

Reviews

Denise N. Baker (ed.), *Inscribing the Hundred Years' War in French and English Cultures*, State University of New York Press, 2000, pp. ix + 277, \$68.50, \$22.95 pb.

This collection of eleven essays comprises four pieces reprinted from elsewhere, albeit sometimes with revisions, two pieces which began as papers at the International Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo 1994), and five further contributions accompanied by an introduction by the editor. Essentially the focus is on literary works of the period of the Hundred Years' War. As the editor notes, 'This period of hostilities coincided with a remarkable efflorescence of vernacular literature in both countries.' Six of the papers consider English texts, three French, with a concluding paper by Ellen Cladwell which covers both (but so widely in chronological terms that it appears superficial and out of context). Some of the essays are impressively sensitive to context. This is particularly so in Earl Jeffrey Richards's discussion, 'The uncertainty in defining France as a nation in the works of Eustace Deschamps', which ends with a reminder of the French poet's praise of Chaucer's eloquence 'as though to stress that the literary republic is still undivided'. Michelle Szkilnik's study of the less studied, but contemporarily well known, French poem, *Cleliadus et Meliadice*, also emphasises dreams of a united Europe based on chivalric and courtly links, suggesting that the work was produced at the very time an Anglo-French truce was being negotiated in the early 1440s. A conclusion is suggested that the writer of this work, like Froissart, 'believed that literature had the capacity to influence reality'. Other contributions take this last notion as read, accepting also without question the impact of events on specific literary composition. Many give the impression of trying rather too hard to create links between history and literature. This is at its most extreme in Judith Fenster's argument that Chaucer's

tale of Melibee was essentially a pro-Richard II and anti-Appellant work, but it is also to be found in an essay by Anne Culkus and Julia M. Walker which was originally published in 1996, where they redate the *Ditie de Jeanne d'Arc* to make it fit their understanding of the military and political activities of late 1429 and 1430. As Angus Kennedy has argued elsewhere (*Au Champ des Escriptions*, ed. E. Hicks, Paris 2000), there is no real reason to doubt the truth of the date which Christine herself gives for her composition (31 July 1429), especially when she commonly provided dates of completion for her other works, dates which critics have not seen to require correction. R. F. Yeager is on firmer ground in his suggestions that Gower was influenced by changes in Anglo-French relations, showing how this was reflected in the pattern of language usage adopted by the writer. John M. Bower is keen to demonstrate how Chaucer's career phases also match 'the contours of England's shifting military and diplomatic relations with France', but imposes an over rigorous pattern on the matter. Denise N. Baker focuses on lines in the A and B text of *Piers Ploughman* which show opposition to the treaty of Brétigny, suggesting that Langland may have been the first to comment on the storm of 14 April as a factor in Edward III's volte face from aggressor to peacemaker. But her conclusion suggesting that Langland was keen to expose the greed of the warrior class is strained.

In general the volume highlights the problem of 'literature and history'. Literary specialists rarely understand enough of the historical nuances; historians are ignorant of literary forms and tradition. In this respect the most successful paper in the volume is Susan Crane's 'Gender and Clothing Definition: Joan of Arc', which is reprinted from the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* of 1996 and which is much wider than its title suggests, providing an in-depth analysis of what Joan of Arc's wearing of male attire meant to her and to her contemporaries. Overall, this volume is likely to be of interest to those working on texts of the period but historians such as myself may remain sceptical of the emphasis on so many works as 'pièces d'occasion'.

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Anne Curry

Richard Firth Green, *A Crisis of Truth: Literature and Law in Ricardian England*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999, pp. xvi + 496, £59.50.

The 'crisis of truth' in Richard II's reign is a change in the meaning of the keyword 'trouth'. Already a term with many shades of meaning, no less than thirteen being identified in the Middle English Dictionary, 'trouth' moved from predominantly legal to ethical senses, from 'something like integrity' to its modern sense of 'conformity to fact'. Green substantiates his hypothesis with copious literary references from the Anglo-Saxon era onwards. Far from being purely semantic, so he argues, this change was a far-reaching consequence of the 'rapid spread of vernacular literacy' and itself generated 'a fundamental shift in popular attitudes to the nature of evidence and proof'. Its significance extends far beyond the reign of Richard II or the earlier centuries on which Green dwells. Much of the book is not literary at all, as Green explores the place of token and symbol, of oaths and promises, and especially of law in a society fundamentally different from our own. What was happening, he argues, was a decline in popular conceptions of social organisation and justice – popular in

the sense that they were shared by all, not purely by the common people – towards regulation top-down by the authoritarian law and justice of the king. The king's law and the king's judges were intruders into local self-regulation, an earlier system of legal order which Green calls 'the folklaw'. The Peasants Revolt was thus a clash between alternative systems. The arbitrations recently discovered and lauded by fifteenth-century historians were actually an attenuated survival from earlier systems of conflict resolution that succumbed to our modern adversarial litigation, which magnifies differences rather than defuses them. In a society in which 'plighting one's troth', contracting on oath, was almost universal, applicable from marriage vows to commercial bargains, indentured retaining, the coronation of kings, and prayers to God, perjury was the most fundamental and dishonourable of faults. Perjury was indeed the primary meaning of treason. 'He that wikked conseil yeveth is a traytour', says Chaucer's Parson, 'For he deceyveth hym that trusteth in hym'. The definition of treason imposed by the Statute of Treasons in 1352 failed to eradicate earlier notions, which made a traitor even of Richard II in 1399 and of Henry VI's councillors in 1450. The Cotterel, Folville and Robin Hood's gangs were not instances of 'social crime', local exceptions to national norms, but rather majority attitudes that were only slowly to be vanquished by written laws and professional lawyers. Many of the orthodoxies about English social and legal development are thus questioned or overturned in this immensely learned, wide-ranging and remarkably lucid book, which combines an exceptional richness of example and citation with anthropological parallels from the modern Nigerian novel. If many of the examples and indeed hypotheses deserve more detailed scrutiny than is possible here, this brilliant book is of fundamental importance for scholars of medieval English law and history as well as of English literature.

King Alfred's College, Winchester

Michael Hicks

Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. viii + 235, £35.

At the time when literary scholars are bedazzled by critical theory, it is a pleasure to read a book about women and romance fiction in the English Renaissance which emphasizes content over hypothesis. When Helen Hackett examines prose romance fiction and the women who read it, she provides a clearly written text with historical authenticity as well as a well informed commentary on feminist criticism.

In the opening chapters, Hackett examines the continuing debate about the number of female readers of the new genre of prose fiction in the last quarter of the sixteenth century who often are addressed in epistles and dedications as 'gentlewomen', meaning women readers of middle rank in society. David Cressy's argument that no more than ten percent of the women could read, based on the assumption that a mark on a legal document signals female illiteracy, is viewed as a huge understatement by many historians. In Shakespeare's romantic plays, a mirror of Elizabethan social practice, ladies repeatedly demonstrate skills of reading and letter writing. Literate female protagonists in comedies, aristocratic as well as middling, include Julia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Kate and Bianca in the *Shrew* and, Portia, Rosalind and, in tragedy, Lady

Macbeth. On the other hand, servants like Jacquenetra are illiterate, and men whose rank is below middling, like Bottom and Dogberry, are lightly satirized for their pompous attempts at literacy.

The romantic fiction which appealed to feminine readers in the English Renaissance centred on the adventures of knights and ladies in foreign exotic lands or in some distant mythic history. It often includes stories with marvellous supernatural interventions, amazing twists of fate, clothed in high rhetoric, characterized by verbal artifice rather than natural speech. Fiction, which began with relatively brief novella, expanded to prose narratives of great length and complexity. Paradoxically, Hackett points out, on the long list of fiction romances discussed here, only two are the work of women, one a translation, *The Mirror of Knighthood*, translated from Spanish by Mary Tyler (1587) and the other *Urania* (1621), an original work written by Mary Wroth.

Although the number of female readers, Helen Hackett agrees, may have been small in the 1560s and 1570s, the number of readers increased towards the end of the century, and in the next they include Sidney's sister, Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, and her friends. Although these women would read, write letters and keep journals, they seldom comment on individual reading habits, perhaps in response to public sentiment that reading romances was evidence of idleness and folly. Hackett adds a new category of readers of romance fiction, the men themselves, who may have been impishly attracted to reading (perhaps as voyeurs) with the hope of learning the secrets of the ladies themselves.

Having established the popularity and commercial success of Renaissance fiction for readers, Helen Hackett investigates the romances themselves, their content and appeal, beginning with the novellas of the 1560s and 70s and Spanish and Portuguese romances, followed by fictions addressed to women by Lyly, Rich and Greene. She addresses Sidney's *Arcadia* at length, beginning with the *Old Arcadia*, the revised 1590 *Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, and spurious additions written following Sidney's death. In each group, Hackett explores the heroic and the fantastic, topics which appeal to women and men as readers.

Spenser receives but brief attention here, as *The Faerie Queene* is certainly a romance with heroic passages, but Hackett finds that Spenser's approach to women tends to focus on external realities, not inner. Shakespeare's romance sources also receive attention. Hackett concludes with analysis of Sidney's Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*, the only romance written by a woman, a *romance à clef* which shadows the author and her circle.

Woman and Renaissance Fiction in the English Renaissance is thorough and comprehensive. Helen Hackett is mindful of history as well as current feminist criticism. Her remarks are intelligent and insightful, and they make a significant contribution to the study of Renaissance prose fiction.

Daniel J. Vitkus (ed.), *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England: Selimus, A Christian Turned Turk, The Renegado*, Columbia University Press, 2000, pp. 358, £31.50, £12 pb.

In recent years Nabil Matar in two books, *Islam in Britain 1558–1685* (Cambridge University Press, 1989) and *Turks, Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (Columbia University Press, 1999), has challenged received ideas about English relations with Islam and Muslims in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His colleague at the Florida Institute of Technology, Daniel J. Vitkus, has now edited three of the texts cited by Matar, that disclose an awareness and even intimacy with the world of Islam.

Both Matar and Vitkus show that trade and piracy in the western Mediterranean led to British individuals being familiar with the customs of Muslims in North Africa. Some were taken captive and ransomed. Others voluntarily entered the service of Muslim rulers, transferring the latest military technology. Piracy was a hazardous but not illegal venture. Some pirates of the time acquired heroic status. Ships from Islamic countries raided the coasts of England. Individuals from Islamic countries settled in London. The formal economic relations paralleled England's official diplomatic and economic policies. Morocco was seen as a potential ally against Spain. Although Ottoman advances in Eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean could be presented as an early 'clash of civilisations', royal patronage at the same time encouraged Levantine trade with the countries of the Ottoman Empire. Travellers brought back the idea of the Turkish bath. Coffee-houses mushroomed in London. These centuries also saw the early growth of scholarly Islamic and Arabic studies. Commerce and ideology were the driving forces behind the foundation of chairs of Arabic at Cambridge and Oxford. That at Cambridge was founded by a 'Turkey merchant'. That at Oxford by Archbishop Laud.

There was also a literary and popular interest. Robert Greene's *Selimus* was published in 1594 and is about the rise to power of the Ottoman Emperor, Salim 'the Grim', who murdered his way to power, consolidated the Empire and extended Ottoman rule over Syria and Egypt at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Greene was well-informed on the events of the reign, though his Turkish characters are soaked in an improbable classical heritage – a Hellenic heritage that, paradoxically, grew in geographical Turkey. Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*, published in 1612, tells the contemporary story of one of the 'notorious' pirates, John Ward, his conversion to Islam and his deeds in Tunis. Ward, a fisherman from Faversham, became rich and powerful in service to the infidel. He was the subject of popular pamphlets and did not die the death given him by Daborne. *The Renegado* by Philip Massinger, published in 1623, is also about merchants and renegades in Tunis. It is fast-moving and has observations of the contrasting attitudes towards sexual relations and apostasy. All three plays expressed popular perceptions of the 'Turk' and the Muslim 'other'. They are no better or worse than many other expressed views, in sermons or travellers' tales. But individual Muslims face the same dilemmas as Christians – conflicts of loyalties and interests. The plays present a plurality of 'others': Jews and Muslims as well as European adventurers operated in the souks of Tunis.

Daniel Vitkus, who was for six years Assistant Professor of English at the American University in Cairo, argues that the plays show that misreadings and misunderstandings

of Islamic society go back a long way. His editing is almost impeccable. The texts of the plays are modernised and readable. Notes are clear and comprehensive. He includes a number of contemporary pictures and prints popular ballads about the famous/notorious pirate, Captain Ward.

London

Peter Clark

Lena Cowen Orlin (ed.), *Material London c. 1600*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000, pp. ix + 393, \$65, \$26.50 pb; **Elizabeth McKellar**, *The Birth of Modern London: The Development and Design of the City, 1660–1720*, Manchester University Press, 1999, pp. xvii + 245, £45, £17.99 pb.

Material London is a splendid collection of sixteen articles, all of which, but one, were originally presented at a conference held at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC in the spring of 1995. Rarely does one see in a single volume so much learning from such a variety of disciplines – archaeology as well as history, literary history as well as economic history. Usually a collective work of this kind would almost inevitably lack a structural unity. However, with material London *c. 1600* as the central focus, the articles, heterogeneous though they are in the individual approaches and interpretations, do manifest, as Dr Orlin points out in this skilfully edited volume, ‘a multivalent cogency’.

Part I consists of three articles, each of which addresses itself respectively to one of the three component elements of the book’s title. Using the Hobbesian concept of matter in motion, David Harris Sacks surveys London’s tremendous population growth in the early modern period and development as a primate city. He combines these general observations with an account of ‘two tales of metropolitan dominion’, the abortive rebellion of the Earl of Essex in 1601 and the Morris dance of Will Kemp from London to Norwich in 1600. In ‘Material London in time and space’ Derek Keene chooses to look at London in ‘its spatial and chronological context’. London’s role as a centre of trade and material consumption as well as the national capital of royal government and administration goes back to the thirteenth century. Not until 1700, however, when London took over the position which had formerly been occupied by Antwerp and Amsterdam, Keene concludes, was London, rebuilt after the Great Fire, on the way to establishing a commanding international position in the new Atlantic economy.

Four articles discuss the influence of London as a centre of trade and its consumer culture in Part II. Joan Thirsk’s absorbing essay on ‘London’s provinces’ uncovers a reciprocal process in which the provinces both ‘served’ and ‘drove’ the consumer culture in London. While the introduction of new tastes and fashions into rural areas by gentry families moving back and forth to Westminster made demands on the local community to satisfy and consequently changed the market economy in the countryside, local communities with their embedded traditions in some rural industries had skills to be exploited, when the time was ripe, to become a driving force in the consumer market in London. In ‘Fantastical Colors in Foggy London’ Jane Schneider examines the changing fashion of colouration from the sober black and white of the Elizabethan era to the peacock splendour of the reign of James I, with the year 1600

‘as a metaphorical divide’. Similarly in ‘Rugges of London and the Divell’s Band’, Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass use the adoption of the Irish mantle and yellow starch, both of which had been identified with Irishness and incivility, to reveal that ‘the fashionable Londoner of 1600 was ... implicated in international trade, competing ideologies of nationality, and unstable mixture of style’. Jean Howard’s essay, ‘Women, foreigners and the regulation of urban space in *Westward Ho*’, deals with the subtle metamorphosis of anti-immigrant sentiment in London: from fear of economic competition to resentment of the insinuation of foreign ways into English life and eventually to a new understanding of what constituted ‘Englishness’.

The underlying theme in Part III is the social hierarchy and urban sensibilities of the residents of early modern London. In ‘Material Londoners?’ Ian Archer demonstrates that the City fathers were keenly aware of the increasing wealth and commercialisation of their city, an understanding clearly revealed in the shift from the morality tradition to the celebration of commercial wealth itself in their civic pageants and ceremonies. In ‘Purgation as the allure of mastery’ Gail Kern Paster argues that ‘the specifics of cathartic practice – what drugs were administered to whom, by whom, and for what physical, psychological, and social ends – became markers of status’ and the subject of satire in city comedies like *The Family of Love*. While Archer and Paster speak of commercial wealth and conspicuous consumption in Elizabethan and Jacobean London, Patricia Fumerton calls attention to the London poor, placing them in their own space, ‘a spaciousness of itinerancy, fragmentation, disconnection, and multiplicity that produces a very different topographical mapping of social relations’. In its most general sense vagrancy was pervasive in the capital. ‘For many, to be a Londoner in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was to experience a degree of alienation and anonymity’.

In Part IV the articles deal with the attraction of London’s material culture, the playhouses, and the urban palaces of the aristocracy. In her essay ‘Inside/Out: women, domesticity, and the pleasures of the city’, Alice T. Friedman examines Elizabethan country houses such as Wollaton Hall in Nottinghamshire and Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire as London ‘institutions’ transplanted into rural England. Linda Levy Peck emphasises the new aristocratic culture – British, urban and international – of the reign of James I in her article ‘Building, buying and collecting in London, 1600–25’. Three articles are placed in Part V under the general title ‘Building the City’. John Schofield’s essay ‘The topography and buildings of London c. 1600’ gives a panoramic view of the City and its surroundings. Drawing information from a variety of sources including archaeological excavations, surviving building structures, documentary records, drawn surveys, panoramas and maps, Schofield takes the reader on a learned guided tour of the capital. In ‘John Day and the bookshop that never was’ Peter Glayney focuses on the bookshops in St Paul’s Churchyard and especially on the bitter jurisdictional disputes surrounding the proposed building of a bookshop for John Day at the churchyard’s northeast corner. ‘Boundary disputes in early modern London’ by the editor Lena Cowen Orlin gives an interesting account of the daily living conditions of ordinary London tradesmen and craftsmen. From sources such as the reports and judgements of the London Viewers in the middle of the sixteenth century, the early seventeenth century London property surveys drawn by Ralph Treswell, records of livery companies and parish churches, as well as an account book concerning some properties in the City, Orlin explores the regular conflicts to which shared spaces and shared facilities gave rise.

If *Material London ca. 1600* is a fine collective work on London's material culture, *The Birth of Modern London* by Elizabeth McKellar is an admirable monograph on the development and design of the capital in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As any architectural study of this era would have to respond to the interpretations of Sir John Summerson in his classic *Georgian London*, McKellar acknowledges that her study takes 'the form of a sustained dialogue with him', 'a critique of' as well as 'a homage to' a famous predecessor in the field. In her introduction McKellar gives a succinct historiographical discussion of her subject, with her own themes carefully defined and her methods of research forcibly and convincingly presented and defended. Her study sets out to 'explore the relationship between process and form' and 'contribute towards the beginnings of an alternative history of architectural reception and perception in Britain'.

The book is divided into two main parts. Part I, which consists of five chapters, deals with the development of London. She opens by using contemporary maps and plans by Wenceslaus Hollar, John Kip and John Stripe and contemporary descriptions by Evelyn, Addison and Defoe to give a vivid picture of London's expansion. This is followed by four chapters on the process of the 'making' of London in the period 1660–1720, dealing with the developers, the complicated leasing arrangements, the imposition of greater standardisation, and the actual builders. In Part II the first two chapters are devoted to the 'design' of the new London housing to test the assumption that there was a separation between design and the building process as such. McKellar's argument is that much of the design process actually took place on site; 'it was incremental, empirical and not solely paper-based'. Chapter 8 deals with the central theme of this study: the emergence of a new prototype for urban housing in the two decades after 1660. This new brick architecture was transitional in that it combined 'traditional elements with new classical features ... It has remained the model for domestic housing to the present day'.

These two books, complementary and interdisciplinary in origin and significance, are substantial additions to the historical literature of early modern London. They should be read by all those interested in London's social and cultural history.

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Tai Liu

Kevin Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England: The Culture of Seventeenth-century Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, xvii + 475 pp., £50.00, £17.95 pb.

Kevin Sharpe's main aim in publishing another volume of his collected essays is to persuade historians of early modern England to address 'a new agenda' that, if followed, he believes would result in a radical transformation in the way most historians now interpret the period. Whether or not he will succeed is uncertain, but if he fails it will not be for want of trying. During the last ten years he has exhorted his fellow historians in essays and review articles (eleven of which are reprinted here) to move on from what he calls 'the stale debates over revisionism' that consumed their attentions for much of the late 1970s and 1980s and to take more account of the work of literary critics and art historians of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. Now, in

the only new essay in this new book, 'Remapping early modern England: from revisionism to the culture of politics', his calls are more insistent than ever. He presses historians to 'move from politics conceived (anachronistically) as the business of institutions, bureaucracies and officers to the broader politics of discourse and symbols, anxieties and aspirations, myths and memories' (p. 3).

His broad interdisciplinary aim of bringing together the scholarship of literary critics, art historians and political historians is one that no doubt readers of this journal will support as wholeheartedly as does this reviewer. But there are reasons to doubt whether Sharpe has produced 'the map' that will guide others to this goal. One is that even Sharpe himself clearly finds it difficult to move on from old 'stale debates'. In many of the essays in this collections he snipes at old adversaries, like Nicholas Tyacke, Johanne Sommerville and Richard Cust, in the debates over revisionism which he professes to want to leave behind. On p. 425 Patrick Collinson, who probably knows more about puritans than any other historian, is accused (without any explanation) of being 'almost certainly wrong in the case of puritans'. Second, and more seriously, Sharpe has not succeeded in defining clearly what is the history of 'political culture' or 'the culture of politics' that he wants historians to write. Historians sympathetic to his interdisciplinary aims need a more well-defined 'map' than the broad guide given in these essays, of which the sentence from page 3 quoted above is typical. Sharpe's point that historians should use literary and visual evidence that has often been ignored is well made. In a superb essay in this book, "An image dotting rabble": the failure of republican culture in seventeenth-century England', he shows how the use of this kind of evidence can throw new light on the nature of the republican regimes of the 1650s and the impact that they had in permanently changing the political order in seventeenth-century Britain. Nor is Sharpe alone; other historians of early modern Britain have exploited texts and sources more commonly used by literary critics and art historians. Sean Kelsey's *Inventing a Republic: The Political Culture of the English Commonwealth 1649–53* (1997), which is not cited by Sharpe, is a good example of what is being done. So too are the writings of Alistair Bellany, Pauline Croft, Dagmar Freist and others, on the expansion of 'the public sphere' and the growth of popular political awareness in the seventeenth century. These represent one new and exciting way in which the history of early modern Britain has moved on from the debates over revisionism in the 1980s. But there are many others, like the work of Mike Braddick that places early modern British history in the context of debates about state formation, and like the writings of Steve Hindle and other young social historians that promise to restore a social context to the political and religious history of the period. Those who re-write and revise that history would be advised to take account of many more 'maps' than Kevin Sharpe's.

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Barry Coward

Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780, Volume II: Shaftesbury to Hume*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, xiv + 386 pp., £45.00.

In the first volume of *Reason, Grace and Sentiment*, published in 1991, Isabel Rivers examined the changing attitudes of the Reformation doctrine of grace in the century

after 1660 in response to the influential 'latitudinarian' emphasis on reason and free will. In the second volume of her discussion of the relationship between religion and ethics in the long eighteenth century, she turns her attention to the tension between reason and sentiment from the 1690s as some moralists attempted to separate ethics from religion. The four main chapters of the new volume focus on the thinkers who, in her opinion, made the most important contributions to this debate: the freethinkers, notably Toland, Tindal and Collins (ch. 1); Shaftesbury (ch. 2); Hutcheson, Butler, Price and other 'Shaftesburians' (ch. 3); and Hume (ch. 4). Two features in particular distinguish Rivers' approach to her subject. The first is her close readings of the major texts. The accounts which she provides of her chosen moralists are models of clarity and illumination, while remaining sensitive to the complexities of their thought. In part the success of these accounts can be explained by the second important feature of Rivers' approach, her preoccupation with issues of style – not for nothing are the volumes sub-titled 'A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics'. Thus, it is through an examination of the rhetorical practices of the freethinkers that she brings out, most convincingly, their anti-christian meaning. Similarly, the discussion of the style of Shaftesbury, the dominating figure of the volume, plays a crucial part in explaining how his work came to be christianized by some (notably English dissenters and moderates in the Church of Scotland) and denounced by others as destructive of true religion. Indeed, it is the subtleties and paradoxes of Rivers' account that make this volume so compelling. Some of the most important critics of Shaftesbury's influence were to be found among the representatives of the Lockean and latitudinarian tradition at Cambridge, including Edmund Law and William Paley, who rejected the Shaftesburian moral sense tradition and insisted that the only foundation of moral obligation was 'the Divine Will' (p. 334). Ironically, however, as Rivers points out in her concluding chapter, a new Cambridge school, within which William Whewell was prominent, came to see the works of Paley as undermining Christianity and turned to the Shaftesburian tradition, as represented by Joseph Butler, to resist its influence. Like most good books, this one leaves some questions unanswered. What, for example, was going on at Oxford? (Perhaps the answer is nothing.) It is a worthy partner to its widely-acclaimed predecessor. Together they constitute a major contribution to our understanding of eighteenth-century moral thought. They represent interdisciplinary scholarship at its best, and will remain essential reading for students of history, theology and literature for many years.

University of Reading

Stephen Taylor

Lori Anne Ferrell and Peter McCullough (eds), *The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and History, 1600–1750*, Manchester University Press, 2000, pp. x + 270, £48.

This book – comprising an introduction by the editors and ten essays – makes a timely appearance. It reflects the revival of interest in religious history in the last twenty years, and current matters of interest, such as ideas of discourse and Habermas's 'public sphere'. Readers of this periodical will find it a rewarding volume: it is genuinely interdisciplinary in its approach. the essays – and particularly Tony Claydon's (on the

‘public sphere’) – argue for the importance of sermons in early modern English culture, and the editors and contributors advance methodologies for studying them in their literary and historical contexts.

The essays cover a range of topics. Andrew Fitzmaurice examines the Virginia Company sermons, emphasizing the ideological, and not the material, rationale for its enterprises. Bryan Crockett compares Thomas Playfere’s preaching with the contemporary theatrical practice, and two essays, by Debora Shuger and Jeanne Shami, examine John Donne’s sermons. Peter Lake sensitively explores the rhetoric of moderation in early Stuart court sermons, and James Rigney, in an essay on sermons, print, and the Civil Wars, asks important questions – for instance, how far was a sermon’s spirit retained when printed? Mary Morrissey, continuing the assault on William Haller’s thinking, analyses the Jeremiads preached at Paul’s Cross, and argues that their comparison between the Jews and the English, far from reassuringly casting the latter as a most favoured nation, alarmingly prophesied England’s downfall, mirroring the crushing and scattering of the Jews, were not sin eschewed. Yet how representative were these Jeremiads of the sermons comparing England and Israel?

There are certain weaknesses. In particular, given that the volume’s terminal date is 1750, it is disappointing that only one essay – that of James Caudle (on preaching in Parliament between 1701 and 1760) – deals properly with the eighteenth century. This imbalance is reflected in the introduction, and here there is a missed opportunity given the arguments of Jonathan Clark, among others, for the continuing vitality of Anglicanism, and religion generally, in Georgian England. It is also unhelpful, with text-based essays, to have the notes at the end of chapters. More could have been said about routine sermons, and, above all, the rôle of all sermons in the struggle to save souls – there is very little about this in the volume, and this is a conspicuous gap. Some methodological issues deserved further discussion. How far should a sermon be regarded as a preacher’s rounded view of a topic, and how far merely what he thought his congregation should hear? What can be said about congregations’ reception of, and responses to, sermons? Arnold Hunt attempts to uncover this when examining sermons and Essex’s revolt, but the sources present many difficulties. Probably no methodology can satisfactorily overcome this problem, so, usually, one must be content with the view from the pulpit rather than the pews.

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Colin Haydon

Amanda Gilroy (ed.), *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel, 1775–1844*, Manchester University Press, 2000, pp. xii + 260, £17.99; **Chloe Chard**, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography, 1600–1830*, Manchester University Press, 1999, pp. ix + 278, £45.

Romantic Geographies is part of the Manchester University Press’s Exploring Travel series. Chloe Chard, a contributor to this volume, describes at the beginning of her own book on *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour*, also published by Manchester, how visiting an archive of travel writings in Rome changed the course of her academic life. She swapped English country house novels for travel writings. I suspect that many of the other contributors could tell a similar story about their own academic travels.

There is a freshness and excitement about both these books that reflects the fact that many of the writers have travelled hopefully and eventually arrived at a relatively new subject which inspires them. Manchester is to be congratulated on providing something approaching home for these restless pioneers.

Romantic Geographies is a very well-edited volume. The essays are short and crisp. Although many of them as might be expected draw on post-colonial theories, the writing on the whole is not as dense as is sometimes the case in this area. The volume, which is clearly introduced and organised, covers the period between the decline of the Grand Tour and the rise of railway travel. It is influenced by what is sometimes known as new Romanticism: some of the familiar male poets are discussed, but more room is given to writers who have been either marginalised or else almost completely forgotten. Keith Hanley explores the routes that led Wordsworth to Rome. Saree Samir Makdasi considers some of the ways in which P. B. Shelley's *Alastor* deconstructs itself. Jane Sadler highlights the subversive nature of some of Byron's notes to *Childe Harold*.

This interesting work on the Romantic poets takes place alongside the recovery of more marginalised writers. Priscilla Wakefield's *A Family Tour ...* was a popular book at the time but relatively unknown now. Jacqueline M. Labbe suggests that, although Wakefield appears to be following the accepted protocols for the female traveller, she may at times have also been drawing attention to some of their restrictions. Mariana Starke's *Letters from Italy ...* is credited by Jeanne Moskal as establishing a template for the well-known guidebooks like Baedeker that were produced later in the century. Starke is seen as a crafty, quirky and deeply ambitious writer who, like Wakefield, may be hiding these things behind acceptable masks.

Those interested in women travellers and travel-writers will find many more good readings in this volume. Sara Mills (one of the editors of the Exploring Travel series) discusses how Mary Wollstonecraft negotiates the male discourses of the picturesque and sublime in her account of her Scandinavian journey. Dorothy McMillan shows that Ann Radcliffe had not gone mad as was rumoured after the publication of *The Italian* in 1797. Between then and her death in 1823 she was touring the Lake District and elsewhere. The impact of real landscapes may have prevented her from inhabiting imaginary ones. Chris Jones, unlike some other critics, sees Helen Maria Williams's *Letters from France* as being audacious in its range. She too may at times have worn an acceptable mask (in this case sensibility), but this did not prevent her from actively supporting Girondist political programmes and dealing with military matters. Beth Dolan Kautz considers the way in which Mary Shelley's *Rambles in Germany and Italy ...* offers a critique of the construction of the sick woman, by spa doctors and others, while never entirely freeing itself from these male medical discourses.

Wollstonecraft went to Scandinavia to try to recover a considerable sum of money that was owed to her lover, Gilbert Imlay. W. M. Verhoeven argues that Imlay's *A Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America* is also about cash. The writer is part promoter and part peddler. Clare Brant indicates another of the roles assumed by male travellers in her reading of Sir Nathaniel Wraxall's *Cursory Remarks ...*: that of peeper, or voyeur. This essay, which concludes with a discussion of *Frankenstein*, shows the elasticity of some of the supposedly fixed points in travel writing: north and south, hot and cold. Nigel Leask tells a detective story about how Francis Wilford's scholarly work on Hindu culture was based on forged documents fed to him by a native collaborator. This was perhaps a case, as Amanda Gilroy

wonders in her introduction, of the empire striking back. As it is never possible in a short review like this to do justice to individual essays or to a volume as a whole, I probably need to emphasise again that this is an excellent collection that is well-edited and well-produced.

Chloe Chard's contribution to *Romantic Geographies* is a good account of how women like Emma Lady Hamilton, who posed and paraded as historical characters, became tourist attractions. It also deals with that moment when Lady Mary Wortley Montagu shows off her stays to Turkish women in a bath-house: the spectator becomes the spectacle. A version of this material is also to be found in Chard's book about the Grand Tour. This book is primarily concerned with the narrative structures to be found in travel writing. It looks, for instance, at the ways in which, structurally, writers from the Renaissance through to Romanticism deal with apparent differences between the familiar and the foreign. Perhaps, on reflection, the foreign turns out to be just an intensification of the familiar. Some writers embrace the foreign, and the destabilising dangers that it brings with it. Others clutch at narrative devices such as itemization and naming to keep the foreign at bay. Moving on quickly is another ploy: if it's Tuesday, this must be Belgium. The traveller, who enjoys surviving danger, and the tourist, who has strategies for avoiding it, are seen as being very different creatures. Chard reads her texts attentively and imaginatively, particularly the earlier material on Italy (although having said this the readings of Montagu and of Byron are also very persuasive). The argument is less secure, for instance in the last chapter on tourism, where there is a need for historical contextualisation that moves beyond the tokenistic. Both these books are in fact quite writerly in their concerns. There were a number of occasions when I wanted to know much more about publishers, reviewers and, above all, readers. I am sure that the Manchester University Press and its team of academic travellers will boldly go to these places before too long. In summary: Gilroy's edition is excellent and very much a model of how such a volume should be produced; Chard's monograph (although not her chapter in this volume) is more uneven particularly towards the end, and yet is still an exciting and committed book.

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Daniel Sanjiv Roberts, *Revisionary Gleam: De Quincey, Coleridge and the High Romantic Argument*, Liverpool University Press, 2000, pp. xxii + 311, £34, £16.00 pb.; **John Whale**, *Imagination under Pressure, 1789–1832: Aesthetics, Politics and Utility*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. xii + 240, £37.50.

Daniel Roberts' book is essentially a repackaging of a doctoral dissertation, John Whale's is the final distillation of many years' thinking and writing about its topic, but by very different routes both authors converge in a thorough reassessment of 'High Romantic Argument' and its supposed apostles.

Imagination Under Pressure focuses on Burke, Paine, Wollstonecraft, Hazlitt, Cobbett, and Coleridge. In a spirited rebuff to the notion of a monolithic 'Romantic Imagination' associated most readily with Jerome McGann, Whale suggests we look

instead at how imagination is deployed discursively at particular moments of cultural crisis, by particular writers, rather than at its assumed invariable qualities. As 'a means of articulating resistance' (11), but one with no predetermined ideological colouration of its own, it is an always dialogically defined term, always immersed in the messy, contentious world of cultural politics.

Whale's individual analyses amply demonstrate the instability of imagination – its capacity for challenging, complicating and unsettling arguments and beliefs across the political spectrum. For Burke, imagination is chiefly a passive faculty responding to aestheticised forms of power as though to a higher necessity; but at times as in his curious observations on the South Sea Bubble, he accords it a more positive role as a guarantor of individual freedom and dignity against the cold abstractions of the French revolutionaries. Paine's rational literalism seems remote from the theatricality and lush metaphoricity of Burke's prose, but his belief in the aesthetic as a fount of delusion and deceit falters in places – notably in his impassioned advocacy of representative government, where he himself strives 'to put the idealisms of man beyond nature' (65). In Wollstonecraft, imagination swings unnervingly between the false refinements of a bankrupt aristocratic culture and 'the unique hallmark of the divinity of the human mind' (90). Hazlitt distrusts imagination as a mediating factor in public affairs but prizes it as an unabashedly élitist creative faculty; with the explosion of print culture and the growing dominance of utilitarianism he is driven to separate the practical and ideal worlds ever more sharply. Cobbett puts utility above beauty in his descriptions of the countryside, but imagination reappears at the margins of his argument as he pursues his attack on the evil of paper currency: he 'wages war with what appears to be an invisible enemy and has to make it visible' (164). Coleridge's celebrated defence of the imagination increasingly stresses the culture of the individual rather than social improvement: is this an abandonment of his grand claims for a faculty that could mediate the dichotomies of modern culture, or, as Whale suggests, a 'strategic withdrawal' which allows it to retain its critical force in times of crisis?

Clearly, Whale believes that imagination still possesses such strategic force, pointing out its resilience in other disciplines despite being stripped of honours in literary studies. Its exclusion there looks insecure, once re-conceived – as in Whale's intricate, thought-provoking readings – as a locus of *différance*, a 'spectral or figurative capacity' (196) that changes its identity and function according to different discursive contexts. Whale's book invites comparison with Forest Pyle's *The Ideology of Imagination* (1995), which also investigates the social roles imagination is asked to perform, but its focus upon prose rather than poetry makes this a complementary rather than competitive relationship. It is good to see serious concepts treated with an equally serious and discriminating critical intelligence.

Daniel Robert's *Revisionary Gleam* attacks the High Romantic Argument through the different medium of a sophisticated, historically informed influence study, and aims to dislodge the received view of De Quincey's personal and creative subjection to Wordsworth by demonstrating the much closer textual relations that tie him to Coleridge. Roberts argues that critical tradition has obscured this line of influence, and intriguingly suggests it was assisted in this by the destruction of De Quincey's letters to Coleridge by the latter's trustees (angered by De Quincey's role in bringing to light Coleridge's early radicalism and opium addiction). Unusually extensive use is made of De Quincey's neglected political writings in the periodical press, and of his 1803 diary. Roberts gives a fascinating account of how De Quincey's reception of

Lyrical Ballads was mediated by a Liverpool literary society who were in close contact with Coleridge and were well placed to put the poems in their correct ideological context; furthermore, De Quincey's own youthful radicalism is asserted on the basis of his evident sympathy with the Tookean linguistics which, as others have shown, underpins the 'experimental' poetry of the *Ballads*.

In a searching discussion of De Quincey's underrated role in mediating German philosophy to an English audience, Roberts shows him initially associating Kant with the inferior books of 'knowledge', in his classic dichotomy, but later re-assimilating his work to the 'literature of power', allowing it a creative, synthetic function. De Quincey shared with Coleridge the difficulty of rendering Kant accessible to a British public preoccupied with business matters, and like Coleridge his essays follow the path of 'turning Kant's work to the nobler service of appreciating Wordsworth's poetry' (182). In his final chapter, Roberts considers how De Quincey's commentaries on German literature and aesthetics, his views on women writers, and his thoughts on poetic diction are all joined to a nationalistic critical agenda: language is one of the 'trophies of nationality' and style a means of advancing 'power' in actual colonial situations rather than some transcendental mental realm. This engrossing book assists the ongoing project of transforming De Quincey from one-dimensional Romantic bit-player to a rounded, complex, and politically ambiguous figure.

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