

Introduction

The Enlightenment and the Atlantic

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Our starting point is that there was no Enlightenment without the Atlantic. From jurisprudential definitions to the depths of spiritual desolation, the principles of Enlightenment were cast in consciously global and comparative terms. Discussing the principles of 'Property' in his *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (1690), for example, John Locke wrote 'In the beginning, all the world was America'; while at the other end of the emotional spectrum William Cowper's 'Castaway' found the nadir of despair amidst the roar of 'Atlantic billows'.¹ In structural terms, Samuel Johnson's magisterial statement that 'All judgement is comparative' announces a habit of mind that is constitutive of Enlightened discourse.² Johnson was referring to the moral education of the fictional prince Rasselas, but his critical procedure—knowing 'here' in relation to 'there'; weighing one thing against another; general principles derived from particular examples; objectivity, measurement, analysis arrived at by experience tested through mediation—suggests some of the reasons why Enlightenment principles were so frequently articulated in Atlantic contexts, and how the empirical exchanges of eighteenth-century trade, colonisation and political experiment are embedded in discussions ostensibly far removed from 'Atlantic' topics.

Malcolm Bradbury, Stephen Greenblatt and others have shown how ideas of America helped to shape Renaissance culture and discussions of profit and colonisation, adventure and humanist endeavour.³ The present volume is concerned less with the ideals and projections that dominated sixteenth- and seventeenth-century discussions, and more with the exchanges and circulations—commercial, material, spiritual, intellectual and imaginative—that characterise encounters and transformations in the eighteenth century. There are always two—and sometimes more—*points d'appui*. As the essays in this book cumulatively demonstrate, the Atlantic Enlightenment is not a compound product of modern scholarship, but a framework intrinsic to the articulation of the modern world as it was perceived and described by the major figures of that eighteenth-century world. The Atlantic was embodied and traversed in the trade and colonisation, the discoveries and debates, the discourses and concepts that together became known as Enlightenment.

1 William Cowper, 'The Cast-away', in eds. John D. Baird and Charles Ryskamp, *The Poems of William Cowper* (3 vols, Oxford, 1980–1995), vol. 3, p. 214.

2 Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas and Other Tales*, ed. Gwin J. Kolb (New Haven, 1990).

3 Malcolm Bradbury, *Dangerous Pilgrimages: Trans-Atlantic Mythologies and the Novel* (London, 1995); Hugh Honour, *The New Golden Land: European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time* (New York, 1976); Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford, 1991).

One of the aims of this book, then, is to contribute to the recent re-centring of Enlightenment discussion on the Atlantic. These essays move away from static, essentialist definitions of Enlightenment exemplified in the foundational works of Ernst Cassirer, Paul Hazard, Peter Gay, and others which identified typifying ‘characteristics’ of Enlightenment such as rational empiricism or religious scepticism.⁴ The study of the Enlightenment, by contrast, has become increasingly fragmented. Whether this multiplicity is understood in regional, disciplinary or conceptual terms, not all scholars now speak of ‘the’ Enlightenment, or, if they do, it is not always to talk of the same thing. Rather, they often see multiple Enlightenments and they rightly give as much attention to the social and political contexts in which ideas were generated as to the intellectual movements regarded in isolation. In addition to the possibilities for re-orientation offered by comparative study, the field has been revolutionised by increasingly sophisticated social, cultural and intellectual research into local and regional Enlightenments.⁵

While the study of the Enlightenment has become increasingly fragmented over the past two generations, the Atlantic has emerged as a subject of study that has united disparate scholars during the same period of time.⁶ This has to date primarily been the province of historians; although the potential of ‘Atlantic’ Enlightenments has engaged individual scholars across the disciplinary spectrum, their discussions have not, until now, been in dialogue. A further aim of this collection is to explore points of connection, disjunction and mutual enrichment that emerge when a range of approaches and scholarly methods is directed towards a series of linked and cognate topics. In this way we hope to complement and to extend the important conversations that have emerged from the institutional centre for the study of the early modern Atlantic during the past decade, namely Bernard Bailyn’s International Seminar on the History of Atlantic World at Harvard University. *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (2002), edited by David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, emerged from this Seminar and reflects the range, quality and intellectual breadth as historians of its participants.⁷ The evolution on both sides of the Atlantic of broad

4 The ‘classical’ literature of the European Enlightenment is enormous. See, for example, Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Boston, 1955); Hazard, *The European Mind: The Critical Years 1690–1715* (London, 1953) and *European Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1954); Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (2 vols. New York, 1967–69); Alfred Cobban, ed., *The Eighteenth Century: Europe in the Age of Enlightenment* (New York, 1969).

5 Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich, eds., *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge, 1981); Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London, 2000).

6 See Paul Butel, *The Atlantic*, trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (London, 1999). Notable transatlantic studies include R.R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800*, (2 vols., Princeton, 1959–1964); David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (New York, 1975); Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies* (London, 1973); and Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History* (Cambridge, 1990).

7 For recent developments in Atlantic history see, Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, MA, 2006); David Armitage, ‘Three Concepts of Atlantic

themes such as trade, slavery, and revolution have become major subjects of study. More recently social historians have focused on the ‘red’ Atlantic, arguing that the working men and women of the early modern Atlantic vigorously defined and defended their rights in a manner which anticipated the class tensions characteristic of nineteenth-century industrialisation. Still others, students of race and the African diasporic experience, have described a ‘black’ Atlantic in which Africans were not only victims of the Atlantic slave trade but played a central role in shaping the development of an Atlantic culture.⁸ Intellectual and cultural historians have demonstrated that ideas crossed the ocean along with commodities and people. This is a major theme of this volume. What each of these interpretations share is an assumption that the Atlantic is a dynamic context that brings together disparate peoples, ideas and commodities.

The emergence of the Atlantic as an important conceptual paradigm, and a renewed scholarly interest in the Enlightenment understood less as a magisterial agglomeration of grand narratives and scientific confidence and more as a network of actively contested discourses and experimental possibilities, have established contexts for the essays in this volume. The Atlanticist perspective is also able to move beyond regional exceptionalist narratives (either contemporary or retrospectively imposed), to consider how much the modern world was created by the interaction of people, ideas, and commodities from Europe, Africa, and the Americas during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Atlantic was a crucial space that allowed for exchange, mutual influence and conflict between the peoples of four continents; its crossing needs to be understood as both a literal action whose material conditions require elucidation and analysis, and a culturally dense symbolic experience in

History’, in eds. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (London, 2002), pp. 11–27; Linda Colley, ‘The Sea Around Us’, *The New York Review of Books*, 53:11, June 22, 2006; J.H. Elliott, ‘Atlantic History: A Circumnavigation’, in Armitage and Braddick, *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800*, pp. 233–34; Peter A. Coclanis, ‘*Drang nach Osten*: Bernard Bailyn, the World-Island, and the Idea of Atlantic History’, *Journal of World History*, 13 (2002): 169–82; and Nicholas Canny, ‘Atlantic History: What and Why?’, *European Review*, 9 (2001): 399–411; ‘The Nature of Atlantic History’, *Itinerario*, 23 (1999); ‘Forum: The New British History in Atlantic Perspective’, *American Historical Review*, 104 (1999): 426–500; Nicholas Canny, ‘Writing Atlantic History, or, Reconfiguring the History of Colonial British America’, *Journal of American History*, 86 (1999): 1093–114; Bernard Bailyn, ‘The Idea of Atlantic History’, *Itinerario*, 20 (1996): 19–44. We are grateful to Emma Rothschild for sharing her paper, ‘The Atlantic and Other Oceans’ presented at the 10th Anniversary Conference of the International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World at Harvard University on August 9 2005. It will be published in 2008 in Bernard Bailyn, ed., *Atlantic Soundings*. It provides a brief overview of the history of the seminar and assesses its scholarly contribution.

8 For the ‘red’ Atlantic see Jesse Lemisch, ‘Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 25 (1968): 371–407; Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World* (Cambridge, 1987); Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, 2000). For the ‘black’ Atlantic see: Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic* (Cambridge, Ma., 1995); and John Thornton, *Africa and Africans and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800* (Cambridge, 1998).

which ideas, beliefs, and consciousness itself were transformed. Taking forward some recent debates, these essays collectively offer a strong demonstration of the ways in which the Atlantic context put the Enlightenment, in Paul Gilje's phrase, literally and metaphorically 'at sea'.

Another version of 'Enlightenment' that no longer sustains unconditional assent is that arising from the conveniencies of historical and literary periodisation. J. C. D. Clark identifies the first use of 'Enlightenment' to specify a discrete historical period occurring in 1865—a year which to contemporaries itself seemed to mark the end of an era, which spawned a wave of epochally-structured thinking around defining moments of inception and conclusion.⁹ In this frame, 'the' Enlightenment began, variously, with the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688–89 or the publication of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in 1689; or Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40), or perhaps Newton's *Principia* One thing which for a long time seemed agreed, and unshakeable, however, was that 'the' Enlightenment ended on 14 July 1789, ushered violently off-stage by the French Revolution which itself provided a hinge into the next 'period', Romanticism. This caricature, of course, by no means does justice to the subtlety and reflectiveness of such period-defined studies as Carl Becker's *Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (1932), Paul Fussell's *Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism* (1965), or Roy Porter's *Enlightenment* (2000), but it does perhaps point out the arbitrariness of the criteria which tend to circumscribe Enlightenment defined by dated event, whether in print or in popular consciousness. Several of our contributors make compelling cases for a flexible definition of 'Enlightenment' able to accommodate events and discussions occurring well into the nineteenth century. By pointing out the multifarious inflections of 'Enlightened' principles in local contexts and individual expressions, the work of Porter, Teich and others has broken up the universalising tendencies of earlier analysis, but it carries the danger of more parochial forms of essentialism: arguments from national exceptionalism increasingly seem both historically untenable and ethically unacceptable in a world of international trade, moving peoples and shifting boundaries. Modern Atlantic studies, initially focused on the Renaissance, have encouraged students to consider the common experiences which link the Old and New Worlds during the early modern period. And the contributors to this volume demonstrate the limited viability of nation-based analyses that discover 'French', 'German', 'Scottish', or 'British' Enlightenments with their own particular characteristics.¹⁰

A defining factor of Enlightenment as an Atlantic phenomenon was the use of the spatial as a device for opening up both temporal and ethical assumptions. The transatlantic, spatial dimension of the Enlightenment is so important partly because it prompts questions about the evolution of societies over time, and about the development or degeneracy of the natural environment in time and space. Both issues were prominent subjects of enlightened debate with powerful political consequences. Transatlantic travellers and commentators found the past of Europe (via the four-stage theory of Scottish conjectural historians such as William

9 See Paul Giles's essay, below, for further discussion on this point.

10 See Porter and Teich, *op. cit.*

Robertson) and its future inscribed on the American landscape and in its native inhabitants. At one level, geographical exploration and surveying were activities practised by transatlantic reporters as different as William Byrd II of Virginia, Peter Jefferson, the Swedish naturalist Peter Kalm, and the soldier, diplomat, farmer and possible double agent Hector St John de Crèvecoeur who named his eldest daughter *Amérique-Francès* in honour of the alliance that sustained his activities and almost cost him his life. Crèvecoeur corresponded with Peter Jefferson's son, the more famous Thomas, on the appropriateness of the physiocratic theory of the French *philosophes* to the American environment. In one of the earliest recorded uses of the term 'transatlantic', in 1782, Jefferson expressed his 'doubt'—the Revolutionary war which would establish the separate existence of America still ongoing, and its outcome uncertain—'whether nature has enlisted herself as a cis- or trans-Atlantic partisan'.¹¹ 'Nature' here is not the inert abstraction identified by classical studies of Enlightenment, but a transitive *force* whose ultimate alignment will, he hopes, record a decisive shift in the balance of inter-continental power. Jefferson's 'doubt' embeds the Enlightened political and moral questions surrounding the patriot case within a much older rhetorical formula: the classical trope of *translatio studii et imperii*, which held that virtues flee a decadent civilisation for a simpler, regenerate one. Norman kings invoked the *translatio imperii* trope to underwrite the transfer of power from the Classical civilisations to the French, and thence to England. Conjoining progress with authority, they devised the foundational myth of King Brutus of Troy, who instituted the kingdom of 'Britain' (Jefferson collected references to this story when he sought an appropriate name and official Seal for the new nation which, in a new phase of the *translatio*, was to inherit British imperial grandeur).¹² Other eighteenth-century observers of shifting relationships between Europe and her transatlantic colonies renewed the assumption of the *translatio* that civilisation consistently migrates from East to West. Its most celebrated eighteenth-century expression is George Berkeley's poem 'On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America', which transposes time and space, projecting the rise and fall of empires onto the movement of European migration:

The Muse, disgusted at an age and clime
 Barren of every glorious theme,
 In distant lands now waits a better time,
 Producing subjects worthy fame ...

There shall be sung another golden age,
 The rise of empire and of arts,
 The good and great inspiring epic rage,
 The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

11 This is the first citation offered for the term by the Oxford English Dictionary.

12 See *Thomas Jefferson's Literary Commonplace Book*, ed. Douglas L. Wilson (Princeton, NJ, 1989). Information on the translation trope is drawn from <http://cla.calpoly.edu/~dschwartz/engl513/courtly/translat.htm>, copyright Debora B. Schwartz.

Not such as Europe breeds in her decay; ...
 Westward the course of empire takes its way;
 The four first acts already past,
 A fifth shall close the drama with the day;
 Time's noblest offspring is the last.¹³

The transforming nature of the 'space between'—the Atlantic voyage, the 3000 miles' separation, the time taken between writing a letter and having it read—is an ever-present feature of Atlantic Enlightenment consciousness. At least from the time of the early seventeenth-century Puritan conversion narratives, traversing the Atlantic, whether on a boat or in the mind, was an extraordinarily powerful agent and image of defamiliarisation, setting Enlightened minds 'at sea' in the uncertainties of an existence become irremediably comparative and relative. The writers considered in this book were aware that their environment and their identity were partly comprehended in that transatlantic 'other', be it the botanical specimens that might prove the New World to be a degenerating or an appreciating sphere in relation to Europe, or the evidence of different racial or cultural communities that enabled them to describe their own. Amongst our contributors, Charles Withers in particular considers the Atlantic as a subject for Enlightenment inquiry as a space over which ideas and practices moved and as a site in which the Enlightenment was made and tested, while Paul Gilje studies the penetration of the Enlightenment into the world of the men who worked the ships which traversed the Atlantic—transporting people, ideas, and commodities across the ocean. Assembling the extensive 'oceanic' connections of even the sedentary self-avowedly indolent philosopher David Hume, Emma Rothschild's essay demonstrates the extent to which the intellectual history of the Enlightenment on such formative issues as commerce, empire and public credit was inflected by Atlantic thinking. Other essays—such as those of Thomas Ahnert, Sarah Wood and Peter Onuf—consider the impact of the transmission of Enlightenment ideas on intellectual communities on both sides of the Atlantic. Read together the last three essays remind us that the transatlantic traffic in ideas moved from west to east as well as east to west, and in circulatory patterns that complicate vectors of transmission. In this as in other respects, *The Atlantic Enlightenment* re-conceptualizes the influence-led binaries of earlier studies such as Richard B. Sher and Jeffrey Smitten's distinguished collection *Scotland and America in the Age of the Enlightenment* (1990). For our contributors, the Atlantic itself becomes a transformative third term in the equation. Attending to the realities and fantasies of distance and passage, and interrogating the grounds for comparison, we hope to open new perspectives on previously documented connections.

Atlantic discourse generates a politics, and a poetics, of both distance and sympathy. Awareness that knowledge and expression are relative, contingent and timebound

13 (wr. 1726, publ. 1752). Text taken from Roger Lonsdale, ed., *The New Oxford Book of Eighteenth-Century Verse* (Oxford, 1984), p. 175. Edward Said has pointed out the irremediably cultural nature of geography: 'space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning'. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1995), 55.

does not lead us, or our contributors, to the extreme endpoints of linguistic scepticism. Even the supposed arch-sceptic David Hume was—whatever the tendencies of his epistemological theories—a devotee of ‘intelligence’ and thoroughly engaged in the politics of Atlantic discourse, corresponding with Benjamin Franklin, and (as he put it), ‘an American in [his] principles’.¹⁴ As a figure of the ‘American’ Enlightenment, on the other hand, Jonathan Edwards usually appears in biography and intellectual history as the true heir of Founding Fathers who articulated their sense of the special destiny of American settlement in millenarian terms derived from Old Testament Judaic rhetoric. Edwards’s first American biographer, Samuel Hopkins, described his subject’s sense of the slippery slope of doctrinal latitude: ‘For if these [Calvinist] doctrines, in the whole length and breadth of them were relinquished, he did not see, where a man could set his foot down with consistency and safety, short of Deism, or even Atheism itself; or rather universal Skepticism.’¹⁵ The rigorous consistency of this position begins to blur at the edges when we set Edwards’s New Light Calvinism in the context of his transatlantic correspondence with Nisbet on doctrinal issues and his *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746), which develops a sensationist psychology every bit as subtle as that of Hume or Adam Smith; it metamorphoses entirely when his theological enquires are read as part of an intellectual profile that included an early and lifelong engagement with the writing of Locke, and a full awareness of its sceptical possibilities. Perry Miller stressed this affiliation many years ago, but Edwards has never made it into the canon of great writers of the (Eurocentric) Enlightenment, and his evangelical views make him an uneasy term in an American intellectual lineage that comfortably conjures with the names of Franklin, Jefferson and Adams.¹⁶ An Enlightenment reconfigured ‘Atlantically’, so to speak, would, on the other hand, accommodate Edwards’s Lockean insistence on the primacy of experience equally in the political, scientific and spiritual spheres as part of a comparative configuration that would also include Joseph Priestley (another American in his principles), and Thomas Paine. Properly transatlantic accounts of these three exemplars of Enlightenment remain to be written; in this volume, Daniel Howe’s essay on John Witherspoon in Scotland and America represents a dissenting, evangelising version of Enlightenment that expressed itself fully in a transatlantic context. James Chandler’s essay on the fortunes of the Scottish Enlightenment’s ethical and aesthetic theory of sympathy in early American fiction offers a context in which the elastic perception enabled by comparison may enlarge understanding and refine self-definition without succumbing to ‘universal Skepticism’. The kind of reflexive consciousness that Henry James would develop in his ‘international

14 *Letters of David Hume*, ed. J.Y.T Greig (2 vols, Oxford 1969), vol. 2, p. 302. Emma Rothschild’s essay in this volume considers the Atlantic dimensions of Hume’s Enlightenment.

15 *The Life and Character of Reverend Mr Jonathan Edwards* (1765), in ed. David Levin, *Jonathan Edwards: A Profile* (New York, 1969), p. 52.

16 Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York, 1949); for a more orthodox view of the ‘great figures’ of American Enlightenment, see (for example) Carl Van Doren, *Benjamin Franklin* (New York, 1938); Charles L. Sanford, ed., *Benjamin Franklin and the American Character* (Boston, 1955); Merrill D. Peterson, *Adam and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue* (Athens, Ga., 1976).

novels' of transatlantic encounter in the late nineteenth century has both experiential and theoretical origins in transatlantic Enlightenment.

The manner in which Enlightenment ideas moved and the relationship between their production and reception in different intellectual, social and geographic milieux is the major theme of Paul Giles's overview of recent Enlightenment scholarship, which looks further into our argument that viewed from an Atlantic perspective the shared characteristics and mutual engagements of the various national and regional Enlightenments become apparent. The obstacles to such exchanges also emerge. For example, while colonial exchanges broadened the horizons of European thinking, assumptions about race and its implications for societal progress in the conjectural historiography of the Scottish Enlightenment exemplified in William Robertson's widely acclaimed *History of America* (1777), had the effect, as Emma Rothschild shows, of severely limiting the circulation of ideas within the Atlantic world. Warfare, endemic in this world during the eighteenth century, was a further obstacle to the circulation of trade and people—a phenomenon analysed with some urgency by Adam Smith in his *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776).

Here we should note the broad disciplinary ethos that informs this volume as a collective contribution to Enlightenment and Atlantic Studies. The degree to which the individual authors draw on multiple disciplinary perspectives within their essays is striking, and suggests that the multi-layeredness of the subject requires of its students a similar flexibility with respect to the parameters and methodologies of traditional disciplines. Paul Giles, a literary specialist, provides an historiographical overview of the Enlightenment. Sarah Wood's closer textual approach to literary study is informed by the political history of the early American Republic. Taking examples and contexts from intellectual history, geographer Charles Withers considers how eighteenth-century natural scientists came to understand the Gulf Stream. Emma Rothschild, a political economist, presents an analysis heavily inflected by the philosophical debates of the Scottish Enlightenment. The intellectual historian Peter Onuf presents an analysis of Adam Smith's reception in the antebellum United States that recruits the study of political economy to its argument. Social historian Paul Gilje draws evidence and insights from literature in order to recreate the mental world of mariners during the 'Age of Sail'. This navigation within and across disciplinary lines presses hard at the limitations of established approaches to the study of Enlightenment.

The essays in this volume show, that is, how the Atlantic perspective renders Enlightenment boundaries of all kinds fluid and permeable. It problematises assumptions not only about the categorisation of knowledge, but also of perception and articulation. If the Enlightenment (as Michel Foucault has argued influentially) is defined by its taxonomic imperatives, Enlightenment viewed through the prism of the Atlantic insists that we recognise the constantly contested and renegotiated features of these taxonomies in the context of the comparative data collection referred to above.¹⁷ Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* is in part a powerful

17 See, in particular, Foucault's *Les mots et les choses* (1966), translated as *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London, 1970).

engagement—not to say refutation—of the degenerationist theories of Buffon and the Abbé Raynal, and a comparative demonstration of the available classification systems of Linnaeus, Catesby, Buffon and ‘popular names’. From early in the eighteenth century, antiquarians and collectors exchanged skulls, word lists, botanical specimens, rocks and myths across the Atlantic, in a co-operative effort to expand and characterise the field of knowledge in a global rather than Eurocentric frame.¹⁸

Methodological flexibility also seems key to further progress in mapping the multiplicity of Atlantic Enlightenment connections. While these essays share an interest in interdisciplinary opportunities, they explore very different angles of approach to the overarching question. Paul Giles’s essay, for instance, adopts a conceptual approach in order to consider plural Enlightenments, as he attempts to determine (and question) the common characteristics of ‘the’ Atlantic Enlightenment as an historicised subject of study. Daniel Howe, on the other hand, focuses on the life, work, and cares of John Witherspoon, reading an individual biography as an exemplification of a particular version of the transformation wrought by Atlantic crossing on Enlightenment ideas. Howe argues for a specifically Protestant Enlightenment as the prevailing version imbibed in late colonial and early revolutionary America; taking Witherspoon as his exemplar of this ‘mode’ he charts precisely how the Scottish evangelical theologian’s emigration across the Atlantic affected his thinking. Howe’s demonstration compares the ‘Scottish’ and ‘American’ writings of Witherspoon to suggest the natural evolution from Calvinist theologian to Revolutionary theorist. Calvinism and Revolution are parameters which help to define Howe’s version of the Atlantic Enlightenment. His reading is indicative; it makes a convincing case for Witherspoon as an unjustly neglected central figure in the picture of an Atlantic Enlightenment which should—more than it has hitherto been—be viewed from a specifically Scottish point of origin.

At this point, a particular bias and unique contribution of the Atlantic Enlightenment described by this volume should be made explicit. Ours is, by design, a *North* Atlantic Enlightenment primarily protestant in denomination, and anglophone in orientation. This is both a practical consequence of our particular interests as Americanists living and working in Edinburgh, and a deliberate decision to focus attention within a field of enquiry potentially so large as to overwhelm attention. South American and Caribbean Atlantic circulations are beginning to be explored by historians, literary scholars and political scientists in the wake of pioneering work by Anthony Pagden and Edmundo O’Gorman; more recently, Felipe Fernandez-Armesto’s synoptic study *The Americas: The History of a Hemisphere* (2003) has argued for a pan-American approach that recognises a common history of colonisation and north-south circulation within the Americas. ‘Latinization’, as he sees it, is ‘the vital counterpart of Americanization’; there is a hispanic, Catholic

18 ‘Popular names’ was one of Jefferson’s classificatory categories in his comparison of Old and New World flora and fauna, in the *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787), ed. William H. Peden (Chapel Hill, 1955). On taxonomies of language, in particular, see Edward G. Gray, *New World Babel: Languages and Nations in Early America* (Princeton, 1999); on transatlantic taxonomies, see Susan Manning, *Fragments of Union: Making Connections in Scottish and American Writing* (Basingstoke, 2002), especially chapter 5.

transatlanticism whose history should not be forgotten because it was not primarily active in the eighteenth century.¹⁹ Aspects of the Transatlantic Enlightenment oriented towards South America have recently been opened up by Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, and Nigel Leask in his studies of the travels of Alexander von Humboldt and Frances Calderón de la Barca's *Life in Mexico* (1843). Similarly, transatlantic circulation focused on the Caribbean has been a rapidly expanding field of study in the last twenty years.²⁰

Reflecting the location of the discussions which gave rise to this volume, the Atlantic Enlightenment presented here has then its axis unashamedly tilted towards Scotland. Daniel Howe's Witherspoon is exemplary in his Presbyterianism, and Emma Rothschild's essay puts Hume in an original relation to Atlantic Enlightenment discourse. For Chandler, Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) is a foundational text. Smith's *Wealth of Nations* is the starting point for Peter Onuf's analysis of antebellum American political economy. Sarah Wood marks out continuities between the writings of Benjamin Franklin and Tobias Smollett. Yet these essays equally demonstrate that there is nothing provincial about the Atlantic Enlightenment seen from a Scottish perspective. A straightforwardly nation-based reading of productive influences and of their passive reception—as indicated above—is not something to which any of our contributors would subscribe. Scotland's Enlightenment was itself a multifarious and fractured set of possibilities, exemplified equally by the Presbyterian Witherspoon and the skeptical Hume, as also by Smith in both his ethical and economic writing. Scottish intellectual movements were themselves intimately interwoven with the Enlightenments of France, Germany, and other European countries, and these essays reveal some of these networks in operation. Even as our authors look across the Atlantic, Gilje points us towards Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau as contexts for his maritime exemplars of the Enlightenment 'at sea', Wood's 'Transatlantic Cervantics' offers a 'hispanised' transatlantic exchange which also draws on the Anglo-Irish Edmund Burke and the discourse of sentiment, an English perspective is voiced in Giles's and Ahnert's essays by Samuel Johnson's writing, and Emma Rothschild's Hume is deeply European in his sensibilities.

19 *The Americas: The History of a Hemisphere* (London, 2003), p. 141. Also see Edmundo O'Gorman, *The Invention of America: an Inquiry Into the Historical Nature of the New World and the Meaning of Its History* (Bloomington, IN, 1961), Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters With the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven, 1993), Lester D. Langley, *The Americas in the Age of Revolution* (New Haven, 1997) and Lester D. Langley, *The Americas in the Modern Age* (New Haven, 2003) for other examples of hemispheric history.

20 *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992); Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing 1770–1840* (Oxford, 2002); Nigel Leask, 'The Ghost in Catapultepec: Fanny Calderón de la Barca, William Prescott and 19th Century Mexican Travel Accounts', in Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, eds., *Voyages and Visions* (London, 1999). On the Caribbean and the Atlantic world, see, for example Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath, eds., *First Encounters: Spanish Explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492–1570* (Gainesville, FL., 1989), and David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus, eds., *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington, IN, 1997).

And Scotland, of course, is not the only point of origin from which to view even a North Atlantic Enlightenment. Study of the Atlantic Enlightenment to date has unaccountably neglected German contributions to its counter-currents. In this volume we begin to address this lack. Giles opens his analysis of ‘Enlightenments’ with Kant’s famous formulation, and Hegel’s conceptual historicisation. The importance of Goethe’s *Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) to the transatlantic economy of sentiment in William Hill Brown’s *Power of Sympathy* (1789) is noted by Chandler. German responses to the American Revolution are the particular subject of Thomas Ahnert’s essay. Ahnert brings to bear a set of jurisprudential considerations derived from the work of John Pocock; he situates German reactions in the context of European Enlightenment debates about natural law, civil law and the *ius gentium* or law of nations, and reminds us of the intense theoretical scrutiny to which the Americans’ actions in declaring independence from Britain were subject across Europe. Ahnert’s emphasis on the extent to which religio-political *Schwärmerei*, or enthusiasts, were also part of the intellectual world of the Atlantic Enlightenment offers a counterpart to Howe’s Presbyterian Enlightenment. The contradiction, if so it appears, is only apparent: reformed religious practice is fundamental to both cases, and Howe’s and Ahnert’s essays between them exemplify the polyvalency of Atlantic Enlightenments. More specifically they make it clear (as, in different ways, do Chandler’s and Gilje’s literary readings) that the Atlantic Enlightenment should not only be read as a space for the influential exchange of abstractly conceived ideas about governance and justice, but as an intense emotional and spiritual battleground in which, in the ultimate analysis, nothing less than the soul’s salvation might be at stake.

Giles offers an illuminating analysis of how the concept of an Atlantic Enlightenment has been formulated in recent scholarship. Starting from the general question of how ‘Enlightenment’ historically been located and described, he moves in to focus on how specific eighteenth-century commentators such as Samuel Johnson and Richard Price who, unlike John Witherspoon, did not themselves undertake the physical crossing of the Atlantic, but nonetheless found it figuring largely on their ideological horizons. The now-obvious limitations of their interpretations should, Giles argues, be instructive to us as we attempt to read Atlanticism back into the Enlightenment. James Chandler’s essay on the ‘first American novel’ locates the Atlanticism of the Enlightenment at the level of precise inter-textual analysis. Chandler shares with Howe the sense that the Scottish intellectual background offered something particularly conducive to Atlantic export—in this case, the ethics of sympathy developed by Hume and Adam Smith which, in its aesthetic aspect, manifested itself in the sentimental novel. Chandler reminds us that Jefferson’s favourite fictional and poetic reading was the novels of Sterne and James Macpherson’s translations of Ossian. One of the major contributions of this essay is its consideration of ‘the meaning of a “transatlantic idea”’ (to adapt a phrase from Lionel Trilling) in the context of the prevailing and eminently transportable literary discourse of sensibility.²¹

21 Lionel Trilling, ‘The Meaning of a Literary Idea’, *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (New York, 1940; rpt., 1976).

As the Atlantic is bounded by the Americas, Europe, Africa and the Antarctic and Arctic, Enlightenment thinking is bounded by the limits of race, status and gender. Paul Gilje's essay delineates the degree to which Enlightenment thinking transcended both disciplinary and social boundaries. His discussion of the conjunction of economics, politics and sentiment that informed contemporary views of sailors and the seafaring life reminds us that the Enlightenment was not confined to a social elite, and that its theoretical ideas were intimately bound to practice. There are echoes here of Thomas Munck's pioneering exploration of the meaning of the Enlightenment for partially educated social groups.²² While Munck considers the degree to which Enlightenment ideas transcended class and educational boundaries in three western European cities—London, Paris and Hamburg—Gilje demonstrates that sailors were themselves well-versed in Enlightenment discourse and, by the nature of their peripatetic employment, helped to circulate those ideas around the Atlantic world. Seen from the perspective of the lower decks of the ships which plied its waves, the Atlantic was not a barrier to be surmounted but a vast pool which facilitated the diffusion of ideas (as well as people and goods) across space and social boundaries. Nonetheless, as Gilje's discussion of Thomas Paine shows, restrictions on education and opportunity made it inevitable that most of the perspectives available to us now on the Atlantic Enlightenment come from writers of middle- or upper-class backgrounds. These essays are at least able to indicate how the non-written experience of working men, women and slaves were subjects of active interest and importance to the Atlantic discourse of the Enlightenment.

For women whose livelihoods depended on the Atlantic, life could be precarious. Nonetheless the fluidity of life at sea and on the waterfront offered women opportunity as well as uncertainty. During the eighteenth century, women in maritime communities, especially seaports (as well as the smaller number who went to sea) enjoyed more opportunities to amass wealth and achieve social and economic autonomy than their counterparts in inland communities.²³ As the sea broadened women's horizons economically and socially, Enlightenment offered some women a degree of intellectual and cultural opportunity. The sentimental novel as described here by Chandler gave a growing number of female readers entertainment and an entrée into the Enlightenment. Moreover the late eighteenth century saw the substantial presence of published female authors as well as readers on both sides of the Atlantic. Chandler's enquiry into the conjunction of 'sympathy' with 'power' suggests that we look carefully at transatlantic intertextualities not as simple instances of 'influences' on a juvenile and derivative culture from a more established and authoritative source.

22 Thomas Munck, *The Enlightenment: A Comparative Social History, 1721–1794* (London, 2000).

23 Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia, 2004), ch. 2; David Cordingly, *Women Sailors and Sailors' Women: An Untold Maritime History* (New York, 2001); Elaine Forman Crane, *Ebb Tide in New England: Women, Seaports and Social Change, 1630–1800* (Boston, 1998); Lisa Norling, *Captain Ahab Had a Wife: New England Women and the Whalefishery, 1720–1870* (Chapel Hill, 2000); Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling, eds., *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700–1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Suzanne J. Stark, *Women Aboard Ship in the Age of Sail* (Annapolis, 1996).

We need in addition to be alert to the challenging revisions produced by the repositioning of apparently familiar and uncontentious ideas in frameworks that put pressure on their illusion of ‘naturalness’. Such a perception allows us to return to the canonical works of British sensibility, such as Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey* (1767) or Henry Mackenzie’s *Man of Feeling* (1771), with renewed awareness of their aesthetic sophistication—apparent to Hill Brown as a transatlantic reader and adaptor, but too readily naturalised by British audiences who took their fictions for ethical instruction. Some women writers such as Susanna Rowson, Frances Wright, Maria Graham or Frances Calderòn de la Barca (née Inglis) were themselves transatlantic figures who wrote on transatlantic themes and subjects. From the standpoint of gender the Enlightenment remained male dominated, but—as Abigail Adams famously reminded her husband—it was in no sense an exclusively male domain.²⁴ By the late eighteenth century the gender boundary of the Enlightenment was somewhat like the ‘boundary’ of the Atlantic Ocean at Tierra del Fuego, or in the polar regions—shifting, imprecise and sometimes stormy.

Charles Withers demonstrates that coastal west Africa, integral to the Atlantic economy, did not figure in the thoughts of most of those who contributed to Enlightenment discourse about the geography of the Atlantic world.²⁵ As a consequence, Africa and Africans are not central to the essays in this book, despite the fact that the transatlantic economy which so concerned thinkers from Hume to Jefferson depended on the transatlantic slave trade and the commodities produced by African slaves in the New World. Nonetheless, as Emma Rothschild demonstrates in her analysis of Hume’s infamous footnote on Africans, assumptions about race brought severe pressure to bear on Enlightenment discourse. Her essay shows, in a different way from Paul Giles’s, how the imaginative sympathy (and its failures) that underpinned discourse of the Atlantic inflected the writing of major Enlightenment figures who never made the crossing for themselves, and their understanding of evidence brought back by travellers, traders and those others who did. Hume’s comments on race need to be understood not only in the light of the empirical observations of those who encountered Africans in enslaved conditions in the Americas, but in relation to the theories of government and the theoretical historiography of universal societal development being worked out so notably in Enlightenment Scotland. This was articulated in the fourth book of Hume’s friend Robertson’s *History of America*, where—in a central and influential case of that comparative social evolutionism opened up by the Atlantic perspective—the primary examples of the ‘primitive’ stages of society are Native Americans and Scottish Highlanders.

Neither Hume nor Robertson had direct experience of New World slavery when they made their assertions about the inferiority of Africans. The same cannot be said of Jefferson, who articulated some of the noblest aspirations of the Enlightenment,

²⁴ Abigail Adams to John Adams, March 31, 1776, in L. H. Butterfield *et al.* eds., *The Adams Family Correspondence*, 7 vols to date (Cambridge, Mass, 1963–), vol 1, p. 370.

²⁵ For example T. Carlos Jacques, ‘From Savages and Barbarians to Primitives: Africa, Social Typologies, and History in Eighteenth-Century French Philosophy’, *History and Theory*, 36 (1997): 190–215.

and both as philosopher and politician was an active reader of the major figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, and also embodied many of its limitations and contradictions. Despite some well-intentioned denunciations of slavery, he took no steps towards abolition in Virginia. By contrast in his most extensive publication, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson offered, ‘as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to whites in the endowments of body and mind’. Unlike Hume, Jefferson based his claim of supposed African inferiority on empirical observation and comparison with Europeans:

Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination it appears to me that in memory they are equal to the white; in reason much inferior, as I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in the imagination they are dull, tasteless and anomalous. It would be unfair to follow them to Africa for this investigation. We will compare them here, on the same stage with the whites, and where the facts are not apocryphal on which a judgment is to be formed.

He dismissed the notion that the environment—that is slavery—produced the inferior characteristics he described. ‘It is not their condition then,’ he concluded, ‘but nature which has produced the distinction.’²⁶

Jefferson’s racial comparisons were not confined to Europeans and Africans. In the *Notes on the State of Virginia* he compared Native Americans favourably to Africans.

Some [African slaves] have been liberally educated, and all lived in countries where the arts and sciences are cultivated to a considerable degree, and have had before their eyes samples of the best works from abroad. The Indians, with no advantages of this kind, will often carve figures on their pipes not destitute of design and merit. ... They astonish you with strokes of the most sublime oratory; such as prove their reason and sentiment strong, their imagination glowing and elevated. But never yet could I find a black that had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never see even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture.²⁷

Whereas Africans were inferior by nature, Jefferson claimed that circumstances alone accounted for the seeming differences between whites and Native Americans. If the circumstances of Native American life changed, then Native Americans could achieve equality with European Americans, a status which Africans could never achieve. As expressed here, Jefferson’s views on race suggest a common outlook in Edinburgh and Monticello. Notwithstanding his intimate knowledge of slavery and Africans—including, of course, his own children by his mixed-race slave, Sally Hemings—his racial attitudes are reminiscent of Hume. Like Hume, though perhaps for different reasons, Jefferson contended that Africans (unlike Native Americans) were incapable of the intellectual development necessary to participate in civil society.

26 Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. Peden, quotations, 143, 139, 141–2. The best analysis of Jefferson’s writings on race in the *Notes* is Winthrop D. Jordan’s *White Over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill, 1968), ch. 12.

27 Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed., Peden, 140.

Jefferson's racial thinking owed other debts to Scottish Enlightenment thought. Although he felt that blacks were intellectually inferior to whites, the races were equal in their common, or 'moral sense'. Jefferson, who derived his thinking on the subject from the writings of the Scottish common sense philosophers, believed that the moral sense was distinct from the intellect. 'State a moral case to a ploughman and a professor,' he wrote in 1787, 'the former will decide it as well, and often better than the latter, because he has not been led astray by artificial rules.' Like the ploughman, the African slave was the equal to his white master in determining right from wrong.²⁸ Similarly Jefferson's enthusiasm for the primitive potential of Native Americans—reminiscent of William Robertson—particularly the tragic oratory of Chief Logan, may be derived from his enthusiasm for Ossian.²⁹

The more general point here might be the mutually constitutive interaction of empirical data, system, and imaginative exploration in the cross-currents of Atlantic Enlightenment discourse: if the evidence gained in observing Native Americans and slaves helped European writers to construct universal conjectural histories of mankind—and subsequently seemed to confirm these theories—the examples offered by the early Roman republic and the evidence of the contemporary abuses of the French *ancien régime* were formative in American revolutionary thinking. Equally formative, as Chandler's and Sarah Wood's essays remind us, were the literary structures of sentiment and satire. At this point it becomes possible to see the underlying relationships between the symbolic structures they explore, and the more empirically-based accounts of movement on and across the Atlantic presented by Withers and Gilje.

Indeed, it is one of the strengths of the interdisciplinary approach of this collection to reveal how 'literary' the Atlantic Enlightenment was, in the sense of being articulated, debated and contested in contexts ranging from taxonomy and political philosophy to historiography, psychology and fiction. The generic or disciplinary boundaries between these kinds of writing are revealed as matters of convention and convenience: as Chandler demonstrates, the transatlantic sentimental novel opens up additional ways to understand the sensationist psychology of Hume, Smith, and Edwards, while Wood's essay shows how the established European genre of quixotic

28 Thomas Jefferson to Peter Carr, August 10, 1787, in Julian P. Boyd, *et al.* eds., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (33 vols to date, Princeton, 1950–), vol. 12, p. 15. For Jefferson's views on race and the common sense philosophy see: Jordan, *White Over Black*, 439–40 and Garry Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (New York, 1978), chs. 14–15. Wills made a strong case for the Scottish Enlightenment as a source many of Jefferson's ideas. Hostile reviews, notably by Ronald Hamowy in the *William and Mary Quarterly*, (36 [1979]: 503–23), pointed out the many anachronisms and factual errors in Wills's argument, but his fundamental thesis was both sound and surprisingly revolutionary within an American historiography very slow to recognise the substantial intellectual cross-currents between Scotland and pre-Revolutionary America. On the controversy and its implications, see Andrew Hook, 'The Scottish Invention of the USA', *From Goosecreek to Gandercleugh: Studies in Scottish-American Literary and Cultural History* (East Linton, 1999), pp. 8–24 and Francis D. Cogliano, *Thomas Jefferson: Reputation and Legacy* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 138–47.

29 Manning, *Fragments of Union*, 182–90.

romance was a ready vehicle for discussion of contemporary politics in a transatlantic context. In addition, it would be possible to find issues of race and slavery explored in the transatlantic novels of, for example, Henry Mackenzie (*The Man of the World* [1773] and *Julia de Roubigné* [1777]) and Robert Bage (*Hermisprong; or Man as He is Not* [1796]); or Smithian theory of Atlantic economic exchange implied in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814); or comparative topographies and social analysis in Frances Brooke's *Emily Montague* (1769) or Susanna Rowson's *Americans in England* (1796). What imaginative fiction can do that political philosophy, empirical psychology and comparative historiography may not permit themselves, is to explore at length the poetic and metaphoric implications of certain kinds of 'thought experiment' regarding the effects of personal and cultural displacement.

Walter Scott—Tory, anti-Reform, very much heir to the Loyalist elements in Scottish Enlightenment thought that do not feature largely in this volume—is not readily associated with the kind of experience and ideological imperatives that make travel writers, political theorists, theologians and sailors, obvious starting points for articulating an Atlantic Enlightenment. Yet Scott, who never visited America nor wrote a transatlantic novel, and who has been retrospectively identified with some of the most anti-democratic, 'anti-Enlightened' episodes in American history, nonetheless played a part in the continuing imaginative transatlantic dialogues of the nineteenth century, a part that—precisely because of its *unlikeliness*—suggests that we shall indeed benefit from acknowledging the pervasiveness of Atlantic discourse in the formation of concerns far removed from the self-styled revolutionaries of the Enlightenment.³⁰ Though his 'American' fiction remained unachieved, Scott recognised its possibilities in his fascination with the story of the regicide Goff, who took refuge in Virginia following the execution of Charles I. More material, perhaps, was his delight in a text discussed below by Sarah Wood, the 'most excellently jocose' *History of New York* sent to him unsolicited during the Anglo-American conflict of 1812–14 by its author Washington Irving, whose publication and career prospects in Britain Scott thereafter untiringly championed.³¹ Praising the spoof *History* to the publisher John Murray, he wrote of his intention to write an article on the book; in the event, at Scott's instigation, his prospective son-in-law John Wilson Lockhart reviewed Irving's work extensively in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, while Murray was sufficiently persuaded to undertake the first British publication of Irving's transatlantic *Sketches of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* in 1820. Irving's writing (central to Sarah Wood's argument about the multiply mediated figure of the Quixote in transatlantic writing that hovers between satire and sentiment) makes it clear that just as the Enlightenment receives new conceptual richness and extent

30 See, most notoriously, Mark Twain's indictment that Scott was responsible for the American Civil War, in *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), ed. James M. Cox (Harmondsworth, 1986), p. 327. See also Andrew Hook, 'Scott and America', in *From Goosecreek to Gandercleugh*, and Susan Manning, 'Did Mark Twain bring down the temple on Scott's shoulders?' in Janet Beer and Bridget Bennett, eds., *Special Relationships: Anglo-American Affinities and Antagonisms, 1854–1936* (Manchester, 2002), pp. 8–27.

31 H. J. C. Grierson, ed., *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott* (12 vols, London, 1932–33), vol. 3, p. 259.

when considered in its transatlantic dimensions, so too may Romanticism. Indeed, the Atlantic view brings the usefulness of such ‘period’ compartments once more into question.

As the most successful novelist of his generation (perhaps, depending on one’s measure, of the nineteenth century) writing in English, Scott was both a model for, and an enormous challenge to, American writers as they construed a literature that would articulate specifically ‘American’ experience within the conventions of immensely powerful British literary traditions. Scott’s work, which is frequently invoked in terms of ‘Romantic nationalism’, in fact exemplifies the futility of the kinds of periodisation and localisation in relation to literature that we argued against at the beginning of this introduction. Its thematic, geographical, socio-political and historical amplitude militates against narrow categories of analysis; a more fruitful way of reading the ‘Waverley Novels’ would be to see them as the fullest imaginative exposition of the kinds of Enlightened enquiry also exemplified in the Atlantic contexts explored in this volume. Progress achieved through resolution of conflict between racial and cultural groups; territorial disputes and their social and psychological consequences; a geographically- and topographically-based understanding of the political world; economic development and its societal consequences; the power of local allegiances and the equally powerful emotional consequences of displacement, dispersal and exile: these were some of the themes that exemplify the Enlightened foundation of the Waverley series of novels. Played into an Atlantic perspective, they presented inescapable—if ideologically troublesome—models for the fictional experiments of James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain and innumerable less celebrated nineteenth-century American writers.³²

Coleridge and Southey fantasising about a pantisocratic community on the banks of the Susquehanna; the 1802 reprinting of *The Lyrical Ballads* in Philadelphia as a seditious act; the excitement of an unexpected meeting of minds in the first encounter and subsequent correspondence of Emerson and Thomas Carlyle, leading to the literary-historical oddity of the first book publication of the latter’s highly Germanic *Sartor Resartus* in America, not England: all are part of the continuing story of Atlantic exchanges whose Enlightenment contours are described, interrogated, complicated and clarified in this volume of essays. We seek here to move beyond a reductive, essentialist, conception of Enlightenment as a fixed set of ideas confined to certain geographic locales or as a period defined by ‘turning points’ at its beginning and end. Rather we see the Enlightenment as an integral part of transatlantic networks of exchange—of ideas, people, and commodities.

Equally, though, we seek to move discussion of Atlantic worlds beyond the disciplinary framework of historical studies towards a flexible range of methodologies and approaches that will, we hope, encourage future discussion across boundaries, and the opening up of new types of exchanges, networks, dialogues and transformations.

32 See, for example, George Dekker, *The American Historical Romance* (Cambridge, 1987), Richard Brodhead, *Hawthorne, Melville and the Novel* (Chicago, 1976; rpt 1977); Susan Manning, ‘Scott and Hawthorne: The Making of a National Literary Tradition,’ in David Hewitt and J. H. Alexander, eds. *Scott and His Influence* (Aberdeen, 1983); Manning, ‘Did Mark Twain bring down the temple’.

Such networks were constitutive of the Atlantic Enlightenment pluralistically conceived: the Atlantic was not just the space in which debates and circulation took place, but, as these essays show, shaped the contours of debate and informed the 'enlightened' profile of the (northern, Protestant) Atlantic world. What we offer here is a more open Enlightenment or Enlightenments viewed through the refracting lens of Atlanticism: a world of exchanges and relationships, whose political and cultural events cannot be understood apart from the dynamic physical and geographical environments in which they were determined.