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and research British romanticism will find new insights into canonical authors and texts and the contexts in which they were produced.

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CARL CHINN and MALCOLM DICK, eds. *Birmingham: The Workshop of the World*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016. Pp. 334. $60.00 (cloth).
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In *Birmingham: The Workshop of the World*, editors Carl Chinn and Malcolm Dick have brought together twelve essays by thirteen scholars to yield what they hope is "the most substantial, scholarly, illuminating and visually attractive one-volume history of Birmingham to date" (viii). They certainly have succeeded in the latter respect, producing a stunningly beautiful work of urban history. The book's more than two-hundred full-color illustrations reproducing maps, paintings, era documents, photographs, and material artifacts make it worth the price of admission alone. The intellectual contents of the volume's chapters are likewise impressive, covering a great deal of historical ground, including not only the city's geography, built environment, economy, population, and politics, but also the histories of religion, the arts, medical and educational institutions, and Birmingham's relationship to the wider history of print and communications media. In their introduction, Chinn and Dick emphasize that the word "workshop" in the book's subtitle was selected, not in order to reference the city's well-known history as an industrial center alone, but in order to capture Birmingham's broader history as a place of experiment and opportunity—as a "workshop for initiating, testing and implementing political, educational, medical and cultural ideas and practices" (6). Thus, this is a collection of essays brimming with valuable insights into the entire history of the "midland metropolis" and its place in the history of Britain and the wider world. One suspects that if the city's first historian, William Hutton (1723–1815), could view this work, he would be most impressed by the editors' achievement.

Indeed, readers will perceive striking parallels between these authors' collective history of Birmingham and Hutton's 1783 history of the city. First, there is the book's chronological inclusivity, inspired by the 850th anniversary of King Henry II's granting a market charter to Peter de Birmingham in 1166. This act, the editors contend, "marked the birth of modern Birmingham as a commercial and manufacturing centre" (1). Their claim is particularly striking given that in the same year (2016) Liverpool University Press published a similar multiauthor history of another of Britain's well-known industrial cities (Alan Kidd and Terry Wyke, eds., *Manchester: Making the Modern City* [2016]), whose chapters, in contrast, almost exclusively address that city's history post-1750, and whose introduction (like its subtitle) emphasizes parallels between Manchester's history and the history of "modernity." In contrast, the concept of "modernity" is most notable in Chinn and Dick's volume for its absence.

Instead, like Hutton, the editors have chosen to narrate the history of Birmingham from its earliest historical traces up to the present day, rather than merely from the era of the industrial revolution. Unlike Hutton and other early historians of the city, however, who frequently resorted to "local legend and myth" to fill in gaps in the archival record (101), the histories of ancient, medieval, and early modern Birmingham featured here draw upon a wealth of archaeological and historical data, including artifacts newly unearthed in the process of twenty-first-century construction projects. It is nevertheless striking how often these authors' conclusions parallel those of their forbearers. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes, for example, ultimately conclude

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that Hutton was correct in asserting that the era following the Restoration represented a watershed in Birmingham's development—the moment when it became "no longer just a town of local and regional significance" but "an urban centre of national importance" (121). Yet this very assertion speaks to a fundamental tension at work in this volume between the editors' stated desire to produce a chronologically inclusive account of the city and the book's actual contents. Only one of the chapters (Chinn's, addressing the history of Birmingham's evolving population) actually spans the entirety of the city's history, three others address the city's history from ancient times to 1700, and the remaining eight address the post-1700 period, thus yielding the impression that while one might be able to trace the history of Birmingham into the depths of the historical record, its historical significance outside its immediate local context really only began during the modern era, making its historical trajectory more like that of Manchester (or Leeds, or Sheffield) than the essayists in this book seem to want to suggest.

Another similarity between the history assembled here and that produced by early historians of Birmingham like Hutton (and for that matter, twentieth-century historians like Asa Briggs) is the authors' collective insistence on Birmingham's exceptionalism. Like Hutton, Chinn emphasizes the entrepreneurial "verve" of the city's inhabitants (301), asserting that, "unlike most great centres of population," Birmingham's expansion into a city of national and global importance "was not facilitated by providential physical or geographical features," but instead depended "almost entirely upon the talents of its people and upon the relationships they formed" (10–11). We likewise learn that the city possessed a unique status as a community that welcomed religious dissenters in the early modern era, played a pioneering role in both the development of compulsory elementary education and the teaching of math and science to women and girls, produced an unrivaled range of voluntary hospitals, and represented the most important locus of the printing industry outside of London.

Many of the arguments advanced here in favor of Birmingham's unique development are convincing. In particular, the chapters by Dick, Roger Ward, and Jonathan Reinarz collectively demonstrate how in the nineteenth century, the city's diverse range of small-scale manufacturing industries created a social context that promoted more harmonious relations between employers and workers, which in turn fostered greater cross-class cooperation in local politics. This same economic diversity allowed the city's many medical charities to thrive because it provided them with a varied financial base, protecting them from the market fluctuations that undermined the survival of similar institutions in single-industry towns, like Manchester. Still, at times a bit more emphasis on comparison—more discussion of shared trends rather than just particularities—might have further enriched this beautiful and insightful study of one of Britain's most important global cities.

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Harold D. Clarke, Matthew Goodwin, and Paul Whiteley. *Brexit: Why Britain Voted to Leave the European Union*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. 256. $19.99 (paper).
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The question evoked by the title of this book, *Brexit: Why Britain Voted to Leave the European Union*, will reverberate in the future. While the United Kingdom's 2016 referendum on membership in the European Union, or Brexit, is frequently regarded as an event, daily the British state and those who follow its fortunes are reminded that Brexit will be a lengthy process,

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