



# **Re-Viewing Thomas Holcroft, 1745-1809: Essays on His Works and Life (British Literature in Context in the Long Eighteenth Century)**

*A.A. Markley*

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Thomas Holcroft was a central figure of the 1790s, whose texts played an important role in the transition toward Romanticism. In this, the first essay collection devoted to his life and work, the contributors reassess Holcroft's contributions to a remarkable range of literary genres—drama, poetry, fiction, autobiography, political philosophy—and to the project of revolutionary reform in the late eighteenth century. The self-educated son of a cobbler, Holcroft transformed himself into a popular playwright, influential reformist novelist, and controversial political radical. But his work is not important merely because he himself was a remarkable character, but rather because he was a hinge figure between laboring Britons and the dissenting intelligentsia, between Enlightenment traditions and developing 'Romantic' concerns, and between the world of self-made hack writers and that of established critics. Enhanced by an updated and corrected chronology of Holcroft's life and work, key images, and a full bibliography of published scholarship, this volume makes way for more concerted and focused scholarship and teaching on Holcroft. Taken together, the essays in this collection situate Holcroft's self-fashioning as a member of London's literati, his central role among the London radical reformers and intelligentsia, and his theatrical innovations within ongoing explorations of the late eighteenth-century public sphere of letters and debate.

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