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that there was no set body of aristocratic suppliers in London as in Paris, and two houses less than twenty miles apart (Arbury and Stoneleigh) could have barely any suppliers in common, metropolitan or local.

The chapter "Consumption and the Household" contains the most valuable insights of the book. Stobart and Rothery point up the sometimes persistent power and influence of dowagers; they highlight the role of trustees and guardians in the shaping and success of an estate; and they provide a particularly fascinating account of stewards, who are surely worth more sustained historical attention. As in so many places in this book, the most striking point here is the sheer variety of possible scenarios: from William Peacock at Canons Ashby, who managed the estate in Lady Dryden's absence, following her orders closely; through Richard Jee, near redundant on the estate of the micromanaging Sir Roger Newdigate; to Samuel Butler at Stoneleigh, a compelling figure, who not only evoked his master's authority in his dealings with retailers and craftsmen, but also his own. This chapter opens up valuable territory ripe for future research and, like the book as a whole, provides a valuable building block in the ongoing, increasingly interesting and rich field of country house studies.

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HELEN THOMPSON. *Fictional Matter: Empiricism, Corpuscles, and the Novel*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. Pp. 359. $59.95 (cloth).
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2017.204

Displaying an impressive command of early modern science in her engaging and highly interdisciplinary *Fictional Matter: Empiricism, Corpuscles, and the Novel*, Helen Thompson strives to (re)assert the central place of "Corpuscularian Philosophy" (1) in the history of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British culture. In Thompson's compelling account, the corpuscle hypothesized by Robert Boyle and variously deployed by Isaac Newton, John Locke, and some of the period's novelists postulates that all matter is made up of miniscule parts that cannot be sensed directly. Instead, the corpuscle's existence can only be established relationally; consequently, it produces knowledge in the perceiving subject despite—or, more accurately, because of—its evasion of the viewer's senses. One of Thompson's many examples is illustrative here: that a chemical process such as sublimation can make a substance such as sulfur disappear from the bottom of a flask only to reappear on the flask's sides shortly after establishes that sulfur is composed of minute particles precisely *because* it disappears for a time (3–4).

Modern accounts of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century science and the novel, Thompson argues, have elided the period's indebtedness to corpuscularian philosophy, with its attendant interest in "imperceptible causes" and "sensed qualities" such as "sourness or acidity" (1). As a result, empiricism is often presented as a mimetic mode of knowing that relies exclusively on a direct, one-to-one transposition of the external world to sensory perception. For Thompson, however, such an understanding neglects the period's interest in "corpuscular matter's power to stimulate empirical knowledge" (69). In *Fictional Matter*, histories of early science by critics such as Ian Hacking, Karen Barad, Steven Shapin, and Simon Schaffer as well as literary histories of the novel by Michael McKeon and Ian Watt are equally implicated in this construction of a "'realist' regime of transparently apprehended and transparently rendered facts" (1) that Thompson seeks to refute. Thompson convincingly demonstrates that, in failing to

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acknowledge seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British culture's indebtedness to the corpuscle, such studies have obscured how empiricism accommodates knowledge acquired relationally. It is this relational way of "knowing," Thompson argues, that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century science and the novel engage or activate, in a variety of ways.

As Thompson stresses, *Fictional Matter* is not in any straightforward way a study of the eighteenth-century novel against the "factual backdrop" early modern science (3). Instead, she organizes the chapters according to topics that develop readings of the works of early scientists and empiricists such as Boyle, Locke, and Newton alongside those of the novelists it studies. In chapter 2 she illustrates how a "Boylean" (68) Locke presents identity as something "approximated from the outside" (69) rather than a matter of essence before demonstrating how Eliza Haywood activates that radically contingent notion of identity in *Fantomina* (1725) and *Love in Excess* (1719). In chapter 3 she explores how George Thomson's and George Starkey's scientific writings in the wake of the Great Plague are grounded in the corpuscular understanding that all things are composed of miniscule parts to posit an imperceptibly "porous" or "pervious" person (113); that concept of personhood, Thompson argues, directly informs the presentation of character in Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), a text in which interiority or "innerness" remains inaccessible and unknowable. In chapter 4 she turns her attention to the subject of race, moving from Boyle's and Newton's competing accounts of color to John Arbuthnot's and John Mitchell's anti-essentialist justifications of slavery to, finally, Penelope Aubin's and William Chetwood's vexed engagements with these corpuscularian accounts of color and race.

As the book unfolds, Thompson moves the novel to the center stage, although the thematic organizational scheme continues. In chapters 5 and 6 she examines Henry Fielding's and Samuel Richardson's corpuscularian considerations of class and gender, respectively, and Thompson's accounts here are especially illuminating. Much as in the earlier chapters' accounts of identity and race, the author's engagements with corpuscularian philosophy that Thompson examines in the final two chapters destabilize essentialist accounts of class and gender. In a text such as *Shamela* (1741), for instance, Fielding stages "readable" selves who lay claim to virtues they lack, and he deploys "the sensible qualities of print" (194), Thompson argues, as the marker of character that otherwise troublingly eludes direct sensory observation. Meanwhile, in chapter 6 Thompson examines Richardson's fractious attempts to separate Clarissa from the prostitutes among whom she is forced to live and breathe the same air, arguing that "*Clarissa*'s failure to isolate the source of Clarissa's sexed virtue reflects the novel's engagement with a metaphysics and an ontology engendered by corpuscles" (234).

While she succeeds in confirming the surprisingly widespread influence and implications of corpuscularian philosophy, Thompson provides no clear rationale as to why she selects for study the texts that she does. Consequently, and with some notable exceptions such as Haywood, Aubin, and Chetwood, she largely ends up replicating the canon of novelists studied in Watt's *Rise of the Novel* (1957), moving from extended considerations of Defoe, Fielding, and Richardson to Jane Austen (in the epilogue), while the fiction of the latter half of the eighteenth century remains on the periphery. One wonders how the introduction of the writings of Laurence Sterne, Henry Mackenzie, Fanny Burney, or—perhaps more interestingly, given his peculiar aesthetic—Tobias Smollett might complicate or augment Thompson's findings. Nor does *Fictional Matter* offer an easy reading experience: the writing is at times dense, and the interdisciplinarity of the material is simultaneously a source of the argument's strength and an occasionally challenging hurdle for the reader to overcome.

Rigorously argued and consistently insightful, *Fictional Matter* demands a rethinking of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century understanding of empiricism and its role in early modern science as well as the novel's development. In particular, and despite the occasional opacity of her claims, Thompson persuasively demonstrates that our too-literalist construction of an empiricism that relies exclusively on direct sensory observation both misrepresents the

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period's scientific and "chymical" (10) investigations while at the same time it hinders our familiar, prevailing narratives of the eighteenth-century novel.

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THEA TOMAINI. *The Corpse as Text: Disinterment and Antiquarian Enquiry, 1700–1900*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017. Pp. 241. $99.00 (cloth).
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2017.205

In 2012, the remains of King Richard III were discovered under a parking lot in the city of Leicester. Thanks to Richard's distinctive physiognomy, they were swiftly identified, and a decision was made to reinter the bones in Leicester Cathedral, in keeping with standard British archaeological practice that human remains discovered in excavations should be reburied in the nearest consecrated ground. In this case, however, the choice of reburial site proved controversial: some people wanted to see Richard's remains interred in Westminster Abbey alongside over a dozen other British monarchs, while others argued that his purported wish to be buried in York Minster should be honored. Under the name "Plantagenet Alliance," a group claiming to be Richard's descendants brought a legal action demanding that York be his ultimate resting place, but the judges found no evidence that he had ever expressed such a desire, and so Leicester got his bones—and 100,000 annual visitors eager to see their final resting place—after all.

As Thea Tomaini makes clear in *The Corpse as Text: Disinterment and Antiquarian Enquiry, 1700–1900*, this was far from the first time that a royal disinterment has caused controversy and debate. Tomaini tackles the delightfully macabre subject of the disinterment of the corpses of prominent, mostly royal Britons between the early eighteenth and late nineteenth centuries. Rather than being treated with reverence, the remains of John I, Henry VIII, Charles I, and others were seen as objects of antiquarian interest, as curious investigators sought to resolve various mysteries about their lives and deaths by inspecting the contents of their coffins. Questions such as whether the corpse of Henry VIII had literally exploded —either due to an incompetent embalmer or the effects of a moral corruption that had lingered after the king's death—became the foci of examinations with major significance for present-day debates about important political, social, and religious questions. This was in part because these morbid investigations took place in the context of the emergence of a new sense of the English past that relied upon key moments from the medieval and early modern eras to establish a broadly accepted conception of national history and heritage. Their conclusions were thus heavily influenced by present-day concerns. But at the same time, the dead rarely yielded incontrovertible evidence, as their remains almost never allowed clear conclusions to be drawn. (It could not be definitively determined, for example, whether a skeleton with a smashed skull that was unearthed in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral in 1888 really was that of Henry II's "troublesome priest" Thomas Becket.) This is ultimately the key point that emerges from Tomaini's work: disinterment, which ignored scruples about the potential desecration of the dead in order to obtain what was supposed to be uncontestable empirical evidence, almost always led instead to the production of "a complicated narrative of the corpse" (132).

Tomaini organizes her argument into discrete chapters focusing on individual cases. This biographical structure makes for more compelling reading than a thematic approach might

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