

Reviews

Brian Fay, Philip Pomper, Richard T. Vann (eds), *History and Theory: Contemporary Readings*, Blackwell, 1998, pp. x + 406, £50, £16.99 pb; **Anna Green and Kathleen Troup** (eds), *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-century History and Theory*, Manchester University Press, 1999, pp. x + 338, £45, £14.99 pb.

I want to pose three questions in relation to the two texts reviewed here: (1) what do they contain? (2) what and who are they for? (3) how well do they fit (a) their own and (b) other people's bills?

History and Theory: Contemporary Readings is a collection of nineteen essays mostly reprinted from the journal *History and Theory*, divided into sections on Narrativity; Reading and Writing in History; Realism, Constructivism and Beyond; Postmodernism ... ; Representation and Trauma; Gender, Sexuality and Sex; and Objectivity. The essayists include Hayden White, Louis Mink, Dominick LaCapra and Chris Lorenz and, interestingly enough (though what one can conclude from this is not clear) two essays by the only woman contributor, Nancy Partner. What holds the essays together is the impact on history (and history theorists) of the 'linguistic turn', an impact dated here from the publication of Hayden White's *Metahistory* is 1973 which, almost singlehandedly according to Brian Fay's Introduction, created a 'Rhetorical Attitude' he then traces through three distinct phases down to the late 1990s and with which the essays engage; 'the selections in this volume are organized attempts to capture the various implications of the development of the Rhetorical Attitude'. (7)

Here we move towards the second question: what is, and who is, the collection for? The 'what' is addressed by Fay: the essays seek to establish a 'middle ground' between

the (apparent) extremes of the Rhetorical Attitude I have just mentioned and the 'Scientific Attitude' ('expressed in positivisms of various sorts' including empiricist and realist versions, etc.), it being held that, shorn of their sometimes mutual exclusivity, their 'differences' can be merged into a moderate, productive compatibility: 'to be true to itself [*sic*] the discipline of history must [*sic*] involve both its scientific dimension and its rhetorical dimension'. (8) Here the 'always sensible historian' wins out, and one cannot help reflecting that, once again, the radical potential of post-modernism (made up of a mongrel-mixture of deconstructionalist, post-structuralist, post-Marxist, etc. approaches) which could perhaps revitalise history in the very act of transforming it beyond its present, arguably moribund condition, is checked so that, in the end, this 'refreshed' but essentially same old show, goes on. So what could this text be for? Well, I think for what I have just said: to tamper, to counter, to qualify and make relatively impotent the incursion of the linguistic (postmodern) turn into history theory and, by implication, practice. So, who is it for? Presumably for history undergraduates and postgraduates and their teachers. Will it work for them? The essays are not easy. The pages of *History and Theory* often seem intimidatingly hard for such readers, and putting a selection together in a book does not make them less so. So does Fay's introduction make them accessible? Not really, because he seems to assume what cannot be assumed in this area: that students and those teaching generally 'introductory' theory courses (often skills/methods courses) are already familiar with the 'debate' under consideration.

So, how far does it fit the bill? From Fay's position it obviously hits the spot, assembling essays 'students of history theory' may well not be able to easily find and put together; moreover, some of them (White's, Partner's, Ankersmit's, Kellner's) are quite brilliant and arguably no historian today should be ignorant of their existence (as many are). So this is, from this perspective, excellent. As to other people's bills, however, this is more problematic given the way that, not least, Fay's introduction positions readers. That said, a counter-positioned engagement with these essays and that introduction may serve a purpose I, as one reader, might like, which is to recognise that historical discourse *per se* is 'theoretical all the way down' and that, somewhat against the stated intention of the collection's *raison d'être*, students understand that it is not a matter of reconciling a Rhetorical Attitude with a non-rhetorical Scientific Attitude, but that science is itself rhetorical. That rhetoric goes 'all the way down' and that today, as Stanley Fish has commented (a Fish somewhat differently construed by Fay) we recognise that 'rhetoric is the only game in town'. It was ever thus of course.

'Each piece of historical writing has a theoretical basis on which evidence is selected, filtered and understood. This statement is as true of scientific empiricism as it is of poststructuralism'. So read the first two sentences of Green and Troup's preface, taking it as an axiom that theory/rhetoric goes 'all the way down'. What then, does their history theory *Reader* contain?

It consists of twelve schools (or *houses*) 'of history' (empiricist, Marxist, psycho-analytical, sociological, *annalist*, quantitative, anthropological, narrativist, oral, genderist, postcolonialist and postmodernist), approaches which, it is stated, have exerted the 'greatest influence on the historical profession in the twentieth century'. Each approach is uniformly structured; there is an introduction to each of the houses followed by one extract exemplifying it (generally 'in practice') with, at the close of the introductions, several questions being posed as those to be kept in mind when

reading the extracts. The book – which arose out of the experience of the editors teaching a university course on ‘History and Theory’ in New Zealand – is thus overtly pedagogical and student-friendly: in it they want to ‘introduce students to the theories behind different kinds of historical writing in order that they might read more critically and reflect on their own historical practice’. (vii)

If this is what the Reader is for, how successful is it according to their own and, on this occasion, my lights? They have built in their own problematicising qualifications: they know they have arbitrarily limited the number of houses; the readings selected are somewhat idiosyncratic; the houses are not discrete; the introductions to each house are deliberately straightforward and not heavily weighed down with ‘scholarship’. All this is fine; this is an introductory, working text. But there are still a few queries *vis à vis* the editors’ stated aims.

First, there is no general, overarching introduction to the twelve houses; the only generalising remarks are contained in a one and a half page preface. So the kind of issues raised summarily in it – of selection, of emphasis, of interpretation, of editing decisions, of the notion of ‘history theory in the twentieth-century’, etc., are all left begging somewhat. Second, and consequentially, one gets little sense of ‘coherence’ (albeit an artificial coherence of course) from the readings. Each house seems detached from its neighbours; none are ‘semis’, and there is no street or city map. To change the analogy, there are twelve trees without so much as a trace of the wood (or forest or jungle or whatever ...). And third, though ‘positioning’ and ‘ideologizing’ are obviously problematical for the editors, one would like to know, fairly precisely and very explicitly, the position *they* historicise the past from, how *they* do it and to what end; I mean, why bother with it, what is the point – for them? One can guess at this between the lines, but the lines they write to introduce the houses are fairly descriptive and pretty even-handed: these are schools they try and present objectively and ‘fairly’ so as to let the reader ‘choose’. But this seems a little disingenuous in a text wanting to raise students’ awareness as to the always ideologically positioned nature of texts, including this one. For, of course, the idea of writing a somewhat objective, neutral, disinterested text, where explaining, describing or ‘introducing’ something is done from a position that is not somehow a position at all, is a naive one. For to put things under a description in what may appear to be the most innocent of ways is still to privilege that description over another; it thus throws down a challenge, it stakes a claim, any objectivity is ultimately spurious. As a result it may be impossible to write today in any other way than polemical. Not confronting this today – at the end of the ‘twentieth-century’ – may be the one lesson you really can get from a study of ‘theory’, a lesson which, sadly, this text on such theory fails to point out strongly enough – or practice.

University College Chichester

Keith Jenkins

T. A. Shippey and A. Haarder (eds), *Beowulf: The Critical Heritage*, Routledge, 1998, 591 pp, £125.

One of the first things the reader is likely to ask about this book is, can it possibly be worth £125? The price begins to seem more reasonable when one realises that it

comes out at just under £1 per commentary, many of which have been translated from German or Danish and rescued from extremely obscure publications by the diligence of the editors. In addition, there are an informative and engaging 74 pages of introduction provided by Tom Shippey, and biographical details of the authors at the head of each extract. However, just as the spirits begin to rise, they may be dampened again by the realisation that the 'critical heritage' with which the volume is concerned covers only the period 1705–1935. What was written over these years is not without its own fascination, especially for historians and medievalists, but, as Professor Shippey ruefully admits, much of it was a deadend as far as modern *Beowulf* studies are concerned. There is much hunting for relics of Germanic heathenism and mythology; approaches that were exploded by J. R. Tolkien in 'Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics' (1936) which, as the end date of the volume acknowledges, inaugurated a new era in the study of the poem. But one valuable lesson which the critical heritage assembled here has for modern *Beowulf* scholars is of the extent to which interpretations of the poem were affected by the critical fashions and the politics of the time in which they were written. Some of the most interesting extracts relate to how the poem was annexed by protagonists on both sides of the Schleswig-Holstein dispute of the mid nineteenth century. Both camps were convinced that events of the poem were to be located in the province, but disagreed over the nationality of the court which Beowulf visited. The fact that in the poem it is described as Danish might seem to clinch the matter for that side, but German critics could use the identification of Old English as a Western Germanic language spoken by the Anglo-Saxons who had originally lived in Schleswig-Holstein (as Bede revealed) to claim the poem (and the province) as part of the heritage of the new Germanic fatherland. There was surprisingly little interest in the poem from English commentators. Professor Shippey suggests that this was due 'to the nineteenth-century suppression of specifically English sentiment in the interests of an ideology of British unity' (74). But the Anglo-Saxons were in other respects extremely popular in Victorian England when, for instance, there was something of a cult of King Alfred and moves to have him declared the patron saint of England. The absence of interest is more likely to be due to the fact that *Beowulf*, which is not set in England, did not provide a mirror in which nineteenth-century Englishmen could see the seeds of their own future imperial greatness as they thought they could in Alfred's army, navy and governmental institutions. Such cautionary tales reinforce the conclusions expressed in Alan Frantzen's *Desire for Origins* (1990) that even apparently politically neutral or politically correct judgements of *Beowulf* today will be in danger a hundred years hence of looking as outmoded and as imprinted as products of their time as the articles that Haarder and Shippey have assembled for this volume.

King Alfred's College, Winchester

Barbara Yorke

Marjorie Chibnall, *The Debate on the Norman Conquest*, Manchester University Press, 1999, pp. 168, £40, £14.99 pb.

The Norman Conquest is a particularly suitable vehicle for treatment in what shows all the signs of being a most interesting and useful series, 'Issues in Historiography'.

In addition, there is perhaps no person in Britain today better qualified than Marjorie Chibnall to write such a study. As the author notes in her preface, she has herself experienced the changing interpretations of the Conquest, as they happened, from the 1930s to the present. But as she tells us, the historiography of the Norman Conquest begins within the period itself, as both conquerors and conquered dealt with what was already a momentous event by applying existing traditions of historical writing. Her book divides into two roughly equal halves. The first traces interpretations from the Norman period through to the early twentieth century. In five chapters we have an elegant and lucid discussion of changing emphases, at one time law, at another feudalism, at another cultural identity. Chibnall's historians emerge not only as interpreters but also as interesting individuals in their own right. Her chosen quotations are always telling; her discussion is brisk and succinct, but instructive. The book thus tells us much about the way history itself developed as well as about the specific treatment of the Norman Conquest. The second half of the book is formed by a further five chapters which look in detail at the work of the last forty years of the twentieth century within the main areas of feudalism and lordship, law and the family, empire and colonisation, peoples and frontiers, church and economy. The fact that such space is devoted to recent work is testimony to the amount of research and revision in recent times, and to the impact of other disciplines, such as archaeology and sociology, on the study of history. New methods are applied to what was already a vast quantity of source material; increasingly systematic study of Domesday Book, and more detailed, wider-ranging prosopographical work have been particularly influential in creating new insights. Older, feudally-centred interpretations have been doubted, whilst the more general issues of lordship and law have been emphasised by means of comparative study. Chibnall's study shows how it has become possible, as research advances, to set events and developments more firmly in context, something which writers of earlier generations found harder, if not impossible to do. Not only do we know more, but we also understand more, more deeply. There have been tentative steps towards setting the Conquest in the context of economic expansion but as Chibnall notes, 'the colonial angle is one (but only one) of the ways in which the Norman Conquest in its wider setting might profitably be investigated'. The jury is still out, too, on the issue of the consequences of the Conquest for the Normans themselves in their own homeland. Thus it is entirely appropriate that the book ends with a forward glance, in eager anticipation of 'the new interpretations ... that will surely be sought by historians of the twenty-first century'. There is, thankfully perhaps, no end to 'history' or to 'historiography'.

University of Reading

Anne Curry

David Willbern, *Poetic Will: Shakespeare and the Play of Language*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, pp. xix + 237, \$37.50.

In a prologue called 'Cordelia's Skirt', David Willbern deconstructs the punning title of his book, *Poetic Will*, with the same ingenuity that he subsequently brings to bear on Shakespeare's language. More fruitful than the whimsy of embedding the signature-like 'Will: Shakespeare' in his title is Willbern's exploration of the many Renais-

sance meanings of 'will', which serve to illustrate his argument that the creative will expressed in the play of Shakespeare's language is joined, at the root, with the pre-creative sexual 'will'. Uninhibited close reading is Willbern's basic technique; like such exemplary practitioners as Stephen Booth and Harry Berger, Jr., he revels in the plenitude of Shakespeare's language. Unlike Booth and Berger, however, Willbern finds in psychoanalysis the ultimate ground for his generation of meaning from play-texts – a ground he justifies historically by asserting 'an *isomorphic* relation between Freud and Shakespeare' (72). That is, '[T]hey are two variant representations of human behavior, uncannily similar when examined in relation to each other' (119).

Willbern's method, the result of his evolution from self-censored New Critic to post-structuralist explorer of the text's unstable meanings, is to pursue the connotations of Shakespeare's words, unchecked, to their furthest limit. His seminal example is Cordelia's 'nothing', which, he argues, is as pregnant with the word's contemporary sexual meanings here as in *Hamlet*, despite critics' habitual inclination to exclude or subordinate these meanings as 'inappropriate' in *King Lear*. Chapter 7, 'Shakespeare's Nothing', attempts a catalogue of the many dimensions of Shakespeare's 'O'. Other objects of Willbern's sustained critical attention include *1 Henry IV*, *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Macbeth*.

Anticipating the resistance of readers who wonder where Shakespeare ends and Willbern begins, the author has one eye always on the issue of the limits of criticism, acknowledging the danger that his method may become an exercise in mere projection, a critical approach that he characterizes aptly as 'Malvolian'. Indeed, the tireless ingenuity by which Willbern spins meanings indiscriminately out of Shakespeare's lines is sometimes cloying. There is no denying, however, that Willbern has a fine ear, a learned understanding of both the Elizabethan senses and the etymological underpinnings of Shakespeare's words, and a grasp of the psychic energies churning under (and supporting) the written works.

Regrettably, Willbern's understandable antipathy to the notion of character – because it wrongly encourages critics to circumscribe the connotative range of Shakespeare's language in instances like Cordelia's 'nothing' – leads him unnecessarily into a naive anti-theatrical prejudice, proposing 'to rescue Shakespeare from the lamentable, albeit necessary, limitations and distortions of dramatic performance and to reclaim as fully as possible the rich potential of his poetic language' (4). No one who has seen many *Othellos* could believe, with Willbern, that performance is incapable of registering, as readers may, open-ended connections between the flag of Othello's 'ancient' (ensign) Iago and the handkerchief Othello gives to Desdemona, but more astonishing still is his presumption that the free play of Shakespeare's language cannot be heard by auditors in a theatre as well as readers in their studies.

Southern Oregon University

Alan Armstrong

Sarah Barber, *Regicide and Republicanism: Politics and Ethics in the English Revolution, 1646–1659*, Edinburgh University Press, 1998, pp. x + 246, £40.

The execution of Charles I (30 January 1649) was swiftly followed by the abolition

of the English monarchy together with the House of Lords and by the establishment of a Commonwealth in the form of a republic. Yet the regicides, an eclectic lot, were by no means all of them committed to a republican ideology and for some republicans so far from the destruction of that 'mere man' being a necessity it was a sin, a crime, a blunder. What was objectionable was the institution of monarchy itself. Drawing on theories, some deep-rooted in history, some only now in the formulation, and responding to recent experience, republicans were convinced that any individual 'invested with the powers of potential absolutism', as it seemed the English monarchy had been, must at length use them to the detriment of the subject. So government ought to be determined by laws and not by men, though in most times of the actual devising of a constitution it would always be, as it certainly was in 1649, hard to separate the laws from the men. For instance, some of the most high-minded of the republicans found no embarrassment in acquiring considerable personal estates from land sales. 'Men are corrupt and will be so', Henry Ireton opined sadly in another context. It was, anyway, the actual regicide alone, as expedient as it was principled, which gave these men the opportunity to try out and to develop some of their burgeoning ideas. These circumstances and the complex events which led up to them stir Sarah Barber to explore the topics and their interactions in theory and practice set out in her subtitle. Clearly herself a republican of the modern sort, though certainly not because to be one is to be 'newly fashionable', she demonstrates *pace* J. H. Hexter that historians can never, nor perhaps should, escape 'their day'.

Tensions between pragmatic regicides and republicans proper in the actual framing and implementation of the Commonwealth were replicated within the republican groups themselves. All this gave the reason or the excuse and certainly the opportunity for Cromwell and the army grandees to 'usurp' the state in April 1653. It was not only the presumed contents of the missing bill for a new representative that had exhausted their patience. After that date Dr Barber's study becomes something of a postscript. Long before the end of the Protectorate, when the republicans ought to have come into their own, the evidence was that the advocates of a state without a Single Person were not capable of cohesive action based on agreed thinking. 'It was not that no-one knew what the Good Old Cause was; everybody knew; and everyone knew different.' Well said. The thing had become a nothing. The Restoration arrived, it is suggested, not because what was expressed so eloquently, so passionately, so sincerely, was at bottom an empty rhetoric, but because 'they ran out of time before they could establish a workable system of binary and tripartite, secular and millennial, hierarchical and popular'. Yet for this lot to have succeeded one might feel that time must have had to have a stop. In the event, George Monck, 'blockhead' grown wise and wily by experience, and 'his boys', politically bone from ear to ear, made sure that it did not. But really there never was 'a ready and easy way to a commonwealth'. For many the 1650s had turned out to be an argument for monarchy as the best policy. Henceforward in pursuit of their interests men of substance would move away from hacking at the royal prerogative to capturing it for themselves. The survival of these powers has been the making of a Thatcher or a Blair. The monarchy itself nowadays is more useless than dangerous. Is there, even so, a need for a call to a republicanism of the sort that flared up for a while in the 1650s?

Curiously Dr Barber does not contemplate the fates of the regicides and republicans at the Restoration. Henry Marten, sometimes seen as 'the greatest republican of them all', bold, raffish, witty, as radical as they come, in and out of parliament before

and after the demise of Charles I, somehow escaped hanging and its accompaniments, to eke out his days incarcerated in Chepstow castle. He was a conspicuous regicide, yet Sir Henry Vane, who was not, was meanly sacrificed. Why the difference? No doubt Dr Barber in her impending biography of Marten, somewhat of a hero in this present feisty study, will give us a welcome answer.

Exeter

Ivan Roots

Achshah Guibbory, *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 235, £35.

After years of listening to radical voices in the mid-seventeenth century urging reform and alteration in church and state, and speaking out for the primacy of individual conscience, it is perhaps time to pay attention to those writers who held an ideal of a conservative, inclusive community sustained by tradition and custom, who were disturbed by the divisiveness of puritan separatism and who wanted to assert the value of a tolerant society that accepted diversity and was respectful of the past. The setting for Achshah Guibbory's book is the rancorous debate over the role of ceremonies in worship in the 1630s and 1640s. As the high-church party headed by Laud, Cosin and Matthew Wren began to introduce more ritual and ceremony into services under their control, so those of a puritan persuasion vehemently denounced these 'innovations', claiming that they represented the insidious return of popish practices and threatened to undo the Reformation. The Laudians insisted that their practices were justified by the early church and by the Jewish religion before Christ, and so restored a connection with antiquity as well as with acceptable aspects of Catholic devotional forms. Puritan agitators, notably Prynne, Bastwick and Burton, clamorously maintained that reformation involved a separation from a corrupt past, denied that the early church used ceremonies, and called for a return to plain religion. The Laudians grew more authoritarian, the puritans grew more strident. Out of their mutual hostility grew civil war.

Guibbory reviews the work of four authors, Herbert, Herrick, Browne and Milton, in the context of these dissensions, and demonstrates most persuasively that an awareness of current controversies over ceremonies is a pervasive feature of their writings. At first sight, Herbert would seem to side with the ceremonialists, given the prominence of 'The Altar' at the beginning of *The Temple*, the numerous poems about 'the beauty of holiness' and the decorousness of worship throughout the volume. But Herbert's doubts about the validity of carefully crafted verse as a religious offering, his sense that in some subtle way the making of poems is an act of idolatry, show him to share some of the reservations of the men of plain religion. Guibbory's sensitive readings of Herbert are some of the most convincing I have read in recent criticism, and allow us to understand how Herbert could be claimed to be both Anglo-Catholic and reformist in his devotional stance.

Herbert yearned for a community of all believers within 'The British Church', and it is part of Guibbory's scheme to identify writers who wanted 'ceremony and community' together: who saw in a non-coercive formalised Anglican devotion the best hope for a truly inclusive national church. Herrick is presented here as a poet who found in rituals and ceremonies the means of asserting the fundamental unity of the

religious impulse in ancient and modern societies, and who tried to find an equipoise between a spiritual and a corporeal response to the complexities of this life. He has a vision of community through ritual, one that is shared in many ways by Thomas Browne. *Religio Medici* clearly signals his formalist tendencies, and he has a deep impulse to emphasise community. In *Urn Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus*, written when the ceremonies of his church had been suppressed, he still insisted on the ineradicable need for ritual and order in human society, for he saw it present also in the natural world.

Milton was hardly a man for community. His instinct was to imagine the perpetual warfare of contraries throughout the creation. Guibbory claims, with some reason, that he developed a lifelong preoccupation with idolatry from his experience of the ritualist controversies of the 1630s. *Comus* is read here as a dramatisation of the conflict between the seductive carnality of ceremonial Anglicanism and the chaste conduct of the spiritually pure. *Paradise Lost* achieves a moment of perfect balance in Adam and Eve's nuptial embrace 'that acknowledges the connection between God's creative power and the generative power of human love', but the impulse to idolatry is already present in Eve, and the Fall brings a delight in the carnal that mankind has rarely renounced. Milton's last poems offer a bleak picture, with the unmarried, celibate Son of *Paradise Regained* making his solitary way home after rejecting all that is social, communal and human; Samson, in bondage through his carnal devotion to a woman, rouses himself to destroy his antagonists, but fails to liberate the Israelites and kills himself in a frenzy of puritan violence against the idolatrous Philistines. There is a grim isolationism in these scenes.

These brief comments cannot do justice to this excellent and well-written book. Achsa Guibbory's interpretations are remarkably persuasive, and in tracing the literary responses to the ritualist disputes, she is a reliable guide in unfamiliar territory.

University of York

Graham Parry

Chun-shu Chang and Shelley Hsueh-lun Chang, *Redefining History: Ghosts, Spirits and Human Society in P'u Sung-ling's World, 1640–1715*, University of Michigan Press, 1998, pp. xiii + 358, £37.

To a generation of readers in the Western world, who now daily encounter alien beings from, and civilizations in, outer space in the enchanting works of science fiction, the world of ghosts, spirits and other supernatural phenomena may appear strangely remote and dimly intelligible. This should not be so. Up until the late nineteenth century, if not later, books of prodigies, apparitions and fairy-tales were quite common in the Western world as well as in other cultures, and, in the dexterous hands of historians or anthropologists, they have often been turned into historical mirrors to reflect, perhaps more vividly and more accurately than other sources, the realities of past societies. This is certainly the case with this superb study of *Liao-chai chih-i*, a multi-volume collection of 500 artistically crafted and beautifully written short stories by an extraordinarily talented scholar, P'u Sung-ling (1640–1715), in late Ming and early Ch'ing China.

Redefining History is composed of three parts. Part 1, consisting of two chapters,

examines the life of P'u Sung-ling and his world. As the authors rightly claim, although this book is not designed intrinsically as a biographical study, it provides 'the first comprehensive biography of P'u Sung-ling in any Western language' and 'the most systematic historical and cultural biography of P'u Sung-ling in any language' (4). Indeed, there are extremely perceptive analyses of, and observations on, the intellectual and personal life of P'u, which enable the reader to know this rather intriguing figure in seventeenth-century China not only intellectually but also *feelingly*. The inner struggle of P'u as a Confucian scholar, who took eleven of the sixteen provincial examinations between 1660 and 1705 but failed in every one of them, P'u's short sojourn in Chiangsu, where 'he saw a lifestyle marked by intense commercial pursuits, materialism, cultural pluralism, and intellectual diversity' all so different from the rural life of his home county (43), and his visits with two other senior scholars to the mystic and almost holy Mt. Lao and Mt. T'ai, which undoubtedly affected his views towards the supernatural world, the cosmic order and perhaps the mysterious principle of retribution – all such episodes in P'u's life are described with penetrating insights. Part 2 begins with a chapter of textual and historical analyses to reconstruct the chronology of the composition and collection of *Liao-chai chih-i* (or simply *Liao-chai*, as it is commonly referred to in China). This is a very rewarding chapter for all *Liao-chai* specialists. It is followed by three chapters of thematic analyses of the stories in the *Liao-chai*. They are studied from various perspectives such as gender relations, family ethics, officials and commoners, class consciousness, racial relations and socio-economic conditions. And all the analyses are presented in the context of the intellectual and cultural history of late imperial China. Part 3 discusses the legacy of the *Liao-chai*, or rather its author. Again, placed in the light of China's cultural, intellectual and literary history, 'P'u Sung-ling is both a carrier and a creator of his cultural traditions' (180).

The most inspiring aspect of the book, to this reviewer at least, is the authors' brilliant, and convincing, discussions on P'u Sung-ling as a historian, albeit a historian of the unusual, as, indeed, P'u Sung-ling so styles himself in the *Liao-chai*. With regard to the contents of the *Liao-chai*, the authors write, 'the stories are structured in a vast intellectual design to expound the beliefs, ideas, values, customs, rituals and life patterns of traditional China' (2). Whereas traditional histories deal with emperors and princes, generals and ministers, P'u envisioned a different kind of history, a history from below 'emphasizing the common people, their daily work and family life, their secret dreams and yearnings, their private worship and superstitions, their sufferings and achievements, their emotions and feelings, and so forth' (74) and 'the cosmic order of the unfamiliar spiritual world', would, in the eyes of P'u, complement the conventional world 'in seeking universal moral truth as guidance for human social, political, and ethical life' (48). In short, 'P'u Sung-ling did not write his stories as a creative writer or as a Confucian ideologue; he wrote them as a historian and referred to himself as such in his commentaries' (194).

Professor Chun-shu Chang is a renowned historian in classical Chinese history, and Professor Shelley Hsueh-lun Chang has long established herself as a leading authority in the field of Chinese history and literature. Together they have produced, with admirable erudition and impeccable scholarship, a fascinating book on the cultural and intellectual history of late imperial China.

Roy Porter and G. S. Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, Yale University Press, 1998, pp. xiv + 393, £25.00.

When *Literature and History* was first launched it was to try to bridge the gap between the two disciplines which at the time was a yawning gulf. Not only were their subject matter and sources discrete, but their methodologies seemed totally different. Nothing could more dramatically document their convergence in recent years than this volume, jointly written by the Professor of Social History and Medicine at the Wellcome Institute, University of London and, at the time of its composition, the Regius Professor of English at King's College, Aberdeen. It is tempting to try to identify their separate contributions. Is that Roy Porter on Gibbon and George Rousseau on Smollett? Probably, but their expertise overlaps so much, as a glance at their own voluminous contributions to a Bibliography which takes up 52 pages reveals, while they both write in fecund and scintillating styles, that such questions are not readily answered.

Fittingly for two leading scholars of the Enlightenment, they have produced an Encyclopaedic volume on Gout, that most eighteenth-century of diseases. Its fashionability then is illustrated by their review of its history in the first part of the book, which covers the years from classical antiquity and the Renaissance in the first half, and the years 1660 to 1760 in the second half. They concede that its apparent rise to epidemic proportions in those years might be 'an optical illusion, the product of ampler survival of evidence', or even 'a diagnostic artefact, with physicians finding or framing gout in various shapes and forms, to mask their ignorance or milk an eligible diagnosis – rather as with 'hysteria' in the nineteenth century'. Certainly the word was used to describe a remarkable variety of symptoms, with 'flying gout' moving about the body from the feet to the head, 'almost what post-modernists might call a floating signifier'. The toe joints were early recognised as a prime location of the excruciating pain inflicted on sufferers, even given its own classical 'fury', Podora. It was also appreciated that it was associated with over eating and drinking, excesses indulged in by the wealthy. Hence the subtitle of the book, 'the patrician malady'. Very little progress was made in its diagnosis as long as the concept of the humours dominated medical thinking. Thus it was thought that gouty humours went around the system and became concentrated in certain organs or joints to produce the pain. It was not until Thomas Sydenham, a sufferer himself, that much progress was made in the linking of gout to diet. But he remained sceptical about the possibility of finding a cure. Even Sydenham's contribution was within the context of belief in gouty humours; he was known as 'the English Hippocrates'.

The second part of the book discusses the 'Cultures' of Gout. Curiously many of its victims actually welcomed being afflicted by it despite its being regarded as incurable. It conferred upon them a certain social status, as it was held to be not only patrician but hereditary. It was also alleged to provide immunity from other diseases and so to guarantee a ripe old age. They therefore did not welcome William Cadogan's *Dissertation on the Gout* on its appearance in 1771, since he argued that it was not hereditary and was curable by the adoption of an abstemious and temperate lifestyle. Cadogan provoked a reaction from those who felt that he was attacking the excesses of the aristocracy; the discussion of gout thus became embroiled in the contemporary debate between reactionaries and radicals.

Although many claimed that gout was incurable, cures were in fact sought throughout history. In classical times all kinds of remedies were proposed, among the more exotic being poultices of ‘ox-dung and cabbage leaves’ to be applied to the affected parts. The Age of Enlightenment saw little progress in this area, for even in the eighteenth century ‘the right foot of a frog, wrapped in deer’s skin, was said to protect against the gout’. Only *eau medicinale*, a colchicum-based concoction introduced towards the end of the century, seems to have been efficacious. By then the disease was becoming less salient in literature. Thus Smollett’s Matthew Bramble was the last hero of a novel whose gout played a significant part in the plot. It is of minor significance in Scott’s novels, very little in Jane Austen’s, despite her valetudinarian characters, and hardly any in those of the major Victorian novelists, Dickens and George Eliot, whose *Middlemarch* is discussed at length, excepted. Gout had gone down market to popular magazines like *Punch*. It does not appear that the disease itself was any less prevalent. Some noted nineteenth-century authors, for example Coleridge, Tennyson and Wilkie Collins, whose ‘correspondence with Dickens remains one of the great archives in the annals of gout’, were tortured with it. Rather it seems that gout was less fashionable than in the previous century. Perhaps this was partly due to the vital discovery by Alfred Baring Garrod that it was the product of excess uric acid in the blood, which rather tended to remove its patrician mystique. As the authors observe when discussing the work of Alexander Haig, one of Garrod’s successors, ‘Gout had always been élitist; Haig’s uric-acid disease was a malady for everyman in the new age of the masses.’

The third part of the book, ‘Goutometries’, is a particular treat for students of History and Literature. Its two chapters deal with the disease as a literary and visual subject. They mine a rich seam of published sources, including seventeenth-century verses on Gout – Pills to Purge Podora? – and eighteenth-century prints. As the authors note ‘about these domains of pains and print the social historians have been virtually silent.’

Leeds

W. A. Speck

Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, pp. 271, \$39.95.

Simon P. Newman, of the University of Glasgow, has researched an interesting topic, the profusion of popular festivals, parades, songs, and even drinking toasts in the United States after the adoption of the federal Constitution, but before the accession to power of Thomas Jefferson and the Democratic-Republicans. The result is an engaging book, but one that sometimes claims too much, and also one that has some serious flaws of omission.

Newman begins his study with a critique of what he terms ‘high political thought’ in the Federalist period, that is, too great an emphasis on the words and deeds of elite political figures, and too little attention to the popular participation of the mass of Americans. He proposes to correct this oversight by following the lead of George Rudé and Edward Thompson in highlighting the role of the American crowd in the history of

years 1789–1801. Moreover, he borrows from cultural historians such as David Waldstreicher, Shane White and Susan G. Davis, in searching for the popular rites of the early republic. The result is a book with chapters devoted to celebrations in America of the 4th of July and of Bastille Day (and whenever Revolutionary France won a great battle). A separate chapter examines the emergence of a personality cult around the figure of George Washington. Originating with drinking toasts in the Revolutionary War ('God Save Great Washington! God Damn the King' (37), the cult of Washington became highly contested in the early and mid-1790s between the rival factions of Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, and even more so after his death in 1799.

In addition to uncovering the role of the crowd in the early republic, and of establishing the form of various popular political rites, author Newman claims one more achievement from his study: he contends that a national political culture emerged from below in society in the 1790s, a political culture that was accessible alike to urban and rural, to people in Virginia as well as Massachusetts. He further contends that the popular political culture of the American masses, including contributions from women and minorities, helped determine the emergence of the Democratic-Republicans as a genuine political party. The author could have strengthened his assertion had he devoted more time to the earlier emergence of a similar political culture in the years 1765–1781, and then its inexplicable disappearance in the 1780s.

The author's assertion that he has found a national political culture is offered in the opening chapter and is revisited in the conclusion. His evidence for such a sweeping interpretation comes from reading newspapers, in which he finds a convergence nationwide of radical festivals and rites. A reading of newspapers is both the strength and the weakness of this book. The weekly papers did often record the popular rites of the streets, but the newspapers were, of course, concentrated in the seaport towns of an overwhelmingly rural nation. Newman's own maps show how little evidence there was of his popular political culture in the South, or in the rural North. A more accurate summary of his findings, therefore, would be the emergence of an urban, artisan political culture in the North.

The most surprising omission in this book is the almost complete absence of any reference to voting as a means of participating in politics. Newman is so taken with the British examples from Rudé and Thompson that one could forget that the suffrage was available to American white males in the crowd, and that they used it in the early republic. It is one thing for a historian to criticize 'high' studies such as Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick's 1993 *Age of Federalism*, but it is quite another to ignore completely voting as an expression of political participation, and the extensive literature written by political historians about voting in the early republic. That shortcoming is representative of this engaging, but flawed study.

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

James W. Oberly

Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, Columbia University Press, 1997, pp. 185, £26.50, £10.50 pb.

In the last ten years as a result of the work of Lorna Weatherill, Carole Lammas and Beverly Lemire, consumption has become an established subject of historical research

and one of considerable relevance to women. This is an addition with a difference. The approach is through a series of literary and other texts from Smollett via Richardson's *Clarissa* and Burney's *Camilla* to the film script of 'Paris is Burning'. It explores the link between women and the goods that, as shoppers, they buy.

The eighteenth century is identified as the period in which a consumer culture developed. Among the commodities first introduced were tea, sugar and china. It is argued that the tea table became 'a feminized location', the epitome of upper class delicacy and refinement. Wedgwood introduced his black porcelain in order to better display the white hands of the ladies serving tea. At the tea table, the author concludes, the woman metaphorically 'indicates that her own female sexuality has been tamed, rendered innocuous'.

The Quaker poet, Mary Birkett, in advocating the sugar boycott saw sugar consumption as cannibalism. It revealed the power of women as domestic consumers. A number of eighteenth-century texts use china to denote women and their weaknesses. So Wycherley clearly associated china with female appetite. The pleasing surface of plates and cups reflected the wealth and taste of their possessors but at the same time they represented their emptiness and superficiality.

With the origins of modern shopping in the eighteenth century, the shop moves indoors. Shopping, we are told, involved the purchase of what is 'desirable but not indispensable'. The salesman is seen as essentially masculine. Increasingly those women who persisted in business were seen as prostitutes. Hence the myth that all milliners were prostitutes. The buyer became the one to be 'seduced' as well as mastered. In *The Fable of the Bees*, a male mercer makes his female client buy what he wishes to sell at whatever price he demands. The woman denies she has been seduced but by sliding 'into the inmost recesses of the Soul' he accomplishes an 'amorous invasion'. In reality women shoppers had various ways of resisting the salesman's attempts at control. But it is no accident that shopping coincided with the emergence of pornography. Women could be 'commodious' in relation to male need.

Many eighteenth-century trade handbooks in their concern with gentility truncate the employments suitable for women. So *A General Description* (1747) omits the possibility of girls being apprenticed as butchers. Opportunities for girls' employment are effectively reduced to mantua-making and millinery. Campbell is described as 'vociferous against women in business'. The millinery shop is seen as 'the last shop before the streets'. Women are advised to stay away from business and so denied any possibility of economic independence. By the end of the century the author argues 'women's business was the business of the body'.

In this construction of female subjectivity 'in relation to the emerging practices of consumerism' there are 'simultaneously projected the deepest anxieties about and its greatest hopes for powerful acts of consumption'. But sometimes the 'female consumer has resisted the cultural narrative that would contain her'. She has taken what consumer culture has to offer but made it the basis of real choices.

Sibford Ferris, Banbury

Bridget Hill

Paul Poplawski, *A Jane Austen Encyclopedia*, Aldwych Press, 1998, pp. xii + 411, £75.

Like all recent writers on Jane Austen, Dr Poplawski assumes that he has to justify his entry into an already crowded market. He cites a number of previous books of a similar nature to his own, but claims that there are key differences. He believes, for instance, that the up-to-date bibliographies which form the last section of his work – a comprehensive list of books and pamphlets and a generous if selective list of essays and articles reaching to the end of 1996 – will be for many scholars a sufficient justification for his endeavours.

His encyclopaedia begins with three chronologies. The first, dealing with Jane Austen's life and works, is certainly fuller than others of its kind, with some fairly lengthy entries. The literary and historical chronologies which follow are less successful. We are warned that the former, by beginning with the publication of *Tom Jones* in 1749, omits some important texts from earlier centuries, such as the Bible and Shakespeare, which were well known to Jane Austen. It need not, however, have omitted almost the whole of her childhood reading. The chronology is meant to reveal the literary context in which she wrote, but few of the many lovers of Jane Austen are likely to possess the extensive knowledge of contemporary literature needed to detect the trends which Poplawski hopes will emerge from the welter of book titles. Many will be perplexed also by the historical chronology, which could almost have been designed to highlight topics ignored by Jane Austen in her novels – governments, inventions, riots and repressive legislation. A good deal of the historical context in which she lived and wrote was of a sort which cannot be conveyed in a list of dates and happenings. There is nothing here to explain the workings of patronage, the conventions governing family relationships, or the contemporary meaning of terms such as 'taste'.

The largest section of the book is arranged alphabetically and consists of short biographies of Jane Austen's nearest relations along with accounts of her juvenile and minor works, outlines of the plots of her novels, and sketches of the characters that appear in them. Aunt and Uncle Leigh-Perrot are missing from among the relatives, but the entries dealing with Jane Austen's writings are exhaustive. Poplawski adds to the reader's interest by including an occasional opinion of his own (welcome, if not strictly admissible in a book which professes to deal in 'known facts'). Helpful entries under the heading 'Criticism' and 'Themes and Concerns' owe much to his perception.

Overall, it is clear that no trouble has been spared. The standard of accuracy is high. The longer biographical and literary entries reveal a wide knowledge of Jane Austen and her work, along with an ability to write clearly and sensitively. The most troublesome question for the reviewer is to identify the readership for such a volume. Who are the people who enter libraries in search of an encyclopaedia? Students? teachers? prospective authors? Whoever they are, they will be reasonably well served by this contribution, but they will have to think twice before buying their own copy at £75.

University of Liverpool

Irene Collins

Irene Collins, *Jane Austen: The Parson's Daughter*, Hambledon Press, 1998, pp. xxi + 282, £25; Mary Waldron, *Jane Austen and the Fiction of her Time*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 194, £32.50.

The Austen boom of the 1990s has produced many new biographies, as well as leading to the re-issue of a number of earlier ones. Irene Collins's starting point is that these studies whatever their individual merits, in attempting to see Austen's life as a whole, have underplayed the formative influences – social and religious as well as literary – of the Steventon years. As might be expected from Collins's previous work on Austen and the clergy as well as her current title, the Austen who emerges here is a parson's daughter from the age of reason: religious but without being ostentatious and fervently Evangelical about it. By concentrating just on the early life, Collins is able to build up through detailed and often original local research a strong sense of the Austen network or connection (particularly good on Eliza de Feuillide as well as on some of the local figures). The parson himself has more life breathed into him. The parochial records show that he rarely used a substitute, as well as doing almost all the hatched, matched and despatched paperwork that was expected of him over a long period. When there were threats of an invasion in 1798, he wrote carefully and conscientiously to the lord-lieutenant promising, if required, thirty-five men from Steventon, which was apparently more than other vicars (too busy hunting perhaps) in the rural parts of Hampshire could muster. Austen herself, her father's daughter, is also seen as a conscientious writer rather than as somebody who, according to the legend, just scribbled a line or two to while away the occasional gap in the domestic routine. More generally, this is a book that explains some of the social structures of the established church (tithes, glebes, curacies, pluralism, patronage and so on), which Collins is probably right to maintain that even historically-minded critics need to know more about.

Not everything can be explained of course, as Collins herself is only too aware. Why did the parson suddenly decide to decamp to Bath (this world is recreated well here), giving his daughter what Collins describes as the shock of her life? She lost her piano, her furniture, her books as well as those belonging to the family, and perhaps an awful lot else as well. Did the parson want to make one final attempt to marry a daughter who might have disappointed him in this respect at least? Did he, alternatively, seemingly so selfless have more than a streak of selfishness? We do not know.

This parson's household was perhaps not the idyllic place it is sometimes claimed to be. There may have been bouts of fun and frolic, theatre and teasing, yet it could also be at one and the same time a deeply formal and reticent place. There was a disabled son who was farmed out for his natural life; another son who was allowed to be adopted; the girls were sent away to boarding school when there was not room for them; and the eldest (and nastiest) son ended up inheriting the equivalent of this family's silver. Collins deals sensibly with these and other aspects of the family history, which were not particularly unusual among the lesser gentry. Perhaps, as she contends, this is just what passed for happy family life in a parsonage in the age of reason. Without recommending for a moment the sort of cod psychology to be found in some earlier biographies, where a few amusing remarks in the letters are turned into a life-long feud between Austen and her mother, there were probably darker and more disturbing features of the Steventon years than are given in this account of them.

A number of readers will have some difficulties buying into the main thesis here about Austen's reticent, reasonable piety. It is not just Lydia Bennet who laughs at Mr Collins and his attachment to Fordyce's sermons. This cues laughter from readers. Perhaps there are also just too many dispossessed or marginalised women, as well as those who hover precariously on the brink of these fates, in the novels for the argument here about Austen as daddy's devoted girl to be convincing. The strength of the book, and it is a real and substantial one, lies not in such main arguments as in the richness of the particular details that evoke the world that was Steventon. The book is well-produced with informative illustrative material.

Mary Waldron's book is relatively short, but packaged with insights about how Austen self-consciously sets up expectations in her readers only to fail to deliver on most them. She plays fast and loose, as Waldron puts it: sometimes wittily and mischievously, but often being deadly serious at the same time. There is play, but also some passion. Austen sports with readers and their allegiances, to use another of Waldron's phrases, yet this is shown to be more than just a knowing game. Bad fiction read during the Steventon years but continually up-dated, with its confining and often silly stereotypes, is not just bad fiction. It is a wider form of bad faith. Waldron is good at highlighting Austen's failure to supply traditional resolutions to the novels even while appearing, ever so neatly, to do so. Will Emma and Mr Knightley quarrel happily ever after? Perhaps the Austen boom has produced sequels and related writings, as well as biographies and movies, because some modern readers still crave the conventional endings that they are denied. According to Waldron, Austen also does not more generally supply traditional heroines, even though just to confuse things a bit some of the situations that they find themselves in appear, on first impressions, to run with the grain of contemporary fiction. Put in summary in this way, this may sound like a familiar enough piece of literary history, particularly about the earlier writings, and to some extent it is. What makes it more exciting than this is the way in which Waldron accepts so gleefully what she takes to be Austen's playfully serious challenge to read against the deceptively comfortable and comforting grain of the novels.

Waldron, like Collins, will not have anything to do with an Evangelical Austen. *Mansfield Park* may give the appearance of an Evangelical, conduct novel, and has been accepted as such by too many critics. Waldron shows, in the best chapter in a good book, how seeming certainties about how moral dilemmas in fiction ought to be solved are muddled and muddied. Evangelical conduct is, at best, as theatrical as most other things in the novel: confused and confusing to those who seem to act it out as well as to those who become spectators of it.

University of East Anglia

Roger Sales

Anne Hogan and Andrew Bradstock (eds), *Women of Faith in Victorian Culture: Reassessing the Angel in the House*, Macmillan, 1998, pp. xiv + 230, £42.50.

The Angel in the House has long been recognised as the dominant paradigm in the construction of Victorian femininity, so much so, that the notion of the Angel has lost much of its critical poignancy, becoming to a large extent a cliché. This is acknowledged at the outset by the editors of this volume, who ponder 'why another

book on the theme? Is there still more to be said?'. Clearly, they feel that there is, a fact born out by contributions in areas as various as Temperance Fiction, Victorian Catholicism, Hymn-Writing, and Female Missionaries. Indeed, the particular method employed to re-read what might at first glance appear to be a familiar subject field is to be applauded. Not only is there an evident interdisciplinary focus prevalent across the range of essays, allowing for (and indeed provoking) lively and original debate, but there is also an overarching concern with revisiting the Angel in the House in ways that work both inside and outside the dominant, inherent gender paradigm. In the essays focusing on Anna Kingsford, George Eliot, Mrs Humphrey Ward, and English hymnody, the respective authors illustrate the pervasive influence of the Angel on religious women; an influence that is both prescriptive and restrictive. However, the essays on Sarah Stickney Ellis, Anne Brontë, and May Sinclair, in particular, illustrate ways in which the Angel in the House was used as part of a rhetoric of emancipation, as such a denial of the Angel as an ideologically conservative role model.

This volume works best when the less well-known material is interrogated and utilised for the particular light it sheds on Victorian gender roles. In these cases the critical strategy goes beyond simply reinterpreting the traditional Western canon. Though there are a few minor occasions on which familiar material is revisited rather than being radically reconfigured, as a whole this study is a valuable addition to existing critical works in the area. It has much to say about the fashioning of nineteenth-century gender identities, the interaction between religious discourses and evolving conceptions of human subjectivity, and in a broader sense about the ideological foundations of Victorian culture. The contributions are considered and well directed, and the editors successfully draw together the various strands of thought so as to produce a coherent and intellectually rigorous critical re-examination. It is only through such a combination that the initial doubts about the viability, or necessity of the project as a whole could have been overcome. Consequently, the volume provides its own affirmative response to the initial anxiety about 'is there still more to be said?'. In the wake of this volume, perhaps, such an affirmative might now be much more difficult to achieve.

King Alfred's College, Winchester

Neil McCaw

K. D. M. Snell (ed.), *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland, 1800–1990*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. x + 300, £45.

The regional novel, according to the editor of this fine collection of essays, is fiction set in a recognisable region, with features describing the life, social relations, customs, language, dialect, or other aspects of its culture. Of course, everything happens somewhere, and apart from picaresque narratives like Fielding's *Tom Jones* or Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*, it would be hard to find a good or famous novel that is not set in a particular place. Some novelists, of course, were more firmly attached to their regions than others. Scott's Scottish Borders, Elizabeth Gaskell's Lancashire, Thomas Hardy's Wessex, James Joyce's Dublin, Daphne du Maurier's Cornwall, Catherine Cookson's Geordieland, and Alan Sillitoe's Nottingham all immediately call to mind

the vision of those well-known and well-loved places. All these and more engage the attentions of the eminent critics here assembled.

Maria Edgeworth and Sir Walter Scott seem to have invented the self-consciously regional novel. Before that the convention was to rise above the local and aspire to a national or abstract voice and venue. Samuel Johnson sought to establish an invariant national vocabulary and his *Rasselas*, like Voltaire's *Candide*, exists in a cosmopolitan, indeterminate geography. Richardson's *Pamela* resisted her aristocratic seducer in a generalized English countryside. The Anglo-Irish Thomas Sheridan disliked distinctions between subjects of the same king and thought that they would end if we all spoke 'the English tongue in its purity'. According to Liz Bellamy, even Edgeworth took the same line, and satirised the Irish in such a way as to justify the removal of political influence from their hands, while Scott used his countrymen to illustrate the blessings of pre-industrial society before modern commercialism betrayed it.

Harriet Guest shows how Mrs Gaskell redressed the ill repute of the industrial North and brought 'the deep romance of Manchester' to the eyes of the superior South. For John Barrell, Hardy perpetuated the stereotypes of the dialect-using Egdon Heath yokels, yet found in them timeless echoes of a common humanity. Philip Dodd traces the peculiarities of the Cornish, that forgotten race of ancient Britons, from Charles Kingsley to Daphne du Maurier, while Declan Kiberd divines the mythic realism of Joyce's Dublin and finds the Irish not so much rootless as rooted in too many places at once. For Robert Colls that phenomenon of popular bestsellers, Catherine Cookson, and her rival northern chroniclers Sid Chaplin and Jack Common, mined a vein of working-class life far deeper than the angry young men of the 1950s, while Stephen Daniels and Simon Rycroft retrace Alan Sillitoe's mapping of the embattled modern city of Nottingham. M. Wynn Thomas sees Wales and its literature, as in the novels of Emyr Humphries, as systematically diverse, with its three different regions more remote from each other than from their adjacent English counties.

The editor, K. M. D. Snell, succeeds in his effort to show that the regional novel is far from dead, and has done a service to interdisciplinary scholarship and to the hoards of visitors who throng to the sites of their favourite authors.

London

Joan Perkin

Daniel Bivona, *British Imperial Literature, 1870–1940*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 237, £40.

Dr Bivona's subject, an important stage in the evolution of modern imperialism, is the transition from the rugged individual as its flag-bearer to the well-trained, self-effacing bureaucrat. In the second half of the nineteenth century Livingstone and Stanley were an antithetical pair of pioneers in Africa, one standing for peaceful progress, the other for bulldozing methods: Stanley set off into the wilderness with a private force of 350 armed men, without the intention of taking *no* for an answer. By 1900, though such men might still be folk-heroes, sober observers were aware that what counted now, in empire as in industry, was skill in large-scale organization, administrative machinery where every employee had his place and must not presume to overstep it.

Cromer, long-term master of Egypt, is chosen for discussion as an eloquent prophet of the new order. Kipling is given perhaps more space than he deserves as an observer of how it was being imposed on British officialdom in India. His 'most comprehensive statement on social order' is to be looked for however in his children's stories, the *Jungle Books* and their hazy 'Law'. As to 'the Indian cultures he knew so well', Kipling's concern was really not with India, a country he disapproved of and soon left, but with the white man ruling India for its own good. On this theme he can indeed be credited with 'deeply skeptical views', 'doubts about ultimate purposes'. He fell back on 'the ethic of self-sacrifice', as displayed for instance by a group of isolated, overworked men breaking down under the strain. Anglo-Indians were as a rule comfortably stolid, unimaginative people, with plenty of servants, whisky, and animals for them to shoot, to keep them going. Cromer and Gordon make another contrasted pair, with a complex relationship. 'Chinese Gordon' was a man of the frontiers or beyond, recognizing no book of rules except what he could find in the Bible. As Bivona says, Cromer could accept in theory the freedom of decision and action claimed by the 'man on the spot', but it went against his grain, his 'ideology of professional service'. From this point we are led into a group of Conrad studies of men in the outposts. These scrutinies are mainly on psychological lines; but in the best novel, *Nostromo*, Bivona recognizes 'a strikingly Marxist-flavoured conception of history as determined, "in the last instance", by relations of production'.

T. E. Lawrence is given a chapter, as 'a great military strategist', though with allegiances always divided between the Arab cause and the British imperial. Whether he is entitled to so prominent a place has been sharply questioned by some writers. For the interwar period we have as stage-setter Lugard, evolving from imperialist buccaneer to philosopher of Indirect Rule. Studies of three novels, and of a new individualism irked by soulless bureaucratism, follow: Orwell's *Burmese Days*, savagely satirical; Forster's inevitable *Passage to India*, officialdom living on 'tautological axioms'; and, far the most interesting, Cary's *Mr Johnson*, the best as Bivona says of this author's four African novels, despite its 'profoundly undecidable tone'. Johnson the young Nigerian clerk is a quaint, often absurd figure, but he is treated very seriously as spokesman of 'a new Nigeria in the process of construction'. Bivona's notes and references are unusually searching and helpful throughout.

University of Edinburgh

V. G. Kiernan

Mark B. Williams, *Endô Shūsaku: A Literature of Reconciliation*, Routledge, 1999, pp. xvii + 276, £55.

This is a serious book, the product of much thought on the author's part as he investigates what have sometimes been seen as irreconcilable conflicts (East *vs* West, Christianity *vs* native Japanese spirituality) in Endô Shūsaku's work. He is to be congratulated for examining not only works like *Silence* and *The Samurai*, but also less familiar ones. He suggests that Endô's basic impulse is to attempt a reconciliation between conscious and unconscious elements of human nature through literature.

The introduction, which places Endô's writing in the broad context of modern

Japanese literature, is highly informative. In particular, he contrasts earlier shishōsetsu-ka (I-novelists) with the Dai san no shijin (third generation of new authors) group which emerged after the traumatic events of the Second World War. While the former were characterised by a confident narrative technique of depicting reality seen almost entirely from the narrator's narrow viewpoint (since this was the only 'knowable' truth), Endō sought a transcendent inner truth beyond the small details of everyday experience. In practice, by showing greater awareness of others' existence, he highlighted more the relationships *between* people. This self-examination should be placed in the context of postwar defeat, when a critical light was thrown on self-responsibility and relations with society at large. More generally, it touches on uneasy negotiations between truth and fiction in literature, always particularly important in the Japanese tradition. Williams portrays a multifaceted truth in Endō's writing which struggles to reconcile the experience of being Japanese, a novelist, and a Catholic.

In the course of six chapters of close readings focusing on individual novels, Williams examines several important themes addressed by Endō: the inner conscience that enters a character's mind and refuses to be silenced; the problem of whether a Christian writer's first duty is to his religion or position as novelist; use of the doppelgänger in order to view the self from an external perspective. Particularly interesting is his exploration of how Endō, far from condemning 'weakness' in characters (like the apostate Rodrigues in *Silence*), instead interprets it as a means to a more rounded and sympathetic understanding of humanity. I wonder if this urge towards reconciliation is not also related to his acknowledgement and 'forgiveness' of an earlier generation's shortcomings during the war.

Carl Jung's psychological writings are frequently mentioned in these close readings, not incidental since Endō himself acknowledged their powerful influence. On the other hand, I feel the book would have benefitted more from closer integration of some of the critical works Williams excellently covered in the introduction. Also, I sometimes wished he had been a little more critical of Endō. For instance, though I understand that spiritual interests are the principal concern, Endō's depiction of India in *Deep River* as the 'land of the unconscious' (192) confirms a deeply flawed cliché of a place which is also one of the world's largest industrial nations. I am not sure that any late twentieth century writer, however well meaning, should be able to get away with this.

Having said this, Williams' long-standing interest in Christianity's influence on modern Japanese fiction has born rich fruit in this book, and it amounts to an important contribution to our deeper understanding of a major Japanese writer.

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Stephen Dodd