Eighteenth-Century Thing Theory in a Global Context: From Consumerism to Celebrity Culture

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Exploring Enlightenment attitudes toward things and their relation to human subjects, this collection offers a geographically wide-ranging perspective on what the eighteenth century looked like beyond British or British-colonial borders. To highlight trends, fashions, and cultural imports of truly global significance, the contributors draw their case studies from Western Europe, Russia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania. This survey underscores the multifarious ways in which new theoretical approaches, such as thing theory or material and visual culture studies, revise our understanding of the people and objects that inhabit the phenomenological spaces of the eighteenth century. Rather than focusing on a particular geographical area, or on the global as a juxtaposition of regions with a distinctive cultural footprint, this collection draws attention to the unforeseen relational maps drawn by things in their global peregrinations, celebrating the logic of serendipity that transforms the object into some-thing else when it is placed in a new locale.

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