

# BOOK REVIEWS

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*Shakespeare and Masculinity*. By Bruce R. Smith. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. 182 pages. \$19.95 US paper.

Smith's study is one in the series of Oxford Shakespeare Topics, edited by Peter Holland and Stanley Wells, which are affordable but high quality paperbacks, very handsomely produced, each written, as the blurbs suggest, "by an authority in its field, and combin[ing] accessible style with original discussion of its subject." Smith, the author of *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England* (1991), generally regarded as the best single study of Renaissance homoeroticism, is certainly an authority on this topic, and he invariably commands attention not only for his accessibility of style but also in general for his humane critical approach. Aimed (like the rest of the series) at both students and teachers, Smith's book will likely be useful to both, although it may be significant not for its originality but for its status as a kind of marker or definer of the present state of gender studies in early modern scholarship.

The brief introduction makes the unsurprising assertion that masculinity is "just as much a social construction as 'femininity'"(2), but quickly moves on to the perhaps more disputable assertion that masculinity as represented in Shakespearean drama is all "a matter of contingency, or circumstances, or performances"(4). Nevertheless the argument is carefully constructed. The "existential challenge" to "Be a man" in Shakespeare needs, Smith proposes, to be examined from "several critical vantage-points": early modern definitions of "Persons" (Chapter 1), social "Ideals" of masculinity (Chapter 2), the "Passages" or transitions between life stages (Chapter 3), self-definitions vis-à-vis various cultural "Others" (Chapter 4), and a final discussion on "Coalescences" (Chapter 5), which invites the reader to "consider the performances of masculinity in the theatre as an experiment in which self and others, past and present, ... present realities and future possibilities converge in potentially liberating ways" (5). This last statement, very revealing of the book's ideological agenda, may be questioned by those who believe that masculinity has historically had more to do with rigours of self-discipline and the assumption of personal responsibility than with potential liberation, although there is much to engage even such "old-fashioned" readers in Smith's ensuing chapters.

The first chapter on "Persons," like much in the rest of the book, suggests that in fact Smith's subject is ultimately the "self" rather than exclusively masculinity. (What questions this raises about the relation between "masculinity" studies and feminism is a political can of worms Smith chooses not to open.) The very real problem facing scholars is that "many of the words we use today to talk about self-consciousness did not exist [in Shakespeare's England], or at least not with the meanings we assume." Most cru-

cially, "Self as 'a permanent subject of successive and varying states of consciousness' ... dates only from the late seventeenth century" (7). Confusingly, however, "self" in the first text examined—*The True Knowledge of Man's Own Self* (1602)—seems to suggest both the body, via physiological awareness, and God (the soul-in-a-body). The chapter offers a useful review and reminder of the great importance of biological beliefs and humoral theory in early modern self-conceptions, yet some of Smith's examples seem to indicate that references to humours are used less literally and specifically than he suggests: if hare-brained Hotspur from *1 Henry IV* is governed by a spleen (where black bile is stored), this ought to make him (strictly speaking, according to Galenic theory) melancholy, not choleric. Moreover, Smith's reading of Hal's final triumph as a humoral balancing act, as "physiological in nature" (21)—"Presume not that I am the thing I was ... I have turned away my former self" (*2 Henry IV*, 5.5.56–8, my emphasis)—ignores completely the spiritual significance in Hal's rejection of Falstaff. Hal's pronouncement, "I know thee not, old man" (5.5.47), surely alludes to the Pauline meaning of the old man or carnal self, and therefore the "self" in the above utterance carries a spiritual more than a physiological sense. Smith observes that "person" in early modern discourse refers primarily to a social role, admits that "early modern men do testify to a central essence in personhood" which they call a "soul," and concludes that the relationship of the spiritual "I" to the physical person is "ambiguous" (24–25). Such "ambiguity" might be said to carry a different meaning for early modern selves than for present selves, but the one gesture towards elucidating this difference, involving a quotation from Leeds Barroll, is wholly inadequate: "If a man's essence is the soul with which he was endowed at creation, then 'the desideratum for the human personality' must be, not the integration of soul and body, but their separation. What that might mean in practice is precisely the opposite of our modern sense of individuality as 'self-actualization'" (27). This reading completely elides the significance of the whole tradition of Renaissance humanism, which, if not engaged in the same process as contemporary "self-actualization," was certainly profoundly interested in the integration of body and soul.

Thus the first chapter almost accidentally stumbles across an ideological assumption which constitutes the main weakness of the study, and which again finds expression, this time more obviously, in the concluding chapter. Anxious to achieve a concept—"coalescence"—to bridge the opposition between constructionism and essentialism, Smith writes, "Constructionism is one of the basic propositions by which new historicism as a way of reading has distinguished itself from humanism. Where humanism assumes a core essence that unites people otherwise separated in time and social circumstances[,] new historicism insists on cultural differences" (131–32). Since early modern masculinity is inextricably bound up with Renaissance humanism, new historicism—or any other critical methodology, for that matter—will never be able to explore adequately, with any historical accuracy, early modern gender roles until it abandons reductive and inaccurate "essentialist" assumptions regarding humanism. If Erasmus wrote "Homines non nascuntur, sed

funguntur”—men are fashioned rather than born—and if, as Thomas Greene has claimed, this constitutes “a formula which might be taken as the motto of the Humanist revolution,” then Renaissance humanism evidently has at least as much to do with a “constructed” as with an “essential” self.

How and where and why these constructions take place are, nevertheless, questions that the final chapter on “Coalescences,” as well as the preceding chapters, helpfully explore. As a critic Smith excels at discerning patterns, and cataloguing aspects of a phenomenon, as he does when he identifies five masculine “Ideals”: “the chivalrous knight, the Herculean hero, the humanist man of moderation, the merchant prince, and the saucy jack” (44). The chapter on “Passages” makes some interesting observations on the astrological and humoral significance of the ages of man, and the “scripting” of one’s life according to accepted cultural patterns. The chapter on “Others,” probably the richest and most satisfying, offers an interesting review of the relational nature of early modern masculinity, although one might argue that occasionally the clichés of poststructuralism swamp the common sense of the analysis: “according to Derrida the dubious status of masculinity follows from the nature of language itself. Masculinity, like anything else, is knowable only in terms of the things it is not” (104). Moreover, the dependency of masculine self-definition on the denigration of cultural others—“women, foreigners, persons of lower rank, and sodomites” (104)—may raise the question of whether critics should take such narcissistic identifications and displacements as paradigmatic or “normal.” Such an objection does of course raise the question of the possibility or impossibility of a coherent self. Each of Smith’s chapters eventually concludes with much the same commonplace: “[Tensions between generations] render masculinity as something unstable, something always in the process of being achieved” (99); “The definition of masculinity in terms of others is an inherently unstable business” (128). But criticism needs now to move past this recognition, and to offer something more than Smith’s vaguely political gesture that readings of Shakespeare “give us the opportunity to imagine versions of masculinity that may be more equitable and more fulfilling than those we know already” (161). As I have already indicated, a more historically informed reading of Renaissance humanism would be a good place to start, but I will make as well another suggestion. At various moments in this study, Smith, consistent with the tendency of much postmodern thought, equates the “performance” of masculinity with the real social function of masculinity, or, it may be more accurate to say, fails to recognize the distinction that so much early modern drama makes between “genuine” (and risk-filled) performances of manliness and false or spurious performances. More attention via psychoanalysis to mechanisms of both positive and negative identification among theatre audiences (active imitation of models versus voyeuristic indulgence), as well as a closer consideration of the anti-theatrical prejudice prevalent during the Renaissance, might be useful correctives in future attempts to historicize early modern masculinity in the context of literary studies.

*Representing Revolution in Milton and his Contemporaries: Religion, Politics, and Polemics in Radical Puritanism.* By David Loewenstein. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. xiii, 413 pages. \$59.95 US.

David Loewenstein's book usefully situates some of Milton's principal works in relation to the writings of radical Puritans during and after the English civil war of the mid-seventeenth century. Eschewing a traditional history of ideas approach employed—for example, by Christopher Hill in *Milton and the English Revolution* (1977) and other works—the author examines the “literary texture” of revolutionary pamphlets written by radical Puritans and addresses Milton's works in light of these lesser known polemics of his contemporaries. He seeks not only to provide a context for Milton's opus but also to “bring together the republican and radical spiritual dimensions of Milton's writings” (4). Loewenstein succeeds in the former endeavour but not entirely in the latter.

The study is divided into two parts. The first discusses polemical works of Leveller, Digger, Ranter, Fifth Monarchist, and Quaker writers, as well as Andrew Marvell's poetic defence of Cromwell. Throughout, the author emphasizes the spiritual, rather than political or economic, dimensions of radical revolutionary fervour: for example, the apocalyptic symbolism associated with the promised new Jerusalem and the claims of antinomian conscience against sinful worldly powers. He nicely differentiates the doctrines of social egalitarians such as John Lilburne and Gerard Winstanley from more messianic (hence elitist) revolutionaries such as Abiezer Coppe, Anna Trapnel, and George Fox.

In the second part, Loewenstein is chiefly interested in how Milton, like Marvell and others, depicted the ambivalent tendencies of the revolution in his prose and poetry. In his prose works, Milton linked the Irish rebellion with the King's “equivocal politics” (178), as well as treating of Presbyterian “verbal equivocations” in seeking restoration of the monarchy (188). In his chapter on *Paradise Lost* (1667), the author focuses on the contradictory rhetoric of Milton's Satan and on Abdiel's “godly resistance” (226) as indirect reflections on the revolution. He persuasively argues that the figures in and episodes of the Satanic revolt are not literal representations; instead, the reader is “to remain especially vigilant about endangered spiritual and political liberties” in Restoration England (203). Loewenstein insists that *Paradise Regained* (1671) is not simply a turn inward and therefore away from political engagement. On the contrary, Milton's Jesus employs “verbal weapons” against the temptations of Satan and patiently awaits the future victory over evil, so that the poem “can assume a political dimension that is more polemically engaged—and surely less quietist and passively resigned—than ... it is often assumed to be” (265–66). And Milton reconciled freedom and providence in the story of Samson's final act of holy violence, implying that the radical Puritan saint should trust to God's “unsearchable providence” despite the failure of the revolution (279). Loewenstein concludes that *Paradise Regained*

and *Samson Agonistes*, published together, show two forms of “spiritual warfare.” This contrast between the two poems reveal Milton’s “calculated indeterminacy” (294).

Loewenstein marshals a vast range of primary sources in setting out the polemical context of Milton’s chief works. At times, however, breadth is emphasized to the detriment of depth. It may be questioned why 150 pages are devoted largely to best-forgotten declamations of religious fanatics, particularly in contrast to the meagre 40 pages on *Paradise Lost*. The author favours literary texture over history of ideas but textures are only skin-deep. His extensive treatment of Milton’s contemporaries serves mainly to expose the paucity of compelling ideas contained within their writings. One would like to have seen further discussion of *Paradise Lost*, for example; the fall of Man and Michael’s revelation to Adam are arguably as politically resonant as the war in heaven. This book is a comprehensive resource for scholars interested in radical Puritanism; as a study of Milton, however, it chiefly illuminates why we should be more interested in Milton’s writings than those of most of his contemporaries.

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*Kant, Art, and Art History: Moments of Discipline.* By Mark Cheetham. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. 232 pages. £37.00.

Is Kant a prototypical postmodernist? And is Kantian philosophy still important to art and art history? How many Kants are there? These are questions that, as an art historian and philosopher, Mark Cheetham is probably well positioned to answer. His ruminations on these and other critical questions provide the matrix for this very readable and rich exploration of Kant’s influence(s) on visual arts and art history from the 1770s to 1990s, the first reception study of its type to emerge from the academic industry connected to this paragon among philosophers. Cheetham’s quest is grand indeed, and although some may question the “concurrency” (5) of his critical approaches to his subject, or quibble about the unKantian/anti-Kantian manner with which he accommodates competing intellectual discourses and ideological positions, this book adds something new and provocative to the annals of Kantian scholarship.

Kant is taken to be “a synecdochic personification of philosophy in his interactions with art history and the visual arts.” Cheetham further allegorises these relations as “analogous to those performed by a domestic boarder—a temporary and unwelcome lodger or visitor—whose presence ‘in’ art and art history helps to explain the shifting borders between these areas” (6). This reviewer was reminded of Alfred Hitchcock’s film *The Lodger*, another boarder, modeled after the infamous serial killer Jack the Ripper, who could perhaps provide another (nefarious) role for Kant (and his Doppelgänger)—a prover-

bial Jekyll to his Hyde. For Cheetham also likens Kant's critical counter-disciplinary behaviour (insurgency?) to a plasmatic agent; a Massumian blob, and oddly, after Deleuze and Guatarri, a heterogenetic rhizome builder.

He argues that in this way, Kant is a subliminal figure, neither inside nor outside of space and time, "a Derridean supplement, a parergon in a perpetual process of self-definition" (7). The author's play with non-Euclidean tropes to describe Kant's relationship(s) to the visual arts and art history would be risible but for the depth of his research into the uses and abuses of the Kantian 'Critique' through two hundred years of aesthetic indoctrination. Each chapter informs and enriches our understanding of Kantian discourse as it has been subsumed within and re-contoured the visual arts and art history.

The book is structured into five chapters, the first functioning as an introduction, mapping out Cheetham's own intellectual provenance, and outlining his somewhat quixotic Derridean/Deleuzian approach (parergonal, plasmatics) to reception methodology, which could be loosely characterized as an attempt to think outside the frame but in the body. Chapter 2 details the use made of Kant's political writings by German-speaking artists and critics in Rome around 1800. His third chapter explores Kant's influence on the development of aesthetic theory as it pertains to the generative art-historical writing of Wöfflin, Panofsky, and other foundational figures. This chapter represents a Foucauldian genealogy or archeology of the intellectual authority legislated by Kant. Cheetham offers much evidence to support the reception of Kantian philosophy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the embedding of his aesthetic theory within proto-modernist and modernist discourse. He revisits and re-assesses the influence of Kant on the critical writing (strategic formalism) of Clement Greenberg.

Finally, for this writer the most fascinating chapter is "Kant's Skull: Portraits and the Image of Philosophy, c. 1790–199." It is perhaps misplaced in the book since it provides one of the more interesting tropes—phrenology—subtending Cheetham's thesis regarding "the practical implications of Kant's legacy" for contemporary artists and art historians. The book is richly illustrated and should provide arresting reading across the disciplines.

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*The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern.* By Carla Hesse. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001. xvi, 233 pages. \$35.00 US.

Subtly drawing the reader into her argument, Hesse opens this text with the case of a Parisian cook executed in 1793 for seditious speech. Mme Clere's story leads naturally to a discussion of the *poissarde* as a literary/political genre. More importantly, the *poissardes* offer an example of "literary transvestism." During the early years of the French Revolution, men adopted female

voices, ironically at a time when society feared *actual* female speech. With this opening, Hesse has spun the threads she will weave throughout her text. The example of the political *poissardes* reveals Hesse's fundamental theme: the question of female authorial voice.

The role of the *poissardes* reveals, too, the blurring of lines between art and life that is also at the heart of this work. Historiography has traditionally argued that the French Revolution excluded women from the public sphere. Drawing on a broad range of literature, Hesse challenges this view, arguing that 1789, in fact, "marked a dramatic and unprecedented moment of entry for women into public life" (38). Vigée-Lebrun's portrait, *Lady Folding a Letter*, serves as a compelling transitional device to reveal the self-creation inherent in the act of writing, allowing for women's entrance into the modern world and their participation in the public sphere in new ways. Statistical analysis of publication records appears to bear out Hesse's argument.

Nonetheless, despite the rise in publications, women were confronted by physiological and philosophical arguments that women do not have the capacity for "autonomous self-determination," hence they cannot or should not write (120). Hesse argues that the political culture of the republic exacerbated the question of women and writing. Not only were the lines blurred between art and life, but so also were the distinctions between public and private, person and author. If women were to "recivilize public discourse," they would do so through the writing of fiction.

We know that the eighteenth century gave birth to the novel and that women were its principal audience. Hesse introduces us to an exhaustive list of women who *produced* fiction. The "doubling of the self," inherent in self-representation as author, reclaimed the female authorial voice usurped at the beginning of the text by men speaking as *poissardes*. Turning the traditional dichotomy of male and female, public and private, on its head, Hesse argues that women authors used the sentimental novel to redefine the female sphere in positive ways. Through the sentimental novel, fiction became yet another channel for moral philosophy. Moreover, that which is female, private, emotional and intuitive becomes an expression of inner truth, in direct contrast to male, public, external "appearance." The recurring theme in French literature which focuses on the juxtaposition of the provinces to Paris, rural to urban, pure to corrupt, reappears under Hesse's pen in a new guise. Finally, that Hesse chooses to end with Simone de Beauvoir, and her own place in the long *durée* of female writing, casts the notion of woman as "other" in a new and positive light.

Hesse's work is rich in sources, drawn from a long tradition of female publishing. The extensive bibliography and list of publishers and their locations included in two appendices will be of use to students and scholars alike. Hesse is a skilful writer, and this is an elegantly structured text. Her approach to the question of female authorial voice might benefit from broadening the survey. Without denying the dramatic shifts of the eighteenth century, we should not forget that Christine de Pizan challenged male, written authority as early as the fifteenth century. Moreover, Hesse's argument is not

entirely new. A number of historians have addressed the importance of reading and writing to the creation of identity and the heightened sense of individualism we associate with the early modern period. This does not detract from Hesse's valuable contribution to a redefinition of public and private spheres in the eighteenth century.

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*Janeites: Austen's Disciples and Devotees*. Edited by Deidre Lynch. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000. 233 pages. \$17.95 US paper.

"A customary method of establishing one's credentials as a reader of Austen has been to regret that others simply will insist on liking her in inappropriate ways," writes Deidre Lynch in her Introduction to this collection of essays focused on the cultural history of the Janeite (7). Instead of "adjudicat[ing] between faithful and unfaithful readings" of Austen, these essays will ask "more productive" questions about the "record of adaptations, reviews, rewritings, and appreciations" of Austen over the last two centuries; such questions will address "the diverse frameworks within which audiences have claimed interpretive authority" over the novels; "the varying motives audiences have had for valuing the novels and for identifying with or repudiating Austen's example"; and "the divergent uses to which such alternative Austens have been put in the literary system and the culture at large" (5).

Although the Introduction claims to value all Austens equally, as interesting indications of what generations of readers have thought and how they have used Austen to represent their own preoccupations, it is clear which readers Lynch believes liked Austen in inappropriate ways. They are Lionel Trilling, D.W. Harding, and F.R. Leavis, as the following remarks make clear: "We cannot always count on ... [Austen's] rootedness in English Literature's Great Tradition" (13); "[Harding's] prerogative was to show that, in contradistinction to that [popular] audience, he knew better" (8). In the Introduction's conclusion, there is a displacement of Trilling's "exhortation to duty"—in which a reader of Austen "is required to make no mere literary judgement but a decision about his own character and personality, and about his relation to society and all of life" (20)—with a more comfortable attitude toward literature. Here is Lynch's alternative exhortation to Austen's readers: "let us substitute Miss Bates's description of a reader's love: 'such a pleasure to her—a letter from Jane—that she can never hear it enough!'" (20). (It should read "often enough"—Lynch misquotes the line.)

C.E. Brock's 1898 illustration for Chapter 19 (or Vol. 2, Ch. 1) of *Emma*, in which the heroine reads Jane's letter while Miss Bates looks on, serves as the cover image for *Janeites*, presumably to reinforce the idea that Austen's readers approach her novels as intimate letters addressed to them, and which



they read for pleasure, not for the purpose of judging either the novels or themselves. (The illustration, incidentally, is inaccurate, as Emma never actually reads the letter.) Yet to choose Miss Bates as the ideal reader of Austen suggests contradictory things about Lynch's stance toward the audience of her own book: either she counts herself and the other contributors among the Miss Bateses of the world, endlessly reading uncritically and speaking verbosely and foolishly, or she condescends to her readers, figuring the quintessential Janeite as Miss Bates, a silly member of the stereotyped group known as the "frilly bonnet brigade" (8), while reserving for the authors of this volume the privileged point of view of Emma Woodhouse, an imperfect reader, but a much more intelligent one than Miss Bates.

The authors of the essays in this collection are intelligent readers, and they demonstrate a wide range of historical knowledge about Austen's other readers. Claudia L. Johnson and Clara Tuite comment on homosexual readers, Barbara M. Benedict and William Galperin on Austen's earliest readers, Mary Ann O'Farrell on readers as friends, Katie Trumpener on readers who attempted to write as Austen did, and Mary A. Favret on American readers. It is not entirely clear why the last two essays—Roger Sales's "In Face of All the Servants: Spectators and Spies in Austen" and Susan Fraiman's "Jane Austen and Edward Said: Gender, Culture, and Imperialism"—are included: Lynch says it's because they "engage Austen's reception at the present moment" (19), yet as neither of them makes any attempt at cataloguing a range of contemporary responses, and no reasons are offered for why these two approaches are superior to other current Austen criticism, it's hard to see why they were chosen as representative samples. Sales's essay deals with film adaptations, especially the 1995 *Persuasion* (BBC/WGBH), and Fraiman's is a review essay, first published in *Critical Inquiry* in 1995, on Said's *Culture and Imperialism*.

It's hard to write the history of the present, however, and current versions of Jane Austen would be difficult to judge in a comprehensive way. The essays in *Janeites* are a useful and often fascinating introductory survey of the ways in which readers of Jane Austen have made her their friend, their enemy, or their ideological representative. The essays by O'Farrell, Favret, and Trumpener are particularly good. O'Farrell provides a thoughtful analysis of the parallel between descriptions of friendships in the novels and the idea of a friendship forged between Austen and her reader. Her use of examples from the novels enriches her discussion of "what is involved in construing authorship and readership as friendly activities" (47). Favret offers an illuminating history of how Jane Austen has often been read in America not as the quintessential novelist of "Englishness," but as a representative of "freedom and the pursuit of happiness" (168): she cites, for example, William Dean Howells's view of the "courage" and "independence" of Austen's realism, and his suggestion that her writing "allows modern Americans to gain 'a firmer hold upon our place in the world'" (170–71). Trumpener surveys novels reprinted by Virago Press in order to investigate the ways in which, "in the introductions and afterwords of the Virago Modern Classics, Austen appears

consistently as a figure who gives coherence to a tradition" (148), and her essay argues eloquently that these novels demonstrate that "Austen showed later women writers how to create transcendence from the quotidian, and how to create an aesthetic of their own" (160). But although some of the essayists in this volume are insightful readers of the history of Austen's fans and friends, the collection as a whole lacks an acknowledgement by its editor that the 'cultural-studies Jane' is also a version of Austen by writers who claim to "know better" than other readers.

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*The Unpleasant Subject: Sketches Around Hitler.* By Michael Thorpe. Toronto: TSAR Publications, 2001. 72 pages. \$14.95 paper.

This collection of ninety poems (a few are actually prose pieces) represents, their author tells us, the distillation of and reflection upon a two-year study of writings related to the Hitler era. The volume is divided into three subject groups: one concerns the "Führer" himself, another deals with his "Executives and Executioners," and the largest is on "Followers and Bystanders; Resisters, Sufferers." Michael Thorpe's purpose was "to compose a virtual narrative, a 'documentary poem' or poetic history, as comprehensive in scope as I could manage," of the Third Reich.

How is an historian to evaluate the project's success? The range of sources Thorpe has drawn upon for background is impressively broad. They include Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and *Table Talk*, memoirs or biographical materials concerning most of the leading Nazis and also several SS killers (Otto Ohlendorf, Franz Stangl, Alois Brunner), Holocaust survivor accounts (Primo Levi's is the best known), and testimony about relatively obscure contemporaries such as the Austrian "poet laureate" Josef Weinheber, who committed suicide in 1945 supposedly to atone for his support of the regime. Although Thorpe apologizes for not completing verses on Claus von Stauffenberg and Adam von Trott zu Solz, quite moving poems commemorate other Resistance figures: Hans and Sophie Scholl (the "White Rose" students), Helmut James von Moltke, and the enigmatic Kurt Gerstein, who transported zyklon B gas to Belzec camp in order to expose the genocide of the Jews. Even the experiences of some European peoples—the Russians, French and Dutch, but curiously not the Poles—under German occupation are at least briefly treated. So the period is indeed reasonably well covered in the book.

However, its worth must ultimately be judged by the quality of Thorpe's poems; and these are often superb. Take, for example, this pithy characterization of the writer who famously protested to the Propaganda Minister for not honouring his work by burning it:

"Burn Me Too"

May these words serve as upright epitaph  
for novelist Oskar Maria Graf. (52)

Or, contrastingly:

Concordat: Führer and Pontiff  
Both kept silence for dubious ends;  
each obsessively cleansed his hands. (16)

The function of the "puny, club-footed ... Doctor ... with his hate-sharp slogans" is accurately caught in "His Duality":

Apt to be played upon and filled,  
self-described instrument and vessel  
of the man whose myth he forged,  
this was the duality of Goebbels:  
both dummy and ventriloquist. (27)

And his master is rendered in "Health Food" thus:

Teetotal, vegetarian, advocate  
of the Roman legions' cereal diet,  
he mocked all "corpse-consumers"—  
though he gorged upon such fare  
in atrocious metaphor .... (10)

Longer stanzas allude to German cultural icons Wagner (48), Goethe (65), Schiller and Rilke (66), and their—sometimes bizarre—connections to Nazism. Of special interest to the ex-professor of English are the roles played by academics and by intellectuals like "Heidegger '33" (46), "who, to keep position or clutch power, sold their reason and their moral being":

Men of idea and principle  
eager for self-betrayal  
in what they wrote and taught—  
like Him who despised them, believing  
words could mean all or nothing. (71)

Thorpe's verse abounds in thoughtful juxtapositions ("Protective Custody' meant ... protected from any form of justice") and telling phrases: Baldur von Schirach was the "Misleader of Youth" (29, 36). My favourite, perhaps, is the "imaginary dialogue" of "Freud Meets Young Hitler" during "Vienna's golden autumn" (4), too extensive to quote here but a masterpiece of insight into two such different personalities.

Notwithstanding some minor inaccuracies and inadequacies in the author's explanatory notes (the Versailles Treaty was not "negotiated" by any Germans, "back-stabbers" or otherwise, and the "special work" of the Jewish *Sonderkommando* was precisely to remove dead bodies from the gas chambers), Michael Thorpe has added a new dimension to this grim subject.

Lawrence D. Stokes

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*Authority and Influence: Australian Literary Criticism 1950–2000*. Edited by Delys Bird, Robert Dixon, and Christopher Lee. St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 2001. xxxviii, 401 pages. \$30.00 Australian.

*Authority and Influence* represents an ambitious attempt to trace Australian literary criticism from 1950 to 2000 and to chart some of its more important and influential debates. Certainly an analysis of this period makes sense: by the 1950s there was perceived to be less of a need to justify the study of Australian literature, and an increasing interest in its value and complexity. *Authority and Influence* illustrates the immense vitality of Australian writing, and the questions it has raised.

What marks *Authority and Influence*, however, is that Delys Bird, Robert Dixon, and Christopher Lee have not chosen essays based on what might be considered their canonical position within the field. Rather, as indicated by the Introduction, the relevance of the eighty-seven essays is a consequence of how they came to "intervene polemically in debates, to assert new positions, or to demonstrate what a new Australian literary criticism might be" (xiv). Divided chronologically, and then subdivided into recurring themes, the collection attempts to trace the genealogy of some central questions. Thus issues of canonicity, the 'profession' of literary criticism, and the rise of theory and interdisciplinarity become the focus, and the literature discussed illustrates this. Academic feuds surface but are not focused on, and the very public debates over Helen Demidenko/Darville's *The Hand that Signed the Paper* and Helen Garner's quasi-fictional *The First Stone* during the 1990s receive some limited, but very necessary, coverage.

Bird, Dixon, and Lee's introductory essay admirably gives continuity to these seemingly disparate pieces and a justification for why they find these themes so pertinent. But it is also indicative of how *Authority and Influence* might be considered flawed. The Introduction states that *Authority and Influence* was "compiled with the express purpose of refocusing attention on the historical archive by bringing together a selection of key documents in Australian literary criticism" (xiii), and in this it is largely successful. However the massive amount of editing needed to reduce the articles to an appropriate length (most are five pages) is occasionally jarring, too focused on executing the editors' vision at the expense of the nuances of the original works. And

perhaps it is symptomatic of the paucity of similar anthologies that *Authority and Influence* is rushed and occasionally disjointed. The present volume feels inadequate, perhaps simply because its scope is too unwieldy.

However, while I remain unsure that *Authority and Influence* might not have been more successful as a book-length study, or perhaps a multi-volume work, I would suggest that that the project succeeds within its declared limits, and is undoubtedly a good introduction. In selectively and subjectively charting the development of contemporary Australian literary criticism, and the genealogies of some of its debates, Bird, Dixon, and Lee have taken the first step in what will hopefully be part of a much larger continuum.

Ben Authers

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