

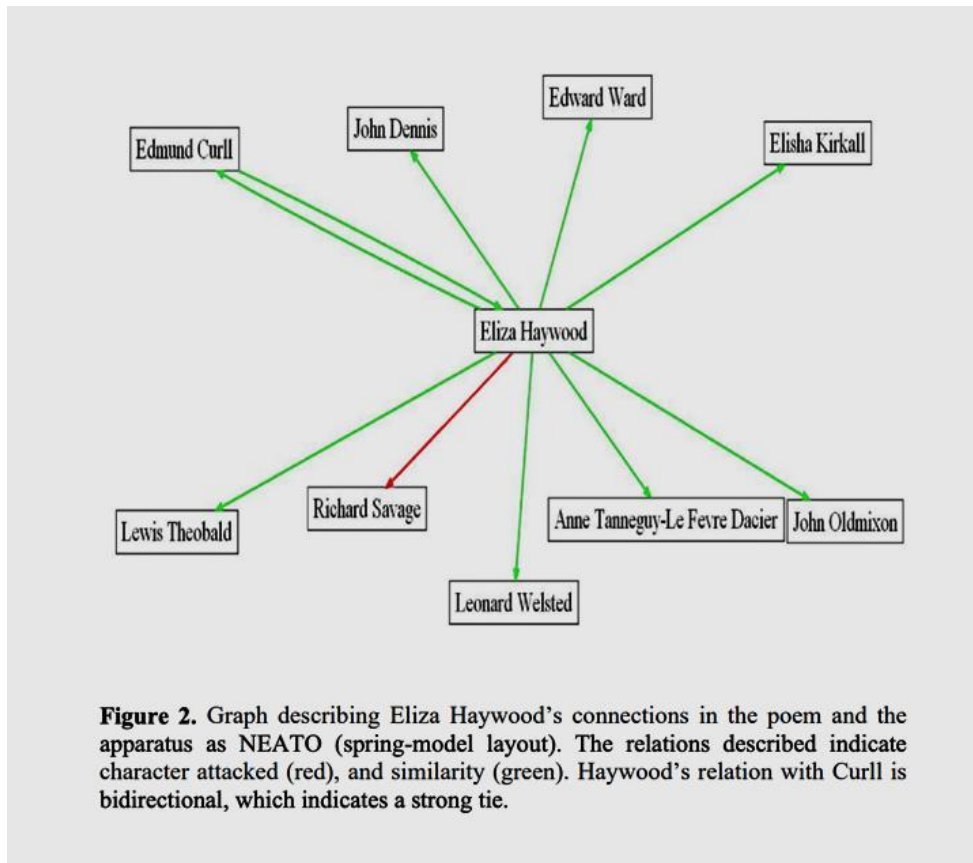
Ileana Baird, ed. *Data Visualization in Enlightenment Literature and Culture*.

**Ileana Baird, ed. *Data Visualization in Enlightenment Literature and Culture*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan/Springer Nature International Publications, 2022. 385 pages, 90 Figures, 27 Tables. ISBN (cloth) 978-3-030-54912-1; (paper) 978-3-030-54913-8. \$99.99 (cloth and paper); Kindle (rent, \$23.04; buy, \$89). Chapters 1, 3, 8, 10 are open access under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International [License](#).**

We begin in a playful spirit: What do John Tenniel, Sidney Paget, and Ileana Baird have in common? If you know their work, the answer is easy: *They are all visualizers*. They speak to the eye of the reader; they connect eye and brain through the agency of image. Can we imagine *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* without the Tenniel illustrations? Or the Sherlock Holmes stories without Paget's drawings? Or Data Visualization Studies without Ileana Baird? Surely not.

Over ten finely documented and illustrated chapters, Ileana Baird and her twelve contributing writers offer scholars of the long eighteenth century (1660-c1800) a timely high-tech methodology: graphical conveyance of information. Baird's new book, *Data Visualization in Enlightenment Literature and Culture* (2022), demonstrates the utility of content imaging. Baird and her writers have constructed datasets of research on selected topics in visually accessible designs: graphs, tables, figures, tabulations, charts, clustering, topic modeling, network graphs, data mapping,

Baird stands on a secure foundation. Presently an Associate Professor of English at Zayed University, United Arab Emirates (PhD, 2012, University of Virginia), Baird has been building a record of publication on the Digital Humanities, Visualization, and eighteenth-century subjects. In addition to articles and reviews, she has edited or co-edited *Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century* (2014); *Eighteenth-Century Thing Theory* (2014); *All Things Arabia* (2020); and now *Data Visualization in Enlightenment Literature and Culture* (2022). (Detailed [profile](#).) Digital Humanities and its visualization have been a continuing interest of Baird's; indeed, innovation is the theme of her career. Here is a sample of Baird's work in "social analysis visualization", constructed from datasets of research on the networks "social, literary, career" of novelist Eliza Haywood, as described (and debased) in Pope's *Dunciad* and in the poem's busy apparatus:



**Source:** “The Strength of Weak Ties: Eliza Haywood’s Social Networks in *The Dunciad in Four Books* (1743).” *ABO Interactive Journal for Women in the Arts, 1640-1830*. Fall, 2019, pp. 1-36. In creating several visualizations of her subject, Baird used digital design tools SHIVA Graph and GraphViz.

Baird’s collection succeeds as a useful new product owing to three features: its timely subject; its range of topics discussed by specialists from Australia, Canada, England, Finland, the UAE, the U.S.; and its striking graphical component of 117 images.

In Chapter One, Baird sets out the purpose, organization, and utility of her collection. Her thorough opening remarks (27 pp., 63 footnotes) introduce readers to theory and *praxis*, explaining that “[T]his collection is a truly interdisciplinary effort that showcases the significant digital humanities work done in the field of eighteenth-century studies and its potential to transform our disciplinary practices.” Baird continues, “By translating these new findings in suggestive visualizations, the contributors to this collection unveil unforeseen patterns, trends, connections, or networks of influence that could potentially revise existing master narratives about the period and ideological structures at the core of the Enlightenment.” (23) The book’s contributors are published specialists, and Baird demonstrated editorial intelligence in her interdisciplinary selections

Her stellar cast of established specialists begins with **Simon Burrows**, who opens the collection. “In Search of Enlightenment: From Mapping Books to Cultural History” discusses an important project at Western Sydney University on the eighteenth-century French book trade. The following chapter, on the *English Short-Title Catalogue*, is arguably the best of the book, assembled by the five-

member team of **Mikko Tolonen, Mark J. Hill, Ali Zeeshan Iza, Ville Vaara, and Leo Lahti**; their essay demonstrates the benefits of collaborative scholarship in a fresh look at the early-modern canon constructed by a traditional bibliographical tool. **John Regan**, in “Europe and Its Others”<sup>TM</sup>, discusses visualizing lexical relations between Western and Non-western locations in another bibliographical tool: *Eighteenth-Century Collection Online*. **Bill Hall**, in “Text Mining and Visualization” explores cultural formations and structural changes in fifty years of eighteenth-century poetry criticism (1967-2018). **Jakub Zdebik** gives us “The Grid and the Visualization of Abstract Information” in three well-selected eighteenth-century models. **Courtney A. Hoffman** in “Exploring Data Visualization” examines time, emotion, and epistolarity in Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague*. **Baird**’s chapter, “Outliers, Connectors, and Textual Periphery,” offers a social analysis of John Dennis’s networks in Pope’s *Dunciad*. **Simon D. I. Fleming** in “Publishing Music by Subscription,” will capture music historians with new attention to the concerti of Charles Avison. The collection closes with **Emily Friedman**’s Afterword on “Cleansing Dirty Data: Toward Open-Source Histories of the Novel.”

This reviewer’s single disappointment with Baird’s collection is its omission of some serious contexts. While the content coverage is interesting and original, specialists will miss dedicated engagement with the most representative voices of the Enlightenment: Descartes, Diderot, Rousseau, Voltaire; likewise, Gibbon, Hume, Locke, and Newton. Is this not the promise of the book’s title? And in the best of all possible worlds, Baird’s new book would have included a preface by that Da Vinci of design, that Galileo of graphics: [Edward Tufte](#).

Nonetheless, while data visualization has been common practice for decades in economics, finance, medicine, and, of course, statistics, Baird’s ambitious book is entirely innovative for scholars of pre-1800 literature and culture. Her collection of essays valuably introduces eighteenth-century specialists – likewise, graduate students, PhD advisers, curriculum designers – to the theory and practice of this new approach. As Baird and the contributors show, scholarly argument and presentation can now be enhanced through creative graphical images. A line of inquiry can be illustrated by a researcher, then grasped almost immediately by the reader. (Note this [prescient essay](#) by the reviewer in 1993.) Scholarship is effectively transformed from word to word-*with*-image: a functional pairing. Researchers can be released from the constraints of conventional exposition by creating datasets of research and moving that data into the visual medium. We have here a further development in Digital Humanities: data visualization effectively takes Digital Humanities to a more technically advanced level. It also gives scholars a new (visual) rhetoric in constructing arguments.

Maureen E. Mulvihill, Princeton Research Forum, New Jersey.

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