ABSTRACT

Ruth Knezevich

Noah Heringman, Dissertation Co-Supervisor

Devoney Looser, Dissertation Co-Supervisor

_Narrative as Archive_ contributes to the small-but-growing body of scholarship on paratexts—specifically footnotes—in imaginative literatures of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Britain. I argue that these annotated literatures are Enlightenment-inspired, Foucauldian discursive sites (archives). These archives consist of collected ideas of human history catalogued through the annotations that de- and re-contextualize them into an imaginative record as a way to explore and come to terms with Britain’s past. To illustrate this claim, I wed archival research with media-historical readings of works by the antiquarian Thomas Percy, the Irish novelist Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan), the poet Lord Byron, and the Scottish author James Hogg. I argue that the literary footnote offers these authors-as-editors a way to collect and curate textual artifacts into an imaginative record in order to explore and come to terms with the past. _Narrative as Archive_ calls attention to the collapse of distinctions between author/editor, page/margin, poetry/prose. In sum, I argue that greater consideration to the material manifestations of knowledge work in these imaginative literatures can allow critics to navigate the division between form and content—and between media history and literary analysis—in the study of Enlightenment and Romantic-Era British Literature. This body of work offers an especially rich archive for exploration, in part because it initially was constructed as one.