

Reviews

Terry Cochran, *Twilight of the Literary: Figures of Thought in the Age of Print*, Harvard University Press, 2001, pp. 288, £27.50.

Terry Cochran's *Twilight of the Literary* is based on a simple but arresting proposition: that most of what we understand of modernity is tied up in the printed book. There is an epistemological corollary to this theory: modernity (and the printed book) consists in secularization, or 'the relative disengagement from a theologically grounded view of human history'. Beyond the scope of most of this work there is a similarly arresting proposition about cultural life after nightfall: that most of what we understand of post-modernity is as we experience it through electronic media, especially the Internet. Cochran is deeply persuasive about how we have 'meandered' into this situation. There has been no simple break. Nonetheless, we now occupy a world created by a major 'shift' in several dimensions. These include transformations in 'material inscription (from print to orality or visual images), in time (from slow, relatively laborious reading to the immediacy of perception), in collective participation (from the solitary reception of the book to the mass simultaneity of television and radio), among many other transformations, some of which are contradictory (solitary video viewing, for example)'.

However, the subject of this particular work is the twilight zone of modernity. The book focuses explicitly on 'the conceptual and historical parameters of print culture'. In a series of stimulating readings of texts and authors between the late medieval period and the twentieth century, Cochran ranges over issues of language, of representation, of agency, and of time (and history). These play out across changing perceptions of the vernacular, nationalism (and incipient globalization), disciplines (especially history and literature), forms of expression (especially history and poetry), and communication technologies (notably the long hegemony of the book). His key

witnesses are authors operating in what Hannah Arendt (not herself called upon) referred to (following Walter Benjamin's image of the 'angel of history', which is analysed in depth here) as the gap 'between past and future'. Their work characteristically not only captures a moment of theoretical understanding, but also shows how it could be transformed. Examples are Camoëns, Leibniz, Kant, Dante, Machiavelli, Gramsci, Peirce, Benjamin and Nietzsche. All are shown in effect to be writing for audiences and circumstances beyond their times, and which they hope to help to bring about (as, for example, in Gramsci's powerful call to 'subaltern social groups').

The resulting contribution to criticism about these figures and their times is rich and interesting. It does, however, leave a slightly incomplete feeling, reinforced by a quasi-elegiac sense of loss of the characteristic 'figurations' of modernity. The author is clearly comfortable with a world in which the 'subject . . . attempts to constitute his or her public', that public shares a potential 'mental unity,' and the state co-exists with the more 'fuzzy domain of the cosmopolitical (sic)'. Meanwhile, the reader's attention is constantly driven forward towards a present and future in which the 'global mind . . . no longer requires or even cares about the authentic artifact.' It would be good to see another book from Cochran mapping this post-literary domain and the 'new level' of anachronism in which he describes us as living in the early twenty-first century.

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David Watson

Geoffrey Roberts, *The History and Narrative Reader*, Routledge, 2001, pp. 452, £55, £16.99 pb.

It is the intention of Geoffrey Roberts in his *The History and Narrative Reader* to reflect on the status of historical discourse if it is presented in a narrative form made problematical by such philosophers as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard, Hélène Cixous, Jean François Lyotard, *et al.* (extracts from whom do *not* appear in this volume) and such history theorists and philosophers of history as Louis Mink, Hayden White and Frank Ankersmit who do. In this sense Roberts's text has excluded those who may not be 'proper' historians or 'proper history theorists' despite the fact that the critiques of metanarratives undertaken by Lyotard *et al.* apply equally to those more academic narratives produced by proper, professional historians.

That having been said, however, the extracts Roberts has selected draw together practically all the relevant contributions to the 'history and narrative' genre. Such contributors, for example, Gallie, Dray, Carroll, Stone, *et al.*, are organised into six sections: Narrative and Historical Understanding, Narrative and Human Action, Narrative and Historical Realism, Narrative History and the Linguistic Turn, Narrative and Structure and Narrative and the Practice of History; Roberts's own Introduction sets these into his preferred context. Roberts also provides a useful 'Conclusion' to his own 'Introduction' wherein he lists six questions raised – and still on the agenda after his contributors have had their say – by the problematic of history and narrative, namely: the differences between 'story' and narrative, the question of whether there are histories that refuse narrative form, the problem of narrative writing if there are no 'real stories' in the past for narratives to correspond

to, the role of retrospection so essential to a 'complete narrative' yet one sometimes thought to do injustice to an understanding of the past on its own terms, the relationships between structure and agency and, finally, the old chestnut of the question of narrative representation and truth. And of course Roberts shouldn't be surprised that these *problematical* questions remain, their very designation as problematic drawing attention to their aporetic 'nature'.

In terms of 'worthwhileness', however, in terms of whether or not this is a good, useful book for those who may know of the existence of the debates over narrativity in history, the answer is – despite the omission of Lyotard et al. and one or two positional quibbles – yes. And this is due not least to the fact that, though this is a long book, it contains only 26 extracts which means that, somewhat against the trend for readers to contain dozens of very short extracts which are often very difficult to 'contextualise' let alone use in teaching, Roberts generally has the space to put in very lengthy pieces and sometimes whole chapters or, better still, whole articles which can be read by students without having to go off and find the bulk of the remaining pages themselves. As a relatively self-contained reader, then, Roberts's book deserves to find itself on all reading lists concerned with 'the nature of history' to which it indeed makes its own 'problematical' contribution.

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Keith Jenkins

Peter France and William St Clair (eds), *Mapping Lives: The Uses of Biography*, published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. x + 350, £35.

The art of biography, wrote E. C. Bentley, is different from Geography. After almost a hundred years the academic study of chaps is catching up with the study of maps. In recent years conferences and collections of essays have been devoted to biography and the present volume is the latest distinguished addition to the literature. Eighteen contributors survey the field from medieval times to the present day and raise intellectual and ethical issues.

The volume suffers from the inevitability of such a volume. Each author is a specialist and we receive a collection of *sondages* in the subject: medieval hagiography (by Sergei Averintsev), Renaissance biography and autobiography (Martin McLaughlin), the French tradition of *eloges* (Peter France). Some biographies have had an impact on the art-form – Boswell on Johnson, Lockhart on Scott, and Froude on Carlyle (though Froude's first name was James not John, *pace* Elinor S. Shaffer but not Miranda Seymour). Only Richard Holmes and James Walter offer a more comprehensive survey of the art.

The essays are heavily literary, with a strong emphasis on writers writing on other writers. The pervasive influence of Virginia Woolf has been largely literary with ethical challenges on the validity of evidence and imagination in the re-creation of a life. Her books, *Orlando* and *Flush*, defy categorisation. Biography became no longer a fleshed out CV with the embarrassing bits missed out. Author and reader embarked on an imaginative journey of discovery together, based on the life of another. In our day Peter Ackroyd has been writing such lives of Blake and Dickens, and Edmund

Morris of Ronald Reagan. In each case the author has interposed himself into the evidence of the life in question.

Autobiography is mentioned but not examined. And there is very little on political biography or autobiography. This is a pity, for political memoirs raise major historical, artistic and ethical issues. It has become mandatory for British Prime Ministers on final retirement to write accounts of their stewardship. All ten former Prime Ministers since Neville Chamberlain have done so, but in the previous sixty years only three (out of eleven) Prime Ministers wrote autobiographical works, none of them conventional. Why this shift in accountability?

Many essays touch on changing values of privacy in the writing of biography. John Forster alluded to Dickens' mistress by revealing without comment that his will left a huge sum to her. A contemporary biographer, Miranda Seymour, writes that in the first edition of her biography of Lady Ottoline Morrell she only dropped a hint of an incestuous relationship between her heroine and her half-brother, the Duke of Portland. This was to protect the feelings of the Duke's surviving children. It was only after the death of the last child – at the age of 104 – that she felt able to publish a full account.

An attractively produced volume, full of insights but not the full story: a collection of large-scale maps if not a comprehensive atlas.

London

Peter Clark

Thomas A. Bredehoft, *Textual Histories: Readings in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, University of Toronto Press 2001, pp. 229, £50.

The study of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* provides a meeting-ground for scholars of several different branches of Anglo-Saxon studies – palaeographers, linguists, historians, and literary specialists. The final category have not been such assiduous visitors as the other groups to date, and the more obvious literary features of the text such as the tenth-century poems have been considered rather inferior outliers of the established Old English literary canon; indeed, there has been considerable disagreement about how many of the latter should be counted as poems at all. However, now that more traditional literary quarries such as *Beowulf* and *The Dream of the Road* have been analysed almost to death, colonists have been seen combining the literary badlands for sustenance, and Thomas Bredehoft is one of the new breed. His study looks at six main aspects of the *Chronicle* – the genealogies, the 757 annal concerning Cynewulf and Cyneheard, the post-Alfredian annals, the poems, the use of Latin, and the points at which the *Chronicle* manuscripts end. Approaches currently fashionable among literary specialists are applied, and the attention to many 'marginal' aspects rather than to the main annals is one manifestation of these. Bredehoft pays most attention to variations in the textual history of the different *Chronicle* texts and to the history of different forms or genres. Some interesting conclusions emerge. For instance, he suggests that the apparent 'metrical' pointing in the *Chronicle* genealogies is not so much an imitation of metrical pointing in the transcription of Old English verse as an attempt to adapt the traditional columnar layout to the linear arrangement dictated by the annals, and he has several other valuable, though

controversial, suggestions for how the compiler of the *Chronicle* archetype may have introduced further innovations in the presentation of genealogies. Such conclusions should interest a wide audience though the one that seems to be specifically addressed is a relatively narrow one of North American literary specialists. The author often seems oblivious to studies by specialists in other areas of Anglo-Saxon studies that have implications for his own work. One of the themes that runs through the book is how the *Chronicle* was created primarily as political propaganda by King Alfred with subsequent generations continuing his desire to legitimise his rule and that of his descendants. These projects included the development of a new English national unity and identity in which Old English itself had a significant contribution to make. These are certainly valid conclusions, but they are hardly news to historians. Over the last ten years there have been several excellent historical studies of how Alfred and his successor did just that both in the *Chronicle* and in other surviving texts from the court circle. Unfortunately Bredehoff seems unaware of these studies which he could have built upon to considerable effect, and has a tendency to assume that certain developments are peculiar to the *Chronicle* text rather than representative of a wider political ideology in later Anglo-Saxon England.

King Alfred's College, Winchester

Babara Yorke

Guðrun Nordal, *Tools of Literacy: The Role of Skaldic Verse in Icelandic Textual Culture of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, University of Toronto Press, 2001, pp. 440, £60.

The study of skaldic verse is, at the very least, a specialist area within a minority discipline. The skalds' use of forms of obscure extended metaphor, the *kenning* and the *heiti* render the study of the verse form difficult for those without proficiency in Icelandic, and tend to find study focused at postgraduate level. Even within the sphere of Icelandic scholarship there tend to be those who focus their work within the study of poetry and those who do not; occasionally, finding points of reference between the two 'camps' can be difficult.

Guðrun Nordal's fascinating study of 'the role of skaldic verse in Icelandic textual culture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries' does much to change this situation. It provides a useful background to the verse form for the less specialist reader, presuming little of its reader and providing useful, and recent, references where an issue is not fully covered (such as with the fundamental notion of how a *kenning* is constructed). The formal and stylistic complexities of the verse are dealt with together with issues surrounding the transmission of the form. The *kenning* is placed within a literary context, with a careful consideration of the relationship of the use of *kennings* within individual verses and the delineation of the form within medieval poetic 'handbooks', such as Snorri Sturluson's *Skáldskaparmál*. This study has a clear thematic focus situated around *kennings* for the body and for gold and clearly demonstrates the efficacy of computer-aided analysis in such an undertaking.

Much more than this, however, the analysis of skaldic verse within the context of a textual culture opens up issues that are of much wider relevance and interest within the more general study of medieval Icelandic literature. Guðrun Nordal deals with

issues such as the transition of skaldic verse from an oral to a written culture (with the many problems of authenticity that this raises), the relationship between skaldic verse and non-Icelandic medieval texts (particularly Latin texts, either existing in Icelandic translation or in Latin) and the cultural context of the transcription and composition of skaldic verse, issues which all have their counterparts in the study of prose narratives in medieval Iceland and which throw a new and fascinating light upon many of the issues that have been concerning saga scholars for decades. It is a pity in this respect (though quite understandable) that Guðrun Nordal asserts that the *foraldarsögur* (legendary sagas) fall outside the scope of her study as the issues of authenticity and transition from an oral to a written form within a late-medieval context are frequently echoed within her study of skaldic verse.

This volume, then, is one which will find a readership far beyond those with a specialist interest in skaldic verse. It provides a stimulating introduction to the issues surrounding the study of that form, but moves far beyond this in terms of the scope of the discussion as a whole. It will be of great value and interest to all those whose research lies within medieval Iceland, but also to scholars with interest in the wider issues of orality and literacy in the Middle Ages. It is a pity that, as yet, the volume is unavailable in a paper-cover, as its current price is the only factor that would prevent me from recommending it without reservation.

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Philip Cardew

Marjorie Swann, *Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collecting in Early Modern England*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001, pp. 280, \$49.95.

The history of museums, and of the activity of collecting that underlies it, has undergone a Renaissance in the last decade or so. Museums, cabinets of curiosities, and libraries have been approached, from different perspectives, by historians of antiquarianism and historiography, art historians, bibliographers, and historians of the book/print culture. One reason is that such collections form a nodal point connecting many cross-currents of intellectual activity in the period from 1500 to 1800, ranging from the apparently arcane (alchemy) to the seemingly scientific (natural history and geology). Recent studies have built on classic works (for instance Walter Houghton's famous essay on the English virtuoso), but have also taken the study of collecting itself in new and surprising directions.

Curiosities and Texts is the work of a literary scholar, but one well read in the writings of historians of art, history, and science. In a relatively concise study, Marjorie Swann examines several different forms of the activity of collecting in early modern (mainly seventeenth-century) England. The chapters, which range in subject from private collections and their public display, to natural history, through chorography and literary collected works, are linked by a number of arguments, of which two stand out. The first is that an identifiable culture of collecting came into existence which connects the differing types of objects (including texts, man-made artifacts, and natural remains) that might otherwise be treated separately. The second is that the activity of collecting these texts/objects, even if conceived by their practitioners as a mode of 'self-fashioning' of the collector into a member of a social elite, acted to

subvert, or at least cross-cut this kind of ambition by constituting other social groups defined by common interest in the objects rather than by birth and blood. 'To understand early modern English modes of selfhood and social identity,' Swann contends, '... we must consider how individuals and groups used collections of physical objects as sites of self-fashioning' (p. 194).

That collecting broadened from princely and aristocratic figures such as Prince Henry or his brother Charles I over the course of the seventeenth century is indisputable. Indeed, as the evidence of Camden's *Britannia* shows, rural gentlemen were already showing an interest in the objects (coins, monuments, bones, fossils) found on their estates as early as the 1580s, while Camden's own pupil, Sir Robert Cotton, was the greatest collector of manuscripts of the early seventeenth century. A hundred years later, there were many more such collections, and some of the larger ones (the mid-century 'ark' of the Tradescants, for instance) had begun to coalesce into institutions such as the Ashmolean, and, several decades further on, the British Museum. Overlaying Swann's account is a patina of cultural materialism, wherein the possessive individualist collector acquires, catalogues, and displays the exotic and rare and then seeks to preserve his/its identity, after death, in the bequeathed collection; these proprietary activities serve to remedy any weakness in the collector's objective social identity, such as landlessness, childlessness, or humble birth. Collecting, in short, is constitutive of both an intellectual subculture and a bourgeois subject.

There is nothing objectionable in this, but a certain amount of liberty is taken with both chronology and context. Swann's argument unfolds topically rather than chronologically: thus we sail from Tradescant and Ashmole back to Bacon, forward to Browne, and back again to Jonson, before this literary ark alights in an epilogue on Sloane. The result is that Swann sometimes appears to be taking the entire century as a block, obscuring changes in virtuoso taste – for instance the marked shift in focus away from man-made objects such as coins toward natural ones such as fossils at century's end. This blurring of chronology is unfortunate and perhaps unintentional, since Swann often astutely points to other changes of significance during the period. She is also correct that collecting (like the philological study of texts that began a century or so earlier), could provide a social glue that transcended more traditional divisions such as birth and rank. This, however, gives rise to the second problem, that of social context. Is it the case that collecting was becoming a defining activity of the middling sort, helping to free it, rather unwillingly, from what Swann defines, somewhat prematurely, as 'a vanished social and political order' (p. 40)? Or is it rather, as scholars such as Peter Earle have suggested, that older markers of gentility simply matter less after 1660, as well-to-do urban merchants (now sporting a 'Mr' in front of their names) and town-dwelling gentry co-mingle in the first genuine middle class – even if the right to be believed, as Shapin and others have argued, remained attached to gentility and its successors, civility and worthiness. In short, the greater heterogeneity of collectors may be more effect than cause of the social realignment of intellectual life discernible in the late seventeenth century.

But I do not mean to cavil at theoretical positions. There is much of value in this book, and the treatments of its subjects, based on sound scholarship, are persuasive and often incisive. Among the high points are the treatment of Francis Bacon, whose own natural history prescriptions (along with his imagined Solomonic/sodomitic academy of like-minded men) provide the intellectual justification for virtuoso display later in the century; the chapter on chorography, which points to a decline in the

importance of genealogical and heraldic matters by the middle of the century, as archaeological and naturalist inclinations came to the fore; and a clever study of both Jonson and Herrick as collectors of their own (and in Jonson's case, others') work, forming posthumous identities to replace the children that in Jonson's case predeceased him or in Herrick's case that he never had. Perhaps most significantly, Swann's collectors (along with their admirers, visitors, traders and – mentioned only in passing here – the humbler folk who often unearthed rarities in the first place), provide compelling evidence that both texts and objects were socially circulated commodities. As such, they were as much a part of a contemporary cultural economy as they are, now, exhibits in the grand narratives of intellectual or social history into which we collect them today.

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D. R. Woolf

Lukas Erne, *Beyond The Spanish Tragedy: A Study of the Works of Thomas Kyd*, Manchester University Press, 2001, pp. xix + 252, £45.

The place of Thomas Kyd in early modern literary scholarship has always been an uncomfortable one. He is generally recognized as a pivotal figure in the development of English tragedy, and an important influence on Shakespeare in particular. However, the fact that so few of his works are extant – and that even his authorship of *The Spanish Tragedy* itself retains some shadows of doubt – makes a wider-ranging assessment of his significance difficult in the extreme.

In *Beyond The Spanish Tragedy*, Lukas Erne has embarked on an ambitious and perilous voyage that sets out to chart not only the most famous work commonly attributed to Kyd, but the works that are lesser known and (in terms of authorship) less certain: *Soliman and Perseda*, *Don Horatio*, and the lost *Ur-Hamlet*, as well as *Cornelia* (probably the only extant work we can confidently ascribe to him). Although the book proposes to take us 'beyond' *The Spanish Tragedy*, more often than not there is a sense of unfathomed (indeed, unfathomable) depth, and, in some cases, fevered speculation. To give just one example, he argues at length for a five-act structure for the play, rather than the four-act structure that has traditionally been accepted by editors, building his argument on a string of conjectures that become less and less plausible as they multiply (p. 66).

The chapter on the *Ur-Hamlet* is itself something of a black hole, struggling to fill nine pages, of which two are stocked with extensive quotation from the Preface to Greene's *Menaphon* and Q1 of *Hamlet*. It is frustrating, if not altogether unexpected, to find that this new scholarship reveals little that is unfamiliar, aside from some provocative speculation about the possible (but, again, conjectural) topicality of Kyd's *Hamlet*. Erne makes a fascinating connection between the play and the murder of Mary Queen of Scots' husband Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley; within three months, Mary had married the instigator of the murder plot, the Earl of Bothwell (p. 154).

However, when the book ignores purely textual quests for what may lie 'beyond' the *Spanish Tragedy*, the investment in a reassessment of Kyd's work begins to pay dividends. There is a fascinating chapter on adaptations of the play in Holland, Denmark, Germany, and elsewhere. However, the most valuable part of the book is

probably the consideration of *The Spanish Tragedy's* curious stage history. Although it is chiefly a history of neglect, some late twentieth-century revivals have made demands for a reassessment of the play's power that have been impossible to ignore. In particular, the Royal Shakespeare Company's 1997 production proved what dramatic and emotional impact the play retains four hundred years on, even if neither that revival nor Erne's book manage to deal adequately with the extraordinary prologue, and the framing apparatus of the Ghost of Andrea and his conversations with the allegorical persona of Revenge.

It is unfortunate that the huge gaps in our knowledge of Kyd's work seem to have compelled the author into the occasional instance of wild conjecture. Such over-reaching speculation aside, Lukas Erne has made a valuable contribution to the body of scholarship that has developed around this tantalizingly elusive dramatist.

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Stevie Simkin

Thomas N. Corns (ed.), *A Companion to Milton*, Blackwell, 2002, pp. xvi + 528, £80; **David Loewenstein**, *Representing Revolution in Milton and his Contemporaries*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. xiv + 413, £40.

These books participate in the upheaval that has swept Milton studies during the last generation, ever since the publication of Christopher Hill's *Milton and the English Revolution* (1977). It is no longer possible to perceive of Milton as he was seen by generations of critics from Addison to Leavis to A. S. P. Woodhouse, who discovered an exemplar of Christian humanism crafting sublime masterpieces divorced from political turmoil and the fray of history. The Milton of the present age is a gritty partisan who wrote biblical epics that reflect his participation in the turbulent politics and religion of the Civil War era, Commonwealth, and Restoration.

The *Companion to Milton* is a valuable book that will find a place on my desktop as a handy work of reference. Reflecting upon the death of a Miltonic myth that Addison grounded upon the neo-classical canons of the Augustan era, Thomas Corns's Introduction celebrates the contemporary moment of 'historically informed interpretation [that] is refreshed by significant developments in early modern historiography that are re-charting the history of the early Stuart church, the origins of the English Civil War, and the informing philosophies of English republicanism' (p. viii). The volume's twenty-nine essays on cultural contexts, politics and religion, Miltonic texts, influences and reputation, and biography are rightly designed 'to define problems rather than offer premature syntheses' (p. ix). En route from the opening essay (Barbara Lewalski's magisterial reconsideration of genre) to the conclusion (Gordon Campbell's survey of life records), the reader encounters excellent essays by Sharon Achinstein, Amy Boesky, Achsah Guibbory, Andrew Hadfield, Leah Marcus, Annabel Patterson, Michael Schoenfeldt, Regina Schwartz, and many others.

Of particular interest to readers of *Literature & History* is a healthy series of essays that survey the general terrain of seventeenth-century English politics and religion, in addition to specific analyses of the engagement of Miltonic texts with republican politics and radical religion. Cedric Brown, N. H. Keeble, and John Rumrich respectively define Milton's achievement with respect to religio-political developments during the

latter part of the reign of James I, to the manifold meanings associated with English Puritanism, and to radical heterodoxy and heresy. Elizabeth Skerpan Wheeler's astute discussion of Milton's early political prose prepares the way for Laura Knoppers' stirring analysis of the engagement of Milton's late pamphlets with the role played by General George Monck in preparing for the Restoration during the chaotic period following the death of Oliver Cromwell. Stephen Fallon does a splendid job of setting *Paradise Lost* within the context of intellectual history, with special reference to contemporary debates on theodicy and materialism. Deserving of particular recognition are Joad Raymond's 'The Literature of Controversy' and Martin Dzelzainis's 'Republicanism'. Raymond breaks new ground concerning English print culture by setting Milton's pamphleteering within the unique state of the 1640s book trade. Dzelzainis provides a very useful conspectus concerning present study of the emergence of republicanism, an inquiry that has driven some of the best recent work on seventeenth-century English literature and history.

David Loewenstein's contribution to the *Companion to Milton*, 'The Radical Religious Politics of *Paradise Lost*', affords a foretaste of arguments that he develops fully in *Representing Revolution in Milton and His Contemporaries*. The first half of this book focuses on the prose writings of John Lilburne and the Levellers, Gerrard Winstanley and Digger, Ranter and Fifth Monarchist prophecies by Abiezer Coppe and Anna Trapnel, the revolutionary discourse of George Fox and other early Quakers, and political poems by Andrew Marvell. Loewenstein devotes the remainder of his book to interrelationships among radical prose of the mid-century and Milton's 1640s prose tracts, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*.

In the course of demonstrating the ambiguous reversibility of rhetoric employed by the warring religious and political factions, Loewenstein revisits territory traversed by Christopher Hill in *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (1972) and *Milton and the English Revolution*. He takes issue with Hill's claim that Milton engaged in direct 'conversation' with radical sectarians by observing that 'one cannot imagine that the highly cultured Milton, immersed in the classical republican tradition, would have sympathized with Fox's coarse, humourless prophetic railing against academic learning and the universities (despite Jesus's sweeping critique of Athenian culture and learning in *Paradise Regained*)' (p. 11). Nonetheless, Loewenstein insists that important analogies override manifold differences between Milton's radical thinking and that of the Quakers and other sectarians.

The resulting portrayal of Milton and the English Revolution may be less exciting than that drawn in Christopher Hill's seminal studies, but Loewenstein argues with thoughtful conviction based upon his sweeping knowledge and judicious distillation of seventeenth-century English radical thought. His terminology can be somewhat slippery at times, and this reviewer would appreciate more concrete definitions and applications of terms such as 'radical', 'Puritan', 'visionary', 'iconoclastic', and 'apocalyptic'. Nevertheless, Loewenstein's book constitutes an excellent addition to our understanding of seventeenth-century English radicalism. The reader may use it with confidence as a handbook concerning the revolutionary thinking of Milton and his contemporaries. As such, it complements the *Companion to Milton* in its methodological sophistication and in contributing to and absorbing recent findings concerning Milton's religio-political ideas and early modern British historiography in general.

Robert Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism, 1628–1660*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 400, £40.

Robert Wilcher's *The Writing of Royalism* will be of tremendous value for anyone interested in the literature of the seventeenth century, and in particular the way in which the English Civil War sparked the production of a wide variety of royalist writings. Wilcher builds on the work of critics such as Lois Potter, Kevin Sharpe, David Norbrook, Thomas Corns and Annabel Patterson, describing the emergence of a royalist consciousness over a thirty-two year period (1628–60) with scrupulous care. He grants particular attention to royalism as an emergent identity, tracing literary responses to the waning fortunes of Charles I. Strong consideration is given to the subtle differences between individual royalist thinkers, from those who stress divine right to those with a more constitutional approach. Wilcher's chronological account allows him to present both fast and slow change over the period covered; the result of this meticulous detail is a highly effective synthesis of literary, historical, and biographical concerns that allows for the exploration of patterns of royalist identity and strategy while demonstrating the complexities of events as they unfolded.

While focusing on printed books, which he finds of particular importance to the royalist cause, Wilcher covers a number of important genres, such as familiar letters, poetry, epic, and hagiography (first of Laud and then of Charles I himself). His delineation of how old forms like the Caroline masque and early seventeenth-century panegyric were modified to fit the new demands of royalist concerns is well sustained and intriguing. Wilcher also does a good job of demonstrating how royalist writers tried to 'supplement "fighting" with "writing"' (p. 184). One particularly valuable aspect of the chronological approach is the way it draws attention to the frequently unexpected nature of political events, as when the 'unthinkable possibility that [Charles I] would be brought to trial by his own subjects edged into the public consciousness' (p. 252). He also considers the royalist choice of the literary mode of 'incredulity' once the unthinkable had happened (p. 294).

The Writing of Royalism includes a helpful exploration of the publication and manuscript circulation of royalist texts, including the role of Humphrey Moseley as the primary royalist printer. Individual royalist writers during the three decades are given detailed and lively treatment; readers can learn much about writers such as Denham, Cleveland and Cartwright. The final section on royalist defeat includes a particularly poignant section on Vaughan, and intriguing explorations of the work of Katherine Philips and Abraham Cowley. Wilcher chooses to end his study with the Restoration of the King, but it might have been interesting to see an exploration of the continuities in royalist culture for another decade at least. It might also have been instructive to see slightly more attention to the reception and readership of these royalist writings, and how they were received on both sides of the conflict. Wilcher's carefully researched and subtle book will spark further work in the period; he has done much to provide a nuanced vision of royalist political identity and literary production.

Robert Poole (ed.), *The Lancashire Witches: Histories and Stories*, Manchester University Press, 2003, pp. xiv + 226, £45, £14.99 pb.

In April 1999 a conference on the Lancashire witches of 1612 was held at St Martin's College, Lancaster. This volume reproduces some of the papers given during that event. James Sharpe, a well-known authority in the field but an absentee on that occasion, provides a general introduction and the editor, Robert Poole, supplies introductory matter to each of the three sections of the book. Seven historians, three English Literature and two Religious Studies specialists join forces to shed light on the events of 1612 and their representation both within the original time-frame and subsequently. Aimed at both academic and general readers, the book is consistently readable, lively, and coherent even though it does not aim at complete coverage. Thomas Shadwell's play on the *Lancashire Witches* of 1681 rates little more than a mention. The same goes for a 1951 novel on the subject – Robert Neil's *Mist over Pendle* – and for a 1987 television documentary 'Lucifer over Lancashire'. And there are occasional errors. Guy Fawkes's social status somehow gets elevated. A standard modern work on *The Catholics of Caroline England* is attributed to *Marvin* not Martin Havran. David Punter's book on *The Literature of Terror* (1980) is consistently given a publication date of 1908. Quibbles apart, however, this collection deserves to attract notice.

Only a minority of the essays concern themselves with the original events and circumstances of 1612 and with the rapidity with which the trials were despatched; the whole legal process, executions included, was over within three days. Jonathan Lumby unearths the dark family secrets which lay behind two key protagonists in the proceedings, Roger Nowell and Thomas Lister. John Swain identifies two rival clans struggling for supremacy amongst those accused of witchcraft and more generally surveys the socio-economic scene in the Pendle region to test whether economics itself provides convincing explanations of the witchcraft craze. Michael Mullett shows how the dissolution of Whalley Abbey during the Henrician Reformation not only left a moral vacuum in the region but removed a 'generous paternalistic agribusiness' and 'vibrant economic generator' and led to a new pattern of gentry land-owning based on the Bradyll, Assheton and Nowell families which underpinned a new and strident godly crusade against sin, witchcraft included, in the region. Kirsten Macpherson Bardell argues that the attention given to the principal target of this Protestant assault – the Lancashire witches of 1612 – has tended to divert attention from other witches. Her concern, therefore, is to bring these 'lost' witches – both those accused on other occasions and the many practitioners of 'white' magic – back into focus. She does well to remind us that such cunning folk, because their art was more ingrained, regular and easily accessible, were often seen by opponents as a more serious threat than the more exceptional and more easily prosecuted black magic represented in the witch trials of 1612. It was understandable that both physicians and clergymen regarded wise men and wise women as competitors for the people's loyalties. Black magic, however, became blacker still in the early seventeenth century through the elite's adoption (via James I's *Daemonologie* (1597) and the Roman Catholic seminarists) of European concepts of witchcraft which centred on satanic pacts and sabbats.

Most contributors to this volume focus on representations of witchcraft in texts. Stephen Pumphrey and Marion Gibson subject the main contemporary account of the 1612 events, Thomas Potts's *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches* (1613), to

unprecedented scrutiny. Both see Potts's account as an artful and not a literal rendition, pointing out that it was commissioned by the judges in question and that it lost no opportunity of aligning itself with the royal perspective on the subject expressed so clearly in the King's treatise on *Daemonologie*. At times, indeed, Potts was the 'notional author'; the insertion of claims about a planned rescue attempt and scheme to blow up Lancaster Castle can be attributed to Thomas Knyvett, Privy Councillor and discoverer of the Gunpowder Plot. Gibson emphasises Potts's constant concern to depict the judicial process as both efficient and infallible by means of a carefully contrived narrative coherence. Far from offering a documentary account of the proceedings against the witches, Potts was providing the kind of record which his patrons and his audience wanted. His book may have been 'honestly meant' but it was stage-managed from first to last.

Other texts and representations, too, are systematically examined. Richard Wilson imaginatively – perhaps over-imaginatively! – connects *Macbeth* with the Lancashire witches of 1612, 'the two key manifestations of the Jacobean witchcraze'. He does so partly on the grounds that Shakespeare himself was probably in Lancashire (at Hoghton Tower) in the late sixteenth century and partly that his dramatic depiction, presented before a courtly audience, of witches as a satanic confederacy, helped change English understanding of the phenomenon of witchcraft and paved the way for later representations. He also draws Roman Catholicism into the picture, linking the gruesome catalogue of ingredients of the witches' cauldren in *Macbeth* with the salvaging and veneration of half burnt body parts of executed priestly martyrs which beleaguered English Catholics of the period engaged in. By contrast another text on another set of witches – Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome's *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1634) – is presented by Alison Findlay as being chiefly remarkable for its comic strain and dramatic journalism, a far cry indeed from the feverish intensity of *Macbeth*.

Jeffrey Richards, still on texts, shifts the focus to the nineteenth century in his insightful treatment of Harrison Ainsworth's romantic novel *The Lancashire Witches*, first published in 1849 and continuously in print until the present day. Armed with some newly published editions of contemporary sources – especially the 1845 edition of Potts's *Wonderfull Discoverie* – Ainsworth offered his many readers a blend of antiquarian picturesque, gothic, and sound Tory principles in which order achieves a satisfying triumph. For extra dramatic effect historical chronology was changed – James I's 1617 visit to Hoghton Tower was taken back to 1612 to give the King himself a role in the story – and historical characters were re-written or transformed into composites.

The resonances of the 1612 witch trials evidently still linger in present-day Lancashire. Joanne Pearson, in the final essay, offers something on how today's practitioners of the Wicca cult position themselves in relation to the Jacobean witch-craze. Others stress the ways in which the heritage industry in the North-West has capitalised on the Lancashire Witches. Walking the forty-five mile 'Pendle Witch Trail' must surely concentrate the mind, while drinking the 'Pendle Witches Brew' – hygienically filtered presumably! – in local pubs probably has the desired effect of preparing visitors for the tempting array of witch models, pottery, and tee-shirts on sale in the 'Witches Galore' shop in Newchurch village. Potts, Puritanism and Jacobean politics have become quite submerged under the relentless commercialism of the twenty-first century.

J. Douglas Cranfield, *Heroes and States: On the Ideology of Restoration Tragedy*, University Press of Kentucky, 2000, pp. xvii + 249, \$39.95.

Early in the year of 1688 there was a performance of John Crowne's heroic drama *Darius, King of Persia* in the presence of King James II. How James received this is not recorded, but the play, which depicted a monarch abandoned by his people and betrayed by generals of his army, may have made him feel slightly uncomfortable. In his speech Darius also eerily echoes James's later cries in the winter of that year.

Oh! Rise in my Revenge and Aid all Kings!
This is your common cause, I am a King . . .
For all Humanity
Is by these Villains scorn'd, disgrac'd, and curst,
By what they do to me . . .

In essence such heroic drama was not on the surface meant to unnerve its most adoring public whether monarch or aristocrat, but in reality such theatre was as much a real explanation of the processes of Restoration politics and culture as any of the current events at court or in parliament. In particular heroic tragedy, to modern tastes a superficially loud, pompous and long-winded form of performance, was greatly popular in its day, perhaps even more than the famed Restoration comedies. As depicted in this book it certainly reveals much about the Restoration politics, sensibilities, its style, and its modes of thought. In other words J. Douglas Cranfield does a very good job of illuminating the depth of such drama and its use as a means by which Restoration tragedy and heroic tragedy in particular can assist in our understanding of the tropes of power and the heroic ideals in the period. Such drama purveyed an ideology which was in many senses already old fashioned at the time: colourful, feudal, aristocratic, conservative, and monarchical in taste, narrated in such a bombastic manner that it often seems as though its dramatists were protesting too much at the passing of that particular world. Yet this world, seemingly formulaic with its villains and heroes, great souls who were capable of great passions that inevitably brought them to ruin, is possibly the most revealing of all forms of Restoration drama, especially to the political historian. For even as it stressed its certainties the dramatic heroic tragedy was also being undermined. Dramatists began to use it as vehicle for more subversive ideas about politics and sexuality. Such drama, as Douglas Cranfield ably points out, was also as much about power and its loss, a power that the apparent subversion of the moral and political order in 1688 encapsulated. It was, of course, a drama of its time and with the mercantilist dominated world of the eighteenth century just around the corner, it often gives off an air of trying to put Humpty Dumpty back together again especially after 1649. Unfortunately it is not often seen on today's stages, perhaps because we have our own bombastic metaphors lurking in every multiplex cinema, which go some way to explaining our own ideologies. Certainly books such as this one that open out such dramatic forms for study are to be welcomed for they are often explanations of the real ideals of the Restoration era.

Moira Dearnley, *Distant Fields: Eighteenth-century Fictions of Wales*, University of Wales Press, 2001, pp. xxii + 246, £25.

This book sets itself the limited aim of bringing to light a selection of texts written in English about Wales, or which incorporate Welsh characters or settings, and which 'record in their own way a small part of the history of the Welsh people' (p. xxi). Their authors are almost exclusively non-Welsh, so the Wales they portray is in the main an imaginative geography constructed east of the Severn. In broad terms, these representations divide between those which rework crude stereotypes of the Welsh as 'dishonest and stupid, credulous and superstitious' (p. xvi), and those which inflict upon Wales the more positive yet equally distorting notions of romantic primitivism.

It has to be said that Wales is a less than integral feature of some of Dearnley's chosen texts. In Sarah Fielding's *The History of Ophelia* (1760), for example, it is chosen as a suitable site to bring up a daughter in total ignorance of the existence of evil, but in Dearnley's own words is simultaneously 'Wales and Nowhere' (p. 71) and could be substituted by any other sparsely populated mountainous region. The later chapters of the book present the more substantial treatments of Welsh themes. It is interesting to hear of Richard Graves's *The Spiritual Quixote* (1773), a comic satire on the Welsh embrace of Methodism, and *Eugenius* (1785), celebrated as the first Welsh industrial novel and remarkable for its combination of 'remorseless optimism' and 'invincible ignorance' (p. 113). William Godwin receives welcome attention for his use of Druidic history in *Imogen* (1784) to attack the tyranny of religious priest-hoods. Anna Maria Bennett's *Ellen* (1794) is offered as an ambivalent lament for a dying feudal caste, while Edward Davies, self-educated in the Welsh language and Welsh culture and a strong supporter of the eighteenth-century 'Welsh renaissance', is seen as having provided 'an outsider's view of his place of birth' (p. 171) in *Elisa Powell* (1795). An engaging chapter on Mary Robinson assesses her *Walsingham* (1797) for its satirical treatment, in a Welsh context, of the Romantic philosophy of nature and natural education.

Dearnley's approach is, broadly speaking, an old-fashioned biographico-historical one. Occasionally she makes what seems a reluctant and timid engagement with modern theory, and this is always unfortunate: she is clearly happiest when addressing the relations between literature and what she takes to be historical 'fact', and her attempts (for example) to squash the clevernesses of poststructuralism simply by insisting that 'Autobiography must not be mistaken for fiction' (p. 54), or by stating that something 'remains the case' without further argument, try the reader's patience.

There is much of interest in *Distant Fields*, but the lack of a conclusion underlines the fact that what it presents is a loose compilation of essays on individual texts rather than a structured argument about the narrative deployment of Wales. Dearnley should be thanked for assisting the critical recovery of neglected eighteenth-century texts, but she needed to make a stronger case for assembling what appears a shapeless and arbitrary canon of minor literature. Her comment that the texts she discusses 'have received little critical attention in Wales' strikes a parochial note which does little to advertise their interest for the scholarly community at large.

Carla Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern*, Princeton University Press, 2001, pp. xix + 233, £24.95; Bridget Hill, *Women Alone: Spinsters in England 1660–1850*, Yale University Press, 2001, pp. viii + 219, £25.00.

The time-scale of these studies overlap, but *The Other Enlightenment* provides a more optimistic view of women developing a consciousness of themselves as individuals, whereas *Women Alone* is a study of spinsters as a distinct social category of 'failed' or 'redundant' women. Hesse's women do not generally remain single, but Hill shows that women did not have a real choice to determine their status, and that spinsterhood, like marriage, was often forced upon them.

Carla Hesse's intention is to recover the French female literary tradition. Her focus is much narrower than that of Bridget Hill. Hesse's subjects are women writers who insisted on the intellectual equality of women, and their right to moral autonomy. Hesse argues that, from being marginal to the literary culture of the pre-revolutionary period, women's writings flourished even more than men's when the old order collapsed. The revolutionary authorities punished seditious speech heavily, establishing the authority of the written over the spoken word, which Hesse admits was a defeat for the 'female oral genius' (p. 28) of the salon and the marketplace. Yet while she acknowledges that in that period, the majority of French women were illiterate, she does not clearly address the issue of which audience women writers were targeting. The implication is that they were writing for men, trying to find a place in the developing literature culture.

Hesse's perspective is not the gender ideology of the period, which sought to shut women out of politics and print. She argues against Joan Wallach Scott's view (in *Only Paradoxes to Offer*) that women were precluded from citizenship in the Republic because that was perceived as a masculine attribute. Hesse holds that the cause was instead that women were considered to be incapable of self-governance, and unable to represent anything other than their own gender. In practice, there seems little to separate these positions. Hesse examines women participating in politics and publishing (providing two useful appendices on what and where they published) to make a reasonable, though not entirely convincing, case that women were not marginalised or confined to typically feminine subjects or genres. Certainly, it seems that in the post-revolutionary period, they were increasingly turning to fiction, suggesting a narrowing of female literary expression. Looking ahead to Simone de Beauvoir, however, Hesse concludes that women in the eighteenth century also wrote fiction as a means of writing philosophy, of which they were deemed to be biologically incapable by the very Enlightenment philosophers who inspired their efforts. Hesse overstates her case when she claims that women writers aimed to prevent the eclipse of female cultural and political power: influence would seem more appropriate. Her female writers did not challenge patriarchy directly, but were adept at manoeuvring within its confines.

Bridget Hill agrees that women's public expression of themselves can be seen in the steady growth of female writers by the middle of the nineteenth century. In contrast to Hesse's study of women in revolutionary France, however, Hill argues that the position of single women in Britain changed very little over the previous two centuries. While Hesse concentrates on a few individuals who managed to establish an autonomous intellectual life, Hill shows that it was extremely difficult for women of

all social groups to establish an independent identity. Labouring women did not earn sufficient to live on their own; businesswomen generally made insignificant profits; middle and upper class ladies were confined by propriety to a very narrow range of 'respectable' occupations, which were either poorly paid (governess) or paid only in board and lodging (lady's companion). Very few single women were able to save for the future, and all feared the workhouse. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the plight of the middle-class spinster was recognised to be a problem: pauperism and gentility could not be reconciled.

Hill acknowledges that some single women escaped poverty by writing. These, however, were a small minority. Both authors record the derogatory criticism directed at female writers by their male counterparts, particularly in the post-revolutionary period. Whereas Hesse suggests that this was because the women were seen as competitors, implying a certain equality, Hill notes that by then, all the opprobrium directed at spinsters was concentrated on the learned lady who was assumed to lack feminine charms: both were deemed to be unnatural.

Industrialisation in Britain had in practice narrowed rather than widened job opportunities for such women. Yet as Hesse points out, even as male legislators ensured their juridical subordination to men, the new economy made possible a public debate on the role of women, in which women themselves could engage. Indeed, it was the plight of the impoverished middle-class single woman which led to the demand for improvements in female education. Hill agrees that women were not passive victims of patriarchy. Both authors show that considerable numbers of exceptional women succeeded in pushing the limits of their sphere against a range of obstacles (legal, constitutional, economic, cultural), laying the basis for the first wave of feminism.

University of Southampton

Jane McDermid

Norman Scarfe (ed. and transl.), *A Frenchman's Year in Suffolk, 1784*, Suffolk Records Society, vol. 30, 1988, pp. xv + 226, 44 illus., £25.00; **Norman Scarfe**, *Innocent Espionage: The La Rochefoucauld Brothers' Tour of England in 1785*, Boydell Press, 1995, pp. xx + 270, 62 illus., £25; **Norman Scarfe**, *To the Highlands in 1786: The Inquisitive Journey of a Young French Aristocrat*, Boydell Press, 2001, pp. xxiv + 276, 71 illus., 2 maps, £30.

Foreigners' impressions of life in Britain always yield fascinating insights, and these three volumes, recording the experiences in 1784–86 of two young Frenchmen, François and Alexandre de la Rochefoucauld and their Polish tutor are models of their kind. Our travellers first visited Suffolk, briefly venturing further afield into East Anglia, having been instructed in the arts of observation and reporting by their father, the Duc de Liancourt who was dedicated to the improvement of the arts and trades of France, using knowledge culled from elsewhere. Then, in 1785 they journeyed through Midland England. Finally, in 1786, they went to Scotland, adding a brief sojourn in Ireland.

In Suffolk they learned from their friend, Arthur Young, the agriculturist, what questions the curious traveller should ask, and how to seize on every chance meeting

with local people – labourers, farmers, artisans, no matter whom – to gather correct and detailed information on their working routines. All three were immensely serious in recording their encounters speedily and accurately, and showed equal interest in the lifestyles of great lords in their castles, ordinary folk in their cottages, physicians and patients in hospitals. They peered through open doors to see women and children spinning and carding, marvelled at the cleanliness of humble cottages in England, deplored the poverty of Scots women walking outdoors without shoes or stockings, and shovelling manure with their bare hands. In no other account from a single source does one find from all over the kingdom so many reliable statements on crop rotations and husbandry practices – so much so that the editor has been obliged to abbreviate some passages – six pages on Kent agriculture, for example – and agricultural historians, greedy for every crumb of such first-hand information, will have to seek out the original text for the full accounts.

In illustrating some industrial operations the diarists drew lively sketches which are reproduced here, while all three volumes are greatly enriched by reproductions of innumerable engravings, dating from the same period. For these, the editor has searched far and wide, and with extraordinary success; the reader may see the buildings and landscape much as our three travellers saw them for themselves.

In fact, words and pictures enable readers to live through the experience of the diarists in an unexpectedly intimate, personal way. And they cannot fail to admire the cheerful, patient and uncomplaining good humour of the travellers as they rode, with their two servants, one and sometimes two gigs, plus riding horses, though they evidently often preferred to walk and keep warm in cold weather, rather than ride in the carriage. With astonishing composure they braved precipitous mountain paths and floods in Scotland, and survived.

Norman Scarfe, the editor, has translated the French text into a flowing, friendly account that conveys in the fullest sense the goodwill and good nature of the travellers. They warmly appreciated the kindness of all the English they encountered. Technical information was nearly always freely given, or, if denied, then explanations and apologies were offered. They were struck by the intelligence and well considered judgments of labourers and farmers, while we as readers from another age must be struck by the way they arrived unannounced on doorsteps at 9a.m in the morning, were welcomed, shown around farms and factories, given food, and often occupied their hosts for half and even whole days.

The editor tirelessly pursues for us explanations of innumerable references to people and places, and is notably successful in finding answers. He even manages to identify a nameless, newly published guide to London which our Frenchmen used when on their way home in 1785, this little puzzle scoring a triumph for the librarians in the British Library.

The one dimension missing from these volumes is some notion of the large network of curious travellers from all over Europe at this time, arriving in England with exactly the same purpose as our Frenchmen, studying its industries and agriculture, and reporting to patrons and entrepreneurs at home. They numbered scores, or more probably hundreds of people. Norman Scarfe cites a later letter, of September 1798, to Arthur Young when François de la Rochefoucauld expected Young to visit him in Altona, near Hamburg in north Germany. He looked forward to introducing Young to a Mr Voght, a 'very rich man who left off business to turn a gentleman farmer [and was] much travelled in England; Voght claimed to know Young. It is a

fitting illustration of the intricate network that put these many scattered investigators in touch with each other, and then produced remarkable practical results in countries stretching far across eastern and western Europe. Caspar Voght had spent more than two years in England and Scotland before setting up a farm at Flottbek on the English/Scottish model. His story was told in a book by Gerhard Ahrens in 1969, and makes riveting reading alongside these French diaries (see a review in *Agricultural History Review*, 24:i, 1976, pp. 80–2). In these days when ideas of a European union are built on bureaucratic impositions, it is instructive to recall economic influences that flowed across Europe two centuries ago in very different, freer channels.

Plainly, these volumes prompt many comparative reflections on past and present. But, above all, they command praise as the finest examples one could find of zestful, persistent, indeed, veritably sleuth-like scholarship, offering, furthermore, a text of consuming interest on Britain in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Hadlow, Kent

Joan Thirsk

Louise Purbrick (ed.), *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, Texts in Culture, Manchester University Press, 2001, pp. xii + 217, £45, £15.99 pb.

This collection is designed, Louise Purbrick says, to debate ‘how class and empire as cultural and political formations have operated in and around 1851’. Common themes or interests are thrown up: the artisan and issues of control, *Punch*, the Koh-i-noor, John Cassell and his publishing ventures, the Exhibition’s taxonomy. Some of the essays seem fully worked up, others work in progress, where an eye applied longer or more sharply may produce interesting results. Even given Purbrick’s theme, other topics might usefully have been covered or even expected: almost nothing is said about Exhibitions in France and the States, the Victoria and Albert, the Art Fund, the Festival of Britain (or the Millennium Dome).

Purbrick gives a useful survey of the history of the Exhibition, setting up the past debate to contextualise the present, pausing, if necessarily briefly, over past reactions, such as Pevsner’s sweeping (but not unfounded) ‘the aesthetic quality of the objects was abominable’: a clue that might have been followed up. The debate is taken up by Steve Edwards, in an oddly shaped piece, that begins with a *Punch* cartoon, the meeting of artisans and gentry, read suggestively, but with the need for more spadework. Edwards then breaks across to consider Whewell and the Exhibition’s taxonomy, part of that process (‘a weapon deployed’, says Edwards) of standardisation that denied worker skill and artisan knowledge. This blunt conclusion is challenged by other essays, which recognise, if occasionally I feel perforce, ambiguities and actualities. It is Rafael Cardoso Denis who, with coherence and subtlety, traces the importance placed upon technical drawing, and how it related to understanding, production, and divisions of mental and physical labour. He takes the opportunity, in doubting drawing to be the good-in-itself, so often claimed, to parallel and question current unthinking enthusiasm for computer skills.

Popular education, differently inflected, is the concern too of Brian Maidment, who explores Cassell’s *Illustrated Exhibitor* in its manifestations of 1851 and 1852,

from effectively a catalogue to a work defining and satisfying the cultural ambitions of an audience predicated by the Exhibition. Tighter in its focus than Denis's essay, it falls slightly uneasily into two sections, tied to the magazine's very different avatars, and offers a snapshot of publishing history towards a fuller account of the work of Cassell and others. Against Cassell's twelve-month artisan agenda, Peter Gurney considers the Crystal Palace as an appropriated space, a long view that takes us from the re-establishment of the Palace at Sydenham to the failure of the Company in 1913. After a review of radical voices against the Palace (set up a little too rhetorically, as though no voices had been heard against it before), he shows how at Sydenham it became the 'people's Palace', with its Temperance Meetings and then the National Co-operative Festivals: detail here provides the comedy of earnestness, the 1889 Festival including a didactic play, performing elephants, and amidst the fireworks, 'a flaming co-operative wheatsheaf'.

The two concluding essays, dealing with ambiguity and diversity, suggest the disconcerting way life destabilises the best-shaped narrative. Lara Kriegel, if rebarbative in style, fascinatingly shows the complexity of response to the Indian display, allowing an openness even if committed to a narrative of colonisation, as she traces the ways in which viewers and writers animated the objects on display and how their 'stories' worked to define, variously, Britain's 'imperial project'. The closing essay, Richard Pearson's exploration of *Punch's* reporting of the Exhibition finds (surely no more to his surprise than ours?) that *Punch's* Crystal Palace is ambivalent and contradictory – when was *Punch* not given to have its cake and eating it? Yet he argues effectively, though the material is rather slight, that Thackeray's contributions destabilised *Punch's* view of the Other at the Exhibition. It is disappointing that the illustrations here are poor, impeding understanding (elsewhere reproductions – or the originals – are better), while *Punch's* parody of 'The Raft of the *Medusa*' in 'The shipwrecked ministers' might have been noticed.

One final point or puzzle. This collection appears in a series devoted to single influential texts. While the Crystal Palace was 'read' by contemporaries, it neither was nor is a text and it sits oddly in a series emphatically about specific works: *The Origin of Species*, *The Prince*, *The Second Sex*, amongst volumes already published. Neither the General Editors (the Series Introduction is printed) nor Purbrick so much as allude to this incongruity.

University of Salford

Angus Easson

Ian Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain: The Epitome of Modernity*, Manchester University Press, 2001, pp. xi + 338, £49.99, £16.99 pb.

Ian Carter explores how the steam railway, which epitomised modernity's relentless advance in the nineteenth century, was represented in contemporary fiction, painting, and drawing. The railways, as Carter reminds us, are 'modernity's archetypal objects'. He starts with a discursive chapter on the relationships between railways, modernity, and culture. This neatly sets up the case for ignoring boundaries between literary and other work in the pursuit of his subject and suggests that Raymond Williams' cultural materialism still offers a fruitful guide for exploring these rela-

tionships. In the first substantive part of the book, Carter compares fiction and images by canonical British figures (Turner, Dickens, and Bennett) with that of several French and Russian figures: Tolstoy, Zola, Monet, and Manet. It is clear from these chapters that high cultural work on the British steam railway is thin on the ground. There is no great British 'railway' novel.

However in the second part of the book, Carter shows that the railways were enthusiastically taken up by popular culture. From the outpourings of crime fiction, comic fiction and of cartoons, it is evident that the railways were the subject and object of popular fascination. It was in particular the railway accident, the railway crime, and the *train* crime – the latter the site of so much mayhem – that were taken up by these genres rather than by 'serious' literature. It is through his exploration of these unexplored and overlooked sources of popular culture that Carter is at his best and most original. A final, more speculative, chapter offers some interesting reflections on the cultural meaning of the steam railway's eclipse and asks whether the contemporary dominance of other forms of transport signifies a shift to postmodernity.

This is a significant book because Carter roams freely and confidently between and across disciplines to illuminate his subject and because he extends the boundaries of railway history way beyond the narrowly material, which until recently has dominated the historiography. Some readers, including this one, may be annoyed in places by his rather uncontrolled style and his over-elaborate use of the metaphor, as for example in 'Postmodernity is an increasingly weedy siding in social theory . . .' (p. 308). Leaving these quibbles aside, however, the persistent reader will take away a vivid and compelling panorama of cultural representations of the modern steam railway in the country where it was born.

University of the West of England

Geoffrey Channon

Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis (eds), *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact: fin de siècle Feminisms*, Palgrave, 2001, pp. 258, £42.50.

The fourteen essays in this collection stem from an interdisciplinary conference held in 1998, yet remain strongly rooted in literary studies. Together they explore the 'shifting and contested' meanings of New Womanhood at the turn of the nineteenth century and in recent scholarship. Authors include some of the leading researchers in this well-populated field, joined by promising newcomers whose work is of at least equal interest. The editors have made an excellent job of composing a coherent volume from disparate parts. Some of the rich diversity of the original conference has been lost in the process, but this is perhaps a price worth paying for such a readable, stimulating contribution to current research on one of the most important cultural icons of the late nineteenth century. The New Woman was 'a mobile and contradictory figure', as Lyn Pykett explains in her Foreword. Her historical and literary importance related to her assumption of multiple identities, in the hands of both admirers and detractors. Never uncontroversial, she became a target of social and political hostility, a gift to parodists (whose cartoons enliven this book), and an inspiration to the growing numbers of Victorian and Edwardian women whose ambitions and opportunities were uncomfortably at odds. Moreover she inspired both female

and male writers, across the full spectrum of literary merit and public accessibility, over a period of more than twenty years. Fictional representations of the New Woman provide the backbone of this volume, despite its authors' forays into the adjacent literatures of public polemic, feminist politics, medical and scientific discourse and moral and aesthetic philosophy. Collectively the essays succeed both in broadening and in further problematising their subject matter. It is largely left to the editors, in an admirable introduction, to explain the historical origins of the New Woman and to assess her impact upon social and political behaviours as well as upon intellectual life and the public imagination. Further work in these directions is needed from enterprising historians. Meanwhile, the landscape of New Woman fiction is powerfully illuminated by the current book. Talia Schaffer analyses the 1894 debate between Ouida and Sarah Grand, concluding that readers' engagement with New Woman fiction shaped their feminist or anti-feminist politics, thus undermining distinctions between 'fiction' and 'fact'. Chris Willis and Sarah Wintle provide a very necessary (and at times hilarious) extension of the debate into the realms of mass publication and popular fiction. Sarah Ledger, Gail Cunningham, and Matthew Beaumont address varied aspects of men's engagement with the New Woman, both as authors and as literary subjects. Ann Ardis connects Oxford Hellenism to female intellectualism, through works by Olive Schreiner and Ethel Arnold, before Regenia Gagnier relates the New Woman to end-of-century British aestheticism. Ann Heilmann and Laura Marcus position New Woman literature within contemporary discourses of medicine and psychoanalysis, whilst Rebecca Stott, Carolyn Burdett, and Angélique Richardson analyse women novelists' scientific and pseudo-scientific eugenic, racial and colonial allusions. Lesley Hall's essay on Stella Browne stands out as the only one to discuss political journalism as such, despite the book's subtitled reference to more broadly defined 'feminisms'. Several of these authors have monographs forthcoming. The debates opened up by these strikingly well-written essays will clearly reverberate for many years to come: none more so than that concerning relationships between 'fiction' and 'fact', so provocatively juxtaposed in the book's title and so subversively interwoven throughout its content.

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Sara Haslam, *Fragmenting Modernism: Ford Madox Ford, the Novel and the Great War*, Manchester University Press, 2002, pp. 233, £40.

Ford Madox Ford's reputation has never been quite secure. At his best, he wrote some remarkable novels; at his worst, he produced slackly written potboilers. Ford, moreover, is not easy to locate: an apologist for the most challenging work of his time, he cannot himself be aligned with any single movement or group of writers. For scholars have in recent years sought to rehabilitate him by situating him within the orbit of modernism, which seems apposite, given that the latter has been undergoing a process of critical revision that focuses on its diverse trajectories and internal dissonances. Ford's place within a pluralist conception of modernism can scarcely be denied, and it is a great merit of Sara Haslam's *Fragmenting Modernism* that she concentrates on explicating the precise nature of his significance. Her project is Janus-

faced: it requires us to reconsider Ford as an individual writer and to revision the modernism he helped to create. Haslam's Ford develops narrative techniques that depict a kaleidoscopic modernity in all its puzzling confusion but he also creates healing fictions that aim to be redemptive. A concern to represent the chaotic nature of modern life, so central to Ford's best-known novels and to his impressionist aesthetic, vies with a drive to reconnect the shards, in order to celebrate the regenerative possibilities released by the disintegration of social life. Ford emerges as a writer who needs to be read again so that his depictions of personal breakdown and social collapse do not obliterate his portrayals of life's enriching aspects.

Fittingly, *Fragmenting Modernism* is a multi-layered, complex book. In seeking to explore the various levels at which Ford's fiction works, it focuses on the importance of the visual to his brand of modernism, emphasising the link between cognition and sight in the fractured narratives he produces; foregrounds the texts' linguistic struggle to do justice to a recalcitrant reality that exceeds the capacity of language to grasp it; explores the interaction between incompatible desires, especially the psychological processes through which desire emerges from the unconscious into the conscious mind; and connects his impressionism, which is so attentive to the subjective nature of perception, with the working of memory, which ranges across experience from a dizzying array of viewpoints. Haslam identifies several historically locatable issues as particularly relevant to any understanding of Ford's work: the battle between the sexes, which she traces with great subtlety from the early to late texts; the conflict between civilisation and desire, which she usefully reads in relation to Freud; and the impact of World War One on Ford's themes and narrative style, which she argues results in a linguistic crisis that not only signals the loss of shared cultural assumptions but also points to the near impossibility of communication between individuals.

These issues are discussed with a commendable attention to historical context and to textual detail. Haslam's perceptive discussion of texts such as *A Call*, *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, *The Good Soldier*, and *Parade's End* focuses on their representations of gender, the workings of the unconscious, and the tension between public codes (languages) and private passions, but her exploration of these issues is never simply 'thematic' – it seeks to demonstrate how Ford's changing attitudes to these issues are revealed in the actual texture of his prose and in the key alterations to his fictional modes. For a writer who was so obsessed with the nitty-gritty minutiae of narrative technique, Haslam's clear-sighted concentration on the *detail* of his work is valuable indeed. She argues compellingly that in Ford's later texts – as a result of his shattering war experiences – he created fictional realities in which the passions that had been repressed in earlier novels and projected on to women could be liberated and articulated, with the result that the fragmentation inherent in modernity could be reclaimed for desire. Ford saw himself as a historian of his age; his task was to depict the realities of his time without judging them. Resolutely non-didactic and anti-moralistic, impressionism was the perfect means for putting across his often baffled perceptions of a rapidly changing world. But impressionism was not solely interested in the fractured sensibility. Haslam's nicely judged and persuasive monograph makes us see the cultural dislocation is just one aspect of Ford's multitudinous fictional world, which, more positively, may also offer 'ways to counter and to represent the fragmentations and realignments of the new age' (p. 200).

Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, illustrations, pp. x + 343, £45, £15.95 pb.

The literature of travel is becoming an academic subject. There is always the danger that this trend squeezes out a spontaneous enjoyment of reading other people's experiences and observations. But when we consider the Book of Exodus, Homer's *Odyssey* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* we can see a long connection between travel and literature. Travel pieces have been a by-product of many nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers – Dickens, Thackeray, Henry James, D. H. Lawrence, W. H. Auden, Evelyn Waugh. It therefore makes sense to apply standards of critical enquiry and analysis to travel literature.

The volume under review is the latest of the Cambridge Companions to Literature. It is divided into three parts. The first is a rough chronological survey. The second focuses on particular areas. The third considers topics – gender, ethnography and theory. The editors limit themselves to works written in English, or easily available through translation into English. A final section has a list of travel works from 1500 to 2000. There is thus some ethnocentricity that could be corrected by examination of impressions of Britain and America recorded by outsiders.

The historical section shows how travel developed either from medieval pilgrimage and from the excitement of the novelty of newly discovered places to an institutionalisation of travel, culturally for an elite in the eighteenth century or collectively for the masses in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The second section on areas show how different places have been interpreted by successive writers – from the Middle East and Arabia to America and California. If 'the past' and 'a foreign country' are identical, then it is possible to look at travel literature in the way that history writing has been critically appraised. We read Macaulay no longer for an understanding of seventeenth-century Britain but rather to understand how an early Victorian viewed the past and contributed a vigorous idea of historical identity to his generation. Similarly travel literature reveals the writer and his background as much as the subject of his/her journeys.

The volume is particularly illuminating on the remoter locations. Neil L. Whitehead on South America and Rod Edmond on the Pacific show how travellers were looking for dreams – Amazon women and Eldorado in the former, unspoilt and care-free people on a desert island in the latter. Susan Basnett argues that travel was part of a man's world, and women's roles have in the last generation been reassessed. Individual pioneers like Isabella Bird and Mary Kingsley had to fight for recognition. In the twentieth century Freya Stark was able to exploit her femininity by occupying Middle East worlds of both sexes – men's public space and women's private worlds – in a way that was denied to men.

The impact of Edward Said's *Orientalism* has affected all who look at travel writing. His targets were often travellers of the nineteenth century, and his work has made critics reassess writers and their relationship with their subjects. Billie Melman explores how 'Arabia' became an idea of a pristine and authentic way of life – not unlike the South Sea islands. Unfortunately her essay is full of silly mistakes. There are five pillars of Islam, not seven – an interesting slip showing a subconscious influence of T. E. Lawrence. Lawrence's celebrity status was not created by *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (which was not *published* until after his death) but by the lecture

tours of Lowell Thomas. The oil crisis was 1973, not 1978.

The greatest merit of this Companion is its appreciation of contemporary travel writing. Robyn Davidson, William Dalrymple, P. J. O'Rourke, V. S. Naipaul, Sara Wheeler, Colin Thubron all show that the genre is flourishing as never before. Even though there are fewer places to 'explore', the ways of looking at people and places are unlimited. As Freya Stark once wrote, It is not what you see but how you see it that matters. And, one may add, how you communicate that perception to others.

London

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