

## REVIEWS

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**Christine F. Cooper-Rompato, *The Gift of Tongues. Women's Xenoglossia in the Later Middle Ages* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2010), pp. ix + 217. ISBN 978 0271036168.**

This study investigates the nature of miraculous xenoglossia, the sudden ability to speak, write or read in another language. Cooper-Rompato considers this surprisingly overlooked yet significant miracle found in Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians to assess what it may reveal about gendered experiences of spoken and written translations in the late Middle Ages.

In chapter one, a broad range of male and female saints' lives which contain examples of vernacular xenoglossia are examined. It is established that vernacular xenoglossia appear more often in the lives of holy men than in female *vitae*. Miraculous xenoglossia among men sometimes occurred during large-scale preaching events. For example, the founder of the Premonstratensian order, the German-speaking Norbert of Xanten, was able to preach in French one day after his arrival in Valenciennes. Miraculous xenoglossia could also be in the ear of the listener rather than in the mouth of the preacher. This is clearly demonstrated in the *vita* of the Spaniard Vincent Ferrer. He preached to a mixed crowd comprising several linguistic groups, including Greeks, Germans and Hungarians, yet the entire audience was able to understand him although he spoke in his mother tongue. The few cases of vernacular xenoglossia which appear in female lives are normally on a smaller scale, one-off events whereby a woman is given the temporary ability to speak and/or understand a language in order to give spiritual counsel to a foreign person in need; this is seen in the case of Bridget of Sweden who successfully gave advice to a Finnish man although each did not speak the other's language.

Chapter two examines miraculous Latin xenoglossia in female saints' lives. In *vitae* of holy women, Latin xenoglossia occurred more frequently in comparison to vernacular xenoglossia. However, Cooper-Rompato establishes that women's Latin abilities were limited when compared to their male counterparts. For example, women's Latin xenoglossia frequently entailed their ability to recite the Psalter or to translate well-known liturgical sequences into the vernacular, while their male counterparts gained a complete mastery of the Latin language. Cooper-Rompato also examines

what she terms 'miraculous tutelage'. This is when a woman is portrayed as learning Latin at an accelerated pace under the guidance of the Virgin Mary and Christ before going on to teach others, as demonstrated by the Benedictine abbess Sperandea of Cingoli (d.1276) and the Augustinian nun Christiana of Lucca (d.1310). In the case of Bridget of Sweden (d.1373), however, her ability to learn Latin was not so much miraculous – although at one point she is encouraged by the Virgin Mary to learn Latin – but the result of time spent studying and speaking the Latin language.

In Chapter three, Cooper-Rompato moves her focus to the *Book of Margery Kempe* to examine how miraculous and non-miraculous xenoglossia incidents are portrayed in Margery's travels throughout Europe and the Holy Land. Margery experiences vernacular xenoglossia where she is understood by foreigners or she can understand foreign speakers. Furthermore, Margery is never presented as experiencing Latin xenoglossia. Cooper-Rompato contends that there are two possible explanations for this. The first may be an attempt by Margery to disassociate herself from the Lollards who were viewed as subversive in their application of Latin literacy to religious learning. Second, Margery's world was a vernacular one whereby Latinity was not essential and hence not important for her to acquire. Several other examples of Margery's language interpretation are thoroughly discussed. However, some consideration of how a shared religious culture may have enabled the unilingual Margery to understand and to be understood in foreign lands would have been useful.

Chapter four considers Chaucer as translator and author. Here Cooper-Rompato presents a close reading of the *Prioress's Prologue* and *Tale*, the *Man of Law's Tale* and the *Squire's Tale*. The argument is made that Chaucer's treatment of xenoglossic women in the *Canterbury Tales* is employed at one level to legitimate his own role as a writer and translator. Cooper-Rompato posits that during Chaucer's lifetime, when the translation of Latin texts into the vernacular was on the rise, thoughts on the activity of language translation were evolving. In this context, Chaucer developed and appropriated examples of female xenoglossia to explore his own voice as writer and translator.

While each chapter contains valuable arguments, the overall structure of the book is uneven. Chapters one and two use numerous *vitae* dating from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. Chapter three uses one English text: the fifteenth-century *Book of Margery Kempe*. However, the *Book* does follow on nicely from the previous two chapters in that it provides a detailed case study of one woman's xenoglossic experiences. It is Chapter four which sits uneasily in this study, as it focuses on Chaucer's concept of authorship and translation rather than strictly on a consideration of women's xenoglossia. Thus this shift from an examination of a broad range of hagiographical sources dating from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, which contain explicit examples of miraculous and non-miraculous xenoglossia, to a concentrated examination of authorship in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, which contain oblique examples of female xenoglossia, is mismatched. Nonetheless, each individual chapter makes sound observations concerning gendered differences of speech and literacy. Overall, Cooper-Rompato offers the scholarly world much to consider, not least of all the significance of miraculous xenoglossia and its gendered implications in the late medieval world.

CAROLYN MUESSIG

*Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Bristol, UK*

**Jennifer D. Thibodeaux (ed.), *Negotiating Clerical Identities: Priests, Monks and Masculinity in the Middle Ages* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. xiii + 269. ISBN 978 0230222205.**

In the study of clerical masculinity, sexuality and celibacy have frequently been key topics of discussion, understandably enough since in many cases they are highly significant. The essays in this collection argue that celibacy is not necessarily the defining characteristic of clerical masculinity, and seek to identify new approaches to masculinity in a range of clerical contexts in medieval Europe. The essays cover north-western Europe and Scandinavia as well as Crusaders and reactions to them, and explore case studies ranging in date from the Carolingian period through to the Reformation.

Some of the best discussions in the book are found in attempts to distinguish connections between the normative and the actual in considering a variety of masculinities. Janelle Werner explores the realities of the non-celibate priesthood and how parish priests in England asserted their masculinity much like non-celibate men (although she might usefully have referred to the work of James Brundage in this context); Tanya Stabler Miller considers Robert of Sorbon's efforts to present *béguines* as examples for clerics, but also (and perhaps more interestingly) discusses evidence for clerical interest in *béguines*, including collections of sermons preached at the beguinage which were copied and consulted by clerics connected with the Sorbonne. There are also careful and interesting interpretations of medieval texts in the essays by Andrew Romig and Anthony Perron, which consider Odo of Cluny's *Life of Gerald of Aurillac* and Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum* respectively. Katherine Allen Smith's essay is notable as one of the few which relates concepts of clerical masculinity to a particular type of femininity for religious women, and discusses how masculinity and femininity were blended in different contexts and in different measures for those of both sexes in religious life.

The aims of the book are both sensible and interesting, but only in places do the essays come close to achieving those aims. One of the key arguments running throughout the collection is that there were multiple clerical masculinities which should be seen in their own contexts. Despite this, several of the essays do not explicitly compare clerical masculinity (or masculinities) in a given geographical area and/or time period to the perceived secular masculinity (or masculinities), perhaps assuming that this would be self-evident, but non-clerical masculinity was also not static or monolithic. Another key point is a rejection of the idea of a third gender (such as Robert Swanson's proposed 'emasculine') in considering clerical identity. As a result, there seems occasionally to be an underlying assumption that if clerics were not considered masculine they must have been considered effeminate: the focus on presence of absence of masculinity leaves little exploration of degrees of masculinity, or whether in some contexts there was 'good' and 'bad' masculinity. The authors are right to assert that clerics retained their masculinity, albeit a masculinity defined specifically for clerical contexts, but it is surely significant that the ungended angels were important role models for clerical and especially monastic behaviour. It is also significant that clerics often seem to have asserted their masculinity precisely by not being celibate.

The production quality seems surprisingly poor for a major publisher, and occasional typographical errors and inconsistent editing spoil the text in places, particularly where these have a significant effect on the content (for example, Goscelin of St Bertin wrote his *Liber Confortatorius* in the 1080s, not the 1180s (p. 98)). The essays are not always well connected or integrated, and the overall effect is one of repetition: discussions or arguments in one chapter often do not cite relevant chapters elsewhere in the collection, and overlap is frequently ignored. Articles by Jo Ann MacNamara, Robert Swanson and/or Vern Bullough are discussed in most chapters, and while this emphasises the significance of these authors' contributions and the scholarly dialogue that they have provoked, the collection as a whole would have read more smoothly and appeared more unified if there had been a slightly heavier editorial hand here. The index is rather sparse, and it would have been helpful to have a combined bibliography.

The collection as a whole is an interesting step in the history of medieval masculinity, which has received much less attention than the history of women and femininity in the Middle Ages. Its focus on men in religious life who were (at least supposedly) celibate is interesting in that this is a group which does not appear with the same frequency in ancient or more modern studies of masculine identity, and it is important too that the essays seek to approach clerical masculinity without using 'celibacy itself [as] the principal category of analysis' (p. 4). However, a collection which examines clerical masculinity specifically, rather than masculinity for a range of groups in any particular time or place (including celibate and non-celibate men, and potentially women too), runs the risk of doing exactly that.

HELEN FOXHALL FORBES

*School of Historical Studies, University of Leicester, UK*

**Scott B. Montgomery, *St Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne: Relics, Reliquaries and the Visual Culture of Group Sanctity in Late Medieval Europe* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. xv + 207. ISBN 978 3039118526.**

Scott Montgomery's book states its aims clearly: to explore the 'corporate identity' of St Ursula and her band of 11,000 martyrs, 'investigating how text, image and relic display worked in concert to fashion a total cult environment that expressed the power, presence and cohesion of this company' (p. 3). Montgomery tells the story of the British princess Ursula, who undertook a pilgrimage to Rome accompanied by 11,000 virgin companions, who suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Huns in Cologne. He covers the development of the cult in medieval Cologne, the spread of its relics throughout Europe and analyses connections between relics, artworks and worshippers.

The book ranges widely, opening with a fifth-century plaque in Cologne's Church of St Ursula, and closing with the seventeenth-century arrangement of the building's *Goldene Kammer*. However, this breadth of focus does not always support the author's central argument: that of the 'corporate unity' of the 11,000, promulgated throughout Europe by their relics. The varying significance of individuals such as St Pinossa in

Essen, St Pantalus in Basel, or St Cordula, with her separate feast day, indicates that the 11,000 offered relatively easy access to relics that could then be attributed to the figure best suited to a town's devotional or political needs. The sixteenth-century shift in emphasis from the virgins to Ursula is not fully explored, despite its undermining of the central argument, which places the group's collective nature at the centre of their appeal. A rather throwaway reference to the Burkhardtian 'renaissance of the individual' seems insufficient explanation.

This rigid adherence to a central thesis is a shame, as when Montgomery engages directly with his visual material, his close focus on the ways in which architecture, images, reliquaries and relics could combine to create a cohesive visual reality for the worshipper is successful. It is in exploring how Cologne's Church of St Ursula could act as a 'super-reliquary' into which one must enter, that Montgomery's argument for the overlooked importance of the virgins' unity is most convincing. His exploration of the ways in which relics and artworks could encourage vicarious mental pilgrimage is also effective. This is fertile ground, in which the symbiotic relationship between viewer and work can be explored with attention to 'sensory information . . . bearing primary status in determining reality' (p. 182). For instance, Montgomery suggests interestingly that the notable focus on dismemberment in Germanic images of the virgins suggests not barbarism, but a more proximate relationship with their corporeal remains than in Italy.

However, Montgomery's more sweeping conclusions and arguments are often weaker. To suggest that all religious women across this period would have equated imagery of male saints with masculine clerical authority, and imagery of a collective female group with themselves, sidelines the many potential subtleties of the relationship between viewer and depicted figure. Female religious experiences are unthinkingly lumped together, with references to 'female spirituality, both within the cloister, and in society' (pp. 45–6) and 'the spiritual concerns and identities of women – both religious and secular' (p. 23). Sometimes the reader is left wishing that certain facets of the relic cult had received more attention: how was devotion complicated by scepticism over the veracity of the relic, in light of the proliferation of heads attributed to Ursula; what role did miracles play in attitudes towards relics; how was the martial role of the virgins squared with contemporary constructions of femininity? It is unfair to expect answers to all of the questions raised in this study, but the book would have been strengthened had repetition of key ideas made way for more nuanced examination of social and geographical disparities, and shifts over time.

For a text well aimed at undergraduates, the decision not to translate Latin quotations (including an entire poem) is perhaps misguided. It is also frustrating that so many works referenced in key arguments are not illustrated. However, for those seeking examples of how close-focused analysis of artefacts can reveal new historical insights into religious practice and beliefs, Montgomery's text is instructive and persuasive. It is only when his conclusions become more sweeping that this reader remains unconvinced.

MAYA CORRY

*New College, University of Oxford, UK*

**Liz Oakley-Brown and Louise J. Wilkinson (eds), *The Rituals and Rhetoric of Queenship: Medieval to Early Modern* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), pp. 288. ISBN 978 1846821783.**

This book comprises a collection of eighteen papers compiled from a conference held at Canterbury Christ Church University in 2006. Examining queens consort and regnant, the authors are concerned with the 'fashioning of queenship through visual display and textual discourse' (p. 11). The emphasis here leans towards textual analysis; although there are contributions from historians and literary scholars, the latter predominate. The book is split into four sections: 'Rituals' (with the focus on politics, patronage and the court); 'Rhetoric' (focusing on textual sources such as chronicles, letters and drama); 'Subverting the rituals and rhetoric of queenship'; and a final, theory-based section. The writers address several common themes, the most salient being how far their subjects fulfilled contemporary gender expectations, and to what extent they were able to manipulate and defy those expectations. Agency is therefore a key issue throughout the book. It emerges that, particularly for early modern thinkers, the concept of queenship offered an arena in which patriarchal discourse was both constructed and deconstructed, reinforced and subverted.

The first section includes perceptive studies of queens consort such as Isabella of England, wife of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, and Philippa of Lancaster (*d.*1415), wife of João I of Portugal. Both have hitherto received scant attention from academics. Louise J. Wilkinson's chapter portrays Isabella in the traditional medieval mould as intercessor, but also stresses her role as transmitter of English cultural influences into the imperial court, introducing new fashions in clothing and reading. Manuela Santos Silva portrays Philippa of Lancaster in the same manner. Her political influence through advising the royal family and council is confirmed, alongside her role in translating cultural influences from home into the royal court, for example instigating the use of the Sarum rite into religious ceremonial. Jacqueline Johnson examines the evolving perceptions of Elizabeth of York (*d.*1503), daughter of Edward IV and queen of Henry VII; from diplomatic pawn, to matriarch of the Tudor dynasty, to mother of the house of York at the dawn of the sixteenth century, when the Stanley family were attempting to denigrate the Tudor claim to the throne. Despite these changing representations, Elizabeth was persistently manipulated as a mother/grandmother figure, thus conforming to the period's gender expectations. Anna Whitelock offers a revisionist study of Mary Tudor (*d.*1558), emphasising her intelligent, strong-willed and politically astute character. Under Mary, parliamentary queenship was confirmed, paving the way for her successor, Elizabeth I, to rule as queen with full powers of a king, even if this caused a measure of anxiety among contemporary writers such as John Lyly, as Shehzana Mamujee illustrates.

The essays under the 'Rhetoric' umbrella focus on textual discourse. Elizabeth Woodville's (*d.*1492) character comes under scrutiny from Polydore Vergil and Sir Thomas More, who reach contrasting conclusions. The Tudor historian Vergil depicts her as an interloper, a woman 'of meane caulynge' (p. 106), whereas More gives her a voice and praises her role as protector of her young sons from their usurper uncle, Richard III. Two chapters examine correspondence between Elizabeth I, Mary Stuart and her son James VI of Scotland. Alison Findlay interprets the letters between

Elizabeth and Mary as a medium for 'competitive queenly self-display' (p. 120), with both skilfully appropriating the rhetoric of queenship to bolster their own authority and legitimacy, and (particularly in the case of Elizabeth) to stress their superiority over the other. The letters between Elizabeth and James elucidate their contrasting attitudes to female rule. The queen frequently describes herself as 'king', avoiding 'princess' or 'queen'. In contrast, James addresses her as 'prince' and 'madam', reflecting his opinions on the ineffectiveness of female rule. In the final chapter of the section we witness Anne Clifford (*d.*1676), the 'lady of the North', emulating Elizabeth by vigorously defending her legal rights to land in Westmorland and North Yorkshire. She thus constructed an agency that empowered her in the localities, serving to defy acknowledged forms of womanly behaviour.

Some of the best contributions form part of the penultimate section. Anne Boleyn (*d.*1536) and Mary Queen of Scots (*d.*1587) each receive two chapters. Boleyn's execution speech provides an opportunity to conform to traditional conventions of state executions, with the emphasis on the 'good death'. However, through what she says and, more importantly, what she fails to say, she slights the honour of her husband Henry VIII, and fails to explicitly confess to her crimes, thus adding a degree of subversion to the proceedings. Another facet of Boleyn's subversive identity is considered by Paula de Pando, who looks at the queen's posthumous reputation in Spain as an evil temptress and heretic. Mary Queen of Scots also received a mass of attention from contemporary writers, such as the anti-Catholic polemicist George Buchanan, who used her Casket Sonnets to confirm her immorality. Lacking rationality and reason, and being implicated in the murder of her husband, Lord Darnley, the queen epitomised the female gender, which Buchanan suggested was unfit to rule. Leticia Álvarez-Recio expands the topic by looking at a variety of contrasting works which depict the queen as martyr and evil heretic. Catholic writers used her death as a spur to militant action around Europe, whereas Elizabethan tracts reveal the continued anxiety over pro-Catholic sentiment in Protestant England. Mary is, however, given a final opportunity to subvert the Protestant construction of her: in her last letter to Henry III of France, she is able to construct herself as an innocent, devout Catholic.

The two chapters in the final section are concerned with 'presentist projections' of queenship (p. 240), and are arguably the weakest aspect of the book. The final chapter, in which Elizabeth I is compared to modern-day stars such as Gwyneth Paltrow, although interesting in its own right, sits rather awkwardly with the rest of the essays here.

It is difficult to criticise such a collection of well-researched, insightful essays. However, one weakness is the limited timespan of the book. Despite claiming to cover the medieval to early modern periods, only a few medieval queens are included, and of those the emphasis is firmly on the fifteenth century. Equally, the remainder of the studies focus on the sixteenth century. Some individuals, admittedly important enough to warrant a whole book's worth of attention, are the focus of several essays. Perhaps the book may have benefited from a wider selection of queens encompassing the full epoch featured in the title.

MATTHEW WARD

*School of History, University of Nottingham, UK*

**Jane Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. x + 264. ISBN 978 0521767613.**

If we were asked to imagine Cupid, we might picture a gilt-edged Rococo cherub with a mischievous but essentially angelic air. The god of love did not always seem so innocent, as Jane Kingsley-Smith reminds us in her well-written cultural history. She charts the relationship between early modern depictions of Cupid and the more darkly troubling or contested aspects of desire. Her study focuses on the English reception and portrayal of Cupid between 1557 and 1635, and draws primarily on artistic, literary and dramatic sources. These extensive materials more than justify her claim that Cupid inhabited a range of identities in early modern England, allowing him to perform considerable cultural work. She argues that this multifaceted Cupid, god of both love and lust, confounded distinctions between licit and illicit desires, since he was used both to upset and reinforce sexual and gender norms, both to materialise forbidden fantasies and to punish transgressions. Her nuanced approach successfully negotiates varied depictions of this elusive, ambiguous and often double-edged mythical god.

The chapters are organised around the cultural functions Cupid fulfilled. Chapter one considers the god as ‘a figure for Catholic idolatry in a time of Protestant iconoclasm’ (p. 20). It convincingly argues that Protestant poets used Cupid both to critique Elizabethan iconophobia and to defend art’s affective power. Chapter two argues that the European iconographical tradition in which Cupid came to resemble Death – exemplified by popular ‘De Morte & Amore’ emblems – informed a tragic vision of Cupid. The author’s accompanying argument for a new category of ‘Cupidean tragedy’ is the weakest in this otherwise strong book: four plays are offered as candidates, but since one of these only ‘anticipates’ the development and another two are variants of a single play, the extant evidence for this ‘sub-genre’ consists of just two plays (pp. 74–7). However, the artistic and dramatic sources covered in this chapter make a compelling case for a sadistic Cupid allied to destructive and even tragic passions.

The book’s central chapters have the most to offer gender historians, and they bring together fascinating artistic, poetic and theatrical materials. Chapter three turns to the encounter between Cupid and three elite early modern women: Mary Stuart, Elizabeth I and Lady Mary Wroth. Kingsley-Smith argues that ‘each of these women found her public identity shaped by her supposed relationship to Cupid, and attempted to control that image by incorporating him in her own literary texts’ (p. 96). Chapter four examines the early modern sexualisation of Cupid as a beautiful boy who aroused, indulged, punished and confounded a range of heteroerotic and homoerotic desires. While art, lyric poetry and some drama positioned Cupid as a source of erotic pleasure for both sexes, frequently subverting conventional gender roles, dramatised Cupids also threatened to punish excessively desiring men with effeminacy, sodomy and even castration. Kingsley-Smith argues that this equivocal, sexualised version of Cupid ‘not only confuses the categories of early modern desire, he asserts the impossibility of categorisation’ (p. 162).

The final chapter of the book discusses various retellings of the mythic marriage between Cupid and Psyche (or love and the soul) as it engages with Neoplatonic understandings of love and desire and their religious and political connotations. As



this chapter moves into the philosophical milieu of the Caroline court, it also traces the gradual decline of Cupid's cultural importance into decorative marginality during the 1630s and the Civil War. Just as the end of the book looks forward, so its introduction provides earlier historical context: it surveys literary and artistic depictions of the god of love from Ancient Greek Eros-worship onwards, glancing at the Roman Cupids of Virgil, Seneca and Ovid, and the incarnations of the deity that presided over medieval courtly love. The European context for early modern English Cupids informs and enriches the entire book through the author's ongoing discussions of art imported into England and European sources and analogies for English literary works.

Kingsley-Smith commands an impressive array of materials. Her book's artistic and literary sources complement each other: the images reproduced and discussed at the beginning of each chapter illuminate the subsequent discussions of literary texts. There is less engagement with Protestant beliefs and writing throughout the book than one might expect from the author's argument that Cupid's 'adversarial relationship to English Protestantism' is the central factor uniting his disparate roles, but she is otherwise admirably clear in argument, structure and style (p. 1). This book may not change how we read a particular artwork or literary text but that is not its point: its achievement is to place such particular depictions of Cupid within their broader contexts. This is not a book about this poem or that painting; it is a book about the whole cultural story within the bigger early modern English picture.

JOANNA CRAIGWOOD

*Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge*

**Rolf Schulte, *Man as Witch: Male Witches in Central Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 256. ISBN 978 0230537026.**

**Alison Rowlands (ed.), *Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 256. ISBN 978 0230553293.**

These two books examine men accused of witchcraft, and re-evaluate the role of gender as a primary category of analysis for the early modern European witch hunts. Alison Rowlands has edited a collection of ten essays covering western and central Europe. Rolf Schulte, a contributor to Rowlands's volume, has produced an updated monograph in English, based on his German publication (2000) on male witches within the Holy Roman Empire. Both books are a reaction to the role of men in witchcraft trials being identified with that of persecutor, to research largely oblivious to men 'as accused and executed victims' and 'gender analysis concerned with associating women with witch trials' (Schulte, p. 2). None of these authors seeks to overturn the significance of the feminine majority among early modern witches, rather they emphasise that the gendering of witchcraft was more complex than historians have considered to date.

These works range over a great deal of historiographical and geographic territory, but share a number of common concerns. A central question is what exactly constituted 'male witchcraft'. Rowlands raises this in her introduction, noting that the essayists define it as *maleficium*. These charges of *maleficium*, though, came in many different guises: they arose out of healing or cunning magic, out of veterinary, ecclesiastical or natural magic, out of lycanthropy, wealth acquisition, family feuds; from elite sorcery

and plebeian charming. Charges of 'male witchcraft' describe magical practices bound up with the life stories of the men accused in ways that produce categorical slippage. Most of the authors acknowledge that early modern trial records use a plethora of terms to describe masculine criminal magic; that judicial records often align poorly with demonological categorisations; that ideas of beneficent and malefic male witchcraft differed in elite and popular estimations, between denominations, and across regions. Such diversity shows masculine magical typologies as messy, overlapping and highly contextually specific: there was no pan-European 'masculine magic' that can be neatly separated from 'feminine' magic.

Another major conclusion from all these works is that men cannot be assumed to have been accused only during witch 'panics'. Men were accused in this context, but gender ratios across all types of trials could vary considerably: a 'minority' of men accused might be 10 per cent or 48 per cent (Schulte, p. 67). In some regions, men formed the majority of accused (Carinthia 68 per cent), in some trials men were a majority ('Sorcerer Jack' trials in Salzburg 70 per cent). The notion that mass trials undermined the female witch stereotype, so allegations spread to those not usually accused, is shown here to be an unsubtle oversimplification. Similarly, men were not simply implicated in witchcraft accusations made initially against women. Family links to accused witches could be significant but were also subject to considerable variation. Briggs identified such links as significant in Lorraine; Voltmer thought not in the Rhine–Meuse trials; Schulte found familial links had some significance in Holstein, but virtually none in Carinthia.

All of the works reviewed here stressed that men from all walks of life were accused of witchcraft: vagrants and beggars, settled men of the towns, farmers and peasants, and men from administrative elites. Most of the authors suggest that men of lower social status were more vulnerable: for example, Schulte found that a 'statistically relevant' (Schulte, p. 247) number of male witches were socially disadvantaged men, excluded in some fashion from social life. But individual circumstances could vary greatly. In Eichstätt, men accused of witchcraft tended to be 'married, middle-class and middle aged' (Rowlands, p. 113). In Bamberg, the 'highest social class, using allegations of witchcraft as one of their weapons' led to 'the replacement of one entire group of leading men with another' (Rowlands, p. 61).

Male witches, like their female counterparts, were prosecuted within 'judicial apparatus . . . exclusively in the hands of men' (Rowlands, p. 20). A good number of the authors emphasised the need for further research on the witch hunters. Julian Goodare noted that Scottish witch hunters were problematic characters, in debt, or quarrelsome individuals, who used witch hunting to vindicate themselves within their communities; elite men might be 'spurred into witch hunting' from witchcraft threats to themselves or their estate, or might cast themselves as saviours extirpating a diabolic threat. Gaskill examined the witch hunters Matthew Hopkins and John Stearne and cautioned against interpretive frameworks focusing on issues of sexuality. If Hopkins and Stearne were driven by 'sexual prurience or perversion, it cannot be known, and should not be assumed' (Rowlands, p. 183). Sexuality, he contends, might not be relevant either to their witch hunting or their masculinity. More broadly, as Briggs observes, the 'male domination of all forms of institutional and repressive power' (Rowlands, p. 38) needs to be assessed in relation to gendered power dynamics between men, as well as between women and men.

Rowlands raises the issue of understanding the way 'male witches were perceived to have contravened norms of masculine behaviour' (Rowlands, p. 17). Robin Briggs, however, questions the importance of 'deviant behaviour that violated masculine roles' (Rowlands, p. 32), arguing the behaviour attributed to male witches 'reflected their status as witches much more than it did their gender' (Rowlands, p. 50). Briggs stressed the intersection between 'the social world that made quarrels much likelier with some people than others, and the imaginary world of witch beliefs' (Rowlands, p. 39). Malcolm Gaskill argues that 'male witches were wicked because they gave themselves to the Devil' (Rowlands, p. 184). Gender was 'relevant to their public censure less because they aped female values than because they failed to measure up to male ones', but 'ultimately . . . male witches were witches' (Rowlands, p. 184).

Rita Voltmer raises intriguing possibilities. Voltmer challenges Midelfort's suggestion that the accusation of 'non-stereotypical' witches destabilised witch hunting, producing a 'crisis of confidence' (Rowlands, p. 75) particularly as high-ranking individuals were drawn into trials. Voltmer argues that evidence tortured from high-ranking men supported the witch hunters' mission, producing evidence from 'strong minded' men, rather than 'old, weak-minded women'. The identification of elite men as 'kings of the sabbath' underscored the threat of the witches' sect (Rowlands, p. 83). Exploring the notion of the 'dual-gendered' Sabbat (Rowlands, p. 93), Voltmer points to masculine narratives that structured diabolic witchcraft. Like Voltmer, Schulte and Goodacre identified 'authority-bearing' (Rowlands, p. 189) male witches. While women formed the mass of Satan's agents, his lieutenants, and the Devil himself, were male. Key gender hierarchies were preserved, not inverted, within the patriarchal narratives that structured accounts of diabolic witchcraft, and become visible when male witches are considered as 'real' witches.

Jonathan Durrant examines witch trials at Eichstätt, which produced only a small number of male witches (12 per cent), arguing that 'gender was not significant in popular conceptions of the witch' (Rowlands, p. 101). In Eichstätt, more men were denounced than were prosecuted: had all been prosecuted, these would have been male-dominated trials. Durrant argues this 'process of selection' by the witch commissioners, influenced by their 'learned misogyny', accounts for the female majority, and that the gender of the witch was imposed 'from above' (Rowlands, pp. 106, 117). Interestingly, Schulte identified a similar dynamic, but working in reverse. In Carinthia, male suspects denounced large numbers of women, but in a 'gender-specific selection process' (Schulte, p. 189) many were not charged by the courts. Schulte also found denunciations of people 'from higher social groups were not followed up with charges' (Schulte, p. 230). While I am not convinced by Durrant's conclusion that the gender of the witch was entirely the product of elite jurists, the idea that courts applied 'selection' processes to those denounced, and the conditions which prompted such culling, requires further investigation.

Malcolm Gaskill and Willem de Blécourt make particularly useful suggestions for future research. In his essay on the East Anglian trials in England, Gaskill suggests a 'definitional axis' that is 'not just female-male, but human-beast' (Rowlands, p. 178). Investigating the intersection of charges of lycanthropy and male witchcraft, de Blécourt suggests (cautiously) that the human-beast 'definitional axis' could be classified as a 'third gender' (Rowlands, p. 192), where humans moved into the animal realm. These are fascinating insights and suggest the importance of examining the

zoomorphic aspects of early modern witchcraft. In particular, where aspects of sexuality appear absent from cases of male witchcraft, 'men could become animalised' (Rowlands, p. 208) to encode ideas of deviant sexuality. The animalisation of witches, through metamorphoses, or the English notion of the animal familiar, has only been dealt with in a limited fashion. Further research along these lines will pay significant interpretive dividends.

Sarah Ferber discusses possession, a phenomenon related to, but not synonymous with, early modern witchcraft. Examining two rare cases of adult male possession, Ferber concludes these male possessed drew important psychological authentication from cases of female possession, but that the phenomena itself 'transformed' when it moved from female to male. Ferber concludes that these two stories of masculine possession 'might take us back to the cultural silences around the idea of the masculine as the human generic' (Rowlands, p. 233). Here Ferber provides a clue to understanding Schulte's finding that concepts of masculinity were 'less frequently verbalised' (Schulte, p. 147) in demonologies, when the cultural agency of masculinity was most certainly present. Ferber alerts us to the fact that masculine normativity produces textual invisibility, and operates frequently in subterranean fashion, structuring social and cultural life via underlying, unspoken assumptions. Historians need to develop the methodological acuity to decode the 'cultural silences' that scaffolded masculinity.

Schulte's book provides the first major statistical study of male witches available in English. From a study of demonologists and demonologies, Schulte identifies the key role of denomination, arguing that the Catholic 'witch paradigm', which stressed the 'collective element' of the Witches' Sabbat, produced greater scope for the inclusion of men in witch trials (Schulte, p. 149). The Lutheran/Protestant witch paradigm largely preserved the identification of witchcraft with women. Schulte understands male witches as 'feminised men', whose 'personality features were considered feminine' (Schulte, p. 148). Schulte raises the important question of whether the prosecution of male witches served as a means of 'asserting and publicising' (Schulte, p. 249) new masculine gender ideals. Schulte usefully appropriates, and redefines, the concept of 'primary' and 'secondary' witches. Primary male witches are those accused at the 'beginning of trial series or in an individual trial'; secondary male witches were not necessarily 'ancillary witches', but 'were victims of denunciations in a current trial' (Schulte, p. 189).

Schulte uses a multi-relational explanatory model for the male-dominated witch trials in Carinthia. After 1630, in this Austrian territory, about 68 per cent of witch trials targeted men. Arguing against 'monocausal explanations' (Schulte, p. 248), Schulte accounts for this male majority through a variety of factors. The courts applied a Catholic demonological paradigm, with its emphasis on collectivity, targeted socially disadvantaged beggars, and were supported by the 'integrated estates' (Schulte, p. 241) in a society experiencing economic downturn and a restriction of material resources. Beggars, already reputed to have magical skills, and travelling in loosely organised groups searching for work, could be 'stylised' (Schulte, p. 240) as an organised conspiracy and represented as a secret society of demonic witches. Established persecutory practices, including torture and denunciation, had been honed against the Waldensian heresy, and were transferred from one masculine out-group to another. How transferrable this model is to other witch trials remains to be seen, but Schulte clearly demonstrates that the persecution of male witches was created by multiple, interacting factors. Schulte

offers the prospect for engaging with male witchcraft as an historical phenomenon that was complex and dynamic, rather than derivative and static.

A number of the authors examine masculinity through feminisation. I remain suspicious of this model. It is a methodological shortcut that appears reasonable due to our current lack of knowledge of the cultural conditions of early modern masculinity. Once we are able better to interrogate the 'cultural silences' surrounding masculinity, I think we will be able describe deviant men without making them fictive women. The tendency of authors in Rowlands's collection to identify only with femaleness has produced some sour notes from some authors which will hamper the reception of their work by gender scholars. Durrant does his essay no favours when accusing gender scholars of 'a tendency to seek the lowest common denominator', which can be 'forced into shocking stereotypes' (Rowlands, p.102); Oscar Di Simplicio writes that 'my work on witchcraft . . . has persuaded me that witchcraft beliefs . . . were not first and foremost "about" gender' (Rowlands, p. 121), then examines a set of witch trials in which 99.14 per cent of those accused were female. The study of male witches is important because they are a group of men visible as gendered historical actors: they are clearly differentiated from the majority of their co-accused on account of their gender. For several decades now, the study of witchcraft has been dominated by a search for those pan-European similarities which explain the witch and her femaleness. Difference has been explained away rather than integrated. These two books suggest that a consideration of difference may be in order: they offer the prospect of a more finely grained account of gender and witchcraft in early modern Europe.

E. J. KENT

*School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne, Australia*

**Yi-Li Wu, *Reproducing Women: Medicine, Metaphor, and Childbirth in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), pp. 378. ISBN 978 0520260689.**

*Reproducing Women* is an exciting journey into the Chinese late imperial (1368–1912) realm of *fuke*, 'medicine for married women'. As in the patriarchal Confucian tradition, the role of women was to reproduce and ensure lineage continuation, so in *nüke*, 'medicine for women', the dominant discourse focused on married women's fertility, pregnancy and successful childbirth. In the Chinese medical tradition, not to be confused with the twentieth century construct Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the human body is conceived as a flowing universe, which health is maintained by the right balance between energy (qi), the cosmological complementary principles of yin and yang, and the five phases (*wuxing*), associated to the five elements: water, fire, wood, metal and earth.

Dating back to the second century BCE, the *fuke* literature was, by the seventeenth century, largely circulated in printed texts within the whole empire, thanks to a blooming publishing industry. Although women were often practitioners and healers, and midwives took care of the practicalities of labour, delivery and post-partum, Chinese medical epistemology was a male production. The apparatus of theories and ideologies on diagnosis, pathologies and treatments were written and debated by men:

scholar-doctors, educated elite men who held an official degree or came from a hereditary medicine literate context, and not officially recognised doctors.

Wu's research focuses primarily on Qing dynasty (1644–1912) sources, but she largely references texts and debates from previous periods, so as to orient the reader in a broader frame of medical tradition. In the Qing, despite the Neo-Confucian revival and its consequential institutional promotion of female chastity and gender segregation, there is a new and more positive conceptualisation of the female body and its reproductive function. Over the centuries, the woman's body was conceived differently from the male body and was more difficult to treat because of women's emotions and segregation. Nevertheless, by the seventeenth century, medical theorists perceived women's illnesses as essentially equal to men's, besides those related to menses and childbearing. This process of *de-exoticization* of the female body is confirmed by the increasingly accepted idea that men also possessed a 'womb', intended as the 'reservoir for generative and gestational forms of qi' (p. 104). Qi and bodily fluids (called Blood) are especially important in understanding the functions of the reproductive body as seen for instance in menstruation, Blood stagnation after delivery and breastfeeding.

*Reproducing Women* introduces three main new concepts about late imperial *fuke*: the above-mentioned de-exoticisation of the female body; the discourse on the cosmologically resonant birth (chapter four), where the metaphor of the body as microcosmos and the female body as earth is reinforced by the idea of birth as repetition of cosmogenesis; and finally, the infinitive body. As the normative body discussed in medical treatises is non-gendered, and previous scholarship – Charlotte Furth, *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History, 960–1665* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) – discussed it as androgynous, Wu borrows from linguistics and calls it 'infinitive body', which can be then conjugated and gendered.

In order to explore healing repertoires and debates on therapeutic strategies on diagnosis of illnesses and ailments and cures, and the wisdom of self-treatment in *fuke* from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, Wu uses numerous primary texts, such as local gazetteers, dynastic histories, medical manuals and treatises. Written in a pleasant and accessible style, this well-documented research is addressed to specialists in the field, who will appreciate the juicy footnotes, as well as to a wider public who will enjoy successful stories of women's difficult deliveries, anecdotes of fantastic five-year pregnancies or unfortunate death in post-partum as a result of misdiagnosis, and men who turned to medicine after their wives died in childbirth.

The volume successfully represents the pluralism of voices and interesting debates within *fuke* literature, that is, on the structure and functions of the reproductive body where healthy Blood and womb are essential to achieve successful childbearing; on different methods to diagnose pregnancy, and avoid miscarriage; on the legitimisation of 'new approaches to potentially life-threatening issues' (p. 13). In the epilogue, the author briefly discusses the development of *fuke* in the early twentieth century, when it was used in the nationalistic political agenda of the Republican era (1912–49). Although not a main concern of this book, more in-depth considerations on the changes in the conception of womanhood, gender and the discourse of modernity at the turn of the twentieth century would have helped to better understand the use of *fuke* in the creation of a 'national medicine'.

*Reproducing Women* greatly contributes to the historical revision within the relatively new scholarship on women in Chinese medical history; its useful comparisons with the European medical tradition open new venues for future cross-cultural debates. It presents multiple layers of metaphors: the female body as fertile earth, birth as cosmogenesis, *fuke* as metaphor of the pluralism of intellectual debates in late imperial China and reproduction seen as reproduction of scholarly, popular and hereditary knowledges. It also can be read as a meta-discourse of reproducing, where the author 'reproduces' stories of women who reproduce, and men who reproduce knowledge while debating on reproduction.

MONICA MERLIN

*Queen's College, University of Oxford, UK*

**Suzanne G. Cusick, *Francesca Caccini at the Medici Court: Music and the Circulation of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. xxxvi + 445 and CD. ISBN 978 0226132129.**

At first sight, Suzanne G. Cusick's book could pass as nothing more than a common biography of one of the most important composers of the seventeenth century. An impression is, indeed, programmatically exceeded from the title in which the author brings forward the leading theme of the study: a fascinating link between Francesca Caccini's music and the (female) Medici court's administration of power or, more precisely, the important contribution of *Cecchina* (as she was commonly known) in establishing the grand duchesses' own authority. Therefore, this biography is not just a mere description of a life – albeit an extraordinary life – but instead it is perceived and constructed as a narrative that is readable, engaging and helps the reader to achieve a better understanding of early modern Florence, its courtly dynamics, social networks and family organisation.

According to this theoretical approach, Cusick first describes Francesca Caccini's childhood, her humanistic studies and musical training as a typical genteel girl's education, complying with gender norms of the time and adhering to unavoidable ethical values such as *castità*, *onestà* and *continenza* (chastity, honesty and continence) (chapter one). Yet on the other side, the analysis of Caccini's musical training with her father Giulio provides Cusick with the chance to investigate teaching techniques on breath control and *gorgoreggiando* – phrased in Giulio's *Le nuove musiche* (1602) – and, above all, to identify the genesis of Caccini's growing success as a performer at the Florentine court.

Cusick highlights key elements in understanding Caccini's achievements, such as her sojourns in Paris (1604–05) and Rome (1605–07). By using documents as well as letters (all published in Appendix B), Cusick clearly illustrates how *Cecchina*'s virtuous performances were employed as diplomatic instruments within political alliance strategies; but in the meantime she also outlines how Caccini's burgeoning reputation transformed her into an 'object of desire' among European courts (chapter two). Apart from her responsibilities as Medici's *musica*, singing teacher and *virtuosa* solo singer, Francesca's fortune should be ascribed to the court's consciousness of her value (by

1614 she became the best-paid musician of her time), but Francesca also needs to be understood within the milieu of the female performer; Cusick here insightfully explores Caccini's service within courtesan dynamics of power (chapters three and four).

The case study of the composition of *La stiava* provides the core of evidence for chapter two. Designed by Michelangelo Buonarroti (the Younger) and set to music by Caccini herself, *La stiava* was to be the highlight and concluding performance of the Medici court's carnival at Pisa (1607). The play is loosely based on the Medici household itself, where a foreign-born woman, Christine de Lorraine, became de facto sovereign of Tuscany in place of her husband Ferdinando I. Caccini revisited the theme almost twenty years later while working on *La liberazione di Ruggiero*, a 'balletto composto per musica', this time (1625) used to celebrate the new dynamics of Tuscany's female court of the Archduchess Maria Magdalena d'Austria (chapters nine and ten).

Under the auspices of these two outstanding women, who literally ran and reinvented a traditional patriarchal society, lived and worked Caccini, herself (as a female composer) a woman in a man's world. In chapter five, Cusick explores Caccini's working activities, her private life and her interests in more detail; she focuses on her two marriages arranged under the court's supervision (and the social implications of her widowhood: chapters eleven and twelve), as well as her involvement in family management. Additionally, the author also outlines Caccini's material circumstances by looking at the domestic arrangements concerning her house on the via Valfonda, reconstructing musical and non-musical library materials, and also examining her collection of musical instruments. *Cecchina* must have been constantly engaged in copying manuscripts, studying and composing music (all her known works are published in Appendix A, and complemented by the CD) such as her first collection of solo songs, *Primo libro delle musiche* (1618).

Apart from the functions, values and designs which are inherent in the *Primo Libro*, and to which Cusick dedicates an accurate analysis (chapters six to eight), it is significant to underline what the author claims to be the most remarkable issue of Caccini's book. Indeed, according to the courtesan representation of power, Cusick suggests that the publication of the book in 1618 should be understood as a part of a larger project, serving an 'emerging cultural program' hatched to 'prepare the people of Tuscany for the *jure* regency' of Magdalena (p. 105) – a programme, therefore, explicitly supported even by the apologetic Bronzini's *Della dignità e nobiltà delle donne* (already approved for publication by 1618) where the moral, intellectual and political equality of women and men were used to justify the legitimacy of female's power, and where, coherently, the author also extols Francesca's virtues (Appendix C).

To conclude, thanks to a massive collation of documentary material, as well as contextual evidence, Cusick's multidisciplinary approach portrays Francesca's existence while vividly describing her own society and its social duties. In other words, this volume provides a priceless study on a songstress and her audience or, as Cusick puts it, on 'the musical centre of a women's court' (p. 75).

GABRIELE MATINO

*Institute for Medieval Research, University of Nottingham, UK*



**Patricia Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 368. ISBN 978 0199204809.**

The history of parenting is a popular topic for research at the moment, but Patricia Crawford's book is unusual in focusing specifically on the poorer strata. In fact one of her principal concerns is to highlight the class specificities of the experiences of parenting; as she says in reference to earlier works which focused on the elite, 'we cannot read the history of poor mothers and fathers as a pathetic attempt at the ideals and practices of the elite' (p. 3). It will come as no surprise to those familiar with Crawford's earlier work that a second focus is on the gendered aspects of parenting: in particular, the way that mothers and fathers of illegitimate children were treated differently, and carried out different roles in relation to their children. She has cast her net wide in search of sources to support this study, from the poor laws and the foundling hospital, to advice literature, court records and visual images. Her time frame is also deliberately broad (1580–1800), in order to cover a 'sea change' in gender relations, alongside the development of the poor laws (p. 4).

The attention to gender roles is reflected in the structure of the book, which first examines mothers, then fathers, before moving on to the dual experiences of poverty and parenting. The different ways that parents of children born out of wedlock were treated is made clear – mothers are discussed in terms of 'bastards', while fathers are associated with 'illegitimacy' in their chapter heading. Crawford lays much emphasis on these distinctions, pointing out the cultural as well as biological differences in parent–child relations according to gender. This discussion is framed by the ideology of patriarchy, which is set up in the introduction, and runs throughout the main chapters. Each chapter is composed of shorter sections dealing with different aspects of parenting – for example, marriage versus cohabitation, denying paternity, training and disciplining children. Each refers to a truly impressive range of literature, drawn from many different English communities. It is unfortunate that the field has become so vibrant during the time that this book was in preparation, as these sections, although painstakingly researched and clearly presented, do not have quite the impact they would have done had the book appeared in the vanguard of research (as was the intention when it was begun). Nonetheless, social and family historians alike will find much in the way of detail to support developing ideas about the construction and experiences of parenting here.

More novel, although more contentious, is the last section, on 'civic fatherhood'. Here Crawford develops the argument that the language of fatherhood was adopted by those higher up the social scale, such as poor law officers and charity officials, on behalf of the children of the poor. By casting themselves in a kind of *loco parentis* for poor children, however, she suggests that they emasculated biological fathers, whose gender status was undermined by their poverty. This is well sustained, but readers may not all be convinced. Other researchers have found a less clear-cut set of dichotomies in the way that poor fathers were treated, particularly in this context, but also in the terms of reference used by the poor laws.

It is with very mixed feelings that I review this book, as its author did not live to see its publication. It was originally conceived as part of a wider project which would have treated the middling and upper classes as well, but in isolating this section, Patricia Crawford was able to construct a framework of gender relations and

feminist thought which bear the hallmark of her skills and ideas as a historian. Many of the reservations about novelty are the result of her book being slowed down by her lengthy final illness, and I would much rather draw attention to its novel intentions, the scope of its remit and its focus on a social class whose family relationships are only slowly being revealed. It also absolutely succeeds in its intention to illustrate that there was no single type of family among the poor ('there was only a diversity of family types, constantly changing as individuals were born and died' (p. 17)), and that poverty shaped the most basic experiences of parenting. This book will undoubtedly be of great interest to those working in this growing field, and is wide-ranging enough to be an excellent reference point for those new to it as well. It is also a fitting testimonial to the skills and determination of one of our best-known feminist historians.

ALYSA LEVENE

*School of Arts and Humanities, Oxford Brookes University, UK*

**Leslie Tuttle, *Conceiving the Old Regime: Pronatalism and the Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 264. ISBN 978 0195381603.**

Leslie Tuttle, assistant professor of history at the University of Kansas, analyses royal policies designed to shape family relations in early modern France. She focuses on the Edict on Marriage of 1666, the first 'pronatalist' policy that rewarded men who married young and fathered large numbers of legitimate children. A man who had produced ten living children would be exempt from such duties as collecting taxes and billeting troops, but only if none of his progeny had taken religious vows. The prize for twelve children was extended to include a full reprieve from direct royal taxation (p. 52). Bourgeois fathers who did not pay taxes were instead promised an annual pension of 500 *livres* for ten children, and 1,000 for twelve. Noblemen could fare even better, with 1,000 *livres* for ten, and 2,000 for twelve.

In her meticulously researched and fascinating study, Tuttle shows how these policies were far from straightforward, placing them within the politics of fertility. During the seventeenth century, reproduction within marriage was valued by the monarchy as a positive and sanctioned way to increase the French king's subjects and thus his bounty; it was not driven by fears of a declining population. The Edict on Marriage affirmed and attempted to expand royal intervention in the lives of French people, encouraging the kind of conservative gendered dynamics that considered women's fertility a resource, and praised fatherhood as a social role likely to produce industrious and docile men devoted to securing their children's futures.

Of course, pronatalist policies were also meant to boost the birth rate, though methods for measuring population growth were not yet in place. All the same, Tuttle finds little indication that the number of large families multiplied in France after 1666. She argues that during the second half of the seventeenth century, families with ten children were not common, but also not exactly rare – about one in nine families would have been this large, especially when parents were wealthy enough to hire wet nurses to feed their newborns, freeing recently delivered women from the contraceptive effects

associated with lactation (p. 132). The Edict on Marriage might be best understood in relation to the decreasing numbers of such large families, noticeable by the eighteenth century, though it by no means caused them. According to Tuttle, pronatalist policies helped make it possible to think about family size by promoting the idea that it could be controlled by human intervention, and was not simply God's will (p. 11). Common early modern methods of birth control included late marriage and lengthy periods of breast feeding, liable to decrease to five or six the number of children born to parents (p. 10).

The ineffectiveness of pronatalist policies is perhaps the most striking point made in Tuttle's book. Not only did the Edict on Marriage fail to increase fertility, it met with resistance, revealing the limited powers of the 'absolutist' French monarchy. Political and religious leaders successfully rebuffed, among other things, the Ordinance of Orléans, which attempted to inhibit men from becoming monks before the age of twenty-five (p. 60). Furthermore, when similar kinds of pronatalist edicts were imposed on the peoples of New France with the assumption that monogamous Catholic marriage patterns would civilise the colony, they were even less successful. Tuttle reveals that Amerindian practices of occasional polygamy and premarital sex continued, as did partnerships between native women and French men, or even between women and several men, a situation produced by the lack of available women in New France, despite the influx of 770 *filles du roi* between 1663 and 1673 (p. 96).

The chapter on New France is among the most compelling, and it displays the depth and diversity of Tuttle's research skills. Despite starting with a relatively narrow piece of legislation, she contextualises it within political, sexual, religious and moral practices and ideas, drawing on demographic, literary and archival sources. Her book shifts from canonised political figures and writings to individual family members and the records related to their birth patterns. Perhaps most impressive is Tuttle's engaging writing style, which encompasses detailed accounts of the birthing room and the efforts of individual men to retain their tax-exemption privileges even after the death of a child, along with broad overviews of such topics as the shifting understandings of contraception from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries. In short, Leslie Tuttle has produced a brilliant book, and it should appeal to a range of historians and scholars, as well as to both undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in courses on early modern culture and society.

LIANNE McTAVISH

*Department of Art and Design, University of Alberta, Canada*

**Rebecca Hartkopf Schloss, *Sweet Liberty: The Final Days of Slavery in Martinique* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), pp. 312. ISBN 978 0812241723.**

*Sweet Liberty: The Final Days of Slavery in Martinique* draws upon vast official records and private papers documenting life in Martinique in the last fifty years of slavery and abolitionism. Rebecca Hartkopf Schloss reveals that the lives of Martinicans were bound to those in the metropole and around the Atlantic by business, political and intimate ties that individuals were at pains to sustain through dramatic events:

revolution in France and Saint Domingue, the founding of Haiti, British rule during the Napoleonic period, the legal emancipation of enslaved labourers in the British empire and finally the end of slavery and decree of universal male suffrage in revolutionary 1848.

Schloss addresses the cultural construction of labels such as 'French', 'Creole', 'citizen' and 'nation'. Such labels were continually being made, challenged and remade in the interaction between wealthy, free and enslaved individuals in the racialised plantation society of colonial Martinique. These were unsettling times for the island's elite white males, the *colons*. Wealthy planters negotiated for power between themselves and with a series of metropolitan administrators, who were French, then British and ultimately French again. For their part, administrators sought to reconcile competing agendas between Creoles and metropolitan government. For the British governing Martinique, the task included rationalising trade policy formed under imperial competition that barred French Caribbean sugar produce from British ports. For the French, this balancing act frequently meant attempting to bring Martinique in line with continental France in the face of resistance from *colons* eager to assert the distinctiveness of Creole society and affirm their precarious position at the top of it.

Martinican life was the scene of the 'complex interplay' between individuals negotiating a racial, gender and class hierarchy. Schloss is alert to the nuances of this hierarchy: phenotype, property ownership, occupation, birthplace, education and free or enslaved status. This racialising process was also felt in continental French society as colonists, 'poor whites' (descendants of indentured labourers), free persons of colour and enslaved labourers moved between Martinique and the Atlantic port cities of mainland France and its capital. Local authorities were so alarmed by the presence of a tiny minority of people of colour in continental France that laws were hurriedly passed to restrict the entrance of people of African descent into the country, to preserve the putative purity of French blood. The author skilfully addresses how the movement of people around the French Atlantic revealed the boundaries and contradictions of French citizenship and nationhood.

Most interesting are the tireless efforts of *colons* to defend their privilege in the last fifty years of slavery and abolitionism. Fabricating an ideal of white womanhood (comprised of dignified comportment, marriage and conspicuous leisure) was particularly important cultural work for elite men, and this stereotype was energetically sustained. Often *colons* were supported in this work by colonial administrators, who reserved special aid for orphaned white girls and assisted poor white women in leaving the island. These idealised images of white femininity contradicted white women's active roles in maintaining the social position of planter and merchant families through frequent trips to metropolitan France, to collect debts, maintain social networks and find suitable schooling and professions for their children. Defending white prestige also extended to reserving education for whites only and resisting the integration of schools when emancipation seemed inevitable. 'Poor whites' were especially subversive to the work of preserving white prestige. Fears of an alliance between 'poor whites' and freed people of colour constantly stalked the *colons*, as did the frequently plotted slave uprisings, which raised the spectre of 'another Saint Domingue'. Schloss's attention to the construction of social categories in the colony would have been enriched further still by greater attention to the efforts of people of colour, especially enslaved

labourers and free women of colour *as individuals* to improve his or her lot and negotiate for status in the contingent and ever-shifting social hierarchy of Martinican society. Overall, however, this is a much-needed contribution to scholarship on the imperial and cultural history of the French Atlantic.

ROCHELLE ROWE

*Department of History, University of Essex, UK*

**Victoria Kelley, *Soap and Water: Cleanliness, Dirt and the Working Classes in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (London and New York: I. B Tauris, 2010), pp. 256. ISBN 978 1848850521.**

In *Soap and Water*, Victoria Kelley explores the nature and production of meanings associated with cleanliness and dirtiness among the British working classes from approximately 1880 to 1914. Working at the intersections of social history, design history, cultural studies, feminist studies and anthropology, Kelley contests historiographic narratives that posit changing working-class attitudes towards, and practices of, cleanliness as evidence of either middle-class social imperialism, or bourgeoisification among elements of the working classes. Instead, by appealing to the ‘voices’ and experiences of working-class subjects, she argues that working-class values and meanings surrounding cleanliness and dirtiness were complex and multivalent, inextricably bound up with ideas and ideologies of gender as well as concerns for class status and community standing. She further insists that these meanings were informed by a variety of factors stemming not only from middle-class moral and hygienic imperatives, but also from a burgeoning consumer culture, as well as what she terms “‘indigenous’ working class values’ (p. 191).

To substantiate such claims, Kelley draws upon three distinct types of sources: so-called ‘civilising sources’, referring primarily to the proliferating social investigations of the later nineteenth century; working-class autobiographies; and advertisements for soap and cleaning products, found on the pages of women’s magazines and penny papers. Kelley deliberately chose these sources, claiming they take the investigator and reader ‘directly into the homes and lives of working-class people’. Taken together, she asserts, they ‘create a map of cleanliness, as an idea, a set of practices, and a proliferating array of products’ which ‘overlap and coincide’ but ‘also contradict each other’ (p. 7). Each chapter, defined thematically, is organised and informed by a particular source set; together, they explore the relationships between cleanliness and class, gender and consumer culture. Kelley’s reading of these sources is impressively interdisciplinary, but centrally informed by anthropological concepts and methods. Kelley insists that anthropological approaches uniquely enable historians to explore in great depth both the moral valences of cleanliness, and the production and performance of cleanliness through details such as the arrangement of hair, clothing and the household. She makes particularly effective use of Mary Douglas’s theories regarding cleanliness and dirtiness as fundamental organising principles of human social life, as well as theories regarding the production of social and cultural meanings through the practices of ‘everyday life’.

Running throughout the text is a concern with the mutually constitutive relationship between norms of gender and norms of cleanliness. Kelley focuses on the figure

of the working-class wife and mother, as the latter was primarily responsible for upholding standards of cleanliness. Just as Kelley resists interpretations that represent working-class regimes and ideals of cleanliness as class oppression, she also insists that working-class women's efforts to keep a clean home do not simply reflect gender oppression. While acknowledging the restrictive aspects of the gendered division of domestic labour for women, Kelley nonetheless asserts that wives and mothers' efforts to keep a clean home also represented an act through which women 'creatively expressed love, energy, and initiative' for their families (p. 112). Such claims are developed through Kelley's readings of working-class autobiographies, as well as feminist histories of housework, which suggest that domestic norms of cleanliness can have a range of implications for women. Kelley's argument here is somewhat undermined by the paucity of sources offering less mediated testimony from Victorian and Edwardian working-class wives and mothers themselves, as well as her observation that most wives and mothers appear in working-class narratives as 'lacking a vital presence' and 'almost a cipher' (pp. 95 and 93 respectively).

*Soap and Water* is an engaging and interesting study that is both analytically rich and accessible thanks to Kelley's clear writing. Kelley is most convincing when discussing the dynamics of cleanliness, class and gender through readings of social investigatory and autobiographical texts; conversely, her discussion of the role of soap, consumer culture and their relation to the concerns at hand feels belaboured. Nevertheless, her arguments are persuasive, and suggest that this subject deserves further, broader inquiry. Although, as Kelley notes, a distinct historiography of 'cleanliness' is virtually non-existent, *Soap and Water* arguably makes its most important contribution to the cultural history of the British working classes.

KIRSTEN LENG

*Department of Women's Studies, University of Michigan, USA*

**Sharrona Pearl, *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. xii + 288. ISBN 978 0674036048.**

In this fascinating book, Sharrona Pearl offers a fresh look at physiognomy as a visual language of communication with an important place in our historical understanding of Victorian culture. The study of facial features and their relationship to character has a long history, but Pearl is less interested in the legitimacy of physiognomic practice than the role of audiences and consumers in developing a distinctive way of seeing, indeed a technology of description and classification. Given the number of existing studies of physiognomy, the examples and themes discussed here will be familiar to many readers. Yet Pearl's conceptual approach is ingenious, for she takes the reader on a journey through the sites and spaces of London in order to show how the cultural experience of modern, urban life was shaped by physiognomy, which in turn shaped 'the ways in which Victorians saw the world and made decisions about it' (p. 3).

The central claim of the book is that the Victorians became more physiognomically literate through the century, and so the practice of reading faces changed from a

mechanism for getting information to the self-conscious giving of information. Why this change occurred is not a question that Pearl dwells on, for the simple reason that the social transformations produced by modernity are well enough known. The interest of this study lies instead in chronicling the uses to which physiognomy was put in different urban environments to categorise humanity and visualise difference, both of individuals and groups. Pearl shows how physiognomy was an especially useful tool for navigating London life, in that it offered a shorthand vision of moral character and so contained the conditions of possibility for 'a new form of trust' (p. 15) to bridge the gap between anonymity and interaction in the city. It was precisely because of its flexibility in serving everyday and professional uses that physiognomy contributed to debates about character and community, race and representation, and mental disease, according to Pearl. In the streets and the theatre, in paintings, photographs and newspapers, or in medical practice, people instinctively read the visible signs of the face and thereby became accomplished in judging others while aware of their own susceptibility to the physiognomic gaze.

The book follows a roughly chronological order, with each of the six chapters describing how different media contributed to the growth and diversification of Lavaterian physiognomy in the nineteenth century. The first chapter is broadly concerned with daily life on the streets of London and investigates the codes of behaviour necessary to blend into 'the right crowd and the right class' (p. 37), in particular via clothing and self-presentation. The chapter is full of examples of the sensory experience of the city, though at times it would benefit from more sustained analysis, because the connections between disparate figures such as Henry Mayhew, Elizabeth Eastlake, Thomas Woolnoth and Charles Darwin can seem tenuous. The succeeding chapters display something of the same tendency to generalise and smooth over the complexity of debates; however, they focus on a single medium of physiognomic vision and so the claims are more coherent – and there is much to praise as a result. From acting, portraits and caricatures to photographic and diagnostic techniques, these chapters describe the process through which physiognomic practice transformed from a description of individual character to a mode of classifying individuals into groups. In chapters two and three, for example, we learn how artists and actors used physiognomic conventions in painting and performance to capture their subjects and also 'hone their powers of observation, as well as the perceptual skills of their audiences' (p. 103). And in chapters four and five, we see what happens when physiognomic principles are used to categorise groups as, for instance, in caricatures of the racialised types of the Irish and the Jews that appeared in the periodical press and the photographic representations of mental disease produced by Dr Hugh Welch Diamond. The book closes with the scientific appropriations of physiognomy by Francis Galton and Jean-Martin Charcot in a professional, diagnostic context, which proves a fitting way to indicate how physiognomy was recast in two new directions as the 'radical exteriority' of anthropology and eugenics, and the 'radical interiority' of psychoanalysis (p. 209).

This is a richly textured book, bursting with perceptive commentary on the ways in which the physiognomic notions of character were communicated across a spectrum of cultural experiences and professional practices. It is obvious that the work of Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, James Secord, Alison Winter, Chris Otter and Simon Gunn have proved especially influential to this account. Yet the pleasure of the

book lies in its ability to synthesise different approaches from the cultural history of science and media and communication studies through the claim that physiognomy is science *and* entertainment. This is a persuasive thesis, which provides justification for the broad scope of the book and the distinctiveness of its method. While there are some weaknesses in argumentation, especially in the use of 'technology' to characterise the practice of physiognomy and the notion of the physiognomic instinct, the book nonetheless succeeds in its ambitious task of expanding the scope of our understanding of physiognomy and its numerous practices. Indeed, it demonstrates that the questions and problems posed by reading faces are still very much alive.

LUCY HARTLEY

*Department of English Language and Literature, University of Michigan, USA*

**Jacqueline M. Moore, *Cow Boys and Cattle Men: Class and Masculinity on the Texas Frontier, 1865–1900* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), pp. xii + 269. ISBN 978 0814757390.**

The history of the American West has been traditionally told in masculine terms with the cowboy heading the parade of male heroes. He became an icon of white manhood to generations of Americans because he personified the taming of the frontier. The Texan cowboy was deemed to be stronger and bolder than his contemporaries because Texas was both the early home of the cattle industry and the largest and most independent of the Western states. Traditional narratives of the American West have, however, taken a battering in recent years. Whether criticised by New Western History or by one of the newer strands of history such as ethno-history, ecological history or women's history, the heroic and macho role of the cowboy has been downgraded to that of a hired hand. Yet for all the re-visioning relatively little historical research has applied the lens of masculine studies to the cowboy. *Cow Boys and Cattle Men* offers a detailed and judicious assessment of the many forms which masculinity took among the owners and the paid workers of the Texan cattle industry in the late nineteenth century.

Jacqueline Moore divides her subject into two broad areas, roughly corresponding to work and leisure. Within these sections, she scrutinises both the cattlemen, who owned or managed the land and the animals, and the cowboys, who were employees and rarely managed to accumulate enough capital to become cattlemen themselves. The economic and class division between these two sets of men was clear-cut. Cowboys were young, single, usually aged between twenty and forty, had only a few years of education and rarely came from a genteel background (unless seeking adventure away from their families). They did not have a lifelong career 'cowboying' and were highly mobile. As low-paid workers, they were required to do a variety of tasks, including herding cattle, riding and mending fences, digging wells, building windmills and growing feed crops for the animals.

By contrast, many cattlemen began wealthy or had family connections that facilitated access to money. Others found wealthy backers before they came to Texas. They might work with their employees, but they rarely integrated with them and they usually regulated their workforce. As their ranches increased in size, they adopted the



methods of big business to gain efficiencies and their relationship with their employees became more impersonal. Indeed, the arrival of corporations reduced the cowboy to an entry into the account book. In this he was in a similar subordinate position to western miners, railway workers and loggers in the American north-west.

Relegating the cowboy and the cattleman to the status of employee and employer may demythologise part of the epic of the cowboy, but says little about social relations and the ethos of masculinity that developed. Texas ranch life in the late nineteenth century was predominantly an all-male environment, but one in which cowboys looked mainly to each other for confirmation of their manhood while cattlemen looked outside the ranch. Cowboys judged each other on their hard work and bravery and prized camaraderie. Yet despite their general emphasis on equality, they created social hierarchies in which they disparaged incompetent dudes who could not meet work standards and white cowboys degraded many of their black and Hispanic peers. When in town, they were often on the defensive and felt uncomfortable. Then they often engaged in impulsive spending on new clothes, gambling, drinking, fighting and sexual conquests. Their town behaviour condemned them to being considered irresponsible 'boys'.

Cattlemen, by contrast, were comfortable in their local urban communities and valued their interactions with this 'civilised society'. Indeed, they often had homes in the town. Like their employees, they were physical, aggressive and dedicated to their job, but they were also intellectual, articulate, self-reliant, morally upright, could control their passions, mixed comfortably with women and valued civic involvement. They usually married. They considered that they were gentlemen and were a 'cut above' their employees. Cattlemen defined their masculinity in middle-class terms of self-discipline, which they expressed in part through their ability to restrain other men at work and at leisure.

Jacqueline Moore has travelled the state of Texas to locate primary and secondary sources on the state's cattle industry, thus revealing many nuances about the work and social cultures of men in this industry. Her information on cowboys is stronger and more detailed than on cattlemen. This may stem from the nature of the sources, or from her wish to bring factual evidence to the history of the cowboy which has drawn too much from dime novels, Wild West shows and popular films. Her style is narrative, telling what she has found; and though she discusses recent historical studies of masculinity, these act more as a point of reference than as a framework for analysis. Nevertheless, this is a volume on which scholars of both the American West and of masculinity will find valuable for its evidence of manliness.

MARGARET WALSH

*School of American and Canadian Studies, University of Nottingham, UK*

**Sue Hawkins, *Nursing and Women's Labour in the Nineteenth Century: The Quest for Independence* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010) pp. xi + 228. ISBN 978 0415551694.**

It is a refreshing change to read nursing history that does not dwell on the registration debates, the 'great and the good' of nursing and nursing vocation. Sue Hawkins's

*Nursing and Women's Labour in the Nineteenth Century* provides its readers with something different: a rich analysis which follows in the fine traditions of 'history from below' and delves deeply into the everyday working life of the 'ordinary nurse' in nineteenth-century Britain. It frames nursing as a job for both working- and middle-class women by highlighting the difficult working conditions but also the opportunities for independent living and even advancement. The proliferation of prescriptive literature published in the nineteenth century has seduced many into identifying nursing as exclusively a vocation, but this volume allows readers to question the centrality of the vocation discourse. The methodological approaches used, a mix of microhistory and prosopography, lend themselves to the discovery of a surprising amount of detail in the ordinary lives of the nurses of St George's Hospital, London, the focus of this study. But microhistory is also valuable for the second objective of this volume, to chart the changing working conditions of nursing (p. 9). After an introduction which outlines the contested historiography of nursing history (a must-read for students), the first chapter places nurses into the context of social, labour and medical history by framing nursing within the important debates about the medical marketplace (particularly the world of voluntary hospitals); the literature on middle- and working-class women; and the literature on the post-Gamp 'new nurse'. Throughout the next four chapters which investigate class, education, attrition and advancement, Hawkins reveals diverse nursing identities while weaving throughout the changes in working conditions.

Hawkins begins by developing a profile of St George's 'new nurse'. Like many other voluntary hospitals, rising patient admissions led St George's to hire large numbers of nurse probationers who did the majority of the bedside nursing (p. 49). The demand for probationers was matched by the supply of women from all classes eager to enter probationer nursing schemes. Hawkins argues for the meritocracy of nursing at St George's until 1897, and certainly there are many elements that attest to this (p. 65). Matron Harriet Coster, initially a housemaid, was one of the most longstanding matrons (1872–97) (p. 62); during her tenure, internal promotion policies rewarded working-class nurses with advancement. However, middle-class Florence Smedley, matron after 1897, brought a 'new style of nursing' which Hawkins indicates led to a reversal of internal promotion policies. (pp. 64, 136). Hawkins's analysis of social class also indicates an important shift from probationers coming from the skilled working classes in the 1850s to the upper and middle classes by 1900 (pp. 54–5). This brings to the fore the inevitable questions of how dependent was meritocracy to the class and personal attitudes of the matron. More importantly, as Hawkins herself notes, this mingling of classes points to questions about the tenor of the relationships between nurses of different class backgrounds and the development of nursing communities as well as nursing networks. This is a research area that merits a full investigation of its own.

Hawkins next examines nursing knowledge, arguing it was more practical than theoretical, and taught by more experienced nurses and medics mostly on the wards. When lectures by medics were offered from 1882, nurses were not obliged to attend them. Formal exams were introduced in 1894 and initial results proved 'devastating', reflecting the arbitrary nature of nurse training (p. 103). Lectures became compulsory in 1897 when Matron Smedley introduced a systematic syllabus. The boundaries between knowledge held by the doctor and the nurse were mired in the politics and

competitiveness of professionalisation. Hawkins notes the missed opportunity of defining nursing knowledge, a theme still resonant today (pp. 78–80).

Hawkins charts the improvements in working conditions at St George's, revealing both the agency of the nurses and the need to reduce attrition rates. Wages were increased in 1852, after head nurses petitioned the Weekly Board to examine their wages. Wages were reviewed regularly after 1869, though not all changes were welcomed. In 1895, second-year probationers complained about their pay changes and the Weekly Board addressed their concerns (pp. 120–21). Advances occurred elsewhere as working hours dropped slightly and nursing accommodation was upgraded. Many women continued to work as nurses, even after leaving St George's, which Hawkins attributes to improved working conditions.

This highly readable text allows its readers to glimpse the everyday life of the hospital nurse. This is more than nursing history; it is medical, social, gender and labour history and should be read widely by academic scholars and students. Hawkins's overall argument is convincing: despite the difficult and fatiguing work, St George's Hospital offered nurses a respectable livelihood with a living wage, advancement opportunities and long-term stability. But can this argument be extended to other hospitals and other forms of nursing? Importantly, Hawkins has provided a methodology which can be replicated by historians researching nursing history. Hopefully historians will take up this challenge.

CARMEN M. MANGION

*School of History, Classics & Archaeology, Birkbeck College, London, UK*

**Elisa Camiscioli, *Reproducing the French Race: Immigration, Intimacy, and Embodiment in the Early Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. 240 + 10 illustrations. ISBN 978 0822345480 (hb); 978 0822345657 (pb).**

In the nineteenth century, France had the lowest birth rate in Europe. This demographic trend was a 'depopulation' crisis, to which immigration appeared as a promising solution to boost economic productivity and spur fertility. Active recruiting by industrialists and open border policies fuelled modest population growth such that, by 1930, three million foreigners had made France their home, constituting 7 per cent of the population.

*Reproducing the French Race* examines the public and intellectual debates on the assimilability of foreigners and the future of French society during the First World War and the 1920s. Camiscioli uses an analytical lens of 'embodiment' to examine the cultural meanings attached to varied bodies within the context of a republican society that proclaimed universal citizenship rights. Drawing out ideas from parliamentary debates, industrial studies, military documents and feminist newspapers, Camiscioli concludes that elites obsessed over matters of race, sexuality and reproduction as they commented on the influx of immigrants. While this is not the first book on *denatalité*, it combines a fresh cultural studies approach with richly textured analysis to bring us a new synthesis on the political and ideological challenges of immigration between the two world wars.

Camiscioli's central contribution is that the intellectual fixation on racial difference and the construction of racial hierarchies served to undermine republican ideals. Inspired by Joan W. Scott's critique of republican citizenship, Camiscioli finds that 'the uneasy incorporation of the Enlightenment concept of Man into a national and hence particularist system necessitated a distinction between citizens and foreigners which was, strictly speaking, antithetical to its universalizing project' (p. 11). The French republic promised universal citizenship rights but did not deliver them to either colonial subjects or Frenchwomen until the mid-twentieth century. This book documents racist, xenophobic and anti-feminist rhetoric around the immigration question, and reveals the fallacy of the 'melting pot' theory of assimilation.

The book is composed of five thematically related chapters, two of which were published previously in academic journals. The first three chapters focus on representations of male immigrants' potential assimilability, and their social value as fathers, workers and citizens respectively. The immigrants in questions were usually 'white' Europeans and people of colour from French colonies in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. In chapter one, the author shows us that pronatalists sublimated their xenophobia in order to endorse a short-term immigration plan that would give France a 'blood transfusion' until the time native-born French families become more fecund. In chapter two, we encounter labour scientists who hoped to Taylorise the workplace according to hierarchies of racial fitness, discipline, productivity and dexterity. In chapter three, Camiscioli exposes the ideas of physicians and anthropologists who pessimistically imagined the 'hybrid' families produced by immigrant male labourers and French women. Despite public wariness about intermarriage, the French Third Republic government never passed antimiscegenation laws, forbade interracial relations or instituted eugenics policies.

The final two chapters turn to the social commentary on women as wives with non-French husbands, and as prostitutes within regulated prostitution. The argument in chapter four on the movement to abolish state-regulated prostitution is rather contentious. Camiscioli asserts that the social reformers who sought to end regulated prostitution and international sex trafficking 'endorsed a conservative understanding of the gender order' that attempted to 'reinscribe paternal authority' and 'restrict the movement of women' (p. 100), offering women an 'alternative form of subjugation' (p. 113). Camiscioli unfairly characterises feminists, including Madame Ghénia Avril de Sainte-Croix and lawyer Maria Vérone, as representing all prostitutes as victims, denying women's agency, and endorsing patriarchal families as the best alternative to prostitution. Historians including Christine Bard, Anne Cova and Florence Rochefort have argued that feminist abolitionists were known for endorsing the rights of prostitutes as individuals to whom they offered social, educational, legal and health services.

By contrast, chapter five effectively balances the concerns of pronatalists and politicians versus feminists over the question of married women's independent nationality. The author argues persuasively that the law of 1927 granting brides the right to keep their nationality was motivated not by a desire to promote women's rights, but rather by concern for the children of the 150,000 native-born women rendered foreigners by marriage.

One of the unresolved questions haunting this book is the place of Jewish immigrants within these debates, and the influence of interwar racism on the Vichy regime.

Camiscioli asks but does not answer 'to what degree did Vichy's anti-Jewish policies have their roots in the political culture of the previous Republican form?' (p. 158). The implied answer is that republicans were indeed guilty of Vichy's crimes.

These concerns aside, this is a thought-provoking book that highlights the complexity of ideas about race and racial identity at the levels of both private and public life, and simultaneously incorporates theoretical insights from cultural studies, critical race studies and gender studies. The dynamic topics addressed in the short chapters may appeal to students. For scholars, this book contributes to our understanding of the ways immigration and depopulation troubled the ideals of French republicanism.

SARA L. KIMBLE

*Newberry Library, Chicago, USA*

**Sue Bruley, *The Women and Men of 1926: A Gender and Social History of the General Strike and the Miners' Lockout in South Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010), pp. ix + 202. ISBN 978 0708322758.**

**Annmarie Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland, 1919–1939*, Scottish Historical Review Monograph (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 235. ISBN 978 0748639816.**

*Gender and Political Identities in Scotland, 1919–1939* by Annmarie Hughes explores Scottish women's participation in both formal and informal political struggles. She begins her study by posing a number of questions relating to the ability of women to resist, defy or subvert dominant discourses that could shape their identity, issues she links specifically to class, geography and gender antagonism. These form overarching themes that are explored throughout the book. Hughes presents a strong case for a study of this nature, highlighting that much of the historiography concerning the Scottish labour movement, particularly that which focuses on debates over the country's radical and 'revolutionary' potential, has tended towards a narrative dominated by a masculine perspective rather than one that includes women's experiences. Furthermore, she points out that there is an absence of any systematic analysis of Scottish women within the wider context of British gender historiography. As such, Hughes's study focusing on women's identities and the experiences of gender in the workplace, politics, the community and the home is a very welcome addition to current literature.

The study is structured around eight main chapters. Chapters one and four provide an excellent study of work and political identities, examining the gendered nature of employment using a broad range of women's experiences in the workplace. Hughes notes that, although fragmented identities among women could cause tensions, there was also the possibility of developing 'gender-specific personal relationships and work cultures that formed part of a process by which they became politicised' (p. 90). These included a variety of 'informal' organisations when women were denied contact with the 'formal' trade union organisations. Outside these two chapters, the study moves beyond the workplace as it seeks to explore how women's experiences of everyday life politicised them, and it analyses the relationship between class awareness and gender identity. This theme is explored from a number of angles in the latter part of the book

as Hughes explores the campaigns of feminist groups (noting how feminist women were not necessarily united in their aims, objectives and strategies), the politics of marriages of conflict (highlighting how women used a range of strategies to resist men's domination in this private sphere), and mothering and political identity (analysing women's support networks which, she argues, could be 'based on subversive forums of knowledge, defiance and courage that constituted a forum of gender consciousness' (p. 163)). These sections of the book are particularly strong, well argued and highly informative. The conclusion to the book is short, but it does succeed in drawing together the main arguments in the study in a clear and crisp fashion, and offers recommendations for further study.

One of the main strengths of this monograph is the way in which it explores how groups of women challenged gender oppression and behaved in 'feminist' ways. It draws on a wide selection of oral testimonies (interviews conducted by the author as well as the oral history projects of other organisations, such as the Workers' Educational Association) and autobiographies. Using these, Hughes explores contemporary attitudes and the 'intersection of different forms of politics in the everyday lives of women' (p. 10). She challenges both historiographical presentations of the interwar years being a 'barren period' for women of the labour movement and images of working-class women as politically apathetic. Hughes's book is an exceptionally strong and much-needed contribution to the literature on the histories of gender, the labour movement, women's employment and the construction of feminism.

The relationship between class and gender during the General Strike is a theme common to both Hughes's work on gender and political identities in Scotland and Sue Bruley's gender and social history of the General Strike in south Wales. Both authors note that there is little historiography on women's participation in industrial action during 1926. Hughes examines women's conduct during the dispute, challenging accounts that have simply focused on their 'steadfast loyalty rather than their industrial militancy' (p. 93), and Bruley explores mining women's participation in popular disturbances and the implications this had for working-class solidarity, gender politics and the patriarchal practices of the labour movement.

Sue Bruley's monograph, *The Women and Men of 1926*, is designed to provide a detailed study of gender relations before, during and after the General Strike and Miners' Lockout of 1926. Set within a broader social history of these events, the study is designed to address the need to reconsider these events from a gender perspective. As Bruley notes, 'the homogenous nature of coalfield communities' is generally emphasised within the historiography whereby 'elements of opposition and conflict other than class conflict' are downplayed. 'The challenge of gender history is to revisit coalfield history and analyse changing identities and relationships in mining communities' (p. 15).

This book takes the south Wales coalfield as its focus but, where appropriate, places developments within a national context and in so doing broadens the scope and nature of this work. It sets out to analyse masculine and feminine identities 'at a particular moment of crisis in British history, giving a new dimension to this very significant event' (p. 146). It does this by focusing on the following themes: gender, family and neighbourhood prior to 1926; the shifts in gender relations brought about by collective eating; the cultural aspects of the dispute; women, politics and pickets; and the construction of gender in the aftermath of the Lockout. One of the

drawbacks of structuring the study in this way is that there are elements of repetition, as the author herself notes. However this is far outweighed by the level of analysis possible with a study of this type compared to an alternative, chronological approach.

The argument and conclusions are strongly informed by oral testimony, based on interviews conducted by Bruley, together with those organised as part of the South Wales Coalfield History Project and the Valley and Vale project. These are used to great effect to draw some significant conclusions about gender roles being less rigid within the private sphere of the home than normally imagined. Providing an analysis of individual homes and setting this within a broader framework ensures that the study of these personal testimonies also makes important contributions to more general work on living conditions, poverty and mutual dependence within communities during the interwar years. Bruley also uses the contemporary press very effectively. This can be seen most prominently in her research on the role of women in industrial disturbances and the prosecutions that often followed. She argues that there was not just one particular age group involved in these events, and in so doing challenges some of the conclusions drawn in Francis and Smith's earlier work in which it was claimed that it was older women that featured most in these prosecutions (p. 107).

One of the strongest sections within this innovative study is that which focuses on the seven-month period following the General Strike, and specifically on the miners' kitchens, the public spaces of communal eating, and sporting activities. It was in these areas and during these activities that, Bruley argues, roles and fellowship 'cut across the usual gender divide' (p. 144).

This is an illuminating study of 1926 from a gender and social perspective. It provides a detailed insight and case study of south Wales, while also ensuring that the results and implications of this research have a broader relevance.

NICOLE ROBERTSON

*Department of History, University of Northumbria, UK*

**Anne Meis Knupfer and Christine Woyshner (eds), *The Educational Work of Women's Organisations, 1890–1960* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 260. ISBN 978 0230600072.**

**Lorna Gibson, *Beyond Jerusalem: Music in the Women's Institute, 1919–1969* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. xiii + 200. ISBN 978 0754663492.**

The devil, as they say, is in the detail, and these two books exploring the history of voluntary women's organisations and their contribution to women's lives in the twentieth century stand out for the range and depth of detail provided on how voluntary action can enhance and change women's lives. Both books make an important contribution to the historiography of voluntary associations for women and to ongoing historical debates concerning the inclusion of mainstream, conservative women's groups which do not appear to 'fit' into the history of the women's movement. Lorna Gibson, in her study of the role of music in the Women's Institutes (WIs), argues that the term feminism needs to be redefined. This would allow historians to make sense of the agency displayed by voluntary women's groups who embraced traditional domestic roles and therefore

appeared to reject feminist activity, which Gibson writes 'is assumed to originate from women's dissatisfaction with domesticity' (p. 47).

Gibson proposes a new definition of 'moderate feminism' or 'empowerment' to ensure that organisations such as the Women's Institutes are included in the historical record as groups which allowed women to 'have fulfilled lives within the traditional social constructions of gender and acceptance of patriarchy' (p. 48).

*The Educational Work of Women's Organisations, 1890–1960* is a collection of twelve essays charting the history of voluntary women's organisations in the US from the Progressive era in American history to the 1960s. Anne Meis Knupfer and Christine Woyshner have divided the collection into four main sections, each featuring three women's groups, and the detailed accounts presented reveal a vibrant and complex network of women's organisations committed to improving educational standards in the US and asserting the right of women to a good education.

A key feature is grappling with how to write a more inclusive history of women's lives. In their introduction, the editors explain that the objective of the book is to explore the 'intersection of two major social institutions in the US – education and voluntary organisations – and to understand how the work of women's groups brought about educational reform and 'how associational life affected women's status' (p. 2).

In this context, the editors argue that the work of women in educational reform, often overlooked by historians of the American women's movement, must be construed as political as it gave women access to 'a means of power and control that they did not typically have in educational institutions and society' (p. 5). Barbara Beatty, in her essay on the history of the National Kindergarten Association Campaign, 1909–60, again reiterates this point when she reflects on how 'scholars of female activism have struggled with how to deal with the range of political values represented by female reformers' (p. 196). Within this spectrum of female agency are included feminist, socialist, radical, traditional and conservative outlooks, and these views are not, as Beatty argues, fixed but are fluid and change over time. To gain a deeper understanding of women's past lives, historians need to go beyond narrow definitions of traditional 'feminist activity', both books reviewed here achieve this with considerable success.

The first section of the book looks at three women's organisations active in promoting educational and professional opportunities for women. Joan Marie Johnson provides a fascinating account about how the Southern Association of College Women (SACW), established in 1903, sought to improve school standards in southern girls' schools and colleges. At the turn of the century, the majority of southern girls seeking college education had to travel north to attend one of the 'seven sisters' colleges including Vassar, Wellesley and Smith. It was graduates of these women's colleges that set up the SACW, having recognised the inadequacies in the south with regard to female education. Johnson also argues that the SACW played an important part in contemporary discourses on what was a suitable college education for girls. For example, domestic science was no substitute for Latin as 'it was better if a woman occasionally had a mishap while cooking but was able to feed her children's intellectual growth and her husband's need for an intelligent companion' (p. 27).

Other chapters in this section include Laura Puaca's study of the Society of Women Engineers, 1950–60, which sought to encourage young women to become engineers. Puaca interestingly suggests that the Cold War and fears about US competitiveness with regard to science and engineering enabled more women to train as engineers.



This led to widespread endorsement of women's professional and scientific skills in the 1950s which challenged the ideology of domesticity so prevalent at that time.

The link between educational organisations for women and the demand for political and social reform is addressed in the second section of the book. The three chapters here focus on the work of the National College of Equal Suffrage League, the College Settlement Association and the Women's Trade Union League. Each chapter illustrates how supporting the education of women could lead directly to greater engagement by women in campaigning for political and social reform.

Questions of race, gender and education are addressed in the third section of the book. Here the issue of racial segregation in the YWCA is explored, as is the success of elite black women in exploiting their friendship networks to set up their own organisation, 'The Links', in 1946. Founded in Philadelphia, 'The Links' hoped to foster the cultural and educational growth of poor black children. Issues of segregation and race are also at the forefront of Marybeth Gasman's chapter on the fundraising activities of rich white women for the United Negro College Fund. Gasman writes that speakers from black colleges attending fundraising lunches in the 1950s were not permitted to eat with the white guests who had come to donate to their college funds.

The final section of the book looks at women's organisations involved in the education of school children, focusing on the National Kindergarten Association Campaign, the Georgia Federation of Women's Clubs and the suburban PTA. In addition to highlighting the contribution that women's groups can make to the enhancement of the educational experience of children, these final chapters also reiterate the unifying theme of the collection that female agency can be located in unexpected places, namely among conservative and traditional associations for women.

Lorna Gibson's new book on the role of music in the Women's Institute movement (WI) represents an original and important contribution to knowledge about the history of what is the largest voluntary organisation for women in Britain. The WI has been the subject of a number of historical studies in recent years, most notably Margaret Andrews's *The Acceptable Face of Feminism: the Women's Institute as a Social Movement* (1997). These studies have tended to focus on the campaigning activities of the WI and not so much on the wide range of other activities the WI offered to members. Gibson's book, which focuses on the role of music within the WI, succeeds therefore in exploring this important aspect of the WI, and in doing so also highlights how underrepresented women are in the history of western music and British musical culture.

The book is divided into six chapters and a Personalia of key WI members involved in the development of music within the organisation. Appendices include additional information on the background of the WI song *Jerusalem* as well as details regarding WI song books, music courses and musical events held by the WI. The first three chapters detail the implementation of music policy within the WI from 1919 and the work of the music sub-committee which oversaw the practice and enjoyment of music within the organisation. Chapter one includes an interesting and detailed account of how the hymn *Jerusalem* came to be adopted as the WI song. Chapter two explores the role of education and empowerment within the WI, and presents an intriguing argument that the WI's championing of conducting for women can be regarded as a challenge to traditional gendered roles within the music profession. Gibson argues that the promotion of female conductors can therefore be construed as a 'mode of feminist empowerment for its members' (p. 42).

Chapter three considers the role of the WI in promoting folk song throughout the years 1919 to 1969, suggesting that during these years the organisation's policy shifted away from its support of folk song to a new interest in opera and classical music. Gibson writes that growing dissatisfaction among members with folk song, referred to derisively by one member as 'infantile nursery rhymes' (p. 62) helps explain this change in policy. The subsequent three chapters present interesting case studies of specific musical projects. The first is the commissioning and performance of Ralph Vaughan Williams's cantata for female voices, *Folk Songs of the Four Seasons*, in the Royal Albert Hall in 1950. The second also features a WI commission, *The Brilliant and the Dark*, an operatic sequence composed by Malcolm Williamson and performed in 1969. In both cases, Gibson provides the reader with a detailed account of how each commission came about, the way in which the WI facilitated the involvement of members in each event and the impact the commissions had on the organisation's music policy. The final chapter explores the formation of the National Society Choir within the WI in 1969. This event marked a departure in WI policy, with members of the choir being individually auditioned. This type of selection conflicted with the amateur ethos of the WI where all members were encouraged to take part in its music and drama activities. The impact of this controversy is assessed by Gibson and she illustrates how in the long term the experiment failed.

Taken together, these two books make a significant and important contribution to our understanding of women's past lives. This understanding extends our knowledge about the wide variety of interests that women had both in the UK and the US, and provides greater insight into the activities and aspirations of women who joined voluntary women's organisations. As a result, both books make for essential reading for academics and students interested in learning more about female agency and women's lives in the twentieth century.

CAITRIONA BEAUMONT

*Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, London South Bank University, UK*

**Thomas Hajkowski, *The BBC and National Identity in Britain, 1922–53* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. xii + 252. ISBN 978 0719079443.**

**Robert James, *Popular Culture and Working-Class Taste in Britain, 1930–39: A Round of Cheap Diversions?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. xii + 268. ISBN 978 0719080258.**

Both of the books reviewed here promise to enhance our understanding of twentieth-century British social and cultural history. First, Thomas Hajkowski's *The BBC and National Identity in Britain, 1922–53* assesses the pivotal role performed by Britain's national broadcaster in creating and perpetuating a sense of 'Britishness' in a period encompassing imperial grandeur, the turbulence of interwar Europe, an abdication crisis, a world war, the onset of decolonisation and the loss of Britain's great power status. Second, Robert James's *Popular Culture and Working-Class Taste in Britain, 1930–39* offers another snapshot into Britain's cultural history, analysing how the British working class of the 1930s expressed themselves and their social status through

their choice of leisure pursuits. For the most part, both books succeed in fulfilling their ostensible objectives and thus enriching our understanding of the subject matter.

Such enrichment is, arguably, particularly necessary when it comes to the role of the BBC. In stating his ambitions, Hajkowski argues persuasively that existing analyses invariably portray a BBC intent on projecting a certain 'type' of British national identity onto the entire country, notably one that was both peculiarly 'English' and peculiarly 'middle class'. By contrast, Hajkowski argues that the BBC sought to promote a more inclusive sense of 'Britishness' rather than a necessarily exclusive 'Englishness'. This distinct 'Britishness', suggests Hajkowski, was not simply an anglicised version of what it meant to be 'British', but something far more complex. On the one hand, he notes the importance of empire and the monarchy in terms of presenting an image of 'Britishness' that all Britons, whatever constituent part of the country they were from, could identify with. But 'Britishness' was not simply about what was shared. The BBC, argues Hajkowski, celebrated Britain's regional diversity. Hence, the regional outposts of the BBC in Scotland and Wales were distinctly Scottish and Welsh, cultivating not only a sense of 'British' national identity, but also a distinct sense of 'Scottishness' and 'Welshness'. In Northern Ireland, still a relatively new political entity in 1922, the BBC was equally keen to promote regional identity, contributing to the creation of 'Ulster' and a specific 'Ulster' identity, albeit one that was unavoidably Unionist and thus exclusive of the province's Catholic community.

In so doing, Hajkowski outlines clearly his methodological approach, which borrows heavily from both Benedict Anderson's conception of an 'imagined community' and the 'methodology and the mood of the four nations approach to British history pioneered by J. G. A. Pocock, Hugh Kearney and T. W. Heyck' (p. 8). The 'imagined community' approach is particularly apt for a study of the BBC, and the evidence Hajkowski presents clearly portrays an institution eager to foster and perpetuate a shared national identity, contributing to an 'imagined' nationhood. However, the 'four nations' approach is arguably more problematic, especially as Hajkowski only really does justice to three of the four nations. Distinct chapters are devoted to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and even those chapters looking specifically at the promotion of the empire and the monarchy focus heavily on these regions. By contrast, there is no specific chapter looking at England. This is a regrettable shortcoming, as what comes across very clearly and effectively in Hajkowski's lucid and original analysis is how 'the BBC constructed Britishness as an inclusive, pluralistic identity . . . creat[ing] spaces for the expression of multiple identities in Britain' (p. 236). Consequently, it would have been helpful to have seen how this played out, not just in the different countries of the United Kingdom, but also in the different (and often very culturally distinct) regions of England. Furthermore, a study encompassing an era of political extremes and social upheaval would have benefited from providing a more detailed appreciation of the BBC's attempts to reconcile not only national and regional differences, but also differences emanating from class and social standing. In so doing, the BBC's ultimate role as a creator of British national identity would have been outlined more thoroughly and persuasively.

Of course, such recommendations would have necessitated a much longer and more cumbersome study, and one of the principal strengths of Hajkowski's book is its cogency. Indeed, his lucid and accessible analysis makes an important

contribution to our understanding of both the historical role of the BBC and the concept of British national identity. Moreover, it provides a much-needed corrective to the prevailing interpretation of the BBC as a uniquely (and even oppressively) English institution. Another much-needed corrective is offered by Robert James in *Popular Culture and Working-Class Taste in Britain, 1930–39*, in which the author takes issue with the widespread assumption that the working class were ‘passive’ consumers of culture, simply lapping up whatever was offered to them. Instead, argues James, the working class expressed ‘choices’, articulated preferences in choosing which films they went to see and which books they opted to read. In short, James portrays the working class not as apathetic and passive, but as a group of people with a social conscience, class consciousness and, above all, individual agency.

There is certainly a need to reposition the working classes as active rather than passive consumers of popular culture. For James, this necessity arises from a number of shortcomings within the existing literature. First, he suggests that existing analyses of leisure have largely focused on the middle class and thus overlooked the working class; second, he argues that the dominant methodological approach to the sociology of taste places too much emphasis on the importance of education and social status, thus ‘denying working-class consumers their place within the cultural sphere’ (p. 4); third, James laments the misguided assumption of existing studies that the cultural tastes of the working classes could be explained simply as escapism from otherwise drab, arduous and depressing lives. Importantly, James does not deny that an element of escapism – often a sizeable element – contributed to the leisure choices made by the working classes. However, he argues convincingly that we need to ‘contextualise’ it, as working-class interest in film and novels ‘was predicated on far more than the need to escape’ (p. 204). Indeed, he demonstrates effectively that ‘patterns of taste were never uniform, that acts of consumption are highly complex, that working-class consumers chose leisure activities to fulfil a range of cultural roles, and that these roles are never easy to define’ (p. 207).

Clearly, the cultural choices of the working classes were contingent on many factors, and cannot simply be dismissed as ‘escapism’. James therefore succeeds in portraying the working class as people with ‘agency’, capable of exercising individual choice and free will. They were, in short, proactive consumers. Moreover, James’s study duly notes other contingencies that influenced working-class taste, notably regional diversity, gender distinctions and a more general evolution over time. As a result, James deserves considerable credit for providing such a thorough, nuanced and sophisticated analysis. He also deserves credit for identifying and acknowledging the book’s limitations. He explains persuasively his choice of case studies (South Wales, Derby and Portsmouth) without trying to disguise the fact that the limited number of case studies precludes any broad or sweeping conclusions about working-class cultural tastes on a national level. More interestingly, he acknowledges that his book could be perceived as ‘a celebration of working-class consciousness’, his conclusions vulnerable to criticism on the basis of being ‘hagiographic’. Defending himself, James asserts that his ambition was always to ‘remind us that working-class consumers *should* be accorded equal complexity in the act of consumption as other classes have been in the past’ (p. 207). This he achieves successfully, but the evidence presented in this very important study is perhaps too inconclusive, and certainly too nuanced, to draw any

far-reaching conclusions about class consciousness, social conscience and political awakening on a genuinely national level.

What it does do, however, is enlighten us greatly about the cultural choices that the working classes made during the 1930s, speculating as to the possible motivations behind these choices. James also provides several invaluable appendices, detailing some of the most popular films, actors and actresses, and novels of the 1930s. Consequently, *Popular Culture and Working-Class Taste in Britain, 1930–39* will be essential reading for anybody interested in 1930s British society.

Overall, therefore, these two books provide a fascinating insight into the cultural landscape of Britain from the 1920s to the 1950s. Indeed, taken in combination, the reader is provided with an unparalleled wealth of information concerning the films that people watched, the books that they read, and the radio programmes that the nation listened to. As a result, they will both make invaluable additions to the libraries of those interested in twentieth-century British social and cultural history, as well as those with a more general interest in literary history and the history of the media.

DANIEL HUCKER

*School of History, University of Nottingham, UK*

**Daniel J. Walkowitz, *City Folk: English Country Dance and the Politics of the Folk in Modern America* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), pp. xv + 335. ISBN 978 0814794692.**

Daniel Walkowitz is best known for his work in labour history, where he was among the first generation of American historians to apply the insights of E. P. Thompson to class formation in the US. In his spare time, though, he is a member of folk dancing troupes in New York, and his interest in this practice – and in particular one variant, English country dance (ECD) – inspired this transatlantic study of twentieth-century folk revivals.

While the subject-matter may seem an unlikely one for a historian of the labour movement, this is very much a cultural history of politics and power. Walkowitz begins his study by following the career of the English schoolmaster Cecil Sharp, one of the leading lights of the first folk revival of the Edwardian era. Inspired by the sight of Morris dancers in a village outside Oxford, he became an avid collector of songs and dances, first in the UK then later in rural America. Walkowitz suggests, however, that Sharp was no mere antiquarian but rather a figure shaped by the culture of transatlantic Progressivism. The movement to rediscover – or rather invent, for Sharp selectively edited what he found – ‘peasant’ traditions was inspired by concerns about the need to discipline degraded working-class bodies in anonymous big cities. In Britain and America, settlement house workers and educators saw country dance as a way to acculturate rural transplants to urban society through harking back to their peasant roots. ECD, which provided an imaginary link to the supposedly Anglo-Saxon origins of the two nations and (in Sharp’s notations at least) carefully circumscribed the movement of the female dancers – held especial appeal to Progressive liberal reformers. When the socialist suffragette Mary Neal, whose Espérance Club for girls in central London embraced a more expressive form of folk dancing, presented a challenge to Sharp’s leadership, he was able to cast himself as the male professional

with the expertise to determine authenticity. Through setting up summer schools on both sides of the Atlantic, publishing collections of dances, and taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by the new recording industry, he established his authority over the first folk revival.

Walkowitz then turns away from the progressive politics of ECD to examine international folk dance, which he had encountered at summer schools for red diaper babies (children of parents who were members of the United States Communist Party [CPUSA] or were close to the party or sympathetic to its aims) in the McCarthy era. In contrast to the nationally rooted tradition Sharp extolled, this movement was rooted in leftist internationalism, and its practitioners expressed solidarity with other peoples – while celebrating the diverse origins of the American working class – through peasant dances from around the world. He moves away here from his early focus on leadership and authority towards exploring – often through oral testimony – the motives of the dancers themselves. During the second folk revival of the 1950s and 1960s, ECD offered a haven for affluent Americans unwilling to throw in their lot with the ‘freaks’ of the folk music scene. Yet from the Reagan era onwards, the left-leaning, white-ethnic, middle class began to drift into the scene as a form of escapism from the materialism and competitiveness of everyday life. On the one hand, this influx – which appears to be a largely American story – opened radical new possibilities, as composers self-consciously invented new folk traditions and feminists and gay rights activists challenged (with mixed success) Sharp’s rigid prescriptions for gender roles and bodily comportment. On the other hand, though, Walkowitz sees the movement as a preserve of wealthy white liberals whose desire to escape an ‘urban’ culture characterised by non-white forms like hip-hop is not altogether dissimilar to the aspirations of Sharp’s generation.

As the author acknowledges, it may come as a surprise to Walkowitz’s friends in the ECD community to discover they are ‘enmeshed in the contradictions of the modern liberal imaginary’ (p. 11), yet his engaging narrative makes a persuasive case for listening to the ways in which people speak through their bodies. Though the rich detail occasionally belies his personal involvement with folk dancing, his broad thesis – that the fate of ECD can tell us a great deal about the class, race and gender dynamics of twentieth-century liberalism – holds up well. It binds together an intriguing analysis of an invented transatlantic tradition that continues to have surprising political meanings.

ANDREW HEATH

*Department of History, University of Sheffield, UK*

**Carol Giardina, *Freedom for Women: Forging the Women’s Liberation Movement, 1953–1970* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2010), pp. ix + 321. ISBN 978 0813034560.**

There is renewed interest among historians in the women’s liberation movement (WLM), yet little is known about the formation of this social movement. This is the focus of Giardina’s book, which explores the conditions which were important to the formation of feminism in the USA during the late 1950s and 1960s. Giardina is a visiting professor of history at Queen’s College in New York. She was also a women’s liberation activist, and counts many of the leading lights of 1970s feminism

among her friends. These perspectives, both as an academic and an activist, lead to an extremely lively account which successfully raises many important points for future studies of the movement. For example, she is able to not only illustrate the evolution of the terms 'sisterhood is powerful' and 'consciousness-raising' but also to comment on how feminists felt about these concepts. Moreover, her active involvement in the movement has led to her being granted access to Jo Freeman's personal archive. There are clearly advantages to researching a movement you were also involved in. Yet while participant accounts are extremely valuable, there is still tremendous scope for research to be completed by a new generation of historians; those who were not alive during the height of women's liberation activism and who can assess the development of the movement from the perspective of observers and not participants.

Giardina seeks to revise the origins of the WLM. As she makes clear in the opening paragraphs of her book, the WLM is generally understood as having emerged due to the frustration felt by many female activists that certain organisations on the left and within the black freedom movement were dominated by men. Giardina argues that while sexism did exist within these groups, many women learnt how to be activists by challenging this male domination. The experience of sexism therefore had a somewhat paradoxical impact on the formation of the movement. Furthermore, there were other reasons for the emergence of the movement. Of far greater importance to the creation of the WLM was the knowledge and experience gained from being part of left-wing organisations and the black freedom movement. In arguing this, Giardina clearly wants to redefine women as more active participants in the creation of the movement.

This is an interesting argument, which is well made throughout the book. By focusing on the roots of the movement, she also draws attention to the important girlhood experiences of future feminist activists. Giardina illustrates the importance of activist families and in particular the influence of the Old Left. While the examples she uses are interesting, it would be helpful if future research also considered those women who, rather than carrying on their family's political heritage, reacted against parents who adhered to right-wing politics. This would lead to a greater understanding of the range of personal experiences which led some women to adopt a feminist political identity.

Other interesting themes to emerge are the importance of black freedom and the civil rights movement. While this has been explored in other studies, Giardina effectively illustrates the importance of black women in shaping women's liberation politics. She also highlights the importance of men. Their support of women within leftist organisations helped to draw many women's attention to the peculiar conditions of female oppression. Reflecting recent historiographical trends, she also reassesses the impact of ideological divisions, such as radical and socialist feminism. Portrayed by many commentators and researchers as leading to the end of the movement, she instead argues that these debates were 'immensely productive' (p. 128).

These themes have led to a particularly engaging account. Yet there were certain areas which merited further discussion. For instance, Giardina objects to the concept of 'feminisms', believing that this label dilutes the ideology's impact. However it was unclear to whom she was referring when she discussed 'moderate' feminists. Within the context of the WLM, the terms 'moderate' and 'radical' have at times led to a simplification of feminist ideas, and more must be done to complicate accepted narratives of feminist politics. But this is clearly a very valuable account. While

there are differences between the American movement and other feminist groups in western Europe, it is evident that the WLM was international and many researchers will therefore find the themes raised in Giardina's book thought-provoking and worthy of further exploration within their own work.

SARAH BROWNE

*School of History, University of Nottingham, UK*

**Jadwiga Pieper Mooney, *The Politics of Motherhood: Maternity and Women's Rights in Twentieth-Century Chile* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), pp. 320. ISBN 978 0822960430.**

*The Politics of Motherhood* is an historical study, linking socio-economic change, global discourse and national policy and their combined impact on women's reproductive choices. Jadwiga Pieper Mooney employs the lens of motherhood to bring together family planning policy, population discourse and broader political goals to show how women's rights are affected by changing constructions of motherhood and femininity. She claims that this lens offers various advantages, demonstrating how women have appropriated and contested disempowered stereotypes; how changes in the social construction of motherhood are tied in with changing rights of women over time; as well as providing new insights into history of women's rights. So, does it deliver?

The core of the book is made up of six chapters which are organised along a loosely chronological structure, but take their name from the dominant thinking on motherhood of the period, starting with the emergence of public health as a concept in the 1920s, and finishing with the activism of women under the dictatorship of the 1970s and 1980s. The looser structure allows the author to jump forwards and back, not confined by a stricter chronology, in order to illustrate pertinent points or persistent trends from other periods. Although within a new frame, some of Pieper Mooney's argument is familiar, as she points out the tendency of the socialist project to prioritise broad social change over women's rights, as was demonstrated by Maxine Molyneux's pathbreaking work on Sandinista Nicaragua ('Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State, and Revolution in Nicaragua', *Feminist Studies* 11 (1985), p. 227–54). Pieper Mooney builds on this analysis by revealing the internal debate within Allende's socialist government, sections of which actively sought to dismantle some of the progress made on women's rights, criticising family planning as part of the US hegemonic project. The author argues that this attitude fails to account for the active role played by Chilean professionals in the international policy arena and ignores women's demands to control their own bodies. The discussion illustrates one of the persistent themes of the book, which challenges the simplistic association between certain types of political regime and corresponding range of women's rights. Simplistic associations have been challenged elsewhere, exploring how military dictatorship and authoritarian regimes can mobilise language of rights, for example the increases to women's formal rights under Peru's Fujimori regime – see Jenke Boesten, *Intersecting Inequalities: Women and Social Policy in Peru, 1990–2000* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2010). Pieper Mooney similarly argues that progress in women's rights does not automatically result from left-wing political principles, but



that dictatorships are not necessarily favourable settings for increased rights either. Policy change is dependent on current socio-economic demands and the perceived needs of the government, whatever the political colour, to construct motherhood in certain ways, whether it be as part of the modernising project, or as a stable pillar in uncertain times of change. The author makes a convincing case, for example, for the importance of Cold War paranoia impacting on family planning policy.

A related argument is the suggestion that Chile has not been a passive player in the global policy discourse on population control and reproductive rights, but rather that it helped shape policy directions, and was part of an international medical alliance. Furthermore, Pieper Mooney points out the important role that feminists have played in networking, lobbying and activism. Although she usefully deconstructs the narrow lens of 'imperialism', Pieper Mooney herself points out the close academic and funding ties between Chile and the US, which do not suggest an entirely equal relationship, but rather an international elite dominated by the US. This also raises the question of who gets to speak for whom. The technocratic medical elite clearly had broader goals than women's health, openly acknowledging the goal of population control in an era of modernisation, as well as the health of society at large. Feminists, however, claimed to speak for women of all classes. Pieper Mooney shows how the beneficent discourse allowed middle-class women to see themselves as educators of ignorant and needy working-class women in the 1920s and 1930s. So, while Pieper Mooney is willing to point out the flaws in the more conservative approach to working-class women, whereby 'armies' of medical staff and social workers invade women's homes, she does not provide evidence that this was unwelcome. Moreover, her claims that feminists were more inclusive and brought in women from all classes could have been better substantiated. Although there are some references to working-class women's voices, the voices of educated feminists and medical professionals are the ones that come through the text most clearly. On a side issue, it is clear that such an educationalist approach continues to exist today with working-class women in the global north and south being constructed as in need of nutritional and parenting skills.

Pieper Mooney consistently points out the way in which socio-economic barriers to improved mother and child health were overlooked as women were blamed as 'unfit' mothers; meanwhile their salvation would be through changing their mothering practices to bring up healthier and smaller family units. This point illustrates one of the contradictions in this discourse, which ignores structural barriers to women's agency, although it sees the solution in a national approach to construct an ideal of responsible mothers. Individual mothers are then given the responsibility to construct a modern nation, a model that denies them individual reproductive choice. Within this restrictive national discourse on motherhood, Pieper Mooney picks up on the argument of subversive mothers. This refers to women who used the cultural protection granted to the label of 'motherhood' in order to organise themselves against political oppression and human rights abuses. Their apolitical construction permitted their political agency. The wide literature on the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo is evidence of the passionate debate on the potential to achieve feminist goals through the mobilisation of orthodox stereotypes. Pieper Mooney contributes to this debate by pointing out Chilean feminists' willingness to see motherhood not as a fixed aspect of their identity, nor as a label to be rejected, but as part of their cultural heritage and a source of strength.

Pieper Mooney critiques the *marianismo* model – ‘referring to an ideal of womanhood modelled after the Virgin Mary’ (p. 2) – as an insufficient concept to describe the complexity of the reality of women’s lives and the mobilisation of motherhood as a political tool. She argues that it has not only been used as a controlling mechanism, but that women have also subverted it, so that such a binary construction is inadequate. However, this depends on how the concept of *marianismo* is used, whether as an explanatory framework or a descriptor. In much the same way as the public/private debate risks reinforcing the very divide that feminists wish to break down (Squires), both *marianismo*/*machismo* and the public/private binaries have the potential to highlight the contradictions between their simplistic ideological construction and the complexity of women’s lives. These concepts require deconstruction in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of women’s lives and thus remain useful as analytical tools, as long as they are used critically.

This book provides many important insights into the Chilean context that are too numerous to list here, such as those on the double discourse on morals and ethics (with public intolerance, but tacit tolerance of private acts), the lack of women’s individual agency even as ‘choice’ was increasing and women’s health improved, as well as the Church’s pragmatic approach to contraception as a lesser evil. Pieper Mooney uses personal anecdotes to sustain the readers’ interest, personalising changes in macro policy and discourse and how they impact on women’s lives. This book is ambitious in scope, yet manages to provide a coherent and interesting narrative that adds to our understanding of the links between policy, shifting gendered stereotypes and women’s rights. It will be useful to anyone wishing to gain insight on the links between politics and reproductive rights, holistic approaches to health and those interested in feminist activism and networking.

POLLY WILDING

*School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds, UK*

**Ellen Rutten, *Unattainable Bride Russia: Gendering Nation, State and Intelligentsia in Russian Intellectual Culture* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010), pp. vii + 328. ISBN 978 0810126565.**

The idea of the Russian nation as a feminine entity is one that has echoed through Russian culture, and subsequent analysis of that culture, for centuries. Ellen Rutten takes just one aspect of this conceptualisation of ‘Russia as woman’ myth – that of Russia as an unattainable bride, unsuccessfully wooed or defended by her various suitors. Selecting a range of works, which include poetry, novels and philosophical tracts (although no grounds are offered as a justification for this selection), Rutten’s work traces the development of this metaphor throughout the tumult of tsardom, revolution, civil war, Stalinism and collapse.

Beginning with an investigation into the familiar incarnation of the Russian land as found in folklore and Orthodox symbolism, Rutten juxtaposes the notion of Russia as an unattainable woman against the perceived self-failure of the nineteenth-century intelligentsia to free Russia from the clutches of authoritarianism. Consequently, time and again, the intelligentsia are portrayed as being a westernised alien other, unable to form a successful relationship with the exotic and quintessentially Russian heroine,

who is thus doomed to a tragic fate. Chapter two focuses on the work of Aleksandr Blok and Andrei Belyi and it is in this discussion of these pre-revolutionary works that Rutten is at her most persuasive. Through an exploration of tropes such as the Sleeping Princess and the apocalyptic imagery of whores and horsemen, the deployment of the bride metaphor is traced through this period of upheaval and is on the whole well historicised, with discussion of both the implications of 1905 and the First World War.

The Soviet period is addressed through a small range of works, primarily Andrei Platonov's *Happy Moscow* and Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*. The struggle between the intelligentsia and the state as to who was to be the saviour of Russia clearly had no place under Socialist Realism, particularly in light of the paternalistic personality cult surrounding Stalin, and Rutten's analysis is reflective of these limitations. While the discussion of Pasternak is particularly interesting, this section of the book is often lacking in contextualisation and the author draws work from the 1920s and the 1960s with no real discussion of the very different climates in which they were produced, nor does she make any distinction between those which were part of the canon and those which, like Pasternak, were only published in Russia after *perestroika*. Finally, Rutten turns her attention to the work of the post-Soviet period. Within this postmodern era, we are presented with a conceptualisation of Russia which is explicitly corporeal and sexual in form, marking a dramatic shift from the mystical envisaging of Russia at the opening of the century, while conversely demonstrating the persistence of Blok and Belyi's conceptualisation of Russia as being in the thrall of a sorcerer-seducer. Rutten concludes that, although associated with the romanticism and frustration of the late-imperial period, the unattainable bride metaphor is one that still has a place in contemporary Russian culture.

Although Rutten does look beyond the textual in her analysis of the unattainable bride metaphor, references to non-literary sources are fleeting. With the exception of material presented in the post-Soviet chapter and a short, completely out of place, discussion of prison tattoos, references to work such as that of Viktor Vasnetsov and Mikhail Nesterov or the mobilisation of the motherland icon during the Second World War are made merely in passing. Instead, the reader is, somewhat frustratingly, directed towards other work by the author, rather than any detail being provided at a point where it would have been highly pertinent.

Rutten's analysis is rich with textual examples, although she quotes extensively, and in this reviewer's opinion excessively, from secondary material. The close reading of the texts does at times, however, limit the author's discussion of the wider socio-political developments, a self-professed aim of this work (p. 4). For example, given how central fairytale and chivalric codes are to her analysis, it is surprising that the concurrent revivification of the mythic Russian past by the state is not even mentioned. Nicholas II's obsession with Aleksei Mikhailovich, the 1902 Winter Ball and the tercentenary of the Romanov dynasty in 1913, along with other developments such as revival of Yaroslavl-Muscovite ornamentalism in architecture, can also be seen as part of the Westerniser/Slavophile debate, and some discussion of these trends and the use of such motifs by the regime would have only served to enhance Rutten's textual analysis, particularly in light of her attempt to contextualise literary output with other forms of contemporaneous cultural production.

Overall though, Rutten's ambitious attempt to trace the development of this metaphor throughout the twentieth century will no doubt be of relevance to both literary scholars and those interested in the gendering of the Russian nation alike.

CLAIRE McCALLUM

*Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies, University of Sheffield, UK*

**Sarah Hodges, *Contraception, Colonialism and Commerce: Birth Control in South India, 1920–1940* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 188. ISBN 978 0754638094.**

*Contraception, Colonialism and Commerce* presents a history of contraception in colonial south India from around 1920, when a variety of contraceptive methods became commercially available, until independence in 1947. The book is compact, comprising an introduction, four core chapters and an epilogue. The first chapter situates the history of contraception within official debates on public health and explores the implications that the transfer of responsibility to provincial governments of certain departments including health had for political leaders advocating a non-Brahman agenda in the Madras Presidency after 1919. The second examines the role of voluntary associations such as the Madras Neo-Malthusian League, populated largely with upper-caste reformist men, in promoting contraception in the city of Madras and in their relations with contraceptive advocates from the west. Chapter three is a study of the role of contraception within the broader politics of the Self-Respect movement, the principle advocate in south India for secular, egalitarian, anti-caste and feminist politics. The final chapter departs from the focus on advocacy and policy to explore the commercial world of contraception in Madras. The epilogue takes forward the author's introductory comments on the 'problem' of population and fertility in contemporary debates in India to consider various policy proposals and demographic approaches that have been brought to bear on these debates while placing them in historical perspective.

At one level, the chapters provide a fairly straightforward account of organisational debates around contraception within the context of a provincial colonial administration, and the public presence that contraception had in intellectual, political and commercial networks in south India before independence. However, the author places this story in a much wider frame. Hodges maintains that, since independence, debates around contraception in India have been closely bound up with India's poverty and burgeoning population. These discourses of 'overpopulation' have, in turn, articulated the relationship between public health and governance – specifically, the role of the state has been central to managing population growth through a range of contraceptive measures. What the author seeks to do is quite different. Hodges argues that historically, contraception and population did not necessarily exist within the same discursive frame as they do today. In the two decades before independence, whatever anxieties the colonial state and non-state actors may have had about population, there was no consensus about what that problem was. Rather, contraception in the late colonial period was 'part of other agendas and sets of meanings' often 'unconnected to questions of population' (p. 2). It is these agendas and meanings, articulated by Indians, that the book aims to explore.

At the heart of Hodges's argument lies the idea that in the history of contraception in this period can be seen the relationship between health and governance under

colonial conditions. She seeks to understand governance in the broadest way. Thus, governance is not solely about a modern regime asserting its dominance over a people, but also (and more importantly for this study) as biopolitics: a set of political, intellectual and discursive networks and relationships outside the formal bounds of the colonial state that regulated the practice of reproductive health within the framework of global science. For Hodges, these non-state modes of governance include voluntary associations and commercial activity. Moreover, just as Hodges examines the relationships between voluntary associations in India with their counterparts in the west, her concern is as much about the 'indigenization' of contraception in colonial south India. Her assertion is entirely pertinent: that 'contraception' was embedded in discursive networks with local as well as global meanings. As such, contraception was part of south Indian society with meanings particular to the historical moment. Hodges argues intriguingly that late colonial reformist advocacy around contraception became part of a 'Brahmin-non-Brahmin reframing of the social and political terrain of the Tamil south' (p. 17). Contraception in this context thus had little to do with concerns over population. The latter played themselves out more in the areas of epidemic disease and famine while contraception seemed to be part of the moral and intellectual contours of reformist and anti-caste politics of the south. This is a very interesting argument and provides much food for thought. It would be important to know when and in what contexts contraception became part of the discourse around population.

Hodges places this history of contraception at the nexus of a number of intellectual problems and historiographical debates. It is an ambitious framing of the project and the chapters themselves examine an understudied aspect of colonial medical history. A few points bear noting. First, there is a disjuncture between the introduction and the core chapters. The introduction introduces key theoretical concepts – governance, biopolitics, vernacular knowledge and colonial science for instance – which should be woven into the chapters that follow. While these concepts appear, they sometimes do so in a way that is assertive rather than analytically convincing. In chapter one, for instance, the author asserts:

The governmentality of health in colonial India was produced by a constant tension between, on the one hand, a coercive set of crisis-management tactics and, on the other, a constant drive to retrench and rescind . . . Health, rather than functioning as the extension of government – annexing and creating greater intrusions into people's lives – served as a fault-line that exposed not the reach but the limits of colonial government (p. 36).

This is significant point which one would expect to be developed further. Yet, the reader is left dangling as the author moves on to a separate discussion. It remains unclear why Hodges has chosen 'governance' as a central theoretical tool with which to frame the four chapters for she does not present adequate empirical evidence to carry the argument through. At the same time, the problem of evidence upholding claims continues at different points through the monograph. In chapter three, for example, there are several points where it would have been useful to have references to follow arguments about the Self-Respect movement and Ramasamy (e.g., pp. 84–5).

Second, and the author notes this herself, three out of the four chapters chart a largely discursive terrain. This has to do with the availability of sources, I imagine, but it would have been useful if the author had found a way to address the gap between social histories of gender and family size and the discursive intellectual/political histories of

advocacy groups. Finally, the monograph ends somewhat abruptly with the commercial life of contraception. The epilogue is a comment on 'the state of the population' in late twentieth-century Tamilnadu. It makes a plea for policy administrators to 'see beyond the state'. But it is a huge leap from 1947 to 1991. A chapter on the postcolonial period in the 1960s, an important moment in the history of contraception in India as the author herself states, would have rounded out the study. That said, this is an interesting, engagingly written piece of research that makes a contribution to studies of fertility and reproductive health, as well as offering a considered intervention in the historiography on colonial medicine.

SHABNUM TEJANI

*Department of History, SOAS, London, UK*