

Reviews

Kelly Boyd (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Historians and Historical Writing*, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999, 2 vols, I: pp. xl + 742; II: pp. xxxii + 820, £175.

Large, expensive reference books on historical studies seem to be proliferating these days, though they vary in purpose and character. Michael Bentley's substantial *Companion to Historical Historical Studies* (1997) is one of them. It forcefully drew attention to the first word in its title and distanced itself from the dictionary and encyclopaedia formats; its fewer components consisted of longer, reflective, and argumentative essays written, for the most part, by leaders in the field. (A paperback edition of part of it has subsequently been reissued as a student primer). D. R. Woolf (ed.), *A Global Encyclopaedia of Historical Writing* (2 vols, New York, 1998) was no more and no less than its title suggests. Here was a serviceable, densely packed, accessible, reference book, with lots of pithy entries on individual writers, particular topics and periods, concepts and themes, accompanied with the briefest guides to further reading. The latest instalment of this genre to appear, Kelly Boyd's *Encyclopaedia of Historians and Historical Writing*, (2 vols, 1999), comes – conceptually, at any rate – somewhere in between the other two works just mentioned, though it shares an unavoidable eclecticism. In all other ways – including price! – it stands in a class of its own. The mere statistics are staggering. It weighs in excess of five kilos, with two large-format volumes (page size: 21.5 × 27.5 cms) containing over 1,500 pages, and with indexes alone running to 178 pages. There are 862 separate entries written by a total of 377 contributors. There are some big names among them – including the ubiquitous Jeremy Black – but they are greatly outnumbered by others, some of them research students. The editor provides the briefest of introductions explaining the nature of the enterprise and offering a thumbnail sketch of the development of historiography; the text of the encyclopaedia, therefore, very largely stands alone and is left to speak for itself.

In terms of chronology of coverage, the heavy concentration on the twentieth century is unmistakable; the nineteenth century drags a long way behind in second place. The geographical scope and distribution are no less plain to see. The West, clearly, gets pride of place; the sheer volume of entries on Europe (especially Britain) and the USA is far greater than those on all the rest of the world put together. China, Japan, and India are not omitted, but they are poor relations in the allocation of space. And there are noticeable quirks in relative weightings which may or may not indicate an almost haphazard process of accumulation. Argentina and Brazil get considerably more space than Australia and the same as that allotted to two thirds of the African continent. Ireland has more pages devoted to it than India.

As regards thematic coverage theorising and theorists come out quite well in terms of the emphasis they receive. Althusser, Foucault, Said, and White all receive their due. Postmodernism and postcolonialism attract separate treatment. Cultural history receives recognition and there is much on historical approaches to the study of gender and sexuality. Articles are included on childhood studies, on the history of the body, on mentalities, on consumers and consumerism, and on crime and deviance. There is a separate article – a rather blinkered piece and limited chiefly to a historiographical survey – on the interface between literature and history. But there are significant gaps and imbalances. Reader Response theory – as relevant to historians as to cultural critics – somehow gets left out. Business history and urban history find a place; transport history does not. Women's history has a notable presence but feminist studies almost creep in by a back door; in terms of page weight Feminism gets little more than Feudalism. (Here the editor's introductory remark: 'That women have infiltrated the ranks of historians in greater numbers is only the smallest part of this story. More significant is the expansion of the historical imagination' may well provide part of the explanation). The impact of computers and computerisation gets short shrift. Ecclesiastical history has more space here than social history or cultural history. The slant of some of the thematic articles seems at times almost outrageously dependant on the nationality of the contributor. The reader would scarcely guess, for example, from the entries here on agrarian history and local history that these were fields in which crucial, pioneering, map-making, work had been done in England. Written by the same author, both articles devote themselves almost exclusively to trends in American research and writing.

The largest single category of articles is biographies. Homage is done here to the great names from all periods in the development of historiography; the historian's canon, for the most part, is amply defended in these two volumes. Gibbon, Macaulay, Carlyle, Ranke, Stubbs, Acton, Namier, Tawney, Elton, the Annales School, Christopher Hill and E. P. Thompson are all assessed. (One wonders, however, what has happened to others like Bacon, Clarendon, and Robertson)? The concentration on western historians is again noticeable, and fewer women historians than might have been expected find a place. The medievalist Sir Frank Stenton (1880–1967) has an assured position in this portrait gallery; his wife, Doris Stenton, a medievalist of arguably no less stature, gets left out. (On the other hand, historian Alice Green (1847–1929) finds a place in this encyclopaedia whereas J. R. Green, her husband and author of *A Short History of the English People* (1874), one of the great Victorian bestsellers, is excluded.)

Clearly, no publication of this kind could hope to be comprehensive. Selectivity is unavoidable. The principles of selection here, however, are largely concealed. Who

or what gets in or omitted seems largely a matter of chance. There are all kinds of imbalance in these two hefty volumes – chronological, geographical, ideological, and thematic. The actual length of the articles themselves seems almost arbitrary. There is much unevenness in the quality of the writing; incisive scholarship and rather flabby journalism rub shoulders here. All such criticisms apart, however, there is an undeniable utility in this project for historians and others in adjacent disciplines. At such a high price individual academics are not likely to regard it as something that they must rush out to buy for themselves. But university and college librarians can look upon the *Encyclopaedia of Historians and Historical Writing* as a sound acquisition for their reference collections. There is a formidable amount of knowledge and judgement packed into these 1,500 pages, in the very valuable bibliographies as well as in the articles themselves.

King Alfred's College, Winchester

R. C. Richardson

Nabil Matar *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*, Columbia University Press, 1999, pp. xi+268, \$32.50.

In the days of 'old' historicism that his manner of exposition recalls, Nabil Matar's *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*, and his recent *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), would probably have been published under one title. *Islam* concerns itself primarily with domestic consequences of Islamic exposures, *Turks*, a looser aggregation of essays, with Britons abroad and constructions of Others in Britain and America. Manifesting impressively wide scholarship, both books foreground materials whose neglect in recent cultural studies has distorted contemporary views of early modern England's cross-cultural confidence and power. Matar provides sharp correctives to Edward Said's *Orientalism* and post-colonial studies that magnify England's imperial beginnings. He insists that, discursive reassurances notwithstanding, pre-Enlightenment England did not dominate, but lived in pervasive fear of, and collaboration with, Ottomans and North Africans. By Matar's account, England's conflation of American and Mediterranean 'Moors' was strategic and defensive: on to intimidating Muslim Others, England projected characteristics (fecklessness, sodomy, diabolism) supposedly prevalent among subject New World natives. 'Triumphant in America, the English found themselves humbled in North Africa and the Levant', and they therefore 'superimposed' constructions of alterity from the American on to the Eastern theatre (*Turks*, 15). To possess the New Canaan fuelled resolve to take the Old and cleared imaginative space for empire.

A fascinating, elegant hypothesis – but was the superimposition so deliberate as Matar maintains, and did the English become 'conquerors in Virginia' (15) so early as this argument would seem to suggest? The major irony besetting the book is that, even as Matar dismantles anachronistic back-readings of European hegemony in Asia, he endorses an attendant mythos of New World conquest that scarcely distinguishes Spanish from English achievement there. While he cites Jeffrey Knapp and Mary Fuller, Matar does not register the force of their arguments: that England's early initiative in the Americas was a blundering, often catastrophic business that salvaged spiritual or textural achievement from material failure. The contradiction that Matar observes of

Anglo-Islamic relations – the disparities between fictive empowerments in London and practical limitations abroad – likewise held, until well into the seventeenth century, for Anglo-American initiatives. If England's constructions of Muslims often depended, as Matar argues, rather on prior constructions than on first-hand experience, then England required no experience of New World conquest in order to construct dominable others, West or East: the crucial tropes of ethnocentric dismissal antedated colonization. While Matar clearly demonstrates, then, that English visions, sometimes 'lumping the whole "uncivilized" world indiscriminately together' (107), fused Muslim and New World others, his primary claim that the latter's superimposition on the former was deliberate and attentive, not insular and confused, remains sketchy.

Perhaps the case would have been clearer had the book generated closer readings of works pivotal to the argument. Surveying discursive fields, accumulating Turkish and Moroccan allusions, Matar inclines rather to schematic generalization than to sustained analysis of influential texts. The material he thus illuminates, particularly the English captivity narratives reviewed in one chapter and listed in an appendix, will be invaluable to scholars following his lead.

Oregon State University, Corvallis

Richmond Barbour

Carl B. Estabrook, *Urbane and Rustic England: Cultural Ties and Social Spheres in the Provinces, 1660–1780*, Manchester University Press, 1998, pp. xiv + 317, £49.00.

Carl Estabrook seeks in this book to identify the influence of towns on the cultural and social life of neighbouring villages in a period when towns are considered to have undergone an urban renaissance – between 1660 and 1780. His choice falls on Bristol, a port renowned for its expanding trade, burgeoning population and boisterous contacts with the New World at this time, and villages lying within twelve miles in Gloucestershire and Somerset. He draws on much varied evidence, including diaries, wills, inventories, sermons, quarter sessions business and newspapers, and his conclusions rest on a strong statistical base. Here and there the niceties of those analyses demand strenuous mental concentration from the reader. But in general his thirty-six tables do not dominate the scene, leaving room for many shrewd portraits of people and perceptive descriptions of events that sensitively conjure up the atmosphere of the time.

The contrasts in the seasonal rhythms of town and country are well sketched in. Bristol's markets, fairs, assize sessions, and royal visits were milestones in its urban year, whereas villagers planned their lives by the farming calendar, taking more notice of the differing hours of daylight and darkness, and the different rations of time for their meetings in the fields and in the alehouses. Intriguing reflections follow from the evidence of games like skittles and shuffleboard being found in private houses in Bristol but only in taverns in the countryside.

Estabrook proceeds methodically, testing such cultural and social influences of the urban lifestyle as are measurable in documents, and showing at every turn the tacit resistance of rural communities to the aliens hovering on their fringe. His verdict is not unexpected: in many parts of the present-day world we can observe the same cultural gulf, and the same mutual suspicion, broken down very slowly indeed despite

the pace and aggressive procedures of our communication networks. Estabrook documents the same resistance and a trickling infiltration. Country people did not care to apprentice their sons in town, though the demand for woodworkers and builders did allow for some bridging of the divide. Marriages upheld separate values, townspeople preferring partners from the town, country folk partners from their own or another village. The ownership of luxury goods, of books, ephemeral literature, and maps (these last noticeably conspicuous in this port city) similarly exemplify the different aspirations of town and country people. Some effective illustrations are given of the vague rural geography that satisfied Bristol reporters to their newspapers.

Estabrook sees the two separate worlds converging after a hundred years, by the 1760s. But before that he notes the importance of alliances forged between gentlemen and professionals living in the country and relying on the town to satisfy their intellectual and consumerist urges. He demonstrates this dependence through the possession of books and decorative household wares (he should note that it has been further superbly illustrated in a recent volume of Worcestershire gentlemen's inventories: *Worcs. Hist. Soc.*, NS, vol. 16, 1998). He also scrutinizes in an original way many other threads in the weave of his story, showing, for example, credit networks, market trading sites and traders separating town and countrymen from each other. But finally, in drawing the two worlds together, he underlines the role of dissenters in joining sympathetically the two groups, and then places most weight of all on the actions of townsmen intruding into the countryside to create suburbias: they 'reinvented bucolic space as a bourgeois commodity', he says. It happened when townsmen began to see the drawbacks of urban life, in the dirt and smoke, the crime, and the congested living space. He will startle most agricultural historians by seeing in enclosure agreements and awards a somewhat precocious scheming by town developers viewing this opportunity to subdivide land for suburban speculation. But all in all, his careful study of Bristol, forging for itself a bolder commercial role in the kingdom at this time, is a persuasive example of the way that 'suburbanites mediated the town-country divide'.

Hadlow, Kent

Joan Thirsk

Stephanie L. Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood*, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 267, £40.

This study of the impact of British legend on nineteenth-century British national identity is both provocative and thoroughly documented. In the introduction, King Arthur, according to legend, is an English hero of the knightly classes; Robin Hood is linked to men of humbler rank: the king and the outlaw. Both men were firmly established in nineteenth-century literature as national heroes by such works as Edward Bulwer Lytton's epic poem, *King Arthur* (1849), and Vivian Matthews and Alick Manley's burlesque extravaganza, *Little Red Robin* (1900).

The Arthurian legend, not mentioned by well regarded sources like Bede and Gildas, can be found only in limited allusions in the eleventh-century Welsh prose story of *Culhwch and Olwen* which is greatly enlarged in *Historia regum Britanniae*

by Geoffrey of Monmouth, a twelfth-century Oxford cleric. The Arthurian romance, originated by Chrétien de Troyes, entertained French readers for two hundred years. In the fifteenth century, Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* brought the full account of the Knights of the Round Table to English readers, and subsequent kings of England from Henry VII to James I used Arthurian imagery as political propaganda repeatedly in court pageants and masques. During the Civil War, King Arthur assumed a royalist pose. Puritans looked elsewhere for national symbols; Milton consulted his Bible.

In chapter one these two English heroes are identified as opposing types. King Arthur is portrayed as an aristocrat with political power; Robin Hood is always an outlaw, apparently well-born, not a serf, and he is associated with a folk festival known as the May games where he became a 'Lord of Misrule'. Victorian Britons espoused tales of King Arthur and Robin Hood as the roots of their national identity, which they adapted to the exigencies of their own time. Robin Hood appealed to the revolutionary spirit, the quest for freedom in America and France. King Arthur assumed the pose of a Wellington in opposition to Napoleon.

Barczewski examines the construction and development of national identity in nineteenth-century England through a reflective study of English history. Here, Robin Hood and King Arthur assume adaptive roles. Young Protestant reformers become Galahads out to tilt with the evils of society. Robin Hood is the plebeian hero who robs the rich to aid the poor. Chapters three and four examine the role of these heroes in native language and literature. Reflections of Arthur and Robin Hood, contributed to the rise of a nineteenth-century attitude towards race, as Anglo-Saxons began to identify themselves as a superior race that would dominate the world. Ballads of the life and death of Robin Hood, collected and printed contributed to the nationalistic implications of the late nineteenth century. Rural and historical values combined and found expression in the concept of 'Merrie England'.

Following the rise of English literature as an academic discipline in the nineteenth century, Malory's abridged, sanitized, anglicized *Morte D'Arthur* became a source for Alfred, Lord Tennyson, William Morris and Algernon Charles Swinburne's neo-Arthurian romances of English heroism; Sir Walter Scott's novels celebrated Robin Hood as a symbol of Saxon resistance to Norman oppression.

Chapter five takes a look at the role of women in nineteenth-century literature. Victorian criticism often assumed a misogynist posture, condemning women like Guinevere for Arthur's fall, but treatment of Maid Marian tended to be sympathetic. In the sixth chapter, King Arthur and Robin Hood are associated with place names from Sherwood Forest to the Cornish coast, and King Arthur's invasion of Europe is an early signal of British imperialism. In the concluding chapter, King Arthur and Robin Hood continue to play opposing roles. In a 1935 spy novel, Captain Robin Hood outwits a German spy and saves Merrie England. King Arthur as conveyer T. H. White is caught in a struggle between the Galls (English) and Gaels (Celts). The broad assortment of evidence present in this study leads to the logical conclusion that British national identity is more complex than historians have often assumed.

Hugh Tulloch, *The Debate on the American Civil War Era*, Manchester University Press, 1999, pp. xi + 255, £45.00, £14.99 pb.

The huge volume of historical writing on the American Civil War is enough to daunt any would-be historiographer, but Hugh Tulloch has the courage to review, in one volume, the historical literature on slavery and abolitionism, the origins of the conflict, the war years, and postwar reconstruction. As a critic, he is not only brave, but intelligent and often very perceptive. He is particularly effective in relating the work of historians to the political, social and racial climate of the times in which they wrote. He exposes mercilessly the racial prejudice underlying the work of Phillips on slavery or Dunning and his school on Reconstruction, and he is equally capable of a sustained and judicious critical appreciation of, for example, the works of Eugene Genovese on slavery.

With so much in its favour, why is the book ultimately so unsatisfying? The answer lies in a series of barriers that often permit only a distant and dated view of the historiography. The first, and most substantial, lies in the heavy concentration in every chapter on the earlier historical literature at the expense of recent studies. On abolitionism, for example, there are twenty-five pages on the earlier historiography and four hurried pages on the recent and current debate. Only five out of thirty-eight items listed in the bibliography for this chapter have been published since 1980. There is a similar imbalance in the chapter on the causes of the war, where, after thirty-five pages on the likes of James Ford Rhodes, Charles A. Beard and the Southern revisionists, major recent contributors to the continuing debate, including Eugene Genovese, Michael Holt, William Gienapp, William Freehling and Bruce Levine, are given very short shrift, if they are mentioned at all. This is historiography stuck in a time warp.

A second reason for the 'remote control' over the subject matter is revealed by Hugh Tulloch's own honesty and integrity as a scholar. Many of the references are to other historiographical surveys or collections of readings and the words 'quoted in' run like a refrain through all the notes. In consequence, the reader is too frequently offered a summary of the views of leading historians at one remove, or sometimes two or three removes. The third and most irritating barrier between the reader and the historiography lies in the astonishing profusion of typographical errors, misspellings of names, inaccurate book titles and wrong attributions of authorship. Only a small sample of such errors can be listed here. Not even the best-known authors in the field escape. The full names of Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, Comer Vann Woodward and George Fredrickson are repeatedly mis-spelt. James G. Randall (referred to several times as J. R. Randall), and not T. Harry Williams, is credited with the authorship of *Lincoln and the Radicals* (p. 181). Jefferson Davis's wife becomes Verena, rather than Varina, Howell Davis (p. 197), and Lincoln's minder and general factotum, Ward Hill Lamon, becomes Ward Hill Lania (p. 179). Ambrose Burnside is confused with Joseph Hooker (p. 178). The title of John Hope Franklin's classic text appears as *From Freedom to Slavery* (p. 22) – a title that stands African American history on its head – and the word 'desegregation' is used where its opposite 'segregation' is obviously meant (p. 210). Proof-reading, alas, seems to be a lost art, even in a university press.

It is much to be regretted that what has the potential to be a thoughtful and often

insightful critique of Civil War historiography, of much value to students, has been seriously devalued by so many flaws, great and small.

University of Cambridge

Peter J. Parish

Balachandra Rajan, *Under Western Eyes: India from Milton to Macaulay*, Duke University Press, 1999, pp. 288, £34, £11.95 pb.

Professor Rajan's study is scholarly, subtle, wide-ranging, and within its own boundaries penetrating. It moves however on an abstract as well as complex plane. It is not much concerned with what imperialism brought to ordinary Indians, but rather with what it tried – under 'imperialism's self-justifying compulsions' (4) – to convince public opinion in Britain that it was doing. Two recurrent themes are the 'self-and-other figure', which despite its failings Rajan believes will have continuing prominence; and the concept of India as a feminine entity, destined to fall under a master as women have always done, and ready to welcome him. Rajan rightly gives this fiction no support.

Readers may find the Introduction and Afterword sometimes heavy going; in between are nine chapters devoted to more tangible stepping-stones of history, and to the leading writers who trod them. First comes Camoens, with his epic poem *The Lusíads* about the first Portuguese in India. He has not been much regarded in Britain, but in Rajan's view 'can be considered crucial in the genealogy of English imperial discourse' (7). The curious fact is noted that Portugal's emergence from the sea came at the same time as the Mogul conquest of India by Turks and Persians from middle Asia. A very different spokesman from Camoens was Milton. Few of his readers are likely to have realised how much, as Rajan makes clear, Milton was intrigued by thoughts of India, its vastness and remoteness, and the strange reports about it that were percolating into Europe.

Discussing Dryden's curious – in many ways ludicrous – play about Aurangzeb, last of the great Mogul emperors, Rajan identifies Shuja, one of the princes contesting the succession (a Shia heretic relying on Persian aid), with Charles II's brother James, a Catholic looking to French aid. This is convincing, but it is not much followed up in the play. Poetry is descending towards prose, and reaches it with James Mill and his history of India, a country that he never saw but helped to govern. 'One constructs the past in order to enlist it as the future's accomplice', Rajan aptly comments (79), and the conquest of Bengal had 'eradicated the sometimes thin line that separates commerce from plunder' (81). The attack on Mill is pushed on thoroughly, and is given a sort of companion-piece in Chapter 5, on Hegel's reaction to India: more philosophical than Mill's but with similar foundations of prejudice. Hegel was after all a liegeman to the Prussian monarchy.

Chapter 6 is a new departure, concerned with two forgotten English women writers of the Romantic era. It is of interest to know that women writers could echo the masculine belief in India's femininity, also that Shelley read one of their novels several times. We return to poetry, or to verse at least, with Southey's fantastical long work *The Curse of Kehama*, alias Napoleon. Southey by now was a pious conservative, but even Shelley seems to have shared the prevalent feeling that India needed Britain, though not British tyranny and robbery. And so we come to Macaulay and

his Minute. He is not taken very seriously here, and did not take India very seriously. Some errors about him are set right; but he is held up as an ‘anglicist’, only able to think of turning Indians into second-rate Englishmen. He argued for higher education in English. It may be fair to add that Indians, now free to choose, seem to be making the same choice. Whatever they may be learning, there is a great deal for Britons to learn from this book.

University of Edinburgh

V. G. Kiernan

Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past. Volume III: Symbols*, Columbia University Press, n.d. [1998], pp. xii + 751, £31.95.

This latest volume, on the symbolic sites of French identity, completes the translation of the trilogy directed by Pierre Nora, first published in France 1984–1992, which brought post-Benjamin, post-*Annales*, radical cultural history into the mainstream, and with it a new concept, enshrined in the dictionary in 1993 in Nora’s own terms: the *lieu de mémoire* [locus of memory], which is ‘a signifying unit, of a material or ideal order, which by willed human intention or through the work of time has become a symbolic element for a given community’ (*Le Grand Robert*, rpt. *Realms of Memory*, p. 160 – my translation). Awareness of the constructed nature of the historical object and of the historian’s perspective is the informing dynamic of these analyses, pinpointing key symbolic elements of the shifting function which is the French nation-state. Nora’s valuable closing essay tracks the move from history to heritage, from the national to the patrimonial, explores the definitions of ‘[i]dentity, memory, patrimony: the three key words of contemporary consciousness, the three faces of the new continent, Culture’ (635), and notes the recent significant change in the dynamics of commemoration. He probes the moment of his project’s own inception, between May 1968 and the 1989 Bicentennial of the French Revolution, in that founding flurry of commemoration which signalled the collapse of the consensus that constituted the nation-state, and the evacuation of political substance from ‘the traditional system that was its concentrated symbolic expression’ (614). In present-day France, ‘the epoch as a whole has become commemorative’ (627), but different groups are now recuperating different aspects of a contested heritage, within a nation that since World War I has had no sense of unified values, nor of a single direction. The phenomenon is worldwide, but in France, Nora feels, it is particularly intense, not least because of the national feeling that ‘[France] is no longer a place where history on the grand scale is made’ (610).

The elegiac note struck here is echoed in several of the essays, but is balanced by a powerful sense of the excitement and energies engaged in successive symbolic appropriations. Nora explains in his Introduction his criteria for the selection of content: ‘the evidence of important temporal stratifications, the homogeneity of the sources, and the concurrence of French and/or foreign opinion’ (ix). Part I, ‘Emblems’, covers the four symbols of state: the tricolore, the Marseillaise, the Republican motto, Bastille Day. ‘Major Sites’ moves through the centuries from Jean-Paul Demoule’s Lascaux, tracing the (re)appropriations and ultimate commodification of the archaeological

patrimony, to Antoine Prost's spine-chillingly understated essay on the 'unique' place occupied in the national memory by Verdun, the front-line sacrifice in which every French regiment participated. 'Identifications' homes in on the Gallic Cock, Joan of Arc, Descartes, Paris, and the French language, blending familiar themes with freshly-researched detail and novel perspectives. Marc Fumaroli's account of the perceived genius of the language, for example, covering the construction of the King's tongue from the twelfth century to the Revolution, gives a new share of the credit to the secretaries of the Royal Chancellery. Generous tribute is paid to Marot's generation for lodging the essence of the language in its spoken rhetorics, establishing the new civilization of France as a distinctive living entity, not the mere dependant of antiquity to which, Fumaroli argues, the Pléiade's 'anxious' emulation of Greek and Roman writing would have consigned it. A partisan argument develops, reworking for the 1990s the old simplistic oppositions of Marot/Ronsard, Protestant/Catholic, this time setting morality against humanist literary rhetoric, and – rather oddly – castigating the Pléiade for contributing to France's determination to play a part in the 'grand European competition [...] for diplomatic and military supremacy' (572). Even so, identifying morality as the distinguishing mark of the national language turns out to be a very effective way to narrate its rise. The story moves from the rhythms of Montaigne's ground-breaking conversational syntax (the private subject at ease, for the first time, in the public tongue), through the aristocratic salons of the seventeenth century, up to the eighteenth-century triumphs of French as the language of the diplomatic circles of Europe.

The admirable readability of this book derives, arguably, from the presence of more reliance on coherent narratives than its stated methodology might suggest. On the other hand, Nora's framing commentary alerts readers to authorial investments, notes and further references are compendious, and only the wilfully perverse could fail to take the recommended critical distance. Just one major cavil: for all the work of internationally-recognised feminist historians in France, UK and the US, there is little or no acknowledgement in the volume of the relentless masculinity of French national identity. This is, as the Introduction says, an account of 'the principal ways in which Frenchmen identify with France' (ix).

The University of Birmingham

Jennifer Birkett

Deborah A. Martinsen (ed.), *Literary Journals in Imperial Russia*, Cambridge Studies in Russian Literature, Studies of the Harriman Institute, Columbia University, Cambridge University Press, 1997 pp. xiv + 265, \$64.95.

This edited collection of essays lives up to its title, offering an informative survey, sometimes quite detailed in focus, of journals published between the eighteenth century and the Bolshevik Revolution. Its form and content make it a valuable source for historians and literary scholars, who will find it a useful compendium of information about editors, contributors, themes and the general fortunes of the so-called 'thick journals' of the Russian Empire.

Robert Maguire's introduction, while perhaps a little elementary for specialists in Russian literature and history, provides a useful summary of the importance of these

publications which he characterizes as the primary mechanism through which ‘Russian literature found its public and worked its magic’ (1). The importance of this point is stressed: he further notes that ‘literature, and therefore journals, has served as the principal means by which Russia has discovered, defined and shaped itself’ (1–2). Given these points, clearly learning more about the editors and publishers, the censors and readers, will deepen one’s understanding of imperial Russian society; unfortunately, there is less information about the last two topics.

Following the setting of the scene, the book is divided into four parts: the eighteenth century, which includes one essay, the early nineteenth century, with two, the mid-nineteenth century, with four, and concludes with the Silver Age, also with four. The division makes clear that the real flowering of its literature, and the journals in which it (and other sorts of writing) were displayed, came in approximately a hundred years, crossing times of extreme political repression in the reign of Nicholas I (1825–55), those of liberalization and the Great Reforms under Alexander II (1855–81) as well as the politically and artistically varied period of Russia’s last ruler, Nicholas II (1894–1917). The chronological arrangement is logical, providing a strong sense of the organic development of the journals; however, the multiplicity of articles makes for some overlap, and occasionally allows some gaps.

Gary Marker’s article on ‘The creation of journals and the profession of letters in the eighteenth century’ gives a thorough grounding in the practical issues of publishing, while pointing out the interesting anomaly that although journal publishing was generally not profitable, journals proliferated. Marker contends that the publishers, and authors, were committed to a mission: to civilize, to develop an ideological position. His article is one of the few which even considers the readers; however, as he points out, circulation figures are notoriously unreliable. In general, it seems that the provincial subscriptions (that is, outside St. Petersburg and Moscow) tend to reflect a somewhat more democratic readership than the nobility of the two largest cities, but only references in later issues, or in other journals, tell us of debates which particular articles may have engendered.

The two essays which discuss the early nineteenth century offer complementary views of the development of the journal as a focus for intellectual and political life. That by William Mills Todd provides an overview of the journal’s development into a shaper of literary taste and political attitudes, while that of Chester Rządkiwicz analyses the significant role of personal animosities in the literary world of the 1820s and 1830s.

Section 3’s overview, by Robert Belknap, covers the period 1840–80. Inevitably, at times this essay becomes a listing of names: only those most familiar with Russian culture in this period will find it easy to read. Probably the key essay in this section is Victor Terras’s on ‘Belinsky the journalist and Russian literature’, which emphasizes the journalist/critic’s pivotal role in arguing for the importance of literature as a progressive social agent. Alexis Pogorelskin’s essay on *the Messenger of Europe (Vestnik evropy)*, founded by former history professor M. M. Stasiulevich, both analyses the importance of the journal and corrects errors in the memoirs of some of the contributors to it, in the process emphasizing the significant contributions of A. N. Pypin, L. A. Polonsky and K. K. Arsenev. As he notes in his conclusion, and as this whole book makes clear, knowledge of the authorship of particular articles is important. The last essay in this section, editor Deborah Martinsen’s on a journal written by Dostoevsky for short periods in the 1870s and again in the 1880s, is a thoughtful exploration of

the novelist as journalist, and in particular describes his interest in court reform and psychological motivation – topics which are prevalent in his novels.

The last section, on the Silver Age, focuses mostly on the period before 1905; the overview, by Joan Delaney Grossman, is more pessimistic than the others, noting the decline of the journal form. Her detailed presentation of the numerous artistic movement, and their often-fueled protagonists, which can be confusing for anyone not familiar with their goals and artistic expressions, suggests that increased censorship, political concerns or warfare were not the only reasons for the decline. Doubtless many will be familiar with the publication discussed by William Harkins, *The World of Art* (*Mir iskusstva*), particularly its association with the impresario Serge Diaghilev and his bringing Russian ballet to Western Europe; Harkins acknowledges, however, that this was primarily an art journal and so his discussion of the literary content is general, referring briefly to its largely Symbolist, and Russian, orientation.

Symbolism was also a dominant influence on *The Northern Herald* (*Severnyi vestnik*), the subject of Stanley Rabinowitz's essay. An important point about this journal was that it had female publishers – Anna Vasilevna Sabashnikova and Liubov Iakovlevna Gurevich – and a female editor, Anna Mikhailovna Evréinova, which may account for its 'unprecedented exposure of women writers' (220). While the journal did not avoid political or economic issues, and indeed had significant coverage of provincial matters, it was firmly rooted in philosophical, ethical and moral questions. Rabinowitz considers this emphasis as one of the reasons it was able to secure Leo Tolstoy as a contributor in the mid-1890s. Unlike *The World of Art*, *Northern Herald* welcomed and helped publicize western European writers, artists, musicians and critics. The final essay in this section, somewhat paralleling the earlier one on Dostoevsky, is Andrew Durkin's on 'Chekhov and the journals of his time'. The plural form is deliberate, for while the author relied on periodicals to publish his work, he also wished to avoid being too closely connected with any one editorial position. Thus, a study of Chekhov's work demonstrates his interest in selecting journals for such reasons as their taking a shorter work – which paid less, but could be written more quickly. His earlier pieces tended to be written for satirical journals, while he later agreed to contribute to particular journals because of an interest in supporting the editor, or having his work read by a particular audience.

A few caveats: the transliteration varies, and sometimes people are identified more fully at a point later than their first mention. Women's involvement, as readers or, more actively, as writers, editors and publishers, is only treated in depth in one article.

Overall, the book is well-produced, and the supporting material is helpful. Notes follow each of the essays, and there is a very useful listing of the titles of journals and almanacs, in English and Russian since not all of these are listed in the index, it would have been useful to have included their publication dates). The bibliography includes a large number of Russian-language monographs, as well as monographs and articles in other languages. Hence, the value for the Russian specialist and the more general scholar is enhanced.

Thomas Doherty, *Criticism and Modernity: Aesthetics, Literature, and Nations in Europe and its Academies*, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. vi + 248, £40.00.

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'.

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David Watson

Michael Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination*, Yale University Press, 1999, pp. 271, £25.

With the publication of this book, railways history enters a new phase. Railway enthusiasts, economic and social historians of technology and business historians have all told the story of railways in their different ways. *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* is the first comprehensive attempt to consider the railway as a cultural phenomenon. It attempts to recover the cultural world that railway made through a lively narrative and probably the richest collection of visual images ever assembled on the subject.

Any impression that this is a coffee table book is quickly dispelled, for Michael Freeman, a distinguished historical geographer, guides the reader adeptly through the traditional reaches of railway history. There is much here on capital, labour and urbanisation, mostly scripted from secondary sources, as well as a lot of new material (or old material reinterpreted) on Victorian notions of time, distance and space and consequently of employment, leisure and education, even of life itself. The dramatic time-space compression that railway speed introduced; the redefinition of the public and the private that resulted from railway travel; and the collective and personal danger to which passengers were seemingly exposed, found their imaginative responses in contemporary texts, visual and written. It is the setting together of the physical and economic, and the cultural, which enables Freeman to steer the reader from the existing traditions of railway writing to the new – railway history is truly in transition.

Whether or not the images can help us recover the impact on the railway on the cultural, artistic and imaginative life of the nation as a *central* influence without much consideration of other contenders, is debatable. Nor will all readers, not least art historians, accept Freeman's judgements about pictorial production and consumption in every case. Nonetheless the works of art (not just Turner) and engravings (not just Bourne) are by no means the only illustrations. There are numerous photographs, a few well-chosen maps and some excellent posters too; and in each case the illustration is used to explore a point being made in the text.

The writing is lucid and the themes of the chapters are well chosen. Freeman has new and interesting ways of organising knowledge, such as in the chapter (seven) on education and social reproduction, which among other things deals with the railway in children's literature, children's jig-saw puzzles, sheet music, and toy trains. The overall approach in this chapter and much of the rest of the book is original, yet accessible. For readers of *Literature & History* perhaps its greatest value lies in the essentially interdisciplinary nature of the approach rather than in its contribution to theoretical debate. And at £25 it represents stunningly good value for money.

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Geoffrey Channon

A. Fletcher and S. Hussey (eds), *Childhood in Question: Children, Parents and the State*, Manchester University Press, 1999 pp. 177, £12.99 pb.

Childhood in Question aims to illuminate aspects of the experience of children in Britain from the mid-seventeenth century to the 1960s. Several authors draw on legal and welfare records, with the result that the collection often returns to issues of discord and violence in relation to children's lives. Other chapters deal with questions of selfhood and idealised families, including Buettner's fascinating discussion of parent-child separations and colonial careers.

Historians have focussed on the shifting meanings of childhood. Yet, as the editors rightly state, the issue of retrieving childhood experience from the past is highly contentious; for there are major issues of historical methodology when it comes to any attempt to reach into the minds and emotions of children through the use of second-hand material. The editors refer several times to the issue of 'authenticity'. Highlighting the 'authenticity' of the material that Houlbrooke presents in his discussion of children and death in early modern England, they conclude that he shows how much it is possible for us to learn about the real experience of children in the past, even when dealing entirely with reported speech. Discussing Jackson's chapter on child sex abuse, they see Lily Thurlow's version of events in court as both vivid and 'authentic' and argue that the tone, detail and specificity of Lily's version of events convinces us that we are close to the heart of the actual experience she had undergone.

The notion of 'experience' has been a thorny issue for historians. Given the professed focus of the book on issues of experience in childhood, it is disappointing that methodological issues of experience, both generally, and in relation to childhood in particular, are handled in a patchy fashion, not least by the editors. In a chapter far more nuanced than the editors' introduction suggests, Jackson skilfully illustrates how the production of narratives in court was structured and coded in relation to existing scripts and points to the way in which care had to be taken in treating depositions simply as verbatim reports of witnesses' stories. Similarly, Shore critiques the sources of her narratives in her discussion of the causes and explanations for juvenile crime in the early nineteenth century. In contrast, Houlbrooke points to the way accounts of some children's deaths were related to the need for reassurance on the part of the parents, yet insights of this nature needed to be followed through more rigorously in his chapter.

There are, however, important challenges for the historian of childhood in this collection, which make it valuable. These include Foyster's questioning of Ariès' view that during the early modern period children were quarantined from the adult world; Gamon's analysis that to convince a court a young girl needed to display a level of innocence in her testimony, which militated against her ability to provide 'explicit' evidence on which to gain the conviction of her assaulter; and Abram's contention that in experiential terms there was little to distinguish the failures of residential and boarded-out care for orphaned children.

Brenda Silver, *Virginia Woolf: Icon*, University of Chicago Press, 2000, pp. 324, \$19.

Brenda Silver's wide-ranging exploration of the reiterations of Virginia Woolf's images in the late twentieth century provides a context for understanding the importance of icons in a time of unstable cultural boundaries. Associated with the concepts of 'hero/heroine' and 'star,' the definition of icon central to *Virginia Woolf, Icon* comes from a variety of contemporary sources, including a *Time* magazine article by Holly Brubach, who defines the modern icon as 'a human sound bite, an individual reduced to a name, a face, and an idea' (7). In the case of Virginia Woolf, the name and face are ubiquitous (and reinforced generously in the text by illustrations), but the idea remains more ambiguous, creating an unstable cultural sign, which Silver analyses across the borders of élite and popular culture.

Using an impressive number of examples, she demonstrates the function of 'versioning' in what Stuart Hall refers to as a 'double movement of containment and resistance' (13). According to Silver, from her appearance as a symbol in plays and movies, to the cardboard hybrid 'monster,' fabricated from Woolf's head and Marilyn Monroe's body, Virginia Woolf has become a site of cultural contestation, a site from which to both challenge and reinforce the boundaries of class and gender. The text or image, rather than remaining subject to a specific, authoritative reading, becomes the product of 'the free play of meaning,' evoking a Derridean post-structuralism, which Silver also associates with the 'versioning' of African American storytelling and musical forms. As Silver points out, while the act of versioning can subvert cultural norms, the fluidity in the interaction of text and context provides an opening to the appropriation of cultural forms in relation to a defined, domestic centre.

The 1962 production of Edward Albee's play, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, in the United States serves as an early example of the danger of this appropriation. As Silver points out, the title of the play, especially as translated into the popular screen adaptation in 1966, contributed significantly to the visibility of Virginia Woolf outside the academy. However, in her analysis of the gender play within the play, she convincingly argues that Albee's use of Woolf's name creates a version of Virginia Woolf linked with the culturally élite, destructive, childless, and thus, unnatural female in the characters of Martha and Honey. Incorporating the theories of Judith Butler and Hélène Cixous, Silver links these characters with the 'monstrous' figures of the Sphinx and Medusa, both associated with the threat implicit in the 'new' woman suggested by the revived women's movement in the 1960s. With examples from plays, movies, and television shows, as well as posters, postcards, t-shirts, and advertisements, she illustrates the continuing double movement of fear and subversion associated with Woolf's visual and textual image.

Although more about the mechanisms of popular culture than Woolf's writing, this study would be interesting to any Woolf scholar (particularly those whose walls are graced with her image) in approaching an understanding of what it means to read and teach her work within the context of late twentieth-century cultural politics. At the same time, Silver's analysis of the movement from author to icon, the 'double movement of iconization and iconoclasm' (5) has a much broader application in the cultural analysis of the power of representation in structuring identity at the turn of the century.

Barbara Wilt, *Gertrude Stein: Modernism, and the Problem of 'Genius'*, Edinburgh University Press, 2000, pp. 180, £40.

The notion of genius would appear to have little place in modern academia with the postmodern interest in the death of the subject. It is a term which invariably invokes discomfort; suspect as a fabrication of the Romantic era – by the end of the eighteenth-century genius had acquired romantic *hauteur* and had metamorphosed from a special kind of gift or talent into a superior kind of being – and all too often cited in order to render the rigorous analysis of texts redundant. It is, moreover, élitist, notoriously difficult to define, at some level inexplicable, and is almost always used in reference to men; Da Vinci, Einstein, Shakespeare, Mozart, Newton, Beethoven, etc. who did not have to confront the rhetoric of sexual exclusion when expressing their creativity.

Gertrude Stein frequently referred to herself as a solitary genius and with disarming logic also insisted that she was also representative of 'everybody'. Hence a text which is essentially about herself as an artist-genius in America in the 1930s is entitled *Everybody's Autobiography* (1937). Barbara Wilt's *Gertrude Stein, Modernism, and the Problem of 'Genius'* (1989) is a philosophically penetrating work which asks why Stein in common with so many Modernist artists had an investment in genius; a concept which came to stand in for the aesthetic demands and dimensions of High Modernism whereby to be an artist meant abstracting oneself from ordinary people, turning away from everyday language, and rejecting the clichés of subjective and social experience in order to effect the shock of the new.

This is a sophisticated and densely argued book which unravels the connections between the philosophical and the literary in ways which are suggested in Christine Battersby's *Gender and Genius* (1989). Like Battersby, Wilt places question of gender at the heart of academic scholarship on genius (instead of its more usual place on its peripheries) in this illuminating case-study of Gertrude Stein. Wilt emphasises the dialogic nature of genius which she contends is written into the very structure of Stein's autobiographical writings and Stein's desire to present her experience as a universal American experience, to make the 'I' interchangeable with a generic 'you', by suggesting not only that she is a genius but also that 'everybody' is one as well. The relationship of Stein's written texts to three specific audiences: the individual reader, the American nation, and the 'masses' is usefully addressed.

Gertrude Stein, Modernism, and the Problem of 'Genius' analyses how the idea of genius relates to Stein's identification of herself as a Jew, a lesbian, and a citizen of the United States. The book demonstrates a sure grasp of the salient aspects of post-modernist theory and European philosophy upon which it draws confidently to produce a refutation of many of the critical commonplaces about Stein; that she is solipsistic, unreadable, hermetic, and unpleasantly egotistical. In place of the elitism which characterises high Modernist singularity *Gertrude Stein, Modernism, and the Problem of 'Genius'* locates the radically democratic, anti-subjective, and anti-essentialist impulses within Stein's later writing discussing both her affiliation with American democratic culture and her inscription within European high art.

Georges Minois, *History of Suicide: Voluntary Death in Western Culture*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999, pp. 387, £30.

Minois' study is mainly concerned with France and England, other Western countries making an appearance now and then. English readers may occasionally find it puzzling when the argument moves across the Channel without warning. On p. 116 the seventeenth century enjoys a 'classical' period of law and order, of 'certitude, stability, and immobility', a description perhaps suitable to Louis XIV's reign, but scarcely to Charles I's. But in general the argument is clear enough, and the book is a valuable contribution to the subject, and to general history.

Part I deals with the Middle Ages, not omitting their 'classical heritage' from Cato and Seneca. It is pointed out that the New Testament offers no guidance, so that the early Church had to make up its own mind. Not all the considerations that swayed it were equally edifying. By the fifth century it owned much land and many slaves, and *coloni*, more serfs than freemen; and it is a reflection running through the book that suicide has been condemned largely because it has deprived owners – with God at their head – of a part of their property. Most medieval suicides were oppressed peasants or craftsmen, and every effort was made to punish them or their families, for running away from their duty. Their corpses were dragged through the streets in disgrace, and denied burial in consecrated ground; their property could be confiscated. Relatives tried to pass off their deaths as madness, or accident, and usually had the backing of their neighbours. Nobles and priests could drop out of the ranks without fear of such penalties.

In early modern times all theologians continued hostile. Theology itself, especially predestination – as in Scotland – might drive men to despair and suicide. But Minois turns frequently to Hamlet, and 'To be or not to be', as best expressing the doubtful mood of the times. Bacon could write of death without denouncing suicide. Donne could even justify it, if only posthumously. Montaigne had pointed the way. Minois is careful to add that none of these writers committed suicide themselves. It was simply that Europe was moving towards secularism. Self-destruction was resorted to mainly by the poor, very often at times of food shortages, and still more of plague. Upper-class observers in the eighteenth century were less shocked than of old by the thought of such acts; French novels abounded in suicides, treated from a sentimental angle which led towards the Romantic approach of Rousseau and the Goethe of *Werther*. National proclivities were frequently debated, and French gentlemen might look up to English gentlemen as their model: suicide was 'the English malady'.

More practical men were turning their thoughts to the social causes of suicide, and to measures that might be employed to remove them. Minois gives a revealing table of suicides in eighteenth-century Brittany, and their motives. Legal and theological thunders through the ages would seem to have had very little effect. In their place was dawning the idea that the world might be made worth living in, for all men and women. In our age the forces of evil, directed by rulers like Pinochet, have retorted, as Minois recognizes, by driving prisoners into suicide as their only alternative to being compelled by torture to betray their comrades. And today there is the insistent question of euthanasia.

David Ayers, *English Literature of the 1920s*, Edinburgh University Press, 1999, pp. 223, £40.

David Ayers's *English Literature of the 1920s* is the second of two fine recent studies of the literature of 1920s which contribute much to our understanding of that decade as more than the jazz age or the apex of Modernism. The first is John Lucas's *The Radical Twenties: Writing, Politics, Culture* (Nottingham: Five Leaf Books, 1997) which appeared too late for Ayers to be able to enter into a dialogue with Lucas about an assessment of the period which differs markedly from his own. He shares Lucas's strong sense of social history but not his mission to restore lost works to the historical record. Instead, his interest is largely in the formal questions raised by complex literary works which socially and politically committed writings fail to address. Thus 'Wyndham Lewis continues to claim our attention in ways in which the communist fervour of Douglas Goldring does not' (223). Goldring happens to be a writer in whom John Lucas is especially interested and who is crucial to his argument that in some respects the 1920s was more radical politically than the decade which came after. In contrast, Ayers argues that the literature of the 1920s in the main 'speaks from pessimistic, socially conservative, even regressive political positions' (123) and examines the pessimistic attitudes to mass culture in literary periodicals, *The Criterion*, *The Adelphi*, and *The Calendar of Modern Letters*.

Although Ayers has a strong preference for Modernist texts, and for those writers whose disillusionment with modernity might seem to echo our own, he is generous in his discussion of the popular works of fiction which give the decade its distinctive flavour – by far the most successful novel of the 1920s was Michael Arlen's *The Green Hat*. But the choice of popular texts such as Warwick Deeping's *Sorrell and Son* and E. M. Hull's *The Sheik* belong to the informal canon which commentators on the 1920s usually mention rather than any which Ayers has unearthed himself. This is a scholarly and thoughtful book but it is let down in places by intrusive and questionable value judgements. As an example, Ellen Wilkinson's novel, *Clash*, is described as a 'manipulative book, and as a consequence the characters are not fully dimensioned'. Moreover, the 'heroine's unrelenting virtue is irritating and unconvincing – worryingly so, as she is closely modelled on the author herself' (128). Until this point the close reading of Wilkinson's novel and its situation in history and social relations had been exemplary.

English Literature of the 1920s should properly be entitled *English Fiction of the 1920s* since it contains no discussion of poetry or drama. Ayers is at his best in relation to the questioning of sexual mores in Wyndham Lewis and in unravelling the masculinist project of D. H. Lawrence providing authoritative and erudite readings of *Kangaroo*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *The Plumed Serpent*. His excellent discussion of the anti-humanist elements in *The Apes of God* confronts Lewis's negativity with an enthusiast's determination to make his work available to the non specialist. In discriminating between the 'brilliant' (5) writing and the reactionary nature of Lewis's politics, he compels those like myself who had hitherto regarded the fiction as little more than 'intellectualised bigotry' (155) to think again.

Jonathan Haslam, *The Vices of Integrity: E. H. Carr 1892–1982*, Verso Press, 1999, pp. 306, £25.

The publication of this biography is timely. During Carr's lifetime his historical work was widely criticised as being anti-liberal and in turn pro-Hitler and pro-Stalin. In his personal relationships he was dubbed 'a very cold fish'. These assessments are biased and misleading. The merit of Haslam's book is that it gives a balanced account which recognises the damaging weaknesses in his subject's character which made him 'wholly incapable of putting himself in other people's shoes'. He was 'happier with documents and events than with people'. The writer is wise enough to see that while Carr was 'proclaiming a doctrine of ruthless realism he was, in fact, pushing for policies justified in moral terms'.

The Vices of Integrity is primarily a literary biography. Haslam traces Carr's life through his immense written output; but the character of the man greatly influenced the type of history he chose to write. He favoured the 'underdog', individual or nation. This outlook was revealed in the beautifully and sympathetically written *The Romantic Exiles* (1933) about the Russian and other exiles centred around Herzen. His brilliant, summary, *International Relations since the Peace Treaties* (1937) revealed his sympathy with the German nation humiliated by a dictated Versailles Treaty (1919) and its 'War Guilt' clause.

Carr always claimed that the study of history would yield lessons of value for understanding the problems of contemporary society. Some of his most fruitful work appeared as leading articles written for *The Times* and the *Times Literary Supplement* in the 1940s. Nye Bevan is justifiably remembered for his eloquent advocacy to the general public of his national health service; but in his 'Meaning of Democracy' and 'Two scourges' leaders in *The Times* of 1 July and 26 November 1940, Carr expressed with unsurpassable clarity and beautifully structured language the needs for a broader understanding of the term 'democracy' and the ending of 'The two scourges' of unemployment and war. These articles influenced opinion in government circles in the U.K. and abroad.

Through the publication of his 1961 Trinity College, Cambridge, Trevelyan lecture, *What is History?* in 1962, a brilliant essay of interpretation which has sold over a quarter of a million copies, Carr gave an important stimulus to the reform of the history Tripos at Trinity. Before his intervention the syllabuses ended in about 1911. Within four years they were brought up to date and made more relevant to current issues.

In his 'Conditions of Peace' leader in *The Times* on 10 March 1943 Carr wrote that: 'To suppose that Britain and the USA ... could maintain permanent security in Europe through a policy which alienated Russia ... would be sheer madness'. In this belief he embarked on writing his monumental *History of Soviet Russia*, imagining it would take three years to complete. In the event it took him nearly forty years and extended to fourteen volumes. He was helped with the last two volumes by Robert Davies of the University of Birmingham, a collaboration which Haslam described as 'very harmonious'. 'Affectionate and understanding' would more aptly describe the co-operation with Tamara Deutscher, widow of Isaac Deutscher, who researched for him in this last decade of his life.

In an article in *The London Review of Books*, written within three weeks of Carr's

death, Professor Norman Stone wrote 'he was a very ungenerous reviewer of dissertations'. This was not the experience of Jonathan Frankel, a 'refugee' from McCarthyism in 1973. Nor was it this reviewer's experience when Carr examined his Ph.D. thesis on German policy at the Disarmament Conference of 1932. His questions were designed to 'draw out' rather than 'catch out' the examinee.

London

Philip S. Bagwell

Richard Harland, *Literary Theory from Plato to Barthes: An Introductory History*, Macmillan Press, 1999, pp. xiii + 302, £14.99 pb.

In this book Richard Harland undertakes to 'tell the *whole* story' of literary theory, from classical times to the beginnings of the post-modern period (there is to be a sequel reserved for the last thirty-years). Harland's theoretical position is that of his previous work, *Beyond Superstructuralism*. Which is to say that *Literary Theory from Plato to Barthes* proceeds from the basic assumption that it is only as a whole that the story of literary theory makes sense. This gives rise to an impressively wide-ranging account of changing ideas about what has come to be called 'literature', starting with the rhetorical criticism of the pre-Platonic Sophists and terminating in the anti-authorial and anti-realist themes of Barthes's transitional post-structuralism. There is a necessary element of simplification in what is unfolded. A marked internationalist dimension, serving to unify Greek, Roman, Italian, French, British, German, Russian and American discussions of literature, is a distinguishing feature of the present volume. The book offers itself as a valuable supplement to such readers and anthologies of primary source material as Hazard Adams's *Critical Theory since Plato* and Roman Selden's *The Theory of Criticism: From Plato to the Present*.

The engagement here with pre-'postmodernist' literary theory is indeed welcome, especially in respect of classical and medieval developments. But such is the degree and distribution of narrative simplification, we are already into the French neo-classicism of the modern period by page 39. The single longest chapter deals with the modernist-oriented Anglo-American criticism of 1900 to 1960. In other words, the largely absent post-modern period nevertheless exerts a strong gravitational pull. This has serious consequences regarding Harland's methodology.

For this text is, explicitly, not a critical account of its subject-matter. The overall intention is to 'step into the shoes' of earlier theoretical perspectives. Inevitably, perhaps, it follows that Harland's narrative does not cut through to the whole as such at the level of the story. Revealingly, what might be described as the counter-theoretical ideas of Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and Saussure are grouped together at a mid-point in these pages, in a single chapter, under the catch-all title, 'New Developments in Theory'. This is a strategy which seems to hamper the capacity for development of a fully unified sense of ancient and modern literary theory as inscribed in these ideas. Their specific difference consists in their shared tendency to explain phenomena, as Harland himself puts it, '*from behind*'. Harland's discussion of French structuralism is evidently informed by an awareness of this distinction. It may be that a proper acknowledgement of the impact on the twentieth century (at least) of these 'new' theoretical developments is being reserved for the next book; principally, discussion

of what Harland for the moment is calling 'Postmodernist-Poststructuralist literary theory'. If so, it might entail in the process an adjustment to what appear to be the residually pre-structuralist, following-in-the-footsteps aspects of Harland's current approach.

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Gary Farnell

Keith Jenkins, *Why History? Ethics and Postmodernity*, Routledge, 1999, pp. 232, £12.99.

This is Jenkins's best book to date and should be read by anybody who wants to understand postmodernist attitudes to history. Though it is in his usual polemical style, it is free of the worst excesses which have irritated in the past. Perhaps this was due to the influence of Michael Stanford who, surprisingly, is acknowledged as a critical reader of the original typescript. Jenkins's position can fairly be described as extreme: traditional history and ethics are no longer valid. Professional historians can take no comfort from the decline or disappearance of 'upper-case' history or meta-narrative; their 'lower-case', artisan history is also defunct. If one accepts his post-modernist premises, his denial of history is more logical than the position of those postmodernist historians who sometimes seem to be simply swapping one vaguely modernist narrative for another.

The form of the book is a series of essays, first on Derrida, Baudrillard and Lyotard. His analysis of their ideas is useful in itself, but he uses his critique of their ideas to advance his own thesis as far as upper-case history and ethics are concerned. He then goes on to attack the traditional role of lower-case history as practised by the professional historian, 'appropriating', in his terms, the ideas of Hayden White and Ankersmit, and then Ermarth and Harlan, but rejecting what he sometimes identifies as compromises in their approaches. Inevitably perhaps, in trying to both introduce the ideas of these sometimes difficult writers and incorporate them into his own argument, he is less successful with some than others. For example, as someone who has failed to understand Ermarth's arguments in full whilst recognising the significance of her conclusions, I was left none the wiser by an essay which relied too heavily on quoting Ermarth herself. This is a general fault of Jenkins; he quotes nearly ten pages of Ankersmit, and also quotes Harlan so extensively that permission to quote had to be obtained.

However, it is probably for his treatment of Richard Evans's *In Defence of History* that this book will be most remembered. Evans is a combative writer, and his judgments are sometimes dismissive. Jenkins clearly intended to bite back. He ridicules Evans's position as part of a strategy for demonstrating the hopelessness of the case for history. This is a pity because it distracts from the validity of some of his arguments – for example, his argument against Ranke. Linked with his scorn for Evans, which includes attacking him for writing in the first person plural as if for a club of professional historians, is Jenkins's own assertion that 'we postmodernists', simply by existing, by being the here and now, have already carried the day; modernism, and hence history, are no more. This presentism is a surprisingly Hegelian position for a post-modernist; and it also ignores the remarkable boom scholarly history is enjoying in the

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bookshops, and the fact that modernism seems to be the password to power in politics.

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