in which terms associated with geographic places have been identified), thus allowing further research to be done on the corpus for those more advanced in digital techniques.

Taylor and Gregory practise what they preach: they consistently combine quantitative methods and visualisations to enrich the close readings of the corpus throughout the book. The broad scope of this study—its time span, the texts under study and the methods—makes it a fascinating and well-informed piece of scholarship. By demonstrating the potential of deep mapping to enhance our understanding of the literary and cultural heritage of the Lake District, Taylor and Gregory's multiscalar analysis does indeed 'open up access to new kinds of sources and allow us to ask new kinds of questions of this material' (p. 6) and I am keen to see what other sources and questions might be explored in the wake of this innovative study.

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M. Wynn Thomas, *The History of Wales in Twelve Poems* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2021), 96 pp. ISBN 978-1-7868-3766-0; £8.99 (hb).

In *The History of Wales in Twelve Poems*, M. Wynn Thomas's ambition to employ the eponymous poems to offer the reader a new path into Wales's complicated past is matched by his eminent success in accomplishing it over a slim 112 pages. This success, indeed, emanates by way of the novel structure of the text: while it is separated chronologically into twelve parts, each introduced with a Welsh-authored poem contemporary to the period being covered, the poems play the role of beacons. Thomas does not perform close readings of them *per se* (and in some cases does not refer back to them explicitly at all); rather, they illuminate the narrative path on which he guides the reader, while serving also as literary paratextual backdrops that reflect the sensibilities of the people being described. What results is an enriching and very readable chronicle that balances Wales's social and literary histories over its long timeline, and in manners that serve to broaden and enhance our knowledge of Wales in the long nineteenth century, as well as our understanding of how Wales and its identities were felt and understood by both the Welsh and their English neighbours across time.

Once more, Thomas accomplishes this through a succinct yet lilting telling of Wales's history (up to and beyond the Romantic era). Readers learn very early that external colonialism and internal urgencies to preserve a cultural

identity punctuate all of Wales's epochal measures. This duality is exemplified in the names bestowed upon the country and its people from those within and without: 'There the people came to call their land self-protectively "Cymru" [...] and then "Cymry" ("comrades"), although the invaders [...] referred to them dismissively as "Welsh" (a foreign, Romanised people)' (p. 7). It also could be seen to symbolise the hegemonic conflicts throughout the Medieval and Early Modern Eras, from the Norman Conquest and establishment of the Welsh Marches, to lights and extinguishments of still-heralded figures such as Llewelyn ap Gruffudd and Owain Glyndŵr and their counterparts in such figures as Geoffrey of Monmouth and Edward I, up to the formal union of Wales with England with Henry VIII's 1536 *Act of Union*.

The historical narrative sets the backdrop helpfully for Thomas's survey of the long nineteenth century. Thomas admirably condenses the story of the preeminent pillar of Welsh history of this era: a rise in religious enthusiasm, which was galvanised by the mechanisms and benefits of grassroots education, and which energised much of the prevailing literary culture of the period. Thomas gives due diligence to Griffith Jones, the vicar whose system of 'circulating schools' over the first half of the eighteenth century eventually 'resulted in around half the population of Wales becoming literate' (p. 56). In the wake of Jones's schools there came to the fore Welsh Calvinistic Methodism (Jones was not a Methodist), and Thomas navigates considerately through such major figures as William Williams Pantycelyn and Ann Griffiths. Upon this foundation he transitions smoothly to the rise of both industrialisation and social unrest, and finally to the devastating effects of the 1847 Blue Books.

Thomas goes on to guide readers in the same productive fashion into the twenty-first century. Nearer the conclusion, he inserts what could be described as an even more condensed 'mini chapter' dedicated to women in Wales across time (that is, the same timeline as the whole book, but in miniature). This approach gives him an opportunity to weave significant figures from antiquity into the timeline, which for the purposes of a Romanticist includes figures indispensable in discussions of nineteenth-century Welsh antiquarianism such as Lady Llanover (patron of the Eisteddfod and of Welsh traditional dress) and Lady Charlotte Guest (translator of *The Mabinogion*). His discrete chapter on Wales's women nicely situates their presences in the timeline that he had already canvassed while also illuminating their unique contributions and challenges throughout Wales's history.

Indeed, following the course of the book and Thomas's sensitive accounts of, for instance, advances in access to education over time, one would be forgiven for anticipating an optimistic coda. But Thomas takes the conclusion in another direction, lamenting that: 'the young of today still seem very much Thatcher's children' to whom 'there is no such thing as society—or at least a Welsh society to which they feel they owe any allegiance' (p. 111). In its place, Thomas contends, is a dominant Anglo-American culture that jeopardises any sense of local collectivism. In the face of such myriad challenges, Thomas finds it 'one

of the very minor wonders of the modern world that a Wales still exists', even if the Welshness that persists is one he feels that is 'becoming ever more a matter of sentiment [...] than of substance' (pp. 111-12).

Be this as it may, Thomas does ultimately concede that 'the single most persistent and distinctive identifying feature of the Welsh people [...] has been their mute, inexplicable, unbreakable determination to survive' (p. 112). One cannot escape the tones of admonition and pessimism that underscore the closing chapter and guide us to the ending of what is otherwise a powerful presentation of Welsh history. Though jarring at first, Thomas's closing jeremiads can indeed be seen to align with the book's overall conceit: indeed, he does announce in the introduction that he has 'long felt' that '[t]he Welsh [...] are not only an invisible people, they are a Tinker Bell of a people', having reminded readers of the conceit that 'her very existence [...] is entirely dependent on there being children enough who stubbornly continue [...] to believe in fairies' (p. xiii). One can scarcely claim that there has not been Welsh literature or culture since the Methodists (indeed, half of this book details the innovations that succeeded them). Second, they serve as a challenge to his subjects and audience to defy such a verdict. The very existence of this book reminds us that there is life in Welsh literature, and many yet who still believe in her.

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Susan J. Wolfson, *On Mary Wollstonecraft's 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman': The First of a New Genus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023), 185 pp. ISBN 978-0-2312-0625-9; £12.99 (pb).

Amidst the vast bibliography devoted to Mary Wollstonecraft, Susan Wolfson's *On Mary Wollstonecraft's 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman'* will not go unnoticed. While the book does not necessarily reveal new information about one of the most significant œuvres of Enlightenment and Romantic Britain, it stands out for how the author adeptly unveils significant new interpretations of Wollstonecraft's pioneering text. Wolfson's eminently readable and enjoyable book contributes essential new scholarship that recontextualises our understanding of the culture and politics of the long eighteenth century, its heirs and what could be deemed as different waves, forms and proto-forms of feminist literary criticism.

This intention is made clear in the first lines, as Wolfson connects Wollstonecraft with her lasting legacy, emphasising the 'two productions' (p. 1) for

Literary Exchanges (with Julia M. Wright, 2011) and *Native Americans and Anglo-American Culture: The Indian Atlantic* (with Tim Fulford, 2009); and he has published more than thirty-five journal articles and book chapters. Kevin is currently working on a monograph entitled *The Life and Literary Adventures of Sir Francis Bond Head*, which under contract at McGill–Queen's University Press and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

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Judith Pascoe is the George Mills Harper Professor of English at Florida State University. Her work focuses on the theatrical, visual and material culture of the British Romantic period. Pascoe has written about theatrical self-representation in the 1790s (*Romantic Theatricality: Gender, Poetry, and Spectatorship*, 1997) and about Romantic-era collectors (*The Hummingbird Cabinet: A Rare and*