

Landscape, liberty and authority: poetry, criticism and politics from Thomson to Wordsworth

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Abstrak

Eighteenth-century landscape description formed part of a larger debate over the nature of liberty and authority which was vital to a Britain newly defining its nationhood in a period of growing imperial power and rapid economic change. Tim Fulford examines landscape description in the writings of Thomson, Cowper, Johnson, Gilpin, Repton, Wordsworth, Coleridge and others, revealing tensions that arose as writers struggled for authority over the public sphere and sought to redefine the nature of that authority. In his investigation of poetry and political and aesthetic writing, Dr Fulford throws light on the legacy of Commonwealth and Country-party ideas of liberty. Also discussed are the significance of the Miltonic sublime, the politics of the picturesque and the post-colonial encounter of the Scottish tour. Dr Fulford goes on to show how the early radicalism and later conservatism of Wordsworth and Coleridge were shaped, in part, by eighteenth-century literary political and literary authorities. His study offers an understanding of literary and political influence that cuts across conventional periodization, finding new links between the early eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.