



Lucy Peltz, *Facing the Text: Extra-Illustration, Print Culture, and Society in Britain 1769-1840*

Lucy Peltz. *Facing the Text: Extra-Illustration, Print Culture, and Society in Britain 1769-1840*. San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens / The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2017. Xii, 407 p., ill. USD 115. ISBN: 9780873282611. Nearly every rare book library has at least one extra-illustrated book; many archives hold hundreds of them. Yet the polarizing eighteenth- and nineteenth-century practice of extra-illustration has rarely been studied in its own right. Instead it is generally mentioned only briefly as part of larger arguments about marginalia, book use, and private libraries. Lucy Peltz's extravagantly illustrated and extraordinarily well-researched *Facing the Text: Extra-Illustration, Print Culture, and Society in Britain 1769-1840* offers a strikingly new approach as it both defines extra-illustration against similar "bibliographic activities" (5) and traces the rise and fall of what might be called its golden age. Beginning in the last decades of the eighteenth century, wealthy men began expanding their libraries of valuable books to include rare prints. Casting about for new ways to showcase their tremendous collections, as well as to publicize their well-honed sense of taste, many began adding these prints to their books, rebinding volumes, and even commissioning special bookcases in which to house them. Peltz's study begins by dismantling the commonly used term "grangerizing." Published in 1769, James Granger's *Biographical History of England from Egbert the Great to the Revolution* was the start of two interlinked trends: one was a passion for British history and the other was a sudden interest in engraved portrait collecting. Brought together, these fads naturally led to the rise of extra-illustration. Granger corresponded regularly with one of the first extra-illustrators, Richard Bull, who added prints to the British biographer's book in order to expand it into an enormous set of volumes. Yet despite his close involvement with the project, Granger himself "never grangerized a book" (31). Extending her study of the relationships between extra-illustrators, authors, and collectors, Peltz turns her attention in the middle part of the book to two waves of extra-illustration that occurred between the 1770s and 1840s. In the first period, a group of gentlemen surrounding the famed gothic writer and eccentric Horace Walpole undertook the extra-illustration of volumes dedicated to biography, travel, and history. Following rapidly on the heels of this club's work, new practitioners of extra-illustration emerged as the "print market and book trade began to subtly reorient and capitalize on the practice" (46). While participating in an art undertaken by readers with enough money to purchase books and prints, these new extra-illustrators nevertheless relied on commercially available items including widely



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reproduced copies of rare images. By the 1840s, extra-illustrated books' "power to signal respectability and distinction was diminished" and the worth of these once-invaluable objects began to plummet (5-7).

The final section of this monograph is the richest, raising numerous questions about the tensions between authors and compilers, the role of gender in collecting, and the cultural impact of these privately created artifacts. Greatly expanded by Charlotte Sutherland after the death of her husband, Alexander Hendras Sutherland (the original extra-illustrator of the project), the "Sutherland Clarendon" bound together two books on history with some of the most expensive prints of the day. Sutherland's final book totaled sixty-one elephant folio volumes stuffed with materials selected by a keen eye for quality. She used the notion that her continuation of her husband's work was a memorial to him in order to insert herself into an almost entirely male world of antiquarians, auction house goers, and authors of private catalogues. In her choice of images for the work, she also offered subtle revisions of her late husband's views such as when, for example, she included extremely costly engravings depicting the folk hero John Felton. Executed for assassinating the Duke of Buckingham in 1628 as a retribution for his disastrous military leadership, Felton was remembered by the Crown and gentry as an irredeemable criminal. Indeed, this was how Sutherland's husband illustrated this section of the book: he included images of Buckingham, but none of Felton. By adding rare prints showing Felton, Sutherland revised the visual narrative laid out by her husband and took a surprisingly populist position on the historical incident.

*Facing the Text* is not only an important book because it dispenses with the unhelpful, but still enduring, belief that extra-illustration was mere book destruction. Instead, in considering artifacts that "now form a cumbersome and heterogeneous body of material that resists exegesis" (43), Peltz invites new inquiries into the relationship between word and image at the end of the eighteenth century. Given our modern libraries' firm demarcations between books, manuscripts, graphic materials, and, increasingly, digital content, we would do well to follow Peltz's method of rethinking how such classifications limit what we can know about the past.

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