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[Review of: K. Rumbold (2016) Shakespeare and the Eighteenth-Century Novel : Cultures of Quotation from Samuel Richardson to Jane Austen]

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elists deploy Shakespeare's person and words. It focuses principally on the works of Richardson, the Fieldings, and Sterne in its first chapters before offering case studies of Radcliffe and Austen "as something of a coda" in the final chapters. From the outset, Ms. Rumbold argues for literature's shaping power, positing that "Shakespeare and the eighteenth-century novel mutually construct each other as morally and emotionally valuable, and help to establish each other as dominant cultural forms." A key point throughout is that literature is not exclusively a mirror of its historical context, but rather shapes that history itself. Her first chapter sets up this exploration, as it examines the "Quotation culture" to which Ms. Rumbold's title refers. This culture crucially provides the fertile ground for the blossoming—or weed-like profusion, depending on perspective—of Shakespeare quotation from the 1730s onward. Attending to a range of sources, including Shakespeare editions, quotation books, spiritual biographies, periodicals, and polite conversation, she identifies and analyzes those that provided not only Shakespeare's texts, but also models for how to quote them. Here, as throughout the monograph, she uses convincing images to support her arguments.

Drawing on Michael Dobson's important work on the eighteenth century's "embodiment" of Shakespeare, chapter 3 ("Shakespeare's novel authority") posits that novelists craft Shakespeare as a moral authority in their fictional worlds. By using their characters to quote Shakespeare and narrating how they talk about him (for example, "our beloved Shakespeare"), mid-century novels such as *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison* "construct Shakespeare as a personal authority on whom all kinds of individuals can call." In this way,

KATE RUMBOLD. *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Cultures of Quotation from Samuel Richardson to Jane Austen*. Cambridge: Cambridge, 2016. Pp. xi + 245. \$114.95.

What does it mean to quote Shakespeare? And what can such quotation do, in its fragmented, out-of-context state? Ms. Rumbold examines how the period's novels use Shakespeare quotations as she offers an answer to these (and more complex) questions. What quotation can do, the book persuasively shows, is no less than create and perpetuate Shakespeare's authority as England's national poet.

The book's structure sets up smartly the various ways that eighteenth-century nov-

“immortal” Shakespeare takes on godlike qualities: he is available to all persons at all times. The chapter then attends to Sarah Fielding and Jane Collier’s *The Cry*, as well as to Henry Fielding’s work, again to conclude that the moral authority granted to Shakespeare in these novels takes on an almost-divine, eternal quality, unbounded by temporality. For “Shakespeare is both celebrated by the novelists as a voice from the past, and recast as a scientist of the modern age who is alive to fluctuations in individual behaviour.”

In “Theatrical Shakespeare,” her fourth chapter, Ms. Rumbold focuses on the significance of Shakespeare quotation for the reader. With particular attention to *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey*, she argues that novelists rely on Shakespeare as a “figure of the theatre” in order to move beyond the material realms conjured by stage and page. “Self-dramatisation is a generic condition of the mid-century novel, and the epistolary novel in particular obliges all characters to perform themselves, and their virtue, to one another,” she writes. As part of this consideration of performance I would have appreciated a discussion of Sterne’s use of comedy, and of Shakespeare for that comedy. Ms. Rumbold claims that the performances created by characters and called up through Shakespearean quotation have significant consequences for readers, since “the disruptive power of quotations lies in their ability to open up imaginary vistas in the mind of the reader.” She argues that prose fiction frees the stage—and thus the imagination—from “the physical restrictions of the auditorium,” as it “expands to a previously unimaginable scale.” This was one of the book’s least persuasive arguments; it is not at all clear how Shakespeare’s plays, or the novels that fragment

and quote them, do not already insist on that expansive imagination. How or why are the imaginations of novel readers in need of further invocation?

However, the next chapter, “Banal Shakespeare,” is a highlight of the book, delightfully recounting how Shakespeare was also a suspect figure in the literary and popular culture of the century. Ms. Rumbold argues that the period’s novelists use Shakespeare quotations to train readers in judgment and taste, and she unfolds a lesser-known story of eighteenth-century Shakespeare, one in which he is a tired, hackneyed source. Various novelists use characters’ misappropriation, misquotation, and misunderstanding of Shakespeare to train readers. But this argument also raised questions that it would have been beneficial to address further, such as what is the aim and end of such training? Regardless of my reservations, I found this chapter one of the most persuasive, as Ms. Rumbold shows again and again how Shakespeare the Banal worked alongside Shakespeare the Brilliant to create the transcendent image of Shakespeare offered by the eighteenth-century novel.

Chapters 6 and 7 provide similarly compelling evidence of how scholars have overlooked the way earlier novelists’ use of Shakespeare influenced later writers, most notably Radcliffe and Austen. By working from broad-stroke arguments to specific case studies to conclude her book, Ms. Rumbold intelligently demonstrates how the practices she has been observing manifest themselves at the end of the century. In “Ann Radcliffe’s Gothic epigraphs,” she argues that the “quotation practices” of the earlier novels are a “crucial influence” on the gothic fictions of Radcliffe and her contemporaries. Whereas previous scholars have drawn straight lines of influence from

Shakespeare to gothic novels and from Shakespeare to Austen, Ms. Rumbold maintains that a “mediating force” lies between: the midcentury novel. She resists what we might call the hiatus model, in which critics of gothic novels or Austen’s corpus “bypass altogether the earlier eighteenth century’s relationship with the playwright and the cultural status he achieved in that period.” This view again supports her larger claim: that the eighteenth-century novel is an agent in eighteenth-century culture, shaping not only Shakespeare’s reputation and authority in the period, but readers’ acceptance, critique, and view of that authority. In this way, Ms. Rumbold’s work—like the recent work of J. K. Barret—reminds critics that literature does not function simply as a mirror of its cultural moment, but as an agent, an active force. Radcliffe, for example, “transforms” quotation practice when she uses quotation for psychological development, “adapt[ing] the self-dramatising quotation of the mid-century novel to convey interior thoughts and unarticulated emotion.”

Ms. Rumbold’s discussion of Austen’s novels—particularly *Sense and Sensibility*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*—challenges past readings of both Austen and Shakespeare’s presence in her works, suggesting that the earlier novelists’ practice of quoting Shakespeare influenced the development of her trademark free, indirect discourse. For Ms. Rumbold, eighteenth-century fiction is a cornerstone for Austen’s work: she “fashions some of her most radical developments in narrative representation out of the quotation practices of earlier eighteenth-century fiction.” One of her narrative strategies is to “incorporate quotation into the texture of her fiction” through her blending of first- and third-person narrative voices and her “precise

words or punctuation marks” that signal the act of quoting. This chapter reintroduces the idea of novelists training their readers. Ms. Rumbold states that in Austen’s attention to theatricality, through her use of Shakespeare, she trains her readers by means of a “new, compelling narrative technique” that itself depends on previous developments in eighteenth-century literature. One minor complaint here is that Ms. Rumbold does not sufficiently complicate the concept of “performance” (or theatricality); her use of it as in opposition to “authenticity” suggests that “authenticity” is always performance’s opposite and always possible. Finally, Ms. Rumbold’s brief “Conclusions” restate her book’s claims and look ahead to how fiction develops after Austen, as she points to her arguments’ significance for the nineteenth-century novel.

Varied, engaging sources, careful close readings, bold conclusions: these are *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth-Century Novel*’s great strengths. It sounds simple and implicit, yet not all authors walk readers with care through their analysis of cited passages. Ms. Rumbold, however, offers close examination of all the quoted material she offers, and I appreciated that attention. She ranges impressively through texts (although these often take her back to the same quotations and Shakespeare plays). The recurrence of *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Romeo and Juliet*—with few exceptions—raises the question: how do these novelists shape the Shakespearean canon itself, and limit or reinforce the attention allocated to just a few works? Additionally, I wonder if addressing the reception of Shakespeare as both a tragic and comic writer would have reminded readers that Shakespeare’s reception is very much connected to genre. However, these critiques are relatively minor. Ms.

Rumbold makes a persuasive case for how the eighteenth century's "Quotation Culture" offered a Shakespeare that novelists in turn molded to their own and their readers' needs. The act of quoting is always more than the sum of its parts, as she clearly demonstrates. In its originality and careful analyses, *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* makes an excellent contribution to the field.

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