

Reviews

Linda Hutcheon and Mario Valdés (eds), *Rethinking Literary History*, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. xiii + 215, £25.

This collection of essays represents part of a dialogue which developed out of ‘an ever larger’ collaborative project begun in 1996 at the University of Toronto and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. According to the editors of this volume, such studies into comparative literary history come at a time when the categories of both history and literature are being re-thought. With regard to history, whilst literary historians have long taken into account the complexities of literary production, the ‘new methodological paradigms’ constituted by various recent/current ‘isms’ . . . post-structuralism, post-feminism, post-colonialism, post-modernism, etc . . . as well as theories of narratology developed by Hayden White and Frank Ankersmit . . . have deconstructed any received/unproblematic ‘idea of history’. Similarly, the expansion of what might be held to live under the name of ‘literature’ has vastly expanded and, in that expansion, has called for a series of rethinkings of an ontological kind such that it is not now easy – if it ever was – to circumscribe the field.

These problematisations are given an additional dimension – and orientation – in the opening chapter of the book (‘Rethinking the National Model’ by Linda Hutcheon) wherein the ‘paradigm’ she thinks Literary History has generally been considered – ‘the national model of literary history’ – has also been undercut. This model – based as it was on ethnic and linguistic singularity and/or purity – can now be seen, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, to be both a particular and peculiar fictive device, an organisational frame that very precisely ‘by no means sprang from nowhere’, but whose logical, ontological status can now be seen as arbitrary and passé. Consequently, it is these (sorts of) conditions that now make, for

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Hutcheon *et al*, the ‘rethinking’ of literary history both prescient and urgent, rethinkings embodied in essays by Stephen Greenblatt, Mario Valdés, Marshall Brown, Walter Mignolo and Homi Bhabha. These essays – rethinking the relationship of racial memory and history, the ‘history’ of literary history, the ‘scale’ of literary history and the ‘colonial model’ (with an *Afterward* by Homi Bhabha – ‘A Personal Response’) are both wide ranging and scholarly and, in the case of Greenblatt and Bhabha, impressionistic.

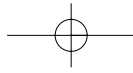
This makes for a very uneven text. Thus, for example, the opening chapter by Hutcheon comes in the shape of a forty-six page essay complete with 244 footnotes; that by Valdés in the form of a fifty-two page ‘survey’ with 98 references. On the other hand, Greenblatt’s piece is only twelve pages long and has 11 references. It is not obvious why this is the case, so that Hutcheon’s claim (p. xi) that *all* the essays here examine the ‘continuous cyclical process of *figurations* . . . between literary expression and the community that creates it; and that *all* the essays serve ‘to provide the material for the story telling project that is literary history’, is simply not the case: Greenblatt and Bhabha really do not engage with these things. But the essays that do address the current problematic that constitutes *comparative* literary history – those by Hutcheon, Valdés, Brown and Mignolo – are wide ranging and ‘comprehensive’. This is not to say these essays are ‘easy to read’. By which I do not mean to say that they are ‘too hard’ or ‘too esoteric’, but that their very *denseness* gives to the main chapters of the text a heaviness, even a dullness, that, ironically, the shorter, snappier pieces by Greenblatt and Bhabha do not have. The worthy endeavours contained in the pieces by Hutcheon *et al* could thus have done with, I think, not only considerable editing but with more lightness of style, freer discussion, provocative suggestiveness and irreverence. It would be a pity if this text were to gain the status of a reference work rather than the appeal to arms its editors claim it is.

University College Chichester

Keith Jenkins

Elizabeth Beaumont Bissell (ed.), *The Question of Literature: The Place of the Literary in Contemporary Theory*, Manchester University Press, 2002, pp. xii + 236, £45, £15.99 pb.

This essay collection is a contribution to the Angelaki Humanities book series which features works that concentrate on issues in the theoretical humanities. Elizabeth Beaumont Bissell has assembled a diverse range of contributors to discuss a variety of issues under the terms of this volume’s given title. Amongst others, Derek Attridge (*Peculiar Language*) and Timothy Clark (*The Theory of Inspiration*) – to name two figures whose texts feature as citations within these essays – here take the opportunity to add to the work they have already produced in the general field of enquiry. To the extent that positions on ‘literature’ and ‘the literary’ are in contention in the space of this book as itself a type of staged debate, it is pertinent to mention that the right and left wings of the debate would here seem to be marked out by Thomas Docherty and Marianne DeKoven respectively. Docherty mounts ‘a defence of literature as the “proper” object of study for a university English department and its students’. DeKoven promotes ‘the literary as activity’ in order to pass beyond the view that ‘the

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valorisation of the literary is seen primarily as a tool of conservative, elitist cultural hegemony'. In her editorial Introduction, Beaumont Bissell occupies the centre ground, emphasising how it is to 'a continual and necessary reinterrogation and reformation' of literary-theoretical assumptions that 'the present volume is intended to contribute'. (In the spirit of this, the essays in this collection are arranged in alphabetical order by author; that DeKoven and Docherty should appear side by side in the running order is thus purely accidental.)

The outcome of this book's debate is, in broad terms, a displacement – effected with varying degrees of force – of the question 'What is literature?' by 'the question of literature'. The former of these questions (as posed by Wellek and Warren in the Anglo-American tradition and by Sartre in the French tradition), despite its appearance of comprehensiveness, is, in Beaumont Bissell's words, 'a fugitive detour between other questions'. Refocusing attention on the legitimation of what it is we can think or say about literature is felt, on the whole, to be a more urgent issue. Correspondent with this is a displacement of literature as a category in the discourse of literary theory by that of the literary.

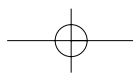
In response to this, one is struck by the way in which these essays seem to follow what in recent years appears to have become the law of literary theory where, as Beaumont Bissell is herself aware, literary theory grows more sophisticated and at the same time more limited and tentative in regard to the problem of overcoming forms of entrenched prejudice. As Beaumont Bissell says towards the end of her Introduction, 'We are no nearer to deciding what the question of literature is, let alone answering it, at the end of the book than we were at the beginning.' In this connection, it is perhaps not unfair to suggest that we are here still in the realm of what, for historical reasons, has latterly become the familiar idea that radical epistemology issues in the form of a conservative politics.

University College Winchester

Gary Farnell

Susan Crane, *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing and Identity During the Hundred Years War*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, pp. ix + 269, \$49.95, \$19.95 pb.

The central thesis of this book is well expressed on its penultimate page; 'Especially in the public forums of late medieval courts, material signs such as dress, emblems, coats of arms, and masks make crucial contributions to identity'. In the preceding chapters, Professor Crane explores these outward expressions through a study of literary texts as well as historical events, focussing on late medieval English and French contexts. As she admits, she is not investigating the Hundred Years War itself, but is able to demonstrate through her study 'the paradoxical closeness of English and French speakers during this time'. In this context, her work is an important contribution to our understanding of court culture, and of the formation of élite identities. In her first chapter, she emphasises the centrality of clothing as a statement of rank and identity – the 'talking garment' as she cleverly puts it. Clothing is, after all, a chosen identity but one which also plays a major role in gift exchange and in the practice of the giving of liveries. Not only, therefore, is this self-representation but also



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consolidation of the group identity, a theme which Crane explores further in later chapters and also in her conclusion. Furthermore, the settings for 'the wearing and exchanging of personal signs' are, in Crane's view, secular. As illustration she neatly juxtaposes the symbolic gestures at the wedding ceremony of Richard II and Isabella of France at Ardres in October 1396 with the tale of Griselda, of which one French version may be linked to the proxy marriage of the English king and French princess in March of the same year. Crane's second chapter on 'Maytime' also reveals complementary literary and historical manifestations. Here a further secular ritual, the adoption by courtiers of plant and flower costumes to celebrate the seasonal festival, is shown to be a further statement and reinforcement of group affiliation as much as an expression of collective escapism. Later chapters on 'Chivalric Display and Incognito', and 'Wild Doubles in Charivari and Interlude' pursue similar themes with appropriate nuances.

The only chapter which pursues a slightly different theme is her study of 'Joan of Arc and Women's Cross-Dress', but even here there is a reminder that Joan spent the last two years of her life 'living, dressing and leading troops as if she were a knight and a courtier'. History and literature are again studied side by side with attention given to the Roman de Silence where a young woman lives as a knight until Merlin reveals her real gender and she marries the king she has been serving. Crane concludes that 'Silence's cross-dress began as an instrumental disguise but its daily practice has substantially reshaped him'. Whether Joan knew of the story cannot be proved one way or the other but the effects her attire had on her may be said to be similar.

Some of the chapters in this book have appeared in earlier versions elsewhere, including that on Joan, but it is useful to have them together in their revised form in one volume. Together they present a conceptually stimulating study through historical and literary comparison of the best kind.

University of Reading

Anne Curry

Jonathan Woolfson (ed.), *Reassessing Tudor Humanism*, Palgrave, 2002, pp. xi + 286, £47.50.

Roger Ascham composed Latin poetry, translated Greek into Latin, wrote on education theory and other subjects, and corresponded internationally in Latin. He 'encapsulates . . . the learned humanism of his day [which] was Latin based, with excursions into Greek and the vernacular, interested in books, scholarship and learning in the widest sense'. In circulation was a vast corpus of Latin works across the full range of disciplines, from music to mathematics. If mostly by foreign authors and from continental presses (and therefore not well represented by the *Short Title Catalogue*), Binns estimates nevertheless that 100 million words were printed in Latin in England up to 1640 – equivalent to all the surviving Latin classics – and that much also remains unpublished. Admittedly of variable quality, such survivals document the vibrant Latin culture of scholarly networks that connected the court with lively universities and that underpinned the high achievement of the English Literary Renaissance. Binns's important paper is the shortest in this thickly annotated set of conference proceedings, all twelve of which, from different disciplinary standpoints, summarise

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critically the current state of scholarship in particular areas, usually via close scrutiny of a single (generally under-rated) text. Woolfson contextualises the whole. Rundle downgrades Duke Humfrey and slightly upgrades other fifteenth-century English members of an international coterie that was deliberately exclusive. Curtis rehabilitates Richard Pace's under-appreciated *De Fructu* as a serious exercise in educational theory. It was an advanced rhetorical handbook for St Paul's School that prepared pupils for the university arts course and also promoted Greek. *De Fructu* was additionally a Menippean satire, directed against the same foes as *Utopia* and *Praise of Folly*, but naming names: hence its disavowal by Erasmus, who may have originally promoted it. It was not really Tyndale's mistranslations that caused More to attack his fellow Erasmian, argues Stewart, but because Tyndale's Bible was in English and thus could not be restricted to the humanist elite. Although the vernacular Bible was actually illegal in England, once in print nothing could be successfully excluded. Unfamiliar Erasmian dimensions are revealed to both Leland and Foxe, the former (by Foister) as an appreciator of Holbein's art and the latter (by King) in his return to those sources of Christianity that antedated barbarous scholasticism. Foxe, indeed, was 'a Renaissance man equally comfortable in the world of Greek and Latin scholarship and Reformation polemics'. Carley explores Henry VIII's cultural interests through his library with reference to Gian Matteo Ghiberti. Overall shows how pre-Tridentine Englishmen appreciated the Italian bestseller *Il Beneficio di Cristo* because it "'playnely sett out" Christ's glory' without yet recognizing its reformist character. Woolfson treats reception of another text, Aristotle's decidedly unmonarchical *Politics*, and its painful assimilation into monarchical England. Elizabethan universities are illuminated both here and in Goulding's paper on science, which uses actual lectures brilliantly to substantiate the aridity of scientific elements in the Oxford arts course and its inferiority to the achievements of mechanics that caused Sir Henry Savile to establish his professorships at Oxford. Finally Boutcher treats an era (and its implications) in which a much enlarged cultural élite critically assessed multiple editions of the same texts and their commentators in a variety of languages. How much had changed since the days of Erasmus emerges in a 1594 *English* sonnet to a lady 'upon occasion of a Petrarch he gave her, shewing her the Reason why the Italian commentres dissent so much in the Exposition hereof'. Not only does this collection contribute to our understanding of the English Renaissance and today's scholarship, but also, very specifically, usefully, and separately, to particular texts and topics within it.

University College Winchester

Michael Hicks

Christopher Highley and John N. King (eds), *John Foxe and His World*, Ashgate, 2002, pp. 297, £55.

This collection of eighteen essays which came out of a 1999 interdisciplinary conference at Ohio State University is about evenly divided between contributions by literary scholars and historians, with one by an art specialist also included. The framing device is perhaps a bit too broad with only a little over half of the contents dealing in some way with the influential sixteenth-century martyrologist. The book is broken up into five sections of three essays each: historiography, history of the book, visual culture, Roman

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Catholicism, and women and gender. In addition, there is a convenient selection of black-and-white illustrations, labelled for easy reference to their connected essays.

Appropriately, in the introduction, Patrick Collinson, the doyen of historians of sixteenth-century English protestantism, continues his penchant for asking the tough but relevant questions, thereby cautioning against any quest for easy answers. He challenges us to reconsider Haller's linkage of Foxe with national consciousness both in the light of the *Acts and Monuments's* probable multiple authorship and the work's reception among contemporaries and later readers alike. A few of the essays that follow attempt to address some of these issues. The afterword is also aptly written by David Loades, who is chiefly responsible for the current project which will soon produce a modern critical edition of the *Acts and Monuments*. He presents several valuable insights into the Protestant culture of the late sixteenth century, including what he deems the general abhorrence for burning heretics even among the more traditional-minded. Through a chronological survey he also demonstrates how the book took on different roles and functions between its initial publication and today.

Limits of space allow me only to comment on a few of the more exemplary remaining essays. David Scott Kastan's "Little Foxes" takes up some of Collinson's queries by examining the process by which Foxe's book was truncated and abridged over the years into the better-known *Book of Martyrs* so that the individual stories came to matter less than the availability of an easily portable testament to 'Protestant triumphalism'. Andrew Pettegree offers a fascinating look at Foxe's atypical inclusion of a large number of gripping pictures in his martyrology, and attributes this to the technological sophistication of English printing by the 1560s while Calvinist iconophobia was still years away from seriously challenging their use. In a critical comparison between Foxe and Richard Verstegan's Catholic book of martyrs (1587), Christopher Highley notes that 'Verstegan's English Catholic martyrs are not so much ideals to be admired or imitated as brutalized victims to be pitied and avenged', thus deprecating martyrdom as a 'form of resistance' for Catholics (189–90). Finally, Sarah E. Wall evaluates Foxe's editorial process by comparing his account of Anne Askew's *Examinations* with those published elsewhere, including John Bale's version. While Bale may have been more obvious and open in his editorializing of the interrogation, Foxe proved a more subtle editor by creating a sentence and paragraph structure that would ensure that Anne's answers in defence of her protestant faith would leave a strong and lasting impression on the reader.

There are several other essays worth careful reading by anyone interested in Foxe, printing, iconography, propaganda, or the history of reading – especially those by Benedict Robinson, Cynthia Zollinger, Richard Williams, and Marsha Robinson. Overall, this is a valuable addition to Ashgate's growing catalogue of volumes devoted to collected essays on Reformation topics.

Florida Atlantic University

Ben Lowe

Claire Jowitt, *Voyage Drama and Gender Politics 1589–1642*, Manchester University Press, 2003, pp. vi + 256, £40.

Claire Jowitt begins this innovative book with the wide-ranging body of early modern travel prose, which she then contrasts with what might be termed the 'travel

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drama' of the later years of the reign of Elizabeth I. In some respects the prose writing seems familiar territory since it has attracted a large amount of research and publication in recent years. However, Jowitt's fresh approach, her extremely accessible style, the thoroughness of her referencing and, above all, her attention to a variety of rather neglected drama texts establishes a promising argument for what is to come later. At the heart of the book she turns to the significant shift in the cultural scene that occurred with the arrival in London of James VI of Scotland. This heralded the exciting mixture of experiment and revision that characterised the theatres until their closure during the reign of his son.

The book reaches beyond the commonplace formula that, one suspects, informs (but not altogether very usefully) many an undergraduate lecture: the dramatists set their plays in imagined worlds ('Italy', Illyria), in order to escape censorship and/or to 'make strange' the domestic realm from which they wrote. This proto-Brechtian stance seems a little limited in its political analysis (and in its formalism) after encountering Jowitt's reading of the allegorical nature of early modern travel dramas. This is especially true of the work of writers whose relative distance from the court probably gave them less to fear from the machinery of surveillance in the first place. The 'gender politics' of the book's title are revealed through her analysis of the anxieties over sexual identity, desire and practice in the imagined worlds. These, she shows, encoded the tensions in the varied courtly structures and, necessarily linked, the colonial projects of the day, and at many levels – with unsettling effects that go beyond a mere sense of defamiliarisation. A good example of this is with her fascinating account of the relationship between piracy, 'turning Turk' and national allegiance in Thomas Heywood and Rowley's *Fortune by Land and Sea*, Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*, and Philip Massinger's *The Renegado*. She argues that 'descriptions of increasingly serious anti-establishment activities in these plays operate as a barometer for the perceived success or failure of Stuart rule'. This is a clever image, as well as an important claim, as it suggests that the drama was a continuum, available for regular inspection as an instrument for the measuring of contradictions and discontinuities in early modern statecraft.

This is a book rich in material and argument that will appeal to literary scholars and historians. It is both readable and demanding, but if nothing else, it will remind the reader of the wealth of dramatic writing beyond the usual canon of plays and authors. To introduce new readers to, say, Thomas Dekker's *If this Be Not Good, the Devil is in It*, or Thomas Heywood's *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* is laudable enough, but especially so when these plays are made to speak so decisively of the arrogance of the colonial appetite.

University of Gloucestershire

Simon Barker

Richmond Barbour, *Before Orientalism: London's Theatre of the East, 1576–1626*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. xii + 238, £45.

Orientalism by the late Edward Said is now over a quarter of a century old. For a generation it has defined and stimulated research on the history of ideas relating to European approaches to Asia and Islam. Said's work has not escaped criticism. He

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was limited in concentrating on Middle Eastern and the Arab Islam. His Palestinian background perhaps made him overlook Jewish insights into Islamic and Arabic culture – whether it was scholarly like the Hungarian Goldziher, or romantic like the frothy ideas of Benjamin Disraeli. The word orientalism has been loaded with negative overtones. Said's work was limited in time to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But, for that reason, research into earlier encounters with the orient have been stimulated. Works by Nabil Matar (*Islam in Britain 1558–1685* and *Turks, Moors and Englishment in the Age of Discovery*) and G J Toomer (*Eastern Wisdom and Learning*) have brought out a much more nuanced picture. This new work by an Associate Professor of the Department of English at Oregon State University is the latest contribution of the debate.

Professor Barbour largely concentrates on the attitudes towards India at the beginning of the seventeenth century. He looks at the contrast between the myths of the east and the beginnings of a methodical documentation, useful for commercial purposes. The theatre is central to the making of myths and images and Barbour examines the language and iconography of Marlowe's *Tamberlaine the Great*, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and Richard Knolly's *The Generall Historie of the Turkes*. He is illuminating on contemporary illustration of these works. Eastern protagonists, Tamberlaine or an Ottoman Sultan, were basically dressed up as Europeans or Mediterraneans, with the incidental orientalist flourish.

But the two central chapters look at the careers of Sir Thomas Roe and Thomas Coryate. Roe became an outstanding and experienced diplomat. In 1614 he was sent as ambassador to open negotiations with the Moghul court for the furtherance of trade. It was a royal appointment but had the support of the growing number of India traders of London. Roe found the experience daunting. The Moghul Emperor was not particularly interested in commercial matters. Roe reported back, not from a standpoint of cultural superiority but rather in nervous awe of the Moghuls. He described the licence and theatricality of the court: a theatricality that harmonised in reality the fantasies of the contemporary English stage.

Coryate was an engaging character. He is seen as the first English *tourist* of Asia. He made one journey to the eastern Mediterranean, and a second to India – dying at Surat at the age of forty. Coryate travelled not for the sake of promoting trade, or to convert anyone, or even for the sake of scholarship. He travelled to have fun, to see curiosities or crudities. His writings contributed to an early literature of travel to feed the appetite of armchair travellers such as the intellectual descendants of Sir Thomas Elyot who, in 1531, had delighted in knowing the sundry manners and conditions of people, and the variety of their natures – and that in a warm study or parlour, without peril of the sea or danger of long and painful journeys.

Those who did not venture abroad had their own clear and strong perceptions and myths of eastern places, myths that were assimilated into the domestic world-picture. The accession of James Stuart to the throne in 1603 was seen as Phoenix arising from the ashes of Elizabeth Tudor. Phoenix came from Arabia Felix, a land, like Scotland, that had just about repelled Roman imperialism. And Brut, legendary founder of Britain, was the grandson of Aeneas who had fled Troy. Coryate wrote of his emotions on visiting the site of Troy.

Barbour's book is not an easy read and the argument is not well focussed. However it is full of nuggets: of legends and travels, deft quotations and shafts of insight. It adds to the breakdown of the simplistic polarities that contributed to the

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eighteenth- and nineteenth-century orientalism constructed by Edward Said and his followers.

London

Peter Clark

Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier (eds), *Royal Subjects: Essays on the Writings of James VI and I*, Wayne State University Press, 2002, pp. 543, £33.50.

The 400th anniversary in 2003 of the change of English dynasty from Tudors to Stuarts, bringing on the union of the crowns of England and Scotland, went largely unnoticed on both sides of the border. The Elizabeth I industry produced a few extra lives and aspects. Of two new biographies of James VI and I, *The Cradle King* by Alan Steward considered some implications of a regency for his future. By 1603 James was already 'an old and experienced king'. Both monarchs were intelligent, educated, intellectuals, even. Each was scribacious. Elizabeth's 'works', some of them, have fitted comfortably into a paperback (University of Chicago, 2003). James, however, was vastly more prolific, his writings voluminous and diverse in genre, whether in prose or verse. A modern printed plain-text collected edition seems unlikely. But as the contributors to *Royal Subjects*, taking the king's reign and his texts as intertwined, are well aware, the latter cry out for close analysis, and interpretation. Moreover, it is apparent that not all of James's writings – not even his love poetry – were all his own work. By putting his name to collaborative texts, authorising though not authoring them, he gave them a somewhat spurious authority. Ruling as well as reigning, James found himself in a love affair with words, his own and those he was happy to make his own. Historians should surely be wary of the beguiling notion of a distinct genre of monarchical writing.

The seventeen contributors to this hefty interdisciplinary tome, historians and literary critics, British and American, unite in identifying in all the writings going under the king's name political and governmental connotations apt for the pursuit of the inwardness of his time. Not only *The True Law of Free Monarchies* and *Basilikon Doron* but *Amatoria* and other erotic effusions were composed and published with an eye to enhancing the power and prestige of the man placed in a God-given office. Averse to meeting his subjects *en masse*, James was content to be 'gazed upon on paper' by (he hoped) discerning readers. But if physical contacts threatened danger, publication in print or even in circulatory manuscript offered hostages to fortune. All texts are wide open to interpretation, re-interpretation and misrepresentation. James himself could feel his words coming back 'like spittle against the wind upon [his] own face', but, inveterate wordsmith that he was, he could never resist putting his ideas and opinions into a plethora of literary forms, confident that being (mostly) his, as in his rights, there was something divine about them.

A short review can mention only a few of the erudite and enterprising essays gathered in 'Poetics and kingship', 'Prose, politics, and society' and 'Writing and religion'. Malcolm Smith, in pursuit of 'the making of Rex Pacificus' through a miscellany of texts, finds that not until late in the reign, when the urge for an accommodation with Spain became almost obsessive, did James enunciate an ideal of peace, and even then

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he kept some grip upon practicalities. In 'Equity and ideas' Mark Fortier portrays a monarch, charged with absolute authority, claiming to dispense justice through conscience and goodwill. Simon Wortham, on 'The gift economy of Renaissance power', quotes Robert Cecil's 'for a king not to be bountiful were a fault'. But James, ever self-regarding and taking generosity as an expression of power, was bountiful to a fault. Among minor texts examined *A Paraphrase upon the Revelation* is found, unsurprisingly, by Daniel Fischlin to underline the especial role assigned to kings as saviours of the people in times of crisis.

Sandra J. Bell's 'Precious stinke' reminds us that James's objections to the rapidly spreading weed in *A counterblast to tobacco* showed no prescience about lung cancer. His catalogue of its ills listed *inter alia*, 'treason, knives, to blow up kingdoms and blow out king's lives' – the gunpowder plotters and Raleigh were 'tobacconists'. The threat was, interestingly, to *English* civilisation. (Successive governments have until recently – and perhaps even now – been ambivalent about an addictive source of easily collected revenue). In 'Writing King James's sexuality', David M. Bergeron probes James's own writings – including extraordinary letters to his favourites – and the subsequent historiography of an ever-interesting topic. He concludes that the monarch shared 'an important reciprocal love' with Buckingham and company. But genuine reciprocity on all sides seems doubtful.

The most wide-ranging and incisive piece here is the characteristic Foreword by Kevin Sharpe, who has completed a trek from 'mainstream' history to a chair in Renaissance studies in a school of English. That experience and, no doubt, further aspirations drive him on to a programme for achieving biographies of royal subjects like James, whose writings are 'only one form of representation', needing to be studied in the contexts of other representations – 'visual images, ceremonies, performances' – and whatever. The list is endless. All this is to be – can hardly avoid being – looked at from diverse perspectives. I suppose, we historians and others must endeavour it.

University of Exeter

Ivan Roots

Graham Parry and Joad Raymond (eds), *Milton and the Terms of Liberty*, D. S. Brewer, 2002, pp. xvi + 218, £35.

Under the broad title of *Milton and the Terms of Liberty*, Graham Parry and Joad Raymond have compiled a volume of strong and engaging essays that are a revealing window on Milton studies in an international perspective. Parry's five-page introduction, albeit brief, is lively and informative, especially on the 1999 York conference from which these papers were drawn.

The focus of much recent work on Milton, most notably in Britain, has been not so much on religion and liberty as on liberty defined in terms of classical republicanism. Quentin Skinner eloquently articulates one version of that argument in this volume, as he traces the influence of Roman thought about servitude, slavery, and freedom first on parliamentary theorists in the 1620s and 1640s (at the outbreak of civil war) and then on Milton as he defends regicide and the Commonwealth state that followed. John Creaser likewise arrives at Milton's republicanism via an analysis

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of the differences between the prosody of Milton and Marvell, the latter seen as more cautious and with a greater need for stability. Tom Corns, however, finds that rather than evincing an early radicalism, Milton's writings before 'Lycidas' reflect dominant values such as ceremony, the beauty of holiness, sacerdotalism, and order.

Continuing with this political emphasis, Joad Raymond looks at Milton alongside crucial issues for the English republic, including the need to distinguish between the name and substance of a king: a distinction marking both Milton's defence of regicide (against the Presbyterians) and his anxious praise of Cromwell as Lord Protector in the *Second Defence*. Martin Czelzainis shows that Milton looks back to not only the Roman republic but the Roman empire in his arguments for domestic liberty, positing congruence between his own thought and Martin Bucer's on divorce by consent as allowed by Roman law (and omitting a problematic later revocation by the emperor Justinian).

Still looking at Milton's political prose, albeit with more attention to literary questions, Christopher Orchard examines uses of martial metaphors following the regicide: military language in Milton's *Eikonoklastes* and his two *Defenses* indicates that debate has become another kind of warfare, underscoring the difficulties of national reconciliation. Similarly, Stephen Fallon's engaging essay looks at the complexities – and contradictions – of Milton's self-representation in the *Defenses*, an oscillation between avowed humility and self-promotion shrewdly targeted by his opponent, Alexander More. John Rumrich is perhaps most narrowly focused on questions of style and authorship, although his topic – the provenance of *De Doctrina Christiana* – is one that has occupied a number of Miltonists for more than a decade.

Other contributors return to church and state politics, if not precisely to questions of republicanism. Janel Mueller looks at *Samson Agonistes* in the context of non-conformist experience of imprisonment, the plague (1665), and the fire of London (1666), finding in *Samson Agonistes* an implicit critique of the self-immolating aspects of nonconformity. Barbara Lewalski examines Milton's last seven years to argue that, in both poems and prose, a non-quietist Milton sought to advance moral and political understanding, preparing his readers to reclaim religious liberty and a free Commonwealth at the appropriate future time.

Two remaining essays treat, in turn, republicanism in a Restoration context and the transformation of Milton from anti-imperial poet to poet of the British empire, in part based on classical (Roman) models. Examining Milton's *Paradise Regained* in relation to his late prose work, *Of True Religion*, Katsuhiko Engetsu finds the politicisation of public and private as part of a struggle between 'republicanism and despotic monarchy'. Anne-Julia Zwierlein shows how Milton's anti-imperial epics and his vision of history as subject of God's inscrutable choices were replaced by a vision of history as defined by the British imperial mission.

While the absence of any sustained attention to religion in a volume on Milton and liberty is striking, these essays show some of the most interesting and promising currents in present-day Milton studies. Drawing on new texts and contexts, the contributors illumine our understanding of Milton's articulation and defence of domestic, ecclesiastical, and civil liberty, particularly with regard to mid-seventeenth-century republicanism. The volume should be of considerable value and interest to scholars and students of Milton and his times.

The Pennsylvania State University

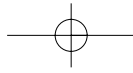
Laura Lunger Knoppers

Reviews

Daniel Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture 1500–1730*, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. xvii + 421, £55.

Originally intended as the sequel to the book at present under review, Daniel Woolf's *Reading History in Early Modern England* in fact appeared – such are the vagaries of publishing – three years ago. As its title proclaims this study moved away from the normal author-centred approach to historiography to concentrate chiefly on aspects of the *consumption* of historical writing in the two centuries after 1500. It is a painstaking investigation of the *active* reading habits of the generations of men and, increasingly, women in this period, partly based on the evidence of commonplace books which showed how they interrogated, marshalled, distilled and digested what they found in the rapidly proliferating historical works which they purchased, inherited or borrowed. New publishers' aids helped them; printed marginal notes and headings and, above all, footnotes and indexes had become standard features by the end of this period. (Even the Bible became divided up into numbered chapters and verses for the first time in its sixteenth-century vernacular translations.) Other aspects of history books dealt with in this volume included perceptive surveys of trends in production, publication – serialisation and the subscription method were two of the most notable of them – pricing and marketing, and the building up and functioning of public and private libraries. F.S.Fussner's 'Historical Revolution' – the subject of his well-known book of 1962 – takes on a new form and different chronology under Woolf's expert guidance.

The Social Circulation of the Past is very much part of the same project as *Reading History* and continues the author's intention of offering much more than a study of the leading writers of early modern histories. There is always a danger, as Woolf fully appreciates, of looking back in a whiggishly blinkered kind of way to the historiographical past only for 'family resemblances' or anticipations of later dominant trends. (One of Woolf's points is how easy it is, anyway, to exaggerate the progressiveness of English humanist historical thought and practice.) The cast list of the book, it is true, includes many familiar names: John Aubrey, William Camden, William Dugdale, Humphrey Wanley, John Leland, John Stow, William Stukeley (and others) are all there. And a few of the big names – Archbishop Matthew Parker, for instance – get trimmed to size. But Woolf takes to heart a quotation from Maurice Halbwachs: 'History resembles a crowded cemetery, where room must constantly be made for new tombstones'. Also present here are a host of lesser lights: several generations of the Roman Catholic Blundell family of Little Crosby, Lancashire, William Holman of Essex, Abraham de la Pryme of Yorkshire, Robert Reyce of Suffolk, John Trussell of Hampshire, and Thomas Westcote of Devon. All are carefully positioned within the cultural landscape to which they belonged and within the context of the broadening phenomenon of antiquarianism (convincingly rescued here from its later pejorative overtones). Moreover Woolf's coverage extends even beyond these unsung antiquarians to the countless ordinary folk, labourers and others, who assisted them by supplying artefacts, pointing out sites, and communicating handed-down folklore; a veritable 'archaeological economy' flourished in these years. To a considerable degree, therefore, this is a book about 'historiography from below'. It takes its place very usefully alongside recent studies by Graham Parry (*The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth*



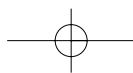
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Century, 1995) and Margorie Swann (*Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collecting in Early Modern England*, 2001).

Woolf's title and sub-title both accurately underline the priorities and scope of this volume. 'Historical culture' and 'the social circulation of the past' provide the chief centre of interest and Woolf throws valuable light on the interactions between élite and popular history and historical consciousness. The plural nature of 'collective', 'community', or 'social' memory comes under close scrutiny. Elite and popular history, as others have already claimed, though never completely disconnected, in due course went their largely separate ways. From the second half of the seventeenth century onwards local history and oral tradition – both chiefly retained by the common people – were increasingly relegated to the sidelines as the master narrative of national history (based on archives and the printed word and produced by writers from the social élite) established its grip. 'The gravity and dignity of history excludes all low and vulgar expressions . . . trivial proverbs, and such like trash', insisted Abel Boyer, Queen Anne's first biographer, at the start of the eighteenth century. Both History and historians became more snobbish as their status increased.

This is a densely packed, richly textured and deeply learned book. Insights abound whether the author is dealing with the increased importance attached to time, the heightened appreciation of mutability and anachronism, the rise of diary keeping, the 'pedigree craze' of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, historians' networking, the lack of an English tradition of historical narrative painting before 1700, or early interpretations of Stonehenge. And the text is enlivened with delightful anecdotes: the Stuart archdeacon of Canterbury's use of a Roman urn for his tobacco, the Society of Roman Knights (a spirited sub-section of the early eighteenth-century Society of Antiquaries), Godiva processions in Coventry (fully clothed, one suspects) between 1678 and 1887, and the wood carvings of giants which once adorned the London Guildhall.

This book, like its companion *Reading History*, has been a long time in the making; its gestation was signalled in work-in-progress articles published as far back as 1988. *The Social Circulation of the Past* deals with a longish period and the author never loses sight of his subject. Sociological and anthropological theory is invoked – Durkheim, Levi-Strauss, Geertz *et al* – where it is deemed to be helpful to the task in hand and in discussions of 'social memory' occasional comparisons are made with Africa, India, and South America. Because it is so densely packed, however, the book is not always easily digestible. The text itself, like that of Woolf's previous book *Reading History*, is divided into clearly titled sub-sections but in both volumes these are absent from the table of contents which thus provides a very incomplete map of what follows by listing only the titles of chapters, some of them over forty pages long. The index is quirky, to say the least, and looks as though it was either computer-generated or compiled by a third party not really conversant with the text. What possible purpose is served by index entries like 'adults', 'change', 'children', 'facts', 'hearing', 'individuals', 'land', 'men', 'roofs', 'utility', 'words', 'sixteenth century', 'Tudor period', 'seventeenth century', and 'eighteenth century'? Slips in the text itself are exceedingly rare. The Great Fire of London is curiously misdated (p. 209). And it is surely inaccurate to place the *Agrarian History of England and Wales* alongside the *Victoria County History* as twin descendants of early modern antiquarianism (p. 147). The book is very long but this reviewer is left with at least the suspicion that it might actually have been shortened at the last minute; the Conclusion and the text



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itself do not always seem to be a perfect match. Compared with the illustrations in *Reading History* (Cambridge University Press) which were reproduced with admirable clarity those included in this volume often tend to be rather fuzzy. The final disservice from the publisher (Oxford University Press) to the distinguished author of what will undoubtedly become a standard work is to describe him on the review slip which accompanied my copy of this book as its *editor*.

University College Winchester

R.C. Richardson

Robert Appelbaum, *Literature and Utopian Politics in Seventeenth-Century England*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. xi + 256, £40.

Reid Barbour, *Literature and Religious Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. viii + 282, £42.50.

Two important new books published by Cambridge evince the recent and salutary interest of literary scholars working on seventeenth-century England in casting a wide net for their analyses: moving well beyond canonical authors and genres to trace thematic, political, religious, or cultural concerns across not only drama, poetry, and expository prose but also sermons, parliamentary records, religious manifestoes, and polemical tracts. For Robert Appelbaum, fictional constructs on the model of Sir Thomas More's famous *Utopia* are simply one possible option for utopian thought; similarly, Reid Barbour looks well beyond sermons and theological treatises in his reconstruction of religious culture in the Caroline period.

Robert Appelbaum's thoughtful and scholarly study focuses on the interaction of the literary and the political in an utopian impulse in seventeenth-century England. His organization is largely chronological: he begins with the inception of the reign of King James (and Ben Jonson's court masques), moving through the utopic industriousness of the Pilgrims to Robert Burton's conflicted and melancholic ramblings to Bacon's *New Atlantis*, which, in Appelbaum's trajectory, had already begun to displace the utopic mastery of the monarch. The 1640s bring idealized politics to the fore, as the sitting parliament embodies the hopes and schemes of a newly energized public nation; fictional works such as Gabriel Platte's *Macaria* and *A discoverie of Infinite Treasure* are set alongside the theorizing and activism of the Levellers, with their schemes for expanded suffrage and individual rights.

The regicide in 1649, what Appelbaum calls the most utopic moment ever seen in England, results in the re-making of the political nation with the abolishing of kingship and of the House of Lords and the declaration of a republic. Again, Appelbaum looks at diverse discourses through the lens of utopia, with a twin focus on ideal politics and utopian mastery: including the fifth monarchists and the radical communitarianism of Gerrard Winstanley the Digger. The inception of the Protectorate marks another turning point for Appelbaum. Although fully developed utopias – such as James Harrington's *Oceana* – appear during the Protectorate, Appelbaum sees a movement away from mastery and actual social change, culminating in the Restoration period in which utopias are aestheticized, rather than seeking to effect change or revolution.

Breadth of texts distinguishes Appelbaum's work from earlier scholars of utopia; focusing on the 'look of power', he traces a utopian impulse through a wide variety

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of forms and actions that might not otherwise be linked together. This broad lens results in some striking new insights and re-combinations: the fascinating juxtaposition, for instance, of the Mayflower compact, Robert Burton's meritocracy, and King Charles's complaint about 'that new *Utopia* of Religion & Government' sought by his parliamentary opponents.

Appelbaum's teleological claims, however, are less convincing. Calling James absolutist on one end and the Restoration 'more democratic and rationalizing' on the other both exaggerates and simplifies political change. A closer look at the rhetoric surrounding the return of Charles II or the flourishing of the cult of the royal martyr post-1660 might well have qualified some of Appelbaum's assertions about the Restoration period. Nonetheless the individual analyses and chapters are useful and well-conceived.

Like Appelbaum, Reid Barbour offers a wide-ranging study, tracing the Caroline reassessment of the 'circumstances' of Protestantism that is impelled by criticisms from Puritan and Catholic alike. Treating religion as a broad category, Barbour has a particular interest in the cultural constituents of religious experience - time, place, person, means - in the 1620s, 30s, and 40s. Barbour begins, then, with a Caroline reassessment of heroism, prompted by the failure of England to act decisively in the Thirty Years War. Charles's bolstering of the Order of the Garter and Caroline masques - such as William Davenant and Inigo Jones's *Britannia Triumphans* - projects an image of heroic virtue that is in some ways compensatory for the lack of sustained military action. Other Caroline communities - the Ferrar family in their dialogues at Little Gidding and the Oxfordshire community at Great Tew under Lucius Carey, second Viscount Falkland - both critique and offer alternatives to the court's reconstitution of Protestant heroism.

Barbour then considers the role of fancy in worship, with a fascinating account of William Laud's conflicted response to the unruly fancy of his own dreams, while he simultaneously seeks to utilize holy fancy or imagination in the beauty of church order and ceremony. Puritans and Laudians accused each other in turn of worship practices built on singularity and fancy.

Caroline attempts to reconcile the biblical dictum that God is no respecter of persons with clear social hierarchies form another circumstance explored by Barbour, who moves from John Donne's sermons to William Sanderson's schemata of salvation to the social logic of persons in the drama of James Shirley. Finally, Barbour looks at the natural theology and religion and the stocktaking that emanates from Bacon's Great Instauration: from Bacon's own attempts to delineate the constituents of nature, to Robert Fludd's mystical and occult philosophy, to nature as hieroglyph of divinity in Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*.

Barbour presents a rich array of materials and a new angle on many texts, with particularly strong discussions of religious heroism and of the conflicted role of fancy and dream for William Laud and others. At times, though, the angle seems oblique, and the analysis can be difficult to follow, jumping rapidly from text to text. Nor does Barbour address at any length such broader questions as: what role did religion play in the outbreak of the civil war? Does this stocktaking increase or help to resolve tensions? How much of a role does the king himself ultimately play?

These two new books work well together. Both Appelbaum and Barbour boldly challenge traditional generic and disciplinary boundaries, moving among many different texts to trace threads of connection and new links. Such a broadening of the

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scholarly lens is enriching and provocative. If that breadth also raises certain questions with each book, it is nonetheless a source of strength. In both books, the reader gains new insights on old, familiar texts and is introduced to an array of new and fascinating sources. Literary scholars and students of cultural history should find both books of much value.

The Pennsylvania State University

Laura Lunger Knoppers

Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason*, Allen Lane, 2003, pp. xviii + 574, £25.

Reviewing a posthumously published book is something of an unnerving experience, especially since this is the second of Roy Porter's books to have appeared since his untimely death in March 2002. But if the very fact of the existence of this large book is testimony to Porter's unrivalled capacity for hard-work and productivity, its subject matter – the body during the long eighteenth century – draws on so many of the themes and personalities which Porter has written about, and made his own, during the course of his lifetime (health, sickness, medicine, science, Gibbon, Sterne, Cheyne and Beddoes, to name just the most obvious), that in some ways it can be viewed as his *magnum opus* and the culmination and final distillation of all that he has published before. And although Porter is quick to point out that this book is not intended as a textbook, because it does not cover all aspects of the topic, let alone all of the century, nevertheless, the huge variety of issues and approaches raised by this often witty study allows the reader to share Porter's vision of the pre-occupations and contours of the period which he found so conducive and fascinating. In this regard it is to be regretted that Porter was unable to provide full references for his material, and so the reader is left with a vast, but undigested, bibliography, which means that it is impossible to follow up Porter's references and insights.

For Porter, 'the body' – and the flesh of the book's title – becomes an overarching tool for analysing not only polarities such as body and soul, but such a vast panoply of topics from consciousness and personality to fashion, make-up addiction, gout, and graveyards that, *inter alia*, he deals with more topics than an author of a conventional textbook of the period would dare to tackle. In places, indeed, the coverage is so wide-ranging that the reader can be forgiven for thinking that Porter has succumbed to the digressions so central to the eighteenth-century novel, but, like those digressions, his generally come back to the main theme. In controlling his material, Porter's guiding framework is that during the course of the eighteenth century (albeit in sometimes contradictory and confusing ways) the Christian lens through which people viewed themselves and their bodies was gradually replaced by science and medicine. In order to argue his case Porter provides us with a masterly historical overview of the dominant Christian and classical understandings of the body as they existed until the mid seventeenth century (seeing Milton as the apogee of this tradition), and then, through a study of individuals and topics, demonstrates the challenges to this understanding during the century and a half after 1688.

Why did attitudes to the body change? Perhaps unsurprisingly Porter finds no easy answers to this question, although he does briefly highlight the importance of a new

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climate of opinion after the political and religious development following 1688, and the speed of education and urbanisation. He finds it easier to catalogue the authors who, in his opinion, gave new responses to questions such as 'who am I?' and 'what will become of me?'. In many ways his heroes are the fairly conventional ones. Porter gives central credit to Locke for associating identity with consciousness, and who paved the way for eighteenth-century moves to shape and mould individuals – such as those found in the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, where Addison and Steele make the case for the well-tempered body, requiring moderation and physical exercise. Porter's narrative draws in figures as diverse as Shaftesbury and Mandeville with their sharply contrasting views of human nature, but significantly both, he notes, treated Christianity as irrelevant. Subsequent chapters deal with well-known figures such as Swift, Hume, Priestley, Erasmus Darwin, Blake and Godwin. Readers of this journal will be particularly interested in Porter's reading of some notable eighteenth-century texts as *Tristram Shandy*, Gibbon's *Memoirs*, Hume's *Treatise*, and Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. There is also an important chapter on David Hartley. But yet, one wonders if this view of the period is the whole story. Early on Porter does admit that traditional religious explanations of the body persisted, and his penetrating chapter on Samuel Johnson's attempts to control his own body – including his nervous tics and mannerisms – gives full weight to Johnson's religious priorities. Nevertheless, the core of this book rests on the acceptance that the eighteenth century was a period of secularisation, and that this-worldly concerns replaced an interest in the after-life. As such, this echoes the dominant theme of Porter's writing, embodied most obviously in his studies of the Enlightenment, of which this book is a part. But it may be that Porter's fascination with those who provided new answers to age-old problems not only magnifies the importance in the period of a few elite thinkers, but too readily equates loss of clerical control over discourse, and concerns with this-life, with secularisation. Against Porter's secularisation model, it can be argued that the eighteenth century was a period of laicisation (where the laity, as well as the clergy, had a duty to take religion seriously), and that this-worldly behaviour was frequently viewed not as a displacement of the after-life, but as a preparation for it. Indeed in one of his most penetrating essays on the English Enlightenment, published in 1981 in *The Enlightenment in National Context*, Porter brilliantly argued that the French model of the Enlightenment is unhelpful in an English context where piety and reason frequently went hand in hand. It would be fascinating to know how far Porter changed his mind, or how far he would have agreed that the dominant thrust of the period was not as secular as this page-turning study would have us believe. Sadly, we shall never know.

University of Manchester

Jeremy Gregory

Dustin Griffin, *Patriotism and Poetry in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. x + 316, £42.50.

The problems which arise from the question of national identity have focussed the minds of researchers in the arts and humanities for some years now, making it a fertile field of inter-disciplinary enquiry. Professor Griffin adds to an impressive and

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growing bibliography on the subject with this investigation of the patriotism of poets in the eighteenth century. After two chapters creating a context in which to discuss their poems, the second of which includes discussions of Thomas Tickell and Alexander Pope, the book is divided into chapters on Thomson, Akenside, Collins, Gray, Dyer, Goldsmith, Smart and Cowper, and finally Ann Yearsley, the 'female patriot'. The introductory chapters investigate the meaning of the words 'patriot' and 'patriotism' in the period, showing that *pace* Johnson's notorious definition, which even he qualified, contemporaries distinguished between 'false' patriots, those 'scoundrels' whose patriotism was of the variety he despised, and 'true' patriots who displayed a genuine love of their country. Professor Griffin also draws a distinction between patriotism, which involved attachment to one's country, and nationalism, which he defines as 'the relationship between Britain and its foreign enemies or rivals'. The difference is sometimes hard to discern in the 'patriotic odes' he analyses in his second chapter. 'Rule Britannia', which first appeared in 1740 as an 'Ode in Honour of Great Britain', and 'God save the king', a traditional song which became popular during the 1745 rebellion, contain elements of both.

Thomson, whose political loyalty to the Hanoverian regime has been queried despite his authorship of 'Rule Britannia', is here firmly identified as a whig, albeit of the patriotic variety during the 1730s. Akenside's politics too have been variously defined. Griffin convincingly dismisses his alleged republicanism to identify him as a 'small - p patriot'. His refutation of the charge that the poet became a tory in George III's reign, however, is less convincing. On the other hand he is persuasive in arguing that Collins was not a 'partisan poet'. Gray is not remembered traditionally as a political poet, although his acquaintance with politicians and his zest for politics is attested by his correspondence. Griffin claims that even the *Elegy* is a poem about quintessential English characteristics. John Dyer, by publishing his eulogy of England's wool trade, *The Fleece*, struck one of his first reviewers as being 'ambitious of uniting the character of patriot and poet'. Oliver Goldsmith called himself 'half a patriot', which Griffin says, 'aptly describes his stance as a political writer in several respects'. His patriotism, as an Irishman living in London, was ambivalent. His 'Deserted Village' was scarcely a paean of praise for contemporary England, yet it contributed to the myth of an idyllic rural past which can still make Englishmen misty eyed, as in John Major's vision of cricket on the village green being quintessentially English. To a patriot like Christopher Smart the English were God's chosen people. Scots, however, were not, for Smart shared Wilkes's views on North Britons. Cowper's patriotism was also English rather than British, as reflected in his most famous line 'England with all thy faults I love thee still.' The chapter devoted to Ann Yearsley opens with a discussion of the contribution of women to the patriotic verse of the eighteenth century. This provides a perhaps unexpectedly rich context into which to place her poems. The patriotism she expressed in 'Brutus' was avowedly British rather than merely English, as is also illustrated in 'British Liberty', an engraving in *The Rural Muse* which Griffin reproduces. He concludes by maintaining that concentration on the 'Patriot poets' who opposed Walpole has obscured the fact that patriotism was a main ingredient of poetry throughout the century. The conclusion rests on the substantial foundation of his book.

University of Northumbria

W. A. Speck

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William Stafford, *English Feminists and their Opponents in the 1780s: Unsex'd and Proper Females*, Manchester University Press, 2002, pp. 239, £45.

Barbara Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 331, £16.95 pb.

All hell broke loose in 1798. This was the year in which William Godwin, very unwisely, published his memoir of the life of Mary Wollstonecraft, who had died the previous year in horrific circumstances in childbirth. They had lived together, before marrying at a later stage. Godwin, who prided himself on being able to see things clearly as they really were, got this one very badly wrong. 1798 perhaps marked the real moment of the Anti-Jacobin ascendancy. Many earlier supporters of the French Revolution had withdrawn allegiance in the face of the terror: as indeed Wollstonecraft, who spent time in Paris, herself had done. Punitive legislation, particularly against the holding of meetings, had successfully closed down radicalism as a mass movement. Parts of it remained underground, necessarily leading a furtive and shadowy existence. The conservative associations and propagandists had triumphed. Godwin's memoir gave them much more ammunition than they really needed. There were Wollstonecraft's suicide attempts (regarded as a mortal sin): almost overdosing on opiates and then hurling herself off Putney Bridge: a philosopher certainly, but also something of a drama queen. These attempts on her life were the result of her tempestuous relationship with Gilbert Imlay. Her willingness to have sex outside of marriage with Imlay and then Godwin was not exactly going to endear her to establishment hacks. What the propagandists had no intention of recognising was that, for all her apparent bohemianism, Wollstonecraft was something of a puritan. Both these books bring this out. Taylor sees one of Wollstonecraft's key ideas, particularly in her earlier writings, as being a plea for modesty for both men and women. This is certainly very true, and yet Wollstonecraft on the page and Wollstonecraft on the stage (Putney Bridge) could be very different people.

Godwin effectively signed, sealed and delivered a literary death notice. Many of Wollstonecraft's former admirers (perhaps Jane Austen was one of them?) understandably did not want to be guilty by association. Although Owenite papers and the pauper press more generally, as pointed out by Barbara Taylor, tried to keep her writings in some sort of circulation, it probably took feminists from elsewhere such as Flora Tristan to unearth her name and reputation in the 1840s. Some of her texts started to be reprinted in the 1840s. Perhaps, though, she has never quite recovered from the damage that Godwin inflicted on her. His intentions may have had some merit, but his judgement of the political climate was all over the place.

One of the central arguments in William Stafford's book is that the conservative propagandists, dished up with these very juicy scandals on a plate, may have been almost as naïve as Godwin himself. Perhaps the war of words in the 1790s just did this to people. The propagandists, perhaps not quite believing their luck, gleefully went in with all guns blazing to criticise Wollstonecraft and some of her associates as unsex'd females. They had strayed too far into the public sphere. But Stafford wonders, quite rightly, why their hit list was so selective and idiosyncratic. It did not include, at least significantly, writers like Mary Robinson. She is dealt with extremely well here. It could and should be argued that on some issues she was more radical

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than Wollstonecraft, as is the case here. Elizabeth Inchbald also does not come in for a great deal of stick. Somewhat tentatively, which is all you can be on issues like this, Stafford suggests that Richard Polwhele and the other hacks who decided to beat and destroy Wollstonecraft may have had a more specifically religious agenda than is sometimes recognised by those who want to look through more specifically political or ideological spectacles. As Stafford brings out very well, dissent or nonconformity (or associations with it), may be more of an issue than is sometimes recognised. More specifically, the target may have been Unitarianism. Taylor deals at some length with Wollstonecraft's changing religious allegiances.

Stafford also puzzles away throughout his book about what, precisely, were the dividing lines between the proper female and the unsex'd one. He certainly finds passages in Hannah More which seem pretty close to Wollstonecraft. Some students are often unable to tell them apart, when doing unseen exercises. Stafford explores the possibility that there could be conservative as well as radical feminism in this period.

Stafford is also good, at various places in the book, at reminding us that (despite the considerable weight of theory on this subject), the gap between the public and the private in this period may not have been as great as is sometimes supposed. Women were actively involved in philanthropic actions, and, for those towards the upper end of the market, the running of a large household could be no mean achievement. Wollstonecraft's construction of the petulant, pampered caged bird does not always correspond with some of the historical realities.

Barbara Taylor takes the view that Wollstonecraft was a very good hater. She argues that in some of the earlier publications there is a sense that some of this hatred is being directed towards women: her mother, perhaps, the woman who employed her as a governess probably, and maybe others as well. She is very scornful about Marie Antoinette. Ladies in any shape or form were not her cup of tea. This is one of the reasons why Wollstonecraft sometimes became a problematic figure for later feminists: they want her to confine her hatred to men. Wollstonecraft's earlier works, often written at speed, demonstrate her considerable abilities as a heckler, often attacking a particular kind of woman. If she could have witnessed the feminist controversy of 1789, she would have known, unlike Godwin, exactly what games were going on. She had more of a sense of things as they really were in the war of ideas than he did.

Taylor makes an extremely strong case at the end of her book, partly through her concentration on Jemima's story in *Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman* (1798), to show just how far some of Wollstonecraft's own class prejudices had been unsettled and disturbed by the end of her life. Earlier on, she had heckled upper-class women, and asserted the need for middle-class women to be given opportunities to demonstrate their professional and managerial abilities. She was, at best, tokenistic when it came to discussing the experiences of labouring-class women. This represented another problem for some later feminists. Yet, by telling Jemima's story of exploitation and sexploitation, and allowing her to take initiatives in the escape from the asylum, Wollstonecraft is exploring new material. Jemima may remain a servant: but she is still a servant with a voice and a history. In one of the endings, she discovers Maria's daughter. She is not represented as a fallen woman: indeed she rises quite literally from the gutter. Taylor's reading of *Maria* is particularly acute. It is here that Wollstonecraft seems to realise that education, for men as well as women, is not going to be enough. She confronts legal prejudices and property laws, not just by telling

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Maria's story but also by allowing other women from lower down the social scale to tell their own stories: the sailor's wife, the shopkeeper, the landlady. There is a sense of similarity in the stories told and some sense of solidarity. Yet, against this, what makes *Maria* such a disturbing read is the way in which it shows how women are forced to betray each other. Maria's maid plays a part in getting her incarcerated in the asylum. Jemima is betrayed by women, but also in the struggle for survival forced to betray a woman. Wollstonecraft needs, of course, to be set within the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Both these books do this well. But she is also beginning to look forward to campaigns fought by Caroline Norton later on.

Wollstonecraft's earlier ideas that men could be reformed and educated seem to be getting lost (Stafford is more sceptical about this claim). But not all and at once: Maria is never quite able to recognise the real Darnford, and she clings to her version of sensibility more generally. As argued by Taylor, and others, Wollstonecraft is sometimes very difficult to read because, although she critiques the cult of sensibility, she also remains attached to it. Yet she is also so pleasurable to read precisely because of some of these contradictions. She is very stylish indeed, while seeming to attack the whole notion of style. Her attachment to sensibility was nevertheless one of the things that got her into trouble after the publication of Godwin's memoir because, for those wanting to make cheap points, it could just be equated with permissiveness and sexual licence.

Stafford seeks to see Wollstonecraft in the immediate historical context of the furore caused by Godwin's memoir. Taylor does not ignore this, but is more concerned in looking back to explain some of the complications involved in Wollstonecraft's enlightenment inheritance: complications which have sometimes puzzled later feminists, who wanted and needed Wollstonecraft to be somebody else. As argued here, she may have more in common with Jean Jacques Rousseau and indeed with Edmund Burke than is generally recognised. Taylor also devotes time to exploring Wollstonecraft's complicated relationship with religious dissent. An important part of Taylor's argument is that, certainly early Wollstonecraft, belongs to a school of Enlightenment thinking. She was very much part of it, while at the same time trying particularly in her later works to tear herself apart from it.

Stafford leans towards Wollstonecraft's letters from Sweden as showing her at her best as a writer. Taylor agrees. There is certainly some interesting and fine writing here. I am more inclined to the view, however, that with the unfinished *Maria* we have a fascinating novel that is fighting hard, and very often succeeding, to free itself from earlier preconceptions and prejudices about and around class. It is also much more pessimistic than Wollstonecraft's earlier work, which seemed to believe quite genuinely that there was a possibility for the reformation of masculine manners and morals.

I do not want, or need, to adjudicate between these two books. They have different, but sometimes overlapping agendas, which are followed very well. Although by no means a major theme, Taylor is spot on when suggesting that the conduct writers like the Rev. James Fordyce, whom Wollstonecraft attacked so violently in her earlier work, were extremely camp. Although the point is not made, perhaps there is something camp too about Wollstonecraft, or at least rhetorically way over-the-top, which may have caused additional problems for later feminists. She certainly hates Fordyce violently, but sometimes writes like him. As Taylor notices, she can be extremely florid, which is the accusation she brings against Fordyce. Both of these

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books, which concentrate primarily on contexts, could perhaps have said a bit more about style. Wollstonecraft was, amongst other things, a great mimic. She begins arguments writing in the voice of a philosopher, but often changes to mockery and mimicry. She is a great comic writer: which sometimes surprises those who want and need her to be somebody else. It was her laughter that really unsettled some early readers. The conduct literature advised women to avoid wit at all costs. Part of Wollstonecraft's challenge to this literature is to make fun of it, and she is very, very good at this.

Taylor has interesting things to say about some of Wollstonecraft's contemporaries such as Mary Hays (who wrote an obituary of Wollstonecraft): she can indeed at times still be an alarming read. Stafford is extremely good on Mary Robinson's prose writings, which need to be much more accessible in printed form. She is seen as conducting very serious and constant guerrilla warfare against the accepted versions of propriety. As a former fashion icon and celebrity, the propagandists did not quite know what to do with her, particularly as she was not a dissenter. As Stafford suggests, Robinson remains difficult to place. She could appear to endorse upper-class codes of conduct, while at the same time being deeply critical of them. Interestingly, unlike most other women writers in this period, she did not attack the world of the duel, but just insisted that women ought to have access to it. Perhaps it was her associations with royalty and the aristocracy that afforded her some protection. Taylor's main interest is in the history of Enlightenment ideas, whereas Stafford takes a more empirical approach. Both books are illuminating, and need to be read alongside work by Janet Todd and others.

University of East Anglia

Roger Sales

Susanne Kord, *Women Peasant Poets in Eighteenth-Century England, Scotland and Germany: Milkmaids on Parnassus*, Camden House, Boydell and Brewer, 2003, pp. xiii + 325, £50.

The scope of this book is unusual and the story of women peasant poets is told from an unusual angle. Such women, as one might expect, were few and far between in the eighteenth century, and Professor Kord finds the published work of only thirteen in England, five in Scotland, three in Ireland and two in Germany. She sets herself the task, not of analysing the themes in their work, but of drawing out the similar circumstances in their lives and the steps by which they achieved some modest fame through patrons.

The two German poets are Anna Louisa Karsch, a Silesian cowherd (1722–91), and Sophie Ludwig, a forester's wife (1764–1815). Ludwig published only single poems, and was not clearly of peasant class, so she is not given attention here. Karsch has been much studied by scholars, and is treated as a model of her kind. Professor Kord translates her quoted poems into English verse, and gives the German in footnotes. The fullest accounts given to English examples relate to Mary/Molly Leapor (1722–46), and Ann Yearsley (1752–1806). Leapor was often likened to Shakespeare, and came from Brackley in Northamptonshire. We are told that she was the daughter of a gardener, became a domestic servant, and found a patron in Bridget

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Freemantle, a gentlewoman. To a local, social historian those bald details immediately prompt questions about a background that was perhaps spent hovering on the outer circle of the gentry class. It is possibly a telling point since the author's portrait of peasant poets stresses their total lack of education. But Northamptonshire was a county of notable gentry families with treasured gardens, and gardeners who were often skilled men, treated with some respect by their employers. A closer investigation of Leapor's environment might have introduced significant subtleties into the interpretation of her upbringing and responses to patronage. Similar reflections arise from the story of Yearsley, who came from Bristol, a town that underwent remarkable growth as a trading port and commercial and cultural centre in the eighteenth century. What educational stimulus, one wonders, came from the sight of this blossoming consumer society? In short, historians who are readers are alerted to a dimension of the subject that has eluded the author. Her skills lie elsewhere.

The eighteenth-century background in Kord's book is portrayed in large generalities, and summarized as an age when the middle class liberated itself politically from aristocratic dominance, and middle-class writers were freed from rich men's patronage. In finding their freedom, it is said, middle-class authors guarded their art as an exclusively middle class enterprise which could not accommodate lowlier folk except on middle-class terms. So peasant poets were supported, patronized and encouraged within clearly defined limits. They might publish one volume of poetry but were expected to return forthwith to country toil. The experience is traced out in an extremely careful reading of the evidence, and all credit is due to Professor Kord for uncovering the fairy tales invented by careless critics that falsified these poets' lives. Often it was simply a matter of interpreting meagre facts and giving one slant rather than another; but it is a sobering lesson for all historians who tackle the same problems and documents, and especially significant in this case where the critics are shown to have conformed to one view of the female peasant poet, and all toned the language of their facts to fit that model.

This is not an easy book to read for several reasons. The author uses the word 'aesthetics' as a noun that seems to belong to German rather than English usage, and invents words like 'poetological', '(auto)biographism', 'individuation', 'self ideation', 'folkization' and more of the like that cannot fail to set the text at a distance from most sympathetic readers. Nevertheless, many insights emerge which must modulate thinking about eighteenth-century attitudes to women and their strategies for survival. It is clear that when they ventured into a man's world they had to show heroic persistence to find an outlet for their poetry. It was thought masculine in some quarters to be interested in books. Women who could readily versify often got a hearing at weddings, christenings and funerals. But if they published, they were expected to make clear that their domestic duties, washing the clothes, cooking the dinner, and rearing their children did not suffer. So they had to have good memories, waiting for a moment of peace and quiet to write down their lines. In a precious piece of autobiography, the Scottish poet, Christian Milne (1773 – after 1817) described how she rocked the cradle with her foot, held the inkstand in one hand, the pen in the other, paper on her knee, 'with my children about me'.

All this was in strong contrast to the regime of Stephen Duck, the male peasant poet who achieved the greatest fame at this time. Exalting in verse men's hard labour as threshers, he voiced standard masculine views of women always prattling, gossiping, never working. While he provoked Mary Collier to reply, it was Duck who became

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famous as the representative of all peasant poets, and received a pension from Queen Caroline. Mary Collier, on the other hand, went unrewarded, and is known only to a few, though E.P. Thompson wrote a thoughtful introduction, and edited with Marian Sugden an attractive edition of Duck's and Collier's poems (Merlin Press, 1989), evidently unknown to Professor Kord. A valuable appendix to this book gives short biographies of her women peasant poets, and it is hoped that it will prompt historians to investigate more deeply their lives in a local, agrarian context, and so sharpen in certain places the lines of this carefully delineated literary history.

Hadlow, Kent

Joan Thirsk

Mona Scheuermann, *In Praise of Poverty: Hannah More Counters Thomas Paine and the Radical Threat*, University Press of Kentucky Press, 2002 pp. xiv + 255, \$36.

Hannah More has recently become quite a difficult writer to place. There was a time when this was easy enough to do: she was a counter-revolutionary very pure and very simple. But then came the suggestion that politically and religiously conservative writers, particularly women writers, might nevertheless still be capable of adopting more radical positions in relation to the condition of women as well as on issues such as slavery. Mona Scheuermann's study attempts to return us to some of the old certainties about More as a relatively uncomplicated counter-revolutionary figure.

One of the starting points for this book is the belief that, although More's views may be uncomfortable for many modern readers, there is still a need to understand that such beliefs were part of a consensus about poverty among what is described rather loosely here as the upper classes. More's circle can be, and has been, described much more precisely. The sense that More's tracts and other writings need extensive contextualisation leads to the claim that what is being offered here is as much a social history as the study of an individual writer. Social history may come in different shapes and sizes. Here it takes the form of reading a very limited number of well-known printed sources about poverty by Joseph Townshend, Josiah Wedgewood and others. It also involves exploring similarities between More and Mary Wollstonecraft's earlier writings such as *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, which was published in 1787. As the title suggests, a crucial part of the book is the recreation of the impact of Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*, which is done through extensive use of very familiar secondary sources by James T. Boulton and E. P. Thompson. There appears to be no archival work on poverty, Paine and related issues, although given the absence of a bibliography it is difficult to be absolutely sure about this (worrying from a university press and not helped by the fact that the endnotes tend to be discursive ones). It seems reasonable to conclude, however, that this is not an example of the kind of Old Historicism that loves to introduce brand new, archival material into the argument. Little mention is made of More's practical forays into charity where there is still scope for further research. The book also seems to be untouched by the kind of New Historicism that delights in exploring textual riddles and puzzles even in seemingly unpromising texts. The concentration here is on *Village Politics* and then on the Cheap Repository Tracts. These are seen to lack shade and subtlety.

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More's views are declared to be absolute as well as uncompromising. This may well be the case, but the fact that these views are often conveyed through dialogue might still have prompted a discussion about the different ways in which overtly dialogic texts can be read. Scheuremann is however relatively uninterested in readers and different reading positions, just as she is untroubled by the lack of archival research. Her book returns us to the old view of More in an old-fashioned way despite the flourishes and gestures towards something vaguely called social history.

Having said this, Scheurmann's readings of texts can still be illuminating. She gives a good sense of Paine as a comic writer whose laughter was deeply threatening. Her work on More's tracts usefully identifies potential contradictions between arguments that recommend no change whatsoever and those that appear to be preaching an early version of self-help. She captures very well on a number of occasions the iron fist in More's writing that lies inside the velvety rhetoric about the blessings of a providence which can produce happy afflictions and fortunate accidents. The writing can indeed be cruel, intimidating and, as mentioned on one occasion here, repugnant. Scheurmann also collects together many examples to support her thesis that More was writing against forms of Enlightenment feminism. Good wives are little better than servants, and bad ones are either stupid or else devious and cunning. Although the case for More's particular brand of feminism does not in fact rest on readings of her tracts, this collection of examples from them is nevertheless useful. It is good, more generally, to be reminded that More is staging versions of the medieval morality play.

Scheurmann's earlier work – *Social Protest in the Eighteenth-Century English Novel* (1985) and *Her Bread to Earn* (1993) – demonstrates her ability to read texts, mainly literary texts, very attentively. And, as just indicated, the textual readings in her latest book are often illuminating. The problem is that the awareness of social history, so necessary for a study of both More and Paine as indeed is acknowledged here, is at best tokenistic, at worst absent. There are still difficulties about placing More. This book offers some straightforward and clear-cut answers to questions about her place. They are however too straightforward, so the debate or dialogue will continue. Social history needs to be treated more seriously, and therefore more extensively, than it is here.

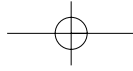
University of East Anglia

Roger Sales

David Perkins, *Romanticism and Animal Rights*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. xvi + 190, £40.

This is a welcome and timely book. The study of English over the last twenty-five years or so has been characterised by the endeavour to read cultural texts for their production and reproduction of the conditions necessary for a variety of power relationships between humans. Only recently has attention turned to the relationship between humans and non-humans and the connected issue of literature and the environment. Professor Perkins's book thus contributes to a growing field of inquiry.

Books on animals and culture tend to fall into two categories: those adopting an explicit position of animal advocacy and those treating the non-human as another of the categories available to cultural analysis. There is a further split between those books which adopt a more or less empirical approach and those which, following

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Heidegger and recent work of Derrida, theorise the non-human and its role in cultural production. Professor Perkins adopts a 'soft advocacy' approach: underlying his work is his sense that animals could and should be treated with more kindness. He also reads in a fairly traditional manner, preferring to look at texts in the context of broader social attitudes to animals and the treatment of animals in the later eighteenth century rather than as linguistic structures that inscribe the 'unspeakable' nature of the non-human presence. The book is all the more welcome for these two reasons.

Professor Perkins offers us interpretations of central Romantic and pre-Romantic texts. He is strong on Burns (although he does not cover such a wide range of his animal poems as might be hoped), Clare and, especially, Cowper. Also valuable are his studies of pet keeping, blood sports and birds. He succeeds in demonstrating the continuities between Romanticism and the discourse on animals that had developed during the Enlightenment. He could perhaps have made more of the relationships between Romantic thought, the French Revolution and animals but, in what is quite a terse book, this limitation by no means undermines the worth of the expository work on a range of texts. He provides a Bibliographical Essay as a kind of postscript and this will prove a useful resource to anyone following up his work in detail.

It is, perhaps, this point about detail that exposes this book's main virtue. There is more to say about animals and radical politics; there is more to say about the gendering of attitudes to animals; there is more to say about the relationship of animal keeping and slavery. Professor Perkins opens up these debates in an authoritative manner but he does not exhaust them. In choosing to survey this particular interface between Romanticism and the Enlightenment he not only provides the kind of scholarship that is necessary to inform the more general picture of animal studies, he also leaves plenty of scope for more detailed accounts of particular issues. What is more he does it through in an engagingly frank and clear approach to his reader.

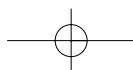
Edge Hill College of Higher Education

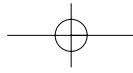
John Simons

Debbie Lee, *Slavery and the Romantic Imagination*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, pp. xiv + 296, \$55.

This book is a major contribution to the developing body of work on race, colonialism, travel, and exploration as contexts for British Romantic literature, and aims to bring the highly charged issue of slavery home to the very centre of the literary tradition. Lee's intentions with regard to modern readers and critics of Romantic texts therefore parallel those of the early abolitionists, who strove to break down the physical and psychological distance which insulated the British public from any too distressing or guilt-inducing awareness of the plight of enslaved African, and to impugn the self-interest which such calculated denial protected.

Lee's introduction rather briskly surveys the excellent work done to date in this field of study, respectfully acknowledging her predecessors (who from this point on tend to feature only in lengthy, ground-clearing footnotes serving an essentially bibliographical function) while making preparations for her own critical departure. Refreshingly, this involves rehabilitating the Romantic imagination, wrongly dismissed by too many critics, including the New Historicists whose methodology Lee





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broadly shares, as a 'self-centered, politically evasive or combative activity'. Instead of 'complicity', 'resistance', or 'anxiety' as models for the treatment of empire and slavery in Romantic writing, Lee chooses empathy, and therefore privileges a certain concept of the imagination, focused not on empowered selfhood but on identification with the other, of which Keats's disavowal of the Wordsworthian egotistical sublime is the iconic expression. Lee's own term for this humane, empathic faculty, the 'distanced imagination', is, I think, unlikely to catch on, but her explorations of its workings in mainstream Romantic literature are fair-minded, scrupulously researched, and thought-provoking. Equally, her occasional use of Emmanuel Levinas to give ethical backbone to her account of the Romantics' 'discursive responsibility for the other' strikes me as superfluous, but takes nothing away from her demonstration of the richly varied ways in which creative writers avoided the 'ideological righteousness or soggy sentimentalism' with which the topic of slavery was typically outfitted.

There is no space to do more than gesture at Lee's detailed readings. She links the imagery of fever in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' to contemporary medical concern with yellow fever and the abolitionist trope of slavery as itself a kind of disease to give a new spin to the poem's acknowledged relationship to Coleridge's passionate views on the slave trade. A generously illustrated chapter draws out the subtleties of Blake's engravings for Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*. George Canning's allusion to Frankenstein's monster during a parliamentary debate on the proposed emancipation of slaves is the kernel of a stimulating analysis of Mary Shelley's novel, and Wordsworth's sporadic and characteristically indirect engagement with slavery issues is sharply juxtaposed with Mary Prince's 1831 autobiography, which demolishes worn-out stereotypes of the slave woman and slave mother. There is perhaps some loss of focus in the two central chapters, where slavery is not so explicitly addressed, but Lee nevertheless serves up interesting geographico-historical readings of Keats's *Lamia* and Shelley's *The Witch of Atlas*.

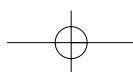
The index to *Slavery and the Romantic Imagination* does not cover the extensive endnotes, which significantly reduces its usefulness. There are few other grumbles to make about a book which throws light on some neglected texts and breathes new life into some of the most familiar. Lee persuades the reader that it is far from coincidental that British Romanticism shares a time-frame with the campaign against slavery and the slave trade, and shows how the creative writer was able to confront 'the most hideous crimes of his or her era' with something like an ethical perspective.

University of the West of England

Robin Jarvis

Richard Foulkes, *Performing Shakespeare in the Age of Empire*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. x + 235, £45.

Richard Foulkes gives us Shakespeare from yet another angle. He has combed through the annals of theatres and performers, first in England and then elsewhere, to find out what Shakespeare meant to them and to their audiences, in successive phases of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In his own day he enjoyed a



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small dole of royal patronage; down to 1843 he had to make up for this by being admitted to two theatres only, both in London, Covent Garden and Drury Lane. But the new English spirit of *laissez-faire*, each for himself, had grown too strong. From that date any theatre that cared to risk its capital could put on any Shakespeare play.

Foulkes tries to decide what sections of the public were considered the most appreciative and deserving. The verdict oftener than not seems to have rested with the pit, rather than with the fashionables. Royalty could help to draw in the swells, and Victoria in her youth was fond of entertainment, in a rather frivolous way; Albert, being a German, was more serious. Actor-managers were the men who had to make the decisions, and the man in command at Covent Garden from 1837 to 1851 was William Macready. He was a thoughtful, intelligent artist, as anyone who has read his diaries will be able to testify. His ideal was for theatre and all other arts to be elevated into places in a national culture. For himself his choice was for tragic roles. His last appearance was as Macbeth; his farewell speech was about his ambition to make Shakespeare's supremacy permanent.

In the next chapter we are shown a different theatre (Sadler's Wells) making its name, in a backward suburb. An onlooker there for *Twelfth Night*, in 1857, found a cheerful working-class audience, 'as orderly as if they were at church' (34). All through the mid-century indeed 'Shakespeare was a genuinely popular dramatist amongst all levels of English society' (57) God's gift of him to England could be taken as proof of special favour; a bishop could pay tribute to the Bard for helping to steady the whole social fabric.

Manchester comes in for special notice: it combined wealth (for some) with culture (largely German or Jewish). From 1859 Charles Calvert was the leading light, exceptional in his being a very religious man. Manchester was still in the lead when the repertory system began to gather strength. At the national level Henry Irving was covering himself with glory. Fame had come to him in 1871 with a melodrama called *The Bells*; his debut as Hamlet ran for 200 nights. Foulkes sums him up as not a great actor, but a great personality.

Like Macready he made a name for himself in America too, and helped to set going an interaction between English and American performers. Something similar linked England and Germany. Schlegel's translations had led the way; Max Muller, the Sanskritist, told his hearers at an 1864 celebration that many Germans were learning English in order to be able to read Shakespeare properly, but in the years before 1914, Foulkes believes, 'Shakespeare ceased to be a genuine popular dramatist' (205). Too many sweeping changes were coming over the drama, with writers like Ibsen. During the First World War, while Shakespeare productions in England flagged, in Germany they kept going. At long last, Shakespeare was being left behind.

University of Edinburgh

Victor Kiernan

Lillian Nayder, *Unequal Partners: Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and Victorian Authorship*, Cornell University Press, 2002, pp. xiv + 221, £23.50.

Much critical effort has gone into the production of this highly detailed study of the relationship between Dickens and Collins. The author draws at every point on

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the mass of revisionist critical writing produced during the last twenty years. Yet she is always careful to reach her own conclusions, 'distancing' herself, a word she often applies to Dickens, from their conclusions. Hers is a work largely for specialists, therefore, and the general points of her own that she makes on Victorian society and culture, above all on publishing, which she treats as an 'industry', are less impressive than her four chapters on Collins's writings, many of them written in collaboration with Dickens, for *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* and a concluding chapter on *The Moonstone* and the unfinished *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

Nayder leaves no doubt about the aptness of her title. Her book begins where the story ends – with Collins one of the twelve mourners who attended Dickens's private burial at Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey in 1870. They had always been 'unequal partners', and Collins on that great occasion mourned not only a lost friend but a 'lost day': he was urgently busy reading the proofs of his novel *Man and Wife*. That was a relationship about which both of them knew much through their own experience. Yet in publishing they were from the start, 1851, 'unequal' partners. Both knew this, Collins with a far stronger awareness of its implications once he had begun to collaborate with the 'Great Man'. John Forster's biography of Dickens (1872–4) relegated Collins to the margins of Dickens's life. Nayder in drawing on the work of others puts him back into the main stream.

She does not explore differences between the 'mood' of mid-Victorian and early and late-Victorian England. Indeed, in her last as well as in her first chapter, which deals with 'imperialism', chronology is somewhat neglected. Moreover, the extent to which 'class difference' is the right term to describe the unequalness of their 'partnership' remains a matter of argument as is the use of the term 'factory like conditions' in describing mid-Victorian publishing. Staff on *Household Words* employed in what John Sutherland rightly described – despite more recent re-evaluation – as a 'writing workshop' were certainly paid three times the weekly wage received by printers and bookbinders, but most of them too, far better paid than most factory workers, did not consider themselves as 'alienated labor'. Mary Poovey's *Uneven Development* (1988), another well-titled revisionist book on gender and work, one of the sources on which Nayder draws most, demands particularly critical study as does Norman Feltes, *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels* (1988). It is when she penetrates the thickets of recent literary scholarship and gets back to the texts that she is most effective. She selects the best quotations and brings out the differences in the social attitudes of Dickens and Collins more clearly than any of her predecessors have done.

Lewes, Sussex

Asa Briggs

Prashkat Karat (ed), *Across Time and Continents: A Tribute to Victor G. Kiernan*, New Delhi, Leftword Books, 2003, pp. vii + 255, 450 rupees/ \$9

Victor Kiernan, whose ninetieth birthday in September 2003 this volume commemorates, has had a long-standing connection with *Literature & History* as one of its most regular and perceptive reviewers. The interface between these two disciplines,

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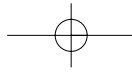
indeed, is one of his special interests and has been variously expressed in books on Shakespeare and Horace, the Roman poet, and in well-known articles on Wordsworth and Tennyson. Harvey Kaye edited a volume of these interdisciplinary essays – *Poets, Politics and the People* – in 1989. (The same editor had no difficulty in assembling two other collections of Kiernan's essays and he also included a thorough and perceptive assessment of him in *The Education of Desire: Marxists and the Writing of History* (1992)). As the varied topics of these publications indicate, Kiernan's range has been positively encyclopaedic and his prolific output, maintained over more than six decades, is still flowing. His first book appeared in 1939, his most recent exactly sixty years later. Best known as a historian of empire – *The Lords of Human Kind* (1969) is his finest work – his insatiable curiosity has taken him in so many other directions that it is easy to lose track of some of them. Books on the history of tobacco and duelling coexist with others on the early modern European state, the Spanish Revolution of 1854, Marxism, and the imperial phenomenon in China, India, and the United States. He is a notable linguist. 'He has no parallel amongst twentieth-century British historians', writes Kiernan's old friend and fellow Marxist Eric Hobsbawm in this volume. Christopher Hill, another old friend and collaborator with Kiernan in the famous British Communist Party's Historians Group and in the journal *Past and Present* recalled: 'He was once asked by a journal for an article on British imperialism in China. He replied that he had rather lost interest in that subject, but could let them have a piece on the Jesuits in Paraguay. The article they finally got was on English Evangelicalism and the French Revolution'. Increasingly from the 1960s macro-history and comparative history have been Kiernan's *forte*.

This book, however, celebrates Kiernan's particular connection with India, a link extending back to the years he spent there between 1938 and 1946 (the most critical period in that country's history) as a young teacher, observer, and Communist Party helper. It has an Indian editor (an admirer of Kiernan and his work since he studied in the UK in 1968) and is published in New Delhi. Seven of Kiernan's Indian essays are reprinted here and range in date from 1967 to 1987. Two of them deal with Marx and India. Two – expressing Kiernan's lifelong interest in literature – are studies of Faiz and Iqbal, distinguished twentieth-century Urdu poets. A new essay 'Reminiscences of India', based on his diaries copiously kept during his period of residence there, rounds off the volume. Though by no means uncritical in his observations, it is clear that India fascinated him then and that it still does.

The appreciations of Victor Kiernan which comprise the first part of this book pay tribute to his considerable achievements as a historian, to the Marx-like range of his work, to the eloquence and accessibility of his writing, and to the warm humanity of this self-effacing man, one of the last survivors of that remarkable company of inter-war British Marxist historians who took their subject into so many new paths. All of them were individually distinctive, though they shared fundamental common denominators and a sense of brotherhood. Kiernan's incredibly wide output – across time and continents, most certainly, as the title of this collection accurately registers – makes him stand out as the most distinctive and remarkable of them all.

University College Winchester

R.C. Richardson



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Terence Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present*, Routledge, 2002, pp. xi + 164, £16.99 pb.

It may seem an irony that a text entitled *Shakespeare in the Present* should be reviewed in the pages of *Literature and History*, but Hawkes argues that though 'we should read Shakespeare historically', his criticism does not, with Stephen Greenblatt, 'yearn to speak with the dead', but rather, 'to talk with the living (4)'. This criticism begins with the present as a means of asking the most insistent questions of the past and to attempt to explicitly acknowledge those agendas which shape the questions.

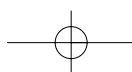
Hawkes's book examines two main areas, the first being late twentieth and early twenty-first century Britain in the context of devolution. By starting with present national fractures he re-reads several Shakespeare texts with a keen historical eye focused on matters Celtic and especially Welsh. Curiously, Hawkes does not position himself presently (or historically) as a professor at Cardiff, though this obviously informs his criticism: the present can refer to place as well as time. His reading of *Cymbeline* and the second tetralogy reveals that the historical naturalisation of Great Britain under the sign of Englishness is riven by contradictions which presently signal 'an enterprise that has now, after four hundred years, reached its conclusion (62).'

The other preoccupation of the book is with an early modern sense of playing. As one of the most playful of Shakespearean critics Hawkes is readily equipped to tackle this subject. His writing is Derridean and Eco-like in the mischievous range of the material considered; indeed, 'echo' is one of the book's favourite words and devices. He finds reasons between Californian soap operas and Shavian Shakespeare criticism, the Dukes Ellington and Theseus, and Harry Hunks the fighting bear and Henry V. This last relationship is illustrative of Hawkes's argument about early modern playing, which draws upon Robert Weimann. Hawkes argues that our understanding of early modern playing needs to be informed by the parallel and often overlapping practices of bear-baiting and that perspective destabilises a notion of careful or precise playing. By extension, Hawkes suggests that this moment of organisation is implicated in 'the development of a particular social and economic formation' which is characterised by 'instrumental reason' (125), and which his presentist playfulness seeks radically (and historically) to disorganise. Most playfully, he does this by lampooning Harold Bloom's 'vacuous cheerleading' (117) of Shakespeare's universalism and by describing the British heir to the throne as 'a shabby-genteel figure, whose cut-glass accent, faded blazer and funny stories about quaint goings on in a wholly imaginary location seem paradoxically to offer unmistakable signs of failure (143)'. Though they are easy targets, this bore-baiting is fun.

Perhaps inevitably Hawkes is better on the present than on the plays, the readings of which are sometimes too speculative or forced; he is fond, for example, of the phrase 'it is tempting'. However, this is a very tempting book which sheds interesting light on both the present and the past.

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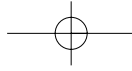
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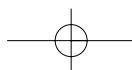
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