

AILEEN DOUGLAS. *Work in Hand: Script, Print, and Writing, 1690–1840*. Oxford Textual Perspectives. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. 208. \$80.00 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2017.192

Print technology, the familiar story goes, altered the development of western culture: it helped circulate information, raised literacy rates, fomented revolutions, and seemed in some cases to render written script obsolete—as Daniel Defoe put it in 1726, “the *Printing Art* has out-run the Pen” (1). In response to such claims, Aileen Douglas’s *Work in Hand: Script, Print, and Writing, 1690–1840* reminds us how nuanced and varied these kinds of changes were, and how gradually and unevenly they unfolded. Specifically, in her analysis she delves into transitioning beliefs and practices accompanying English script and print over the long eighteenth century, including ideas of labor and creativity, of social roles and identity, and of authorship, originality, and interiority.

To tell this story Douglas draws on disciplines including paleography, book history, philosophy, literary theory, and historical analysis. But while acknowledging scholars whose works have lately clarified written script’s continued and potent existence in this period, she emphasizes her intention not simply to recover a sense of script’s importance, nor to oppose its functions to those of print. Instead, she analyzes several complex situations and relationships that arise as script and print coexist in order to provide “a fuller sense, in a culture that accommodated both, of how a print author’s scribal acts and practices may best be understood” (13). She also pays close attention to the class divisions and cultural anxieties that influenced notions of writing as “work”; that is, what kind of work it was or should be, and who could access (often through print) the privilege of learning it. As a whole, the book thus strives to reveal and contextualize what Douglas calls script’s “graphic intelligence” (15)—to help today’s readers perceive some of the complex meanings manual writing could hold for varying populations in the eighteenth century.

As in previous works, Douglas brings to the book a particular interest in embodiment and materiality, as well as her expertise on Irish and women writers. In her introduction, Douglas illuminates numerous philosophical potentials of manual writing, from such period writers as Daniel Defoe and John Locke to modern theorists, including Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Subsequent chapters show writers and readers grappling with these ideas in their encounters with print and script and their hopes for what each medium might or might not achieve. In the first half of the book, Douglas broadly considers key developments in script and print technologies; respectively, the increasing dominance of English round hand, and the importance of the rolling press which produced engraved script and facsimiles of famous handwritten documents. (Douglas’s absorbing account notwithstanding, readers unfamiliar with the appearance of round hand and italic script, and more specialized forms such as secretary and chancery, will lament the scarcity of accompanying images and will at the very least need to supplement their reading with a few image searches.)

At the same time, these early chapters also examine issues affecting the diffusion of manual writing across social classes and colonial populations, including differences in upper and lower class education and beliefs about labor; the role of copybooks both in challenging and reinforcing social norms; and the imperfect results of writing used as an aid to imperial discipline in Irish Charter Schools and Andrew Bell’s pedagogic experiments in Madras. In these studies Douglas particularly interrogates the relationship between writing and work as it unfolded among the laboring classes, since their access to writing instruction often depended on their likelihood of writing for a living. Yet even such a utilitarian emphasis, she shows, manifests budding notions of personal and social identity: writing masters betray some uneasiness in collaborating with engravers to mass-produce copies of their individual handiwork; students learning the shapes of letters from copybooks also absorb the heavily gendered social rules of masculine round hand and feminine italic; and the colonial writing experiments in

Ireland and Madras bring beliefs about the value of discipline and productive labor into conflict with anxieties about personal freedom and empowerment.

In the second half of the book, Douglas transitions to individual authors' relationships to script and print across a wide range of genres. In chapter 4 she considers Samuel Johnson's *Prayers and Meditations* (1785) in terms of readers' evolving beliefs in authorship versus mere writing. In chapter 5 she analyzes printed engravings of manuscript poetry through an unusual juxtaposition of Alexander Pope and William Blake as published in the 1790s—Pope in facsimile, and Blake in his revolutionary method of “illuminated printing.” In chapter 6 Douglas offers a masterful examination of Maria Edgeworth's career-long preoccupation with the power of written and copied documents: their potential to maintain or disrupt personal fortunes, and their role in creating cults of celebrity while potentially threatening the expression of interiority. Douglas uses these chapters, together, to question the relationship between mass-produced handwritten texts, their extent of “authenticity” and circulation, and the sense they do or do not create of the writer's immediate presence, genius, and status.

Douglas's readers will appreciate the book's continuity and clear critical parameters, its philosophical depth and attention to a variety of material texts, and its lively illustration of individual writers' perspectives. Above all, though, the greatest strength of Douglas's book lies in her commitment to complexities. Douglas keeps her nuanced conclusions firmly within the conceptual space she outlines in the beginning—between late seventeenth-century questions about script's relevance, and a time when script came widely to signify personal, human subjectivity. Indeed, she stops pointedly short of that moment, her final chapter on Joseph Barker's plea for working class children's access to writing instruction showing that even his radical belief in the humanizing effects of writing cannot fully reconcile with his acceptance of oppressive child labor. True to her introductory claim, then, Douglas avoids reinforcing a simplified narrative of “progress” and allows her conclusions to remain compellingly mixed.

The work will naturally appeal to scholars of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature and history, yet even those interested in modern and contemporary culture will find much to consider in Douglas's analysis of the long and varied processes that contribute to modern understandings of print, script, the act of writing, and evolving conceptions of humanity.

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ANDREAS GESTRICH and MICHAEL SCHAICH, eds. *The Hanoverian Succession: Dynastic Politics and Monarchical Culture*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. Pp. 288. \$138.00 (cloth).  
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For all the cult of anniversaries in the modern world, the British clearly have problems with key moments that have shaped the political and constitutional contours of the modern state. The tercentenary of the revolution of 1688 was marked by only a relatively low-key exhibition, and anniversaries of the unions with Ireland and Scotland fared no better. So we should not be surprised that the 300th anniversary of the Hanoverian succession was similarly neglected in the country for which it provided the ruling dynasty, in stark contrast to a wonderful series of exhibitions and accompanying multivolume catalogue that were arranged in Hanover (*Als die Royals aus Hannover Kamen*, 2014). Doubtless this tells us something about the nation's current struggles with its identity/ies, and especially with its major institutions (monarchy, parliament, church) and with the legacy of the political unions. However, just as the marking of