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*The Poetics of Spice: Romantic Consumerism and the Exotic* by Timothy Morton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. xiii + 282. \$59.95 cloth.

In this age of electronic media, the relevance of literary criticism is sometimes questioned as an antiquated analytical approach from an outdated era. For many of us who teach and write about literature, the significance of literary analysis seems obvious: the interpretive skills used in examining literature serve broadly beyond the discipline. Although not necessarily intended as such, *The Poetics of Spice*, Timothy Morton's impressively detailed and wide-ranging study of spice and Romantic consumerism, provides an encompassing vindication of the power and importance of literary criticism. Morton argues the effectiveness of literary criticism for examining his topic, the "persistence of tropes, figures, emblems and so forth involving spice," by noting that

Literary criticism, aware of the complexities of figurative language, is able to demonstrate aspects of this topic which have not been pursued in cultural anthropology and histories of the commodity. It is able to treat issues of rhetoric, representation, aesthetics and ideology, including notions of race and gender, in ways that make us sensitive to the power and ambiguity of sign systems. (9)

Morton's complex engagement throughout *The Poetics of Spice* with issues in critical theory such as these will appeal to an audience of readers beyond Romantic specialists; indeed, Morton addresses literary criticism as much as literary and cultural texts. I found myself inspired by Morton's arguments to reconsider ways I teach and write about not only the Romantic texts Morton analyzes, but also poetics and literary theory overall.

*The Poetics of Spice* will also appeal to a broad range of literary scholars because although Morton examines a significant number of Romantic-era texts in this study, he argues convincingly that the poetics of spice forms a much larger continuum, a "style of consuming" (11) that he traces for millennia, to the present. In fact, as Morton notes, by the Romantic era, the maritime trade in spices was waning, while the cultural operations of spice "as discourse, not an object, naively transparent to itself" (3) maintained and increased their potency. He analyzes spice as a sign system using a "diachronic approach" (6) that "does not assume a teleological narrative or a rigid division between modern and pre-modern" (18). As a result, Morton provides readings of work from the Biblical to the postmodern, from sources as varied as cookbooks, the graphic arts, medicine, and the trade in commodities such as perfume, sugar, cinnamon, and pepper.

As one might expect from its title, this book enters the critical conversations about Romanticism and orientalism of the last fifteen years, but with an important expansion of focus. Morton argues that orientalism and colonialism

“are often construed through a psychoanalytic discourse of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’” that “can be expanded with histories of the object in colonial and orientalist texts” (205). What Morton wishes to avoid, however, is the way the “study of the object often presupposes a naive empirical collection of detail as its goal,” instead arguing that the “study of consumption raises the question of enjoyment and suffering” and fantasy often left out of empirical collections of data (205). As a result, postcolonial theory is only one dimension of Morton’s critical strategy here. Morton rejects New Historicist or cultural studies labels for his work, and points instead to deconstruction, close reading, and the work of “Lacanian post-Marxist philosopher Slavoj Žižek” (3) as the foundations of his examination of “relationships between language, desire, and power” (3–4). As these brief quotations illustrate, an important dimension of this book is the way Morton thoroughly dissects the terms of his analysis, perhaps echoing the “self-reflexive” qualities he emphasizes in Romantic consumerism.

As a result, one of the most engaging aspects of this book is the way these analytical terms evolve throughout the study. Morton organizes his textual readings around a series of topoi or founding elements of “the poetics of spice”. These topoi and other figurative devices form the core of his close readings. While I cannot entirely encapsulate Morton’s complex arguments here, I will briefly describe several of the terms that recur most often and note a few of the ways he uses these concepts to read Romantic texts.

Central to Morton’s work is the idea that the poetics of spice has two qualities: “materiality and transumption” (19). The materiality of spice is connected to its role “halfway between object and sign, goods and money” (19), and as such, as a stimulus of desire. One example of this poetic function of spice can be seen in the “trade winds topos” (the perfumed breeze thought to waft from the exotic regions from which spices originate). Morton identifies this topos in a variety of settings, including Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, arguing that “Milton sets the figurative agenda” (46) for the poetics of spice and presents Satan’s journey from Hell to Chaos as a sort of spice trader’s travels (68). Throughout *The Poetics of Spice* and especially in Chapter 2, Morton traces the trade winds topos and related topoi of materiality (e.g. the Poison Tree) in the work of Erasmus Darwin, William Blake, Percy Shelley, and Charlotte Smith, among others.

Transumption, the second quality Morton associates with the poetics of spice, follows Harold Bloom’s reworking of this rhetorical concept. Morton argues that spice is, importantly, a sort of metaspice, that “serves as a figure for poetic language itself” (19) as he explains Bloom’s sense of transumption. Dryden is an important literary source for this metaleptic quality of spice (which emerges particularly in the Romantic era); Morton suggests that Dryden’s works are “paradigmatic of a novel kind of capitalist poetics, relying on the representation of the spice trade. [. . .] Spice is not a balm but an object of

trade, a trope to be carried across boundaries, standing in for money: a metaphor about metaphor" (75). Here and throughout his study, Morton articulates well how spice as object (e.g. cinnamon) also always tropes desire for the exotic and embodies essential values of the commodity. "*Spice is the very form of the idea of the commodity itself*, a form of what Žižek calls 'spiritual substance'" (23), Morton argues, connecting this idea of the commodity to consumerism, which, newly self-reflexive in the Romantic era, capitalizes upon spice's transumptive nature. Morton's analysis of *Paradise Lost* suggests important new ways to view Milton's influence on the Romantics and argues that "Milton's Satan was a template for this self-reflexive consciousness" emerging in the Romantic era (105). As these brief overviews of materiality and transumption suggest, Morton's literary readings effectively fuse deconstructive, Marxist, and psychoanalytic approaches to understanding the evolution of spice as capitalist discourse.

From these readings of Milton and Dryden, Morton loosely follows literary chronology in the examples of the poetics of spice he traverses on his way to the Romantic era (though he also intersperses briefer readings of Romantic texts in the first eighty pages or so). The latter two thirds of the book are mostly devoted to reading a variety of Romantic era texts in lesser and greater amounts of detail, including works by Anna Seward, Mary Shelley, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Helen Maria Williams, Felicia Hemans, Thomas Moore, John Keats, Robert Southey, Leigh Hunt, William Jones, and so forth. If I were to critique any aspect of this astonishing study, it might be to wish that Morton had been able to give us close readings of even larger portions of the works he includes, for his analyses are engaging and vividly bring to life the poetics he deduces over the course of the book.

Several brief examples from his more detailed readings of the ways the Romantics use the poetics of spice will illustrate further Morton's fusion of critical terminology with textual analysis. In his study of Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Morton argues that the poem's medievalism and its commodified qualities as an "'antiqued' text" reflect the "moment of modernity" that produced the idea of the antique (122). Furthermore, this antiquarianism can be seen in connection with spice, in that "[. . .] spice is an antique marker of capitalist expansion, luxury and desire. Spice *per se* (cinnamon, pepper, and so forth) becomes ideologically useful precisely at the point at which it is less materially useful, even for fuelling the capitalist economy" (7).

These threads of medievalism and spice are continued in Morton's long reading of Keats's *The Eve of St. Agnes*, an important core of this book. In his reading of Keats's poem, the dual nature of spice as materiality and as transumption is incorporated in another of the analytical terms Morton employs, the "emulsion"—in which two immiscible "elements [. . .] are not dissolved into each other" but are suspended in tension (33). Emulsion characterizes a

number of spice's traits for Morton and is an apt term for capturing the deconstructive multiplicity of meaning the poetics of spice represent. (Another such term is Derrida's *pharmakon*, meaning "either poison or cure, and an unstable, destabilising flow" (41) which Morton uses throughout his book, especially in readings of Milton and Keats.) For his reading of *The Eve of St. Agnes*, Morton coins the term "the blancmange effect" to describe Keats's emulsive strategy in this poem, particularly in Porphyro's feast for Madeleine in stanza 30. (A blancmange incorporates bland ingredients, like milk, chicken, rice, with spices such as ginger, sugar, and rosewater [150].) The concept of the blancmange enables Morton to take issue with other readings of Keats's poem, such as Marjorie Levinson's argument in *Keats' Life of Allegory* that Porphyro's banquet features "'children's foods.'" He argues that instead we see an "emulsive tension" between "[m]ilky food and spice" that "precisely mirrors the larger figurative patterns of *The Eve of St. Agnes*—a witty staging of the impossible sexual relationship" (151–152).

A final example from Morton's readings of Romantic texts illustrates another dimension of his far-ranging work, an analysis of the abolitionist and proslavery debates of the era. Morton coins another term to read these texts, the "blood sugar topos" (173) in which abolitionists suggest that sugar is actually tainted with the blood of the slaves who produce it, and that consumers should imagine this literally: "The sweetened drinks of tea, coffee and chocolate are rendered suddenly nauseating by the notion that they are full of the blood of slaves" (173). Morton points out the ways that "The blood sugar topos reverses consumption into production, figurality into literality, and supplementarity into essence" (175). Robert Southey's "Poems on the Slave Trade" is the central text of the chapter focused upon the blood sugar topos, and Morton asks complex questions about Southey's attitudes in these sonnets: "[. . .] is Southey supporting rebellion by the slaves or reform by the planters and consumers? Are the Africans victims or agents? Like Coleridge's lecture, Southey's reformist text is haunted by the possibility of rebellion, and one has to wonder whether this is meant as a threat and goad to reform, or as a more complex celebration of revolutionary struggle" (196). As Morton notes, the "[. . .] Romantic period provided special conditions for the critique of trade, and hence the revision of the [trade winds] topos" (42) as seen in Southey's work, among others.

As these brief summaries of a few of Morton's readings may indicate, one of the most compelling aspects of this book, in addition to the brilliant use of theory (many important terms of which I have not been able to present here, such as spice's elements of *ekphrasis* and *fantasia*), is the complexity Morton discovers in the cultural markers and texts he analyzes. One cannot call Morton's work reductive in the least, and its density rewards the careful reader. By

the final chapter, one is thoroughly intrigued by the ways of reading Morton presents—and inspired to apply these to a variety of texts on one's own.

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*The Gang: Coleridge, the Hutchinsons & the Wordsworths in 1802* by John Worthen. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001. Pp. 344. \$30.00 cloth.

Biographies construct one among many possible histories of a life, and books of criticism that focus upon one aspect of a literary career are fragmentary biographies. The biography may trace a religious life, a poetic career, a philosophic or social quest, or, as is common now, an emotional and sexual life. Biography has become biology. Future biographies may concentrate upon a writer's finances, profession, or public life. Some recent biographies offer new research, but many simply re-read the existing printed evidence and are judged on the plausibility of their readings. John Worthen's biography of Coleridge, the Wordsworths, and the Hutchinsons is a welcome change from the limiting focus on one individual life, for the obvious reason that a creative life is often the intersection of a large number of public and private influences, correspondences, and conversations. As Thomas McFarland once wrote, "There are no Robinson Crusoes of the intellect." Worthen's group biography helps us think about what constitutes such a group, how, on a daily basis, it generated literature through collaborative creativity, as well as the limits of the evidence available to know such a group.

Recent criticism has shifted from Romantic individuality to the dialogic and discursive elements of the Romantics' art, and there is no better test case for collaborative creativity than the relationship of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Previous biographies of the two poets read the relationship as antagonistic and commonly praise one poet and condemn the other. Thus Coleridge is either the victim of Wordsworth's public and private criticism, which destroyed him as a poet, or morally hopeless, unable to fulfill his promise; Wordsworth is the quintessential poet of individual imagination, or a domineering egotist, whom Keats described as a bully, and who yet needed both Coleridge's encouragement and his philosophical speculation. Worthen singles out McFarland, Molly Lefebure, and particularly Richard Holmes, who blame Wordsworth's callous cancellation of "Christabel" from the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, and Mary Moorman, who regarded Wordsworth's decision to exclude "Christabel" as an appropriate judgment. One could also question Wordsworth's note

to "The Ancient Mariner" in the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads*: "The Poem of my Friend has indeed great defects."

Worthen wisely avoids taking sides and notes that in spite of these major issues, their daily letters and journals offer a different picture of their relationship between 1800 and 1802, one of their mutual affection and unremitting interchange of poetry and letters. Worthen has written the biography of a creative group that includes not only the poets, but also Dorothy Wordsworth, and the sisters Sara and Mary Hutchinson as members, in 1802, as an extended family. The book is divided into three sections: "Pre-History," including brief histories of the Wordsworths settling in Grasmere in 1799 and 1800, along with the early days of March 1802, including Coleridge's trip from London to Grasmere and his visit to Sara Hutchinson along the way; "Joy and Melancholy," March to July, when Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode" and Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode" and "Resolution and Independence" were originally drafted; and "To the Wedding," the months leading up to Wordsworth's wedding on October 4 and the publication of a partial text of "Dejection: An Ode" in the *Morning Post* on the same day, including William and Dorothy's August trip to Calais to see Annette Vallon and their child. Worthen emphasizes the emotional ties that bound the group: Wordsworth's wedding to Mary Hutchinson and the possibility that his brother John was in love with her; Wordsworth's relationship with Dorothy and her wearing the wedding ring the night before William's marriage; the possibility that Dorothy was in love with Coleridge; and Coleridge's fantasy of love for Sara Hutchinson. Worthen doubts any extramarital sexual activity in the group and emphasizes the group's interest in children, Coleridge's son Hartley, Sara Coleridge's pregnancy during the summer, and Wordsworth's contemplating starting a family after his wedding. Still, his description of their emotional ties, their unconventional behavior, and Coleridge's opium addiction portrays the group as a forerunner of a 1970s commune and inevitably raises questions about reading our own experiences into the customs of the early nineteenth century.

But the group was more than a gathering of unconventional orphans sorting out their emotional lives. It was a creative group, one of the most complex in literary history. The relations of Coleridge's and Wordsworth's poems have been mapped before, and more can be done to assess their mutual influence. The inclusion of Dorothy and the Hutchinson sisters as essential parts of this creative group is a valuable contribution to our understanding of creativity. Since they transcribed the poems, they constituted the first, and perhaps primary, audience for the poems. As critics, they were not inhibited, as Wordsworth's response to Mary Hutchinson's comments on "Resolution and Independence" indicates. And as literary critics are increasingly recognizing, Dorothy's journals are a good read, in part, as Worthen explains, because they were written for the group. How much, one is prompted to ask, is Dorothy's

sensibility found in Wordsworth's poetry? Perhaps most important, their relationships were constituted in letters. They did not often live close to one another, so their communications were in writing. Worthen surmises from the evidence in Dorothy's journal that in some months she wrote letters every day, yet only a small number survive. They were literally men and women of letters and the group was tied together, not only by their emotional connections and daily conversations, but also by the writing of journals and letters.

Worthen argues that their poems and journals originated in conversations, letters, and fragmentary drafts in such a way that a poem's origin cannot be identified as coming from one writer or another. Their poems began as group efforts. Encouraging as this argument is to those who wish to dismantle the myth of individual authorship, questions arise about how a poem emerges from the mazy confluence of conversation and letters to become an individual utterance. The test case is the relationship of "The Immortality Ode," "A Letter to \_\_\_\_\_ [Sara Hutchinson]," "Resolution and Independence," and "Dejection: An Ode." For most critics the sequence began on March 27, 1802 with Wordsworth's drafting the first four stanzas of his "Ode," followed by Coleridge's writing "A Letter," on the evening of April 4, Wordsworth's responsive "Resolution and Independence," and finally Coleridge's transforming "A Letter," into "Dejection: An Ode." Worthen argues "that the sequence of composition . . . is almost unknowable" (138). He suggests that the first stanzas of Wordsworth's "Ode" may have been written as early as 1800, since the opening lines echo lines in "The Mad Monk," on which modern editors are unable to agree whether it belongs to Wordsworth or Coleridge. He also suggests that it is highly unlikely that Coleridge could have written the 339 lines of "A Letter" between sunset and midnight on April 4, and that it is possible that "A Letter" and "Dejection" developed simultaneously.

When he questions the critics' reliance on a clear sequence of poetic statement and response, Worthen's skepticism is appropriate and healthy. Yet Worthen tends to equivocate on the description of the sequence. If by "sequence," one means strict chronology in which drafts can be assigned to particular days and hours, one must agree with him. But if by "sequence" one means the various drafts as statement and response, one must question his reading of the evidence. The evidence for dating the beginning of the "ode" in 1800 is slim, other than the existence of "The Mad Monk," a poem very different from the "Ode." Although the dating of manuscript evidence for Coleridge's poetry is not conclusive, the quotations and allusions in "A Letter" to Wordsworth's "ode" indicate that it was written after the first four stanzas of Wordsworth's poem. There are in Coleridge's "Letter" at least eight or ten clear quotations and allusions to the first four stanzas of the "Ode," so that it is highly probable that Wordsworth's four stanzas existed in close to finished form before Coleridge



began to write "A Letter." Similarly the manic-depressive shifts that Wordsworth describes in "Resolution and Independence" are more typical of Coleridge than of himself. In short, Worthen may be right when he questions the days and hours of composition, but when he "seeks to replace the beautifully shaped orthodox account of series of poems and responses with one which is a good deal less certain" (138), he seems to discount the evidence of the poetry itself as individual dialogic utterances and to slight the fact that uniquely individual poetic forms emerged from the chaotic written exchanges of all the group. After all, the final products of writing, whether they are Wordsworth's or Coleridge's poems or Dorothy's journals, are unique formal structures.

Worthen's biographical reading of the 1802 poetry emphasizes the themes of family and childhood, and hence he reads the opening stanzas of Wordsworth's "Ode" as lamenting the loss of the child's response to nature. The problem, of course, is that there is nothing in the first four stanzas that says Wordsworth has lost the light of childhood. There is no reference to his own childhood in those lines; the reference to his childhood comes in the following stanzas written in 1804. The allusions may suggest, rather, that in 1802 he laments that loss of a light that was his in 1798 or 1800. The skepticism that Worthen deploys in questioning other biographers' claims could well be raised against his biographical reading of the poems. These readings emphasize daily lives and personal relationships, but one misses the flavor and fervor of other topics that must have animated their conversation. Coleridge's political journalism, particularly his important "Once a Jacobin Always a Jacobin" article in the *Morning Post* is slighted, as are Wordsworth's political sonnets written in France in August, which are read simply as defenses against more personal themes. Coleridge's great letter September 10, 1802 to William Sotheby on imagination and the one life is nowhere to be found. It is difficult to imagine their conversation empty of politics, philosophy, and aesthetics.

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*Romanticism and Slave Narratives: Transatlantic Testimonies* by Helen Thomas. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Cambridge Studies in Romanticism 38. Pp. xi + 332. \$59.95 cloth.

In Helen Thomas's often illuminating and trenchant monograph, "Romanticism is recontextualized against a broader canvas of cultural exchanges, geographical migrations and displaced identities" (5). The task she sets herself is to place the African Diaspora and its consequences as central to the national

and personal identities of canonical and non-canonical figures at the heart of Romanticism. She uses the apparatus of postcolonial theories to further her project describing a creolization and a hybridity as central to the self-realization of diasporan Africans in their writings. At its most radical in the work of Robert Wedderburn, “the ‘creolised’ discourse of fluidity, heterogeneity, movement and change demarcated an illuminating revision of established (static) concepts of power, possession and identity” (268). She neither labels the writings of diasporan Africans as pale European imitations or as deeply rooted Africanist texts, but shows how fundamentally bicultural they are. This move is not particularly new but its use in juxtaposition to Romanticism makes for dynamic, if sometimes controversial, interventions.

She describes the “mulatto as the radical agent of socioeconomic transformation” (262). There are problems with this approach though, as her championing of the radical nature of “mulatto discourse,” in her discussion of the Jamaican-born radical, Robert Wedderburn tends to essentialize mixed race discourse in the same reductionist way African essentialism is prioritized in much Black Nationalist criticism. “Mulatto discourse” is not always radical, as the many mulatto slave traders in Africa and slave drivers in the Americas prove. Wedderburn’s radicalism comes not merely from his mixed-race birth, but, I would argue, principally from a working-class background that led to his identifying class as an essential determinant of his radical politics. In this he was like his fellow radical and Cato Street conspirator, William ‘Black’ Davidson. Moreover, Thomas almost completely elides the Naval context of Wedderburn’s radicalism, failing to cite Jesse Lemisch’s pioneering work on *Jack Tar* (from 1968, republished 1993) or Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh’s account (first published in article form in 1993) of a multi-racial mobile proletariat of which Wedderburn was a part. There is a whole historical context here that would have strengthened Thomas’s argument. The focus is so much on the creolized and the hybrid in relation to the individual, that good old-fashioned working-class history and the thriving London black community is rather marginalized.

Apart from Wedderburn, whose appearance is most welcome, this monograph parades the usual suspects both from the European tradition and the African Diaspora. The only slave captain dealt with at length is John Newton. The pioneering work of Suzanne Schwartz (1995) has uncovered an interesting character in James Irving, a former surgeon working out of Liverpool in the 1780s. His journal and letters home could have provided a counterweight to Newton’s eventual guilt about his role in the trade as Irving remained so convinced of slavery’s justification that he continued in the trade even after he himself had been enslaved by Moors for a year. The absence of Irving is accompanied by other lacunae. *The Narrative of Robert Adams* (1816), which details his enslavement in North Africa in 1810, having been a free black in

America, could have provided useful evidence to buttress Thomas's claims about the complexities of hybridity and creolization. His experience of being taken for white because of his status as American, crucially affected the Moors' reaction to him and he used their uncertainty about his color to his own advantage. Thomas Jefferson is included but some of his most revealing writing on race is overlooked. For instance, his discussion of a black Venus pudique in an English garden could have provided must grist for the psycho-sexual reading of his racial ideology, but it is not even mentioned here (Winthrop Jordan had begun this work in *White Over Black* [1968]).

Likewise, although there is some astute commentary on John Stedman, Thomas misses the chance to show how creolization was a two-way process affecting Europeans as well as Africans. Thomas is right to emphasize Stedman's eventual rejection of his mulatta mistress and the "erasure" of her and his son by him from his narrative. However, the text, far from making the act of miscegenation "almost unutterable" (130), as Thomas asserts, uses comic conceit to explicate it to his readers. Thus, his mistress's kiss "made my nose as flat as her own" (qtd 129) literally racially marking him. This flirtation with the other is shown to have the consequence of disturbing racial certainties, and Stedman's textual acknowledgment of this is not given sufficient weight in Thomas's discussion here. William Blake is discussed, but his etchings for John Stedman's book are quickly passed over even though they reveal as much, if not more than his writings. The book is decidedly fixed on literary texts when fuller attention to visual arts would have strengthened the discussion.

There are some concessions to oral literature, slave songs and folk tales being mentioned, but their importance as explicators of slave culture is rather undermined by the continued stress on literary texts. Even when Thomas is dealing with Wedderburn's rhetoric, its subaltern orality is rather downplayed—a more nuanced discussion of this rhetoric can be found in Linebaugh and Rediker's *The Many-Headed Hydra* (2000). Popular cultural forms take a back seat—there is no mention of slave fugitive advertisements or of the marginal, but revealing, use of black Britons in newspaper advertisements. Blacks on the stage or performing creolization as beggars are mainly absent here too, despite their cultural richness as examples of African acculturation in the face of exploitation.

The chapter on Equiano continues this theme, outlining with some excellent, thoughtfully discussed examples, the bicultural nature of his *Narrative*. What is problematic here is the eschewing of the latest critical edition (1995 Carretta) that leads to several minor factual errors. Moreover, there is no mention of the controversial Carretta scholarship that questions Equiano's African patrimony (Carretta in *Slavery and Abolition* 1999). In calling on Equiano's African background to describe his "subtle synthesis of African belief systems

with dissenting traditions" (248), Thomas talks of a rooted African belief system that Equiano gained in Africa. Carretta's latest scholarship would not downgrade the existence of such a belief system, but would hint at a more rooted religious tradition Equiano had imbibed in his boyhood from unacculturated Africans in the Carolinas. The latter would make Thomas's arguments for a creolized and hybrid text all the stronger as the "continuum" of belief in the Diaspora she talks of, is exemplified in Equiano's life-history.

Thomas's book is at its most successful in dealing with issues of gender. She rightly describes how "(Mary) Wollstonecraft's discussion of female subjugation rested fundamentally upon the dynamics of emancipatory and abolitionist discourse" (87). Wollstonecraft's feminist argument stressed how women's worth was valued on her "external and reproductive potential" (87) just like the slaves'. The omission of Mary Prince, then, is baffling as her early nineteenth-century life, narrated in a lively autobiography could have provided a more radical intervention in female discourse about slavery than Phillis Wheatley's rather anodyne verse. Maybe its 1831 date precluded Thomas's use of the text, though the fact that many of the incidents related happened well before 1830, would surely qualify it as a dynamic exemplar of black women's survival in the period before the abolition of slavery and of questioning the very system of chattel slavery itself. Gender, though, is used not only to interrogate female-authored texts, but also to problematize a reading of Wedderburn's radicalism. His claims on his father's property in *Horrors of Slavery* (1824) are shown to be crucially dependent on a proprietorship that has as its object women slaves. This critique of Wedderburn is well-made and apposite.

Apart from its discussion on gender, another success of the book is the excellent work here on the importance of the spiritual element in slave narratives, not in purely Christian salvational terms, but the ways in which the "'discourse of the spirit' provided the slaves with an effective ('creolised') mode of subversion, a persuasive counter-hegemonic mode of articulation via which the culturally hybrid consciousness of a black diaspora could emerge" (153). A more sustained discussion of slave religion as practiced in the Caribbean or the American South would have strengthened this observation, but then, as I have discussed, the book is strangely shy of ethnography.

On Coleridge, Thomas usefully quotes his pamphlet on the trade and stresses the way it "daringly correlated the volatile insurrections and 'justified rebellions' of West Indian slaves in the colonies with the desperate plight of the British peasantry" (95). However, her contention that he "strategically avoided a discussion of the slaves themselves" (95) is wrongheaded, because his very talking of British peasants and slaves in the same breath makes the much more important political point that exploitation by the rich of the poor is a worldwide phenomenon that requires more than philanthropy to overturn

it. This is a point Wedderburn was to return to with a vengeance in his writings and speeches a decade later.

Wordsworth is taken to task for his family's involvement in the slave trade—receiving “material benefits . . . from participants in the slave trade” (112) like the Bristol merchant John Pretor Pinney whose house he stayed in rent-free; but again opportunities to use excellent resources are eschewed. Thus Dorothy Wordsworth's wonderful line on John's trip to Barbados—“How we are squandered abroad!” (195)—is buried in the footnotes when it could have been used to rhetorically interrogate Dorothy and William's complicity in the British imperial project. However, some of the strongest arguments in the book occur in this chapter where Wordsworth's conservatism on the issue is first accurately read in a range of poetic examples and then is contrasted markedly to the position of other writers, like William Blake.

Overall, Thomas's book radically challenges traditional notions of the relations between Romanticism and race. If sometimes its postcolonial rhetoric rather runs ahead of due regard to context, this does not undermine its major contention (following Hortense Spillers *et alia*) that race mattered fundamentally in the period and was used to determine the place of whiteness and maleness as much as blackness and femininity. In a similar gesture to Paul Gilroy's, she identifies diaspora as key to the development of a unique black consciousness that affected black and white identities describing “the ocean as a trope of the diaspora itself, a ‘no man's land’ or middle passage in which ‘identity’ becomes amorphous and in which epistemological boundaries and cultural ideologies are subjected to processes of instability, transition and miscegenation” (244). Her book, then, despite its faults, is a dynamic contribution to a developing intercultural field of inquiry that means traditional concepts of Romanticism are under severe challenge.

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*The Notorious Astrological Physician of London: Works and Days of Simon Forman* by Barbara Howard Traister. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001. Pp. 250. \$30.00.

Poor Simon Forman. History has not served him well. He was falsely, posthumously implicated in the scandalous murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, an event which took place a full two years after his own death. The caricature of Forman that emerged from Frances Howard's trial was that of a nefarious, aphrodisiac- and poison-dispensing practitioner of the evil arts, if not even the

devil himself. In his afterlife, Forman was never able to shake this reputation, and for the next couple of centuries he became a recurring character in poems and novels, even crossing the Atlantic to serve as the model for Hawthorne's insidious Chillingworth in *The Scarlet Letter*. Literary scholarship has not helped his case. A. L. Rowse's biography, *Simon Forman: Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age* (London, 1974), depicts him as a sort of early modern pervert. More recently, Louis Adrian Montrose's canonical essay, "'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture" (*Representations* 2 [1983]) springs from Forman's erotic dream about Queen Elizabeth. Montrose's article, while acknowledged as brilliant, is often disparagingly employed as a synecdoche for the first-wave new historicist tendency to rely on anecdotal history, and "Simon Forman's dream" has even become a synecdoche for Montrose's article itself. In fact, it could be said that within literary history Forman has only been permitted to function synecdotally: he stands for the corruption of the court, for the quirks of the early modern sex life, for the seventeenth-century culture of witchcraft, for the historical archive.

In her fascinating study of Simon Forman's own writings, *The Notorious Astrological Physician of London: Works and Days of Simon Forman*, Barbara Howard Traister assembles the parts back into a whole. A look at the book's bibliography of manuscript sources reveals the depth of materials that went into producing a revived and revitalized Forman; a survey of the reproduced manuscript sections and the extensive quotations suggests an archive that is daunting for its paleography and even more so for its orthography. This is a serious academic undertaking, one requiring a profound depth of cultural knowledge, archival skill, dedication and patience.

The result of Traister's extensive labor is a gripping page-turner. The reader comes not only to know Simon Forman, but to explore his eclectic interests and his cultural milieu. The book wends its way through curious facts, and the result is part biography, part medical and social history, and even part *Alice in Wonderland* (at one point we find ourselves unexpectedly in the world of giants, at another we watch Forman drinking a sort of boiled snake soup as an elixir to reverse the effects of aging).

The Simon Forman that Traister reconstructs is not necessarily a very nice one. Forman emerges as a "humorless, anxious man trying desperately to become something he was not" (30). In some ways, Forman's story is one of self-fashioning gone bad. In his various autobiographies (themselves testament to "A Self-Conscious Life," as Traister entitles a chapter), Forman fantasizes about familial and social grandeur, even drafting several coats of arms. This social elevation did not correspond with the reality of Forman's existence, however. Of relatively humble origins, Forman was largely denied a formal education. While he received some instruction from a clergyman as a child, after his father's death he was apprenticed to a shopkeeper who did not honor an

agreement to send the young Simon to grammar school, a breach which Forman bitterly resented and long remembered. Forman sopped up what knowledge he could by pressing a dim schoolboy sharing his quarters to repeat the daily lessons. This dynamic was one that would repeat itself throughout Forman's life: yearning to be inside of a formal system, aware of his own intelligence and capacities, and yet excluded from the system through the prejudice and injustice of his intellectual inferiors (as he perceived it). The most significant and enduring of Forman's struggles to be an insider was his long campaign to be licensed by the exclusive College of Physicians. This struggle involved repeated imprisonment, failed public examinations, and the influence of Forman's better-placed friends. In the end, Forman prevailed but his relationship with the physicians was fraught and psychologically complex; even as Forman seemed to loathe the medical organization, he was nonetheless desperate to be accepted and even ordered a set of clothes to correspond to the physician's dress code. While Forman eventually secured himself a solid reputation and some degree of wealth, he remained a social outsider. His compulsive attempts to shape his life and family history could not overcome this exclusion.

In his personal life, Forman seems to have been largely friendless. "All too often," writes Traister, "people disappointed, betrayed, or angered Forman" (172). He was deeply suspicious of others, and even thought that people were out to kill him. He was convinced his mother hated him. With the exception of one adulterous passion, his relationships with women appear to have been emotionally distant, if enthusiastically sexual. Forman had abundant extramarital sexual encounters (preferring women who were married or promiscuous so paternity claims could be denied or concealed), and Traister even speculates that he accepted sexual payment for medical services rendered, a speculation that seems plausible and even likely. The portrait that emerges from this book is unflattering, but is tempered by some of Forman's more endearing quirks. We catch glimpses of Forman writing (bad) poetry, indulging his active imagination in chivalric lore, and developing a penchant for gardening in later life. And if Forman's relationship with other humans were rather dispassionate, his heart was faithful to his books, which he cherished to the point of renting a second set of chambers to house and protect them. Lost lovers and lost children rarely figure in his accounts—but lost books are mourned, and their return marked with rejoicing.

While Forman makes an intriguing, even novelistic central character for the book, perhaps even more interesting is the social world that we glimpse through him. While the autobiographic writings attempt to script a particular (usually victimized) persona, the casebooks appear to chart a routine day's labor and record factual information. These casebooks, however, contain particles of hundreds of other narratives of loss, suffering, and desire. We read of

illness and desperate attempts to cure it, or of resignation to its effects. Many of Forman's consultations were with relatives or friends of the suffering person, rather than the patients themselves, an angle which somehow makes the illness more vivid. Scholarly accounts of early modern medicine most often linger over the grotesque details of disease (Forman's account of the man who had finger-sized holes in his neck filled with eighty-six worms would make a nice candidate for these studies), but Traister's unfolding of Forman's writings brings to light the repercussions for the caregivers. Many of Forman's clients came to him for astrological rather than medical advice (a distinction which Forman himself would have considered false, for astrological knowledge was vital to his practice as a physician). These astrological consultations also provide a glimpse of Londoners' affective lives. One desperate couple repeatedly visits Forman hoping to find a lost and clearly much beloved pet dog (one wearing a velvet collar with bells); a widow and her two suitors consult Forman to know which of the pair she is to marry. From the records of Forman's practice the reader encounters an affective economy that is at times poignantly familiar, and at times utterly alien.

One of the ironies of Traister's book is its title, *The Notorious Astrological Physician of London*, since Forman emerges as a figure who was not really notorious within his own lifetime. His repeated and flagrant disregard for the College of Physicians did indeed make him subject to periods of imprisonment, but the overall impression the reader carries from Traister's study is of an anti-social but well-respected medical practitioner. The people who came to see Forman were not courtiers or, so far as we know, scheming murderers. Forman himself was not dispensing aphrodisiacs or abortives. But while the reader expecting notoriety and sensationalism may be disappointed, the study is all the more intriguing for its commonality. Through Forman, we meet a cross-section of ordinary Londoners, and Forman himself functions as an exemplary reader and interpreter of the political circumstances of his day. He was intrigued by the nascent English explorations of the New World, apparently fascinated by Essex (repeatedly performing astrological readings to see how Essex's schemes would fare—and correctly predicting disastrous results), and did indeed dream about the Queen, although only one of his recorded dreams about her was at all risqué. While Forman was only one individual, and an extraordinary one at that, it is nonetheless interesting to see how an inhabitant of the city might have been engaging with the current events that are of primary interest for many historians and literary scholars.

The book is also a marvelous insight into the nuts and bolts of medical practice. Recent scholarly interest in the body has led to an increased awareness of early modern medical theories (such as the humoral economy) and practices (like the culture of dissection). But it remains difficult to imagine



how the medical culture actually affected the lives of the people living in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century London. Here, in Forman's records, we are able to see early modern medicine at work. We read how physicians were paid (part upon receipt of services, part upon the recovery of health). We get a feel for how many patients a doctor, or at any rate Forman, would see in a day (about four). We learn the most common ailments (gynecological problems were especially prevalent), and the demographic breakdown of patients (relatively few children and people over 50, more women than men). An odd aggregate effect of this book, at least for this reader, is that the idea and practice of humoral (and to a lesser degree astrological) medicine begins to emerge as a logical and sensible system. Extensive reading in medical history can explain the principles of the humoral economy, but the concept and the cures often continue to look bizarre to the modern eye. Through encountering Forman's patients and diagnoses, however, the system becomes much more comprehensible, as does the early modern somatic subjectivity.

Traister's study does not present us with any new theoretical paradigms for reading early modern culture. Nor does it pretend to. But in providing such an extensive account of Forman's "works and days" the book is an incredible entry into the world of early modern medicine and life of one of its practitioners. As a work of scholarship Traister's work is profound and invaluable, and as a book a great romp of a read.

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*Jean Toomer and the Harlem Renaissance* edited by Genevieve Fabre and Michel Feith. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001. Pp. 256. \$52.00 cloth; \$22.00 paper.

*The Evidence of Things Not Said* by Lawrie Balfour. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. Pp. 192. \$17.50 paper.

In his dedication to the posthumously published *Juneteenth*, Ralph Ellison eulogizes "That Vanished Tribe into Which [he] Was Born, / The American Negroes." As culled from over 2,000 manuscript pages by his literary executor, John McCallahan, *Juneteenth*, like *Invisible Man*, traces the extinction of Alain Locke's "New Negro" by forces both intrinsic and extrinsic to the former Africans, not the least of which is the phenomenon of "passing," a Trojan Horse strategy that straddles the boundary between the intraracial and the interracial as simultaneous self-extinction and transcendence. Following a line of thought

already displayed by the accessorized identities of Rinehart in *Invisible Man*, Ellison's posthumous send-up of ethnic and racial machinations demonstrates, à la Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Morrison and others, that "passing" is the sine qua non of what it means "to be" an American. Thus, to a certain extent, *Juneteenth* can be read as an appended chapter to Jean Toomer's *Cane*, a book which, as Werner Sollors notes in his contribution to a new collection of essays on Toomer, analogously depicts the "disappearing African culture on the American continent." And if Ellison's work also foretells the coming "black" man, those "race men" whom Toomer had to both embrace and repel, James Baldwin's work *in toto* relentlessly puts "black men" on stage in order to both gape at and gaze beyond them. For Toomer and Baldwin, these reactions to the dilemma of race and racism in America add up to Ellisonian ambivalence, the theses and antitheses of twentieth-century America in the throes of giving birth to America "tomorrow," when men will one day live as they have been created, as equals.

But not, necessarily, women. In these essays that reassess the value and position of Jean Toomer's work and life in relation to the Harlem Renaissance in particular and modernism in general, the question of gender is never addressed explicitly. The absence is significant because Toomer weds his vision of the coming America to the "new race," those of mixed racial and ethnic blood. Although contributor Diana Williams oversimplifies Toomer's endorsement of general eugenics tenets in the early part of the twentieth century, Toomer's reversal of the hierarchical oppositions undergirding value-laden racial theories—"pure" blood v. "mixed" blood—is, as she notes, a kind of "natural aristocracy." Insofar as this "aristocracy" depends on women as well as men, to say nothing of the cultural apparatus of heterosexual norms, feminist and queer readings of Toomer seem justified. Nonetheless, in *Jean Toomer and the Harlem Renaissance*, Williams and twelve other critics examine Toomer's life and work in almost every other important (and not so important) context: the other arts (music and painting), modernity as a cultural force, the political ramifications of *Cane* as well as Toomer's nonfiction work, and the marketing problems around *Cane* given Toomer's reluctance to have himself blurbed as a "Negro author." The range of topics ensures that most, if not all, readers of Toomer will find at least one essay of interest in this collection.

For this reader's part, the most illuminating essays, aside from Williams's, are those by George Hutchinson, Charles-Yves Grandjeat and Michael Soto. All three depict the paradoxical struggles of Toomer's desire to establish himself as a writer per se (that is, as an "American"), his resistance and acquiescence to the racial pigeonholing of his supporter Waldo Frank and publisher Horace Liveright (the ironies of their surnames notwithstanding), and his attempt to overcome racial fixation in *Cane* even as he confesses that his inspiration for artistic creativity is drawn from, and privileged by, "the Negro group."

Certainly Hutchinson is attuned to this delicate balancing act when he notes that Toomer's utopian visions of mixed-race relations take shape within the context of an increasing number of cultural and political clashes within the nation. In short, Toomer looks to a future America as the country becomes even more racially polarized than it had been at his birth in 1894. More ironic, and on point, *Cane* was largely ignored, despite mostly glowing (if problematic) reviews, and disappeared shortly after its publication until it was "resurrected" in the 1960s by the race-conscious purveyors of "black aesthetics," the "foundation" of the Black Arts Movement.

As the focus here is Toomer in the context of the Harlem Renaissance, the essays in general move back and forth between discussing Toomer's ambivalent relationship to the implications of the "new Negro" (Wolfgang Karrer links this ambivalence to that of Claude McKay who, for very different reasons, also resisted the implications of Locke's clarion call) and the ways that *Cane* embodies formal features and thematic elements associated with modernism (e.g., collage, fragmentation, nostalgia, rootlessness, etc.). Charles-Yves Grandjeat argues, for example, that Toomer's use of secondary colors depicts the "in-between" that stands outside or beyond the language of binary oppositions. Genevieve Fabre reads the linguistic structures of *Cane* against musical and theatrical backdrops while the essays by Werner Sollors and Michel Fabre suggest Toomer's restless spirit not only led him to wager his life on an America yet to be born but, in important ways, led him to embrace internationalism on all levels, yet another tenet of modernism. Or perhaps being a member of the "new race" simply meant, for Toomer, that he was both the "First American" (as he entitled a polemical essay) as well as the last American, a man no longer delimited by "history."

If Jean Toomer saw himself as a kind of mosaic figure atop the mountain of history, gazing into a future he would never enter, James Baldwin saw himself, and lived his life, as a fiery Jeremiah, denouncing white and black Americans who failed to seriously examine, and accept with compassion, their shared, checkered, past. In a new book that considers the political economy of race consciousness as it pertains to the ideals of American democracy, Laurie Balfour argues that Baldwin's work *in toto* can be read as a saying of the unsaid, a deliberate refusal of the polite civility of silence that paradoxically underwrites the American discourse on race. Still, for all his hardnosed takes on American democracy, Baldwin, like Toomer and Ellison, linked his vision of what America could be with the development of a certain moral quality within all Americans. Baldwin, as Balfour shows, eschewed talk of transcending race *à la* Toomer; he wanted to highlight race since, he believed, race had never been seriously discussed in America. Yet because he believed American democracy could be fully realized without erasing race, Baldwin was actually

more optimistic—and less idealistic—than Toomer regarding the prospects for blacks in America.

Balfour begins by insisting on the relevance of all of Baldwin's work, both "early" and "late" since, she argues, her concerns do not address the thorny issue of aesthetic value that is often used to denigrate Baldwin's later, largely political, books. But it soon becomes clear that there is one genre of Baldwin's work that Balfour largely neglects: his fiction. And she does so not only or primarily due to the nature of her sociopolitical orientation but also because, I believe, Baldwin's fiction, no more than Ellison's, could deliver on the promise the nonfiction envisions. Baldwin, like Ellison, was too shrewd a writer, too experienced a human, to sugarcoat the raw reality of race as experienced by those deemed "ethnic groups." Most significant, in their fiction both writers consider and dismiss almost all the "solutions" proposed from every segment of the political spectrum (excepting, of course, their much-heralded, and very problematic, championing of "individualism"). And Baldwin, like Ellison, held onto the promise of America even as they conceded the failures of "integration" while depicting the dead-ends of segregation.

Balfour's book, then, considers the political economy of race as analyzed by Baldwin in the essays, with occasional glances at the fiction. After an introductory chapter Balfour views Baldwin's work largely through three interrelated problems: the question of what she calls "race consciousness," the very problematic relationship between victimhood and martyrdom, and the polarization of white and black Americans into havens of "innocence" and camps of "guilt." The last chapter, significantly entitled "The Living Word," represents what Balfour shares with Baldwin, and what both share with Ellison and (perhaps) Toomer: an unshakable belief in the American Constitution as the Bible of democratic aspirations.

Though Balfour herself never puts it this way, it becomes clear through her readings of Baldwin's essays that he struggled to find a moral language of analysis that simultaneously resisted the didactic. The effort presented tremendous difficulties for Baldwin. As Balfour notes, Baldwin's essential problem, which he shared with other black leaders and intellectuals, was how to perform the "necessary critique of racial injustice" without propagating "images of victimhood." It is this dilemma that lies at the heart of Baldwin's notorious essay on Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Richard Wright's *Native Son*, "Everybody's Protest Novel." Protest novels, argued Baldwin, merely reflect, and thus reinforce, the already caricatured discourse on race: whites and blacks as either innocent victims or guilty perpetrators of American history. Anticipating the current vogue in "white studies," Baldwin insists that "race consciousness" must be viewed as essential features of both white and black Americans. Expanding on Du Bois's epigrammatic analysis of the "warring" Negro and American "souls" within black Americans, Baldwin demystifies "whiteness" as the naturalized norm against which "racial progress" or

“regression” is measured. Baldwin argues that racial consciousness and its attendant conflicts are normative features of all Americans. Thus, the “color line,” as a sociopolitical construct, forces all Americans to choose between dissembling (hypocrisy) or rebellion (violence). Yet, precisely because his concern is largely the moral sphere, Baldwin, as Balfour notes, can neither suggest how “whiteness” is to be accepted as a construct by whites nor “imagine” how racial consciousness, even if accepted, is to be non-hierarchical in the America yet to be born. This explains, in part, the dark, despairing tone so evident in the late work.

Baldwin’s interest in the moral sphere has its plusses, as Balfour shows. For one thing, Baldwin, unlike the early King and other civil rights activists and supporters, was never taken in by the attempt to legislate “arbitrary beliefs” into existence as a sign of “racial progress.” Balfour correctly notes that Baldwin saw this strategy for what it was: an attempt to “divide” and “showcase” successful blacks as individual “examples” of what unsuccessful blacks should be. Baldwin’s class analysis of the civil rights movement follows Du Bois in demonstrating how the “private” realm of black Americans—the “warring souls” of the “Negro” and “American”—can be read as an analogue to the “public” realm. But in Baldwin class eventually gives way to morality, as a means to an end, and so he argues, like Ellison, that the all-too-visible and all-too-invisible black American is forced to make immoral choices: again, dissembling (hypocrisy) or rebellion (violence). As applied to all Americans, Baldwin’s analysis is linked to an Ellisonian vision: the fate of America and African Americans are inextricably bound. As to African Americans, Baldwin, like Ellison, Albert Murray and others, weds victimhood to martyrdom: “the memory of the auction block” is the matrix for “the gift of insight.” Thus black Americans have a “more mature aspiration toward freedom and equality” than their white counterparts. As in Ellison, then, African Americans, by virtue of their “peculiar history,” are the seeds of the America still to come. It is this teleological dimension in Baldwin that allows him, as it does all moralists, to circumvent the problem of infrastructural (that is, sociopolitical) change. It is also why, as Balfour notes, Baldwin waffles on the private/public problem. Is racial consciousness essentially a “private” problem of morality or a “public” problem of ethics? As Balfour shows, almost unwittingly, Baldwin is clearly concerned about the latter even as his writings drive home the priority of the former.

In two passages in her book Balfour notes, almost in passing, two problems regarding Baldwin’s language. Balfour doesn’t connect them but I believe they dramatize the limits of moral persuasion as deployed by Baldwin. At the end of the second chapter Balfour comments on Baldwin’s confrontation with gay and lesbian issues. On the one hand, as Balfour notes, Baldwin insisted on the fluidity of sexual identity, the androgynous nature of all human beings,

positioned against the ubiquity of what Balfour calls the “heteronormative.” At the same time, Baldwin insisted that the question of his own sexuality, like that of other public figures, was essentially a pre-political, private, issue. Thus, in chapter three, Balfour notes that though Baldwin was protective of his privacy, he recognized that the private realm impinged upon the public, that “the intangible dreams of people have a tangible effect on the world.” What, then, is one to think about Baldwin’s language, masculinist in its assumptions from beginning to end? For Baldwin insisted that the “problem” of race in America was largely a problem of men, black and white. Balfour explains these tensions, along with the general diminishment of nuance and ambivalence in his work, as a sign of Baldwin’s attempts to remain “relevant” within the increasing black militancy of the sixties and seventies. I believe, however, that Baldwin’s insistence on the priority of morality over ethics, and both over politics, led him, and others (including Balfour), to reify the “private” realm however much they interrogate, and acknowledge, its complex relationship to the public. It is interesting to note in this context that Balfour plays Baldwin off against contemporary moralists like Shelby Steele and Michael Walzer, both of whom deploy metaphors of “innocence” and “guilt,” “home” and “religion,” in their musings on American race problems. Their domestications of race, race as primarily a moral, secondarily an ethical, problem, situate sociopolitical influences “outside” the sphere of racial consciousness, a move which, for all his differences from them, is analogous to Baldwin’s projection of an undetermined future America where heightened racial consciousness levels the playing field of “innocence” and “guilt,” “stranger” and “native.”

Is it fair to conflate these religious categories onto Baldwin’s variegated lexicon? I believe so, especially since Balfour herself refers to Baldwin’s distinctions between the ephemeral and the “constant.” If “money, or power” are examples of the former and “birth and death” examples of the latter, this distinction is true only in the “long run.” In the short run, however, of lived history, the ephemeral—say, racism—can take on the appearance of the constant. Baldwin dubs this a “chimera,” but he can only do so from the long-distance perspective of “democratic possibility.” Thus Balfour: “Baldwin recognizes that the constitution of the United States is itself undefined territory whose contours cannot be mapped in advance of social change” (137). The Ellisonian echoes are unmistakable; Balfour’s “undefined territory” recalls Ellison’s “going to the territory,” which is itself a straight gloss on Twain’s ambivalent “territory” invoked at the end of *Huckleberry Finn*. The utopian impulses in James Baldwin, in Jean Toomer, like those in Ralph Ellison, Albert Murray, could be called “hope” were this word merely ahistorical, merely another name for some future “America.” But as the essayists in *Jean Toomer and the Harlem Renaissance* and Lawrie Balfour in *The Evidence of Things Not Said* demonstrate, however unwittingly, “hope” has a specific historical resonance in the

sociopolitical climate of American racial violence. It may well resonate with a word all these authors have written against. Call it despair.

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*The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief* by Anne Anlin Cheng. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2001. Pp. ix + 271. \$29.95.

*The Melancholy of Race* should be read both for its acumen and for its politics. The book's discussion of "racial melancholia" clarifies the psychological terms organizing the dynamics of race and what politics can be voiced based on those dynamics. In other words, Anne Anlin Cheng's book provides vocabulary for understanding the *invisible* aspects of race, particularly racial subjection, which tends to be ignored by the conventional politics of claiming grievances against racial injustice. Cheng wants us to pause on the important psychoanalytic distinction between grievance and grief and in so doing allow for the rethinking or retheorizing of the terms through which race is represented as well as experienced.

One might criticize Cheng for narrowing her discussion to two race categories—Asian American and African American—even while she mentions Native American and Latino as sidebars, but I see her choice as "strategic." With reference to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's notion of "strategic essentialism," Cheng is quite wary of facile race categories, selecting Asian American and African American for their historically situated positions in hegemonic conceptualizations of the American nation, especially in current dialogues on race. The black-white dyad dominates American talk on race domestically; when attention turns international, Asians versus whites dominate:

With black and white as the dominant racial categories, historical memory tends to overlook the fierce contestation over the shades, as it were, in between—conflicts that involve not just ideological differences but economic and social privileges. Indeed, the formulation of the government's sovereign power to exclude is historically tied to the definitions of aliens and citizens. Well before *Brown*, there was a series of key rulings in school segregation, in addition to the well-known *Plessy v. Ferguson*, that involved the problem of racializing Asians in this country. . . . [In fact,] during the *Brown* litigations, the constitutionality of racialization-as-segregation in the form of Japanese internment (*Korematsu v. U.S.*) was relegitimated on the grounds

that “national security” was at stake . . . the history of virulent racism against Asians and Asian Americans has been at once consistently upheld and denied. Shuttling between “black” and “white”—the Scylla and Charybdis between which all American immigrants have to “pass”—Asian Americans occupy a truly ghostly position in the story of American racialization.

(22–23)

The ghostly characterization is apt for a racial category that tends to be obscured by black and white grievances against each other’s racial positions. However, Asians and Asian Americans are not merely obscured; they are also used to discipline other racialized groups, especially blacks. Through the “model minority” figure, Asian Americans are used to deny black loss and sorrow by accusing blacks of not assimilating as successfully as Asian counterparts. Asian Americans are thus made to embody both “praises of the American way” and the failure of African Americans to succeed as citizens. To move beyond the superficiality of who suffered more or who succeeds more, Cheng invites consideration of the psychological processes through which subjects deal with nationally imposed contradictory categories of race and citizenship.

In other words, Cheng helps reiterate what many race theorists including Spivak know to be illusory about racial categories while turning attention from causes of subjection (e.g., interpellation—or being hailed as an object of racial injustice—by collective memories of slavery, the holocaust, internment) to the effects of subjection on the racialized individual as he or she imagines a group identity with relation to the nation. The strategic value of Cheng’s focus becomes clear as she explains the failure of grievance to exact racial healing. Grievance only is the guise of political action (173) that, as has been charged by white opposition, often sounds like whining or vengeful retribution. Cheng recognizes, exhibiting rare compassion, that “public grievance is a social forum and luxury to which the racially melancholic minorities have little or no access” (174). Such a statement has direct bearing on Asian Americans who are often rendered invisible by racial dialogue dominated by white/black oppositions. And the caution against grievance is clearly addressing the current backlash against the so-called “race card” sounded during the O. J. Simpson trial and in recent anti-affirmative action lawsuits based on charges of “reverse discrimination.” What term captures the complex emotions and experiences that the act of grievance attempts to address but fails to recognize?

Cheng makes a strong case for considering melancholia as the term that best approaches effects of racial subjection and helps put those effects into critical dialogue. Unlike recent popular notions of hybridity and multiplicity (e.g., Homi Bhabha, Iain Chambers), melancholia addresses “the fundamental



processes of identification” (26) without reproducing the too familiar essentialism/anti-essentialism opposition, “an illusory opposition [that] has been established between hybridity and essentialism, as though the former cures the latter; as though differences of class, gender, and nationality eliminate essentialist positions when clearly those different positions are themselves each affecting their own brands of allegiances, each demanding an ‘identity’” (26). Cheng’s turn to psychoanalysis is due to an important recognition:

What has been missing in much of the critical analysis of race relations and representations has been a willingness to confront the psychic implications of the haunting negativity that not only has been attached to but has also helped to constitute the very category of “the racialized.” The truth is that race studies turns with more comfort to sociology, anthropology, and history rather than literature or philosophy. This discomfort has everything to do with an abiding attachment to the notion that we have to talk about racial subjects as “real” subjects. This tendency is not hard to understand since dehumanization has long been the tool of discrimination. The problem, however, is that in trying to compensate for that history, we often sacrifice discussions of all the immaterial, pressing, unquantifiable elements that go into the making of “reality” and end up with a very narrow definition of what constitutes “material” history.

(25–26)

Melancholia allows Cheng to map racial fantasy into identification as that which combines the individual (psyche) with the social (ideological state apparatus) (164; 167–168). Locating racial fantasy as the bridge between individual and state allows her to supplement Althusser’s theory of interpellation which a needed accommodation of the specificity of racialization. The subject of racial subjection is not only hailed into being as an object of racism by national narratives or racial injustice but is also the bearer of fantasies of grievance that can enable space for consideration of processes of grief. Cheng is apt in selecting Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* to illustrate this potential agency in the narrator’s fantasy of grievance. For Cheng, *Invisible Man*:

is a seminal text for theorizing invisibility as a trope for the melancholic incorporation of the self-as-loss. If the ideology of “American cultures,” sustains itself via the repeated exclusion and staged reincorporation of excluded others, then one may begin to read “racialized America” (for both the minority and the dominant subject) as a fantasy built on absences. It is crucial to recognize that *melancholic identity is built on an incorporative confusion* . . . . By locating cultural and racial exclusion as a loss, Ellison’s text offers a theorization of identity that recuperates that loss not as presence but as invisibility.

Or, more specifically, Ellison revalues invisibility as a strategy to identify that absence without denying that absence's constitutive power for the formation of the racialized subject.

(127–128; emphasis in original)

What is evident, especially in the moments where melancholia is explicitly linked to racial subjection, is that the critic is not merely applying psychoanalysis to perform her own intellectual prowess; Cheng sincerely wants the work of psychoanalysis to benefit the racialized by providing “a vocabulary” for the invisible experience of racial grief beyond the polemics of grievance. For as Cheng herself observes, “focus on injury might be naturalized and used against the plaintiffs [making claims of racial injustice. It] can be damaging to say how damaging racism has been” (14). That Cheng succeeds, I think, is evident in her analogy between Asian American experience of assimilation and hypochondria as a symptom of racial grief. Two literary moments of hypochondria and assimilation are especially illuminating. First, Maxine Hong Kingston's autobiographical childhood narrator in *The Woman Warrior* becomes bedridden for nearly a year after she violently confronts a shy Chinese classmate who reminds young Maxine of her own racial otherness. The hypochondriac affords Kingston the power to write her grievances against American ideologies of assimilation simultaneous to grievances against Chinese patriarchal traditions but without simply blaming some figure outside herself. In attacking a Chinese girl who provides a mirror of her own racial status, Kingston's girlhood narrator reveals “a certain pleasure of subjection at work in assimilation . . . for what is desired is precisely the *eligibility* for subjection—even the eligibility of failure” (83). Cheng further explains, “for the one whose very status within the nation has been and continues to be attenuated (more tenuous than African Americans), to vie for the opportunity for comparison is to participate in the American Dream” (83; emphasis in original).

A second analogy between assimilation and hypochondria occurs in Cheng's reevaluation of Theresa Hak-kyeung Cha's body of work, particularly *Dictee*. Cheng rightfully considers Cha as significant as the figures of Pound, Olson, and Stein for their assault on ideological narration through formalist opacity. Like these practitioners of formalism, Cha seems invested in a project of critiquing the linearity and pretentiousness of historical narration through fragments, undocumented quotations, and noncontextualized allusions to historical figures. However, Cheng sees Cha's work as importantly distinguished from her white counterparts' because of its postcolonial critique via a personal history that is impersonal, distant. For Cheng, that Cha “indicts our very desire to know and see the ‘other’ through reading—implicates, in fact, our positions as private, historical, or literary witnesses of submerged historians” (150). “Cha documents not the native but the making of the native” (147). Cheng increases the literary richness of Cha's incredible work while validating and

elucidating its strategic importance for rethinking how race is represented and how race is assimilated, or naturalized within as well as conditioned from without (160–161). This is especially true of her reevaluation of Cha's poetic repetition: "*Dictée* focuses on the processes that enable group identification by dramatizing not only how 'the voice within' comes into being as an injunction from without, but also that the injunction without is always already an echo of something within" (158). *Dictée* dramatizes the desire to repeat, to echo the external world to make an internal reality.

Through her discussion of Cha's postcolonial critique by dramatizing how the voice outside becomes the voice inside, Cheng helps us to rethink Homi Bhabha's concept of colonial mimicry, which tends to conceive of the racialized subject as a process of subjection imposed by the colonizer, a kind of collusion with the colonizer in the attempt by the colonized to be affirmed and valued. Instead of evaluating mimicry as a negative symptom of colonization (i.e., the racialized subject becoming duped to follow the master), Cheng wants to consider mimicry as foundational to the very process of subject formation. In this way, Cheng helps detach the idea of race from the reductive notion of interpellation that treats the oppressed as duped victims of ideology, oversimplifying the complex process of racialization to coercion. Thus, with most impressive synthesis of psychoanalytic, postcolonial, and literary theory, Cheng substantiates her refreshing understanding of mimicry in her quite enlightening reading of Theresa Hak-kyeung Cha's *Dictée*, an understanding that might allow for conceptualizations of the self that is not always already self-incriminating; in other words, a possibility for self-love.

Self-love comes not from grieving, which actually is an expression of hatred for the other that the self needs to exist, but from expressions of grief (195). We must accept paradoxes as preconditions for social relations, then think about the task of responding, ethically, to racial injustice without hatred or competition (193). Turning to self-love has Cheng understandably turn to Walt Whitman where lyrical roots of American melancholia as political praxis appear (193–194). Cheng concludes her hopes for love as the potential by-product of critical examination of racial melancholia with an ironic turn of phrase that is characteristic of *The Melancholy of Race*, "Love look away in order not to look away" (194).

From melancholia to assimilation to identification to love, the psychoanalytic terms dominating each chapter would seem to follow the therapeutic line of "working through." Specifically, literary characters that represent various stages of melancholia, assimilation, identification, or love are either identified as stuck in grievance or open to grief. For instance, chapter two follows two interdependent female embodiments of racial melancholia: Linda Low and Helen Chao; the former is merely fantasy dominated by white ideals of female beauty while the latter expresses grief over the denial and repression of the

Asian body. As the two inappropriate-to-marry female choices for the male protagonist of *Flower Drum Song*, Linda Low and Helen Chao express the racial dynamics of beauty in an American culture that would not even allow these exotic substitutes for American whiteness to marry Chinese. As the transition from grievance to grief suggests, the organization of the book seems to “work through” examples of self-hatred, usually voiced as hatred for the other that is the condition for the naming of the self, toward self-love, or the healthy illusion of being able to identify with the other. In other words, the chapters follow the subject from being stuck in moments of grievance to moments in which grief becomes a nexus, or keyword, for alternative open-ended understanding of racial injustice as a problem of identity formation. Cheng might be read as performing a progression from self-hate to self-love, which would seem contrary to her warnings toward the end of the book against thinking that she is providing any kind of “healing” or therapy. The apparent contradiction, however, is precisely what I find most appealing. If one understands, as she argues, healing to be the false promise of the end of suffering, of being allowed to feel grief after the failure of grievance, then Cheng’s apparent racial contradiction actually supports her agenda. The kind of hope usually voiced in terms of ending racism or resolving racial conflicts here underlies the realization that “ending” and “resolution” fail to address or respect the complexities of grief due to racial injustice, and such grievance even reproduces the very pattern of exclusion on which racism continues its psychic life of power. The ongoing hope for better race relations, after all, depends on a continuous open-ended critical discussion of racism that at least seems to be moving in a positive direction without relying on cliché and reductive logic (i.e., the frustration that fuels the two extreme views voiced in the vernacular as “race no longer matters” or “racism will never change”).

Cheng’s book thus practices some necessary politics: in rethinking the key psychoanalytic terms of melancholia, assimilation, identification, and love, the politics of these terms are elucidated (or made available) and reoriented to help negotiate the tenuous space between a racialized subject and how that subject experiences grief over racial injustice; in focusing on the process of racial subjectivation, the reductive oppositions of oppressor vs. oppressed, state vs. individual, and volunteerism vs. coercion can be replaced with the far more open-ended and thus creative concern for the unseen feelings and ideas that try, often unsuccessfully, to express themselves through grievance, or claims of being wronged. Cheng thus provides a powerful agent against the charge of “reverse discrimination” voiced, increasingly with legislative and legal success, by many whites that would deny the historical contribution of white identity to ongoing racial inequalities.

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*Rethinking the Holocaust* by Yehuda Bauer. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001. Pp. 335. \$29.95, cloth.

At the second International Conference on the Holocaust and Education, held at the Yad Vashem Heroes' and Martyrs' Memorial authority in Jerusalem, Yehuda Bauer challenged the current generation of Holocaust scholars to move beyond the "memorialization" of the event to a study of its effects. This put Bauer in a difficult position: at the time he was the Director the International Institute for Holocaust Education at Yad Vashem, which for the nearly forty years since its founding has served as a reminder and a warning that Jews should never again be the objects of a Final Solution. In Bauer's address (and in *Rethinking the Holocaust*), he insists that we need to move beyond memory and "to rethink the categories and issues that arise out of the contemplation of that watershed event in human history" (ix). But this will be harder than he thinks, given Bauer's position as a historian (and a fairly traditional one at that). Despite positioning himself as an outsider in Holocaust debates—he often begins paragraphs with phrases like "contrary to what many of my colleagues think"—and in spite of the round criticism he levels at as diverse a cast of characters as Zygmunt Bauman, Daniel Goldhagen and the Lubovitcher Rebbe, a lot of the work being done on issues surrounding the Shoah and the Final Solution has moved beyond where Bauer would like it to go.

This is not to say that the book does not provide a good deal of food for thought. Using mainly secondary sources, but relying also on some of his own primary research collected over the years in books like *Jews for Sale?* and *American Jewry and the Holocaust*, Bauer reconsiders some of his earlier positions, and some of those reconsiderations are rather surprising. For example, while he criticizes Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* for a certain amount of scholarly myopia, he reverses his earlier position and praises Goldhagen's thesis for forcing scholars to reconsider the blurry line between "bystander" and "perpetrator," a challenge that Saul Friedlander has taken up in the first volume of his *Nazi Germany and the Jews*. Bauer also reverses his position on resistance, suggesting his earlier definition of resistance—"any group action consciously taken in opposition to known or surmised laws, actions or intentions directed against the Jews by the Germans and their supporters"—was too narrow. It ignored smaller, individual acts (what he calls *amidah*, literally "standing" or "standing up for") that sanctify life rather than work actively against certain destruction, either personal or political. There are other instances—his nod in the direction of women's studies as a method for understanding the difficult position of women in leadership positions, either in the resistance or with the Jewish Councils, is notable if weak—and all suggest that

Bauer, who has been working on the history of the Holocaust for over forty years, is trying hard to move in a new direction and away from the memorial impulse. (It's no surprise, then, that he tells us that he kept his work on this book a secret to nearly all his colleagues at Yad Vashem; they above all will be uncomfortable with his retreat from old and familiar positions: Jews resisted their fate, the state of Israel is the guarantor that no future Holocausts will occur, and the Final Solution was the direct result of a virulent and not-quite-dead central European antisemitism, among others).

Bauer's reconceptualization of Holocaust scholarship rests on two main theses, which he advances in the early chapters of the book, and then weaves through later chapters in which he reconsiders the work of several scholars (among them Goldhagen, Friedlander, Jeffrey Herf, and Goetz Aly) and several lines of research (on gender, on the relation between the Holocaust and new theodicies, the role of resistance and its place in the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine). The first thesis takes on the question of the uniqueness of the Holocaust, which is put in doubt with each new set of atrocities (the Balkans, Rwanda) or reconsideration of older ones (the decimation of native Americans, the middle passage, Armenia). By Bauer's lights, the Holocaust isn't so much unique as it is unprecedented. While it is a genocide under Raphael Lemkin's definition (which was in turn picked up by the United Nations in 1948) because it aimed at the expulsion or destruction of a people, defined in national, ethnic or religious terms, or its leadership, the destruction of the European Jews between 1933 and 1945 under the National Socialist regime in Germany is unprecedented in both its scope and its motivating ideology. What distinguishes the Holocaust from other genocides, in other words, was the fact that the former aimed at the destruction of *all* members of an ethnic/national/religious group. The Holocaust was also unprecedented in its motivation: while other genocides were undertaken for what Bauer calls pragmatic ends—Armenians were killed to quell incipient revolution; native Americans were killed to open the west; the Muslims in Bosnia were “cleansed” for the purpose of Serbian territorial integrity—the destruction of the Jews of Europe was the product of “a pure, abstract antisemitic ideology in the context of biological racism.” Historically Jews were not a threat to Germany (or anyone else) in 1933: most of the intellectual class was assimilated in varying degrees, and there was no political center that would have given Jews, as a group, any kind of national authority. The simple fact that Jews were Jews led to their demotion from the human to the subhuman, and they were eliminated because they fit the category: Jews were put to death for the crime of being born, Bauer tells us. The Holocaust, then, is both particular—it was a crime against Jews—and universal. Because the monumental crime against the Jews was a crime perpetrated by humans against humans, it is also the most universal of crimes: if it could happen once in one of the most civilized countries in Europe, surely it

could happen again. (As in an argument recently and cogently made by Giorgio Agamben, Bauer says that the Holocaust is horrifying not because of its inhumanity but precisely because of its *humanity*: the horrible was made possible; the possible was made manifest.)

Bauer's second thesis is that the Holocaust is not the unfathomable horror—beyond reason—that some scholars have made it out to be. Far from it: the events had clearly identifiable causes, there is plenty of documentation to support what we know about them (and there's more to be had since the opening of the Soviet archives), and it's people like Saul Friedlander, Daniel Goldhagen, and Christopher Browning who have done the most to explain those events in a language that defies mystification. While it's true that the horrors experienced by those who were there cannot be experienced, let alone known, by those who weren't, and while it's true that suffering and its effects defies representation, we have more than enough information at our disposal about the Shoah, and it's that wealth of information that allows Bauer to disagree with other historians. The problem isn't that we don't have enough information; it's that we haven't found a paradigm in which to make sense—to produce knowledge—of it, not yet anyway. The biggest obstacle to eventually producing knowledge of the events is mystification, and chiefest among the mystifiers is, somewhat surprisingly, Elie Wiesel. (That he should be included in the same category as the Menachem Schneerson, the Lubovitcher Rebbe whose *responsum* to the question of a Holocaust theodicy—it was the fault of the non-observant and the non-orthodox—takes a well-deserved body blow in one of Bauer's strongest chapters, is even more surprising.) While he doesn't put it in these terms, Bauer's complaint about the business of Holocaust mystification comes close to those levelled by Peter Novick in *The Holocaust in American Life* (and, to some extent, in Norman Finkelstein's often-cited but poorly researched *The Holocaust Industry*): we're ignoring what we can learn from the events while trying to use them as grist for political or academic mills. (Ironically, in an interview with *The Jerusalem Post* published in August 2001, Bauer implies that part of his motivation in writing the book reviewed here was that he wanted to get something out there while the market was booming with work on the Holocaust.)

It's because the Holocaust is explicable that it's possible to learn from it (though he suggests historians are notoriously hesitant, or simply unable, to take that next step). But the lessons Bauer derives from the Shoah—that Jewish resistance was marginal because the conditions that would have allowed for it were so successfully destroyed by the Germans; that the state of Israel was both more and less a result of the Holocaust than many make it out to be; that the conditions in Germany and in the east that provided for the Final Solution were peculiar and vastly more complicated than even Hilberg's comprehensive treatment allows for—seem oddly low-stakes and uncontroversial.

Part of the reason for this may be the result, as I suggested earlier, of Bauer's position: as an Israeli, as an emeritus director at Yad Vashem, and as an orthodox historian, he is by dint of training and the predicament of location at a distance from some of the more interesting and transdisciplinary work in the study of the Shoah. For example, while Bauer is critical of the ideological stakes that have led the Holocaust to be attached to the history of the partition of Palestine and the creation of Israel, he doesn't seem to be willing to pay attention to *why* that connection was made in the first place, and the political and national imperatives that have allowed the Palestinians to manipulate that history (and the history of the events in Europe and the Middle East between 1933 and 1948) for their own eliminationist ideology. Or, to take another example, while Bauer spends nearly a chapter laying out the paper trail that suggests that the so-called Auschwitz protocols (eyewitness accounts of the destruction taking place at that camp that were transmitted to the Allies and the American Jewish community by mid-1944 but which did not precipitate action to stop the killing) had some influence in Britain and the United States, the larger question of why this matters is left unanswered. Or, to be fair, that answer is only hinted at: "it is better and easier to accuse the Jewish generation that is no longer alive of having failed to rescue their fellows" than it is for this generation to bear the humiliation of the destruction. The Shoah, he goes on, "is a social trauma that causes Jews to accuse one another of Nazism" and worse (241).

And here lies the root of the problem: rethinking the *history* of the Holocaust is one thing; rethinking the Holocaust as it *affects* history is another. The event of the Holocaust has not changed one whit as a result—to cite one controversial example—of the Wilkomirski affair, in which a memoir purportedly written by a child survivor was later proved to be a fabrication. The events remain the same: just as the "author" of the memoir suggests, Jews from the Baltic were rounded up, transported to death camps, and eliminated, while a tiny fraction of them either escaped unharmed or were never caught in the first place and eventually found names, and histories, to take the place of those that were lost. What has changed—and what has to be rethought as a result of the affair—isn't so much history but history's afterimage: what made it possible for the vast majority of the reading public to mistake the Wilkomirski text for history, and how did the language of the memoir, in its replication of the language of history, allow readers to empathize, or to be traumatized, or believe they saw the events described? Or consider the more recent controversy surrounding Jan Gross's book *Neighbors*, about the burning alive of the Jews of Jedwabne, Poland, by a group of non-Jewish townspeople. True, Gross's historical methodology has been called into question: the documents he recovered, and the testimonies he has taken, are only the tip of the iceberg, and to go from that partial reconstruction of events to an accusation that



neighbors killed neighbors (and here, read “Poles killed Jews”) is to take far too liberal an historical license. But in this case what matters isn’t rethinking the history of the massacre in Jedwabne—historians will do their work, cooler heads will prevail, and sooner or later we’ll have the information we need in order to say with some certainty what happened. What matters is why Gross’s representation of the events stirred such vehemence among non-Jewish Poles nearly sixty years after the events.

Moving from testimonies and documents—which Bauer admits are variously interpretable—to the writing of history is always dicey, and is always subject to revision, reconsideration, and, eventually, better (if not more “accurate”) historical accounts. But the work of reconsidering that evidence and the story built to hold it together always involves accounting for the resonance history has upon the present. Like memory, in which the past makes itself evident in the present but which is only available as a commingling of past and present, history involves reckoning with the present. It involves not just mentioning one’s biases up front (as Bauer does) but patiently factoring them into the historical soup. This work is being done in admirable ways in the United States by people like Dominick LaCapra, Peter Novick, Alan Berger and Berel Lang, among others. As Bauer suggested at Yad Vashem three years ago, and as he tells us in *Rethinking the Holocaust*, he is well aware that the only way to resist closing the book on the Shoah and filing it away into cultural memory so it doesn’t bother us any more is to continually put pressure on the categories that we use to keep it at arm’s length. But because Bauer seems unable to consider the often traumatic effects of the Holocaust on members of the three generations born since the events, he can only rethink the Holocaust as history, even as its presence as fact troubles us today.

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*Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* by Alain Badiou. Translated by Peter Hallward. London and New York: Verso, 2001. Pp. 166. \$23.00 cloth.

The publication in English of Alain Badiou’s *Ethics* (originally published in French in 1998) may come to constitute an “event” in just the sense that Badiou gives to the concept in his own work: a break with the received ideas of a given context. As Badiou himself makes clear in the “Preface to the English Edition,” his *Ethics* is mobilized by two, not always consistent desires: this slim volume is at once a critique of the taken for granted ethical culture of the contemporary political and intellectual order and the articulation of a radically different perspective on “Good and Evil.” On the one hand, Badiou has used the

opportunity of an invitation to write a primer on ethics in order to express his “genuine fury” at the “moral terrorism” of the discourse of human rights and the new US-directed, “humanitarian” interventionism that it buttresses (liii). On the other hand, he seeks to develop the practical and ethical consequences of his philosophical system, which he set out in 1988 in his massive and complex work *L'Être et l'événement* (*Being and Event*—currently under translation). Badiou's political critique of the moralization of politics in the post–Cold War era is an important one, and has been echoed by Slavoj Žižek and others. It becomes more interesting and original, however, when read from the perspective of his philosophical engagement with discourses of ethics in postwar thought.

Badiou is probably the most famous French philosopher not to have a major following in the Anglo-American academy—although this situation is surely in the process of changing, with several translations recently published or in the works and with Badiou receiving accolades from Žižek, one of the great contemporary mediators of French theory. Badiou's relative anonymity in the English-speaking world probably results in part from the difficulty of his thought—which draws heavily on mathematics (especially set theory) as well as Lacanian psychoanalysis and Althusserian marxism—and in part from his distinctly un-American political profile as an ex-Maoist and unrepentant radical militant. For those unfamiliar with Badiou's work, *Ethics* makes an excellent starting point. First, the volume is quite accessible, since, as Badiou remarks, it was originally written for “a series aimed at secondary-school and university students” (liii)—although I suspect that the less philosophically-oriented American student would probably still have difficulty with it until the advanced undergraduate level. Second, the book is ably translated by Peter Hallward, who also provides a clear introduction that situates the argument in more familiar theoretical terrain, with references to the ethics of Derrida and Spivak. Hallward also includes a 1997 interview he conducted with Badiou that is fascinating both for the biographical and political contextualization it supplies and for the further hints it contains of Badiou's unusual philosophical system.

Badiou's primary philosophical adversary in his *Ethics* is Emmanuel Lévinas, the Lithuanian-born, French-Jewish philosopher known especially for his ethics of otherness and his influence on certain versions of poststructuralism. Badiou's critique of Lévinas in this brief text will probably seem superficial to adherents of the latter's thought. Indeed, it seems that Badiou is less interested in Lévinas as such than in the general influence he has had on political and theoretical discourses: Lévinas stands in for the contemporary valorization of otherness, difference, and victimization as the grounds and stakes of ethics. In one of Lévinas's most famous formulations, he writes, “To see a face is already to hear ‘You shall not kill,’ and to hear ‘You shall not kill’ is to hear ‘Social

justice'” (*Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, trans. Sean Hand [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990], 8). For Badiou, in contrast, the obsession with human beings’ potential for victimization is a form of nihilism, since the “underlying conviction [of this ethics] is that the only thing that can really happen to someone is death” (35). Such a nihilistic perspective will not lead toward “social justice,” but rather toward apology for actually existing relations of exploitation and domination.

In a further move—which Hallward correctly diagnoses as Badiou’s most provocative point from the perspective of contemporary doxa—Badiou dismisses outright the very interest of discussions of otherness and difference. It would not be quite right to say that Badiou is hostile to the aims of the politics of difference, a perspective often associated with the concept of multiculturalism; rather, he takes cultural and other forms of difference for granted and demands that we move beyond them if we want to be truly ethical. He writes,

genuine thought should affirm the following principle: since differences are what there is, and since every truth is the coming-to-be of that which is not yet, so differences are then precisely what truths depose, or render insignificant. No light is shed on any concrete situation by the notion of the ‘recognition of the other.’ Every modern collective configuration involves people from everywhere, who have their different ways of eating and speaking, who wear different sorts of headgear, follow different religions, have complex and varied relations to sexuality, prefer authority or disorder, and such is the way of the world. (27)

As these rather sarcastic remarks about cultural difference illustrate, Badiou strips otherness of any ethical salience and replaces it with a somewhat idiosyncratic notion of truth. I will return to this question of cultural difference, but for the moment it is important to understand what Badiou means when he opposes the problem of difference to the question of truth.

A truth is, for Badiou, “*indifferent to differences*”; it is “*the same for all*” (27; AB’s italics). How can we situate such a claim in the contemporary theoretical landscape? Is Badiou’s ethics simply a return to the totalizing and universalizing thought that a combination of historical and intellectual events (the Holocaust, Stalinism, colonialism, postmodernism, etc.) had seemed to render hopelessly passé? While Badiou’s understanding of truth, and thus also ethics, is uncompromisingly universalizing, it is also definitively not totalizing. The interest of his thought today lies precisely in the way he finesses this apparent paradox.

When Badiou writes that truth is “the same for all” he does not mean that there is only one truth. To the contrary, truths are irreducibly plural. They are the product of “the real process of fidelity to an event” (42), and there are an

infinite number of possible events. Events—to continue using Badiou’s vocabulary—are immanent breaks with a given situation. And a situation is a singular configuration, an “infinite multiple” which can be “politico-historical,” “strictly physical or material,” aesthetic, or even defined by the relationship of two people (129). As the four-fold definition of potential situations implies, Badiou sees the possibility of truth in the fields of politics, science, art, and love (this last “field” being one of the most surprising and suggestive in this self-proclaimed “anti-humanist” thinker). Within a given situation there are always a number of “instituted knowledges”—that is, everyday forms of understanding that Badiou characterizes as “opinions” (cf. 43, 50–1). These knowledges trace a series of relationships within the situation which can never be universal (i.e. never attain the level of truth) and which always serve the given order or power.

Because knowledge serves power (and this is not precisely Badiou’s own language), there will always be “voids” in a given situation that cannot be known or thought according to the recognized forms of knowledge. Badiou links this notion of the unthought in a given reality to Lacan’s notion of the Real. (One also thinks of the Sartre of *Search for a Method*.) But there is also a significant difference between Badiou’s void and Lacan’s Real: while the Real is never susceptible to transformation (it is the place to which one always returns), the void can be revealed and thus potentially displaced through the advent of an event (although it is never clear from where the event emerges—Badiou likens its advent to a non-theological “grace” [122–3]). An event—whether it involves the production of art, political action, scientific discovery, or an amorous encounter—reveals what was missing in the given state of the situation. Once the event has taken place, producing truth entails remaining “faithful” to the event that has revealed the gaps in the situation. The production of truth also constitutes a subject (which, for Badiou, is more an assemblage than an individual), and helps to re-make the opinions and instituted knowledges of the situation—it is thus fundamentally a form of permanent, if local, revolution.

How does Badiou move from his notion of truth-processes to the question of ethics and what he calls the “ethic of truths” [*l’éthique des vérités*]? In a reversal of what he sees as the contemporary ideology of ethics, Badiou supposes that good must be posited as coming before evil. The regime of human rights sees good primarily as a response to an already existing evil; hence, it remains reactive. Badiou, on the other hand, equates good with the production of universal truths and argues that evil emerges through the failure of truth-processes to live up to their universalizing mission. That is, evil emerges either when a truth is not the same for all, when fidelity to the event is not maintained, or when the truth that has been produced is substituted for the totality

of the social field. Positing evil as a derailed truth process is helpful in understanding one of the key questions of the twentieth century—how can ordinary people commit extraordinary acts of evil?—because it demonstrates evil's proximity to progressive and potentially liberating human projects. Evil is thus not easily ghettoized as the other of reason or humanism.

Because of the three possible sources of evil's emergence, evil is seen as belonging to one of three genres: it appears as terror, as betrayal, or as disaster. Terror involves the attempt to produce a truth that does not hold for all. Nazism falls into this category insofar as it constructs an exclusionary imaginary community, but so would various other communitarian, nationalist, and racist projects. (Here, Badiou seems close to Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's notion of the "Nazi myth," which is characterized by a "will to difference, to distinction, to individuation." (See Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *Le mythe nazi* [La Tour d'Aigues: Editions de l'Aube, 1991], 62; my translation.) When a subject does not remain faithful to a truth-process, the second form of evil, betrayal, results. In scenarios of betrayal, "former revolutionaries are obliged to declare that they used to be lost in error and madness," "a former lover no longer understands why he loved that woman," or "a tired scientist comes to misunderstand, and to frustrate through bureaucratic routine, the very development of his own science" (79–90). Disaster, on the other hand, follows from the too rigorous application of a truth, the "absolutization of its power" such that it comes to wipe out entirely the everyday knowledges of the situation and the "human animal" that constitutes "truth's very foundation" (84–5).

In what ways are Badiou's ethical categories useful? What are the limits of the ethics he articulates? The distinctions between terror, betrayal, and disaster do help us to differentiate between some of the different forms that historical evil has taken in recent times. For example, if Nazism seems to represent the extreme form of terror, Stalinism and the Cultural Revolution might be the extreme forms of the disaster: the pursuit of a truth that is, unlike the racist's truth, addressed to all, and yet which, by virtue of its totalizing application, wipes out the lifeworlds of its addressees. At the same time, if Nazism and more run-of-the-mill forms of nationalism are equally examples of terror, what happens to historical particularity and the scale of ethical judgment? Are betrayal of an amorous encounter, an aesthetic project, a political revolution, and a scientific insight really comparable in ethical or any other terms? While Badiou performs an important service in revealing the underlying structure of forms of evil, his categories risk running together practices of radically different sorts. Furthermore, who is to judge whether a particular event is addressed to all? Is the universal addressee a given or must it also be constructed like the subject of truth?

Another sort of problem emerges when we consider Badiou's attempt to

surpass the discourse of victimization that he and many others see as defining the contemporary moment. While this critique of victim-centered ethics is crucial, and works well with respect to many situations, it risks overgeneralization. In his laudable insistence that humanity “*does not coincide with the identity of the victim*” (11; emphasis in original), Badiou leaves out of his system the possibility that a human being could be *reduced* precisely to the status of victim. Such a case has been investigated by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben in *Remnants of Auschwitz* under the heading of the “*Muselmann*.” *Muselmann*, or “Muslim,” was the name given in certain Nazi camps to prisoners who had been so overcome by hunger, beatings, etc. that they became zombie-like, incapable of human communication or response, trapped in an indeterminate zone between life and death. While surely the product of an extremity not conducive to generalization, the *Muselmann* nevertheless constitutes the unthought of Badiou’s own project: the potential of a victimization so radical that it really does exceed the possibility of any human project or truth-process. Whether this case is at all conducive to ethical or political elaboration must remain open here, but what the counter-example of the *Muselmann* suggests is the limit of Badiou’s will to universality.

The problem with universality surely also returns in the insistence on ignoring questions of cultural difference. Badiou’s absolute commitment to the ethical value of the Same—the fact that truths are addressed equally to all—demonstrates a provocative and radically democratic spirit. In presenting truths as simultaneously multiple and universal, Badiou poses an imaginative answer to what may be the most intractable antinomy of contemporary left social theory: the difficulty of adjudicating claims for universality and particularity. (For other attempts to think through this problem, see the contributions to the recent collective volume by Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* [London and New York: Verso, 2000]. And yet, is his notion that the universality of truths is premised on the simultaneous local nature of truth—its immanence to a particular situation with which it breaks—sufficient to ward off fears of homogenization, if not cultural imperialism? How can we differentiate between the Sameness of truth and the homogenization produced by capitalist commodification? Is there an alternative formulation that would respect the universal address of truths while still allowing for a valorization of or commitment to difference? The unease that Badiou’s dismissal of cultural difference provokes, despite the freshness of his formulation, suggests that the antinomy of the universal and the particular is as much a symptom of the post-Cold War historical moment as a problem solvable in theory.

In addition, given the intractability of the problem, Badiou’s insistence on the universality (and even “immortality”) of truths seems not just a political

response to neo-liberalism and its ideology of human rights and cultural difference, but also a move in a game of academic identity politics. In other words, the philosopher's positing of the existence of universality can also be read as an intra-academic response to disciplines (and interdisciplines) that have been associated with claims to difference, such as literary studies, anthropology, and ethnic, cultural, and women's studies. Such an observation is not meant to detract from the argument, but rather to demonstrate how it works on multiple levels: it is at once a rejection of the politics (or rather anti-politics) of the global order; a rejoinder to the domination of the ethics of alterity in recent philosophy; and a provocation aimed at literary and cultural critics who instinctively and reactively value difference. It is unlikely that readers will agree with Badiou on all of these counts, yet his *Ethics* remains an intervention that deserves a response. After Badiou, those of us committed to a politics of difference will need to think difference differently.

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*Chaos Theory and James Joyce's Everyman* by Peter Francis Mackey. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999. Pp. xiv + 234. \$49.95 cloth.

In an early episode of *Ulysses*, a minor character, Bantam Lyons, asks to borrow Leopold Bloom's newspaper. Bantam Lyons mutters about the upcoming Gold Cup race: "Wait . . . Half a mo. Maximum the second." Bloom tells him to keep the paper: "I was just going to throw it away" (Ed. Hans Walter Gabler; New York: Vintage, 1986; episode 5, lines 532–4). Bantam Lyons asks him to repeat himself. Again hearing the phrase "throw it away," "Bantam Lyons doubted an instant, leering; then thrust the outspread sheets back on Mr. Bloom's arms.—I'll risk it, he said. Here, thanks" (5.539–41). During the chaotic "Wandering Rocks" episode, about halfway through the book, two other minor characters, Lenehan and M'Coy, briefly discuss how Lenehan has prevented Bantam Lyons from betting on "a bloody horse someone gave him that hasn't an earthly" (10.518–19). Lenehan identifies Bloom as the source of the tip. Later, Lenehan tells his friends at Barney Kiernan's pub that Bloom "had a few bob on *Throwaway* and he's gone to gather the shekels . . . Bet you what you like he has a hundred shillings to five on. He's the only man in Dublin has it. A dark horse" (12.1548–58). When the allegedly enriched Bloom later fails to stand drinks for the crowd at the pub, a disagreeable nationalist called the Citizen grows increasingly angry with him. The episode concludes

with the Citizen throwing an empty biscuit-tin at Bloom and Bloom transformed by the narrator into Elijah ascending to heaven "like a shot off a shovel" (12.1915).

In his compelling new book on *Ulysses*, Peter Francis Mackey analyzes the "Throwaway" episode in terms borrowed from "chaos theory," or the theory of complex systems. Joyce's Dublin is a complex social system in which minor incidents, such as Bloom's lending the paper to Bantam Lyons, can have magnified consequences. The familiar example from chaos theory is Edward Lorenz's hypothesis that the flap of a butterfly's wings in South America could conceivably cause a tornado in Texas. Mackey writes that "Moment by moment . . . Bloom finds himself affected by social contingencies that complicate his life and provide fertile soil for the exponential growth of trivialities into crises across his community's common ground" (154). Bloom's (and Joyce's) fascination with fate, kismet, continually calls our attention to this tendency of contingent events to have huge consequences. Moreover, as readers of *Ulysses*, we stand in something like the position of the interpreters of huge systems like the weather or the stock market: a seemingly infinite amount of apparently trivial information needs to be sifted in order for us to identify an underlying pattern in the novel's apparent chaos. Earlier novels incorporate apparently chance events into their carefully crafted plots, but *Ulysses* seems unique in paying such detailed attention to the most random and insignificant occurrences and in showing how they all ultimately contribute to what appears retrospectively as a meaningful chain of events.

Some interpreters would argue that Joyce specifically frustrates our attempts to force these random events into meaningful patterns. For example, a man in a macintosh appears at Paddy Dignam's funeral and reappears frequently throughout the course of the novel, notably in the "Circe" episode at the brothel of Bella Cohen. Our readerly attempts to find the identity of the man in the macintosh resemble those of the reporter Hynes, who mistakenly records "Mr M'Intosh" as among those who attended the funeral. Joyce's critics have vainly sought a meaningful interpretation of the anonymous postcard that Dennis Breen receives with the message "U. p." Often enough, Joyce shows us contingent events that do not apparently lead to magnified consequences.

This objection, however, does not rob the application of chaos theory to *Ulysses* of its strength. The central arguments of chaos theory, as Peter Mackey presents them, do not claim that all events are equally influential. Rather, they concern the challenges that face interpreters in discovering causal chains where events are minute and causation is non-linear (or circular). Traditional thinking about cause and effect tends to assume that a given cause will necessarily have a given effect. But most effects have multiple causes, and frequently complex systems have "feedback" mechanisms, in which a small change in



equilibrium will cause a chain reaction that alters many variables. Both the existence of multiple variables, and their continual interaction through feedback mechanisms, mean that in complex systems chains of causation are practically unpredictable. Even very sophisticated computer models supplied with huge amounts of data cannot accurately predict the course of a storm. This does not mean, however, that the storm cannot be understood causally in retrospect. Human systems, like the stock market or voting patterns, have similar characteristics and so, according to Mackey, does a day in the life of Leopold Bloom.

Mackey offers an intelligent and accessible introduction to the claims of chaos theory (which is in fact called “complex systems theory” by its practitioners). Most of the argument relies on seeing *Ulysses* as analogous to the complex systems later theorized by physicists and other scientists, but there is a historical angle to Mackey’s claims. He suggests (unfortunately without any documentary proof) that Joyce may have known something of the ideas of the mathematician Henri Poincaré, one of the intellectual forefathers of chaos theory. Here, as elsewhere, Mackey is developing a link first suggested by Thomas Jackson Rice, whose excellent study *Joyce, Chaos, and Complexity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997) placed all of Joyce’s works in the context of the new sciences from non-Euclidean geometry to Einstein’s relativity. Mackey’s approach is more focused, both in terms of the science he studies (chaos theory, with little attention, for example to quantum mechanics or the other theories discussed by Rice) and the text he approaches (*Ulysses* and not Joyce’s other writings). Nonetheless, it is a worthy companion to Rice’s work in that it extends the problem of chaos theory into a very thorough reading of *Ulysses* and explores some of the implications of the theory for philosophical issues like the existence of free will and the validity of postmodernism.

Mackey thus makes an important contribution to the growing field of interdisciplinary studies of science and literature. Having read many scientists’ criticisms of humanistic borrowings from quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity, Mackey is frank about treating “chaos theory” primarily as a metaphor, but in fact his applications of scientific ideas seem quite rigorous. He is critical of one of the best-known humanist scholars of chaos theory, Katherine Hayles, for her “postmodern faith in . . . absolute subjectivism and relativism” (21). Mackey claims that chaos theory, by emphasizing the reality of the real world (“aboriginal reality”), refutes postmodernism. However, Mackey remains sensitive to postmodern and neo-pragmatist claims about science as social construction, even if he insists that it is (in words he quotes from Stanley Fish) “the best social construction anyone has devised for testing theories about the world, showing their limits, and coming up with better ones” (19).

Mackey emphasizes four aspects of chaos theory that he finds relevant to our reading of *Ulysses*:

1. Small changes, or perturbations, can unpredictably and drastically alter complex systems.
2. For trivialities to have this influence, extremely sensitive interrelations must exist among the elements of the system.
3. An underlying order is either imbedded within or emerges inside complex systems.
4. Complex systems may provide new insights into our view of determinism and free will. (41)

The first three claims seem to belong strictly to chaos theory. The fourth concern brings a more humanistic aspect to Mackey's study, which can also be seen in the second half of his title, "James Joyce's Everyman." Mackey hopes to find, in the basic unpredictability of complex systems, some assurance that even in a deterministic universe we have a kind of freedom. Since the sensitive interrelations mentioned in point two "make it impossible" for us to overcome our ignorance of the future, even small actions on our part may result in unexpected changes in the course of destiny (49). The argument that this means we have "free will" remains somewhat vague; the fact that our minor acts may have great consequences does not prove that we were free in choosing those acts. I think, however, that Mackey is getting at something like the pragmatist idea that from our perspective (in the midst of chaos) we seem to have free will and thus for all practical purposes we should act *as if* we have it. At any rate, a good deal of Mackey's speculation about Leopold Bloom relates to the question of his free will and particularly to the problem of why he fails to prevent Molly from having her adulterous affair with Blazes Boylan.

Peter Francis Mackey has written a remarkably intelligent work, full of a deep understanding of *Ulysses* and reflecting a passion for both scientific and humanistic inquiry. It adds a needed dimension to our understanding of *Ulysses* and to the general goal of interdisciplinary dialogue. Mackey's approach is perhaps most effective in helping to understand the structure of "Ithaca," the rather bizarre penultimate chapter of *Ulysses* that Joyce wrote in the form of a catechism. Many of the questions ("How did Bloom prepare a collation for a gentile?" [17.354] or "For what creature was the door of egress a door of ingress?" [17.1034]), and their hilarious, increasingly detailed answers, do little to help, retrospectively, to explain some of its mysteries. All the questions, however, contribute in one way or another to our seeing Bloom and Stephen Dedalus as actors in a set of interlocking complex systems: social, religious, sanitary, biological, physical (Joyce describes in detail the physics of boiling water). For Mackey, these interlocking systems demonstrate the claim of anthropologist Gregory Bateson that "circular chains of causation are the rule rather than the exception" (89). As Mackey argues, the chapter's "determined catechetical method proves as inconclusive about the origin of all causes as

any method of inquiry does" (80). Faced with the complex system that is *Ulysses*, we are tempted to ask, "How can we isolate a first cause in a sea of contingency?" (90). The answer of course, is that "we cannot." In *Ulysses*, although we can learn a great deal about particular complex systems, Mackey shows that "questions about the first answer, the cause, the source of meaning, remain unanswered" (90).

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*Fashioning Sapphism: The Origins of a Modern English Lesbian Culture* by Laura Doan. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. Pp. xxii + 284. \$16.50 paper.

With this book Laura Doan makes a significant contribution to the study of lesbian identity formation in the early twentieth century. Future studies in the field will need to take account of her interventions. Doan—co-editor of the Columbia volume *Palatable Poison: Critical Perspectives on "The Well of Loneliness"*—begins by re-examining the scandal surrounding the 1928 publication and suppression of Radclyffe Hall's novel, typically acknowledged as a foundational moment in the establishment of a self-identified lesbian culture in Britain. Alan Sinfield has recently argued that Wilde's trials in 1895 were significant in establishing new possibilities in sexual identity construction, rather than in exposing an already extant subculture. Applying this premise of a newly constructed identity merging with a public event, as opposed to a newly opened closet, Doan concludes that the suppression of Hall's novel was based less on fear of lesbianism *per se* than on a more generalized misogynistic paranoia resulting from the extension of the suffrage during the same year. Indeed, Doan marshals persuasive evidence that the novel's critical reception in the British press was generally sympathetic, even among such conservative critics as Arnold Bennett. She attributes the absence of a broad, clearly-defined anti-lesbian discourse in this period to the lack of any publicly identifiable lesbian subculture. Hall's novel—and, to perhaps an even greater degree, Hall's public persona, and her widely-perceived identification with the novel's lesbian protagonist—established a generally legible lesbian identity for the first time in Britain. (Doan is careful not to conflate public identities with private arrangements, however, specifically refuting the assumption that "romantic friendships" among "New Women" in the preceding period were typically asexual.)

Sharply focused in terms of period and locality, this study is sensitive to

contrasts with the differing modalities of lesbian identity formation in other contexts—specifically, the more widely studied lesbian subculture in Modernist Paris. In an attempt to avoid the anachronistic implications of the now-current term “lesbian,” Doan defines as “Sapphic modernity” the confluence of the private with the public in various discourses of English modernity, which she systematically sets out in a series of chapters structured around the careers of prominent women in a variety of professions. Having bracketed the term, the author reverts to the word “lesbian” in describing these Sapphic moderns throughout the text. While the Parisian lesbian subculture was closely implicated in the cultural avant-garde, Sapphic modernity in England was more commonly characterized by social and aesthetic conservatism. Nor were the British feminist traditions of the New Woman necessarily adopted by British lesbians in this period.

The 1920s saw two unsuccessful attempts to extend England’s legal prohibition of sexual relations between males to include sexual relations between females. The archeology of this failed legislation exposes the connections between legal and sexological discourses in the tentative emergence of a public definition of the lesbian. It is precisely within the area of law enforcement that Doan goes on to discover her most vivid example of initiatory lesbian self-invention and self-presentation. Starting in 1918, two rival, private women’s police forces attempted simultaneously to gain recognition as official branches of the London Metropolitan Police. The women who organized these groups were not specifically defined as lesbian, although historians have subsequently categorized several of them as such. They were, however, subjected to intense scrutiny in terms of perceived transgressions of gender-appropriate behaviors and modes of self-presentation. As upper- and upper-middle class women situating a range of female masculinities within the cultural establishment, these figures brought issues of sexual nonconformity under public scrutiny when their cause was debated in a 1920–21 legal dispute. Specifically, advocates of the better-connected force charged their opposite party with a double impersonation—as illegitimate representations of the London Metropolitan Police, and as women whose gender was blurred by excessively masculine uniforms, with implications of sexual “perversity.” In fact, differences between the uniforms of the two groups were minimal; their identifying sartorial effects were, ultimately, located in their spectatorial reception, which changed with the political and professional alliances these groups were able to form with the male establishment.

In terms of high fashion, Doan makes it clear that the association of androgynous costume with lesbian identity was an instance of reclamation from the larger culture, rather than mainstreaming of an established subcultural code. It did not constitute a public declaration of lesbian identity for an upper-class or upper-middle-class Englishwoman in the 1920s to appear in “masculine” attire; yet “*within* a discrete, perhaps minuscule, subculture, lesbians

passed as stylishly recognizable lesbians as well as women of fashion" (120). This period of sartorial androgyny provided women who were consciously experimenting with definitions of gender and sexuality, such as the artist Gluck and the writer Bryher, with freedom in modes of self-presentation which would only later appear as dangerously transgressive in Britain. Only in cases of actual male impersonation—such as that of Valerie Arkell-Smith, convicted of impersonating a military officer—did androgynous female fashion lead to scandal or legal prohibition and the reinforcement of gender binaries.

Doan asserts that at least some women in this period consciously used the work of sexologists in their own attempts at self-identification, and not simply in the pathologizing sense that critics have customarily ascribed to this discourse. In the 1920s, sexology did not constitute a stabilized system. Controversies among sexologists, as well as changing positions within the work of a given writer such as Havelock Ellis, reveal a discourse in flux. Radclyffe Hall found inspiration in Ellis's writings, and sought his imprimatur for *The Well*. Doan's close reading of the novel reveals how it deploys a creative inconsistency as Hall works sexological theory into her plot. Krafft-Ebing's pathologizing system of sexual classification is the explicit pretext for the novel, but it is invoked only to be discounted. The most significant influence on Hall's definition of lesbianism, in this reading, is the work of Ellis and of Edward Carpenter. In a once influential alternative to Freud, both Ellis and Carpenter saw love as a metaphysically redemptive rather than neurotic component of sexuality. Hall writes from this premise, but contradicts Ellis's etiology of homosexuality. While Ellis took the congenitalist position, Hall's plot proposes a "nurture over nature" theory. Ellis further rejected the Krafft-Ebing system of sexual "types," while Hall proposed the lesbian as a distinct form of being, divisible into various categories. In this, she was strongly directed by Carpenter's theory of the intermediate type, adopting his masculine bias to purposes of female self-fashioning. Hall further adopts Carpenter's elitist claims for the intermediate type's supposedly superior talents, intellect, and spiritual enlightenment. Doan finds evolutionary theory converging with sexology in the conclusion of Hall's novel, when male and female intermediate types marry—a union which promises to produce children possessing the superior qualities of the intermediate.

Contemporaries of Hall's, such as Bryher and Rose Allatini, used the theory of the English sexologists to similar purpose in their novels, which Doan also explicates. How widespread was this influence? Which readers, at which times, were aware of sexology texts, either by reading the texts themselves or by discussing them with those who had? Doan finds evidence that upper- and upper-middle-class women had limited access to these texts, but could and often did obtain access with a modicum of effort. Secondary or tertiary knowledge of sexological theory was sufficiently established in 1920s London for it

to be represented in popular culture. Elsa Lanchester, for example, made sexual categories the subject of a cabaret act. Doan proposes a “taxonomy of readers” in discussing who found what in a given text: “those in the know, those unknowing, and those who knew-but-didn’t-know” (181). This multiple signification is particularly clear in Doan’s analysis of visual texts.

While portrait photographs from this period showing women in “male” costume often appear to contemporary eyes as unambiguous declarations of lesbian sexual identity, in most cases these photographs carried no overt sexual implications for their sitters. Doan reproduces persuasive evidence of this contextualizing interpretation, including a 1929 engagement portrait showing a heterosexual couple displaying matching suits, hairstyles, and profiles. The portrait photograph was then as now a tool of self-imaging. The signifiers deployed in these portraits from the 1920s have evolved new meanings, and must be viewed historically. Specifically, the “boyish” modes of the period are now difficult to distinguish from the “butch” modes of mid-century lesbian identification. Doan does not claim that the mannish lesbian was a mid-century invention; her focus is on the evolution of the signifier, rather than that of the signified. This argument credits the sitters, not the photographers, as the controlling influence in representation. The London policewomen presented themselves in publicity photos as briskly maternal guardians of lost children, but made a fatal public-relations miscalculation in a series of staged photos depicting their rescue of an adult male drunkard. These last images played into the hands of critics who charged the policewomen with behavior inappropriate to their gender. Hall and the artist Gluck used chic, androgynous self-imaging to establish themselves as avant-garde figures. These photographs were widely circulated in the press, and did not carry the risk of coming-out statements, safely participating as they did in current fashion trends. Sitters lost control of the image as it circulated and was appropriated by the viewer. It was only when taken out of its original frame that Hall’s image was appropriated as the archetypal mannish lesbian icon.

As an incitement to further research, this book is exemplary. Doan clearly possesses a strong working knowledge of a broad range of cultural fields, and brings this breadth to bear upon a sharply focused project. Certainly more work remains to be done on this subject. This book gives only perfunctory treatment to the Bloomsbury circle, and less than perfunctory treatment to the fecund areas of British cinema, music, and theatre in this period. It is a measure of Doan’s success that her reader’s only complaints are in the nature of desiring more.

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*William Blake: The Creation of the Songs: From Manuscript to Illuminated Printing* by Michael Phillips. London: The British Library and Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000. Pp. xi + 180. 72 color plates, 37 black-and-white illustrations. \$55.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

To prepare himself to write this study of the genesis of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, Michael Phillips gave two years of evenings to learning how to print, travelled all over the world to examine all but two of the fifty known copies, and studied in minute detail the notebook in which Blake entered drafts of all the poems of *Experience*, trying to establish, by tracing changes in ink colors and nib sizes, the sequence of occasions in which Blake entered or revised them. He also studied the political atmosphere of England and local events in Lambeth at the time Blake worked on the *Songs*, reading at length through parish records and newspaper advertisements. The results of all this research are gathered here in a handsome volume published to coincide with the major Blake exhibition at the Tate Gallery (November 2000), of which Phillips was a guest curator.

The seventy-two color plates are beautifully done and worth the price of the book alone (happily published in paperback from the outset). Anyone interested in comparing the often widely different colorings of certain plates should place this book beside the recent Blake Trust/Princeton edition of the *Songs*, edited by Andrew Lincoln (1991), and the older Trianon/Orion/Oxford version, edited by Geoffrey Keynes (1967); there is just one duplication of a plate. For not very much money we now can own good reproductions of at least one plate from twenty-one copies of *Innocence* or of the joint *Songs*. They are all different from one another, too, sometimes in striking ways, sometimes in subtle. Phillips gives us six versions of the title-page of *Innocence*, for instance, and five each of the *Innocence* "Holy Thursday" and the *Experience* "Nurse's Song," as well as a "London" and a "Tyger." (The "Tyger" is the same as the one from Copy T in the Blake Trust/Princeton edition; it is, alas, no more ferocious than in other copies, but is surrealistically colored like a calico barber pole.) With the expanding on-line Blake Archive and improving desktop printers we may soon have even better means to ponder the effects of varying colorings, effects perhaps even on the meanings of the accompanying texts, but for now we must be grateful for these additions to what is in print.

Among the plates are reproductions of eighteen pages of the notebook (N 98–115 in the Erdman numbering)—those pages that carry texts or designs relevant to the *Songs*. These too are splendid: we can see what Phillips means by the different shades of ink and widths of nib. There are no transcripts in ordinary type as there are in David Erdman's edition of the notebook (Oxford, 1973); instead, in a very long central chapter, Phillips takes us step by step through the entire eighteen pages, transcribing each version of each poem and

noting each revision or crossing-out. Among the plates, finally, are photographs of Phillips's own copper plate copy of the *Innocence* title-page, and a few plates by other printers of Blake's day.

Though it stays focused on the evolution of the *Songs*, the book still seems something of a hybrid. Relatively short chapters on the printing techniques frame the long chapter on the notebook; the explanations of the former presume little knowledge and are generally very clear, but some technical details are controversial and can be assessed only by other specialists (of which this reviewer is not one). Sometimes ballooning out from amidst the usually chaste and exacting accounts of the notebook *variora* are detailed reports of Phillips's discoveries of possible sources or inspirations of the poems, complete with illustrations, but however interesting these may be (I will take up a few of them), they throw the book off balance because they do not take their place beside the comparable research of many scholars before him. One who chooses this book as an introduction to the *Songs* will get a peculiar impression of Blake's historical milieu. Space was doubtless limited, but some of Phillips's research belongs in articles addressed to other scholars and not, or not at such length, in a commentary that looks to be thorough.

He offers a long argument, for example, against taking November 1792 as the *terminus ad quem* of notebook entries that led to the *Songs*, a date widely accepted on the basis of Blake's allusions to Lafayette's arrest by the Austrians, news of which arrived in London that month. Phillips has found documents from a few months later that he believes shed light on the drafts, and to use them he must postdate the completion of the notebook. His first claim relies on Nancy Bogan's offering of a source for the intriguing stanzas that seem intended for what became "London":

Why should I care for the men of Thames  
Or the cheating waves of chartered streams  
Or shrink at the little blasts of fear  
That the hireling blows into my ear

Tho born on the cheating banks of Thames  
Tho his waters bathed my infant limbs  
The Ohio shall wash his stains from me  
I was born a slave but I long to be free

Bogan suggested that Blake thought of the Ohio River because he had been reading Gilbert Imlay's *A Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America*, published in 1792. What Phillips has discovered is that the book did not appear until the end of the year; he has located its first advertisement in *The Public Advertiser* for 12 December, in a column next to one that was likely to capture Blake's attention: a warning "to certain Print-shops



wherein libellous Pictures and Engravings are daily exhibited” that their owners may be prosecuted. This is a nice piece of research, and it is certainly possible that Blake was pushed and pulled toward the thought of the Ohio by these two articles. Yet the Ohio was so well known and so frequently cited in poetry that Blake hardly needed to see it again in print. Major battles with the French had taken place along its banks, battles celebrated in many a verse. If he wanted a contrast to the Thames, the Ohio was almost inevitable. Joel Barlow’s *Vision of Columbus* (1787), which we know Blake read, mentions it five times. Dyer mentions it in *The Fleece* (1757). A trawl through the English Poetry Data-Base will produce many more instances.

Phillips extends the date later still by citing a poem by John Thelwall of April 1793 where “charter’d” is used rather as Blake used it (though not of a river); here the same point can be made: the term had been widely deployed for several years, as Phillips acknowledges. He wants to extend the date well into 1793 because by then the anti-French reaction had taken hold and Blake’s fear of it may have registered in his work, but it is difficult to see what is really gained by a later date, for none of the evidence he has found, it seems to me; counts as an unequivocal source for any of the drafts, let alone an allusion that might alter the way we read them. He cites, and reproduces, a ledger of the accounts of the Parish of Lambeth, where Blake was then living, where it is indicated that an unknown child was found dead in February 1793; the news would have been “the catalyst for the bitter irony of Blake’s railing satire” of “Holy Thursday” in *Experience*. This may well be so—though it is the design, not the text, that presents a dead child—but was it not common in London for children to die of malnutrition?

In general Phillips sees Blake as highly suggestible along a narrow register of subjects, largely social and political. Building on the argument of Nurmi, Erdman, and Paulson that Blake’s tyger owes its birth less to a cosmic blacksmith than to the September Massacres, which several British observers likened to tigerish behavior, Phillips concludes, “‘The Tyger’ may be a metaphor for the forces of revolution in France.” Yet the fact that tigers were sometimes enlisted as metaphors for events in France does not make every tiger French. The tiger has been an emblem of cruelty since the *Aeneid*. The poem is highly resistant to any single line of interpretation and seems to shrug off political allusions with ease; they would only diminish it in any case. When Phillips then goes on to say that Blake might have taken the local reaction against the revolution as itself tigerlike, he is building on air.

Despite the way they intrude into the commentary, and despite my disagreements with some of them, I am glad to have these digressions into Blake’s situation. A haunting photograph of Fore Street, Lambeth Riverside, may or may not be from the neighborhood Blake had in mind as the setting for “London”—after all, its speaker wanders through “each charter’d street,” not just

those nearby—but it conveys something of the London we too easily forget and Blake knew all too well. Phillips is at work on a biography of Blake in Lambeth during the anti-Jacobin reaction, on which he has published interesting articles. I hope he will enrich it with as many pictures as he can find, not so much to nail down a source or allusion as to present the world (or one of the worlds) Blake dwelled in, a world almost entirely lost.

I also found many of the details about Blake's notebook sessions interesting, though it is not clear what implications, if any, they have for how we interpret the final works. Phillips points out that the "Introduction" to *Experience* is not found in the notebook. "Earth's Answer" is, but it is tied at the outset to "Thou hast a lap full of seed," with which it shares some imagery. That poem was abandoned. In its new context, following an "Introduction" almost certainly composed after it, "Earth's Answer" is "profoundly altered." Indeed one is tempted to say that its history explains why "Earth's Answer" seems not quite an answer to the voice of the bard, or seems an answer to someone else. Still, even if he did not have the bard in mind when he wrote the "Answer," Blake must have had the "Answer" in mind when he wrote the "Introduction," and in any case he engraved them both and placed them in succession in all copies. So we must take them together as a single work, or a pair of works in dialogue, however they came to be. It then becomes part of its meaning, its literary effect, that Earth seems half deaf.

One more detail worth relishing: Blake seems to have worked on "London" and "The Tyger" on the same occasion. Two of the greatest poems in English on the same day!

I shall be brief about the chapters on Blake's printing methods. Much of it is uncontroversial and clearly explained, along with good reproductions of contemporary printing equipment. Phillips disagrees with Essick and Viscomi, on whose work he builds, on such details as the speed with which Blake could print his pages, whether he printed the *Songs* plates in pairs or separately, and whether he normally printed his plates once or twice—that is, passed them through the press only once or, as Phillips believes, passed them through a second time with different colored inks. I will leave it to those better qualified than I am to assess his claims. These disputes notwithstanding, I find it remarkable how much we do know about this obscure London engraver: where he got his copper plate and the sizes he cut it down to, when and where he got his paper and how he treated it before printing on it, what pigments he used for hand watercoloring, what acids for the bath, and so on. His characteristic method, relief etching, is pretty well understood now; Phillips contrasts it clearly with intaglio, and offers the suggestive analogy—intaglio is to relief etching as Locke's blank slate is to innate ideas—which ties his method to his core beliefs about the soul and nature.

On one seemingly technical point—whether, apart from the *Songs*, Blake

composed directly on the copper plate (in a wax “resist”), as many scholars believe, or he wrote and revised on paper before transcribing onto copper, as Phillips believes—I have to say I think Phillips has the better argument, though he might have been more explicit about what “composing” means. It is true that we lack first drafts of almost all later works and some earlier ones, but the argument from silence is dangerous; surely it is more remarkable that the *Songs* notebook has survived than that other textbooks have not. Moreover there is the manuscript of *The Four Zoas*, a draft of a work never engraved but quarried for *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. It is also true that Blake claimed that *Jerusalem* was dictated to him, but if Blake was taking it down onto copper plate the dictator must have been the most patient of spirits. In any case, Blake gives it away in *Jerusalem* itself, where he writes, “When this Verse was first dictated to me I consider’d a Monotonous Cadence like that used by Milton & Shakspeare. . . .” We get the absurd idea of “Verse” whose “Cadence” is not determined! Blake appears to have “consider’d” a great deal, and it is hard to agree that he did it all while hovering over the plate. He had to lay out the design, with space for the text, and then write the text, backward, in careful “copperplate hand,” in a sticky resist. He could erase mistakes, but it cost some time and trouble even before the resist hardened. It is pleasing to imagine his spiritual advisers coming every day with different inks and nibs, making him cross out what they dictated the day before, and sitting around chatting while he labored over his plates. But that was their job; they were his own spirits.

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*Quoting Shakespeare: Form and Culture in Early Modern Drama* by Douglas Bruster. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000. Pp. 288. \$50.00 cloth.

There is a stark contrast between the specific readings of early modern texts Douglas Bruster offers in *Quoting Shakespeare: Form and Culture in Early Modern Drama*, and his attempt to situate these readings theoretically around the concept of “quotation.” All the readings are rich and engaged; the readings of Marlowe’s “The Passionate Shepherd” (Chapter Two, a version of an article that appeared in *Criticism*) and Shakespeare and Fletcher’s *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (Chapter Five, a version of an article that appeared in *Shakespeare Quarterly*) are, I think, brilliant. Bruster’s efforts, however, to define his “mode of reading” (13) and differentiate it from various formulations of New Historicism—by using the terms “quotation” and “*bricolage*” instead of “appropriation” or “circulation” to explain how words and things get into a literary

text—are labored. In that, this book stands as fairly representative of the times: New Historical tenets (with numerous modifications) still allow for great work to be done, but talking about New Historical tenets bores people to tears and, with no theoretical breakthrough on the horizon, any discussion of theory in early modern studies remains a tedious task.

Bruster actually says something similar early on: various critical “approaches are being reshuffled rather than rethought, leaving the field busy but without the direction it once had” (13). He says, too, with admirable and refreshing frankness, “this book offers no magic solution” (13). And then he eschews novelty: “It is certainly not my claim . . . that no one has ever read books in this way before. . . . (14). Nonetheless, the pressure to reshuffle—if not create theoretical magic and read in a way no one has read before—remains strong in academic publishing and Bruster complies, it seems, grudgingly: “We might provisionally define quotation as the incorporation, in a text, of discrete elements from outside that text, with or without acknowledgment” (16). These “elements” can be, in addition to other texts, actions, relationships, etc. Rather than talk about quotation in the modern sense—“the reduplication, typically *with* acknowledgment, of others’ words . . . for which we have both cultural protocols and an array of punctuation” (16)—Bruster suggests that a broader (more early modern) use of “quotation” can function as something of a critical tool: “We can learn more about texts and the history they incorporate if we look beyond the provocative material that New Historicism commonly employs, for the *positions* of texts and authors—their orientation, habits, and inclinations—often appear most clearly in otherwise ordinary borrowings” (5). I have no argument with this claim. But Bruster spends too much time “positioning” his “quotations” in and around New Historical “appropriations.” It seems preferable to make the general and simple point that New Historicists need to focus more on immediate literary or linguistic “appropriations” or “borrowings” or “quotations” or whatever.

And I do not use “whatever” loosely here. Right now, recently freed from restrictive metaphors of representation (“reflection,” etc.), it does not seem particularly meaningful which metaphors we use—“borrows,” “appropriates,” “registers,” “participates in,” “exchanges with,” “circulates in,” or “quotes”—to explain our greater openness to the complexity of the relationship between life and the production of art. Indeed, almost as soon as Bruster gives us “quotation” he feels compelled to introduce yet another apt but, at the moment, fairly useless term: “bricolage.” “Such terms characterize making as fabrication rather than as creation and ask us to see that dramatic texts were *bricolage*—a pastiche of various to-hand materials, sometimes by a handyman or bricoleur” (22). One might get the sense that Bruster wishes he did not have to play with nomenclature and could simply use “quotation” as an explicit organizational device for his chapters, correcting bad tendencies in New Historicism as he

goes along. "I am skeptical about the usefulness of larger paradigms and categories for certain acts of interpretation, whether phrased as 'influence' or 'the Elizabethan world picture' or 'social energy' . . ." (211–12).

Once Bruster finishes discussing his "mode of reading," and if one ignores the related connections between chapters, the book stands as a wonderful collection of essays. Chapter Two demonstrates the significance of Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd" by studying together the works "that it quoted" and "works that quoted it" (56). This apparently tranquil lyric elicited such strong and often violent responses in part because Marlowe "quoted" ("appropriated"?) from a long "tradition of amatory invitations" (57) that were very much about asserting the lyrical speaker's power. "Tracing a pattern of quotations" from Theocritus, to Vergil, to Ovid, to Marlowe, to Raleigh and Donne and forward, reveals a threat "lurking behind . . . the sensuous invitation" (84). Other writers quoting from and responding to the poem make the threat visible. The drama, in particular, in its reliance on dialogue and insistence on the social, puts "into motion" the seemingly "monological rigor" of the lyric and exposes its often "brutal urges" for control when it quotes the poem (86). In a particularly remarkable piece of this extended analysis, Bruster catches glimpses of this process in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* when the parson Hugh Evans quotes Marlowe to empower or console himself (64–5). Here the focus on "quotations" tells us much about "The Passionate Shepherd"—and several other works. Nevertheless, Bruster only corrects tendencies in New Historicism—its (1) interest in the synchronic ("sideways" reading) at the expense of the diachronic and (2) its strange lack of interest in literary borrowings.

Chapter Three turns us back, again, to the neglected literary borrowings—in this case, Shakespeare from Plautus—and asks us to consider patterns of quotations (or borrowings). Not as innovative or illuminating as the work on Marlowe, this chapter argues convincingly nonetheless. It looks at aristocratic controlling figures in Shakespeare—Portia, Prospero, Theseus and Oberon—and notes "Shakespeare's tendency to displace the agency of the resourceful slave [in Plautus] upward on the social scale" (90). When Shakespeare adapts the "servus" as "*poeta*" figure in Plautus, the wit and intelligence that make this figure so powerful gets transferred to someone of higher social standing. Puck, for example, is necessary to Oberon not for "wit and intelligence" but for "geographical and social mobility" (108). Such a pattern allows us to say a great deal about Shakespeare's politics.

In contrast to Chapter Three, Chapter Four is provocative, but not entirely convincing. Challenging the current orthodoxy that says *The Tempest* deals with colonialist discourse and new worlds, Bruster argues that Shakespeare "quoted" (or whatever) "relationships" between himself and the world of the theater as his "most salient sources" (118). In Prospero and Miranda we

see Shakespeare as playwright/director guiding an audience member's responses; in Prospero and Ariel we see Shakespeare as playwright/director training and working with a compliant, but indentured, boy actor; in Prospero and Caliban we see Shakespeare as playwright/director working with a not so compliant—indeed, not so “human”—Will Kemp. (So much for Shakespeare's thoughts on the famous clown.) Bruster is sharp when starting with the “theater as ship” trope that opens the play and, true to some of his comments in the Introduction, he uses “ordinary” language borrowings from the theater to make some intriguing connections. For example, the “high-day!” that closes Caliban's song in Act Two refers to Kemp's use of similar phrases (137). The argument, however, rests on these small analogies.

Chapter Five, on *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, makes a provocative and convincing case for the significance of the Jailer's Daughter in early modern dramatic study. The mad language of this “otherwise” disempowered” character standing “outside the play's self-definition of the social” (145) registers “the increasing separation of court and city from the country” (170). This culture-wide separation of social spheres includes the dramatic shift from Shakespeare's “more popular forms of drama” (135) to Fletcher's “more aristocratic” theater (155) and the collaboration of the two playwrights at a moment when the former was giving way to the latter produces this unique character. The Jailer's Daughter functions, then, as something of a transitional marker in history. Through a fascinating analysis of her language, Bruster shows that many of her words “float” within the play, unable to “find an object” (156) because her “thoughts” are, in fact, bits of the fast disappearing world of folk culture not thoroughly integrated into the play. As Bruster ingeniously points out, however, the mix of the new theater (and its interest in strong, individualized female roles) with the old, inflects these bits of folk culture with a “complex individual psychology” (161): “what is inside her mind turns out to be the outside world” (158). Not random at all, the Jailer's Daughter's quotations provide something of a Jamesonian political unconscious for the play: “demarcated from the rest of the drama . . . hidden yet present, unseen at the same time powerful” (162).

Having suggested to his readers in the first paragraph that this book considers “Shakespeare both quoting and quoted” (3), Bruster finds himself having to begin his final chapter by explaining that one might have expected “a full length study of Shakespearean quotations” (171). He then promises to “address” the expectation. Not surprisingly, the last chapter can not fully address the potentially misleading title, but, again, the chapter itself is engaging. Bruster follows a line of inquiry opened by Hugh Grady and Richard Halpern in looking at the American Modernists' use of the “English Renaissance,” suggesting that early twentieth-century Americans “quoted”—and thus helped make—the English Renaissance because they saw it in “usable” material” to

define “distinction, prestige, and ‘class’” in their world (208). This last chapter is filled with much *bricolage* and interesting speculation not previously published.

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*The Reluctant Film Art of Woody Allen* by Peter J. Bailey. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001. Pp. 344. \$29.95 cloth.

Few could have imagined, when Woody Allen began his career telling jokes about his pet ant or the moose he took to a costume party, that he would eventually turn into one of America's, if not the world's, most prolific artists. With three plays, numerous short stories and essays, as well as over thirty films, one nearly every year since *Take the Money and Run* (1969), he has produced a consistent body of work. For me the high water mark is *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1989), a film that combines rich comic characters with some of the deepest and most trenchant comments on the plight of modern existential man; for others, I know that his Oscar-winning *Annie Hall* (1977) and *Manhattan* (1979) stand as his finest work. We might also throw in *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986) and some of the early comedies. Few directors have had such a run of luck.

Nonetheless, in recent years, Allen's career has not fared well. Revelations of a private nature have cast a shadow over the rather benign persona that he had maintained. Possibly the scandal over his marriage to a much younger woman and more recently a law suit against his former producers have eroded his fan base. While *Hannah* earned \$40 million at the box office, *Sweet and Lowdown* (2000), despite the nomination of its female star, only earned a paltry \$4 million. More importantly, his work has also lost the urgency and potency that used to make it a subject of discussion in most intellectual circles. His latest, *Curse of the Jade Scorpion*, which carries on the trend of his most recent work of seeming little more than a tired reworking of old material, is a case in point.

None of this detracts, however, from his importance as a filmmaker. Ironically, he owes little of his success to American cinema. Despite Hollywood's fondness for him—he and his female co-stars are frequent nominees and Oscar winners—he seems to have eschewed anything that can be found in most of the films produced there, except for the iconoclasts like the Marx Brothers and Preston Sturges. Instead, one of his trademarks lies in his devotion to those European directors who have matched medium and message, especially Fellini, Antonioni, and Bergman. There is a wonderful parody of

Antonioni in *Everything You Want to Know about Sex* and in *Manhattan* the image of the skeleton in the classroom center frame, after everyone has left, equals the best of Bergman. Nonetheless, I agree with Peter J. Bailey in *The Reluctant Film Art of Woody Allen* that “to dismiss his movies on the grounds that they are derivative . . . of classic European or Hollywood films is to ignore how deliberately his work addresses and complicates precisely those questions of artistic derivation and imitation and also investigates their relationship to the artist’s mental stability” (235).

Obviously, the “real” Woody Allen and his screen persona are worlds apart. Most of the time his screen persona falls into the schlemiel category, a failure at love and work—Allen is neither. Furthermore, one doesn’t need to be a Freudian (Allen’s former favorite form of therapy) to know that a true schlemiel and/or neurotic could not produce the sheer volume of work that Allen has. More often than not those personalities are paralyzed with fear, producing little or no work, or drown themselves in booze or other addictions. Whatever may be said about Allen’s private life, he seems to have escaped both those fates.

A different kind of neurosis, however, might be the impetus to his artistic impulse. Bailey sees Allen as having an “intransigently, skeptical, highly conflictual attitude towards his own art” (4). He argues that Allen has an ambivalent attitude to the nature of art, one that questions whether art serves any valuable purpose. Allen emerges in these pages as a “devotedly Modernist filmmaker, whose movies gravitate incessantly—if reluctantly—toward the interrogation of their own conditions of postmodernist skepticism, disillusionment, and narcissistic self-reflexivity” (5).

While making for an elaborate and sometimes overwrought examination of some of Allen’s oeuvre, Bailey’s approach does contain more than a modicum of truth. For the most part, Bailey astutely discusses those movies, mostly from 1977 on, that deal in some way with the value of art. They range from serious fare like *Stardust Memories* (1980), and *Crimes*, to lighter fare like *Purple Rose of Cairo* and *Broadway Danny Rose*. All deal with artists of some kind, not always successful ones, or with Art itself, usually filmmaking. The most complex of Allen’s movies lend themselves best to this argument. *Manhattan*, an uncannily prescient movie, contrasts “artistic perfection” with “human perfidy and deceit” (49), a theme taken up with equal power in *Crimes*. Bailey also offers interesting insights into some movies that might be dismissed. *Radio Days*, on the surface little more than light piffle, becomes a debate between the “virtues of entertainment” and the “culturally superior claims of serious art.”

Bailey’s readings show an Allen constantly questioning and never satisfied. Ultimately, however, it paints a rather bleak view of Allen’s attitude. Allen certainly has a dark side. He once remarked that “every morning I contemplate



suicide” and some of his writings show a cynical contempt for human nature, none more ringing than his statement that “inside very heart live[s] the worm of self-preservation, of fear, greed and an animal will to power.” At the same time, Allen has often pulled back from the brink. In many of his movies one finds a sheer, unalloyed joy that counters the darkness that might lurk beneath. Bailey all too often ignores these more benign readings. When in *Hannah*, after a showing failed suicide attempt, Allen, achieves a rather obvious reconciliation with art by going to see a Marx Brothers movie, Bailey poohpoohs it. “He was happy at the time (117), and he regretted it so much that he made *Crimes* three years later as an antidote” (128). In this way, movie after movie turns into a rather dour and dark search for meaning, rather than a laugh riot that many of them are. Allen becomes Samuel Beckett redux. The “fictional character . . . ‘Woody Allen’ may live on in the hearts of film viewers everywhere but Woody Allen won’t live on anywhere, and that discrepancy encapsulates Allen’s primary gripe with art” (69). But Allen is not Beckett: “Woody Allen” is not Didi or Gogo “bestrid the grave” or Winnie endlessly prating on. The cumulative effect of Bailey’s argument is to rob Allen of what makes his work so enduring.

While one cannot doubt Bailey’s expertise, the reductive quality of the reading makes the movies less and not more than they are. While astute on some movies, like the often neglected *Shadows and Fog*, the text tries to make all the movies fit, even when some won’t bear the reading. I question, for example, his reading of *Bullets*, for one. Bailey argues that Allen shares some of the point of view towards the role of the artist with the playwright Shayne in *Bullets over Broadway*. When Shayne says, “I’m not an artist. There I’ve said it and I feel free,” he argues that this is Allen’s “most unequivocally condemnatory concluding judgment on art and artists” (169) but Shayne, it is clear from the movie, *never* was an artist. He couldn’t write and needed the real artist, the hit man Cheech, to save his work. If anything, Allen is condemning the faux artist rather than using him as the mouthpiece for his own views on art. Allen is not and has never been “free.” And if he wanted to be, he would not now be working on his 36<sup>th</sup> movie.

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