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The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making by Adrian Johns. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998. Pp. xxi + 753. \$40.00 cloth.

This massive volume melds two comparatively recent fields of inquiry, science studies and book history, in order to investigate the early modern contexts from which experimental science emerged. Adrian Johns's study thus has two dimensions. On the one hand, it is concerned with the nature of print culture and, on the other, with the cultural construction of natural science in the context of early print culture. As a title, then, *The Nature of the Book* can be read either as referring to the nature of books or to physical nature as constructed in and through books. It should be noted, too, that the title evokes in reversed form the familiar trope of the "book of nature."

The point of departure for Johns's study is Elizabeth L. Eisenstein's monumental *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1979). Johns singles out Eisenstein's argument that printing technology made experimental science possible because of the fixity and uniformity of print as opposed to script. Examining a chart in a printed star catalogue, two scholars separated by a thousand miles could nevertheless exchange comments on the identical image and thereby contribute to the advancement of knowledge. For Johns, however, the crucial issue is not fixity but credit—that is, the degree to which a book might be granted credibility. Johns correctly remarks that early modern hand-made books were not nearly so uniform as we, accustomed to industrialized printing, might suppose. Moreover, he also stresses the destabilizing effects of book piracy, which played, he argues, a much more central and more complex role in the early modern book trade than has generally been acknowledged. Piracy, he argues, had "epistemic as well as economic implications." Because of the wide circulation of pirated editions—and because of the radical uncertainty about what it meant to say that a book was "pirated"—readers could not automatically credit a book simply because it was printed. Early modern printed texts had to be established as trustworthy through difficult social negotiations conducted in particular historical circumstances and in the context of specific practices and conflicts. The sources both of print culture and of experimental science, Johns maintains, are to be sought in "civility" as much as in technology.

Johns's critique of Eisenstein, then, is at heart an accusation that she is guilty of technological determinism—that is, of granting excessive agency to technology and not taking into account the extent to which the significance of technology is culturally constructed. Opinions will differ as to the degree to which Eisenstein's study is to be faulted for technological determinism, but certainly Johns's emphasis on social process is a welcome corrective to any temptation to oversimplification in discussions of historical agency. "Fixity,"

however, the key issue on which Johns focuses his quarrel with Eisenstein, is by no means the only characteristic of print culture with which Eisenstein deals. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* is also concerned with the vast increase in the availability of books that printing made possible. Moreover, Eisenstein considers the effects of printing technology on humanism and religion as well as on the study of nature, whereas Johns's argument is limited to experimental science and, unlike hers, is for the most part restricted to England.

The comparative narrowness of *The Nature of the Book* follows from Johns's orientation to his subject. Writing some two decades after Eisenstein and in a postmodern intellectual climate, Johns emphasizes the local and the particular. He stresses the embodiment of cultural processes in specific personalities located in specific contexts and informed by specific social structures. For Johns there really is no such thing as print culture; rather there are many print cultures, each interestingly different from the other. Naturally, then, he is drawn to local history. Johns's orientation reveals itself, too, in his methodology. He works very little with statistics or other abstractions; instead his characteristic method of demonstration is to tell a story. Thus many of his discussions begin with anecdotes, as, for example, the story of the Rev. William Mewe's glass beehive which allowed an observer to study the "stately City of the Bees," or the story of how the young Robert Boyle sought to cure the effects of a fever by reading the adventures of Amadis de Gaule and wound up with a permanent "Habitue of Raving." Moreover, several chapters are themselves extended stories centered on specific individuals such as that dealing with the astronomer John Flamsteed and his quarrels with Edmund Halley and Isaac Newton.

The wealth of stories in this big book is one of its attractive features, but there is also a certain categorical disjunction between the general assertions that Johns makes and the stories he tells. Johns's recounting—drawn from Francis Kirkman's *The Unlucky Citizen Experimentally Described* (1672)—of how one young man started as a book pirate and became a great bookseller effectively illustrates practices of piracy in the seventeenth century, but I'm not sure that it also establishes that piracy had "epistemic" as well as economic implications. Moreover, being complex and circumstantial, and sometimes very long, the stories Johns tells tend to take on a life of their own, leading us a distance from the main line of his book's argument.

The longest continuous narrative in the book is the story of the printer John Streater and the embittered ex-Cavalier Richard Atkyns and their struggle with the Stationers' Company over Atkyns's claim to hold the exclusive right to publish law books. In the course of this tale, which is as long as some novels, we learn about Streater's republican sympathies during the Civil War and then about his political reversal in the Restoration when, as a printer of

law books, he became involved with Atkyns, a passionate espouser of the royal prerogative. This leads to a discussion of Atkyns's *The Original and Growth of Printing* (1664), which provided a royalist history of printing in England, tracing it to one Frederick Corsalis, in order to establish the legitimacy of printing patents such as that claimed by himself. The Stationers' Company countered with a Whiggish history centered on William Caxton from which it followed that the Crown had no right to grant such a monopoly. After much litigation, Atkyns won confirmation of his monopoly in the House of Lords. Still, it was ultimately Caxton, not Corsallis, who was ratified as the author of English printing, just as, despite other contenders, Johann Gutenberg was ultimately ratified as the author of printing itself. Johns remarks that, along with the specification of Gutenberg and Caxton as the authors of printing, the idea was born that the invention of printing constituted a revolution in human affairs. "With the crystallization of certainty in its inventors came a simultaneous crystallization of certainty in early print itself. And with that came the printing revolution" (378). Thus Eisenstein's printing revolution was in fact a retrospective creation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Moreover, the earliest clear manifestations of her view of print culture as a contributor to the advancement of science came in the mid-eighteenth century along with the new Enlightenment sense of progress. Before then printing was not necessarily regarded as a good thing.

The Streater-Atkyns narrative is a nest of stories within stories, digressions within digressions; nonetheless it is marvelous stuff, and, as any reader of Pope and Swift can confirm, Johns is quite right that printing was not necessarily conceived as a positive force in the early modern period. But to demonstrate that the concept of a printing revolution was culturally constructed, as of course it was, is not also to demonstrate that the revolution did not occur. I am not sure whether Johns believes that his revelation somehow defeats Eisenstein, but it doesn't. The flood of printed books that entered into circulation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did, as Eisenstein argues, change the world. Moreover, it is one thing to show that a historical concept such as the printing revolution was culturally constructed; it is quite another to claim that scientific knowledge has the same status as an historical concept. I do not know whether Johns does claim this—and that I do not know is characteristic of the philosophical slipperiness of his story-telling method—but in any case it is not the philosophical dimension of *The Nature of the Book* on which I feel most qualified to comment. What interests me most are Johns's discussions of early modern print culture. Two early chapters in particular are worth mentioning. One, entitled "Literary Life," traces the practices of several interlocking domains in early modern London: printing house, bookshop, city square, courtroom, and coffee house. This chapter is an excellent compilation of fine-grained information, some of it familiar, but

some of it fresh, such as Johns's discussion of the interplay between home and shop in the booksellers' houses. It is followed by a chapter on the Stationers' Company in which Johns explores company practices as a mode of "disciplining the domains of print"—that is, of developing the structures of civility such as the notion of "copy," which made it possible to grant books credibility. Taking something of an anthropological approach, Johns emphasizes the hierarchical nature of the Stationers' Company and considers its practices of "propriety—the term, as Johns uses it, incorporates both upright behavior and property—as a way of looking at the world. One particularly interesting section analyzes Stationers' Hall and suggests that in design the hall compound was a version of an urban castle, a structure designed not so much for sieges as for administrative tasks. The castle design of the hall was indicative of the company's role as a center of authority.

Taken together, the two chapters devoted specifically to the book trade in early modern England amount to a substantial monograph that might be recommended reading for anyone interested in the subject. They are followed by the long narrative section devoted to Streater and Atkyns, which leads in turn to a chapter on early modern notions of reading and their relationship to the status of claims about knowledge and authority. This is followed by a chapter on the Royal Society and its conventions for regulating credit, and finally by the chapter devoted to Flamsteed's struggles, which serves as an extended example of "how crucial it could be for aspirant providers of authoritative natural knowledge to master the domains of print" (621).

Reading Johns's study, I was repeatedly struck by continuities between the early modern world he describes and the present day. For example, as the recent *Armistad* copyright infringement case suggests, "piracy" is still a problematic and fluid matter, one that today is generally adjudicated in a settlement conference or in a federal court. Moreover, the character of a publisher is still important in the establishment of a book's credit. Johns's conclusion acknowledges that practices of sociability and civility are still at play in the establishment of authoritative knowledge, but points out that our practices differ from those of the early modern period. This is clearly true; the high status of Johns's publisher is founded on practices very different from those underpinning the upright character of an early modern bookseller. Still, that Chicago is the publisher of *The Nature of the Book* enhances its credit and will encourage many scholars, and perhaps even some general readers, to buy it. So will the price; at \$40.00 in hardback this huge book is a bargain.

But how many buyers will actually read it all the way through? To what degree will its credibility rest on the attractiveness in some circles of its general thesis about the cultural construction of knowledge combined with the sense of authority conveyed by its enormous mass? I tried to weigh *The Nature of the Book* but found that it exceeded the capacity of my postal scale, as did my copy of *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*. Therefore I fell back on

calculating length in words. My rough estimate is that *The Nature of the Book* runs 319,000 words—or 400 words longer than *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, which I calculate at 318,600 words. Perhaps the conclusion one can draw is that it takes a big book to challenge a big book. In any event, my guess is that, read or unread, size does count in the construction of credit. This is a subject that Johns does not discuss.

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A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1999. Pp. xiii + 449. \$49.95 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

There was a time not too long ago when “post colonial criticism” seemed the harbinger of a new ethical framework in western cultural critique. Only four years ago, the “postcolonial” perspective in literary, anthropological, and political analyses seemed to be the emergent regime of truth. For a short while, “postcolonial critics,” as purveyors of a seemingly new ethic of resistance, were hot commodities in MLA job lists, at Triple A meetings, in high theory journals, and the various academic conference circuits (the present reviewer was himself hired to teach “postcolonial perspectives on Victorian studies”). It is an indication of the vagaries of intellectual fashion today that critics who once styled themselves “postcolonial critics” (I, perhaps presumptuously, include myself in this category) cannot take too much distance from that very intellectual formation that enabled them, and gave them a certain visibility. It would seem that the postcolonial sun is setting, or better, being eclipsed.

And perhaps intellectual fashion is not solely to blame for this eclipse. In the post-Soviet New World order, politics and economics have come together in unprecedented ways through a globalized techno-informational culturalism: “Third World cultures,” the stock in trade of much postcolonial criticism in the North, have become valuable fetishes in the ritualistic expropriation of the South by globalized capital. The mantra “democracy, liberalization, and human rights” seals the deal in the neat repackaging of “non-western cultures” in “development” under the austere patronage of the World Bank and the IMF. By now this is a familiar tale, but the question that more and more critics are asking is: what is the relationship between these global flows in capital, cultures, migrants, and information and the rise of postcolonial criticism in the West? Has the critique of western imperialism in colonial discourse analysis

somehow foreclosed the very ethical moment that it seemed to herald? What has become of the persistent critique that postcolonial studies launched in the name of the Other?

The short answer is that the Other has become a different-deferred version of the Same. Thus the situation is precarious. And from the multi-disciplinary wilderness comes the cry of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, miming another's voice: "Be careful." The current moment of postcolonial studies, when "telecommunicative informatics taps the Native Informant directly in the name of indigenous knowledge" (ix), calls for "a persistent dredging operation" (1): an ironic, passionate vigilance "to acknowledge a responsibility toward the trace of the other, not to mention toward other struggles" (198). Charting her move "from colonial discourse studies to transnational cultural studies," Spivak "takes" the perspective of the "native informant": "a name for that mark of expulsion from the name of Man—a mark crossing out the impossibility of the ethical relation" (6). For those who have been charmed, frustrated, and prodded by her work, it will come as no surprise that for Spivak the native informant's perspective is (im)possible. Reading her latest work, I am inclined to believe that Spivak is extending to the implied reader an invitation to experience this (im)possibility as the "moving ground" (she is drawing on Foucault here) of a criticism yet to come.

The text is neatly divided into four topics (and one short, brilliant appendix on deconstruction): Philosophy, Literature, History, Culture. Although most of the different sections of the chapters are previously published pieces, (sometimes nominally) reedited in terms of the general argument of the book, a continuous thread of analysis is provided by the almost always provocative footnotes, which get progressively "longer, more narrative, pushing into the text" (2n). Spivak, following the "impossible model" undertaken by Jacques Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington in *Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), puts in play a structure of "invagination" between footnote and text, one which threatens the stability of both. As if partaking in this essential instability, the four chapters seem to bleed into one another: philosophy and culture open on to literature and history without clear disciplinary limitations (clearly a strength of the book). Thus, Spivak is able to chart the foreclosure of the native informant (as Aboriginal) in works of Kant and Hegel; and through a philosophically minded literary criticism (itself parasitic on Kant and Hegel), she marks the "vicissitudes of the native informant as figure in literary representation" (112); in a rewriting of her famous "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak opens the "text-ile" of history and considers the possibility of a haunting that enables her to tell the epistemic story of imperialism as one of "a series of interruptions, a repeated tearing of time that cannot be sutured" (208); and, finally, reweaving the social text of globalization as our "vanishing present," she graphs the violences that link the contempo-

rary high fashion textile industry to the exploitation of child labor in the South. That, briefly and too schematically, is Spivak's itinerary in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*.

But, through all this dazzling brilliance, what is Spivak's project? How can we situate it in today's globalized circuits of power, capital, labor, and knowledge? Let us attempt an "impossible necessity": to define (some of) Spivak's keywords: postcolonial reason, native informant, (im)possibility. She writes, "I have attempted to imagine or construct (im)possible practices, re-constellated classics into implausible and impertinent readings for the sake of disciplinary critique, applauded gestures that could not lead to a model for action, made an effort, indeed, to take a distance from the principle of reason from within, without inclining toward irrationalism: obtuse angling" (336). To take a distance from the principle of reason from within: Spivak is still one of the most imaginative and nuanced critics of Jacques Derrida. Throughout the text, mostly in the footnotes, Spivak shows how "deconstruction can serve reading," how it can teach us to use a text's poison/cure (pharmakon) in strategic ways, setting to work the text's own resources in the service of an (always complicitous) displacement. But Spivak is best known for her at once cautious and wild extension, revision, and application of Derrida's philosophical insights in her readings of politics, economics, history, and culture—and this will be, I think, the long-term value of many of the analyses in *Critique*.

Given this wild deconstruction, what is "postcolonial reason" and what is Spivak's critique of it? One of Spivak's central concerns in this her most sustained work is to counter the "triumphalism" of the metropolitan, Third World hybrid intellectual (exactly who she has in mind is unclear). She seems to be arguing that postcolonial criticism "inadvertently legitimizes the 'pure' by reversal" (65), and thus willy-nilly presents "the ethics of alterity as a politics of identity." In other words, instead of taking a distance from the principle of Enlightenment reason from within, postcolonial criticism, disguised in the text-ile of a radical chic given over to identitarian thought, helps to consolidate western global hegemony. "The latter doubtless makes an effort to interiorize this difference, to master it, . . . by affecting itself with it" (Derrida, "The Ends of Man," quoted in Spivak 17). As Spivak writes,

The current mood, in the radical fringe of humanistic Northern pedagogy, of uncritical enthusiasm for the Third World makes a demand upon the inhabitant of that Third World to speak up as an authentic ethnic fully representative of his or her tradition. This demand in principle ignores an open secret: that an ethnicity untroubled by the vicissitudes of history and neatly accessible as an object of investigation is a confection to which the disciplinary pieties of the anthropologist, the

intellectual curiosity of the early colonials and European scholars partly inspired by them, as well as the indigenous elite nationalists, by way of the culture of imperialism, contributed their labors, and the (proper) object (of investigation) is therefore “lost.” (60)

Who is this (proper) lost object? All the textual evidence would seem to indicate the native informant. My sense is that for Spivak the native informant is less subject-position than a particular strategic perspective, a kind of deconstructive lever through which questions of radical alterity, responsibility, and persistent critique can be constantly re-posed. For Spivak responsibility lies in alterity, in the call of the other. And yet it would seem that this other is also a living, struggling person, or sometimes a certain type of person. As she writes, “Rather than have ‘dinosaurs’ and ‘mountains’ as the name of radical alterity . . . , let us, as the postcolonial subject is being appropriated into globality, follow the impossible perspective of the native informant and place an always prior agency there instead of in the self. This may move capital toward socialism” (n. 355). A stunning claim, but not without its share of problems. For instance: if for Spivak deconstruction cannot give off a politics (upon which she insists), how can following “the impossible perspective of the native informant” move “capital toward socialism”? Clearly for Spivak the impossible perspective is also a guide for politics, but if it is impossible will the move toward socialism be equally so? Further, is the native informant the new name of radical alterity, and if so does it name a subject position? She boldly declares that the “typecase of the foreclosed native informant today is the poorest woman in the South” (6). To my mind, this entire problematic revolves around the question of (im)possibility in Spivak’s project. Here, as elsewhere, she seems to be in close conversation with a certain Derrida. As she writes in her brilliant but too brief appendix,

Now such imponderables as justice and ethics can be seen as “experiences of the impossible”: experiences of radical alterity. As such, they are undeconstructible, for to open them to deconstruction is to open them to the law of *différance*. Decisions based on such experiences involve aporias, or non-passages. . . . Aporias are known in the experience of being passed through although they are non-passages: they are thus disclosed in effacement, thus experience of the impossible. Formalization is achieved by passing through or “solving” aporias, treating them as practical logical problems. In the second phase of deconstruction, then, formalizations can therefore be seen as a halfway house toward the open end of a “setting to work.” (426-27)

If the foreclosed native informant today is the poorest woman in the South she is also for Spivak the occasion of an *aporia*, and a responsible consideration of her figure and figuration will be an experience of the impossible. It is this experience of thinking the laboring woman of the South that would render uncanny the too easy appropriation of "Third World culture" in global capital today.

I cannot say how successful Spivak is in this project; perhaps time will tell. But reading her over the years, I am still learning to hear Spivak's cry as one of vigilance, of a certain warning against getting too comfortable. Reading her carefully, critically, generously, we can never lose sight of the horizon of alterity that must haunt all projects of responsible criticism.

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Motives for Metaphor: Literacy, Curriculum Reform, and the Teaching of English by James E. Seitz. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999. Pp. xii + 244. \$19.95.

In *Motives for Metaphor: Literacy, Curriculum Reform, and the Teaching of English* James Seitz takes as his project the incorporation of "motive" into current discussions of the English curriculum. Seitz follows a strategy of indirection to develop his argument concerning "motive," and so this wide-ranging book includes a contrastive reading of a poem, an examination of 250 years of textbook and handbook presentations of "metaphor," a survey of and a contribution to the contemporary discussion of metaphor, accounts of *aporias* faced when teaching undergraduates, and a commentary on a set of familiar controversies within the academy. Given the indirectness of the book's argument concerning "motive," it seems best to proceed by first pausing on the poem that is invoked as giving the project its direction, to then articulate that project's announced division into a part on "Paradox" and one on "Possibility," and to conclude by focusing attention on the subtitle: "Literacy, Curriculum Reform, and the Teaching of English."

The book takes its title from Wallace Stevens's poem "The Motive for Metaphor." For Seitz the important stanza invokes Stevens's cold look at Keat's night world:

The obscure moon lighting an obscure world
Of things that would never be quite expressed,
Where you yourself were never quite yourself
And did not want or have to be.

(2)

The motive for metaphor, the poem then suggests, is bound up with “[d]esiring the exhilaration of changes” made possible by experimenting with figurative language. Seitz frames this desire through contrasting readings. On the one hand, the poem’s speaker could be finding solace in this realm “Where you yourself are never quite yourself,” but on the other hand, the poem can be read as taking a bit more distance from its speaker so as to show him as one “shrinking from / The weight of primary noon,” and so, by the equivocations of metaphor, refusing to bear the burdens of explicitness. Seitz concludes his discussion of these readings with this comment: “The value of these contrastive readings comes not so much from one or the other as from holding the two of them in productive tension—the very form of tension I hope to sustain throughout this book” (3). This reading of Stevens may be considered a part of Seitz’s method as a writer. His is not a book about poetry, and yet a canonical poet is consulted for the distinction that structures the book. The indulgent and the constructive aspects of metaphor’s power that Seitz finds named by Stevens’s poem become the two parts of *Motives for Metaphor*: “Paradox” and “Possibility.”

The book’s first part, “Paradox,” begins with a reading of the handbook tradition concerning metaphor. In this reading, the “two standard steps in textbook commentary on metaphor” are isolated (31). If the first “is to offer approval so abbreviated that it barely has the chance to register, then the second is to offer a somber, and usually more elaborate, warning whose message can hardly be missed: *metaphor is dangerous*” (31, original emphasis). As the handbooks insist, metaphor can cause those who use it to wander away from consensus modes of expression and into the supposed abyss of the idiosyncratic. Seitz concurs with the tradition that recognizes metaphor as potentially (to use the title of Part One’s first chapter) an “Aberrant Figure.” He argues, though, that while the dangers of strained metaphors are real they are overblown. In consequence he thinks that excessive caution has characterized instruction in figurative language. He thinks we might be more ambitious. I will return to this point.

Another paradox of metaphor that Seitz develops is that, as a student-deployed term, it can be used toward the end of producing impoverished readings, and further, this use of metaphor is one that students frequently understand themselves to have been taught. Seitz is particularly strong when writing about instances in his own teaching that have baffled and incited him. He writes, for example, of a course in Adolescent Literature he taught to future high school teachers. The drama of cultural reproduction is palpably present as Seitz describes working with these students who would soon be teaching. I will relate in some detail the few pages of the book which center on a particular incident because I think they represent his thinking at its most provocative.

He had placed students in groups and had asked them to attend to Robert Frost's forty-two line visionary poem "After Apple-Picking" with some of the terms they had used to read short stories (plot, character, narrative tone, implied author). "My objective," Seitz reports, "was to insist that students focus on the supposedly trivial matter of *what is happening* in the poem before they leapt to the supposedly more substantive issue of *what it means*" (62). The class became instructively disastrous when some students, finding unrewarding Seitz's directions for bringing their attention to bear on "what is happening in the poem," proposed a rogue reading. They assigned discrete images in "After Apple-Picking" conventional valences which they then used as narrative stepping stones to produce the poem as a vapid homily. This reading was of course in and of itself not a disaster, but a possible beginning. But when Seitz began to ask about grammatical and syntactical elements that made the students' reading hard to sustain as a considered response to the whole of the poem, "the group seemed more wounded than enlightened by my response to their work" (66). At one point in the discussion, a student objected to Seitz's objections by saying, "I mean, you can't read the poem as if he's *literally* talking about apple-picking, can you? If you do, then there's nothing to get from it. To read a poem you have to read for metaphor" (64).

Seitz's commentary makes this exchange intriguing by recognizing that this student has a theory of metaphor, and he further notes that more sophisticated versions of a substitution theory circulate freely in the most advanced discussions of the figure. Further, in attempting to take responsibility for his position as a teacher, he does the work of realizing that the trump cards he was able to play on the students' reading failed to have, at least in any honorific sense of the term, a pedagogic effect. The students' use of the term "metaphor," and Seitz's inability to turn them from it, illustrates again the potential of the figure to both subvert and promote understanding. Perhaps this double-edgedness of metaphor is nowhere more apparent than in college English classes. Yet this is something to which attention has not been directed, Seitz argues, because of metaphor's supposed status as a term of basic literacy. He lists refrains from faculty discussions: "If my students could *simply* identify a figure of speech . . ."; 'If I could know that *at least* my students have been told what a metaphor is . . .'; 'If these students *just* had a sense of the difference between the metaphorical and the literal'"—such complaints, Seitz argues, are attempts to wish away the pervasiveness of metaphor and the consequences of figurality which, at other disciplinary moments, are accepted as critical commonplaces (23, original emphasis).

Thinking through the After-Apple-Picking incident Seitz is led to the realization that the critical reading of metaphor he had attempted to promote required of his students a sense of purpose, a motive, which they had no way

to imagine as being needed. In what I read as the book's most provocative moment, Seitz poses the question of what is involved in pedagogically reproducing motives for metaphor:

My question, ultimately, is this: If "reading for metaphor" inevitably requires a leap of faith—an act of inference that cannot be fully substantiated by the text—then how are teachers of English to pass along their "discipline" (by which I mean both the academic enterprise they represent and the interpretive restraint they presumably display) as readers to their students? (74)

In the second of the book's two parts, "Possibilities," Seitz develops his ultimate question through readings of Samuel Levin, Italo Calvino, Roland Barthes, and some theorists of persona. He then makes some notes toward a pedagogy of motive, one that could be advanced in terms of his ultimate question concerning the reproduction of interpretive restraint and disciplinary power. Governing these discussions is a proposal. Seitz would have students in composition and literature classes write fiction, including its most advanced forms: meta-fictional narratives, juxtapositional meditations, fragmentary memoirs, first-person constructions in which the fictive persona muses on its own making. Seitz thinks two good things would happen if student writers became involved in constructing fictive personae. First, by making assignments that invite students into "obscure worlds . . . where you yourself are never quite yourself," he thinks that the question of "how both to accept and resist, to enter and withdraw from, the persuasive force of texts"—that is, the question of motives in reading and writing—would be made more visible and more vital (195). Second, he suggests that treating literary and student texts "as writing"—that is, as in principle the same kind of effort—would demystify literature so that it would not so readily cue the blind interpretive leaps toward conventionality such as were made by the students reading "After Apple-Picking." Students who have been asked to do fiction in the context of studying literature, Seitz argues, are more likely as readers to be attuned to what fiction can and does do. In class discussions of student fiction written in response to the same assignment a crucial fact is likely to become apparent: fiction can fail to achieve its imaginative goals, and it can set imaginative goals that don't deserve to be achieved.

Were fiction writing to be taken up across the English Studies curriculum then the present programmatic division of labor would have to change and the profession's conception of literacy would have to become more capacious. Seitz makes these points, so in this loose sense the book makes good on its subtitle's promise to be about "Literacy, Curriculum Reform, and the Teaching of English." One is left with the sense, however, that the book is in no strong

way about “literacy” or “curriculum reform.” These rubrics are invoked not explored. To my mind the cloak of curriculum reform, in particular, does not fit easily on the figure of inquiry cut by this book. But Seitz takes a position which addresses this objection. In discussing the teaching of argumentation he suggests that it should be taught as an art of borrowing terms from the audience addressed. The best arguments, in this view, are the most generous arguments—and not the ones that make the tightest cases. Clearly intellectual generosity is a goal of this book as it sets about borrowing from and accommodating itself to the roughly twenty tutelary figures who fund its argument. The Epilogue, titled “Toward a Metaphoric Curriculum” is then less a tying together than a winding down. It would be unfair to say that it is not a book about the terms listed in its subtitle: “Literacy, Curriculum Reform, and the Teaching of English,” but the first two of these terms are not explored as terms with a specific institutional purchase and a relevant critical history. *Motives for Metaphor* is, however, a careful consideration of the hazards and benefits of asking students to attend to their motives for metaphor by writing versions of the verbal art they are asked to study. It also introduces the term “motive” as one that deserves further consideration by those who make it their business to work with students on imaginative texts.

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Victorian Sexual Dissidence edited by Richard Dellamora. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999. Pp. viii + 329. \$50.00 cloth; \$20.00 paper.

Some of the most eloquent silences in *Victorian Sexual Dissidence* are those not of sexual transgression but of critical omission: the surprisingly muted presences of both Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Michel Foucault. The substantial attention that Richard Dellamora devotes to each critic in his introduction only underscores their surprisingly peripheral role in the vast bulk of the collection, with each figuring centrally in only one of the dozen essays—Foucault serving merely as one of Regenia Gagnier’s exhibits of how *not* to analyze “the hedonics of modern consumer culture” (134). Of course this relative silence is in part testimony to the foundational presence of Sedgwick and Foucault in so much literary and cultural study of sexuality. But it also signals an important shift of emphasis in that study, away from a preoccupation with homophobia and toward what Dellamora calls the “affirmative aspects of cultural dissidence” (10)—a mode of engagement signaled by the title of the volume,

which echoes the influential work of Jonathan Dollimore. In Foucauldian terms, the volume moves away from Volume One of the *History of Sexuality* to take up the broad concerns of the later volumes: the coercive, disciplinary force of sexual taxonomies is less prominent than are varieties of sexual experience and self-understanding defined in resistance to that force. With this revision comes an emphasis on the fluidity of late-Victorian sexual categories and experience—an emphasis that helps to explain why this epoch has been so prominent in recent reflection on sexuality. The result is a collection of remarkably consistent quality and suggestive but unforced coherence, which offers rewarding examples of both historical recovery and critical method.

As an essay in method, the volume displays a provocative impatience with the familiar binaries of sexual transgression. Much recent criticism, for example, has been eager to believe that Victorian invocations of “effeminacy” are clear insinuations of homosexuality. But this association becomes clear only near the end of the century (as Alan Sinfield has pointedly argued) when it displaces a long-standing designation of insufficiently regulated desire (a usage ultimately derived, as Linda Dowling has shown, from classical republicanism). While Sinfield associates this conceptual and rhetorical shift with the trials of Wilde, Thais Morgan here suggests a potent indeterminacy in “effeminacy” as early as 1871, when the term figures centrally in Robert Buchanan’s “fleshly school” attack on Rossetti and Swinburne. As the very fluidity of the term made it an especially versatile rhetorical weapon, it also accommodated a momentous shift from discourses of gender deviance to those of sexual dissidence. In a related essay on genius and sexuality in George Du Maurier’s novels and caricatures, Dennis Denisoff notes how Du Maurier’s representations of the dandy-aesthete situate “effeminacy” within the shifting economics of taste and artistic production, and thereby prompt attention to the complex but never comfortable distinctions between social marginality and sexual deviance. Initially stigmatizing a vulgarity associated with the commodification of art and connoisseurship, Du Maurier’s aesthetes come to suggest a more unsettling realm of sexual possibility and threat, an eroticism that occasionally—as in *Trilby*—also becomes a marker of possible genius.

Eric Haralson takes up another crucial indeterminacy in Victorian sexuality in his essay “The Elusive Queerness of Henry James’s ‘Queer Comrade,’” which focuses on Gabriel Nash of *The Tragic Muse*. Haralson explores the late-Victorian pursuit of elusive sexuality alongside the sexualizing of elusiveness itself—a conjunction captured in his canny reading of James’s “The Author of ‘Beltraffio.’” In this story—famously based on the marriage of John Addington Symonds but written (James insisted) without knowledge of Symonds’s homosexuality—James’s rendering of an unspecified transgression, and subsequent recognition of the significance attached to it by initiates, registers both “the elaborate epistemology of such men and the delicate folkways of

Victorian homosociality" (195). What might seem an evasive discretion became an occasion for James (prodded by Edmund Gosse) to recognize—and in a sense, to confess—an open secret that he had not fully grasped. As the story suggests the elusiveness to late Victorians of even so "obvious" a queerness as Symonds's, it also suggests how a figure such as Gabriel Nash could incarnate sexual dissidence most suggestively through just such elusiveness, by a paradoxically ostentatious resistance to representation: "the best tactic for queer comrades was to keep the body of their text private by keeping it lively and elusive, 'conspicuously . . . draped' in the 'amplitude of costume' that is style" (205).

Reconfigurations of feminine sexuality emerge in rethinking of the sexual politics of aestheticism, which focus on women not only as objects of desire but as desiring writers. The fascinating, still neglected Vernon Lee is prominent in several essays as a figure who eludes familiar taxonomies, complicating, as Kathy Psomiades puts it, "any easy opposition between liberatory and conservative aestheticisms," and bringing home that "sexual dissidence takes many, sometimes contradictory, forms" (21–22). Lee's marked tendency in her works and life to "intellectualize" her passionate attraction to other women, Psomiades contends, is "less a denial of sexuality than a sexual style" (30). As Lee formulates her "physiological aesthetics" in large part through the contemplation of other women's bodily responses to art, her responsiveness to the beauty of women informs a "medicalization of the aesthetic" anticipating the criticism of I. A. Richards. Though perhaps not as politically unsettling as Psomiades suggests, this conjunction certainly complicates received wisdom about the genealogy of modernism. In a broader reconsideration, "Greek Maenads, Victorian Spinsters," Yopie Prins explores the place of women within Victorian Hellenism, arguing that, "like their male counterparts, they discovered in ancient Greek a new language of desire" (44). Prins deftly analyzes Pater's role as a mediator, particularly of Euripides's *Bacchae*, for Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper (aunt and niece as well as lovers who wrote together as "Michael Field") and for the Cambridge classicist Jane Harrison. All of these women, Prins argues, experienced in the Bacchic cry a power to "project and embody multiple relations," to offer new models for feminine desire and society that Harrison realized with special richness in her life at Cambridge (67). "Pater's wayward daughters" thus call attention to a neglected variety of "queer tutelage": on the model of Sedgwick's suggestive notion of the "avunculate" as a space and agency of deviant or dissident acculturation, Prins offers the further, equally provocative possibility of "a non-avuncular 'tantulate'" (47).

Martha Vicinus brings together Vernon Lee and Michael Field, as well as the homosocial and lesbian continuums, in her essay (previously published) on the adolescent boy as "fin-de-siecle femme fatale," an icon central to both

homosexual and lesbian writing. “This handsome liminal creature could absorb and reflect a variety of sexual desires and emotional needs,” Vicinus suggests (83), serving as an object of desire, an image of freedom, and “action without responsibility” (85), but also as an emblem of transience and foreboding, shadowed by a violence that “metaphorically expresses the socially deviant desire and demonstrates its feared outcome” (84–85). The fin-de-siècle boy returns *en plein air* in Julia Saville’s “The Romance of Boys Bathing,” which analyzes the paintings of Henry Tuke as a realm in which an evocative homoeroticism—“romance” in Patricia Parker’s sense of a seductive deferral or suspension of narrative progress—was reconciled with a Victorian aesthetic of athletic manliness (256).

Nearly all of the essays in the volume display a densely-textured attentiveness to social and cultural contexts; they recognize that the “discourse” of sexuality in any epoch exists in and as a variety of distinctive, sometimes conflicting languages, each with its own rhetorics, occasions, and decorums. They make plain, in short, how much one needs to know to write well on this subject. The wide-ranging and beautifully-deployed erudition of Prins’s essay (perhaps the single most rewarding contribution) underscores the brittleness of efforts to recover sexual dissidence through close reading alone. Oliver Buckton, for example, bracingly challenges the appropriation of Wilde “for contemporary agendas of sexual and textual politics” (171), but he does so through a de Manian reading of *De Profundis* as a work which “deconstructs the singularity of the autobiographical subject” (186). The problem with this essentially formalist strategy is that it yields the same result for *all* autobiographical representation—indeed, for all literary representation. It thus contests the availability of *any* historical figure for any form of political identification, leaving us no basis for explaining why the Wildean subject might offer a more compelling model of “antihomophobic critique” than, say, the Rousseauian.

The main weakness of the volume as a study of Victorian sexual dissidence, however, is a byproduct of its strengths. The fascinating fluidity of late-Victorian sexual categories, and their often surprising bearings on the genealogy of modernism, crowds aside the earlier part of the period; we hear almost nothing of Victorian culture before the 1860s. In this, the volume is representative of current scholarship generally—and with some reason: the earlier decades are certainly less overtly sexy than the later, and more shrouded by those fabled Victorian decorums. But to fully appreciate the strikingly indeterminate and mobile world of late-Victorian sexual dissidence, we need to understand a great deal more of the worlds from which it so momentarily emerged. *Victorian Sexual Dissidence* is a fine provocation to that task.

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Victorian Sappho by Yopie Prins. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. Pp. xiii + 279. \$18.95 paper.

Over the past five years there has been a resurgence of interest in the Greek lyricist, Sappho, evident in a cluster of intriguing publications, some of the most notable being *Sappho Is Burning* by Page duBois (1995); *Sappho's Immortal Daughters* by Margaret Williamson (1995); *Sappho and the Virgin Mary* by Ruth Vanita (1996); and *Lesbian Desire in the Lyrics of Sappho* by Jane Snyder (1997). Yopie Prins's *Victorian Sappho* is not only the latest intervention in this debate, but also the self-reflective critical voice that asks what it is about the fragmentary corpus of Sappho that inspires such sporadic returns to what was also a late-Victorian obsession. Prins's answer, subtle and compelling, will fascinate any scholar invested in lyric theory, Victorian Hellenism, gender studies, or better still, an intersection of all these fields.

One of Prins's prime interests is to bring to the study of Sappho both a theoretical and historical consideration of the way we read lyric and how this might account for the recurrent turns and returns to Sappho as "an exemplary, engendering figure" (7) for that reading process. In the course of her introduction, Prins reminds us of the premise developed in the 1980s by theorists such as Jonathan Culler and Paul de Man that lyric voice is a rhetorical figure—a cause—that brings a persona into being while creating the illusion that it is an effect, a spontaneous utterance from that persona as a preexisting individual subject (19–20). According to this model, Sappho becomes the name for an emptiness that is declined over the centuries, both in the grammatical sense of shifting its rhetorical position within accounts of lyric, and in the material sense of a poetic corpus that has been lost. Prins then gives another turn to the screw of interpretation by refusing the effacement of historical inflections (such as the issue of gender) that de Man's theory of lyric performs. Instead, she accepts the greater challenge of reading Victorian renderings (or declensions) of Sappho as they are inflected both historically by gender and formally by the treatment of rhetoric.

What follows is not a chronological account of Sappho's reception in Victorian England, but a simultaneous performance and description of the metaleptic logic at work in numerous lyrical appropriations of the name of Sappho. "Metalepsis" is a form of metonymy in which causes and effects are interchanged and sometimes doubled. It prevails in the dynamic that characterizes Victorian rewritings of Sappho, specifically as she is represented in Ovid's *Heroides*, leaping from the Leucadian Cliff after her putative betrayal by the young ferryman, Phaon. In this context, to turn back to Sappho is not simply to return to the origin of the Western lyric tradition as a feminized mode

and counterpart to the manly Homeric epic, but to repeat a rhetorical position in which the lyric voice at the moment of utterance is both silenced in death and also leaps into an afterlife, a future echo or rewriting. In other words, the Sapphic lyric refuses the chronological unfolding of time and instead endlessly repeats the activity of looking back to the past even as it predicts its own future rewriting.

The discursive structure of *Victorian Sappho* itself consciously repeats this temporal oscillation, refusing to be a simple chronicle of Sappho's reception from the early to late Victorian period. After setting the rhetorical framework in place with a playful introductory meditation on the process of declension ("Declining a Name"), Prins begins Chapter 1 ("Sappho's Broken Tongue") with a detailed study of the much-translated fragment 31 ("He seems to me equal to the gods . . .") reproduced in its many English versions by Dr. Henry Thornton Wharton in his 1885 publication, *Sappho: Memoir, Text, Selected Renderings, and a Literal Translation*. Prins shows how Wharton's presentation of Sappho as "the pure and unmediated voice of a woman poet who is the perfection of lyric song" (16) is predicated on a Victorian view of lyric as solitary, feelingful speech, fortuitously overheard (75). Erasing the nuances of same-sex eros that surround the Sapphic myth, Wharton views Sappho "according to the Victorian cult of ideal womanhood, and in accordance with nineteenth-century Classical scholars who sought to purify Sappho's reputation by construing her as a schoolmistress for young women" (59). In this chapter in particular, Prins's training in the Classics and her reproduction of the Sapphic fragments with her own parallel English translations give her discussion a vivacity and attention to detail that makes for deeply satisfying reading.

The second chapter ("Sappho Doubled: Michael Field") explores the Sapphic imitations collected in the anthology *Long Ago* (1889) and published under the pseudonym "Michael Field" used by Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper. This aunt and niece, who regarded themselves as a married couple, collaborated to produce lyrics that are less the representation of the unmediated single voice Victorian poetics anticipated in lyric than a poetic field mediating between the two lovers. Instead of reading Field's Sappho as the paradigm of a new language of dissident desire originating from a lesbian identity, Prins argues that Bradley and Cooper "use Sappho's fragmentary text to turn writing into a homoerotic topography: a graphic field rather than a sublimated figure" (99). In so doing, Prins foregoes the force of an overtly political argument—for instance, that Bradley and Cooper write lyrics identifying Lesbian Sappho as lesbian Sappho—and argues more subtly that they pursue the exploration of a discursive field and enjoy the mutual pleasure to be had from collaborative lyric play.

Chapter 3, "Swinburne's Sapphic Sublime," marshalls Longinus's treatise on the sublime to read the Sapphic imitations of Algernon Charles Swinburne

as a display of rhythms whose memorization by the poet was mediated through the floggings he received in his schooldays at Eton. Once again, Prins's Classical erudition gives rigor and substance to her argument. Pointing to the way Greek metrical terms are drawn from bodily names ("Greek colometry described different kinds of meter by measuring poetry into body parts such as *kōla* [legs], *podes* [feet], *daktyloi* [fingers]" 114), she shows how Swinburne's Sappho is undone by the rhythms of "love, the loosener of limbs" (*eros lusimelēs*) even as she, Sappho, uses those rhythms to fragment and dismember her cruel lover, Anactoria.

In later poems, such as "On the Cliffs," Swinburne performs a metalepsis of "Anactoria," a "revision and self-reversal" (135) characteristic of his later verse, presenting an abstract meditation on Sappho's capacity to induce sublime transport in the speaker. Following Isobel Armstrong's observation that Swinburne's poetry tends toward a radical materialism, Prins argues that his later lyrics refuse the organic reading of meter presented by Coventry Patmore and offer another account that "makes the body legible only through the counting of marks and the measuring of intervals between: a formal abstraction" (121).

The fourth and final chapter, "P. S. Sappho," traces the tradition of nineteenth-century women poets who return to the Ovidian Sappho, flinging herself from the Leucadian Cliff, and use this as the image of suffering woman—the image bequeathed to the "Poetess" in Victorian England. In this chapter, Prins is at her very best when she combines subtle theoretical insights with Classical and cultural expertise to demonstrate what is politically at stake in particular rhetorical choices. An especially forceful instance of this occurs towards the end of the chapter, when she complicates Mary Poovey's strategy of reading Caroline Norton's "Defense" (*English Laws for Women in the Nineteenth Century*) according to the model of a melodrama. Prins suggests that

Norton's circulation in the public sphere depends even more on a lyric model, precisely because sentimental lyric is the genre for personifying the poetess as "private sufferer of private wrongs." Without presenting herself in "explicitly political terms," the poetess has the implicitly political function of representing public concerns as if they were private, demonstrating the ideological work of lyric as well as the ideological work of gender in mid-Victorian England. To become "an articulate spokesperson in the public sphere," Norton is transformed not *from* but *into* "the private sufferer," a lyric persona that complicates the politics of voice in Poovey's account. (223)

Admittedly, the reader who is not invested in the theory of lyric may find that occasionally there are moments in this book when Prins's fascination with the

paradoxes of rhetoric stalls the momentum of her argument so that her own rhetoric takes on the quality of an incantatory declension. For instance, the concluding pages of her final chapter are devoted to showing how the narrative of progress that circulates around the name of Sappho is “also an infinite regress, a falling back through history toward a moment in the (future) past, when Sappho is yet again lost” (227). Such logical oscillation may be intriguing, but precisely what the ideological stakes are in repeatedly following this dynamic is less certain.

Victorian Sappho is no light read; the demands it makes on its reader are the effect of Prins's determination not to compromise her study of Sapphic lyricism by simply polarizing the various interpretive discourses she brings to bear on this field. Instead of earning the easy dividends of polemic by setting a formal, rhetorical argument against historical interpretation, or privileging a political debate over attention to its aesthetic representation, she chooses to weave together a wider range of interpretive threads giving this work rare intensity and substance. One might say that Prins's *Sappho* stands as testimony to the interpretive subtlety that can be achieved when seemingly incompatible critical discourses are held together in a finely calibrated and mutually informing alliance.

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Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus by Susannah Heschel. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. Pp. 336. \$48.00 cloth; \$19.00 paper.

In this illuminating study, Susannah Heschel sheds new light on the figure of Abraham Geiger, a leading rabbi of Reform Judaism and brilliant scholar of philology, history, and theology. Heschel's book reveals the complexity of Geiger's position within German theological circles. While Geiger was marginalized within the academic community as an independent scholar, the boldness of his work commanded the attention of mainstream Christian theologians and landed him squarely in the center of the leading theological debates of his era. Through a careful and comprehensive analysis of Geiger's work and its reception, Heschel gains access to the larger issues of Jewish-Christian relations in Geiger's day, laying bare the implications of scholarly debates for Jewish and Christian self-understanding. Heschel overturns the prevailing image of nineteenth-century Jewish historiography as apologetic, casting Geiger as a pioneering Jewish scholar who aimed at nothing short of a fundamental reevaluation of the role of Judaism in the development of Western civilization.

Geiger's work of the 1830s established his focus on the relationship between Judaism and the other ancient religions and laid the foundation for his career. In his doctoral thesis, Geiger identified Midrashic sources for passages of the Qur'an, arguing broadly that the major teachings of Islam were deliberately borrowed from Judaism by Mohammed. Heschel demonstrates the development of Geiger's historical-critical methodology, as he turned to rabbinical literature as a necessary tool of historical analysis. For Geiger, Midrash and the Talmud were central texts to an understanding of the origins of Islam and its development alongside Judaism and Christianity, and the failure of Christian scholarship to consider these texts had created a powerful tradition of misinterpreting the ancient religions. Just as he identified rabbinic sources of Muslim sacred texts, Geiger would later argue for the importance of rabbinic literature in early Christianity, challenging accepted notions of Christianity as the original and true religion. Judaism thus becomes the source of the other two religions, and Christianity, in a reversal of Christian accounts of the history of Judaism, becomes a subtext within the framework of Jewish history. In this early work, Geiger took the first steps towards what would become the larger aim underlying all of his work: the destabilization of Christianity's self-conception as the font of Western civilization, a view in which Judaism figures as an aberration. Heschel argues persuasively that Geiger's work was not intended to further the cause of assimilation, but rather to assign to Judaism "a position of significance transcending virtually all other elements of Western civilization" (49).

Heschel assesses the impact of Geiger's work on views of Islam, placing him at the head of a new wave in Jewish scholarship focusing on the relationship between Judaism and Islam. She appraises this subsequent Jewish scholarship on Islam as a significant contribution to Islamic studies, while also contextualizing this research in terms of Jewish interests in the 1840s-'50s. The depiction of a productive "creative symbiosis" between Jewish and Muslim cultures in the Middle Ages "evident in Geiger's work and furthered in later studies" was held up in contrast to a history of persecution of the Jews in Christian Europe.

By 1835, Geiger had turned to focus primarily on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity and adopted the same historical approach to reinterpret the origins of Christianity. Geiger continued to insist on the necessity of rabbinic texts to understand these origins, and employed these sources to identify misinterpretations in Christian scholarship. Heschel's mastery of nineteenth-century theological scholarship is complete, and she skillfully navigates the various strains of Jewish and Christian scholarship to reveal Geiger's position and significance. Geiger was extremely attentive to developments within Christian scholarship. Indeed, Heschel argues that his engagement with Jewish history was largely channeled into a critique of the

anti-Judaism of Christian theology, particularly the Protestant theology of the German universities.

From the mid-1830s, Geiger's work focused on the period of the Second Temple, which he viewed as a crucial period in his own recasting of early Judaism, and, by extension, of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. This was the project of the *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel*, Geiger's most significant publication, which appeared in 1857. Geiger's arguments surrounding Second Temple Judaism carried important implications for modern Jewish self-understanding, his scholarly work providing a complement to his efforts in the Reform movement. In seeking to demonstrate dynamic development within the Talmud, Geiger undermined the absolute authority of the text, casting the Talmud rather as a reflection of the principles of liberalization in keeping with Reform Judaism. While the *Urschrift* stands as a major work of the "Wissenschaft des Judentums" (science of Judaism), Geiger's approach represented a new direction in Jewish studies which, in its critical approach to the biblical text, was anathema to conservative Jews; conservative Jewish theologians were critical both of Geiger's method and of his depiction of the Pharisees as representing a progressive tendency within religious history.

Geiger's arguments in *Urschrift* posed even greater challenges for Christian scholars. His interpretation of biblical Judaism as developing organically into Talmudism opposed dominant Christian theology of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which tended to see no connection between ancient Israel and the Talmud. Geiger's recasting of early Judaism focused on the Pharisees, as he sought to redeem their image from widely accepted associations with hypocrisy, rigidity, and falsehood. Geiger attempted to shift the focus of historical examination from a sole reliance on the gospels to a consideration of rabbinic sources. For Geiger, these texts yielded a new history of Pharisaism, evolving through a struggle in Palestine with the Sadducees. In Geiger's account, Pharisaism is transformed from a debased and rarified empty ritualism to a commitment to innovation and to the democratization of priestly functions. In light of this rereading of Pharisaic principles, Geiger presented in *Das Judentum und seine Geschichte* (a lecture series delivered in Frankfurt in the 1860s, published in 1910) an account of Jesus as a Pharisee, his teachings virtually identical with classical rabbinic Judaism. Geiger's radical reinterpretation of Pharisaism as a universal liberalizing principle against oppressive authority and his placement of Jesus firmly within the framework of ancient Judaism flew in the face of dominant Christian accounts of Jesus in opposition to the Judaism of his day. Moreover, in Heschel's analysis, Geiger's encounter with Christian theology exposes the anti-Jewish undercurrents of Christian attempts to discredit the Pharisees and distance Jesus from Judaism.

The methodology employed in Geiger's sweeping study was drawn from the very sources whose conclusions he opposed. His critical tools are bor-

rowed from the Tübingen school of historiography, the most influential theological approach of the mid-nineteenth century. This liberal Protestant school advocated historical research into Christianity independent of any theological concerns and highlighted the significance of conflicts between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians during the period of the genesis of the Church for the interpretation of New Testament texts. Heschel deftly traces the implications of these methodological suppositions by various Tübingen school theologians for their views of Jesus and Paul as authors of Christianity and describes Geiger's reaction to their conclusions. Like the Protestant scholars F.C. Baur and D.F. Strauss, Geiger sought to read the religious tendencies within a text in light of the social and political tensions of the period of the text's production. Yet Geiger turned this skeptical interrogation of ancient texts, which Heschel terms a "historiography of suspicion," against the conclusions of its originators.

In attempting to assess Geiger's influence on nineteenth-century theology, Heschel identifies the major liberal Christian theologians as his most important audience. While the majority of Protestant theologians paid little attention to Geiger's work, his work was reviewed, and in some cases even supported, by prominent scholars in the field of New Testament scholarship. Among the liberal Protestants, Geiger found both his most vocal opponents and his most significant supporters. Heschel does not overstate the extent of Geiger's influence. While his methods were embraced and his conclusions regarding the Sadducees found widespread acceptance, Geiger's reevaluation of the Pharisees did not win many supporters; nor did he convince Christian scholars of the validity of rabbinical textual sources. Geiger's ultimate goal—recognition of his profoundly altered image of the relationship between Judaism and early Christianity—was far too radical and too challenging to fundamental claims of Christian theology to succeed. A significant contribution of Heschel's work lies in her exploration of the vehement opposition evoked by Geiger's claims. Heschel exposes the "reactionary modernism" of liberal Protestant theology of the nineteenth century, committed to the historical method yet unwilling to face the consequences of fully applying it to research on Jesus and his relationship to Judaism. Her work demonstrates the function of anti-Judaism in justifying a limited historical investigation that preserved an image of Jesus as unique and distanced from Jewish tradition.

Heschel applies a number of recent modes of analysis in explaining Geiger's oeuvre and assessing his career, drawing, for example, on gender theory, deconstructionism, and film theory. The most fruitful of these approaches is her placement of Geiger within the trajectory of postcolonial thought, through which she challenges the view of Geiger's work as apologetic. Heschel argues forcefully that Geiger's writings represent a form of counter-history to dominant modes of Christian thought on Judaism. His claiming of Jesus for

Judaism is thus not to be narrowly understood as an effort to Christianize Judaism, but rather as a radical retelling that comprises a powerful critique of Christian historiography. Just as Christian histories of the Jews present a negative image of post-exilic Judaism ultimately intended to explain the rise of Christianity, Geiger's work turned Christian accounts against themselves as a defense of Judaism and an effort to undermine accepted notions about the role of Christianity in the development of Western civilization. Heschel successfully demonstrates that Geiger's project was one of inversion—not to Christianize Judaism but to Judaize Christianity.

Geiger emerges in Heschel's account as the first Jewish scholar to sustain the attention of Christian scholars throughout his career—an accomplishment which he met on his own terms, never seeking assimilation but rather radical revisionism. Further, Heschel's intellectual portrait of Geiger also seeks to evaluate his influence on subsequent Jewish scholarship. While she presents a nuanced account of the impact of his historical-critical work on both traditionalist and reform-oriented Jewish theology, Heschel's focus on Geiger's academic research limits her attention to his reform efforts and thus the assessment of his role within the Jewish community is not complete. Given the compatibility of his academic and practical aims, this might have been a fruitful path to pursue. Yet Heschel's scope is ultimately broad in more important ways. This study makes significant contributions to the field of Jesus research, the understanding of relations between early Christians and Jews, as well as the history of modern Judaism. This penetrating work presents challenging new insights into both the ancient and modern worlds.

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Crazy John and the Bishop, and Other Essays on Irish Culture by Terry Eagleton. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998. Pp. x + 345. \$19.95 paper.

Terry Eagleton is the only member of the British Left since the days of Marx and Engels to have taken a serious interest in Ireland and Irish culture. He deserves great credit for this, and for having to tolerate as a consequence of his interest a certain amount of begrudging hostility and suspicion from some Irish intellectuals and academics who feel one has to be Irish to really know what is going on in Ireland, and that Marxism has never been a good fit for the Irish predicament. Eagleton has naturally aligned himself with Field Day literary intellectuals such as Seamus Deane, Declan Kiberd, Luke Gibbons, and others whose work is informed by Marxist and postcolonial

thought, and just as naturally taken issue with the revisionist historians such as Roy Foster who have rewritten Irish history in the last generation. The perspective from which the revisionists have rewritten Irish history is dogmatically opposed not just to a nationalist, but also to a materialist or radical account of Irish history and politics. This collection of essays is a significant and valuable installment in Eagleton's continuing contribution to Irish intellectual life, and especially to the argument between the revisionists and the anti-revisionists.

Eagleton's intervention is most apparent in the essay entitled "Revisionism Revisited." Eagleton convincingly subjects the revisionists to a scrutiny that reveals their entirely unconscious (and certainly undesired) affiliation with postmodernist thought: "their nervousness of grand narratives, their preference for pragmatic explanations rather than big ideas, their embarrassment with the ethical, their emphasis on regionality, complexity, ambiguity, on plurality rather than monocausality, on heterogeneity and discontinuity, on the role of sheer happenstance in historical affairs: all of this places them firmly within the postmodern camp whether they know it or not, which for the most part they do not" (324). This is utterly persuasive, and needs to be put in general terms, yet the essay as a whole would be more to my taste if it proceeded to name names. Which revisionist's tone is described as "suavely hardboiled and emotionally anaesthetised"? (310). I think I know, and the description seems to me exact and entirely justified, but I can't be certain if my identification is correct. By the same token, who exactly are the anti-revisionists Eagleton refers to variously in this essay as "nationalists," "traditionalists," "materialists," "radicals"? Who occupies a traditional nationalist position in this debate, I wonder? Doesn't that position need to be distinguished from the position of the Field Day intellectuals? Perhaps the anti-revisionists are more diverse in their views than the revisionists? The whole essay would be more illuminating if names were used, not because it would personalize everything, but because it would make the essay more specific in its analysis of particular texts. It's a little unreal to talk about "the nationalists" without more discrimination—are we talking about the politics associated with Gerry Adams? John Hume? Seamus Deane? There are also some things that seem odd, or curiously inflected, at least. Although Eagleton subjects one side (the revisionists) to a devastating intellectual scrutiny, he seems occasionally to want to act as mediator between the two sides, blaming the anti-revisionists as well as the revisionists for wrangling with and talking past the other side instead of seriously engaging in debate and discussion. The IRA comes in for some blame for lending credibility to revisionist historiography by their militarism, but surely the writing of revisionist history, which corresponds to official policy, has been much more significantly encouraged by government, the media, and the universities. Eagleton also blames the IRA for subjecting the Protestant community in the North to "permanent military assault for the past few decades [sic]" (309). The IRA has committed despicable acts of violence and political murder

against many completely innocent Protestants (and Catholics, too, for that matter), but if one talks about a community being under a military assault in the North for twenty-five years, it is surely the working class Catholic community which has been systematically subjected to the whole militarized apparatus of repression levied by the British Army and the RUC, not to mention Loyalist paramilitary murder gangs. The new British inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday cannot but focus on the whitewashing by the first inquiry of what was a “military assault” par excellence by the British army upon the Catholic community, an assault that finished off the civil rights movement in the North and understandably recruited a large and long-lasting supply of volunteers for the IRA.

Again, Eagleton’s description of the typical ideological position of revisionist and anti-revisionist invites a demurrer in the case of such generalizations as this: “It is almost certain that those who think that the Famine was planned genocide are also likely to draw attention to the quasi-fascistic elements of Yeats.” But the first significant article on Yeats’s politics and their affiliation with fascism was written by Conor Cruise O’Brien (“Passion and Cunning . . .”), who in his roles as both revisionist historian and popular commentator would deplore the idea of the Famine as genocide as a spurious and self-indulgent manifestation of Irish nationalism. Such generalizations on Eagleton’s part would prove to be more accurate if he were more specific about his instances. Like lesser mortals he seems to get carried away by his rhetoric on occasion, and ends up saying something that is witty and pointed, but that also seems—and here I wonder at my own temerity—just wrong.

Perhaps the most valuable essay in the collection is on Fred Ryan, a neglected figure to be sure—the secretary of the Irish National Theatre Society, a Marxist and nationalist who died in 1913—whom Eagleton holds up as a model to wrangling revisionists and anti-revisionists. The revisionists are not likely to pay much attention. But the quotations from Ryan’s work would certainly impress anyone of leftist sympathies with Ryan’s capacity for a radical material analysis of the Ireland of his day. Eagleton argues persuasively that contemporary Irish intellectuals could learn much from Ryan’s work and example, but it’s not clear if he means to imply a critique of anti-revisionists as well as revisionists. The essay on Ryan seems to have been inspired by Eagleton’s own suggestion in a footnote to *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger* (1996): “A study of this attractive figure [Ryan] . . . would be worth having.” Other essays in *Crazy John* overlap in some measure with the earlier book. For instance, Sterne comes in for a lot of attention as a predecessor of Irish modernity, as Eagleton argued in *Heathcliff* while conceding that Sterne was only “liminally” Irish. There was, too, a searching critique of revisionism in the earlier book.

Similarly, “Home and Away: Internal Emigres in the Irish Novel” complements or supplements “Form and Ideology in the Anglo-Irish Novel” in *Heathcliff*, as Eagleton remarks in a footnote, by way of justifying the “rather

heterogeneous selection of authors in this essay” (216). The persuasive if not startling argument of the essay is that Irish fiction is full of “internal émigrés” and outcasts from the socially oppressive ethos of Irish life. The essay is illuminating on Francis Stuart and Peadar O’Donnell, but a little iconoclastic in some of its judgments, such as that Austin Clarke’s novels are better than most of his poetry, and even perfunctory at times—for example, in giving Michael MacLaverty and Forrest Reid a paragraph apiece.

The essay on Yeats, “Yeats and Poetic Form,” is brilliant in its close examination of some attributes of Yeats’s verse that do not usually get attention—his plain vocabulary, for example, and his singleness of meaning, as opposed to T. S. Eliot’s ambiguity, and his rhythm and tone. And there is more penetrating insight in Eagleton’s remark that in Yeats’s “performativeness” as a poet (he is always “blessing, spurning, summoning, denominating, listing, exhorting, bequeathing and the like”) there can be detected “a trace . . . of an Irish tradition of the poet as magician, social functionary and political activist” (284). The essays on Yeats and Beckett (whose value resides precisely, in part, in his antihumanism, Eagleton suggests) are the only ones on canonical figures. The other essays range from “The Hidden Dunkin,” an appreciation of the poetry of the neglected eighteenth-century Irish poet, whom Eagleton seems to have encountered first in the *Field Day* anthology, to “The Masochism of Thomas Moore” in which he remarks that Moore’s poetry has “something of the semiotic indeterminacy of music,” and lends “its support to Irish nationalism, at the same time as it veils the rebarbative history to which it belongs, thus soothing nationalism’s English opponents” (141). This kind of aperçu characterizes Eagleton’s essays at their brilliant best, in the way that the aesthetic is always seen as the formal manifestation of what is at stake politically, in the realm of the material and the historical. Such insights are somewhat buried in several other essays, which are perhaps overly long and too diligently documented. “Crazy John and the Bishop” is 51 pages with 128 footnotes, “Cork and the Carnavalesque” 54 pages with 237 footnotes, and “The Good-Natured Gael” weighs in at 72 pages and 179 footnotes. In the first of these—the parody of Yeats’s title “Crazy Jane and the Bishop” refers to the eighteenth-century Irish philosophers John Toland and Bishop Berkeley—Eagleton ingeniously constructs a line of wit from Eriugena to Berkeley, Burke, Sterne, Flann O’Brien, and Derrida and contemporary deconstructive thought. But it is to Toland the Enlightenment rationalist, the champion of straightforward and direct speech, as opposed to the theologically infused rhetoric of Berkeley et al., that Eagleton awards the palm of radical and revolutionary, at the same time as he acknowledges and in some measure relishes, I think, the dominance of the other tradition in Irish culture. (Incidentally, Eagleton footnotes a good deal of recent work on Toland, so it is not the case that he has been utterly neglected.)

There is more of Cork than carnival in "Cork and the Carnavalesque," which gives an account of such neglected figures as Mahony, Maginn, Thompson, Maclise, Crofton Croker, Calanan, and many others. What connects these numerous figures, apart from intrinsic interest and local history, presumably has to do with a Bakhtinian sense of carnival, but that aspect of the essay seems almost an afterthought, tacked on at the end where Eagleton rather tentatively suggests, citing Vivian Mercier as authority, that it could be claimed that "the carnivalesque is a major Irish genre, remarkably persistent in the national culture over several centuries" (206). The carnivalesque is linked in ways that are not clear with the colonial predicament of Ireland in the nineteenth century, except perhaps that it "relativizes all values in reaction to oppressive ideological absolutisms" (207). It is not clear if and how the carnivalesque's mockery of the ruling classes functions as a potentially revolutionary formulation in this context.

Eighteenth-century Irish writers and philosophers are the focus of "The Good-Natured Gael," which attributes to Steele, Hutcheson, Goldsmith, Sterne, and Burke the cultivation of benevolence rather than sensibility and sentiment, and subverts the notion of the good-natured Gael. As a preliminary gesture, a kind of clearing of the decks, Eagleton vigorously attacks the current politically correct, postmodernist embargo against any kind of essentializing, and sees something of value to be rescued from stereotyping in the form of clues to social reality: "For a materialist thinker, it would be remarkable if men and women who had for a lengthy period shared roughly the same conditions of material life revealed no psychological traits in common" (68). This is bracing and well-said; it is also typical of Eagleton's clear-sightedness to be able to see through the cant of certain widely prevailing and virtually unquestioned assumptions in current scholarship. This particular insight would be a valuable departure point, moreover, from which to challenge the idea of the nation as a completely imagined entity, which also seems to have assumed the status of an axiom. And the essay possesses in addition its share of Wildean bon mots: "If the English left you to bleed to death in the gutter, it would not be because of hard-heartedness, but because they were anxious not to interfere with your privacy" (69).

Eagleton has aimed, it would seem, in this rather eclectic collection of essays, to extend the Irish literary and intellectual canon, especially by looking at eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Irish writers and philosophers, but it is not his recovery of justly or unjustly neglected writers that is so valuable. It is, rather, Eagleton's materialist analysis of Irish culture that sheds new light on it, and his challenging of a postmodern/revisionist discourse that so often misrepresents or textualizes the actual lives of men and women.

Eagleton's conclusion in the last essay in the book, "Revisionism Revisited," seems a little dispiriting: "there is no satisfying theoretical resolution" of the Irish intellectual debate in which he has intervened, which turns out to be the struggle between modernity and postmodernity, and only "history" (by which I imagine he means continuing political and economic struggle, often in

a larger arena than Ireland, or indeed Europe) will resolve the debate (327). If the debate cannot be reconciled at the level of theory, what gloomy prospects attend an actual political resolution in Ireland? Surely it would be relatively easy to find—at the level of theory—some intellectual common ground for the opposing sides, even if one has to say immediately that such an intellectual resolution has little to do with an actual settlement. It seems unduly despairing (if it is more than the rhetorical flourish of conclusion) to suggest, as Eagleton does, that a resolution of debate and struggle in Ireland generally and not just in the North must attend a millennial realignment of global politics in which Ireland may choose to align itself with the postcolonial countries of the southern hemisphere rather than Europe and the U.S. In other words, the small dispute will eventually be overtaken by a larger one. Two world wars did nothing to resolve the Irish “question,” but perhaps Eagleton is right and it will indeed take a global realignment of economic systems to change anything in Ireland. Yet such a conclusion has the air rather of throwing in the towel, and walking away from the present argument, all the more so when it seems likely that the meager best that can be accomplished politically is, at least in the short run, a reformed state of Northern Ireland.

It is good to have Eagleton's book; it is a worthy entry in Field Day's Critical Conditions series, to which Luke Gibbons's *Transformations in Irish Culture* and Kevin Whelan's *The Tree of Liberty* are previous outstanding contributions. The series, edited by Seamus Deane, is an ambitious and brilliant undertaking, a fine sequel to the Field Day anthology and like that enterprise, of wide interest beyond Irish Studies because it is alert to the implications of theory in ways that Irish Studies has not tended to be in the past. Deane's prodigious editorial skills and his own intellectual brilliance have made the contemporary Irish debate over culture part of a global discourse in which Ireland's condition no longer seems merely anomalous and benighted.

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The Making of Middle English, 1765–1910 by David Matthews. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999. Pp. xxxvii + 231. \$39.95.

It is common for scholars in all fields to posit varying degrees of progress toward greater rigor and sophistication in their disciplines as the years pass. Critiquing this proclivity in *The Study of Language in England, 1780–1860* (1983) Hans Aarsleff warns, “it is not the forward march that misleads but rather the conviction that the top has been reached. . . . In this view all earlier study of language is seen as a rather malicious conspiracy against the future

and the present enlightenment, and history gains attention only as a sort of inverted self-flattery" (9). In a perfect example of such "self-flattery," Norman Cantor, in *Inventing the Middle Ages* (1991), argues that "medieval studies were very largely a twentieth-century phenomenon" (28). He dismisses the work of earlier medievalists by commenting: "the romantics lacked the scholarship, the learning and instruments of research, to go beyond the most superficial kind of inquiry into the medieval past" (29). Similarly, he depreciates the historians of the later nineteenth century when he contends, "Victorian culture made its contribution to discovery of the medieval world by the founding of research institutes, by the building up of libraries and the organization of archives, and by the publication of medieval records. This was important work, but it was preliminary to actual historical reconstruction of the Middle Ages. It was not the creative work of perception, imagination, and narrative itself" (28). Cantor's assessment is, of course, not unique; in a tradition of such "self-flattery," after all, the scholars he belittles had belittled their predecessors as well.

Despite this widespread tendency to dismiss earlier scholarship and scholars within the discipline of Middle English (and of Old English), there are scholars exploring the work of their predecessors for, at the very least, the following reasons: (1) to determine and evaluate the achievements as well as the "failures" of these predecessors, (2) to isolate and analyze the ideologies functioning in their scholarship, (3) to interrogate the motives and influences acting upon the production of early English literary texts, and (4) to recognize the extent of the influence of their preferences and appraisals upon our own understanding of the field. In *The Making of Middle English* (volume 18 of the series *Medieval Cultures*) David Matthews argues, "our reality must not be allowed to efface the importance of prior realities" (xvii). The commonly held view that the work of earlier scholars of Middle English should be dismissed as wrongheaded has meant, among other things, that "the long, often rich history of textual transmission since the invention of print is increasingly neglected" (xv). Matthews's examination of earlier scholarship offers a compelling account of the time, milieu, and motives of those scholars.

It may seem remarkable to situate the origin of modern Middle English scholarship with Thomas Percy, a man who characterizes early English poems as "rude Songs of ancient Minstrels and barbarous productions of unpolished ages" and "not as labours of art, but as effusions of nature" (*Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* 1:v). Despite this harsh assessment, however, the publication of Percy's popular and influential *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765 is a suitable starting point for David Matthews's informative and highly readable overview of the course of Middle English studies from antiquarian beginnings to establishment as an academic discipline. In selecting his endpoint, Matthews has chosen the year of Frederick Furnivall's

death, 1910, thus symbolically acknowledging the considerable impact that the founder of the Early English Text Society (EETS) had upon the production of Middle English texts. Matthews contextualizes his material by depicting several seminal figures in the history of Middle English scholarship. Matthews bases his text upon an examination of these major “authorities.” He examines:

both the materiality of the books produced in the period and the impact of the lives and approaches of the scholars who produced them. . . . This entails looking not simply (or even principally) at the actual medieval text as it has been edited from the manuscript, but at everything that surrounds that text: the scholarship—in introduction, notes, apparatus, glossary—along with anything else that might have made its way into the text, such as promotional material, lists of subscribers, owner’s annotations, and the like. (xvii)

Thus, in addition to the biographical, social, cultural, and political backgrounds of his subject(s), Matthews scrutinizes the editorial positionings, methodologies, and manipulations of these men in their production of Middle English texts. He argues, “it is in such microhistories—of the text in the manuscript, the text in its editions, the circulation of the text, the transmission of editions, the social and scholarly placement of editors—that a larger history of the study of Middle English, such as I aim to trace here, can be found” (xv). Matthews’s aim is a “material history” (xvii) of the field and a Foucauldian “genealogy of the subject” (192). He acknowledges the work of Chris Baldick, Terry Eagleton, Allen Frantzen, Lee Patterson, and Theresa Coletti who, “in different ways, [have] argued for the importance of a deliberate remembering of English studies’ ideological past” (xxi-xxii). To Matthews the “narrative of Middle English . . . shift[s] from the deployment of Middle English studies as an essentially privatized means of aesthetic self-transformation to its reformulation as an arm of governmentally sanctioned education” (xxiv). Based upon this assessment, Matthews has divided his text into two parts, each representative of the prevailing motives (personal and political) evinced by the presenters of Middle English literary works during the period.

Part I is entitled “Patronage and the Antiquarian Self.” It includes chapters centered on Thomas Percy, Joseph Ritson, Walter Scott, and the antiquarian societies, the Roxburghe Club and the Camden Society. Other figures discussed include Thomas Warton, George Ellis, and the prolific (if not meticulous) Thomas Wright. These first four chapters deal with the notion of a “scholarly selfhood, and its relation to the scholar’s work” (xxii) active in the growth of English studies (with a nod to Ian Hunter’s concept of a “technology of the self” and to Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of cultural and symbolic capital). Matthews also discusses the changing nature of the antiquarian societies from the unadulterated elitism of the Roxburghe Club to the seemingly more democratic Camden Society.

In Part 1, Matthews describes a recurring dilemma facing those interested in so-called “ancient” poetry: the conflict between their sense of literary “taste” and their attachment as antiquarians to the original texts with all their “barbarities.” Early producers of Middle English texts did not deem the literature worthy of aesthetic appreciation. Percy, for example, as mentioned above, considered the poetry “rude” and “barbarous.” Matthews notes, “they tended to regard the old texts with which they worked as important and interesting, but at the same time as almost entirely lacking in literary merit” (14). This dilemma forced early editors to make a choice between rewriting works to suit modern taste or presenting the original texts faithfully and accurately. This is an issue of major significance in textual transmission. With the notable exception of Joseph Ritson, the desire for public acceptance and, thus, a requisite “improvement” of the original works, usually eclipsed any feelings of compunction for the lack of fidelity to the original manuscript versions.

In his discussion of Thomas Percy, Matthews argues that Percy’s description of the relationship of medieval minstrels to the nobility and royalty—that is, one of seeking patronage—essentially applies to Percy’s own goals for his poetic collection and for himself. In his *Reliques*, his discussion of medieval romance and the “ancient English Minstrels” combines his imaginings about the Middle Ages with his editorial intervention—“improvement” of the poems—to tailor them to suit his wealthy and aristocratic patrons. Matthews argues that Walter Scott had similar notions of advancement attaching to his literary endeavors. Percy and Scott were successful in large part because of their ability to deliver (or manufacture) chivalric Middle English romances that appealed to upper-class and aristocratic prejudices. In Matthews’s words: “the kinds of scholars who came to Middle English usually lacked economic capital and sought to accrue it through a prior accumulation of symbolic capital. The demands placed as a result on the nascent study overwhelmed it, ensuring that it would be, for some time to come, the tool of a politically conservative self-fashioning” (9). Romances emphasizing hierarchical notions of feudal chivalry were likely to appeal to potential patrons—either individuals or members of the elite antiquarian societies.

Part II, entitled “Nationalism and the Selling of Middle English,” focuses on Frederic Madden, Frederick Furnivall, the Chaucer Society, and the universities. This section also includes a discussion of other figures such as Richard Chenevix Trench and Walter Skeat. Seen by Matthews as a transitional figure, Madden bridges Part I and Part II of this text as well as the “shift” in “Middle English studies” (xxiv). To Matthews, Madden, “the great scholar of Middle English in the middle third of the century, is an example of an increasingly uneasy alliance between the discipline’s two facets as a privatized technology of the self and its emergent national importance” (109). During this time period (1830s–1900) the reasons for examining “ancient” texts

changed. Earlier, the dominant purpose was antiquarian in nature. The antiquarians sought novelty; for many of them “what was most interesting about Middle English was its strangeness, its difference, and they could consequently see little obvious connection with their own culture” (xxv). Later in the nineteenth century, early English literature began to hold more widespread interest “as national heritage” and as a component in “a search for Englishness” (xxv). The influence of Germanic philology combined with the search for an early English origin for English nationalism and superiority ultimately led to the identification of the Anglo-Saxons as the earliest English, thus creating a middle space which could be described as “Middle English.” Matthews explains:

English nationalism is not much in evidence in the study of Middle English before the 1850s, because there was little to be gained from claiming such evidently barbarous material as the national heritage. . . . Philology allowed the scholar to see regular processes of linguistic change connecting modern words to medieval, where earlier generations had seen only hopeless barbarisms. Victorian imperialism provided the occasion for the development of nationalism as the key element in the study of early English. (146)

In 1864, by the time the EETS was established to provide etymological resources for the *New English Dictionary* (later the *Oxford English Dictionary*), the study of English became a patriotic duty.

Matthews, in this volume, offers convincing support for his argument that the personal technologies of the self and the political ideologies of the early producers of Middle English texts had a significant impact upon the construction of the discipline of Middle English. In addition, he describes and analyzes the changes in editorial protocol throughout the period. Editorial theories and methodologies from Percy’s “considerable editorial license” (10) to the earliest “authoritative” editions of modern scholarship are outlined.

In *The Making of Middle English*, Matthews offers a healthy reminder that we should not overlook the scholars and the scholarship of the past lest in our own convictions of superior wisdom we neglect an interesting and useful source of study. Or worse: lest we fall afoul of future generations of scholars who may claim not only error, but even perversity, in our work. It is never too often to be reminded that (re)production of literary texts cannot be untainted by any number of biases; assumptions of “objectivity” or “neutrality” ignore the persistent presence of our ideological positions. It is also useful to consider the transient nature of assumptions of “progress” or “authority.” As Matthews maintains, “Authority ceaselessly reinvents itself, but a condition of its doing so is a forgetting that there was any prior authority. And

so authority creates a continuist narrative of scholarship, in which it is assumed that literary history is always on the improve and that nobody has done it as well as we are doing it now" (xvi). Matthews's work is an impressive effort to return attention to the effect of personal and political positions in the work of textual transmission and editorial production. Matthews demonstrates the relationship of earlier scholarship to our own understanding of our own scholarship. Furthermore, while Matthews's work cogently covers a period lasting 145 years, his text is valuable not only in itself, but in the raising of questions to be explored in future studies.

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