

Reviews

Steven Justice and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (eds), *Written Work: Langland, Labor, and Authorship*, University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 347, £42.75.

It is a tribute to the considerable and careful work devoted to the study of *Piers Plowman* in recent years that a book of essays can now address so directly the issue of the poet in his work. Not surprisingly, the book revolves around Langland's C-text *apologia* and other key revisions. At its heart is Kathryn Kerby-Fulton's 'Langland and the Bibliographic Ego'. With great skill she examines the several strategies of 'authorial intrusion' adopted by Langland in his C-text revisions as a means of reclaiming his work in those changed circumstances, post Peasants' Revolt and post Blackfriars' Council, which rendered him liable to persecution, if not prosecution. She argues convincingly, moreover, for a coterie of supporters who constituted Langland's primary audience, a primary audience which may have centred on the civil service and which may have overlapped with the Chaucer circle. This has obvious implications for the way in which *Piers Plowman* was disseminated. The separate 'prepublication' circulation of passages from the C-text makes perfect sense in this context. It is in this context, too, that scholars will need to assess the evidence offered by Steven Justice, in his introduction, that there were two authorial textual traditions for part, at least, of the B-text. One explanation, among several, would be that he had different audiences in mind. It may be the case, as Kerby-Fulton suggests, that Langland had early readers among the more educated knights 'of the stamp of Sir John Clanvowe' (121). At this point, however, Langland's patent social conservatism leads her to an uncharacteristically false step. It may well be that Langland had considerable sympathy for the gentle class. Nevertheless, her interpretation of the knight's role during the ploughing of the half acre, where he clearly fails to protect against *Waster*, seems strained, while the poet's list of the excesses

of contemporary landlordism is surely more than ‘a gesture in the direction of such abuses’ (143).

In a bold and ambitious essay Anne Middleton argues forcefully that Langland’s *apologia* was inspired by the vagrancy law of 1388, and that Will’s interrogation by Reason and Conscience was effectively a prosecution under that act. In a fascinating discussion of the developing ideology of work she traces the imaginative shifts that took place between the Ordinance of Labourers of 1349 and the Cambridge parliament of 1388, illustrating *inter alia* the extent to which the classes represented in parliament were, by now, looking to the state of bolster their system. Should it be agreed that the *apologia* reflects this specific act rather than the ideological shifts reflected in the act itself, then it would seem to follow not only that Langland was still alive and revising his text in the late 1380s but also that this was very probably his final act of revision. By his famous C-text interpolation, Middleton argues, Langland not only defended his life-style against the charge of parasitism but also produced what was, in effect, a final redirecting, for public consumption, of his entire life’s work. Two more startling propositions follow in this blockbuster essay: that Langland deliberately chose to defend himself under the Cambridge statute rather than against ecclesiastical authority, fearing that he would have been even more vulnerable under the latter; and that he reinterpreted the term ‘loller’ in order to ‘preserve the continued possibility of anticlerical critique apart from the imputation of Wycliffite sympathies to its speaker’ (286).

Less speculative, but nonetheless invaluable, is Ralph Hanna’s close re-examination of ‘Will’s Work’. Ever drawing, and redrawing, the fine line between himself and less desirables, Langland the hermit-poet ‘creates an apostolic function both for his way of life and for his poetry’ (48). Similarly, in ‘Langland’s Persona: An Anatomy of the Mendicant Orders’, Lawrence Clopper shows how Langland’s apparent ‘antifraternalism’ is in fact deeply rooted in, especially, Franciscan thought processes, in the search for the true apostolic life. Derek Pearsall takes issue with Skeat’s observation that ‘London is the origin of the poem, and the true key to the understanding of it’ (201). Based on the puzzling fact that most manuscripts of the C-text derive from the south-west Midlands, he speculates that Langland left London, and that he had done so before the Peasant’s Revolt. Paradoxically, in his emphasising both the vivacity of Langland’s depiction of London life and the poet’s appreciation of commercial imagery, and in his observation that London constitutes the unsolved problem of the poem, Pearsall comes extremely close to reaffirming the great Victorian’s position. And yet, as he notes, Langland’s sense of community is basically a traditional, feudal one; it is also, therefore, an integrative one. In this sense, the separation of town and country is something of a non-issue.

This sturdy but provocative set of essays takes us, arguably, as close as we can get to Langland at present. As Steven Justice aptly says, ‘If the Langland who emerges from these pages seems shadowy, at least the shadow reassures us that we have to do with a body solid enough to block light’ (9).

Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation 1399–1422*, Yale University Press, 1998, pp. xiv + 274, £25.

'The meaning of any event', Professor Strohm contends in this lucid and modestly-priced book, 'is always subsequently determined. Its meaning resides in the future'. Whilst unacceptable 'as unmediated sources of information', written sources do contain valuable knowledge when events are omitted. 'My quest is not for what a text intends to say about itself, but for those moments of inadvertency or lessened vigilance when it means more than it says'. Professor Strohm's focus is 'an empty place', which he 'can only partially know': the deposition of Richard II by Henry IV in 1399. This 'abrupt' and 'murderous' crime beset the Lancastrian regime in unforeseeable ways for twenty years. Concerted efforts to repress dissent and to restrict political speculation within acceptable parameters failed to stem 'the stream of everyday conversation' exploring alternatives 'in the alehouse, between neighbours, on journeys, or in workshop or in the field'. Whereas the regime desired forgetfulness, its shameful origins popped up in even the most apparently untropical writings of its most complicit apologist: Hoccleve's *John of Canace*, an 'Amnesiac Text'. The failure 'to pre-empt unruly and evasive imaginative processes', Strohm observes, demonstrates 'the inherent futility of attempted social-symbolic domination'. Much of our established history is Lancastrian propaganda, the creation of a beleaguered regime that needed an illegitimate opposition to reveal itself in a good light and which thus invented hitherto unquestioned phenomena such as the Lollard threat. Lollards were never a threat; there was no Lollard Rising in 1415; Oldcastle was never a traitor; and the supposed Lollard counterfeiters were constructed from 'Lancastrian anxieties and motivations'. It is wrong to suppose 'that heresy somehow precedes heresy's repression'. Amongst much detail and discussion, often more revealing in the notes than the text, interesting parallels emerge, such as the relative impotence of the pseudo-Richard II compared with pretenders against Henry VII and the failure of anti-Lancastrian conspiracy vis-à-vis the upheavals of the Wars of the Roses. For the Lancastrians *were* successful: Henry V and then Henry VI acceded unopposed. It is hard to accept that alternative imaginings were as popular or as widespread as Strohm supposes and, of course, we cannot know. Assuming that Strohm's chosen texts do offer the insights supposed, when, where, by whom, and by how many were they shared? More consideration is needed of the function and intended circulation of such documents as confessions, their diplomatic and the administrative processes that produced them, and whether narratives are strictly contemporary. It also matters whether real events lie behind the chosen passages and the significant symbolism. Beneath the arguments and assertions there lie a series of verities – that the Lancastrian title was unfounded and the dynasty was illegitimate, that theological differences do not matter, that burning people is wrong, that the English conquest of France was always in vain and that the Treaty of Troyes created conflict, that Ireland and Wales were bound to rise against their colonisers – that make sense to a late-twentieth-century American, but are anachronistic in late medieval England. Few of Strohm's contentions will satisfy historians. Often other alternatives are possible: for why Sawtre was burned in a barrel, of the nature of his appeal, or of Henry IV's second marriage. There is actually no incompatibility between a Lollard threat and the frailty of an individual Lollard or between an ambitious conspiracy and its easy

suppression. It was those who were caught who were tried in 1414: most were executed for treason because it was more difficult and indeed superfluous to convict them of heresy. When Lollardy was so difficult to identify and detect, it was understandable both that the Church concentrated on the comparatively recognizable doctrine of transubstantiation and that it detected those who drew attention to themselves. As well as asking whether Lollards tended to be counterfeiters, an historian might wonder whether it was because the Lollard was a counterfeiter that he was also revealed as a heretic. Strohm has identified episodes worthy of reappraisal and has contributed to the process, yet the intellectual victory of Lancastrianism is more profitably approached via the relatively copious and conventional propaganda of the regime and its foes.

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Michael Hicks

Peter E. McCullough, *Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. xv + 237, £35; **Curtis Perry**, *The Making of Jacobean Culture*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. xiv + 281, £35.

Access to the monarch was an inestimable privilege of court life, and few enjoyed such uninterrupted access as the preachers of the Chapel Royal, who could hold the monarch captive for an hour or more with a sermon that could edify, direct or occasionally admonish. Yet the role of court preachers in the formation of the religious policy of Elizabeth and the early Stuarts has, surprisingly, not been much investigated. Peter McCullough's admirable study of court sermons and preachers provides a most rewarding sequence of insights into the religious culture of the new Protestant establishment.

Elizabeth used the institution of the court sermon as a means of demonstrating her support for reformed religion, attentively listening from the elevated royal closet at the western end of the Chapel Royal to that select band of preachers who were chosen by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain (the latter often under the influence of William Cecil). Elizabeth did not value divines highly, but she attended the weekly service in the Chapel Royal and listened to innumerable sermons, from a broad spectrum of preachers, on biblical exegesis, moral advice and anti-Catholic polemic. Her procession each week from the privy chamber to the chapel, surrounded by her lords, officers and bishops, was a miniature progress, an occasion for visitors at court to observe the Queen in state as she moved along, receiving petitions and acknowledging the acclamation of the onlookers. During the Lent season, when sermons were given three times a week, usually in the garden-court Preaching Place at Whitehall in the presence of large numbers of visitors, she attended dutifully, dressed in black, the very model of a pious monarch supporting her Church. Her own religious position was semi-reformed, it would seem. She had a silver crucifix in her chapel, to the scandal of the godly; she honoured the sacraments, and ordered her services by the prayer book, with much use of sacred music. She had little relish for sermons, but understood the need for a vigorous preaching ministry in her new Church to reinforce reformed doctrine. Generally she was a patient auditor,

but she could be provoked. At the time of the French match, the preachers in the Chapel Royal were often bold in their condemnation, moved by their Protestant zeal and heartened by Leicester's hostility to the match. Sometimes Elizabeth would slam her closet window shut and storm out, at other times she would retaliate verbally. Preachers who encroached on state affairs or church discipline were likely to get a royal flea in their ear. 'Leave that, it has nothing to do with your subject', she shouted down to a Dean of St Paul's who started condemning religious images. Preaching at Elizabeth could be a two-way affair.

King James was a connoisseur of preaching styles and a genuinely avid auditor. McCullough makes a valid point when he remarks that James's much-remarked love of the drama was nowhere near as intense as his passion for sermons. His first public act when he entered England was to hear a sermon at Berwick. He instituted Tuesday sermons at court in memory of his deliverance from gunpowder and the Gowries. He would request copies of sermons he enjoyed so that he could read them at leisure; they were his preferred form of literature. Court sermons were sometimes followed by a viva of the preacher during dinner, an indication of how seriously James responded to these discourses. The king took a strong personal interest in the appointment of court preachers, and from the beginning of his reign he balanced evangelicals with sacramentalists, giving satisfaction to both parties. The competition for royal favour between the two groups is described here with a wealth of new material that enables us to see that from an early stage James was more sympathetic to the high-church party than is commonly allowed. Yet although Lancelot Andrewes was consistently James's favourite preacher, Andrewes not infrequently reprimanded the King for placing too much value on sermons at the expense of prayer and the sacraments. Such disagreements help to explain James's preferment of George Abbot to the see of Canterbury over Andrewes, for James and Abbot were at one on the issue of the primacy of preaching in the Jacobean Church. With sections on the preaching provision for Queen Anne, Prince Henry and Prince Charles, Peter McCullough's book is an important, thorough and well-written account of the politically-charged religious life of the Tudor and Stuart courts.

Curtis Perry's *The Making of Jacobean Culture* also sets James against Elizabeth as he explores the ways in which a distinctive identity for the new reign was evolved by poets, dramatists and image-makers of all kinds. The religious dimension is not much in evidence in this study, however. It is a story of hopes betrayed, of disillusionment setting in after the optimism of a vigorous beginning, as James gradually revealed himself to be averse to public appearances, over-fond of his Scots entourage, apt to be advised by poor counsellors and inclined to conciliate the Catholic powers of Europe. Whereas his reign was initially acclaimed as an extension of the best aspects of Elizabeth's, as the King's flaws became more apparent, so the figure of Elizabeth was increasingly invoked as a monarch whose virtues and policies made James seem tawdry. By looking at a broad range of literary forms that were engaged with the evolving character of the reign – panegyric, pastoral, political drama and the theatre of kingship (the omission of satire is puzzling) – Perry records the growth of that peculiar cultural atmosphere that we recognise as 'Jacobean': magnificence undermined by malignity or corruption, pastoral landscape with brackish streams and uneasy shepherds, political scenes where dissimulation seems essential to survival, and public life characterised by a vague distrust between the rulers and the ruled. The language of praise for the monarch becomes increasingly hollow or equivocal. Perry

writes particularly well about the cooling of the relationship between the crown and the City of London, which had been strong in Elizabeth's time, but diminished by James's indifference to the self-esteem of the city fathers and the mercantile élite. City comedy and civic pageants alike chart the growing disenchantment on the part of Londoners at their neglect by the King; this declining sense of loyalty would have serious consequences in the next reign and in the civil war, when the wealthiest community in the nation found it had no strong reason to support the King against Parliament.

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Graham Parry

Donald R. Kelley and David Harris Sacks (eds), *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain: History, Rhetoric and Fiction, 1500–1800*, Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. xii + 374, £50.

A book with such a title and with contributions from such distinguished writers as Patrick Collinson and Annabel Patterson calls out for review in this journal. The product of a 1993 conference at the Woodrow Wilson Center Washington, this volume examines a number of aspects of the common pedigree of history and story-telling, the power of imagination, and the foundations and forms of cultural memory. It is concerned with narrative techniques and representational practices in the past and in its own interdisciplinary dynamics it expresses the ways in which the concepts and methodologies of the literary scholar and the historian have in our own generation become so closely and fruitfully intertwined. It is a book which positions itself at 'the open boundary of history and fiction' and its thirteen substantial essays cover topics which extend chronologically from the second half of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth. The proportions, however, are not always as comfortable as they might have been. Historians outnumber literary scholars in this volume 2:1, a discrepancy reinforced by the fact that both the editors are historians. A single writer – Thomas Hobbes – gets three chapters and almost ninety pages to himself. The absence of any contribution relating to the first half of the eighteenth century represents a major chronological gap in the coverage. The value of this book – and it is considerable – lies with the individual contributions rather than with any overarching plan and symmetry.

Patrick Collinson writes very effectively on 'Truth, lies and fiction in sixteenth-century Protestant historiography' and focuses on John Foxe, 'the Plutarch of the sixteenth century'. Collinson, in a genuinely interdisciplinary investigation of Foxe's major work, underlines the 'great generic diversity of this huge, sprawling text' and the notions of truth, the purposes and strategies which underpin it. Parts of Foxe's text – those recounting Mary's dealings with her sister Elizabeth, for example – are tellingly described as 'an early version of the novel' and linked to the 'two-way traffic between Foxe's enormous tome and some of the more popular and ephemeral literature of the day'. This said, however, Collinson studiously resists the temptation to measure Foxe's own concept of truth against a set of external and later standards.

Thomas More comes under new scrutiny in Joseph Levine's essay on this 'humanist

rhetorician' and his Utopia. More, says Levine, 'was probably the first person in England to explore the tension between the real and the ideal, and thus between history and fiction, in a way that is still interesting to us'. In the disjunction between the writer's ideals and his perceptions of real life some common ground with Machiavelli is claimed. A more extended comparison of Machiavelli with Hobbes is the subject of David Wootton's interesting and lively essay. Hobbes, Wootton insists, did more than passively read Machiavelli. 'He taught himself to think like him, and persuaded himself that Hobbism and Machiavellism went hand in hand'; Hobbes's *Behemoth*, written in the late 1660s, exemplified the fact, and indeed in some respects went beyond the limits entertained by the author of *The Prince*. Fritz Levy's essay on the same work which follows – he terms *Behemoth* 'a disillusioned discourse on history' – is more inclined to link Hobbes with Bacon (through his Cavendish connection) and Ben Jonson. Patricia Springborg, in another essay, connects Hobbes with George Sandys and Sir William Davenant and explores their shared interest in the classics.

Annabel Patterson's chapter explores the power of anecdote in Tudor historiography and takes Holinshed as one of her many examples. Richard Helgerson travels part of the same road and concentrates on Holinshed's retelling of the story of the sixteenth-century murder of Thomas Arden of Faversham. Here was a kind of alternative history, an apparently 'private' or 'marginal' history, which dealt with people below the elite, with women, crime, and local events. Emphatically this was not the 'public' history which Renaissance historians preferred to celebrate, and part of Helgerson's brief is to show how this kind of history – as exemplified in the Arden story – came to be dropped. Mark Phillips's essay shows that it was not until the eighteenth century with Adam Smith and his successors that social and sentimental narratives of the history of private life were revived.

By no means all the writers who come under discussion in this collection of essays are well known. J. H. M. Salmon resurrects the largely forgotten Degory Wheare and his handbook on *The Method and Order of Reading Histories* (1623). Rebecca Bushnell sets out to link early modern writing about nature with the changing social experience and historical consciousness of the age. Daniel Woolf moves outward from a particular incident – the chance discovery in 1611 of a coin hoard in Little Crosby, Lancashire – to raise questions about the social and cultural contexts of early seventeenth-century antiquarianism and to suggest the need for a broader working definition of historiography (one closely in line with modern local social history, in fact) which finds a place for an obscure but historically curious provincial landlord and his servants as well as Camden, Foxe, Stow and Dugdale.

This book ends with one of the great names of eighteenth-century historiography, Edward Gibbon, in the form of Patricia Craddock's study of his historical imagination and the ways in which it was brought to bear on his perception of the role of the man of letters and in his approach to heroic figures and to empires. Here Craddock, a Professor of English Literature, examines not just the epic *Decline and Fall* but the youthful *Essai sur l'étude de la littérature* and Gibbon's *Memoirs of my Life*. Such framing comes naturally in a book with such a pronounced interdisciplinary agenda which pointedly opens with quotations from Shakespeare.

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R. C. Richardson

Robin Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel*, Macmillan, 1997, pp. x + 246, £45.

On first glance a study of pedestrian travel among Romantic writers carries as much originality as Dorothy Wordsworth's familiar walks from Dove Cottage to Ambleside. That Wordsworth, Coleridge, Clare, Keats, and others derived inspiration from their walks is hardly new; nonetheless, the relationship between poetic text and pedestrian travel poses rich material for critical exploration, which Jarvis manages with competence. Responding to Sir Leslie Stephen's assertion that the Romantic movement was a response to the rise of walking, Jarvis sets out to establish the social and intellectual sources that contributed to this age of pedestrian travel and to define how such contexts become encoded in the literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Central to Jarvis' argument is the shift in social perception of walking during the last two decades of the eighteenth century, the period that gave rise to the term 'pedestrian.' Jarvis aligns this popularity and new respectability with the desire of the traveller, especially the social nonconformist, to identify new ways to define his or her ideological space and newly defined aesthetic sources in nature derived from the picturesque. Walking symbolically freed the Romantic traveller from the combined authority of family, property, or secular vocation and enabled what Jarvis defines as a dialectical relation between mobility and emplacement, liberty and confinement, and indeterminacy and definition (37). Using such poems as Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, Dyer's *Frongar Hill* and Crowe's *Lewesdon Hill*, Jarvis proposes how eighteenth-century locodescriptive poetry signals the intellectual change from landscape as public space to inner space, a symbol of the confinement of the spirit; however, such an argument might carry more merit were the psychological connection between topographical poetry and pedestrianism more clearly established, perhaps the most significant weakness of the book.

The greatest strength of Jarvis' analysis lies in his discussions of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Using *An Evening Walk*, *Descriptive Sketches*, the Salisbury Plain poems, *The Borderers*, *The Ruined Cottage*, *Home at Grasmere*, and Book VI of *The Prelude*, Jarvis supports the assertion that Wordsworth is at his best as a pedestrian poet, for walking provides Wordsworth the dialectal tensions through which he achieves imaginative power (121). Coleridge's poetry illustrates the linking of bodily action, intellectual and moral attitudes, and aesthetic form. Poems such as 'This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison' and 'Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement' show Coleridge reconciling pedestrian activity with spiritual topography to achieve a spiritual moment or to understand the relationship between place, experience, and self. Jarvis finds in Coleridge's blank verse the rhythms of walking both structuring and liberating the poet, a process he also notes in Wordsworth and Clare. While Jarvis cites Coleridge's *Notebooks* for support, such an argument requires stronger underpinning.

Jarvis uses Dorothy Wordsworth and John Clare to exemplify gender and class issues in pedestrianism. Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journal* shows not only the limits of travel for women, but also a different perception occasioned by gender. The *Journal* routinely renegotiates boundaries of new space and Dorothy's position in it by her comparisons with Dove Cottage, a signal Jarvis sees of her reluctance to take imaginative possession of new territory, limiting the empowerment and liberty

Dorothy might derive from landscape. While John Clare's 'Journey out of Essex' demonstrates that pedestrian travel is genderized and socially stratified, the poetry shows that to Clare it means freedom, privilege, and self-confidence. The final chapter places Hazlitt, Keats, and others in the pedestrian tradition with a passing nod to the effects of urbanization on pedestrianism. Keats and Hazlitt deserve more attention, and Jarvis' argument deserves a stronger sense of closure.

Jarvis' carefully researched study assimilates critical material from M. H. Abrams to Mikhail Bahktin and provides a provocative interpretation of how pedestrianism stimulated Romantic poetry and the code it offered the poet/pedestrian as s/he used landscape to establish personal, intellectual, and spiritual space. Roger Gilbert's *Walks in the World: Representation and Experience in Modern American Poetry* and Jeffrey Robinson's *The Walk: Notes on a Romantic Image* may have defined the genre for Jarvis; however, Jarvis has made a more serious contribution to scholarship than the anecdotal Gilbert and a more definitive application for a British age of walkers than Robinson.

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Myron D. Yeager

Robert Crawford (ed.), *The Scottish Invention of English Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 259, £35.

A contributor to this stimulating set of essays describes it as part of a wider effort in recent years 'to clarify and redefine Scotland's distinctive social and cultural development' from the eighteenth century (A. Hook, 164). One path this took was a critical exploration of the English literature that Scotland was eagerly adopting, at the cost of abandoning its native mode of expression; though this reached its highest point, just before and after 1800, with Burns and the dialogue of Scott's best novels. English universities, 'comatose' Oxford (N. Rhodes, 28) and scarcely better Cambridge, were incapable of any such critical effort; whatever interest England could show in its own writers was to be found in the Academies set up by Nonconformists (R. Crawford, 7). Scotland was busy reviewing its own new position in the British Isles and in Europe, and its universities were ready to lead the way, with Edinburgh foremost. They had closer contact than those in England, the editor points out, with the towns where they were located, and could draw nourishment from them. The country was full of aspiring young men for whom command of English could – as in India today – open the way to many opportunities not yet available at home, among them the growing number offered by the empire.

Literary criticism was dawning, in the guise of 'Rhetoric and Belles Letters'. In 1748 Adam Smith, returning from a long stay in England, was appointed to give public lectures at Edinburgh on this new subject. Instead of mummifying his authors, as had been done for centuries with the Classics, he emphasized 'the social, historical and functional dynamism' of their work (I. Duncan, 42). In the Scotland of the sermonizers a moral dimension could not be left out, and Smith's successor at Edinburgh, Robert Watson, taught that improvement in good taste, and in virtue, went together (R. Crawford, 11). Smith dismissed the old Scots poetry to 'a barbaric darkness' (I. Duncan, 41), but Hugh Blair, professor at Edinburgh from 1760, found

something Scottish for Scots to admire in Ossian, as F. Stafford points out in Chapter 4. She draws attention also to the stimulus that the Wordsworth and Coleridge of the *Lyrical Ballads* found in Blair's lectures (82).

When new university colleges were belatedly set up in nineteenth-century England, Scottish influence showed itself afresh; Scots were taking the lead in transforming language studies (L. Ferreira-Buckley, 181, 201). America too came very much under Scottish guidance, down to about 1850 (F. E. Court, 134). In return Scotland imbibed lessons in political thinking and progress from beyond the Atlantic, and the two countries shared a common cult of Whiggery (A. Hook, 166). By the later nineteenth century John Nichol, whose special field was American literature, felt it necessary to warn his fellow-countrymen against the snares of Yankee slang, barbarities like skedaddle, calculate, guess, Britisher (R. Crawford, 230). We are repeatedly reminded that Scotland's self-education had a significant parallel in the self-training of Scots students through their college societies, to whose active life many eminent Scots expressed gratitude. Sad to say, at Edinburgh University the Historical Society has just reached its centenary, and come to an end.

University of Edinburgh

V. G. Kiernan

Alison Milbank, *Dante and the Victorians*, Manchester University Press, 1998, pp. ix + 277, £45.00; **Andrew Thompson**, *George Eliot and Italy: Literary, Cultural and Political Influences from Dante to the Risorgimento*, Macmillan, 1998, pp. x + 243, £42.50.

The posthumous reputations of historical figures and the varied, sometimes contradictory causes which have championed them form a vein of scholarly research which is far from being exhausted. *La divina commedia* would alone make the terrestrial afterlife of Dante Alighieri an exceptionally appropriate subject for precisely such a study, his other writings and public career serving only to underscore this conviction. Alison Milbank ably demonstrates this in her compelling investigation of the Florentine's influence in Britain during an extended nineteenth century which opened with Romantic attachment to him as the Italian Milton, spanned liberal devotion to the cause of peninsular independence from Austrian, French and papal rule, in which Dante's Ghibellinism was called into play, and concluded with the modernist vision of T. S. Eliot, Joyce, Pound and others. Name-dropping nineteenth-century-style does not come finer than this, for Dante had no lack of illustrious translators, commentators, imitators and other miscellaneous enthusiasts, together with many whose work has not stood the test of time. Thus the Tennyson of *In memoriam*, in which Arthur Hallam is interestingly cast as the Beatrice of the *Vita nuova*, rubs poetic shoulders with Elizabeth Barrett Browning, whose Dantean inspiration was fed into the cause of Italian nationalism; in life Gladstone is seen taking a theological interest in *La divina commedia* and in death with the figure of Dante engraved on his tomb; Ruskin is simply ubiquitous. Dante's influence on churchmen was no less profound, though it is perhaps ironic that the Newman of *Gerontius* appears to resist his conception of fiery purgation while Protestant authors seem so full of Dantean enthusiasm as to overcome their opposition to Purgatory with an after-death 'soul-

sleep'. Henry Irving, Cardinal Manning, F. D. Maurice, Mrs Oliphant and Oscar Wilde appear among the lengthy list of minor but nonetheless diverting characters. At the centre of the whole lies the Rossetti dynasty, headed by the political exile and therefore Dantesque Gabriele, attractively if erroneously wedded to the notion of the Ghibelline Dante as an anti-papal proto-Freemason. All four of Gabriele's children, while distancing themselves from their father's more colourful interpretations of his hero, contributed to the substantial Dante industry of their age. While Dante Gabriel and Christina quite naturally take centre stage in Milbank's analysis and portions of Christina's work in particular are explored in some detail, the contributions of William and Maria Francesca are not neglected.

It is mildly unfortunate that the publication of Andrew Thompson's analysis of Italian influences in the fiction of George Eliot should coincide with that of Milbank's virtuosic study, for the two works cover some of the same ground, whether in terms of Eliot's devotion to Mazzini and the cause of Italian national self-determination or her acceptance of Dante's notion of *contrapasso* in determining the fate of individual characters. Thompson's work is somewhat pedestrian and can only suffer by comparison. Attention is quite naturally devoted to the Florentine *quattrocento* subject matter of *Romola*, to the honeymooning Casaubons in Rome and their home life among Middlemarchers provincially ignorant of Dante, as well as to the Zionism of *Daniel Deronda* which is to be understood by reference to the Risorgimento. Additionally, we find Transome Hall in *Felix Holt, the Radical* a latter-day Inferno and its inhabitants caught in the circles of the same. The exile and the suspicious foreigner loom suitably large, whether in the person of the displaced Caterina Sarti in 'Mr Gilfil's Love-Story' or the threatening presence of the decidedly unEnglish Will Ladislaw. Thompson's sensitivity to textual details is commendable but it is not matched by a thorough command of the contexts in which those works are set. Neglected opportunities include mention of the original of Mr Gilfil's patron Sir Christopher Cheverel, the Italophile Sir Roger Newdigate of Arbury, while appreciation of *Romola* is marred by the erroneous claim that Savonarol 'established a Republic' in Florence, a constitutional state which actually endured before, during and after the friar's public ministry there. Eagle-eyed readers may also note that while Milbank correctly identifies the Florentine monument to Dante in S. Croce as no more than a memorial, Thompson assumes that it is the exiled poet's tomb. This is not to say that Milbank's breakneck, almost breathless, survey is not free from minor misfortunes, many of them associated with names, so that Guido Guinizelli appears variously as Guinicelli and Guinizzelli, de Tocqueville has become painfully truncated, and there is momentary doubt about the authorship of the burlesque *Medea* (153–54); further Italian lapses include 'Giovine' for Giovane, 'Giacimo' for Giacomo and 'pallazi' for palazzi. In addition to the end notes, the utility of Milbank's work would have been enhanced by a bibliography. These matters apart, the two volumes each make distinctive contributions to the burgeoning literature on nineteenth-century British enthusiasm for all things Italian and are sure to be eagerly devoured accordingly.

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S. R. Fletcher

Keith A. Sandiford and **Brian Stoddart** (eds), *The Imperial Game: Cricket, Culture and Society*, Manchester University Press, 1998, pp. viii + 178, £40.00.

The current growth of interest in the history of sport provides a context for Sandiford and Stoddart's collection of essays on cricket and imperialism. The book is published in Manchester University Press's 'Studies in Imperialism' series, joining a list of titles that have helped to take the study of imperial history well beyond the political, military, and economic: medicine, drama, propaganda, and gender are among the themes so far covered. Cricket's inclusion is perhaps an obvious addition to this list, and perhaps a belated one due to its self-evident importance in promoting, consolidating, and undermining the British imperial relationships: as Stoddart puts it in this collection, 'Where the British flag went, so too went cricket, to the extent that "Games" might well have been a legitimate addition to the maxim that imperialism was about "God, Gold and Glory"' (135). This collection is a welcome one for historians working in a number of spheres. Those interested in the histories of sport, imperialism, masculinity, cultural politics, and national identities will find much here of interest.

The collection is divided into eight chapters, written by established sports historians from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa. The first five chapters deal with individual cricketing 'countries': England, Australia, South Africa, the West Indies, and New Zealand. These are followed by a chapter on the subcontinent, covering India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, and Brian Stoddart's groundbreaking work on 'other cultures', covering the USA, Canada, Fiji, and Samoa. The collection is concluded by the provocative synoptic essay by Stoddart on 'cricket, culture and meaning'. As should be clear from this breakdown, the editors and authors are interested in far more than a mere recording of the way in which cricket developed in different imperial settings. Their agenda is driven by the need to contextualise, to show continuities as well as changes, and to explore the ways in which the sport has taken on meanings (national, geographical, social, gendered, and, of course, ethnic) in its different settings. As such, it builds on the many useful studies of sport and imperialism (most famously in J. A. Mangan's work), and brings in many fresh ideas and approaches from contemporary historiography.

Cricket is a sport which has always inspired creative writing, from its early journalists and historians through Neville Cardus, C. L. R. James, and John Arlott, and the role of this genre in the sport's imperial history is given some consideration in this collection. For example, Sandiford's essay on England stresses the ways in which 'the printed word' (26) helped to disseminate some of cricket's key ideologies and mythologies throughout the Empire in the nineteenth century and beyond: journalism, coaching books, and *Wisden Cricketer's Almanack* all portrayed the sport as 'a perfect system of manners, ethics and morals' (9). In the colonies and dominions themselves, the literature has displayed ambivalent tendencies of Anglophilia and national self-expression, 'inner contradictions' (84) best seen in C. L. R. James's cricket writings.

This collection adds much to our understanding of cricket's role in imperial history. The focus on the colonised as well as the colonisers, and the contemporary view of how cricket has played a role in inventing stereotypes and identities, ensures that

the book fills a unique niche in the historiography of the sport and of the political and economic structure of which it has been a part.

King Alfred's, Winchester

Martin Polley

Colin Graham, *Ideologies of Epic: Nation, Empire and Victorian Epic Poetry*, Manchester University Press, 1998, pp. 194, £40.

Considering how hard it is to find any Victorian epic poetry worth the name, Dr Graham has chosen a somewhat rarefied subject. He takes for guide the writings of M. M. Bakhtin, though with many supplementary ideas of his own. A sentence of 49 words on p. 1 gives us the gist of the method. The key word is 'monologism', the quality that separates epic from the many-tongued novel. Bakhtin also gives the epic some kind of 'national' character; more cautiously, Graham thinks of it as belonging to 'a particular nation or, more widely, a perceived cultural grouping' (123). He takes three writers, each of them reworking materials from antiquity. Only one has a claim of his own to high poetical gifts: Tennyson, who comes first and who strongly influenced the other two. As Graham admits, he himself firmly disclaimed any thought of the *Idylls of the King* as an epic, and some critics, like Bagehot, considered them simply a series of tales. Graham finds in them a reflexion of the decline of the British empire, which the author greatly admired, and as Laureate was in duty bound to extol. Likenesses are clear enough; the difficulty is that Victoria's empire was highly visible and tangible, whereas Arthur's is destitute of any national or political substance, and consists only of words, often to be sure highly imaginative. He has the support of a feudal array of knights, but not of any other class, if there are any others; and his army is in action only in the suicidal civil war at the end. Until then heroic individuals alone take the stage.

Samuel Ferguson brought out in 1872 an English version of Irish heroic legend, *Congal*. He was an Anglo-Irish landlord, pro-Union and pro-Empire, but with some scholarly interest in Irish antiquities. He was 'almost feudal' in his social outlook, but sufficiently alive to contemporary realities to understand that his class was in need of middle-class allies. He aimed at a 'national epic', devoid of any nationalist politics. A suitable theme was not easy to find. Rejecting the obvious choice of the *Tain*, an authentic epic but too closely linked with the old mythic Ulster, he fell back on an obscure Dark Age battle, the outcome of a conflict between the north and the rest of Ireland with its high king. He made use of two poems, touched up by his own pen. To judge by the few specimens given us, his poetic endowment did not rise much above doggerel. Edwin Arnold was a teacher who went out to India to be principal of the government college at Poona, and in 1879 bought out his chief work, *The Light of Asia*, a versified life of Buddha. It won him a 'bizarre' though brief acclaim (126), and made him inordinately proud of his achievement. There were critics however who objected to his too Christlike picture of Buddha; also to his later work, translations of episodes from the Mahabharata, as likely to fuel Indian nationalism. Graham himself feels that although Arnold was in some degree an 'Orientalist' in Edward Said's sense, he did unwittingly contribute to the growth of patriotic thinking in India. He wrote in a 'pseudo-medievalised', exaggeratedly Tennysonian

language (161). We cannot always be on the heights; Graham has given us interesting sidelights on some byways of our nineteenth-century poetry, and of its political background.

University of Edinburgh

V. G. Kiernan

Monica F. Cohen, *Professional Domesticity in the Victorian Novel: Women, Work and Home*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 216, £35.

This intelligent and largely well-written book has the potential to draw from a wide constituency of readers. Though possibly becoming rather hackneyed, the study of Victorian domestic ideology and gendered 'separate spheres' is still widely accepted as fundamental to any understanding of (particularly) mid-nineteenth-century culture. Monica Cohen places this at the heart of her discussion and interrelates domesticity with contemporaneous notions of professionalisation, with a particular tipping of the philosophical hat to Max Weber. A broad (if traditionally canonical) selection of nineteenth-century fiction is scanned, ranging from Austen to Charlotte Brontë, Dickens to George Eliot. It is perhaps unfortunate that this implicit canonicity is never viewed as an issue for discussion in itself.

The opening discussion of Austen, the pair of chapters on Dickens, and the second of the two chapters on Eliot are particularly insightful and polished. The analysis of the intersection of competing discourses of national identity in *Persuasion*, the interrelation of environment and codes of behaviour in *Great Expectations*, and the focus (albeit an almost incidental one) on nationalism in *Daniel Deronda*, are especially interesting. The argument here is crisp and revealing, and the strategies for 'reading' Home and uncovering the implied Protestantism of domesticity facilitate persuasive criticisms of the individual novels.

My main reservation about the volume is that, despite the clarity and insight of the critical voice, there is something almost remarkably orthodox about the field of study that is engaged with. The dustjacket refers to the fact that 'much attention has recently been given by scholars to the widening of the gender group in the nineteenth century and the concept of separate spheres' with no apparent acknowledgement that these notions have long since been commonplaces of Victorian Studies. As a consequence the project as a whole feels a little dated. This is compounded by the fact that the analysis is founded in the ready acceptance of an existent 'mid-century novelistic discourse'. The asserted homogeneity of the way in which Victorian novelists went about their task and represented their world is viewed (seemingly) as a truism. Perhaps it more closely resembles a historical stereotype. True, Victorian novelists shared obvious market considerations and suffered the conservatism of publishers. They also shared (inevitably) what Bourdieu calls 'doxa', the unconscious assumptions that inform social practice. That said, any assumption of homogeneity is problematic, and cannot be seen as an uncomplicated truism.

As such the more radical tendency in modern Victorian Studies to see mid-late nineteenth-century cultural production as characterised by an almost infinitely heterogeneous polyphony of distinct and often competing voices might be seen to reject the feasibility of the coherent and unified novelistic discourse Monica Cohen

projects. At the very least such revisionism poses fundamental questions of a study that achieves contentiousness almost in spite of itself.

King Alfred's, Winchester

Neil McCaw

Heather Ingham, *Women's Fiction Between the Wars: Mothers, Daughters and Writing*, Edinburgh University Press, 1998, pp. 180, £40, £14.95 pb; **Phyllis Lassner**, *British Women Writers of World War II: Battleground of Their Own*, Macmillan, 1998, pp. 293, £45.

Women's writing of the First World War has excited far more critical attention than women's writing of the Second World War. As Phyllis Lassner observes in *British Women Writers of World War II*, until relatively recently it could still be assumed 'that English literature had somehow glossed over the century's most cataclysmic event' (1). Lassner's new study joins a spate of books which shift attention to the later war. They include Karen Schneider's *Loving Arms: British Women's Writing of the Second World War* (1997), Jenny Hartley's *Millions Like Us: British Women's Fiction of the Second World War* (1997), and Gill Plain's *Women's Fiction of the Second World War: Gender, Power and Resistance* (1996). What all these have in common is their thorough excavation and examination of neglected fiction. In their very different ways they each mount a challenge to the old critical orthodoxy which has viewed war as the exclusive preserve of men while recognising the diversity of women's responses to war, from enthusiastic endorsement to unqualified pacifism, and its representation in their imaginative writing. As Gill Plain has put it, 'women are not inherently opposed to war, any more than they are congenitally inclined towards sentimentality, nurturance or the colour pink' (ix).

This is an interesting and useful book, particularly in the insights which Lassner offers into the representation of the Jew, her discussion of forgotten writers like Betty Miller, the attention which she pays to anti-semitism, and the importance which she attaches to the growth of Fascism. Lassner provides us with much to think about throughout the book, and she is particularly strong on how women writers like Storm Jameson and Phyllis Bottome refused to become victims and expressed their identification with the powerless and dispossessed. Her book goes some way to corroborate Elizabeth Bowen's view that all war writing is 'resistance writing' as it works out its own politics of concern. Lassner's language and arguments can occasionally be imprecise or prolix, a tendency which is marked in a poorly written introduction. What, for example, is the sentence 'All together, their writing represents an epic of moral clarification, working as a self-reflexive document that transverses human experience, memory, and history' (23) doing in a book that would seem in places to argue the very opposite?

Heather Ingham provides the first study of the parallels between inter-war women writers and women psychoanalysts. She deals with the mother-daughter relationship in literature in the context of the daughter's life as a writer and looks in some detail at the work of key inter-war writers, Elizabeth Bowen, Vera Brittain, Ivy Compton-Burnett, Rose Macaulay, Jean Rhys, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Virginia Woolf. Ingham avoids the danger of making the psychological do too much work,

and of seeing relationships in literature as caused by the mother-daughter relationship rather than structured through them, by anchoring the literary texts in the surrounding social realities. The first chapter establishes the political and historical contexts in which Ingham's writers wrote and thus answers a criticism commonly levied at this kind of work, that it can be ahistorical. The second chapter which discusses psychoanalytical theories of motherhood is a model of clarity. Ingham encompasses the alternatives to Freud's accounts of women's psychic development provided by the four 'founding mothers' of psychoanalysis, Helene Deutsch, Karen Horney, Anna Freud and Melanie Klein, the leading French feminist theorists, Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva, and contemporary feminist theorists of maternal thinking including Sarah Ruddick and Jessica Benjamin. Ingham sees the mother figure as empowering and her analysis of how daughters look to the mother as a muse, 'viewed with hatred, longing, love, the figure that animates their writing' (166) is sophisticated and illuminating.

Women's Fiction Between the Wars never strays far from the literary. Ingham sees the central character's quest in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* in the framework of Helene Deutsch's theories about women's psychology, Rose Macaulay's characters in relation to Karen Horney's ideas about women in flight from their own womanhood, and Ivy Compton-Burnett's fictional matriarchs as representations of Julia Kristeva's ideas of the pseudo-masculine woman who become zealous guardians of the established order. *Women's Fiction Between the Wars* is an excellent example of how a body of French feminist theory that once had a reputation for abstraction can be richly informative when applied to literary texts.

Anglia Polytechnic University

Mary Joannou

J. D. Marshall, *The Tyranny of the Discrete: A Discussion of the Problems of Local History in England*, Scolar Press, 1997, pp. vii + 152, £40; **Edward Royle** (ed.), *Issues of Regional Identity: In Honour of John Marshall*, Manchester University Press, 1998, pp. xi + 252, £40.

These two books on regional and local history are framed with strident quotations from dissident literature. *The Tyranny of the Discrete* opens with a resounding extract from the preface to George Orwell's *Animal Farm*: 'If liberty means anything at all it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear'. The second ends with some lines from Marshall's own poem about George Fox the Quaker:

How could such a man walk quiet down the lanes?
His passion and his vision stored ...

They closely related to the content of many of the intervening pages.

The first book is a pugnacious assault on what the study of local history has often become and a tract arguing for what it ought to be. Marshall bemoans the fact that local history has been one of the least controversial of all branches of historical studies. There have been few major debates about questions of definition. The report of the Blake Committee on local history in 1979 was bland in the extreme; the pages

of the journal *The Local Historian* have rarely been enlivened with disagreements. Too often, in Marshall's view, local history – the bulk of whose adherents are amateurs – has capitulated to a reverentially documentary approach to the subject and to the undemanding call of antiquarianism. Antiquarianism, for Marshall, is the great enemy of true local history and he brands it as a 'false trail', even a dangerous 'heresy', 'an inability to distinguish what features of the past are historically significant; an indiscriminately romantic attitude to the past'. He cannot understand why W. G. Hoskins wasted valuable pages on the antiquarians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the impression given here is that they are best forgotten. 'Primitive antiquarianism' which nourishes and is in turn nourished by the Heritage Industry comes in for special condemnation; nothing demonstrates more clearly 'the tyranny of the discrete' of Marshall's title and the avoidance of the necessary rigours of historical interpretation. (The full force of his invective is reserved for Heritage promotion strategies which entail a 'dumbing down' through the creation of 'hyper-realities' which both falsify the past and deaden the curiosity and imagination of the public.) 'Formalized antiquarianism', represented by a host of 'learned' societies and groups like English Heritage, is another variant. But even the best antiquarianism can only be described as 'proto-historical'. Marshall does not mince his words. 'Double standards', one set for amateurs and the other for professionals will not do; both kinds of practitioner need to work with the same methodologies and to the same ends. Others, too, feel the lash. Local archaeology and industrial archaeology are written off as being merely descriptive rather than analytical. Few professional historians are praised in this hard-hitting book. The so-called 'Leicester School' of local history incurs much criticism. Inadequate definitions of the subject propounded by W. G. Hoskins and H. P. R. Finberg for too long went unchallenged and encouraged a replicating uniformity. The 'rural fixation' and 'community obsession' of these historians come under fire. They indulged a tunnel vision by idealising the past and turning their back on the present.

Local history, says Marshall, needs to make new claims to justify its undoubted, but so far unfulfilled, importance. Marshall's preference here – as on so many other previous occasions – is for a holistically regional framework for local history, 'a counterpoint of discovery between the localist and the regionalist. It is a fallacy [he says] to imagine that one can exist satisfactorily without the other'. Local history should ground its agenda in the lives of present-day communities (appealing to civic consciousness, for example), and the teaching of the subject should be relevant, controversial, and concerned actively and explicitly with ideas. A retrogressive approach – going back from what is current and most familiar to a different, partially known or unknown, past – has much to recommend it. And all those postgraduate theses on local and regional history gathering dust in university libraries, says Marshall, need to be brought into circulation and use!

The second volume in this duo, a *festschrift*, exemplifies the kinds of holistic regional history for which the first was calling. With essays supplied by friends, former colleagues, and past students, issues to do with the economic, social, cultural, and religious identity of regions are explored. Historical geographers, social historians, business historians, join forces with regional and local historians in a shared enterprise. The northern counties – Marshall's own principal stomping ground – gain most attention, but the Basque Country gains an entrée and a thumb-nail sketch is offered of the economic margins of Europe. North Wales and the Fens each get a separate

chapter. Regional finance is the subject of another essay. The continuities and discontinuities of Lancashire Catholicism receive attention in chapter five. Another essay, national in scope, looks at regional variations in the employment of women in the grocery trade between 1851 and 1911. Marshall's less than conventional and easy career is recounted and his role as a proselytiser for regional history celebrated. The portrait of the historian offered in the final chapter draws attention to his 'gritty nature', his unflagging energy and missionary zeal. He comes across here – and *The Tyranny of the Discrete* strongly reinforces the impression – as an outsider, working hard 'against the smooth but tight grain of professional academic life', 'a man with a different point of view, who cannot be easily categorised, who is unwilling to fit in for the sake of harmony [and] who has generated strong passions'. Marshall is obviously not a historian who can be neatly fitted into a comfortable niche (the very concept of which he would himself deny). Worth noting for readers of this journal are the complementary facts that his passionate concern for the exploration of regional identities was expressed not only in his creative role in the Centre for North-West Regional Studies at Lancaster University but in his work as co-founder of the Cumbria Poetry Centre in Ambleside.

King Alfred's, Winchester

R. C. Richardson

Felix Driver and David Gilbert (eds), *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity*, Manchester University Press, 1999, pp. 283, £45.

Studies in Imperialism, of which this is the latest volume, has established itself as a valuable, genuinely interdisciplinary series. Based on the conviction of its general editor, John MacKenzie, that imperialism as 'a cultural phenomenon has had as significant an effect on the dominant as on the subordinate societies', it has explored many subjects since 1985 which would never have been studied at all a generation before. *Imperial Cities* were already being studied then, however, and a historiographic essay, even a note, would have been a useful addition to a very useful book. There are many omissions of relevant books in the footnotes to the individual contributions.

As it is, the introductory essay by Felix Driver and David Gilbert, both geographers, not historians, as are most of the contributors, is one of the best introductions to any of the volumes. It explains that the book had its origins in an academic conference and is concerned with 'the relationship between imperial culture and urban space', and it starts vividly with a poster of 1932, inviting Londoners (and others) to 'Visit the Empire'. All that was needed was a ticket for the London Underground. Much of the book pivots on the relationship between inhabitants and tourists, crucial to an understanding of the shifting relationships that 'explain' the cityscapes of London, Rome, Paris, Vienna, Marseilles, Seville and, not least, Glasgow (MacKenzie's own subject) which are the particular places, very diverse places, on which the book focuses. There are interesting insights too on the role of national and international exhibitions, the subject of an earlier volume in the series.

The editors wisely point out – this is the great strength of their introduction – that they are concerned with only one dimension of the cities they call 'imperial'. What is on offer, they state, is an interpretation of city landscapes 'at least in part'. 'Imperial

centrality' can never be taken as central. 'Imperialism' itself must be 'understood as a necessarily hybrid though still uneven experience, shaping the identity of the colonisers as much as that of the colonised'.

Most of the contributors point to 'tensions' and 'contradictions', but, as always in such detailed studies the contributors are uneven in quality. There is an off-putting first sentence comparing reactions to the deaths of Queen Victoria and Princess Diana, but there are particularly thoughtful contributions from Andrew Hassam on 'portable iron structures and uncertain colonial spaces at the Sydenham Crystal Palace' and by Christopher Breward on 'Sartorial Spectacle: clothing and masculine identities in the imperial city'. Neither of these is marginal, as their titles might suggest. Another illuminating contribution is Rebecca Preston's "'The scenery of the torrid Zone": imagined travels and the culture of exotica in nineteenth-century British gardens'. It may or may not be significant that each of these three contributions deals not with a particular city but with a particular theme. The illustrations, while not well reproduced, as well chosen throughout. There are two wonderful postcards from imperial Vienna.

Lewes, Sussex

Asa Briggs

Hayden White, *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999, pp. 205, £31.50.

'I had intended to write a long introduction relating the essays in this collection ... essays I have written since the publication in 1987 of *The Content of the Form* ... to one another and to the sets of essays I have published in the past. But after a few attempts at synthesis that bored even me ... I decided to let the essays stand by themselves as contributions to the specific discussions that occasioned them'. (p. vii) Gathered under the title of *Figural Realism* (a phrase White takes from Auerbach's *Mimesis* because the essays in the volume all try to show 'how figurative language can be said to refer to reality quite as faithfully and much more effectively than any putatively literalist idiom or mode of discourse might do'), the said essays range far and wide in ways which both 'deepen' and extend White's previous work, 'context or no context'. There is nothing exactly new here for those already familiar with White's work (there are essays on Literary Theory and Writing, Emplotment and Truth, Historical Exploration, The Modernist Event, Auerbach's Literary History, Freud, Proust, and Musical Discourse) but such is his capacity to put things so unerringly 'right' that they resonate with new significances, making them unmissable theoretical pieces.

Yet there is a problem which may not give this volume the immediate attention it ought to get from students of history. For although White is famous for his *Meta-history* (1973), and while those within this 'discourse' know his articles well, his two previous collections of essays do not much figure on the reading lists of 'theory and method' introductory courses at university level. And maybe this has something to do with their titles. *Tropics of Discourse* (1978) and *The Content of the Form* (1987) hardly announce that these are history texts, whilst *Figured Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect*, is to be found in bookshops (in Blackwell's for example) not in

the history section at all but on the shelves reserved for Literary Theory and Criticism.

I can only urge, then, as a fan of White's methodological and theoretical position, that this text be put on all reading lists wherever historical theory raises its head and be rigorously referred to and used. From the laid-back 'Preface instead of the Introduction that remains unwritten', to the very last page, White's capacity to illuminate the historical imagination is sustained without let-up, making this a text at once analytically penetrating and intellectually riveting. Now aged over seventy, White's essays have a 'withitness' few younger theorists can match, and which makes him deserve to be one of the most widely read history-theorists of the late twentieth century. And these essays tell you why this 'ought to be so' in no uncertain terms.

University College Chichester

Keith Jenkins

Thomas Doherty, *Criticism and Modernity: Aesthetics, Literature and Nations in Europe and its Academies*, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. vi + 248, £40.

It is one of the key scholarly dilemmas in the humanities: how to link aesthetic and political judgements in a grounded and responsible way. There have been several modern attempts at such a synthesis, mostly heavily influenced by Kant (examples are Hannah Arendt's incomplete *The Life of the Mind* and, more recently, Elaine Scarry's *On Beauty and Being Just*).

Thomas Doherty sets himself a similar task in *Criticism and Modernity*, as reflected in the argumentative sequence of the five big concepts in his subtitle (from aesthetics, through literature, nationality and Europe, to the academy). In the space of nearly 250 densely-packed pages we are shown how aesthetic controversies at the heart of literary development since the seventeenth century can only be fully understood in the political context of emerging European nation-states, and in particular how this understanding controls and represents a range of authorised views of the autonomous subject. This part of the exposition extends the scope of Doherty's earlier and influential study *Alterities*, especially as identity is confirmed by the definition of 'otherness'; in this case Turkey and 'Africa' for Europe as a whole, followed by Scotland and Germany for the English.

The argument is closed by a demonstration of how the academy, and pre-eminently the discipline of English, regulates a general cultural view of what is at stake, as well as a final polemic against the present-day instrumentalist influences on higher education (including the independent 'assessment' of teaching quality) that are seen as undermining its traditional critical capacities.

The detailed readings that underpin this argument are arresting and serious. In each of a series of roughly chronological chapters, the author ties together overarching concepts ('love', 'benevolence', 'democracy', 'singularity', 'aesthetic education') with textual analysis of contemporary controversies (Dryden vs. the Dutch and French, Molière vs. Milton, Shaftesbury vs. Mandeville, Hume vs. Rousseau, Humboldt vs. Newman, to name just a selection). Throughout his subjects' insights are tested against those of modern theorists, especially Derrida, Lyotard, Baudrillard

and Bourdieu. A running theme is the many meanings of 'common sense', including the Habermasian idea (derived again from Kant) of communicability. Most of the French material is dealt with in the original; all of the German is in translation.

The outcome is an emerging picture of European sensibility, and especially of the views promulgated by the academy within it, proceeding on a path of commitment through national allegiance. The self-definition which emerges is both positive and negative, with the latter predominating as the story is brought up to date. The overall effect is of a ringing denunciation of Stanley Fish's view (in his *Professional Correctness*) of a literary criticism which 'has no purpose external to the arena of its practice'.

University of Brighton

David Watson