

Reviews

R. C. Richardson, *The Study of History: A Bibliographical Guide*, 2nd ed., Manchester University Press, 2000, pp. xiv + 140, £40.00.

This is a very useful, important and curiously interesting book, even though the dust cover has all the appeal of a mortician's slab. Its uses hardly need much spelling out. The recent growth of writing about the nature and practice of history has both reflected and stimulated new thinking about the discipline and prompted some spirited defences of its honour. Often, the most ambitious surveys of the discipline's terrain are tethered to some kind of 'post', for reputations can now be made or lost according to the skill with which a scholar can manipulate a post so as to scratch her/his own back or plant it in the path of others. Though most visible to the public eye, these elevated narratives are but a small part of the story. For, as *The Study of History* testifies in its selective listing of over 3,000 items of historiography, philosophy of history and historical method, historians (with a little help from their friends) have not been idle in reviewing and rethinking their specialist fields in recent years, even if their most cherished tools remain largely of the sublunary kind – scepticism and empiricism.

All this effort and achievement needs to be reliably recorded, not only to help each specialist to keep abreast of developments in others' fields, but also and increasingly for teaching purposes. Explicit study of the theory and practice of History is already quite common in the undergraduate curriculum. But, faced with the introduction of a regulatory framework (subject benchmarking) in Britain, that trend will surely grow as we are now told that 'All History students should be expected to reflect critically on the nature of their discipline, its social rationale, its theoretical underpinnings and its intellectual standing.' For such purposes *The Study of History* will serve with distinction.

Following a well-organised section on 'General Works' the book is divided into eight further sections, each based upon a period of history, and each subdivided by region, and highlighting key themes and individuals. Most of the books listed, and exceptionally a few of the articles, are briefly annotated. Richardson makes it all look easy: just a few lines to distil the essence of what may have taken many years of others' toil; a big responsibility. He is never mean, but fair and sober to a fault, so it sometimes feels as though we are in a mortuary where texts are neatly lined up and labelled with short summaries of their post-mortems. Against this it must be said that, as a reader, you would need to be well acquainted with the interpretative community to know for sure which works have spirits that still haunt the discipline, and which are rarely (if ever) now disturbed from slumber. In being so fair to all, so kind and careful in his briefings, we can be left feeling that our expert guide is withholding something (some of the blood and guts that drive our reasonings and writings); something that we badly want to know but that academic decency quietly militates against the telling. Furthermore, this sense of decorum is embedded even in the process of selection. Understandably, some criteria have to be applied to create a book of manageable proportions. Yet the exclusion of 'items which were frankly ephemeral, antiquarian, or discredited' raises hard questions both for teachers and researchers, particularly (and historiographically) in relation to what constitutes a 'discredited' item. It seems that even in an annotated bibliography as excellent as this one, absence invokes a presence.

The chill of propriety in annotated bibliography is one of the genre's most endearing features. For, of course, 'descriptive comments' are inevitably infused with judgements that offer warmth and guidance. Thus, in addition to the fun of finding unknown items, we are treated (especially if you enjoy understatement) to some masterly comments upon familiar studies. My favourite has to be, 'A (distinctly) cool appraisal of current trends in the writing of history' (G. Himmelfarb). Comments such as 'Wise counsel on matters relating to the power and methods of history' (G. K. Clark, 1967); 'Commonsense approach by one of the leading traditionalists in the field' (G.R. Elton, 1967); 'An extended polemic about the position of historical studies after the impact of postmodernism' (K. Jenkins, 1999), offer students guidance while showing a respect for difference.

In academic discussions today, it seems that distinctions between history and historiography are not readily agreed, and are easily dissolved by the acids of postmodernism. To its great credit, *The Study of History* not only helps us to understand the key elements of these debates, but does so in a manner that is both scholarly and refreshing.

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Paul Hyland

Christopher Parker, *The English Idea of History from Coleridge to Collingwood*, Ashgate Publishing, 2000, pp. vii + 244, £45.

Christopher Parker, whose earlier book *The English Historical Tradition since 1850* (1990) positioned its author firmly in the field, now offers a kind of complementary epistemological survey of another tradition, closely connected with the first, that represented by a succession of idealist philosophers of history who have often received

far more attention from literary critics and philosophers than historians. By so doing, of course, he is drawing attention to the need to avoid an exclusive concentration on the much vaunted empiricism of nineteenth and twentieth-century historians; even von Ranke, 'the arch empiricist', gets (convincingly) re-packaged here as much more complex and multi-dimensional, spiritual as well as secular. The paradigms of studying history have been, and continue to be, quintessentially plural.

Parker begins with Coleridge – though with backward glances at Berkeley and Hartley – and his revolt against empiricism, and proceeds to Carlyle whose ideas on history from the 1820s through the rest of his long and prolific life are presented as being more consistent than has often been claimed. (The Hero-fixation was not a later discovery). J. S. Mill, at first much influenced by Carlyle, gets a chapter to himself. Much is made – it amounts to a full-scale rehabilitation – of the Oxford idealists T. H. Green, F. H. Bradley, Bernard Bosanquet, and D. G. Ritchie. These were the philosophical heavyweights of their day and their impact on debates on the nature of historical knowledge was considerable. Their ideas lived on far beyond the Victorian period in which they had been first conceived, partly through the agency of the long-lived Michael Oakeshott (1901–90) whose *Experience and its Modes* (1933) underlined the relativism of what later generations know and choose to remember about the past.

Positioned in this long, active and vibrant idealist tradition, R. G. Collingwood (1889–1943) appears much less of an isolated oddity though he was undoubtedly remarkable in the way he pressed so unremittingly for at least a conjunction, or even a merger, of the disciplines of history and philosophy. Collingwood gets pride of place in Parker's book – roughly a quarter of the text is devoted to him – but much of the discussion provided here is devoted to depicting Collingwood in relation to his predecessors. Even some of Collingwood's most famous epithets – 'Of everything other than thought there can be no history' and 'All thinking is critical thinking' – have an earlier parentage. Parker takes pains to confront the problems connected with the text of *The Idea of History*, assembled posthumously and unsatisfactorily by an insensitive and incompetent editor and with the other miscellaneous and sometimes contradictory manuscript materials by Collingwood which have since come to light. Collingwood's projected but unrealised book on *The Principles of History* receives consideration as does the thorny problem of Collingwood's definition of 'thought' and the extent to which it moved beyond the purely rational to embrace 'essential emotions' as well.

Undoubtedly this idealist tradition was fecund and long lived but often, as Parker himself concedes, more influential in philosophical than in historical studies. Philosophers go on debating Collingwood's value today, historians much less so. Parker's book, directed chiefly at university students and their teachers, helps bring the idealist tradition back into focus. The exposition is clear and well argued though occasionally judgmental and the final chapter, which addresses some of the points of contact between this idealist tradition and postmodernism, usefully links the book with some of the issues currently being tossed around in the historical arena today. Parker certainly leaves the reader in no doubt as to where he stands in all this. Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) is despatched as 'a nine day's wonder', while the post-modernists' exclusive preoccupation with the discourse of history rather than the historical past is decried as being dedicated chiefly to an expansion of their own egos.

R. C. Richardson (ed.), *The Changing Face of English Local History*, Ashgate, 2000, pp. viii + 218, £45.00.

Half a millennium of the writing of English local history is surveyed here in a dozen or so pieces from the last half century, expertly selected by an editor who provides both an introductory context and contributes articles on John Milner's *Winchester* (1798), a local (urban) history seen as an 'exemplification of national history', and, to round the volume off, 'Some Comparisons' between English and American (USA) approaches. Elsewhere we are taken from the sheer antiquarianism of the 'dumpy' 1580 in Latin of William Camden's *Britannia* (Stuart Piggot, 1957), to the development of something very like a discrete discipline, complete with university degrees and supported by the computerisation of sources and services in public archives (Pat Hudson, 1995). For three centuries the field was there for amateurs – gentlemen, clerics, town clerks – moved by pride of lineage, place, property, civic dignity and piety. John Stow surveyed a rather 'static' London in 1598 (M. J. Power, 1965). For M. W. Barley and K. S. S. Train (1972) Robert Thoroton's *Nottingham* (1677) stands in for Carew's *Cornwall*, Burton's *Leicestershire*, Plot's *Oxfordshire*, Erdeswicke's *Staffordshire* and similar works proliferating throughout the seventeenth century. Joan Thirsk on William Hasted and Kent (1993) takes us to the later eighteenth century, a productive period, too. She observes the scissors-and-paste nature of his work, 'nine-tenths of the task of compiling a county history', but goes on to point out how much of his material can be made to yield information that he can hardly have thought of – a common experience when the right questions are asked.

The following century saw the pace and depth of local historical studies quickening, pushed on by record and publishing societies, moving in the same direction as developments in history generally. (M. J. Kidd takes Lancashire as an instance, 1996.) Yet it was not until 1947 that setting up a university department of English Local History at Leicester clinched academic respectability. Three inaugural lectures there form in effect the core of Richardson's story, showing how rapidly ideas and practice were advancing, with investment in diverse approaches paying dividends. H. P. R. Finberg in 1952 defined his job as portraying 'the Origin, Growth, Decline and Fall of a Local Community' – portentous capitals. In 1966 W. G. Hoskins, while opining that the subject was 'still in the collecting stage' – history always is – stressed that in local as in other fields no human record can fail to tell the inquisitive historian something about the fundamentals of the human condition. There is a hint of the romantic and nostalgic about Finberg and Hoskins. They are poets. Alan Everitt (1970) offered a more clinical, even scientific approach, involving the local historian in every aspect of a locality – topography, social and economic structure, culture, morals. Meanwhile the appeal of local enquiries outside formal research has gone on. Enthusiastic, often talented, original and persistent amateurs find publishers and readers. The search for ancient lineages of rising and falling Tudor and Stuart gentry has found its apotheosis in the invasion of record offices by ordinary folk looking for their forbears. They are joined by primary school children fired with their teachers' urge to empathise. Already in 1991 Kevin Schurer was asking was the future Boom or Depression? On present showing neither within nor without academia – apparently half the postgraduates in history are chasing local topics – is Bust likely.

Finally, Richardson acutely contrasts as much as compares the outlooks of English and American practitioners. Unsurprisingly the latter see the former as obsessed with the past. Yet the past can be as recent as yesterday. More important are differences about the parameters of the subject. Where stands the parochial with the global village? Charles Phythian-Adams (Leicester again) called in 1993 for a British (*sic* – sign of the times) Fernand Braudel. Certainly. Perhaps Richardson should in a second edition enlarge and enhance a thought-provoking historiography by drawing on French, German, Russian and even Chinese experience and aspirations, too.

Exeter

Ivan Roots

W. R. J. Barron (ed.), *Arthur and the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, University of Wales Press, 1999, pp. 398, £35.00.

‘The English think of Arthur as their own ... Fifteen centuries of celebration in myth, legend, chronicle, epic, romance, drama, opera and film have engraved it upon the national consciousness as if England and Arthur were one, a secular St. George emblematic of nationhood.’ (Intro., xiii) Without an authentic gravestone, Arthur remains a charismatic folk-hero. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Wace, Layamon tell the story in a variety of languages, as do anonymous alliterative and stanzaic texts in English and the prose romances, *The Weddyng of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell* and *Le Morte Darthur*.

This survey of English versions of the Arthurian legend provides a compendium of interesting and valuable information about King Arthur in English history and society during the Middle Ages. It consists of a series of short segments of information written by twenty-two medieval scholars who identify the chronicles, romances and prose treatments of the Arthur story. The opening section by Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, focused on Celtic tradition, begins with the assertion that, contrary to the traditional search for Celtic origins of Arthur, it is easier to establish that Irish and Welsh translators made use of French and English texts. Several Welsh texts are identified, including Culhwch ac Olwn, which predated Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia regum Britanniae*. Dynastic chronicles are listed next, beginning with Geoffrey, followed by Wace’s *Roman de Brut* and Layamon’s *Brut*, and by prose chronicles, culminating in Caxton’s translation of Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur* and the publication of the *Polychronicon* of Ranulf Higden and others. An Interchapter on English history follows which summarizes the legendary tradition which evolved on the continent, influenced by the romans of Chrétien de Troyes.

In the second section, chapters consider the development of Arthur in the romance tradition, dynastic romance, and chivalric romance, followed by another correlated chapter on Arthur in English society by Juliet Vale.

In the final section, chapters consider Folk Romance and Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur*, concluding with the Arthurian legacy that identifies historians, novelists and poets of later centuries like Tennyson, et al, who return to the legend.

The information presented here is well researched and comprehensive with intelligent interpretations of known facts. The book provides the reader with important

basic information about the Arthurian legend, arranged in a useful pattern. It serves as an encyclopedia, a handy guide for the student who wants an introductory synopsis of what is known about the legend before delving deeply into Arthurian research. Names, dates, and culture are linked in a straightforward manner. Notes are extensive. A useful reference bibliography includes bibliographies, texts in English and additional studies.

The first book in the series, *Arthur and the Welsh*, in my opinion, gives a fuller, more satisfying analysis of information than the synopses in this book. *Arthur and the English*, however, provides reliable information about King Arthur in England. If the book had been at my elbow when I began my current research on Arthurian legend in early modern English history, culture and literature, it would have saved many hours. Reading it now, I find valuable information, but few new discoveries.

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Elizabeth Truax

Viviana Comensoli and Anne Russell (eds), *Enacting Gender on the English Renaissance Stage*, University of Illinois Press, 1999, pp. 270, £18.95; **Eve Rachel Saunders**, *Gender and Literacy on Stage in Early Modern England*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 260, £35.

For some time now, critical theory in a literary context has been running along one track, and performance theory along another, and while those lines have frequently been in parallel, there have been only occasional attempts to breach the division between them. To my mind, the most important essays in Viviana Comensoli and Anne Russell's substantial collection are those that seek to establish some kind of interface between literary critical approaches and performance studies.

That said, there are a number of essays that, while locked in literary mode (with gestures towards the performative), make significant contributions to current debates. Janet Adelman's essay re-opens the case of Galen's one-sex model of the human form, and uses an analysis of early modern medical treatises to challenge a cultural construct that has been in danger of becoming a critical orthodoxy, largely due to Stephen Greenblatt's seminal 'Fiction and Friction' essay in *Shakespearean Negotiations* (1988). Adelman's conclusions put a new slant on Shakespeare's playful references (made by transvestite boy actors, of course) to what women 'lack' in plays like *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Twelfth Night*. Mary Floyd-Wilson also considers *Antony and Cleopatra*, identifying the ways in which early modern categories of race and gender intersect. Less interesting, to my mind, is the work that continues to make obeisance to the circuitous logic of psychoanalysis. Alan Walworth uncovers some fascinating material about the opened body in early modern drama, but insists on reading it via Lacan and Freud, when it might more usefully have been read in terms of gender politics.

Although Judith Butler's name features only once or twice in the book, it is clear that the field of study that her work has opened up has been influential on a number of the authors: the concept of gender as a performance is richly suggestive for scholars of early modern theatre practices, and the essays by Laurie E. Osborne and Christiana Luckyj benefit from it. The former is rewarding for its acknowledgement of the importance of the audience, something that has been in sharp focus in performance theory

recently. Osborne considers the on-stage female spectator in plays such as *Hamlet* and *Love's Labour's Lost* and notes the relative ease with which the spectator herself becomes spectacle, the object of the male gaze. Meanwhile, Luckyj considers the character of Vittoria in Webster's *The White Devil*, and opens up a subversive space for Webster's misogyny by concentrating on the play's (and in particular Vittoria's awareness of its self-consciousness as a piece of theatre).

Eve Rachel Sanders' *Gender and Literacy on Stage in Early Modern England*, winner of the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women Book Award in 1998, is a study that manages to wed often dense research to an elegant prose style. While the depth of the research on offer can be demanding, there is a clarity and directness in Sanders's work that is sorely missed in a good deal of contemporary scholarship. Just as the establishment of gender difference in early modern culture is a preoccupation for many contributors to Comensoli and Russell's volume, so it is for Sanders.

Surprisingly, perhaps, her book begins not on the public stage but in the study and the school room.

Her first chapter considers the education of children in early modern England, and takes account of conduct manuals, as well as the literary texts which would have been most familiar to the scholars of the age – Spenser's *Faerie Queene* in particular. Sanders adeptly weaves together literary criticism (situated largely in the field of new historicism) with cultural history, and shows how religion in particular had a large part to play in determining the different education boys and girls received. In a neat move that is characteristic of her work, Sanders shifts from the study of an educational system split along gendered lines into a consideration of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, where the context is precisely that, an academy established to exclude female company. From here, the book moves us into the theatre, and considers the staging of reading and writing in a number of texts, from the familiar (*Hamlet*) to the more obscure (Thomas Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon*), with the focus on gender distinctions being highlighted with a steady emphasis. Throughout, Eve Sanders is concerned to locate these texts in their cultural contexts, and alongside the male-authored texts we find works by Ann Clifford and Mary Sidney where once again, via Sidney's *Antonius*, the Cleopatra story re-surfaces.

While Sanders's book is more specialized than *Enacting Gender*, it is an important study that opens up genuinely new avenues of research. Meanwhile, at a time when collections of essays such as Comensoli and Russell's are streaming from academic presses, it is a relief to find one that is more than a hastily prepared set of conference proceedings. With an introduction that provides a context and frame for the essays, *Enacting Gender on the English Renaissance Stage* is a wide-ranging volume that should find a large audience at undergraduate level and above.

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Stevie Simkin

Philippa Berry, *Shakespeare's Feminine Endings*, Routledge, 1999, pp. 197, £15.99 pb.; **Ilona Bell**, *Elizabethan Women and the Poetry of Courtship*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 262, £35.00.

In her general editor's introduction to the Routledge series *Feminist Readings of Shakespeare*, Ann Thompson celebrated feminist criticism's 'coming of age': Feminist critics, she suggests 'are not asking' "Is this woman a good or bad role model for women today?" as nineteenth-century writers did, or "Is Shakespeare capable of creating strong females?" as some early feminist critics did, but "How has theatrical and critical tradition re-presented and re-read these texts in relation to issues of gender difference?"

Ann Thompson's new brief for feminist criticism removed that work from its immediate political agenda and opened it up to include all of the critical methods – historical, psychoanalytical, materialist – which currently animate the study of Shakespeare and early modern literature. The two books under review each demonstrates the vitality of the resulting feminist criticism, exploring on the one hand the deep poetic and intellectual structures which inform the representation of women in Shakespearean tragedy, and on the other the relations between men and women implied in the dialogue of Elizabethan lyrics. Each of the books is informed less by the politics of late twentieth century feminism than the grand narratives of European critical theory. The convoluted and ingenious layers of Berry's readings are wrapped around a core of Derridean deconstruction while Ilona Bell revives the closed conventions of the Petrarchan and Ovidian traditions of poetry by invoking Bakhtin's concept of the dialogic which turns attention towards the implied female reader and addressee of Elizabethan sonnetteering. In both books, actual historical women who might have seen the plays or read the poems make only passing appearances. They become the occasions for a critical discourse which dominates the argument, persuading with its own eloquence and intellectual flair rather than its explanatory relation to particular texts or particular historical moments.

Philippa Berry's book works close into the text, exploring 'how a repetitive pattern of feminine or feminized tropes performs an allusive reweaving both of tragic teleology and of orthodox conceptions of death'. However this is language stripped of any denotative function. Rather the allusiveness of Shakespeare's poetic language is mined for its 'multilayered, earthy and primitive sediment of meaning', most notably in its puns and word play. Each strand of meaning is captured and teased out, tracked out to its alleged origins in Stoic and Epicurean thought. However, what an older critical mode might have called 'sources' or 'analogues' are left unconnected to the text; the resulting gap becomes the locus of an uncanny failure of meaning elaborated in all its incomprehensibility. The Freudian concept of the '*unheimlich*' is used to render the meaningless significant without reducing it to an alternative meaning. This complex play with meaning makes summary of the book's argument seem impossible or reductive. There are moments, such as the insistence on the significance of James I's accession to *Macbeth*, when a conventional critic might want to challenge a historical assertion but any such effort seems reductive. It stems the flow of the argument which has more to do with kaleidoscopic patterning within the play, which matches the pairing of Banquo and Macbeth to Jacob and Esau, James and Mary Queen of Scots, Britannia and Ireland and the Union of the Crowns. All of these motifs are

persuasively accepted as 'there' in the play. However where earlier critics would have distinguished the bawdy from the history, the imagery from the narrative, this critical method insists on plaiting the strands together, drawing in the reader to the coils of the argument so that there is no intellectual escape. The finale of the excursus on *Macbeth* illustrates both the method and the impossibility of dialogue or dissent:

On the one hand, therefore, *Macbeth* explores the association of that kingship which is not able to perpetuate itself through lineal succession with recurring cycles of triumph and betrayal, in which the continuing influence of the 'rebel's whore' Fortune can be clearly discerned. Yet on the other hand, through its subtle use of chiasmus or doubling, the play appears simultaneously to suggest that the new British kingship represented by Banquo's heir is mysteriously dependent upon its opposite, yet originating shadow – the tyrannical, bloody and effeminate image of a Scottish or Celtic king.

Each element in the pattern is recognisably from the play, or at least from the legacy of its thematic criticism. However the critic has created a new locus of meaning which has no place in the familiar narrative or its theatrical renditions. All of the buried meanings from the deep substructure of early modern intellectual life are part of the meaning of the text and its past, present and future meanings boil and fuse into one another so that only the alchemical critic is able to identify the different forces in which meaning is constituted.

By contrast Ilona Bell's book is an altogether more measured affair. Yet she too uses the poems she discusses as a springboard into early modern culture and the inaudible voices of its women. She takes as axiomatic the theoretical position that language 'provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction'. In other words, behind and outside every poetic statement, there is an implied reader and if that reader cannot be discovered in empirical history, she must be discerned in the interstices of the texts themselves. Where some feminist critics, looking for those same women have mourned them as necessarily chaste and silent, Ilona Bell finds them altogether more vocal, engaging directly in the dialogue, changing its form and denying its ideologically fraught conclusions.

Bell's argument, however, is the more persuasive for having some empirical evidence in the now familiar writing of Elizabethan women poets. Isabella Whitney's 'Copy of a letter to her Unconstant lover' or Queen Elizabeth's poem on the departure of her French suitor remind us that women did in fact 'write back'. Ilona Bell's close readings of those and other women's poetry delineates the ways in which their poems subtly shifted the traditions of courtly verse to take the woman's part and move outside the positions offered by it. Recent scholarship on numerous and varied early women writers – Martha Moulsworth, Jame Cornwallis and Mary Tudor as well as the better known Mary Sidney and Mary Wroth, is drawn on to give a sense of poetry as the natural discourse of the affections. These women were moreover to be found in writing other than poetry. They appear as the addressees of the dedicatory epistles of collections of poetry, but also as the implied recipients of the letters in manuals of epistolary instruction and are buried in the revision of Gascoigne's *Hundred Sundry Flowers* which excluded the most visibly biographical and specifically referential poems. In a fascinating account of the music master, Thomas Whythorne, who wrote an autobiographical diary, she shows how heterosexual encounter was schooled and tamed by the protocols of poetic writing which permitted, as it

controlled, passionate relations between young men and women. Nor were these poetic versions of love to be set against real social relationships. Martha Moulsworth's account of her relations with four husbands is as clear about her financial as her social responsibilities. Dorothy Oxinden writing to her suitor William Taylor resists being termed a goddess in 'such strains of rhetoric' in order to insist upon the reality of her life as 'a poor mortal creature, subject to all kinds of miseries'.

Bell's account of the uses of poetry for courtship, however, resists any simple conflation of these writing women with the implied idealised mistresses of the famous sonnet sequences. Indeed the strength of her book is in the continuities which it demonstrates between the forms of courtly poetry and the articulation of sentiment in less eloquent writers. Above all, she resists the notion that the objects of the sonnet sequences are mere products of discourse. Instead she locates them both historically and discursively as the objects of male desire and the subjects of their own. History and theory are brought together. The famous male poets, Spenser, Daniel and Donne, are brought alongside the voices of women poets to 'produce alternative histories of form which contain blueprints to the lives of Elizabethan women'.

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Kate McLuskie

David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics 1627–1660*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. xiii + 509, £40.

This is a marvellous book. Perhaps it comes in the wrong packaging: a press release, shrilly entitled 'Vive La Re Publick', and invoking the sacred names of Tony Harrison and Tom Paulin. It makes it an easy target for critics who will see this as another variant on the high-road-to-Civil-War theme. There can be no doubts about this being a committed, teleological work. Norbrook starts with John Pocock's famous dictum that, before 1649, English republicanism was 'a language, not a programme'. He does not dissent from this judgement, but he deepens it. Language, if explored sensitively enough, itself *becomes* a programme. No literary critic of the seventeenth century is better equipped than Norbrook to explore the nuances of language in this particular historical setting. The argument is a cumulative one, and there will be points on the way where the reader will feel a sense of being bullied, however delicately and sensitively it is done. But familiar landmarks are now viewed in a different way – *Paradise Lost*, *The 'Horatian Ode'*, and *Oceana* among them – and figures, hitherto seen as minor, take on a new stature: among these, John Hall (212–21), Thomas May (271–80) and George Wither (351–57). Norbrook pays, incidentally, a graceful, deserved tribute (note 72, p. 86) to John Gurney's pioneering work in the Surrey archives on the career of Wither. Above all, Norbrook forces us to rethink tired assumptions, by the scrupulousness of his close reading of the texts. He begins the book – and very nearly ends it – with Lucan's *Pharsalia*. Sir William Waller had quoted from it: 'this warr without an Enemie'. In the process, as Norbrook drily points out (24), he gave Richard Ollard an unattributed title of his 1976 Civil War monograph. But, *pace* Ollard, Lucan and Waller are not so much bewailing such a war's futility as advocating its vigorous prosecution. The parallel that comes to mind, at least for this reader, is with Philip Hunton (so influential later

upon John Locke), stripping the Parliamentary cause of its legitimacy as a prelude, not to an advocacy of neutrality, but to a conscience-driven apology for resistance. Norbrook powerfully evokes the impact of the Triennial Act of 1641, in conjunction with the freeing of the press (99). His point – important in his reading of the pamphlets and plays which follow this section – is that the pitch of political excitement would no longer subside in the long intervals between Parliaments. Political speeches of MPs could now circulate in print; he does not say this, but perhaps it was the speeches that were circulated, but *never delivered*, which made in the end the greatest impact. As for the freeing of the press, Norbrook correctly makes the point that Milton's *Areopagitica* is not an objection to Parliamentary control of printing as much as to its collusion with the Stationers' Company monopoly. Milton was more of a republican than he let on – Norbrook here sides with an impressive array of recent scholarship – but he was not a democrat. *Areopagus* represented aristocratic wisdom. It was addressed to 'Lords and Commons'. He did not join the Levellers in wanting better representation. If rulers and representatives are *held* to virtue, the mechanics by which that was attained was irrelevant. For Norbrook, it is Milton's *First Defence of the English People* which is 'the true monument both to the republic's aspirations and to his achievement as a writer' (209). Its target, *Eikon Basilike*, had been co-authored by Charles I and 'a Presbyterian clergyman, John Gauden' (206). I find this a curious classification for the past *episcopalian* member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines and the future bishop of Worcester. The work itself, of course, touched a populist nerve. Too populist for Hobbes, who was not anxious to embrace the fate of Dorislaus and Ascham. How well Norbrook captures him, on the eve of publication date for *Leviathan*: 'the man who had been so terrified of the influence of the republican Trojan horse now chose to seek its protection' (212)! Republican rhetoric was simultaneously making its impact alongside *Eikon Basilike*, Norbrook reminds us. It is for such reminders that we are all in Norbrook's debt. He does not argue that the reception of *Eikon Basilike* tries to tell us something of huge importance; but he redresses an imbalance in literary criticism by the case that he makes for the competing vigour of a republican literary culture. Norbrook (a self-denying ordinance?) omits quoting the famous exchange between Henry Marten and Oliver Cromwell, which was recorded by John Aubrey: 'Oliver Cromwell once in the House called him, jestingly or scoffingly, Sir Henry Martin. H.M. rises and bowes; I thanke your *Majestie*. I always thought when you were a *King* I should be Knighted.' Norbrook gives Marten the last word in his exciting book; as Cromwell could testify, it was something that Marten was used to having.

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William Lamont

Harold Fisch, *New Stories for Old: Biblical Patterns in the Novel*, Macmillan, 1998, pp. x + 236, £42.50; **Harold Fisch**, *The Biblical Presence in Shakespeare, Milton and Blake*, Clarendon Press, 1999, pp. xi + 330, £45.

Professor Fisch is evidently a scholar of considerable energy and erudition, well versed in both Literary and Biblical Studies. However, readers may find his two most recent books flawed in conception. This is no doubt due in large measure to the fact

that each contains several chapters previously published in books and periodicals, and that neither book establishes coherence for itself. I use the term reader advisedly, for the major thrust of *New Stories for Old* is to investigate what the first readers of certain classic novels (*Robinson Crusoe*, *Joseph Andrews* and *Silas Marner*) brought with them to their act of reading, in terms of knowledge of Biblical archetypes, and then to perform the same task in relation to a selection of modern Jewish novels. Strangely, Professor Fisch claims in this book that intertextuality is the peculiar province of the novel, whilst acknowledging in *Biblical Presence* that Shakespeare frequently includes metadramatic references in his plays.

I learned much about the ways in which the tale of Jonah might be read as a version of the narratives of Original Sin, a Chosen People and a Promised Land, and I was glad to be reminded that, despite those who scoff at *Desert Island Discs*, Robinson Crusoe was provided with the Bible (even if he had only tobacco to compensate for the complete works of Shakespeare). However, I was not at all clear as to what rationale was being adopted in the selection of the classic novels, nor was I convinced that the transition from the classic to the contemporary texts was effected smoothly. Despite its title, the book is largely preoccupied with the place of Old Testament patterns in the novel, and I wonder whether it is reasonable to regard novels written by American and by European writers as being indistinguishably 'Jewish'. The book as a whole adopts this global position on literature: it refers to Cervantes, Goethe, Dostoevsky, Kafka and Shakespeare, all of whom share a common acquaintance with the Bible (and no doubt they do) which seems to override any cultural differences which might be encoded in their nationalities. I wonder what reader is imagined for this book, and what assumptions and knowledge that reader is expected to bring? A sample of the criticism underpinning this book, using Shakespeare studies, the area with which I am best acquainted, suggested a very traditional approach, and some rather dated material. This suspicion was reinforced by reading the second book *The Biblical Presence in Shakespeare, Milton and Blake*. On one page, of the eight references none is later than 1989 and six are to texts published before 1970.

Professor Fisch tellingly describes his project at the outset as being concerned with 'literary influence as it relates to the work of three poets'. Shakespeare was a poet, but this book is concerned with his work as a dramatist, and the significance of that distinction is not addressed. We receive plays in real time and the work of the audience is of a very different kind from that of the individual reader. Professor Fisch, however, presents us with a Shakespeare who operates not in the theatre of the stage but in the theatre of the mind, as the range of his secondary references makes clear. The principal differences between *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, for example, are attributed simply to the writer. Nowhere in the section on Shakespeare do we encounter the theatre, the actors, the audience or the patrons.

As in his first book, what Professor Fisch means by Biblical presence is, for the most part, the framing by Old Testament narratives. Moreover, Biblical presence is treated as unproblematic, whereas much recent work, and some not so recent, would argue that it is anything but. Schoenbaum's *William Shakespeare, a Documentary Life*, for example, has a section on Faith and Knowledge in which he expresses his debt to Richmond Noble's pioneering work on Shakespeare's use of the Bible. Neither Noble nor Schoenbaum are referred to by Professor Fisch, and he fails to address the matter of just what kind of Bible Shakespeare used, and what kind of faith he espoused.

Thus he can write of 'the weight of biblical-christian allusion in *Hamlet*' without referring to discussions, for example by Stephen Greenblatt, of possible Catholic allusion in the play, especially in the debates between Hamlet and the Ghost. There is but a single sentence on the difference between Protestant and Catholic readings of the Ghost: one might be dismissive of such discussions, but can they really be ignored completely?

Perhaps the most interesting section of the book was that part of the chapter on *King Lear* which dealt with the differences between the Quarto and Folio versions. This is a neat summary of the work of Gary Taylor, Michael Warren and others. Unfortunately, the vigour of this section serves only to reinforce one's sense of the tiredness elsewhere.

King Alfred's College, Winchester

Geoffrey M. Ridden

Arthur F. Marotti (ed.), *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, Macmillan, 1999, pp. xvii + 266, £47.50; **Alison Shell**, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. xi + 309, £37.50.

Recent historical and literary research concerned with the impact of Catholics and Catholicism on early modern England has challenged stubborn scholarly traditions. Defining Catholic identity and influence has taken us beyond the solid nucleus of Catholic recusancy to include the wider span of church-papists, Catholic sympathisers and converts. The emphasis on a religious duality that portrayed Protestantism and Catholicism as locked in perpetual conflict, goodness pitted against evil, truth against error, has arguably been taken too far, obscuring the constant contact and influence of Catholicism and Catholics on Protestant contemporaries. Catholic writers are in the process of being rescued from marginalisation by a Protestant Whig tradition that refused to see much merit in their works. These two books are a product of this major readjustment of historical perspective and literary values.

With just two exceptions, the nine essays in Arthur Marotti's volume are by literary scholars which is an unfortunate start to a stated hope to foster more cross-disciplinary co-operation. The chronological range of the essays extends from Elizabeth I to the late seventeenth century and the principal texts discussed include autobiography, drama and poetry. With an almost missionary zeal, the volume announces its intention to rescue English Catholics and their writings from a wholly unwarranted obscurity and neglect. Marotti's own contribution focuses on recusant Catholic women and Jesuit missionaries and their place in the political mythology of English nationalism. Robert Persons' polemical writings on questions of authority and obedience to both the civil and ecclesiastical power are informatively analysed by Ronald Corthell. The missionary priest lurking in priest holes is the feared hidden threat to Protestant England discussed by Julian Yates. In a fine, thought-provoking essay, Anthony Milton addresses the limits and ambiguities of early Stuart anti-Catholicism in a Protestant environment which was in fact regularly exposed to Catholic ideas, books, images and people. John Watkins examines the anti-Catholic legacy bequeathed by Elizabeth to James I which was reaffirmed in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot. Two very different converts

to Catholicism are the subject of separate essays. In a joint work, Michael Questier and Simon Healy describe the difficult balancing act of an early Jacobean MP, John Good, a 'church papist' who was also staunchly loyal to the Stuart regime. The spiritual odyssey and literary contribution of another convert, Richard Carpenter, who moved from the Church of England to Catholicism and back again and later embraced Independency, are the subject of an interesting piece by Alison Shell. John King's essay explores the anti-Catholic satire which he sees as dominating Milton's account of the 'paradise of fools' in book three of *Paradise Lost*. Finally, Frances Dolan provides a fascinating account of the remarkable Elizabeth Cellier who as an activist and author struggled under the double disability of her sex and her Catholicism.

Alison Shell's impressively wide-ranging and scholarly book sets out to rehabilitate a varied assortment of Catholic imaginative writing, as well as to gauge the creative impact of anti-Catholicism on some mainstream writers, during the years 1558–1660. The book is effectively divided into four essays tracing distinct themes but all testifying to the pervasiveness of Catholic influence. The texts explored vary greatly in their nature. They primarily feature poetry, drama, allegory, emblem and romance but there are also lesser concerns with sermons and devotional and controversial prose. The first essay focuses on the anti-Catholic revenge tragedies of Thomas Middleton (*The Revenger's Tragedy*) and John Webster (*The White Devil*). A full understanding of the intentions of these two works, and how they were understood by contemporaries, it is convincingly argued, depends on an appreciation of the importance of dualism in anti-popery. The world inhabited by these two dramatists is corrupt, decadent and prone to error, all failings associated in the Protestant mind with popery. Idolatry, ornament and hypocrisy, personified in the ubiquitous Whore of Babylon, are recurrent themes alongside apocalyptic expectations in Middleton's case. Catholic religious poetry from the pens of Robert Southwell and Richard Crashaw provides the subject matter for the second essay. Shell makes a strong plea for both men to be recognised as representing an English Catholic baroque tradition with its particular genre of 'tears-poetry'. However, claims for the literary influence of Southwell, whose poems were not published until after his 1595 execution, rest almost exclusively upon internal evidence and are highly conjectural. The third essay is concerned with Elizabethan and early Stuart Catholic writings which stressed the importance of loyalty and obedience to the reigning monarch while trying to reconcile this with the practice of their Catholicism. The book's final essay takes the subject of exile from England and a resultant exposure to European literary and artistic taste. Here Shell's researches into English Jesuit drama furnish fascinating details on a previously obscure literary creation. In the main, both books achieve their objectives and are essential reading for specialists in early modern literature and history.

University of Ulster

Keith Lindley

Zouheir Jamoussi, *Primogeniture and Entail in England: A Survey of their History and Representation in Literature*, Centre de Publication Universitaire, Tunis, 1999, pp. 293, 8 DT.

This book will come as a pleasant surprise to those who have long pondered the influence of inheritance customs on English society. For some unexplained reason, English historians are rarely drawn to investigate them. The last considerable volume to be published in England on this score appeared over twenty years ago, in 1978 (Jack Goody *et al.* (eds), *Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe, 1200–1800*) and had a broader scope than England alone. So this book is special, and in more ways than one. It is written in English, published from Tunis, and the author writes from the University of Manouba there. He brings a fresh eye to the scene from a different cultural tradition.

Jamoussi was first inspired to write on this theme when reading Jane Austen's novels, in which inheritance rules feature prominently in the ordering of her plots. He divides his study into two parts, first, examining historically the law of primogeniture and changes in ideology and practice over the centuries, and second, uncovering contemporary perceptions of the social significance of the rule as exemplified in drama and the novel.

The inheritance of landed estates by the eldest son was a rule introduced into England at the Norman Conquest, and is generally deemed to have been suitable in enabling kings over the long term to remember and recover the military obligations of their feudal tenants. Primogeniture was strengthened from the thirteenth century by the use of entails, and in course of time landowners themselves recognised virtues in the rule; it kept their landed estates intact over the generations, and by the sixteenth century demonstrated the many political and social advantages of preserving the name and power of families. In a working practice, of course, entails became an irksome constraint on some, and so, from the fifteenth century onwards, the common recovery was used to get round them. To arrest that trend, the strict settlement was devised in the mid-seventeenth century, to fortify the authority of entails while allowing for some fairer apportionments to be made to other children in the family, including the women. In narrating this history of primogeniture the author interposes many interesting comments by contemporaries along the way – Defoe, James Boswell, and Edward Gibbon, among them – noticing from their own experience the effects of primogeniture on children's lives. Their personalities sometimes turned out to be at odds with their birth ranking. At the same time, their expectations from birth and their education imposed certain uniformities on their careers, and many tended to fall into one recognised pattern. Writers indulged in colourful generalizations, which Jamoussi judiciously moderates in searching for a more lifelike and complex reality.

When enlarging on the ideology of the subject, Jamoussi sets out the views of the treatise-writers like Thomas Wilson, John ap Robert, and William Sprigge, and eminent political theorists like Filmer, Hobbes and Locke, Edmund Burke, Tom Paine, and Adam Smith. He endeavours to sketch in the economic and social trends that shifted the viewpoint on primogeniture, stressing notably the rise of a moneyed middle class which saw things from a perspective different from that of landowners. Arguments in favour of free trade and *laissez-faire* in economic policy were also influential in the campaign for a free market in land. By the second half of the nineteenth

century the tide was running against a rule that passed land willy nilly to the eldest son, and it was brought to an end with the Settled Lands Act of 1882.

The second half of the book concentrates on the fictional characters in drama and novels, who were affected by this inheritance law. The dramatic examples run from Shakespeare's *As You Like It* through plays of Fletcher, Congreve, Farquhar, Aphra Behn, Richard Cumberland, Thomas Shadwell, and John Vanbrugh, to finish with Sheridan's *School for Scandal*. The novelists include Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Jane Austen, Mrs Gaskell, and George Eliot. The nuances are brought out in authors' different interpretations of the tension between older and younger brothers, and by the time of Jane Austen, we see the sufferings of the women also drawn into the plots. A generous array and range of examples reflects the gradual transformation of opinion from that exalting the patrilineal system of inheritance to one that better satisfied the middle classes, and was centred on maintaining the conjugal family.

Here is an intriguing story that whets the appetite for a further study investigating what actually happened to younger sons of the landed classes; they so often disappear from the official pedigrees. The one stereotype of angry, hungry, young men, embittered by a permanent grudge masks the rich diversity of life, which produced more than a few younger brothers, galvanized by their bleak economic situation into enterprise and invention. When will historians investigate a few real-life stories?

Hadlow, Kent

Joan Thirsk

Roxane C. Murph, *The English Civil War through the Restoration in Fiction: An Annotated Bibliography*, Greenwood Press, Westport, CT., 2000, pp. viii + 349, £63.95.

The significance of the tensions, turbulence, confrontations, upheavals, and readjustments of the English Revolution persisted long after the original events were over. Divisions ran deep and historians have argued over them ever since in one of the longest running debates in English history. Writers of other kinds – poets, political theorists, preachers, and pamphleteers – also engaged with the issues raised in this contentious period; literature, as is now generally recognised, was part of the Revolution itself and supplied some of its dynamics. Later writers down to the present day have taken over from where contemporaries left off. Roxane Murph's annotated bibliography does not claim completeness since it surveys only three genres of writing – verse, novels and short stories, and plays – dealing with the period 1625 to 1685, but with 936 items it clearly covers much ground and draws attention to much forgotten or obscure material drawn from the last three centuries.

Its shortcomings and defects, however, are legion. For a book whose subject, in effect, runs in parallel with the historiography of the subject, the approach adopted here fails to draw attention to changing interpretations of this period over time, shifting centres of interest, and to developments in the methodology and discourse of history. Murph's introduction contents itself with providing a bald and old-fashioned narrative summary of the constitutional history of this period, with a few pages (spiced with examples) about drama, and works of verse and prose devoted to the personalities, events, and movements of these troubled times. (The brief suggestions

for further reading are so utterly inadequate as to be positively worrying and confirm the impression of Murph's exceedingly confined approach to the subject.) Moreover the way the material is organised within the three main genre sections prevents the reader from getting any sense of dominant trends and features in the different kinds of writing at specific points in time. In each section the material, regardless of date of original publication, is simply deposited in alphabetical order. It seems not to have occurred to this editor that a chronological arrangement would have had more advantages to offer.

The majority of the items in the main bibliography are accompanied by the content summary but as a rule no contextualisation is provided and nothing whatever is said about the authors. The annotation, indeed, rarely rises above the banal and is frequently judgmental in the most grotesque and heavy-handed way. Very occasionally there is praise. 'This is a powerfully evocative work,' says Murph as she warms to Brendan Kennelly's long poem *Cromwell* (Dublin, 1983). 'Most readers will enjoy this entertaining novel, despite the unbelievable plot and characters,' she asserts of Charles Hyne's novel *Prince Rupert the Buccaneer* (New York, 1900). Chastisement or condemnation, however, are far more common. For example, of a 1664 poem by Edmund Cooper, she declares 'The writer was a physician, and, one hopes, a better one than he was a poet'. Poor Harrison Ainsworth, a minor nineteenth-century novelist it is true, comes in for rough treatment. Of his *Boscobel: or the Royal Oak. A Tale of the Year 1651* (London, 1872) Murph pronounces (opines is not quite right) 'The writing is florid and the dialogue ludicrous, and the many unnecessary digressions to describe, in great detail, the scenery, architecture, and history of the places the king passed through, lead one to believe that the author was paid by the word'. Sometimes a stern health warning is incorporated into the annotation. Of Stephen Jeffreys' play about Lord Rochester – *The Libertine* (London, 1995) – we are told: 'The play is occasionally witty or moving, but the gross lewdness will make some readers uncomfortable.' And so it goes on – and on!

And there are gaps. Murph seems not to have spotted, for example, G. J. Whyte Melville's *Holmby House* (1860), Jack Lindsay's *1649. Novel of a Year* (1939), Robert Graves's *Wife to Mr Milton* (1944), and David Caute's *Comrade Jacob* (1961). It is regrettable that the editor – a freelance researcher on the later Middle Ages who has strayed into seventeenth-century studies – has simply squandered the opportunity of providing a thorough and systematic annotated bibliography on this important subject which would have been so useful to scholars working in the field. As it is, they will have to struggle with the disjointed chronological ragbag produced by a merely alphabetical sequence and have to make a determined effort to ignore the editor's simplistic and obtrusive verdicts on the various texts which come before her Supreme Court scrutiny. Macaulay might have got away with this kind of thing in the nineteenth century but such high-handedness, lofty disdain, and moralising are inexcusable today. This book brings little credit to either its editor or publisher.

King Alfred's College, Winchester

R. C. Richardson

Paul Hammond, *Dryden and the Traces of Classical Rome*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1999, pp. 305, £45.00.

'I cannot but observe that whenever the Criticks pursue him, he withdraws for shelter under the Artillery of the Ancients and thinks by the discharge of a Quotation for a Latine Author to destroy their criticisms' wrote Gerald Langbaine sarcastically of John Dryden in 1691. In fact Dryden's use of ancient Rome and her authors had more meaning than that of a poet who liked to show off his classical learning to confound his critics. Paul Hammond's book takes as its theme the quotations, allusions and translations of Latin and Latin authors in John Dryden's work and rather than condemning them as Langbaine did, he illuminates the influence of classical Rome upon a seventeenth-century intellect. The personal and public use Dryden made of Latin in his poetry is extensively and painstakingly explored in this rich book, especially for the light thrown upon the way in which contemporary Englishness is conceptualised through references to ancient Rome.

Dryden's ambition to be both classical and modern in his work through the use of an inherited culture illustrates the tension between the ancient world of Rome as an imaginary past and the invented present. Classical quotation from ancient authors was, claims Hammond, part and parcel of Dryden's work. It was used for a variety of purposes: as a means of giving Dryden himself 'space', as well as the reconfiguring of classical texts on his own terms. Quite often such allusions and quotations were not 'guests, but ghosts' in the work of the poet. The Latin entered into Dryden's English text in fragments as a sign of an authority that lay elsewhere, but attesting to the power of the modern author. Often his quotation was in fact misquotation, a creative reflection of text lodged in his own memory and dating back to his early life as a scholar. Thus Horace moved from being Horace the Latin author, to Dryden's version of Horace. Such action was common at the time as these Latin authors were used as 'stones re-cut to fit the second temple rather than simply relics from the first'.

The use of Roman motifs illustrated the subtlety of Dryden's thought and they were full of resonance to his reader. Moreover they were neither as straightforward in their use as may first seem, but in fact replete with problems. Hammond makes a good case for significance of the poem which haunted Dryden's later work, his 'Heroique Stanzas' on the death of Cromwell; a poem with many a Roman allusion that tended to become more and more visible in Dryden's later work. The first half of Hammond's book is concerned with the paradoxes of a modern author's use of Latin quotation, while the second half is a reading of Dryden's translations of the Latin authors. In the case of the translations Dryden made these were 'amplified, but not alter'd'. In fact Dryden's view of the art and the 'management of loss' that is all translation is made lucid by Hammond. There are also significant sections on the contemporary setting for Dryden's translations of Juvenal's satires in a 1690s context, where as Hammond notes, the poet's translations of these satires became a 'mobile text which offer[ed] readers unusual scope to develop their own inferences'. He also makes clear that from the 1660s, through to the 1680s and into the 1690s a change in Dryden's attitude to Rome and her authors can also be observed in which darker shades and meditations on death, fortune, satire and tragedy are visible. In short Paul Hammond's account of the use of Rome by the seventeenth

century poet and the allusions which fall, sometimes misquoted in Dryden's work, provide a valuable addition to our understanding of Dryden the poet and his intellectual context.

Bath Spa University College

Alan Marshall

Joseph M. Levine, *Between the Ancients and the Moderns: Baroque Culture in Restoration England*, Yale University Press, 1999, pp. xiv + 279, £27.50.

England in the four decades following the return of Charles II provides Joseph M. Levine with an instance of the role in 'baroque culture' – about defining which he is confessedly guarded – of the ongoing dispute between the ancients and the moderns for superiority. In this context he contemplates the ideas and activities of four well-known, though perhaps not fully representative, individuals – a would-be virtuoso, a poet-dramatist, an architect and a French *litterateur* in English exile.

First, John Evelyn, who set out to adhere to classical standards as he saw them, but, always eager to tackle anything learned and erudite, came to be open to both 'the new sciences and the old humanities', believing that once assimilated they could, perhaps really would, 'bring about practical benefits [in] moulding human nature into a shape both beautiful and useful'. Initially for John Dryden 'reason or sense, not ancient authority must be the final judge' in matters artistic or intellectual. But during the 1680s, contributing a biography of Plutarch to a pretentious new edition of the *Lives*, he appeared as 'an unreconstructed ancient'. By the 1690s he could well imagine emergent geniuses 'equal to the ancients', while still offering himself a sort of obeisance to antiquity. At the very end of his life Dryden was awarding 'the palm' more or less unequivocally to *ancienneté*. Had he, then, arrived at his true destination or was he still vacillating?

Third of Levine's quartet is Charles de Marquerel, the Sieur de Saint-Evremont, who, spending the bulk of a long life abroad, brought a French dimension to England. The Quarrel was much more intense in France where the Academie had gone right over to the ancients. Saint-Evremont himself was more flexible, but, crying up French as a language over Latin, shows as a fairly consistent modernist. 'We must go upon a new system to suit the inclination and genius of the present age' of change in 'Gods, nature, politicks, manners, humours and customs' – in short, the cultural lot! Antiquity of course, commanded respect, even while modernity was making its own imperious demands. And so we come to Sir Christopher Wren. Levine finds him hard to work out, but concludes that though much of his production, subject as it was to external pressures, might suggest otherwise, his admiration for classical building was genuine and intense. Even so, it was not deferential enough for those committed ancients for whom in architecture as in everything else, the golden age had long since passed. Could anyone, then, in the baroque hope to get beyond mere imitation to arrive at something that could be considered really classical? Should the effort be made at all? Levine quotes Sir Thomas Pope Blount: 'We may assent to them as ancients but not as oracles.' That seems to sum up the thrust of Levine's assessment of the significance for baroque culture of his famous four. For them the distinctions between ancients and moderns were really becoming blurred, though still capable of

exaggeration among the obstinate. The great Quarrel was perhaps already drifting into a war of attrition, bound to peter out.

University of Exeter

Ivan Roots

Anya Taylor, *Bacchus in Romantic England: Writers and Drink, 1780–1830*, Macmillan, 1999, pp. xi + 264, £47.50.

Anya Taylor's study of the relationship between Romantic writers and drink is an innovative exploration of an important and hitherto neglected theme. As she points out 'drinking permeates writing in England' between 1780 and 1830, both in terms of subject matter and because many of the writers we associate with Romanticism, such as Burns, Coleridge, Lamb, and Keats, as well as several of the political figures of the day, including Pitt, Fox and the Prince Regent, were heavy drinkers. Whereas previous authorities have considered the Romantic era to be relatively unconcerned about the effects of alcohol – at least in comparison to the period before 1760 and after 1830 – Taylor argues that, on the contrary, writers in the Romantic period were pre-occupied with both the positive and negative effects of drink in an unprecedented way. Taylor claims that what was distinctive about this period was the rise of spirit drinking and she maintains that doctors were aware of a new kind of drinking, where drinkers were seen as patients to be studied and cured and not just as a moral problem. In their treatment of alcohol, Romantic writers drew on the classical tradition where drink was viewed both as a communal release and as something which could both energise and destroy human will and restraint. Moreover, Taylor convincingly shows that the pleasures and pains associated with drink and the power of alcohol to change human nature, fascinated those interested in philosophy, psychology and physiology. She brings out well the connections between the divided self of alcoholism and the divided self of late eighteenth-century psychology and she emphasises that the moment when heavy drinking began to be perceived as a disease seems to have coincided with the Romantic obsession with introspection and self-awareness. Through a series of case studies, Taylor makes some interesting reflections on class perceptions associated with drink problems. Francis Place and John Clare, for example, were sympathetic to lower class drinking, while condemning the drinking of the upper classes. She also draws attention to the gendered associations of drink. Although drunkenness had long been associated with manliness, writers were concerned on the one hand with the brutishness induced by excessive drinking, and on the other by the dandy's rejection of drink which seemed to be effeminate. Taylor points out that women writers repudiated the male interest in alcohol; and she observes that a substantial number of those women who turned to writing in the period did so in order to support families abandoned by their drunken husbands.

Quite why the Romantic period has not been studied in this light before is an intriguing subject in itself. Taylor argues that we have too readily seen the addiction of this period as opium rather than alcohol, and she points out that even de Quincy noted that it was the wine in which the opium was dissolved that caused intoxication, not the opium itself. She also suggests that we have paid too much attention to twentieth-century literary alcoholics and not enough to their Romantic forebears.

Her analysis (not always totally convincingly) thus uses modern commentators on alcoholism to shed light on Coleridge's illness. In some ways, however, it may be that Taylor overstates her case. As she recognises, not all Romantic authors fit into her paradigm. Wordsworth, surely the Romantic writer *par excellence*, was horrified by the effects of drink on his contemporaries; it was largely Coleridge's drink problem which led them to fall out. And it is not clear that the individuals on whom she focuses were in any way typical of the era as a whole. This same period, of course, saw the growth of Evangelicalism which, perhaps surprisingly, is hardly mentioned in this book, and which while arguably providing a back-handed tribute to the interest in alcohol which Taylor claims was central to the age, also indicates that many of the concerns which drink engendered drew on the moral implications of alcohol, thus connecting this period more centrally than Taylor would have it to those earlier periods of moral reform in the 1690s and 1740s. Perhaps the Romantic age was not that special (or that drunk) after all.

University of Manchester

Jeremy Gregory

Laura Mandell, *Misogynous Economies: The Business of Literature in Eighteenth-century Britain*, University of Kentucky, 1999, pp. x + 228, \$42.00.

Why are there so few female authors in the canon of eighteenth-century English literature? It is a question to which many answers have been given, from the sexist notion that they were not as talented as male authors to the equally sexist notion that men are unable to appreciate their talents. But these are neuter in comparison with this feminist onslaught on what Dr Mandell perceives as a literary strategy of denigrating (or abjecting as she calls it) women in order to make men seem superior. To substantiate this case she investigates misogynistic texts, such as Swift's 'Beautiful Young Nymph going to bed' and Mandeville's *Modest Defence of Public Stews*, showing how they work to 'abject' women. Her claim that the process documents not just the state of the author's mind but the mentality of the eighteenth-century reader is a compelling one. Corinna dismantling herself before going to bed is not just a witness to Swift's scatological vision, which so disgusted Victorians, but to readers fascinated and at the same time repelled in a sado-masochistic reaction. Whether the case becomes convincing as well as compelling by loading it with Freudian psycho-analytic theory depends on how far you think Freud has been discredited. Dr Mandell notes that she agrees 'with Foucauldian theorists that psychoanalysts do not "discover" true desire underneath repression, but rather, as agents of their culture, *produce* culturally recognisable forms of desire in the process of ostensibly discovering it'. Nevertheless she draws on psycho-analytical theories, such as that of D. W. Winnicott's notion of 'potential space', to explain the process of abjecting.

The thesis is loaded with even more freight when it is made to bear responsibility for making literature a valued commodity in the emerging consumer market of the era. This is even placed in a good old fashioned Marxist context of the breakdown of feudalism and the triumph of capitalism. Thus the South Sea Bubble is described as 'a crisis of indifferentiation arising from the market economy's attempt and failure to

supersede feudal class definitions'. Again how far this case carries conviction depends upon how far you think Marx and Marxist historiography have been discredited.

She sustains her thesis literally with a vengeance in a chapter on 'misogyny and the canon'. 'My claim is this' she asserts 'canonical knowledge is produced by the abjection of carnal knowledge ... from the field of literary pleasure.' She draws a distinction between miscellanies of poetry, which did include women, and anthologies which did not, or if they did included so few as to draw attention to their comparative absence. The latter, she maintains, established the canon in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. She quotes Robert Southey's distinction between an anthology as a collection of 'living flowers' and a miscellany as a 'dried bouquet'. Southey was undoubtedly a male chauvinist, in common with most men of his generation. But he was not a misogynist. He did after all include Mary Leapor, one of Dr Mandell's heroines, in his *Specimens of English Poetry*, even if he did earn 'A Rebuke' from another, Anna Letitia Barbauld. And he encouraged the poetess Caroline Bowles, collaborating with her and eventually marrying her. There is a difference between male chauvinism and misogyny. This provocative study fails to make this crucial distinction.

University of Northumbria

W. A. Speck

Paul Baines, *The House of Forgery in Eighteenth-century Britain*, Ashgate, 1999, pp. viii + 195, £47.50.

This highly original and thought-provoking book examines attitudes to, and definitions of, forgery as demonstrated by some of the *causes célèbres* of the eighteenth century: including Macpherson's forging of *Ossian*; Chatterton's fabrication of the 'Rowley' poems; and the unfortunate cleric William Dodd, who was hanged for imitating the earl of Chesterfield's signature on a bond. Forgery of monetary documents, Baines reminds us, was regarded as one of the worst crimes of the period. Thirty-six statutes were passed against it in the century – the 1729 act made it more heinous than perjury, and, if convicted, the forger was likely to be executed. One reason, he suggests, for this harsh treatment, was to protect the new financial system, which itself, with its dependence on paper money, was accused of breaking down authenticity and integrity in economic relations. His approach is thoroughly interdisciplinary, and in looking at criminal instances alongside literary ones he finds some suggestive parallels. In literary cases, for example, forgery was often detected in a prosecutory manner, by marshalling evidence and demonstrating the 'crime'. In criminal proceedings, there was controversy about 'guilt' and 'character' which was reminiscent of contemporary literary analysis.

Baines' literary case studies range from arguments over biblical criticism, showing how accusations of forgery were crucial to Protestant anti-popery, and also to the deists' criticism of the Church of England, through disputes over classical authors, to a concern with issues of historiography and antiquarian research, and the literary authenticity of the texts of those 'greats' of English literature, Shakespeare and Milton. In this regard, William Lauder's forgery of evidence in his attempt to demonstrate that Milton had plagiarised is dealt with particularly interestingly. Moreover,

Baines shows that these areas of research were not discrete. Writing about the Civil War, for example, made Toland think about early Church forgery, and Warburton produced a definitive edition of Shakespeare while commenting on the authenticity of biblical texts. Indeed Baines shows how the issue of authenticity was central to eighteenth-century literary criticism. Much of this was biographical and was concerned with issues of attribution (revealed, for instance, in Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*), and literary debates in the period indicate that the ownership of literary invention was contentious and that authorship was regarded as property. In this scenario, detecting forgery was crucial to the assertion of authorial creativity, *the* literary crime became plagiarism, and the 1709 Copyright Act began to create a new sense of authorial identity. But this could cause a tension, when 'imitation' was a favourite genre in the period, and thus issues of stylistic integrity became paramount. In short, this is an immensely rich book, and in exploring his theme, Baines covers a great deal of ground. While historians of the period have done a great amount of research into crime in general, and into forgery, and while literary critics have examined some of the more spectacular cases of authorial forgery, this is the first study to draw together this research, and to explore the connections between the two. The whole could have been brought together with a firmer conclusion, and the overall argument could have been pushed more forcefully, but there is no doubt that this study deserves to be widely read.

University of Manchester

Jeremy Gregory

Jessica Munns and Penny Richards (eds), *The Clothes that Wear Us*, Newark, University of Delaware Press, 1999, pp. 362, £37.

This collection of essays covers a wide range of approaches to dress from a diverse group of contributors. 'In the eighteenth century the growth of national systems of textile manufacture and the development of an international system of trade' allowed dress to break long-established codes. Divisions between 'status group, genders and nations' became less clear.

The stage is the focus of the first section of the book. Lowenthal analyses Wycherley's *Gentleman Dancing Master* in which two of the main characters suffer from what Wycherley sees as the delusion that nationhood can be 'taken off and put on as easily as a new set of clothes'. Conservatively he emphasises 'the absurdity of imitating what one is not'. Rosenthal probes the brilliance of Mrs Siddons in cross-dressing roles. Although she displayed an 'unusual ambivalence' to them, refusing to wear breeches and rejecting boyish impersonation, she contributed to the 'renegotiating of gender at the end of the eighteenth century'. As James Boaden commented 'the commanding height and powerful action of her figure though always feminine, seemed to tower beyond her sex.' In her performance of Lady Macbeth – often regarded as her masterpiece – far from being 'the "unsexed" creature of previous performances', she 'became "a delicate hyper-feminine beauty – the only kind of woman capable of holding the interest of Macbeth.'

Masquerade reached its peak of popularity in the eighteenth century. It is the subject of a number of these essays. In France, Sarah Cohen writing on fashion prints

argues masquerade received the royal seal of approval. Aristocrats in the court of Louis XIV 'presented a far more ironic view of their own position than we tend to give them credit for today'. As masquerades provided 'opportunities for dressing above and below status, across gender and across national/geographic boundaries they were inherently subversive and denounced as a threat to social order'.

Munn's essay on clothes and public executions explores the idea of an execution dress code and muses over its meaning. Costume, she points out, was always part of 'the elaborate ceremonies of trial, punishment and execution'. Custom and tradition linked execution and marriage so the wedding dress was often that chosen. The last speeches of the condemned would frequently express repentance and white clothes indicated hope of salvation. They could also indicate belief in their innocence. The attitude of the crowd varied according to the social status of the condemned. Molly Blandy who murdered her father won the sympathy and approval of the crowd for her neat appearance but they found it difficult to believe she had just eaten a hearty meal of 'mutton chops ... and ...Apple Pye'. Sympathy for the condemned was seen by the authorities as a sign of defiance and subversion. They wanted torture restored so that crowds would be horrified by the crimes committed, and executions to be private.

There are many other stimulating essays in this splendid collection.

Sibford Ferris, Oxon

Bridget Hill

Iain McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture, 1776–1832*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. xii + 780, £85.

What, in literary terms, is a *Companion*? According to the editor of this wonderfully informative volume, the genre can be traced back to the commonplace books, conversation books and collections of essays which sought during the Romantic Age itself to analyse the spirit of the times. And what, one may ask next, is the Romantic Age? Romanticism, as Iain McCalman admits, is a 'notoriously slippery concept of modern history', and to attempt to confine it within dates would seem to compound the problem. The period from 1776 to 1832 begins with the American Declaration of Independence and ends with Britain's Great Reform Act and is often known to historians as the Age of Revolution. It seems to have been chosen for the Romantic Age in order to set a multitude of other creative individuals, all of whom shared a belief that they were participating in a second cultural Renaissance, against a background of tumultuous events, and to place them in company with opponents and critics, some of whom were among the greatest writers of the age. The result is an admirable blend not only of Literature and History but of the whole range of human activity.

The volume is divided almost equally into two parts. In the first, a collection of forty-one essays, each about 5000 words in length and written by a distinguished scholar in the field, is presented under four headings which range widely over the politics, society, culture and thought of the period. The editor rightly claims that the collection could be useful both to the general reader and to the scholarly specialist, since the essays are for the most part eminently readable and there can be few individuals whose knowledge is sufficiently encyclopaedic as to make the whole series familiar. In spite of the disparity of subject matter, an overall concentration on attitudes and concepts rather

than on events has resulted in a remarkable degree of cohesion. An essay on 'war', for instance, does not describe weapons or campaigns but discusses whether warfare was 'limited' or 'total' and considers the extent to which 'the great war' against Revolutionary France forged British nationhood. Most of the contributors have managed to make sense of the given period. Mark Philp, writing of 'revolution', sees a significant growth in popular politics and agitation but none of the political machinery necessary to present a viable programme; Barbara Caine, dealing with 'women', sets an enormous growth in male claims to superior qualities alongside a softening of patriarchal attitudes; James Walvin, introducing us to 'slavery', tells us categorically that Black slavery was dominant in the British Atlantic Empire at the beginning of the period and doomed at the end. During the Romantic Age, 'design' was recognised for the first time as an activity distinct from the fine arts, 'novels' achieved a literary history and tradition of their own, and 'natural philosophy' moved from being regarded as the handmaid of theology to becoming a science – and so on. 'Religion' is one of the few subjects which does not fit happily into the period, and 'medicine' one of the few areas which did not witness anything approaching a transformation.

An elaborate system of cross-referencing connects the essays with Part II of the volume. Here an alphabetical list of persons and topics adds detail to some of the broad statements in Part I and tempts the idle browser with a wealth of fascinating information. Whilst many of the topics – 'autobiography', 'ballads', 'childhood', 'eisteddfod', 'fortune-telling', 'madhouses' – are to be expected in a Companion to the Romantic Age, others are less predictable. Why 'almanacs', 'dentistry', 'income tax', 'animal magnetism', 'vaccination' and 'national debt'? The answer is usually made clear in the mini-essays which accompany each entry. It may be true that the poor we have always with us, but 'poverty', it seems, was a term which had particular resonance in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. 'Amiens, Peace of', leads not to a summary of treaty clauses but to an account of the impressions received by notable British visitors to Paris such as Wordsworth and Hazlitt. Similarly, the entry on 'Napoleon Bonaparte' deals mainly with the great variety of British attitudes towards the man whom some saw as a ludicrous upstart and others as the Beast of the Apocalypse. Numerous illustrations give further light on the period throughout the volume. Sadly, the price may preclude some institutions as well as individuals from purchasing this worthwhile work.

University of Liverpool

Irene Collins

Inga Bryden and Janet Floyd (eds), *Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth-century Interior*, Manchester University Press, 1999, pp. xii + 219, £40.00; **Alan Kidd and David Nicholls** (eds), *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-class Identity in Britain 1800–1940*, Manchester University Press, 1999, pp. xiv + 223, £46.00, pb. £14.99.

Gone are the days, it seems, when plumbing the depths of working class identity was the priority of historians, sociologists, and other cultural commentators. In a world more interested in becoming middle class, unearthing the origins of the late twentieth-century Western culture of comfort is one of the latest preoccupations among academics on

both sides of the Atlantic. The essays in these two volumes represent some of the latest English language scholarship on the subject, and confirm the belief that the roots of some of our current obsessions are located in Victorian cultural identity.

Domestic Space, the slimmer of the two volumes, is less diverse in attending to questions of identity than the second book under review, and briefer. It grew out of a conference entitled 'Reading the Nineteenth-Century Domestic Space', held in Britain in 1996, and focuses on a broad variety of (mostly literary) nineteenth-century geographical spaces and the objects that occupy them. In one way or another, its nine contributors expand our understanding of the ideological role of the Anglo-American middle-class physical environment in the (sometimes perverse but always political) construction of personal and social boundaries. If previously we thought of the home as a sanctuary for middle-class peace and comfort, here we learn of anti-slavery work and artifacts in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Connecticut house (*Political Pincushions*), or the theatricality of the home, including its desire for 'the transition from the cold "outside" world to that of the warm and supposedly safe drawing room' (*Theatre and the Private Sphere*, p. 165), despite oft-absent fathers (Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, note well, this is not a new problem) and miserable mothers. The one exception to the focus upon middle-class modes of living is a thoughtful investigation of district visiting to working-class homes and the notion of space and/as privacy (*District visiting and the constitution of domestic space in the mid-nineteenth century*). From an historian's perspective, the absence of an object could be thought of as a spurious objective for an essay on ways of viewing the crammed Victorian interior (*What a Rag Rug Means*). Nevertheless, there is some fascinating material in these essays for anyone interested in the Victorian domestic environment.

Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism is in so many ways an entirely different animal to *Domestic Space*, in spite of similarities in its essays-styled-from-conference-paper format (in this case, 'Aspects of the History of the Middle Classes since 1750' in 1996). It is predominantly written by historians and, perhaps for that reason, is overwhelmingly involved in re-envisioning the relationship between history, culture, and middle-class identity. The book begins, like so many others in the field, by systematically processing the historiography of class identity as it has been conceived in recent years, that is, in the period since Jacques Derrida's, Hayden White's, and Jürgen Habermas's ideas changed the way historians thought about the past. Editors Alan Kidd and David Nicholls suggest in their introductory essay that historians are now comfortable with the new history, and may even have grown to prefer the shift away from the metanarratives of earlier generations of social historians. Like many books that have preceded it, most notably Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850*, this one 'link[s] gender explicitly to class and sees them as inseparable concepts in the meaning attributed to the term "middle class"' (p. 7), which, initially, does not seem particularly fresh. It must be said, however, that the essays are more interesting than one might anticipate after reading the Introduction.

The book is divided into two major parts after the lengthy introductory essays, the first being entitled, 'Gender, Identity and Civic Culture', and the second, 'Gender, Identity and Consumer Culture'. With the exception of MacLeod's admirable essay on middle-class art patronage, the first section primarily focuses upon aspects of civic culture in the north, and in doing so, reveals its interest in shaping a distinction between urban cultural identity in London (so much the focus of historians) and

cultural identity in the northern middle classes. Thus, the essays focus upon cultural elements of civic life including the function of portraiture in the formation of middle-class power (*The Bourgeois Body*), the cultural significance of Liverpool's Athenaeum for the city's merchant elite (*'The Florence of the North?'*), and George Bennet of Sheffield's civilizing mission to the South Pacific (*'A Christian and Civilised Land'*). These mostly masculine exploits of middle-class individuals helped to shape the definition of Victorian civic culture, and for the most part, these essays do not challenge that concept. It is only when consumerism is introduced into the equation that the gender analysis more systematically includes studies of women. Here are very satisfactory examinations of middle-class women's property (*Middle-class 'Culture', Law and Gender Identity*), consumerism and identity among the lower-middle-classes (*Mrs Pooter's Purchase, The English Weakness? and Gender, Consumer Culture and the Middle-Class Male, 1918–1939*), and 'high' versus 'middle' taste in music (*An Outbreak of Allodoxia?*). The essays are, uniformly, engaging, although it seems as though they rely upon fairly conventional notions of what consumption *is*, for surely Liverpool's gentleman who used the library or Manchester's businessmen who commissioned portraits were just as good consumers as the property owners, magazine advertisers and readers, and high street shoppers of part two.

In other words, the division of the book into two parts seems arbitrary at best. Despite this odd configuration, readers are bound to gain considerable insight into the making of a more diverse middle class Victorian cultural identity.

University of New Mexico, Albuquerque

Lynn Schibeci

John Schad *Victorians in Theory: From Derrida to Browning*, Manchester University Press, 1999, pp. x + 180, £40.

In this book John Schad embarks upon an ambitious textual and critical quest, mapping the intellectual and imaginative interplay between five Victorian poets and five of the most distinguished luminaries of Francophone cultural theory. His purpose, we are told, came gradually. Initially, Schad wanted to know how far Victorian poets were interested in the ideas of language, words and meaning, 'I wanted to know in what ways they imagined, or dreamt these ideas'. However, this soon led the author to consider how these imaginings compared with the modern dreams of poststructuralism. The result is a powerful exercise in intertextual analysis, as Schad moves 'between two worlds', reading poetry as theory and theory as poetry, a task which is guided and made intelligible by the writer's emphasis upon the heuristic power of metaphor.

The case studies which make up the core of the book link Christina Rossetti with Luce Irigaray, Michel Foucault with Mathew Arnold, Robert Browning with Jacques Derrida, Gerald Manley Hopkins with Jacques Lacan and finally, Elizabeth Barrett Browning with Hélène Cixous. As Schad disarmingly concedes, these couplings across text, time and creative cognition are arbitrary, a sort of 'trick of interpretive ingenuity'. Here indeed is both the strength and the main weakness of the book. As a study of language and meaning Schad's book dissolves the space between the nineteenth and twentieth century in an interesting way. For example, in a chapter entitled 'Foucault after Arnold', the author convincingly shows how these two speculative

giants shared a calendar of metaphysical concerns about religion, death and sexuality. Likewise, his ‘doubling’ interrogation of Hopkins and Lacan is startling and thought-provoking. However, Schad’s book, zestful and stimulating as it is, lacks explanatory purpose. While to be sure, he succeeds in uncovering interesting connections of meaning between the Victorian poetic imagination and postmodernist cultural theory, the implications of these connections – what Schad encapsulates in the memorable statement that ‘the nineteenth century is more than capable of thinking and, indeed, writing the twentieth’ – are the absent chapter of the book.

Nevertheless, Schad’s study is an innovative and welcome addition to the critical canon on Victorian poetry and to the body of interpretative work on French post-structuralist theory. That one book could straddle these co-ordinates is a testimony to the author’s achievement.

Bath Spa University College

Terence Rodgers

David Morse, *The Age of Virtue: British Culture from the Restoration to Romanticism*, Macmillan, 2000, pp. viii + 330, £45.

To assess the cultural sources of virtue from the Restoration to Romanticism is a Herculean task indeed, and David Morse acknowledges the rigours of his challenge as he defines virtue for the eighteenth century in *The Age of Virtue*. Turning to Johnson’s *Dictionary*, Morse constructs a culturally derived definition of virtue at mid-century. To Johnson’s ‘moral goodness’ and ‘moral excellence’, Morse adds ‘benevolence’, ‘promoting the public good’, and ‘the distinguishing mark of a gentleman’. With such generalizations defining ‘virtue’, Morse can look back to the Restoration and forward to the Romantics, fixing the cultural norm of virtue in political, philosophical, and educational discourse.

The strength of Morse’s work lies in the evidence he marshals for his argument. In some three hundred pages he retrieves convincing evidence from nearly every landmark of eighteenth-century British literature: poetry and drama as well as prose fiction. While some readers might want more examples from literature by women and from non-canonical works, the reliance of his argument on social context calls for works from the well-travelled eighteenth century. The work provides a fine review of the literature on which students of the eighteenth century cut their teeth.

Despite the careful consideration of primary material, the book is seriously lacking in secondary sources. Standard works on eighteenth-century aesthetics and culture, like Donald Greene’s *The Age of Exuberance* or James Sambrook’s more contemporary *The Eighteenth Century: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1700–1789*, are conspicuously absent; at least a passing nod to M. H. Abrams’ *The Mirror and the Lamp* would have acknowledged a theoretical debt left unpaid. Indeed, following the introductory chapter in which the critical literature seems more appended than integral, Morse cites little modern work on eighteenth-century culture or aesthetics. Works listed in the bibliography are surprisingly dated, and the scholarship he does recall is not particularly recent.

Two theoretical problems affect the work. First, the book’s critical methodology is limited. Morse provides a comprehensive survey of the sources of virtue from the

Restoration to the Romantic Movement using literary text as evidence. Morse establishes how literature depicts the conditions and principles upon which a society defines virtue with little effort to recognise text as more than a socio-historical document. Such an approach unnecessarily limits literature to the society from which it comes. Second, Morse's argument relies on the assumption that virtue is bound by both time and culture. While such an assumption might serve at first glance, more serious consideration could suggest that the fundamentals of virtue are more deeply seated when specific to one continuing culture. Virtue is limited here to the literary text with little recognition of its tie to the moral and religious contexts.

Most disappointing, however, is the absence of a conclusion. While the last chapter establishes the Romantic reaction to Neoclassical definitions of virtue, it fails to establish the significance of the book's argument. Morse abruptly closes his work by moving from an exploration of Byron and virtue to a single paragraph that introduces a metaphor comparing the Romantic reaction to eighteenth-century virtue to a modern reaction to the Elgin marbles; like the stones, virtue has become a museum piece. A work that has so skilfully traced virtue over a century and a half demands a final systematic statement of consequence, not a comfortable metaphor.

Chapman University, CA

Myron D. Yeager

Mary Klages, *Woeful Afflictions: Disability and Sentimentality in Victorian America*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999, pp. 211, \$36.50.

A first reaction to this book is to wonder why it was written. Dr Klages displays personal interest in questions of disability, has absorbed theoretical works on the topic, and has found various literary references to her selected disability – blindness. However, no one has to struggle through wordy and repetitious pages to understand that many nineteenth-century people were sentimental about children, women, and individuals with afflictions.

Granted, the textual criticism of a few novels, of two autobiographies by blind women, and even of the annual reports by Samuel Gridley Howe of the Perkins Institution for the Blind do provide some other themes, such as that being self-supporting and 'doing for' others is good for the self-image of people, including the disabled; but did we have to be told? Her finding similarities between autobiographies by blind persons and narratives by slaves would be more convincing if she dealt with more than two volumes of the former – only one of which is said to have the noted similarities – *and* if she considered works by sighted persons with similar educational backgrounds for comparison.

Textual critiques based on recent theories are too often ahistorical. Klages asserts that the disabled were expected to be non-sexual and illustrates that by a very few examples, from both literature and real life. While all personal behaviour would be difficult to measure, did none of the graduates of the Perkins school ever marry or become parents?

Indeed, the paucity of examples marks the entire work, making solid conclusions impossible. Especially is this true when males are ignored, as this volume makes blindness essentially a female affliction. There are a *few* references to blind males – one vil-

lain in a Dickens novel, a childhood acquaintance of autobiographer Mary Day, and, in passing, boys at the Perkins school. The deaf and blind boy featured with Laura Bridgman on the cover merely serves as a foil to Bridgman and is not discussed as a person. What happened to him?

Klages does note that the ‘blind historian William Prescott’ assisted founders of the Perkins School; but she says no more about him. Prescott’s blindness was only partial and came after he received his education; but he was able, with the help of readers and a secretary to transcribe the notes he wrote, to do research in Spanish manuscripts and to produce classic works of history. How much, one wonders, did his being male (and, reportedly, a very social person) affect attitudes toward him – thus toward ‘the blind’?

For that matter, how many of the ‘sentimental’ views included in the book were related to the afflicted person’s being a child or a female or both? A sighted female was treated differently than was a male. Did not the sex of a blind person affect how he was viewed? One might assume that less endowed blind men were viewed differently than was Prescott: but shouldn’t the issue be considered?

The injection of the 1950s play *The Miracle Worker* into a study of ‘Victorian America’ is another example of a lack of historical sense. Klages notes the late date, but says the twentieth-century play illustrates conflicts between Victorian attitudes (the Keller parents) and modern ones (Anne Sullivan), forgetting that Sullivan herself was of the Victorian era, as were her attitudes and method. The depiction on stage of a blind child behaving as a savage may have been ‘modern,’ but that child’s ‘wildness’ and that it was ‘tamed’ by Sullivan’s firmness were well known – even appearing in children’s books – well before the 1950s.

University of Southern Maine

Joyce K. Bibber

Sharon Ouditt, *Women Writers of the First World War: An Annotated Bibliography*, Routledge, 2000, pp. 230, £75; **Claire Tylee with Elaine Turner and Agnes Cardinal** (eds), *War Plays by Women: An International Anthology*, Routledge, 2000, pp. 225, £16.99 pb.

Drama has been very much the poor relation of the literature of the First World War concealed in the shadows of the better-known poetry, fiction and autobiography that the war produced. *Journey’s End* (1928) is probably still the one war play from the inter-war period which comes readily to mind. *War Plays by Women* is an unusually eclectic international anthology of nine plays, all but three written before the Second World War, and drawn from seven different countries; Australia, Britain, Canada, Ireland, and The United States and good translations from the German and French. The plays are formally very different, ranging from Gertrude Stein’s eccentric, non-referential dialogues to Berta Lask’s neo-Brechtian epic drama, from Christina Reid’s intimate radio play set in Derry and Holloway Prison to Dorothy Hewitt’s ambitious musical written to celebrate the founding of Western Australia, from Muriel Box’s modest drama written for amateur all-woman casts, to Alice Dunbar-Nelson’s African-American recruiting play. Most of the plays are written by women with first-hand experience of the First World War although the three modern plays (Dorothy

Hewitt's *The Man from Makinupin* (1979), Christina Reid's *My Name, Shall I Tell You My Name* (1988), and Wendy Lill's *The Fighting Days* (1984)) all use the war to foreground issues and events which have been marginalised by the dominant histories of war and combat.

What do these plays have in common other than female authorship? In the first instance, the contexts and commentaries which Tylee, Turner and Cardinal provide situate these forgotten dramatic texts within radical histories of theatre and radical histories of women; pinpointing a radicalism that is located in the politics of gender and the politics of war. These plays engage with, contest and replace the dominant notions of national identity and political purpose focusing on the domestic impact of the war on the community or individual rather than the clash between opposing forces.

Dramatists question, for example, the 'natural' assumption that women will become mothers to provide sons for their country's good. In *Peace* (1918) Marie Leneru enacts a debate between militarism and pacifism. Dorothy Hewitt in *The Man from Mukinupin* (1979), Alice Dunbar-Nelson in *Mine Eyes Have Seen* (1918) and Berta Lask in *Liberation* (1924) all foreground the experience of minority groups such as Aborigines, African-Americans, or working-class war resisters whose perspectives patriotic and nationalistic discourse excludes. Other writers deal with groups of women whose lives were changed by war, for example, suffragettes (Wendy Lill, *The Fighting Days*, 1984) ambulance drivers (Muriel Box, *Angels of War*, 1935), or war brides (Marion Craig Wentworth, *War Brides*, 1915). A useful appendix gives a checklist of published plays by women relevant to the First World War: 1915–1939.

Several dramatists are interested in how masculine identity is constituted by violence and national identity is constituted by war. In *Please Do Not Suffer* (1916) and *Accents in Alsace* (1919) Gertrude Stein disrupts the norms of moral judgement in wartime but does this differently from others by constituting ways of ordering the world through language. Simon Featherstone's intelligent treatment of Gertrude Stein's wartime aesthetics is the highpoint of the companion volume of essays, *Women, The First World War and the Dramatic Imagination* edited by Claire Tylee and Rose Atfield (Edward Mellen Press, 2000) which look critically at some of the authors represented in this anthology.

Sharon Ouditt's *Women Writers of the First World War* is a useful new annotated bibliography. The first part is a listing of primary sources which she subdivides into fiction, contemporary accounts, diaries, letters and autobiographies, journals, and archives. The second is a listing of secondary sources which is subdivided into literary criticism, social and cultural histories, biographies, bibliographies and reference works. Ouditt claims that this is not meant to be a ground-breaking book but sees it as a work of consolidation bringing together much of the recent scholarship by feminist literary scholars and historians including Claire Tylee and her associates.

This reference book is concerned, in the main, with British women writers and excludes drama, poetry and literature from the United States. Ouditt has impressively listed and annotated hundreds of well known and obscure texts. The sections on unpublished material to be found in archives or contemporary journals will be of particular interest to anyone exploring the larger or more localised questions about the war. The fiction and contemporary accounts of war experience which Ouditt has selected were written or published between the outbreak of the First World War and

the start of the Second World War. The sections on unpublished material to be found in archives and contemporary journals are essential reading for all postgraduate students and researchers working on this period.

These are two scholarly and useful books which complement each other well and expand our knowledge of the history of the First World War as being more than the history of the men on the battlefield and our knowledge of the literature of that war as being more than writing by or about combatants.

Anglia Polytechnic University

Mary Joannou

John A. Taylor, *Diana, Self-Interest, and British National Identity*, Praeger, 2000, pp. 169, £44.95.

This short book makes three major claims. First that Diana, Princess of Wales emblematised a shift in British national identity from *gemeinschaft* values of family, household, and community, to *gesellschaft* values of self-interest and social duty. Further, that Diana came to stand for a kind of synthesis of self-interest with social responsibility, a synthesis that Taylor associates with another national shift from a morality based on guilt to one based on shame. Third, that in doing so, Diana's example especially legitimated the self-interested behaviour of so-called 'people of resentment', a phrase by which Taylor groups together women, people of colour, and male homosexuals.

Taylor's approach is markedly different from much academic work on Diana's iconicity and the mourning events. He comprehends the identity issues that drive other academic accounts within an overarching framework of the 'transvaluation of values', derived by re-reading Durkheim via Tönnies and Nietzsche. The advantages of this procedure stem from its production of a transparent critical framework for the interpretation of social values. However, Taylor's application of this framework is open to question. The book depends on a series of grand binary oppositions. On one side are the people of resentment: women, people of colour, and male homosexuals, whose aspirations are legitimated, Taylor argues, through Diana's self-interested take on *gesellschaft* values. On the other side he ranges the 'objective' set of values associated with *gemeinschaft*, exemplified by pre-Thatcher consensus politics, British socialism, sexism, racism, and homophobia. This taxonomy certainly helps us to understand the mixture of self-interest and other-centredness that was central to Diana's iconography, but it leaves much else unexplained and unexamined.

The possessive individualism privileged in *Diana, Self-Interest, and British National Identity* is never explicitly historicised or geographically located. But even if Taylor's premises are granted, it still remains to explain how exactly Diana came to act as an inspirational figure for different identity groups. For many feminist commentators, indeed, Diana is a powerfully ambivalent figure, one whose personal empowerment is not easily transferable. Others have questioned the ways that Diana's example cemented white racial identity at the centre of Britishness, even as she 'reached out' to non-white others. The framework adopted by Taylor elides such issues.

While this lack of detail tends to undermine the overarching project of the book, Taylor does discuss relevant issues often missing from academic analyses of the

'Diana phenomenon', including the question of the nature and extent of mental illness suffered by Diana, and historical changes in household size and structure (especially the increase in divorce). There are also a series of digressions on Henry VIII, village churches, the ordination of women debate, and Sir Walter Scott. While these seem to be primarily directed towards readers unfamiliar with the symbolism of British national identity, they occasionally make some perceptive connections.

King Alfred's College, Winchester

Jude Davies

Steven Earnshaw, *The Pub in Literature*, Manchester University Press, 2000, pp. x + 294, £45 and £15.99 pb.

'The conviviality of the narrative premise' is Steven Earnshaw's felicitous phrase for the theme that suffuses this book. It is 'a crawl through the drinking places of English literary history,' in the company of Chaucer, Langland, Shakespeare, Dekker, Jonson, Pepys, Ned Ward (author of *The London Spy*), Goldsmith, Gray, Fielding, Cowper, Crabbe, Dickens, Eliot (G.), Hardy, Eliot (T. S.), Coppard, Hampson, Hamilton, Orwell and Amis (M.). It also 'attempts to weave a pattern out of the strands of "pub", English literature and England'. It is a labour of love, the product of years of hoarded references and inspired cups and we must be grateful. It will become a standard resort for literary scholars seeking quotable material on pubs (Piers Plowman 'pissed a pottle in a pater-noster while'), and for anyone who likes to savour 'the pub moment' through the medium of print.

The book works as a series of linked essays. What is most useful will vary with the reader; I personally found it lively and insightful on Falstaff, Dickens and (in so far as anyone understands him) Amis, but descriptive and prosaic when it came to Pepys and Ned Ward. The selection of the material is (inevitably) questionable. Given the author's decision to write about 'pubs' rather than 'drink', why then throw in a chapter on the romantics, who on licensed premises scarcely pissed a pottle between them? Why not instead Piers Egan's *Life in London*, a much more appropriate comparison for Ward's *London Spy*? From this period the book strays off course into drinking and temperance, whilst missing (for example) the wonderful pub scenes in the autobiography of Samuel Bamford, which appears in the bibliography but is otherwise overlooked. So is Richard Boston, the pro-CAMRA essayist, whose memorable description of the old-style public bar as 'a symphony in brown' surely deserves a mention.

The main problem with the book is its historical context – or lack of it. Earnshaw begins with a sober discussion of whether a two-class or a three-class 'model' fits England better over the entire period. He pumps blithely for a three-class model, announcing that the two models are in any case 'overlapping'. What this has to do with the matter in hand is unexplained but in any case irrelevant as the issue is ignored for the rest of the book. He goes on to explain how his 'narrative' of drinking places has been 'shaped' and offers a three-paragraph sketch of the history of the pub based mainly on the first part of Peter Clark's splendid *The English Alehouse*. After all the insights of the new historicism in literature and text-based work in cultural history, it is disturbing to find the historical method apparently seen as a matter

of picking some arbitrary 'model' or 'narrative' and then writing according to taste. The book suffers from this lack of historical depth. Clark is relied upon, but the richly relevant work of Felicity Heal on hospitality, Paul Schlicke on Dickens and Ian McCalman on the radical underworld is ignored. Interesting facts (such as the alleged origin of the custom of toasting amongst Elizabethan Dutch immigrants) are reported on trust when they really need to be explored through the author's texts. Hair-raising generalisations are thrown about: what possible meaning can musing about 'tavern time and national time' (p. 47) have for an Elizabethan age before clocks, GMT or licensing hours? And do we really still need to be 'shown' that 'the drinking place ... represents a place inimical to the protestant work ethic'?

Earnshaw has done an admirable job in bringing all this material together and in drawing out the concerns of some of the authors he discusses, but the off-the-peg, man-in-the-pub approach to history limits the insights it can generate.

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H. Gustav Klaus and S. Knight (eds), *British Industrial Fictions*, University of Wales Press, 2000, pp. viii + 212, £14.99 pb.; **Jack S. Balch**, *Lamps at High Noon*, University of Illinois Press, 2000, pp. xl + 404, \$19.45 pb.; **Jack Conroy**, *A World to Win*, University of Illinois Press, 2000, pp. xxxv + 348, \$17.95 pb.

British Industrial Fictions is a worthy and welcome collection of essays, supplementing Klaus's *Socialist Novel in Britain* of twenty years ago in its chief objective of drawing attention to neglected topics, texts and authors. This is generally a strong set of essays, though, as with all such collections from conference papers, it suffers from problems of overall coherence and unevenness of quality. As part of its outsize remit the essays move beyond England into Wales and Scotland (but exclude Ireland), and range from the early nineteenth to the late twentieth century. Selection of subject matter is somewhat unpredictable beyond obvious figures such as Disraeli, Dickens, Tressell and Sillitoe, though there is a marked effort to try to resist exclusive focus on male authors and masculinity. Difficulties of definition and selection can be illustrated by the juxtaposition of essays on Scottish industrial authors, one of which focuses on a single author, Agnes Owen, whose merits fail to secure her a mention on the preceding general survey article.

It seems that in focusing largely on the neglected and despised, critical practice itself shifts from the highly theorised engagement typical of work on the élite art of high modernism. Here most of the contributors limit their approach to the level of description and their objective to giving a summary of works which no reader is likely to have come across. There is almost no attempt to move beyond the expository and historiographical into qualitative evaluation; Klaus describes the collection as 'part honorific obituary, part rescue archaeology'. At its best, however, this rescue operation stimulates a renewed sense of outrage at the iniquities of the canon, denying access to such areas as 'Welsh Industrial Fiction by Women' and an opportunity to savour such crafted sentences as, 'Education is a great thing, no doubt, but I wish it wasn't so hard on the knickers.' (For an explanation of the logic, you will have to buy

the book.) What emerges here is a sense not only of neglect but of reluctance by working people to reflect in writing upon their lives at work. This raises a question for working class studies which has been much discussed in postcolonial studies, which is 'Can the subaltern speak?'. As Rolf Weyn observes of the industrial novel 'very few are written by working men or women'. This is linked to the problem of realism, which remains something of an embarrassment for modern critics, with its suggestions of crudity of representation. For writers to gain sufficient respectability to warrant publication or critical attention, they have to abandon in effect the class which they seek to represent. Thus we have the example of John Fordham celebrating James Hanley as a 'modernist of the working class' because of his ability to 'transform everyday life into the exceptional'. Authors and critics alike inevitably return to this crisis of representation, asking who is authorised to speak on behalf of the downtrodden, and the related question of whether this 'industrial fiction' and the criticism which attaches to it, contribute to necessary social change. As this collection is put together from the vantage point of the 'post-industrial', and a particularly low point in British history for organised labour, there is inevitably something of a sense of distance from these accounts of class struggle and confrontation between the forces of capital and labour. This is, however, a valuable undertaking to attempt to fill a hole in our records of class struggle in industrial settings in British fiction, and such work is a vital contribution to a reassessment of the literary canon, which has been taking place along gender lines but not so much along class lines.

If the objective of *British Industrial Fictions* is to challenge the canon, then this is ably complemented by the series 'The Radical Novel Reconsidered', designed to make available cheap copies of key texts from the labour movement in the United States, where working class authors and topics have also suffered neglect. Jack Conroy's *A World to Win* (1935) and Jack S. Balch's *Lamps at High Noon* (1941) represent a significant addition to the same progressive impetus to explore and understand traditions and movements which have been largely overlooked. These novels, which have excellent lengthy introductions by Douglas Wixson and Michael Szalay respectively, both centre upon labour activism during the Depression. Both gritty and disturbing novels are timely reminders of what fine literature remains outside the mainstream, and of the extent to which these sympathetic representations of the labour battles of that period of U.S. history convey lessons which have to be relearned in our own time. By way of conclusion, it is to be hoped that the appearance of these three publications will go a little way towards establishing proletarian writing as a major part of literary history.

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Regenia Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society*, University of Chicago Press, 2000, pp. 352, £10.50 pb.

The history of ideas trades in shifts, transitions and the occasional watershed or Kuhnian paradigm shift. Regenia Gagnier, author of the highly regarded *Idylls of the Marketplace* (1986), has now produced a collection of essays presenting a series of

careful, nuanced accounts of one of the most important and least well understood of these in the English-speaking tradition. The transition involves the cultural and moral adjustments involved in moving from thinking about economic life in terms of the necessity of production to the opportunity of consumption. The watershed was around 1870; and is sometimes dated as precisely as 1871, when John Stuart Mill – one of her heroes – felt that society had attained an ‘appropriate’ level of production. However, one of the chief merits of Gagnier’s analysis is that it is anything but ‘revolutionary’ in the Kuhnian sense. ‘Precursor’ critics of market society, and early ‘aesthetic’ readers of economic life are given just as much space as twentieth-century stalwarts of the determinant role of the mode of production.

There are other examples of historical sensitivity in a rich set of readings ranging from economic and political theorists (Stanley Jevons, Carl Menger, Samuel Bowles, Herbert Spencer, Anna Wheeler and Olive Schreiner) to literary artists (notably Charles Dickens, Walter Pater, Matthew Arnold, Frederick Rolfe and Oscar Wilde). There are also contemporary analogues in original commentary on figures like Francis Fukayama, Howard Brenton and Martin Amis. These chapters are marred only by repetition of examples (including occasionally lengthy quotations and allusions) as a result of re-working material from articles into the book.

A characteristic theme is the bridging role of *fin de siècle* decadence and general cultural *ennui* in coming to terms with a world in which the liberating and enervating possibilities of indulgence at the margin replace the ethical priorities of work and sufficiency at the core. Gagnier is particularly strong on the implications for gender theory of these shifts, for example on the puzzling lack of solidarity between late Victorian feminist and counter-cultural critiques of patriarchy and gendered division of labour.

As the final two chapters, a ‘conclusion’ and ‘appendix’ on ‘taste, or sex and class as culture’ underline, the real aim of the book is a critique of commodity culture and modern individualism, especially as it exists in the United States. Targets include the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in contemporary British higher education (now almost obligatory in ‘state of the nation’ literary criticism in the UK), the Savings & Loan scandals of the 1980s, and the aestheticisation (through theatre) of the plight of the Californian homeless. As the author declares: ‘competitive individualism and aesthetic individuation through taste, choice and preference have certainly liberated us, but they have also served as the justification of our indifference towards others and as an ideological cover for institutional manipulation of power’.

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