Reviews

Hayden White, edited and with an introduction by Robert Doran, *The Fiction of Narrative: essays on History, Literature and Theory, 1957–2007*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010, pp. xxiv + 382, US$30

For the half-century covered by this collection of essays Hayden White has been the figure with whom any scholar hoping seriously to engage with the concept of history as narrative has had to contend. White's own three-page preface to this collection is worth the price of admission alone. In it he sets out, mostly in propositional form, a manifesto for the varied, rich and ultimately coherent argument of his immense body of work.

Proposition one: 'history exists only in writing...You can carry around in your head all manner of facts and other kinds of information, but you do not have a history until you have brought all of this stuff together and written it up in a narrative or in an argument of some kind. Then and only then can you submit your history to other historians for assessment or criticism. These are the rules of the game in professional historiography.' Proposition two: the relationship between 'nature' and 'culture' is complex and subject to ongoing change. 'Scientists, it turns out, do not want history as they know it to change.' Proposition three: history belongs to many beyond its own 'professional' circle (White is keen to remind us of his formal affiliation not to history but to philology). 'Professional historians do not own the past, and they have no exclusive claim over the study of the way in which the past and the present may be brought together in a comprehensive vision of historical reality.' Proposition four: history has 'dramatistic,' rhetorical" and 'ethical' purposes. 'Very few of the great classics of historiography were undertaken out of disinterested motives, and most of them have been undertaken as a search for what the truth *means* for living people.' Proposition five: the prime value of historical study is as 'an antidote to ideology.' Moreover, in so far as historiography presents itself as scientific it has itself become an ideology, producing

'apathy…rather than a will to action. *Ergo*, proposition six: we should look to literature, and, for, example, the modern novel, as offering 'the spectacle of human self-making.' Following Aristotle 'history without poetry is inert, just as poetry without history is vapid.'

Doran's collection of twenty-three essays, drawn from a wide range of sources, and none previously anthologised, illustrates admirably the path towards these insights, independent of the blockbuster books along the road. These include not only *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (1973), but also the thematic collections of essays made by White himself in *Tropics of Discourse* (1978), *The Content of the Form* (1987) and *Figural Realism* (1999), as well as the co-authored two-volume *Intellectual History of Western Europe* (1962 and 1970). In his introduction, Doran teases out some of the by-ways through which White has glossed and developed this body of work. The result is to offer a kind of 'autobiography in essays' as well as a generally convincing response to White's critics. The humanistic vision of a 'belief in history' (combined with a 'neuralgic relationship with the field of historical studies'), structured around 'figural realism' and the 'concealed formalism' of White's characteristic mode of analysis, is built up carefully and convincingly.

The essays themselves are a treasure trove, and too extensive to be summarised let alone described in the space available here. Suffice it to say that for scholars wondering why White's reputation is so formidable they could hardly do better than to start with this collection.

Green Templeton College, Oxford **David Watson**

Lubomír Doležel, *Possible Worlds of Fiction and History: The Postmodern Stage*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010, pp. ix + 171, £31.

This book addresses the relationship between fiction and history in relation to the 'postmodern challenge' that posits the notion that there is no fundamental difference between fictional and historical forms of narrative. Lubomír Doležel argues cogently that at the level of discourse in either 'fictional' or 'historical' texts the postmodern argument is correct, but at the level of worlds in this respect there is a fundamental difference at issue. Drawing on 'possible-worlds semantics' Doležel says further that just as fictional and historical texts construct possible worlds, so it is in their modes of construction and the semantic properties they entail that that fundamental difference is articulated. As Doležel suggests, striking a common-sensical note in his discussion, although a postmodern blurring of the boundaries between fiction and history is now commonly recognised in texts, hardly anyone confuses the *worlds* of fiction and of history even when they see that a process of dissolution of the line between the two is active.

Thus, Doležel's position in all this is that of a 'moderate postmodernist'. He accepts part of the postmodern argument on the nature of narrative, but rejects its more radical dimension. On this basis, he develops in fine detail accounts of practitioners in the broad field of postmodernism itself whose work he particularly admires. In terms of historiography, Simon Schama is singled out in this way for his valuation of story forms and the degree of cognitive gain they bring in the practice of historical writing. While in the realm of postmodern fiction, where a certain flourishing of the historical novel has been prominent, the work of E. L. Doctorow in *Ragtime* and of A. S. Byatt in *Possession* is highlighted for its broadening of historical understanding through the presentation of textual collages where both historical and fictional worlds are stitched together and, by that same token, differentiated as well. In this vein, *Possible Worlds of Fiction and History* ends with a positive evaluation of Niall

Ferguson's version of counterfactual history, precisely for the reason that Fergusonian alternative history is governed not so much by its *imaginativeness* as its *restrictiveness*, operating strictly (perhaps even too strictly for Doležel's liking) with the material of what have been in the past the considered-but-rejected options for the paths of historical development. Overall, Doležel's choice of subjects in his study, with their attendant valuations, is, as a reflex of his moderation, notably catholic, perhaps controversially so. Either way, one thing is clear from this intervention in the fiction-history debate as regards current discussion of the 'death', the 'dying' or the continued 'dominance' of postmodernism in respect of the contemporary scene. This last is a topic Doležel touches on, though its comprehensive treatment would require him to write another book. The implication of the present study, nonetheless, is that we are here passing beyond the postmodern on the basis of the 'possible worlds' refutation of radical postmodernism. And it is this step which is underlined by Doležel as an anticipated legacy of the present into a projected post-postmodernism.

University of Winchester **Gary Farnell**

Robert Dillon, *History on British Television: Constructing Nation, Nationality and Collective Memory***.** Manchester University Press, 2010, pp. vi + 234, £60.

At the beginning of *History on British Television* Robert Dillon thanks the 'Manchester University Press team' for assistance 'in turning my thesis into a real book.' The reader can only guess at exactly how they did this, but the impression given is that a solid empirical study of a relatively sealed period (1946–1986) has been supplemented by a number of observations, reference to more recent literature, and discussion of selected programmes almost up to the present. Unfortunately the join shows. The analytical core of the book is about a largely pre-internet, entirely pre-Sky and pre-multiple channel world which has acted ruthlessly to elide the popular and the professional televisual presentation of history in a way that would have been unthinkable in the post-war period and only glimpsed from the 1960s onwards. For example, the chapter on 'war' includes a detailed, nuanced account of how television handled the Falklands – before, during and after the Argentinian invasion – but nothing on Bosnia or Afghanistan, and only the briefest of comments on Iraq, because of the 'bypassing' capacity of the internet (p. 156).

Indeed the mid-1980s were a pivotal point in a number of ways: Channel 4 started in 1982; video cassette recorders (VCR) were in a third of British homes by 1985; in 1989 Sky Television started broadcasting by satellite; by this time the apple of Computer Generated Images (CGI) had been bitten by all of the mainstream visual media. The relative monopoly of the BBC and ITV over the choices available to what Dillon calls 'TV-users' was over. This had important implications for the book's attempt 'to trace and reveal how history on television produces and teachers a stylised representation of nation, nationality and citizenship' (p. 10). One effect at least has been to raise the stakes in terms of 'a struggle between dominant and contradictory voices' that takes place on the screen (p. 49). His conclusion quotes the American guru of TV consumption George Gerbner as stating (in 1994) that 'Television is the source of the most broadly shared images and messages in history', while going on to note that 'the encroachment of the personal computer could make that a thing of the past'(p. 198).

The basic dilemma, as Dillon carefully establishes, is that television is a persuasive rather than an analytical medium. In dealing with history it takes on a 'bardic' form; it deals poorly

with 'complexity' (p. 112); it 'simplifies' and 'reduces' (p. 195); it is 'designed to be taken at face value, as though belief and trust in the presenters/narrative/characters/narrator is assumed from the outset and is implicit' (p. 123); it has to strive for a 'difficult balance between giving a factual, authoritative educational base and providing a stimulating visual experience that entertains and informs'. (p. 123); it 'thrives on drama, conflict, suspense and surprise' (p. 143). In this context it is not above deception. Dillon retells the wonderful story of how the iconic series *The Great War* (1964), in an effort to have British and French troops facing from left to right across the screen with the Germans right to left (like the maps of the Western Front), flipped the films and created 'quite a lot of left-handed soldiers' (p. 144). It is these aspects of production values that the 'telly dons', from Taylor to Schama, have been prepared to tolerate in search of an audience, along with the criticism of their colleagues left behind in the academy.

However, Dillon's final view is an affirmative one. In his words, 'television and factual history programming have an important role to play in the regeneration of society. To deny them a part to play because some programmes treat history as entertainment is to deny society a powerful means of recognising what shared and individual pasts stands (sic) for' (p. 203).

Green Templeton College, Oxford **David Watson**

David Clark and **Nicholas Perkins** (eds), *Anglo-Saxon Culture and the Modern Imagination*, D.S. Brewer, 2010, pp. xiv + 213, £55

Medievalism is flourishing, particularly as a branch of literary studies, and has its own specialist series published by D.S. Brewer in which the volume under review appears. An introduction and 14 essays from English and American scholars tackle aspects of what could be termed 'Anglo-Saxonism', the fruits of a conference organised by the Faculty of English at Oxford University in 2008. The essays embrace a wide range of works, both academic and popular. The expectation, until relatively recently, that the study of English would begin with an appreciation of Old English language and literature has meant that many of the finest poets of the English-speaking world have had a grounding in Old English verse and culture. Many of them would have received their introduction through Henry Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Reader* – a heavily annotated copy is among the books of Ezra Pound in the Pound archives in Texas – so it is appropriate that Mark Atherton here places Sweet in his own cultural context. Poets studied in the volume for their brush with Old English include W.H. Auden, David Jones, Basil Bunting, Geoffrey Hill, Peter Reading and Ted Hughes (though the last is there for reaction against Anglo-Saxon culture rather than the embracing of it).

Tolkein, who could be seen as the dominant, popularising, Anglo-Saxonist of the twentieth century, is the subject of only one paper which looks at his pastiche 'Old English Chronicles'. However, though the Tolkein-seam may be all but worked out, the Beowulf-mine seems to be bottomless and as much a stimulus for original literary and artistic works as ever. Seamus Heaney's translation of *Beowulf* hovers in the background of several of the papers, even if it is not the subject of its own chapter. Indeed, the presence of a copy at the bedside of P.D.James's poet-detective Adam Dalgleish in her 2001 novel *Death in Holy Orders* seems to have been sufficient to provoke a chapter meditating on common themes in *Beowulf* and James's novel, (though it is far from clear that James herself, or even Dalgleish, made such connections).

The evergreen story of *Beowulf* can be seen as the most fruitful source of an Anglo-Saxon influence in modern popular culture, and the subject of the most entertaining papers in the volume. Manifestations that are considered include Zameckis's 2007 film *Beowulf*, here given a surprisingly sympathetic appreciation by Chris Jones, and an operatic version of John Gardner's novel *Grendel* that reimagined the story of *Beowulf* from the perspective of its anti-hero. The staging looks intriguing in the photographs that accompany Allen Frantzen's critique of a production that seems to have been rather overloaded with secondary symbolism (though it is not clear whether it worked musically or not). The illustration of *Beowulf* is the subject of two chapters. Siân Echard looks at various ways in which editions of the poem have been illustrated, and could have expressed rather more concern with the mishmash of periods and cultures which all too often has been the result of the search for resonant images. Catherine Clarke barely keeps her tongue in her cheek as she dissects the representation of masculinity in the DC Comics version. A warning to Anglo-Saxonists of a nervous disposition: DC Comics's rereading has departed somewhat from the original and includes Beowulf's previously unsuspected female sidekick Nan-Zee. Those who have had not had to lie down with a cold compress can end their embrace of the Anglo-Saxon's influence on popular culture with Maria Sachiko Cecire's study of representations of the legend of Wayland the Smith. All in all, a stimulating, and very attractively produced volume.

University of Winchester **Barbara Yorke**

Helen Phillips (ed.), *Chaucer and Religion*, Christianity and Culture: Issues in Teaching and Research, D. S. Brewer, 2010. pp. xix + 216, £55 .

This collection of essays is the fourth in a new series 'Christianity and Culture: Issues in Teaching and Research'; its three predecessors concern Anglo-Saxon England, Medieval English Anchoritic and Mystical Texts, and Medieval English Romance. The series aims to provide up-to-date summaries of 'the best contemporary research and thinking,' and also 'to explore how past religious culture can be studied and taught in modern multi-cultural, multi-faith, and in many respects secular, societies, in an objective and academic way' (p. vii). Several books by single authors—some older, some recent—have explored aspects of this topic, but the closest analogue to *Chaucer and Religion* is another collection of essays: *Chaucer's Religious Tales*, ed. C. David Benson and Elizabeth Robertson (D. S. Brewer, 1990). This earlier book occasioned controversy because many of its contributors, though not all, argued for a Chaucer who was a conventional medieval Catholic Christian (vs. 'The Protestant Chaucer,' to quote Linda Georgianna's essay title), and for readings of various tales as straightforwardly pious; ironic meaning, in this view, is the invention of modern secular critics, who are bored or made uncomfortable by medieval piety. Those who criticized the collection have argued for a much more turbulent social and religious context in later medieval England, and often had similar reservations about Eamon Duffy's *Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven, 1992).

Chaucer and Religion lacks such polemical thrust; and in part for this reason, it feels much less memorable than *Chaucer's Religious Tales*, which sparked a lively discussion, and included some exciting readings (such as Elizabeth Kirk's essay on the *Clerk's Tale*) as well as surveys of the critical literature. *Chaucer and Religion* covers a much wider range of Chaucer's works, and a wider range of topics. Its contributors are well-known medievalists, who unsurprisingly take the occasion to sum up and expand on their previous work.

Though the essays include cross references to one another, connections between them on the whole seem rather loose; and 'religion' itself is often defined so loosely as to dilute the discussion further, turning it at times into not much more than a list of relevant studies, and a catalogue of religious references in Chaucer's texts. Anthony Bale's essay does discuss the 'Absent Religions' of Chaucer's England, Judaism and Islam; and the three concluding essays describe the problems of teaching medieval religion in a modern, secular age: students in both the U.K. and the U.S. know very little about the Bible or about religious themes, texts, and commonplaces. Some essays are on topics one might expect in a discussion of fourteenth-century Christianity: the Bible, Lollardy, Saints, Pilgrimages (this last, by Dee Dyas, being particularly interesting); others concern more general Chaucerian topics. And there are memorable insights throughout, such as Alcuin Blamires on the use of the 'conjugal debt' in the *Franklin's Tale* (p. 20), or Stephen Knight on *double entendres* in the *Miller's Tale* (pp. 43–44), or Sherry Reames on the Marian prayers of the Prioress and Second Nun (pp. 86–89), or Helen Phillips on Chaucer's redefinition of romance as a genre of ethics (p. 67) along with the 'clash of chivalric and patriarchal value systems' in the *Franklin's Tale* (p. 160). But overall, in part because its audience is not defined sharply enough, in part because of a flaccid definition of its subject, *Chaucer and Religion* is somewhat disappointing.

Tufts University **John M. Fyler**

Igor Djordjevic, *Holinshed's Nation: Ideals, Memory, and Practical Policy in the* Chronicles, Ashgate, 2010, pp. xii + 274, £55.

In keeping with Dominick LaCapra's contention that texts 'perform critical and transformational work,' Djordjevic demonstrates in this re-reading of Holinshed's *Chronicles* that manipulating reader response was a critical aspect of the compilers' purpose in constructing their histories as they did. Both the 1577 and 1587 editions were intended to 'teach personal ethics, and to foster a spirit of nationalism' (p. 15). While the teleological trajectory of the medieval portion, covering the period between 1377 and 1485, promoted national myths, it was not uncritical or univocal in its presentation. Often , the reader was expected to choose among two or more different explanations for events that promoted particular values important to the triumph of the commonwealth ideal that Djordjevic believed was the primary objective of the writers. His book looks at this influential history as a literary form that utilized different tropes in order to convey patriotic values, in much the same way that Hayden White argued that history is often written in a form similar to fictional genres, such as the chivalric romance or tragedy, both of which can be found throughout the *Chronicles*.

Drawing also on notions of 'authorial intent' and discourse analysis pioneered by Skinner and Pocock, and on contemporary mirrors for princes and Tudor humanism, the author traces in Holinshed the rise of the 'idea of active citizenship' in the early modern era as reflected back by Elizabethan and early Stuart readings of the medieval past. The birth of England's nationhood thus begins with the tragedy of Richard II, where the young king demonstrates 'exemplary kingship' in his valiant handling of the Peasant's Revolt, only to give in to selfish desires that subvert the ideal aristocratic governance on which the common good rested. His successor, Henry IV, underwent a similar transformation from champion of the commonwealth to violator, which further undermined his legitimacy which was already questionable as a perceived usurper. Henry V accepted the penalties of misspent youth, however, by respecting the law and thus restoring the English nation, as can be witnessed

in the campaigns and speeches surrounding the victory at Agincourt. And yet, the chivalric basis of England's greatness began to erode here, first with violation of the *ius armorum* as the prisoners are killed amid the battle. This trend is solidified in the cauldron of civil war between Lancaster and York, where the humanist Duke Humphrey is eulogized for his concern for the 'poor commons' and contrasted with Margaret of Anjou's violent treacheries. Edward IV seems to be the first monarch to appeal to the people directly to legitimize his rule, offering them peace and prosperity. But More's account of Richard III (which is wholly included in the *Chronicles*, and completed by Grafton) shows how without a grounding in humanist moral philosophy, the dissembling king's quest for public approbation acts against the commonwealth. Only with the culminating appearance of the future Henry VII can the consolidation of the peace-giving saviour prince be effected, but even here not without a glimpse of his Machiavellian side.

Djordjevic's book is rich with implications for how chronicles could become maps to national greatness and ethical politics in early modern England, even taking the argument into the pre-Civil War era when more didactic readings were expected and providential history more the norm. There is a tendency to throw in interesting titbits of questionable relevance—such as the evolution of Marian resistance theory—that interrupt the argument. He also accepts perhaps too categorically the bellicose culture of the Hundred Years War and beyond, neglecting the peace element that was a part of late-medieval political theory and especially during Elizabeth's reign when the *Chronicles* were published. His incorporation of the commonwealth discourse, however, into the unfolding of 'English exceptionalism' during these years is nicely articulated, even if the Protestant element goes virtually unrecognized. But then we cannot expect this to be an exhaustive study. Its opening up a new way to see this influential text, on which Shakespeare and others constructed much of England's national identity in these critical years, gives both historians and literary scholars much to think about.

Florida Atlantic University **Ben Lowe**

Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespeare's Freedom*, University of Chicago Press, 2010, pp. xiii + 144, $24.

Stephen Greenblatt's body of work needs no introduction to historians or literary scholars. Even so, before looking at his latest effort, I want to revisit a statement from *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Berkeley, 1988) where Greenblatt writes that 'I believe that sustained, scrupulous attention to formal and linguistic design will remain at the center of literary teaching and study (p. 4).' Largely due to Greenblatt's own monumental influence on the discipline, this statement strikes us today as no longer true. Current literary study is not governed by formalist approaches to the text, but by various forms of historicism that often put literary works in a subservient relationship to their historical context.

Shakespeare's Freedom, though historically informed, moves away from new historicism and the various methodological commitments inspired by it. Instead, Greenblatt argues that the mark of Shakespeare's achievement seems to be his ability to resist history, that 'Shakespeare was able to conceive his art as free to live by its own laws and ... Shakespeare fashioned individuality by departing from his culture's cherished norms' (p. 15). He surveys Shakespeare's aesthetic autonomy across four major themes: beauty, hatred, authority, and freedom, arguing that none of these is ever presented as an absolute in Shakespeare's plays.

Beauty, in the Renaissance, was generally understood to be 'a harmonious integration of ideal proportions,' more about the perfection of the whole than any particular embellishment, more about 'featurelessness' than any individual detail (p. 21). Surprising, then, that Shakespeare's heroes and heroines rarely live up to this ideal. From the dark lady, whose eyes look nothing like the sun, to Portia's 'severed lips,' to Cleopatra's 'wrinkled' complexion, to Imogen's birthmark, Shakespeare's creations are remarkable not for their unmarked approximation of any absolute standard, but for their marked individuality. The next chapter, on hatred, centres on *The Merchant of Venice* where Shylock demonstrates that even hatred has its limits. Shylock's is demarcated by a political enmity that centres around his Jewishness, a hatred that quickly and inexplicably dissolves when Shylock turns Christian at the end of act 4—rather than risking his life, he is willing to renounce his tribe, the source of his identity. In stark contrast to Shylock, lies Iago whose hatred of Othello seems unlimited, pursued even at the cost of his own life. Authority too, even during a period of absolutism, has its limits. Through readings of *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, and the English history plays, Greenblatt concludes that 'the ethics of authority are deeply compromised' (p. 79). And just as the will to power usually ends up in disaster, so too do those characters—like Lear, Richard II, Coriolanus, and Antony—who seek to abdicate their exercise of power.

Finally, Greenblatt turns to aesthetic autonomy, one area where it would seem that Shakespeare's capacity was truly limitless. Following Sidney, we might think that Shakespeare believed in the autonomy of poetry, that works of art are able to transcend the limits that circumscribe other spheres of human activity. Through a brilliant reading of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Greenblatt suggests just this, that the art object does indeed achieve a kind of radical autonomy, just like dreams do. But this comparison of art and dreams also implies limits. If art is autonomous, it is 'only because [like a dream] it floats free of all practical significance' (p. 121). This *is* autonomy, but a severely emaciated one.

In exploring Shakespeare's freedom, Greenblatt is interested primarily in a close reading of the plays—in precisely the 'formal and linguistic design' that he disavowed when turning to the thick cultural description of his earlier work. Today, Greenblatt's insightful readings of the plays and his own elegant prose offer the same kind of refreshing rejoinder to prevailing critical practice as his historical analysis did more than twenty years ago.

University of Texas, San Antonio **Mark Bayer**

Paola Pugliatti, *Shakespeare and the Just War Tradition*, Ashgate, 2010, pp. x + 249, £55.

I first heard Paola Pugliatti speak on the subject of her latest book at the Shakespeare in Europe Conference held at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków in November 2005. Kraków and its environs seemed an appropriate setting for ideas of *ius in bello* and her paper made a deep impression on its audience. The book that has emerged from her research is an important and exciting contribution to an expanding body of work addressing representations of warfare in Shakespeare and other English playwrights of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Despite some pressure points of disagreement, this work has a certain homogeneity, which Pugliatti rightly celebrates. One of the many appealing aspects of her book is Pugliatti's acknowledgement of other people at work in the field: indeed, she offers something of a guide to these critics through frequent and generous reference. As she says, many of her sources have been read and quoted by these other scholars, including the

English Tudor military experts, and the familiar continental authorities such as Pisan and Machiavelli. Yet Pugliatti has extended the range of possible influences on the English scene, and her primary sources have a much more extensive pan-European orbit.

Furthermore, her study is based on a more precise engagement with early modern philosophical argument about the Just War than seen elsewhere. She eloquently records the Christian Just War tradition from its earliest times, but includes in this account a timely reminder of its relationship to Islam. This is an original and compelling approach – and an entirely necessary one if the reader is to grasp fully the early modern crisis over attitudes to the evolving systems of military organisation that were available as paradigms for the increasingly centralized states of the period. She is equally at home with recent history. Her discussion of the 1588 Armada is animated by references to the invasion of Iraq. Her connections across history are highly political, but they are not mere polemic.

In terms of the dramatic writing, she examines plays that most historians and critics would see as fruitful ground for discussions of war: the histories and tragedies, especially, but she includes an analysis of Shakespeare's comedies. I thought she might have looked a little more at non-Shakespearean comedy. I should have liked Pugliatti's thoughts on what some consider an important strand in the work of playwrights such as Beaumont and Fletcher. They seemed themselves to be intent on undermining what was already becoming an orthodox view of the relationship between the early modern stage and its war plays. They parodied Shakespeare, appealing to an audience increasingly (and probably unwillingly) attuned to the excesses of the late-Tudor and early-Stuart attempts to form a sophisticated military state machine.

I found the book readable but challenging. Pugliatti writes in an inviting way, with a touch of the first person now and then to help keep the reader alert to the fact that these are issues that she cares about deeply. The overall structure of the book works well. We move from Christian ideas of the Just War to a very pleasing evocation of the early staging of *Henry V* in a way that is illuminating and instructive. The volume will attract students of early modern history and literature, but has an appeal to those interested in warfare across the four centuries since Shakespeare put down his pen. It thus makes an important and original contribution to our thinking on the representation of the Just War in the work of Shakespeare and his contemporaries as well as providing thoughtful comment on military conflict in our own times.

University of Lincoln **Simon Barker**

Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. x + 222, £55.

Choosing a title for this book not surprisingly exercised its author. This study deals with autobiographical diversity, intertextuality and revisions which took writing from one setting and genre into another. Reference back to a volume like Paul Delany's *British Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century* (1969) reveals at a glance how vastly studies of life writing have changed in the last forty years. The cast list of Delany's book was highly predictable, as was the distribution between the principal sub-sections of religious and secular autobiography; Richard Baxter, John Bunyan, the Earl of Clarendon, Thomas Ellwood, Lady Ann Halkett, Lucy Hutchinson, Adam Martindale, the Duchess of Newcastle, and Henry Newcome are all to be found in the earlier study. Also noteworthy is that, relatively speaking, the concept

of autobiography itself in these pages was by and large an uncontentious fixed entity which was seen to require little in the way of reflection and unpacking. Like Delany, Smyth has an academic base in an English Literature department, but there the similarities end. Smyth has engaged in as much research in historical archives as any historian and an obvious part of the novelty of this book is that he interrogates the manuscript sources he has investigated in ways quite different from those of social historians. On the other hand, just here and there this author betrays a lack of intimate familiarity with the period. Bulstrode Whitelocke suffers the indignity of having his surname and christian name reversed (p. 126). The functions of monasteries and chantries get confused (p. 193). Smyth rejects the conventional stereotypes of autobiography and its links with the rise of humanism, Protestantism, individualism and subjectivity. Indeed, 'autobiography', a term coined considerably later, will not quite do to embrace the different kinds of life writing which come under Smyth's searching eye. Though the word remains lodged in this book's title it does so somewhat uncomfortably and in a very expanded sense.

Smyth engages with the notion of 'autobiography' in this study in a way that Delany avoided and chiefly concentrates on four kinds of text, some of them surprisingly unexpected, in which different forms of life writing appeared. Separate chapters are devoted here to personal annotations in almanacs, to financial accounts, commonplace books and parish registers. All of these genres were either completely new or undergoing significant change in the early modern period. None of them has previously been the subject of extended consideration by a literary scholar. Smyth does much to uncover the ways in which they fitted into the 'notebook culture' which prevailed at this time.

Almanacs, as Smyth makes clear, were ubiquitous best-sellers in the seventeenth century and positively encouraged contributions from readers by the provision of blank pages. It is the personalised content of such publications, the interaction between manuscript and print, that receives Smyth's attention. (Other scholars, of course, have studied marginalia in other printed texts and the use of Bibles as a repository for family-related information). Commonplace books also blended together carefully selected extracts from published texts with personal commentary which justified the relevance of their appropriation. Not for nothing did the hard-pressed Royalist Sir John Gibson choose passages from his reading which dealt with exile, suffering, and unjust punishment. Financial records, too, already individualised, readily intersected with life writing and the double-column strategy increasingly favoured in business ledgers lent itself to juxtaposing different attempts to set the record straight, one in terms of money and the other in terms of circumstances and events and providential interventions in daily life. Case studies of the account books of Lady Anne Clifford, Sir Edward Dering, and the troublesome Independent clergyman Thomas Larkham (1602–69) illustrate these parallel preoccupations very clearly. Smyth comes close to suggesting that the habits of mind associated with financial record keeping were at least as important as Puritanism in fostering a new culture of self examination and life writing.

The choice of parish registers as a source for life writing is the most challenging and surprising element in Smyth's study. Usually little more than a bald record of baptisms, marriages and burials – which found a place for those on the margins of society – parish registers in the hands of conscientious compilers could become more expansive and commemorative. Though the actual texts of parish registers were not widely *read* outside the inner circles which produced them, the periodic *reading aloud* of new sections of registers in parish churches would undoubtedly have extended public 'ownership' of the documents and provided congregations with opportunities to comment and make corrections. *Biography* is self-evidently present in parish registers. Literary flourishes and the indulgence of the

compiler's personal opinions, moralising and prejudices sometimes bring in – tangentially – an element of autobiography as well. Such was the case with the Rev Thomas Hassall (1573–1657) of Amwell, Hertfordshire and with David Foulis who compiled the parish register of Paddington in the 1660s. The Rev John Wade of Hammersmith (1632–1707) revealingly blended parish register notes with personal diary (pp. 203–7). These few examples notwithstanding, the chapter on parish registers often strains the author's claims for inclusion in his treatment of his subject. We are almost forty pages into this chapter before the wake-up call of 'But what of autobiography?' is heard.

Smyth's book insightfully exposes what was unquestionably a 'sprawling culture of life writing' in early modern England which takes the reader far beyond the artificially and anachronistically confined limits of earlier accounts. A special case is made here for viewing financial accounting as a crucial stage in the development of self-awareness and personal stock-taking in a wider sense. In the light of such claims even well-known texts like the diary of Samuel Pepys need to be appreciated not as spontaneously written and free-standing but as the artfully contrived product of revisions of earlier writings, chief of which was this man-on-the-make's meticulous record-keeping of his expenditure and income.

University of Winchester **R.C.Richardson**

Joad Raymond, *Milton's Angels: The Early-Modern Imagination,* Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. xviii + 465, £30.

'Too many in these dayes have been wantonly busie to converse with Angels' complained some Presbyterians in 1657. They had a point: the century had been full of discussions about and conversations with angels, and the best was yet to come, for John Dee's account of his extensive relations with spirits would be published in 1659, and *Paradise Lost,* a work in large part about angels or narrated by angels, in 1667. Angels had survived the Reformation remarkably well. Luther and Calvin had little to say about them, besides warning their followers against worshipping them or expecting them to intercede. Belief remained strong – it was impossible to disbelieve, for there were nearly three hundred references to angels in the Bible – and it grew stronger as the seventeenth century advanced, for the growing conviction that history was entering the Latter Days gave prominence to angels as intermediaries between the divine and the human, just as it encouraged a spirit of prophecy. In his new book, Joad Raymond considers the prevalence of angels in the literature and theology of this period, with the aim of explaining why they held so high a place in the imagination of reformed Englishmen, and in particular why Milton made them central to his epic.

One could say that this book is a treasure-house of useless information: we learn about angels' names, about their hierarchies and roles, their powers of locomotion and vision, their leisure activities and their digestive systems. Do they have free-will? Do they serve both man and God? Is their knowledge full or partial? Can they foretell the future? But this information was not useless to Milton's contemporaries. For them the proximity of angels was undeniable. They rendered prayer effective, they could be enlisted in the service of speculative enquiry, and they were responsible, many thought, for the smooth operation of the cosmos and the regulation of relationships between the Creator and the created. They were an essential part of the celestial economy.

Knowledge of angels came from many sources, and Raymond does his readers a great service in tracing the main lines of angelology from antiquity onwards. The non-canonical

Hebrew Books of Enoch were known in fragmentary ways in the Renaissance, and transmitted the story of the fall of the rebel angels, amongst other lore. The writings of Pseudo-Dionysius with their detailed accounts of the angelic hierarchies were highly influential. The scholastic doctors formalised the study of angelology, and two centuries later the Humanist neo-Platonists found new uses for angels in their philosophic schemes.

When Milton set himself the challenge of describing events from before Creation to the end of time, he found angels indispensable to his narrative. They gave him a means of covering immense spans of time and space, and their anthropomorphic character enabled him to experiment with what Raymond calls 'the doctrine of accommodation', whereby 'ineffable truths are lowered and the human mind lifted so that they converge without misrepresentation'. Angels mediate with our understanding to make the unknowable known. Their mysterious nature adds to the aesthetics of the poem as well as allowing theology to be enunciated by novel means. Raymond has an especially interesting chapter in which he shows how Milton's discussions of the properties of angels have similarities with the contemporary debates on natural philosophy. Questions about infinity, space, the speed of light, optics and the nature of matter are all raised. There are moments in the discussion when one feels that Milton's angels offer a preview of quantum physics as well as a history of the creation.

The scholarship that has gone into the making of this book is profoundly impressive, and Joad Raymond's familiarity with an unusual body of theological writing introduces readers to many authors and texts they will not know. The pleasures and rewards of curious learning are here in abundance.

University of York **Graham Parry**

Angela McShane and **Garthine Walker** (eds), *The Extraordinary and the Everyday in Early Modern England. Essays in Celebration of the Work of Bernard Capp*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. xi + 254, £55.

With the single exception of a book on Cromwell's Navy Bernard Capp's interventions in the early modern field have chiefly centred on socio-cultural history, in particular popular religion, the popular press, the social foundations and context of everyday language, and on the cultural spaces which women created for themselves in the stifling men's world of the time. His study of John Taylor the Water Poet appeared in 1994. He wrote a number of important articles for the journal *Past and Present* and made an impressive 47 contributions to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Clearly his range of interests has been commendably broad.

This volume of essays in his honour certainly echoes not only the wide range of Capp's own work but also takes up a number of themes he himself first examined and embraces some of the methodologies, discourse and, indeed, tone of his own writing. Most fundamentally, as the title of this collection makes clear, these essays explore shifting perceptions of the mundane and the extraordinary in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the changing relationships between them. A number of the contributors follow Capp in addressing popular literature. David M.Turner, for instance offers a probing analysis of the predominantly man's world of *Poor Robin's Intelligence*', a short-lived, sensationalist, London publication of the years 1676–77. Angela McShane examines graphic representations of cavaliers bonding with each other in their experience of defeat after 1649/50. Two essays deal with witchcraft and witchcraft prosecutions. Paul Griffiths provides a compelling

essay on the mental and physical worlds of insult, injury and punishment. Folklore and oral tradition find a secure place in these pages. Alexandra Walsham examines the constantly embellishing legends surrounding Wyclif's well in Leicestershire. Darren Oldridge surveys the changing characterisation and demonisation of the sorceress Mother Shipton between 1641 and 1700. Some of the essays, such as those by Anthony Fletcher, Ralph Houlbrooke, and Steve Hindle have a very specific focus. (In Hindle's case the article skilfully unpacks the many layers of the violent events of a single day – 19 December 1572 – in a Cheshire village.) Others, notably Keith Thomas in his exuberant essay on 'Bodily Control and Social Unease: The Fart in Seventeenth-Century England' draw together an enormous amount of widely scattered and both ribald and prudish material to explore a once taboo historical topic. Thomas, as ever, wins the prize here for the number of footnotes!

Catherine Armstrong's essay on reports of cannibalism in early modern Virginia is the only contribution to move outside an English framework and seems somewhat stranded as a result. But by virtue of its subject matter this book has a rather loose framework anyway and the fact that all its authors as well as its editors are historians means that the interdisciplinary dimension – a pronounced feature of Capp's own work – is rather less in evidence than it might have been if the cast list of contributors had been different.

University of Winchester **R.C.Richardson**

Dennis Todd, *Defoe's America*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. xii +229, £55.

In *Defoe's America*, Dennis Todd investigates Daniel Defoe's enthusiastic support of British colonial projects in the 'extended Chesapeake,' (Brazil north through the Chesapeake) with an analysis of *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders*, and *Colonel Jack*. In very readable prose, he focuses on Defoe's use of indentured servitude as an institution and as a complex metaphor to explore the spiritual, moral and economic transformations that Crusoe, Jack, and Moll go through as they move from being slaves of powerful psychological and social forces to masters of themselves and their environments'. (p. viii–ix) Todd seeks to understand why Defoe exaggerated claims for the efficacy of indentured servitude to promote industry and self-discipline while intimating that his claims were overstated. It is an exploration of both the historical reality of Defoe's claims and, primarily, a detailed literary analysis of Defoe's idealized 'America'.

According to Todd, each protagonist went through transportation (either freely or in chains), indentured servitude (loosely defined), and economic achievement. Todd's chapter on *Robinson Crusoe* sets the stage for the rest of his analysis, an analysis that requires a thorough knowledge of the three books. Crusoe 'began to degenerate into a savage' (p. 37), which was, according to Todd, a type of indentured servitude, after which he was 'domesticated by God' (p. 71). Through his submission to God, Crusoe regains mastery over himself and, ultimately, the savages around him. Defoe promoted a similar a 'bloodless Conquest' of the entire non-Christian world through peaceful conversion' (p. 48) for the New World instead of the brutal policy the English were employing. Such a conquest, he believed, would give the English true domination over American natives. Todd next turns to *Colonel Jack* where he focuses on economic conversion and Defoe's endorsement of European dominance in the New World. Jack is able to reinvent himself, more than once, within the hierarchy of the New World. Defoe believed social hierarchy was necessary to promote economic

productivity and commerce; without it, the world would descend into chaos. Jack's transformation from indentured servant to slave master is a psychological one that allows him to master himself as well as the slaves under his power and to prosper. In his analysis of *Moll Flanders*, Todd tackles Defoe's misrepresentations of servitude. Defoe depicted indentured servitude as a chance for the industrious and diligent to achieve rehabilitation and economic prosperity. Todd makes clear that real indentured servitude offered nothing of the sort. '[Defoe] allowed the complex historical particulars of the institution to be trumped by its meaning as an emblem.' (p. 156) Moll ultimately becomes an indentured servant; a gift, according to Todd, that allows her to rehabilitate herself and to be successful.

It is interesting that Todd did not include a mention of gender in his analysis of Flanders. Even after her reform and eventual prosperity, the reality of her reform remains ambiguous. Moll Flanders never fully masters herself and continues to promote her own self-interest. Did Defoe believe that women could reform? It does not appear so from Todd's analysis. He also does not include some of Defoe's background, such as his constant reinvention or imprisonment, that fits neatly into his analysis of degradation and mastery.

Despite that, Todd's analysis is intriguing and thought provoking where Defoe's 'America' emerges as a symbol of economic prosperity through mastery, peaceful dominance of the 'other', and commerce. His America was not, however, reality. Defoe portrayed an American ideal in which servants could rise to greatness, or at least economic prosperity, but 'only after they have been safely contained by self-discipline'. (p. 157) Defoe leaves his readers certain only of a New World ambiguity where mastery and freedom, savage and civilized, chaos and commerce were closely tied.

Plymouth State University, NH **Marcia Schmidt Blaine**

Claude Rawson (ed.), *Politics and Literature in the Age of Swift: English and Irish Perspectives*, Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp. xiii + 29, £55.

The history of Swift's place and status in the academy over the last thirty years presents a telling case study of the relations between the disciplines of literature and history. While our understanding and appreciation of Swift's literary value may not have changed that significantly in this period, despite the fact that literary scholars have enabled a far better understanding of Swift's sophistication as a writer, his historical and cultural significance has increased massively. 'Swift' – in many ways – has become the essential place in which to trace Anglo-Irish relations in the early eighteenth century: it is around Swift – his writings, his biography and his friends and associates – that accounts are frequently built of these relations that span the disciplines of literature and history and are not constrained by either. Unsurprisingly, this narrative is largely political; equally unsurprising for anyone who knows even a small amount about the early eighteenth century, it is remarkably complex. While Swift's political allegiances and declarations are relatively easy to locate, his positioning within the various political formations in which he found himself in different times and in different places is another matter entirely. The scholars represented here in this fine volume of essays, many of whom have been engaged in the Cambridge edition of Swift, have made major contributions to the assembly of the multiple layers of Swift's political context, and this book is accurate and unpretentious in the tacit claim of its title. To talk of the 'Age of Swift' is no sleight of hand; Swift's epochal status is now beyond question.

This book resonates strongly of politics then, but almost half of the essays here are concerned

to address Swift's literary credentials alongside and within the dominance of political reference points. There are three sections. The first deals with Swift and English politics, exploring Swift's religious and political positioning as a 'High Church Whig' in 1714, his stance in 'Revolution Whiggery' in 1701 and his relations with Walpole. The third section contains essays on Swift and Ireland, covering the 'Castle Party' (those acting as managers for Dublin Castle in the 1720s), the Irish past, and the Irish colonial project. Some of these topics may be familiar ground for Swift scholars, but these are genuinely new contributions fuelled by careful and painstaking historical research. In each of the political formations explored in these sections, Swift's independent and essentially resistant thinking, his deep suspicion of politicians and his censorious morality produce a powerful and paradoxical chemistry: the darkness of his prejudice and critical intelligence continuously place him on the outside; the nature of that critique, and its vital engagement, illuminate what lies at the centre.

The central section of this book offers five essays on Swift as writer which range widely across works and themes, but deliberately avoiding, as the editor notes, the major prose works. So here are studies of Swift's hoaxing, the poetics of friendship, the subtlety of his artistry, the later writings, and Swift and Yeats. These are precise, demanding readings of Swift which – in the main – collectively argue for a writerly sophistication which is to be realised, frequently, by reference to the intricate sets of social and political networks in which he moved. To understand Swift's craft, in other words, we need a lot to be explained to us. His writings, and not merely the more substantial works, are stranded with deliberate allusions, codes, or recondite contexts which, when recovered, provide the re-assembly of meanings that are the raison d'être of historical criticism. Such explication is inevitable and vital, given the nature of writing's production and circulation in the early eighteenth century; equally inevitably, such critical labours can never be completed.

The contributors to this book are clearly undaunted by this, and through their exemplary and exacting scholarship they present us not with a revised subject, but with a Swift whose writings are more demanding, and whose hinterland is mapped with intricate detail.

Sheffield Hallam University **Philip W. Martin**

Andrew Piper, *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Age*, University of Chicago Press, 2009, pp. xvi + 303, £24.

Dreaming in Books is a study of 'how we became bookish at the turn of the nineteenth century', picking up the familiar theme of the explosion in print production in the Romantic era (as conventionally defined) and asking 'what we did with books and what books did to us when there were suddenly too many books'. As such it inserts itself into a burgeoning field of criticism and scholarship inspired by the sprawling discipline of book history, which has invigorated Romantic studies as much as any period-based specialism. What lend Piper's book its distinctiveness are, firstly, its comparative or European perspective, which cuts across the nationalistic foundations of most large history-of-the-book projects; secondly, its concentration on literary characteristics rather than material history, or rather its focus upon scenes of communication within texts to show how Romantic literature made sense of the 'bibliographic environment' in which it emerged; and thirdly, its somewhat overbearing insistence on drawing lessons from the past for the present – using the Romantics' trials and tribulations in adapting to the pervasive medium of the book as a guide to our own vicissitudes in the digital era.

It is the latter objective that explains Piper's decision to organise his study around six activities or practices – networking, copying, processing, sharing, overhearing, and adapting – that may seem to belong more to our modern communications era, but which Piper argues have instructive origins or parallels in the culture of Romanticism. In elaborating this thesis he undoubtedly sheds valuable light on neglected areas of literary production. It is questionable whether any serious scholar still takes the view (as Piper implies) that Romantic creativity was defined as an incorporeal, spontaneous mental event in contradistinction to the mundane realities of book-making, but his detailed case-studies of writers for whom the material book became 'a vital source of creative energy and literary innovation' are nevertheless quirky and thought-provoking. He contends, for instance, that the complicated publication history of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* make it resemble a 'network' rather than a unitary work – the unstable outcome of 'a publishing program that continually transgressed and expanded the work's boundaries.' With specific reference to Hoffmann, he explores the proliferation of collected editions in the Romantic period and how these negotiated the competing demands of textual integrity and originality, producing 'sameness out of heterogeneity and heterogeneity ... out of such sameness.' Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* is the main focus of a particularly interesting chapter on Romantic editing, a practice that blended fidelity to sources with modernisation and improvement, and which was shortly to give way to more recognisably modern critical procedures. Popular miscellanies like *The Keepsake*, which encouraged handwritten dedications, annotations, and supplementary writings, are viewed as early forays in shared authorship, while the importance of translation within the Romantic 'bibliocosmos' also receives welcome attention, albeit with some shaky generalisations about women translators challenging received ideas of literary property. The final chapter on illustrated books is the most frustrating, with much (perhaps fittingly) convoluted discussion of wavy lines as signifiers of 'a new adaptive mentality,' capturing 'the precarious emergence of intermedial knowledge.'

In each branch of this variegated study, a small number of literary examples – episodes, motifs, narratological features – are made to bear a huge load of literary and cultural theory, typically as markers of a self-reflexive concern with issues in the contemporary bibliographic environment. After a while, this procedure begins to wear thin, and seems peculiarly vulnerable to the Stanley Fish argument that it is the interpretive framework that produces the textual 'facts,' rather than the facts of the text that license the interpretation. I must confess, too, that the more Piper insisted that the Romantics' problems and anxieties anticipated our own, that their experience of bibliographic excess, repetition, mediation, de-individualisation and the like foreshadowed the convulsions of our allegedly post-Gutenberg era, the more I was disposed to withhold assent. Nevertheless, it would be quite wrong to deny that this is an impressive, challenging, deeply researched study, which deserves a wide audience among scholars of European Romanticism.

University of the West of England **Robin Jarvis**

Ella Dzelzainis and **Cora Kaplan** (eds), *Harriet Martineau. Authorship, Society and Empire*, Manchester University Press, 2010, pp. xii + 263, £65.

In their introduction to this collection of sharply focused critical essays, Ella Dzelzainis and Cora Kaplan characterize Harriet Martineau's strengths as a nineteenth-century writer and journalist. Suggestively, they fault her modest self-estimate as well as critics' failure to

fit her into any of the well-known categories of novelist, economist, journalist or historian as contributing to the failure of her work to be fully appreciated. In the first section, 'Authorship and identity,' Linda Peterson amasses evidence of Martineau's self-fashioning as a new phenomenon, a woman of letters. Amusing illustrations from journals such as *Fraser's Magazine* demonstrate that while both male and female writers declare their new professionalism, Martineau presents herself as a kind of male professional in female dress. A. Laura Stef-Praun looks at Martineau's ability to use her various disabilities – childhood traumas, deafness, uterine tumour – as part of a balancing act with the Romantic characteristic of genius as allied to physical disability. Martineau nevertheless allies herself to Scott as a healthy genius, carefully differentiating the genius cum infirmities of Byron. Deborah A. Logan, editor of Martineau's collected letters, summarizes the significance of letter-writing to Martineau's contentment and view of herself. Lucy Bending considers self-presentation and instability in Martineau's autobiography, noting inconstancies in her use of the language of her Christian heritage and upbringing with her declared agnosticism. Felicity James also notes the importance of Martineau's Unitarian background to her life and work, while Lesa Scholl examines Martineau's translation of Comte, contending that she rewrote the French positivist for her own purposes. In the section 'Political economy, technology and society,' Lana L. Dalley, Ella Dzelzainis, Mark Curthoys and Tamara Ketabgian look at the emotional dimensions of Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy*, her attacks on trade unions and her opposition to factory regulation. Curthoys, for example, points to 'Demerara' as an early example of Martineau's call for 'free labour' as supported by anti-union employers as well as by those later concerned for working women's rights. The last section, 'Empire, race, nation,' opens with Eitan Bar-Yosef's consideration of the advantages or disadvantages of deafness to a travel writer, including the presence of Martineau's conspicuous ear-trumpet. Cora Kaplan claims that Martineau remains of interest for the 'contradictory and unresolved elements of her thought,' while Lauren M. E. Goodlad imaginatively holds up *The Hour and the Man* as a feminist document. Martineau's attitude towards African slavery, she claims, paralleled that towards Eastern 'despotism' as exemplified by Russia. Isobel Armstrong touts the value of Martineau's *Suggestions towards the Future Government of India*, while Catherine Hall looks at Martineau's venture into a new genre, history. At first doubtful about accepting an offer from the popular educator, Charles Knight, to write a history of modern England, Martineau found she enjoyed the work and felt satisfied of its value. The unusual nature of *History of England during the Thirty Years Peace, AD 1816–46* was in fact suited to her former writing, her familiarity with politicians and her travels.

Throughout the collection, the contributors have approached Martineau's individual works in new and innovative ways. Though little attention is paid in this otherwise ambitious collection to the qualities of Martineau's prose style (such as her vivid descriptions and use of metaphor), the refreshing look at her vast output of prose writings should help to bring about a more careful and serious assessment of Martineau's widely ranging productions. The jacket features a revealing early portrait of Martineau, in colour, by Richard Evans, held at the National Portrait Gallery.

University of Puerto Rico **Elisabeth Sanders Arbuckle**

Katharine Cockin (ed.), *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry: Volume 1, 1865– 1888* Pickering & Chatto, 2010, pp. xlvi + 241, £100.

An enduring figure of fascination, Ellen Terry (1847–1928) captivated audiences, was painted by Singer Sargent and G.F. Watts, proved a puzzle to Virginia Woolf, and remains the most well known actress of her time. Her life and work have been the subject of autobiography, biographies, published correspondence (with George Bernard Shaw and Stephen Coleridge) and theatre histories. After her death, her daughter Edith Craig put out a public call for her letters to be returned to her former home where she established the Ellen Terry Memorial Museum. Now in the custodianship of the National Trust, Smallhythe Place is home to the collected papers of Ellen Terry and Edith Craig.

Dr Katharine Cockin's project to create a searchable online database of the collection bears fruit in the publication of *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry*, a series of eight volumes, of which this is the first instalment. A comprehensive publication (the criteria for selection are explained with admirable transparency), her letters are reproduced and arranged chronologically in order to tell the 'narrative of her life' (p xvii). There have been battles over Ellen Terry's posthumous reputation (most notably between her children's differing views of their mother) but this collection of letters gives a comparatively unmediated glimpse into her life. Useful notes help guide the reader through her erratic punctuation and eccentric turns of phrase but otherwise the letters are offered for the reader to explore. Reading this volume is akin to browsing in the archive from the comfort of one's armchair.

The letters are contextualised with an engaging and informative introduction giving a concise overview of her life and work and a sense of the networks in which she moved. This first volume encompasses the time between Ellen Terry's return to the stage in 1865 to the time in which she created one of her signature roles as Lady Macbeth for Irving in 1888. Whilst her letters reveal much about the inner workings of the theatre, they also suggest something of the wider social and political concerns of her age. Ellen Terry transgressed social norms (including conceiving her two children out of wedlock) and yet managed to maintain, 'simultaneously and without duplicity, the public- and self-image of a thoroughly feminine woman' (p xiv).

The complexity of her rich and busy life is conveyed as she shifts from subject to subject in her correspondence. She writes of her concerns about her health; her throat, as with all theatre performers, is a particular source of anxiety. The familiar complaint of the touring player, derogatory comments about places spill out uncensored: Manchester is a 'God-forsaken hole!' p 29 whereas Margate is 'horrid' p 46. Ellen Terry is also persistently self-critical, often describing her performances in negative terms; suggesting a personality which is the antithesis of the egotistical performer. At the same time she is full of praise and support for others in her field and one cannot help but be swept along by her enduring enthusiasm and warmth. A compelling read; this meticulously presented volume offers unusually direct access to a fascinating historical figure.

University of Winchester **Helen Grime**

Michael J. K. Walsh (ed.), *London, Modernism, and 1914*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. xx + 294, £50.

In *Blasting and Bombardiering* (1937) Wyndham Lewis wrote of his fellow members of the pre-war London avant-garde that 'We are the first men of a Future that has not materialized'. This rather mixed collection aims to portray the artistic 'Future' briefly visible in the summer of 1914 in unprecedented detail. There are ten essays, mostly by professional art historians, and a foreword by Richard Cork – but, frustratingly given the numerous critical interpretations of little-known paintings, there are only seven illustrations, three of which pertain to Epstein's *Rock Drill* (which is also portrayed on the front cover), while a fourth, of Bomberg's *The Mud Bath*, is printed the wrong way up. We cannot, for example, settle the argument over whether or not C. R. W. Nevinson's Futurist work *Non-Stop* is a representation of an Underground journey: this was asserted by the *Times* reviewer of the 1914 London Group exhibition, quoted here by Dominika Buchowska, but is apparently denied in the following chapter by Alan Munton.

It is odd, too, that one of the seven illustrations is a photograph of the editor's great-uncle, a soldier in the Royal Irish Rifles killed on the Somme in 1916. Walsh says of this photograph of a uniformed recruit that 'nothing is more evocative of the year 1914' (p. xi), but the fact is he has nothing in common with the artists and writers whom this book is about. Even to Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, the modernist sculptor who was also killed at the Front, Private Walsh must have seemed one of those 'unimportant units' of 'over-numerous humanity' whom, as Gaudier declared in the 1915 war number of Lewis's *Blast*, the war was busily purging.

In addition to Gaudier and Lewis, *London, Modernism, and 1914* contains extended discussions of the work of Bomberg, Epstein, Sickert, Wadsworth, Yeats, and others. Alan Munton looks at the Slade School of Art's contribution to English modernism, which he finds to be woefully underestimated in Pat Barker's 2007 novel *Life Class*. In essays such as Sarah MacDougall's study of the 'Whitechapel Boys' (David Bomberg, Mark Gertler, Isaac Rosenberg and others) we can reconstruct the local geography of the 1914 art scene, strung out between the Whitechapel Gallery where Bomberg curated a 'Jewish section' at the *Twentieth-Century Art* exhibition, and the Allied Artists' Association show in Holland Park. It was in Kensington, where Lewis, Wadsworth, Ezra Pound and Ford Madox Ford lived – certainly not in Whitechapel – and in Chelsea (where Bomberg's *The Mud Bath* reputedly stopped the traffic) that encounters could take place with what Lawrence in *Women in Love* calls 'the slack aristocracy that keeps in touch with the arts'. One of the many paradoxes of London modernism is that the Lewis who would later boast that, throughout the 'snobbish social sunset of 1914', 'coronetted envelopes showered into my letter-box' was also the artist who, as Pound wrote in June that year, was already 'a man at war'.

In the event, the 'Future that has not materialized' and the future that did materialise from August 1914 onwards showed some portentous similarities. This is rich material, of which contributors such as Cork, MacDougall, Jonathan Black, Andrew Causey, Deborah Parsons and Jonathan Shirland take full advantage. Some opportunities are missed, perhaps because they took place outside London – the extraordinarily productive friendship between Edward Thomas and Robert Frost is a striking example – and, one must reluctantly add, a good deal that is mentioned in this book (including such a prominent figure as D. H. Lawrence) is omitted from Walsh's index. But one can only wonder what poor Harry Walsh, from Ballyclare in Ireland, would have made of it all.

University of Reading **Patrick Parrinder**

John McCourt (ed.), *Roll Away the Reel World: James Joyce and Cinema*, Cork University Press, 2010. pp. xiii + 248, £35.

Vike Martina Plock, *Joyce, Medicine, and Modernity*, University Press of Florida, 2010, pp. xi + 190, $69.95.

No one goes to the cinema on Joyce's 'Bloomsday' (16 June 1904), for the simple reason that Dublin at that time had no permanent cinemas. Instead, there were travelling 'bioscope' and 'mutoscope' exhibitions which might be screened at a local variety theatre or public hall. In *Ulysses* a furtive Leopold Bloom has been to the mutoscope in Capel Street: 'for men only. Peeping Tom.... Do they snapshot those girls or is it all a fake?' Joyce himself doubtless visited similar shows, and in December 1904 he spent an evening at the cinematograph in Pola, where he was teaching at the Berlitz School. Soon he moved to Trieste, where he became an avid filmgoer. In 1909 he persuaded a group of Trieste businessmen to open Dublin's first cinema, the Volta, showing imported films with intertitles in Italian. The absence of American films was a recipe for commercial failure (though it may not have troubled Joyce himself), and the Volta was sold off at a loss after a few months.

Joyce's brief stint as a cinema manager has been known to scholars ever since the publication of Richard Ellmann's biography half a century ago. Generalisations about what Keith Williams, in the volume under review, calls the 'cinematicity' of Joyce's writing have an even longer history. Alfred Döblin remarked on the 'montage' technique of *Ulysses* in 1928, and Sergei Eisenstein, who met Joyce the following year, voiced his admiration on many occasions. Joyce in return seems to have envisaged a somewhat unlikely film version of *Ulysses* directed by Eisenstein and starring Charlie Chaplin. A later generation of media theorists, notably Marshall McLuhan and his disciple Donald E. Theall, looked to *Finnegans Wake* as the key work of what Theall termed the 'Joyce era' of communications technology. 'Roll away the reel world' is a quotation from *Finnegans Wake*, yet John McCourt's collection marks a turning away from broad generalisations about cinematicity to the specific nature of early cinema and its relationships to *Ulysses*.

Joyce's cinematic experiences were formed in the cities of Italy and Austria-Hungary, and this book, the product of a conference held in conjunction with the 2009 Trieste Film Festival, is at its strongest on his debt to French and Italian cinema. A number of the contributors – notably Katherine Mullin, Maria DiBattista, Philip Secker, Marco Camerani and Cleo Hanaway – are especially drawn to the 'Circe' episode of *Ulysses*, showing how much the phantasmagoria of Nighttown owes to film-makers such as the illusionist George Méliès, the quick-change artist Leopoldo Fregoli, and the clown André Deed (known in Italy as Cretinetti). As Camerani explains, we can no longer interpret 'Circe' in terms of a simple dichotomy between dramatic realism and the hallucinatory visions experienced by Joyce's characters Bloom and Stephen. What is presented in the Nighttown episode is not just an expressionist drama but a film treatment, exploiting to the full the magic tricks and special effects, including facial distortions and costume changes, that were the stock-in-trade of the early cinema and contemporary variety theatre. Both Joyce's comedy and his eroticism are heavily indebted to film. That this offers a powerful and relatively new approach to reading and teaching *Ulysses* is partly a reflection of our own times rather than Joyce's. Many early films have not survived, and for much of the twentieth century those that did survive were rarely seen; but today an increasing proportion of what remains, including some 170 Méliès films, can be viewed instantly on a home computer or DVD player.

Roll Away the Reel World is in three sections: essays on the Volta Theatre (supplemented

by a detailed filmography of the programmes shown in 1909–10), critical discussions of *Ulysses* and cinema, and considerations of Joyce's cinematic influence, including the claim (advanced by Jesse Meyers) that he could be credited as a 'subliminal screenwriter' in a number of recent Hollywood movies. It is, however, Joyce's openness to his age's newest art form that stands out, together with his readiness to incorporate into his works what Marco Camerani calls 'everything that other forms, genres and disciplines of entertainment had to offer' (p. 120). This openness, needless to say, extended to any number of discourses besides those of the entertainment industry, including – as Vike Martina Plock's volume reminds us – the discourses of contemporary medicine.

If Joyce failed as a cinema manager, he failed still more abjectly in his somewhat half-hearted career as a medical student. As he told his patron Harriet Shaw Weaver in 1920, 'I myself started to study medicine three times, in Dublin, Paris and again in Dublin. I would have been even more disastrous to society at large than I am in my present state had I continued'. The reason for withdrawal that he gave to Weaver suggests that he was not quite the universal polymath that many have thought. In both Ireland and France chemistry was part of the first-year course, and 'I never could learn it or understand in the least what it is about'. Plock's is the first book-length treatment of Joyce's medical interests since J. B. Lyons's *James Joyce and Medicine* (1973). Suggesting that the story of Joyce's creative labours (and especially his struggles to preserve his sight) is itself 'reminiscent of a medical case study' (p. 1), she offers a series of case studies of the importance of medical allusions and metaphors in his story 'Counterparts', in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and in four of the later episodes of *Ulysses*. (A further study, of the 'Lestrygonians' episode, appeared in *Literature and History* in Autumn 2007.)

According to Plock 'medicine was an authoritative force emerging in modern society, one to which Joyce responded with fascinated interest, analytical force, and subversive creativity' (p. 152). But just how authoritative were the 'medical authorities' in Joyce's time? Long sections of *Joyce, Modernity, and Medicine* are given over to detailed accounts of the medical literature and public health tracts of the late nineteenth century, but the critique of medicine associated (for example) with George Bernard Shaw merits only a couple of sentences, with no mention of his 1906 play *The Doctor's Dilemma*. To think of that popular comedy – so remote from our concerns today – is to be reminded that, in the era of private medicine, the most fashionable doctors could seem to be no more than mountebanks touting remedies that no sane person would have anything to do with. Medical authority and scientific rigour were far more loosely associated than they are now, and we certainly cannot assume that in the late nineteenth century medical discourse was already more influential than traditional religious and moral beliefs. Yet this is precisely what Plock does. Speaking, for example, of Molly Bloom's memory of a gynaecological examination she writes that 'At the turn of the century, both gynecology and its nonacademic sister discourse domestic medicine effectively controlled the interpretations of acceptable female social conduct' (p. 152). Her only evidence for this is found in the assertions of the medical authorities themselves.

It may be no accident, then, that Plock's best chapter is her analysis of Leopold Bloom's participation in the pseudo-medical cult of physical fitness promoted by Eugene Sandow. Similarly, in discussing the students' debate in the 'Oxen of the Sun' episode Plock gives much space to another pseudo-medical work, the popular seventeenth-century manual *Aristotle's Master-Piece*. She refers to this as 'the students' medical reference text' (p. 73) despite the fact that it is Joyce's parodic narrator, not the medical students themselves, who alludes to it. Her chapter on *A Portrait of the Artist* claims to detect the hitherto unsuspected presence of Victorian anti-masturbation propaganda throughout Joyce's novel; such propaganda,

she says, is 'a domineering medico-moral discourse that determines a sensitive and imaginative Irishman's adolescence' (p. 67). The slippage from 'domineering' to 'determining' (i.e., dominant) here is manifest. It sets aside the sexually repressive doctrines of the Catholic Church, to which the young Stephen Dedalus is daily exposed, in favour of tracts by William Acton, Henry Maudsley, and others which Stephen has never heard of and Joyce himself may well not have read. Moreover, it overlooks the strength of youthful iconoclasm and sheer common-sense. After the hell-fire sermon in the *Portrait*, a cynical master or older pupil remarks in Stephen's hearing that 'I suppose he rubbed it in to you well... . That's what you fellows want: and plenty of it to make you work'. Stephen is never consciously confronted by Victorian medical warnings about masturbation, but, if he were, he would be likely to treat them as just another of the 'hollowsounding voices' of adult authority clamouring hypocritically for his attention.

A Portrait of the Artist was published in 1916 and offers a thinly veiled account of Joyce's early life from the 1880s to his departure for Paris in 1902. This raises a problem of anachronism that Plock never properly confronts. Her assertion that 'Not surprisingly, nineteenth-century reformers ... employed the image of the Boy Scout as bogus remedy for the "solitary vice"' (p. 57) is, no doubt, an unfortunate error, and one that reflects no credit on the editorial team at the University of Florida Press; Baden-Powell did not found the Boy Scout movement until 1908. Nevertheless, in a book that carries an index entry referring to 'Maudsley, Henry, as imaginary reader of *A Portrait*', it is symptomatic. (Maudsley was over eighty and had little more than a year left to live when the *Portrait* was published.) Plock's interpretation of *A Portrait* relies on a whole series of hypothetical nineteenth-century medically-trained readers, but in the absence of empirical evidence such readers are no more than a scholarly fantasy. Not only did Joyce's works help to promote modern sexual liberation, but they could only have been written and published in the more liberal medical climate symbolised by a work such as Havelock Ellis's *Auto-Eroticism* (1899).

In an appealing final paragraph, the author outlines the ample scope for further studies of Joyce's medical interests and states that her own work is only a starting-point. Let us hope that future scholars will not only turn to different medical topics and different Joycean texts (particularly *Finnegans Wake*), but that they will set out with a more careful methodological grounding than Plock has thought necessary.

University of Reading **Patrick Parrinder**

Peter Brooker, Andrzej Gasiorek, Deborah Longworth, and **Andrew Thacker** (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms*, Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. xvii + 1182, £85.

For much of the twentieth century the term 'modernism' had a theological significance, referring to the movement in Catholicism which emerged about a century ago and which aimed to update Catholic doctrine and devotion in the context of a rapidly changing world. It was condemned by Rome but went on to influence subsequent developments in the Catholic Church. In the title of this book 'modernism' has its current artistic and cultural reference, which occasionally attracts a form of religious fervour. The use of an abstract noun in the plural is noticeable, and in this context there are two modes of plurality. The first refers to the various forms of artistic and intellectual activity which get called 'modernist'; the second to the nationalities and areas which produce it. The result is a very large book of

fifty-five chapters plus an editorial 'Afterword'. Not surprisingly, some of the contributions are better than others – much better in some cases – and it will be kinder to begin with them. Michael Wood writes very well in his elegantly accomplished chapter, 'The Modernist Novel in Europe', taking in Proust, Joyce, Mann, Musil, Kafka and Biely. It also refers to Fernando Pessoa, increasingly an object of critical attention, and this is the only mention of him in the book. Like all the contributors, Wood is an academic. He has a niche at Princeton, but he is also an experienced literary journalist, and it shows.

In 'Paris: Symbolism, Impressionism, Cubism, Surrealism' Andrew Hussey takes up a familiar and beguiling subject. He begins 'During a period of less than a hundred years, roughly speaking the years that stretched from 1860 to 1939, Paris was without equal as the world capital city of modernity'. Hussey writes with lucid authority on the literary and artistic movements that came out of Paris, and it is significant that he refers throughout to 'modernity' rather than 'modernism'. Only in his final paragraph does he use the word 'modernist', and then encloses it in quotation marks. 'Modernity' is a flatly descriptive word, whereas 'modernism', as it is used throughout the book, has an ideological charge (*marxisant* or feminist on the part of some contributors). Hussey seems to have quietly resisted the editorial remit. If France was a major focus of European modernism then Ireland was a lesser but still important one, and Carol Taaffe does it justice in her chapter on 'Irish Modernism'. The great names are there – Yeats, Joyce, Beckett – and she has pertinent things to say about them. She also plausibly proposes Flann O'Brian's *At Swim Two Birds* as an important modernist novel (it is certainly one of the funniest).

A study that restricted itself to literary works generally regarded as modernist, in English, French and German would have been large enough, but the contributors range over many nationalities, and many arts other than the literary. The essays in the latter category, covering film, photography, dance, architecture, painting and music are, for the most part, agreeably informative, even though they do not advance much sense of a central modernist achievement. It is on the global manifestations of literary modernism that the book runs into difficulties. The chapter on 'Scottish Modernism' concentrates on Hugh MacDiarmid, which is fair enough; but the one on 'Welsh Modernism' is inadequate. It virtually ignores David Jones, the one Welsh modernist writer with an international reputation, because of his major achievements, *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*; (there is more about them, though not enough, in an earlier chapter, 'Innovations in Poetry'). The writer of 'Welsh Modernism' is more interested in poetry in Welsh, and seems generally ill at ease in his task. In fact, he invokes what could be a killer proposition for the whole enterprise by quoting a remark by Perry Anderson to the effect that modernism 'designates no describable object in its own right at all: it is completely lacking in positive content'. A hard but persuasive statement, which much of the book exemplifies.

Looking beyond Britain, America and Western Europe, the book ranges over the literature in English of formerly colonial territories, which would once have been regarded as part of global English literature, but now fits into a post-colonial academic agenda. Difficulties arise in extending the account to literatures in languages other than English, French, German and Spanish, and in places the editors seem to have given up the struggle to maintain standards. The chapter called 'Central European Modernisms' attempts to cover modernist literary achievements in German, Hungarian, Czech and Polish, and the accompanying artistic manifestations, and to do so in the same space as the chapters on much smaller topics. The result is a breathless listing of unfamiliar names and works, which recalls the worst kind of old-fashioned, positivistic literary history, and conveys nothing to the reader. Something similar is true of the round-up of 'Nordic Modernisms', discussing work from Sweden,

Norway and Denmark. The author describes a Danish poet as producing 'a special kind of primitivist utopian socialist Surrealism', whatever that means; in more commercial publications such a description might invite an editorial blue pencil, or at least a question mark in the margin. But in academic compilations of this sort the editors' main concern is to get the many contributors to deliver their work on time – or at all – rather than to write well.

This is a book with many good things in it, and there is a lot be learnt from some of the contributions; for instance, about the differences between Italian and Russian Futurism. But the final impression it leaves is of a mysterious structure unearthed by archaeologists, of which one can say that it is enormous, took a vast amount of work to construct, has many intriguing and some elegant features, but that, finally, one does not know what it was for.

Leamington Spa **Bernard Bergonzi**

Michaela Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933–1945*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. xviii + 390, £55.

The Society for the History of American Foreign Relations has rightly recognized with its Myrna F. Bernath Book Award, Michaela Hoenicke Moore's tremendously researched (and very readable) history of American views towards Nazi Germany, 1933–45. It tilts towards understanding Roosevelt and his administration's policies, subsequently relying upon analyses of texts mainly authored by political leaders and their subordinates; but attention is given to opinion-shaping journalists of the thirties and the book is peppered with contemporary writings by social and behavioural scientists. There is room for literature too, although not much and mainly from the war years: a prologue discusses Thomas Wolfe and two of the twelve chapters examine texts constructed by the Office of War Information and the Frank Capra/War Department films, *Why We Fight*; Hitchcock's *Lifeboat* and Paramount Pictures' *The Hitler Gang* each receive five pages of focused treatment in other chapters. Thus Moore constructs a wartime corpus, including government propaganda films and manuals, which can be seen as literature; even if that is not Moore's intention.

Moore explodes the dichotomies previous historians have used to undergird their portrayals of a seemingly monolithic American view of Nazi-era Germans being 'good' people trapped by a 'bad' government. Moore instead discovers complexity, especially in the 1930s, because of the supposed 'open-mindedness' of the interwar American who could agree with Hitler that the Versailles treaty was unfair and/or believe that Hitler was right in his anticommunism. Also Americans could be tolerant of Hitler's Germany as a result of their being anti-Roosevelt when Roosevelt was either publicly anti-Hitler or seemingly pro-war; and then there were the anti-Semites. Conversely, African Americans, Jewish Americans, antifascist liberals and others analyzed the Third Reich harshly; yet they engaged rhetoric that cut across a simple categorization of anti-Nazism. Moore instead explores Americans classified into discursive groups. Some saw the issues framed in 'gangster' terms, others used the metaphor of 'disease'; and all seemed to fall into a quandary over the language to be used in understanding how to best approach the German people in terms of defeat/victory and the safeguarding of post-war peace.

Divided into four sections of about equal length, the first two move the reader chronologically to 1943 while the second half focuses on the end of the war. Three-fourths examine the ways the government pounded out messages of moralism so as to make the enemy evil, could not convince a public that held diverse views, and worked to find consensus.

Finally the government harmonized the cacophonic interpretations of Germans, resulting in a clear message. As Moore puts it: By mid-wartime, Americans had come to understand 'Germany's self-chosen special path had ended in disaster for itself and others and that the German people could not be exculpated by collectively being declared victims of their regime'. (p. 266) The last quarter of the book focuses on implementing an occupation plan in the context of a now-clearly articulated enemy, but again Moore disrupts convention. She refocuses discussion away from classic historiographic debates concerning a 'harsh' vs. 'soft' peace and instead highlights a third path emphasizing a reconfiguration of the enemy into something more like a sick American who only needed rehabilitation. Indeed, ending with accounts of soldiers and occupying psychologists, Moore shows that Germans-as-enemies quickly became sympathetic victims of 'totalitarianism' just as a new totalitarian enemy, the USSR, emerged. Thus an ally was born. Such a narrative provides substantial grounding for understanding US foreign policies towards Germany in a new light and helps unpack the complexities of recent scholarship concerning the American understanding of totalitarianism (e.g.: work by Benjamin Alpers), as well as the historiography of the US interpreting the USSR as 'red fascism'.

Plymouth State University, NH **John Krueckeberg**

Adam Sisman, *Hugh Trevor-Roper*, *The Biography*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2010, pp. xviii + 598, £25.

The breadth of Trevor-Roper's historical interests and publications was stunningly impressive and extended from the formative centuries of Christian Europe to the second half of the twentieth century. He had little respect for historians and others who imprisoned themselves in narrow specialisms and dry-as-dust scholarship. Like Lord Acton his preference was for studying problems rather than periods. A well-chosen portrait of Erasmus was prominently displayed in his Christ Church study in Oxford. He wrote a number of biographies – *Archbishop Laud* was his first book in 1940. He brought out an edition of the poetry of Richard Corbett in 1955. Scotland under the influence of Enlightenment and Romanticism fascinated him. Work on Adolf Hitler both made his name – his early book on *The Last Days of Hitler* (1947) became an instant best-seller and was translated into many languages – and almost irreparably damaged his reputation in his later, declining, years when he very incautiously authenticated some forged diaries which purported to be those of the German Fuhrer. He wrote on art history and counted the great expert in that field, Bernard Berenson, among his closest friends. But he had an almost morbid fascination with the seventeenth century – sandwiched between the high points, for him, of Renaissance and Enlightenment – and produced a stream of elegant, incisive, path-finding essays in that field which were subsequently collected together and published, and re-published, in volume form. Trevor-Roper indeed stands out as one of the principal twentieth-century exponents of the essay genre and developed a majestic prose style which in its confidence and flow in some respects resembles Gibbon's. A posthumously published volume of his leisured, opinionated letters to Berenson which appeared in 2006 shows him to have been a master of that form, too. Sisman's biography quotes from many more, including those penned devotedly to Xandra, Earl Haig's daughter, who became his wife. Epistles of another kind offering a running commentary on Oxford life and scandals – written anonymously and with impish humour in mock seventeenth-century style – appeared in *The Spectator* from 1968 and were

reprinted in book form as *The Letters of Mercurius* two years later. He was also a prolific book reviewer.

Trevor-Roper's career, apart from his years in wartime intelligence and an unfortunate and stressful epilogue as Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, was spent in Oxford. The factious, petty-minded, back-biting world of that university is exposed here in hideous and depressing detail. The subject of this biography was bound up in all of this and gave as much as, or more than, he got. He could be a cruel controversialist and relished a fight with those he disliked or opposed. Lawrence Stone, R.H.Tawney, Christopher Hill, Arnold Toynbee, A.L.Rowse, A.J.P.Taylor, and Evelyn Waugh all felt his lash; Stone, in fact, was lucky to survive Trevor-Roper's campaign of academic liquidation. He could be kind and helpful to students and former students like Felix Raab, Valerie Pearl and Blair Worden but, by and large, it is not an agreeable personal portrait which emerges here of Oxford's Regius Professor. He was an inveterate snob, a lover of the high life, and uncharitable, dismissive and almost inhuman, in his dealings with many others. 'He does not like anyone or wish to be liked,' opined his Oxford contemporary Maurice Bowra. 'What he wants is to impress and be admired.' (p. 288)

Though Trevor-Roper published a great deal, as this study makes clear, his career was positively littered with unfinished projects. Commissioned books on the English Civil Wars, on religion and the rise of capitalism, and on Whig and Tory history, for example, all failed to see the light of day. Partly this was the result of intense perfectionism. It was also bound up with his own darting, magpie-like mind, always attracted by something new. 'The trouble is, I am too interested in too many things,' Trevor-Roper freely confessed, 'and I write so slowly, that by the time I have written a chapter I have got interested in something else. And then, there are the delights of idleness…' (p. 374) Essay writing became a more manageable alternative to writing whole books. The treadmill of journalism – both academic and political – also diverted him from more serious projects but was increasingly necessary to maintain his elegant life-style. Margaret Thatcher, for one, was distinctly unimpressed when he told her on one occasion that he had a book 'on the stocks'. 'A fat lot of good that is!', replied the iron lady. 'In the shops, that is where we need it!' (p. 521)

Sisman in this engaging and well orchestrated volume chiefly documents Trevor Roper's academic and public career. By and large he does not offer an intellectual life. In that sense the subtitle, announcing that this is *the* biography of this historian, is rather misleading. There are not many insights here into how Trevor-Roper researched, interrogated his materials, established connections (often of an interdisciplinary kind), and framed his writing for his chosen audience.

University of Winchester **R.C.Richardson**