticism must not only acknowledge its deployment in forms of dispossession enacted by and against capital; it must also chart the movement of the figure in the proliferation of subsistence in the war against subsistence, in the riot of differences in the accumulation of differences, and in the globality of Romanticism that survives the globalization of Romanticism. To understand these stringent requirements—and then to practice them, with such aplomb, brilliance, and dedication—is a stirring achievement. *The Romantic Rhetoric of Accumulation* is a work of massive and singular importance."

—Fred Moten, New York University

"This is a profound work that engages as deeply with Romantic poetry as it does with traditions of literary criticism, gender studies, and critical race studies. The seriousness and lyricism of its argumentation will make this an enduring contribution."

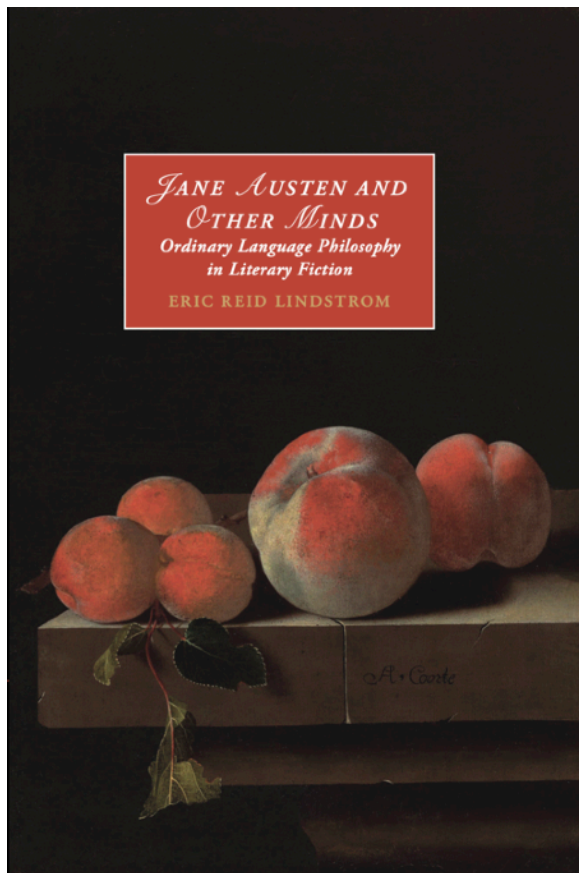
—Jordy Rosenberg, University of Massachusetts-Amherst

"This book establishes Hanson as a significant theorist of subsistence and will be a landmark of Romanticism. Original, learned, and always engaging."

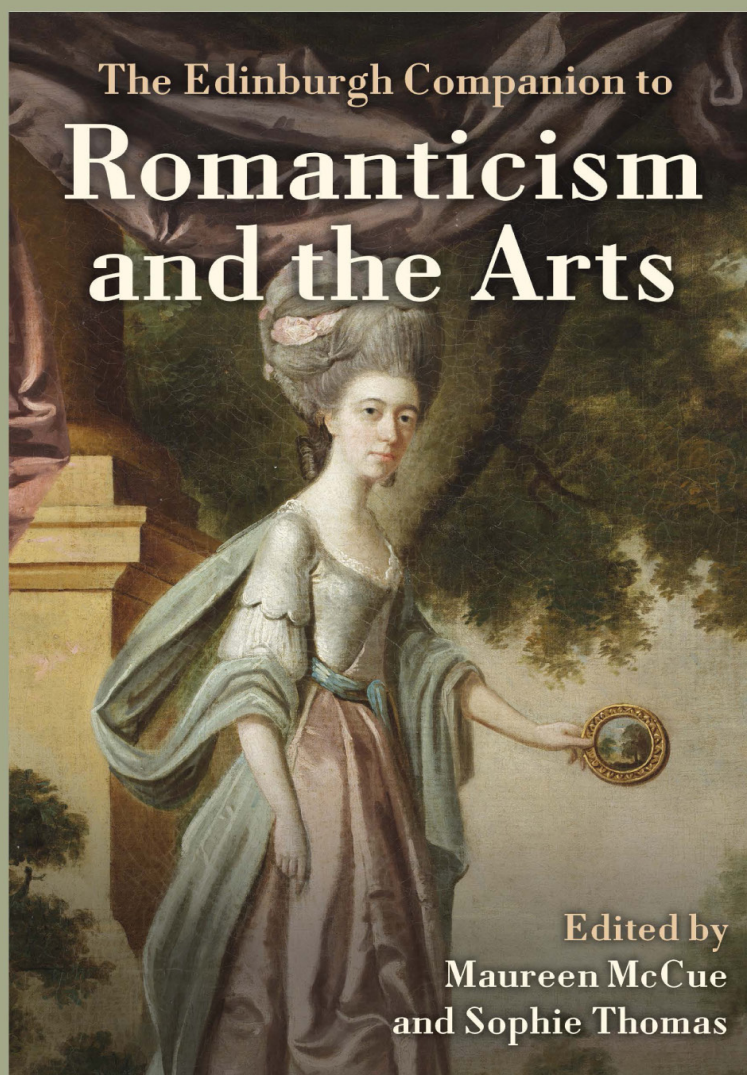
—Rei Terada, University of California, Irvine

Eric Lindstrom (University of Vermont) has published his second monograph, *Jane Austen and Other Minds: Ordinary Language Philosophy in Literary Fiction*, with Cambridge University Press, in the Cambridge Studies in Romanticism Series.

Jane Austen's fiction is itself philosophy, a fact to which Stanley Cavell attested when he honored his philosophical teacher, J. L. Austin, through homage to her and her work. Engaging equally in criticism and in philosophy, *Jane Austen and Other Minds* demonstrates the standing of Austen's fiction as a philosophical investigation, both in its own right and as a resource to ordinary language philosophy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Eric Reid



Lindstrom addresses a long-standing shortcoming of Austen scholarship by locating in her fiction a linguistic phenomenology available to the novelistic everyday but not afforded her in intellectual history. He simultaneously advances recognition and understanding of J. L. Austin and Stanley Cavell, and of ordinary language philosophy, within Austen scholarship and the broader field of contemporary literary studies. This book argues compellingly for Cavell's choice of Austen as a means to pursue 'passionate exchange,' reimagining her common association with restriction and confinement.



The Edinburgh Companion to Romanticism and the Arts

Edited by Maureen McCue and Sophie Thomas

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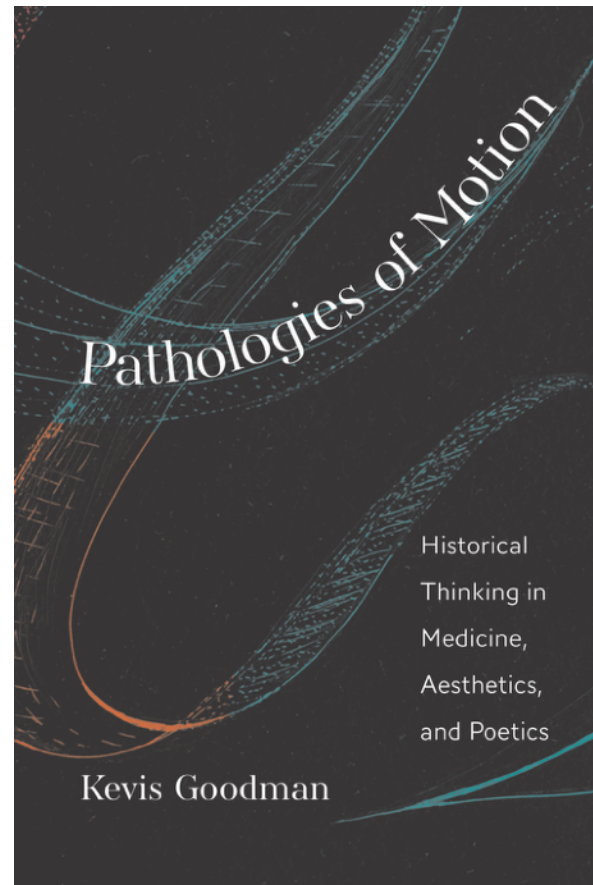
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Kevis Goodman (UC Berkeley) is pleased to announce the publication of *Pathologies of Motion: Historical Thinking in Medicine, Aesthetics, Poetics* (Yale UP). *Pathologies of Motion* offers a new account of later eighteenth-century medicine, aesthetics, and poetics as overlapping forms of knowledge increasingly worried about the relationship between the geographical mobility of persons displaced from home and the internal motions constituting the physiology and sensibility of their moving bodies. Looking beyond more familiar narratives about medicine's and art's shared therapeutic or harmonizing function, the book explores the development of aesthetics and poetics in relation to a different, once-central area of eighteenth-century environmental medicine: pathology. Pathology ("medical semiotics") was not diagnosis nor classification but rather an art of reading, offering sophisticated ways of apprehending the multiple conditions and converging causes, including more abstract historical processes, discernible in and present as their embodied effects, not hidden or separate from them. *Pathologies of Motion* therefore explores how literary studies' understanding of aesthetics and poetics might change when these are considered not in terms of medicine's attempts to accommodate bodies and minds to their historical or natural environments, but in terms of pathology's grasp of the dislocations opening up between them. It argues that Enlightenment medicine's confrontations with the troubled aspects of mobility continued and developed within later eighteenth-century aesthetic theory and some of the poetics forged at the turn of the next century, including theories of reading, perturbing some of their normative claims. Ultimately, Goodman both models and calls for a critical method attentive to aesthetics and poetics as sites for immanent historical thinking.





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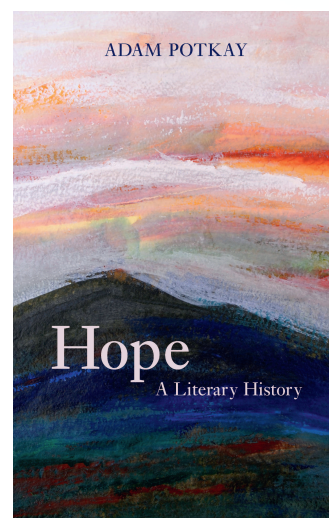
Hope: A Literary History

Adam Potkay

College of William and Mary, Virginia

Hope for us has a positive connotation. Yet it was criticized in classical antiquity as a distraction from the present moment, as the occasion for irrational and self-destructive thinking, and as a presumption against the gods. To what extent do arguments against hope today remain useful? If hope sounds to us like a good thing, that reaction stems from a progressive political tradition grounded in the French Revolution, aspects of Romantic literature and the influence of the Abrahamic faiths. Ranging both wide and deep, Adam Potkay examines the cases for and against hope found in literature from antiquity to the present. Drawing imaginatively on several fields and creatively juxtaposing poetry, drama, and novels alongside philosophy, theology and political theory, the author brings continually fresh insights to a subject of perennial interest. This is a bold and illuminating new treatment of a long-running literary debate as complex as it is compelling.

Introduction: For and against hope; 1. The limits of hope in the ancient world; 2. Eternal hope: The Christian vision; 3. The three hopes of humanism: Sacred, profane, and political; 4. Something evermore about to be: Hope in the Romantic era; 5. Later nineteenth-century responses to Romantic hope; 6. Modernism: Repetition, epiphany, waiting.



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