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Authenticating the imaginary: Cloaking with history the characters of O’Brian’s fiction and Weir’s film

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The interaction of scholarly history with popular history has provoked debate over the value and place of the latter in creating historical consciousness. The various issues meet conveniently in the Aubrey-Maturin novels of Patrick O’Brian and the Peter Weir film Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World (2003). Using the critical work of Robert Rosenstone on historical film and David Harlan on historical fiction, this paper identifies ways in which the novelist and movie anchor historically credible narratives, noting which devices are particular to the novel and which to cinema. It also explores the interplay of historical facts with literary and cinematic devices, an interplay which creates an apparently seamless narrative where historical and fictional genre characteristics mutually reinforce an impression of historical realism. It then critiques this realism to uncover ways in which it is used to cloak invention, but also discusses ways in which the fictions of both literature and cinema can enhance historical understanding, particularly by creating an emotional reality that gives an access to the past.

Alternate ways of telling history, such as historical fiction and historical movies, traditionally have been viewed with suspicion by many historians, who at times have accused popular history of being ‘destructive’, a representation that ‘opens the heart but castrates the intellect’. Yet, just at the moment that Western historical modes of thinking achieved global dominance in the academic world, popular history in the form of novels, movies, comics, museums and electronic games have emerged as the most potent communicators of history to most people. A number of historians have called for the profession to embrace these alternate ways and, instead of listing their failings, explore the ways in which different kinds of historical representation can capture different aspects of the past. For example, Australian Aboriginal historian Tony Birch has chosen the medium of literature for his work, arguing that ‘the past is sometimes represented equally, or at times, more accurately through a range of textual forms, including story-telling and poetry’, a view endorsed by fellow historian Dipesh Chakrabarty. David Harlan calls for historians to outline how the various popular and academic modes of history should relate to each other, noting that each form ‘has its own particular region of the past … and its own criteria for determining what counts as fact, its own research procedures and its own criteria of evaluation’. He argues that each medium offers unique historical perspectives that cannot be gained from the others, and so for example popular-history film ‘stands adjacent to written history’. For this reason he asks that historians ‘delineate and describe the relationships between the primary modes of historical representation’. Similarly, Robert Rosenstone argues that film makers are historians, ‘people who confront the past … and use

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2 Ibid., p. 108.
4 Harlan, ‘Historical fiction’, p. 121-122.
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[films] to tell stories that make meaning for us in the present', but that they use evidence in different ways to traditional history. His book explores how this happens in a number of key films.

Harlan’s call for a delineation and definition of the relationships between history, fiction and film could be done in the abstract, but Rosenstone’s example suggests that analysing specific texts is perhaps the most concrete way of exploring the ideas. The intersection of history, fiction and film found in the Aubrey-Maturin texts of Patrick O’Brien and Peter Weir offers a compact example of the relationships at stake: popular fiction and film grounded in serious history.

O’Brien’s achievement in the twenty principal novels of his Aubrey-Maturin series has been widely acknowledged and praised, with some critics verging on hyperbole. Not only has his writing been acclaimed for its usually impeccable historical fidelity, but he has won plaudits for his literary achievement as well. He has mastered perhaps the most challenging aspect of historical fiction: being true to the demands of both history and of fiction, and has been named the greatest historical fiction writer of all time by one influential reviewer. Critics as formidable as T. J. Binyon, a literary scholar, crime writer and biographer in his own right, and Professor John Bayley, also a scholar and novelist, praised his historical accuracy, Binyon calling the series a ‘brilliant achievement’, displaying a ‘staggering erudition on almost all aspects of early nineteenth century life, with impeccable period detail’. He has been favourably compared to writers such as Jane Austen, Herman Melville and even Leo Tolstoy. His stepson and biographer, historian Nikolai Tolstoy (distantly related to the Russian novelist) observes that he wrote of the history of the Napoleonic period ‘with an effortless flow of instinctive realism’.

O’Brien’s expertise in so many arcane areas of Napoleonic-era life has inspired a minor publishing industry. Apart from two biographies of O’Brien, books have been written on the language and terminology of the series, on its geography, and its characters—human, animal and inanimate. There is the delightfully named cookbook, Lobscouse and Spotted Dog: Which It’s a Gastronomic Companion to the Aubrey/Maturin Novels, and CD recordings of music from the novels. Academics and admirers have written critical essays on various facets of O’Brien’s fiction, such as the nautical background, medicine, astronomy, marriage, natural science, law and politics, while fans have created websites and fan clubs devoted to his work.

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In the author’s note in several of the earlier novels in the series, O’Brien speaks of his devotion to authenticity, and how he writes with contemporary documents to hand, borrowing plots, poetry, and battle descriptions for his fictions, sometimes quoting them directly if he feels his own prose could not do justice to a scene. Where he deviates from history, he usually scrupulously notes the fact, admitting for example that he edited out unimportant and irrelevant ships in the history of the Mauritius campaign, or that he would need to invent an 1812a or even an 1812b in order to continue his series. Eventually, he abandons chronological time and crams eleven novels into 1813-1814. With his characteristic wit, he concludes however that:

the reader will meet no basilisks that destroy with their eyes, no Hottentots without religion, polity or articulate language, no Chinese perfectly polite and completely skilled in all sciences, no wholly virtuous, ever-victorious or necessarily immortal heroes; and should any crocodiles appear, [the author] undertakes that they shall devour their prey without tears.

O’Brien’s attention to detail is key to his extraordinary achievement in historical realism. By recording the minutiae of the world of his characters, he creates a sense of authenticity. His novels are replete with incredible detail, particularly nautical, but also in virtually every area of the period: national and regional social customs, music, food, politics, science, philosophy, military intelligence — and the list goes on. His publisher, Richard Ollard, and literary critics John Bayley and T. J. Binyon note how this accumulation of ‘impeccable period detail’ worked to create the sense of a real world. Bayley compares his work to Jane Austen’s: ‘two or three inches of ivory…turning into art the lives of … a wooden ship of war’, although by the end of the series, O’Brien had created a canvas far bigger than Austen’s, without losing anything of the fineness of detail. With the more technical aspects of his detail, O’Brien sometimes uses one of his characters to gloss terms that would be unfamiliar to common readers. By creating his two chief characters as masters of separate spheres (Aubrey of the sea and of his own limited social world, and Maturin of the scientific and political worlds) but pitifully ignorant in the other’s specialities, O’Brien has reason from time to time to intrude exposition into his story without the reader feeling manipulated. Unlike another respected nautical fiction writer C. S. Forester, who habitually halts his story while he sermonises, O’Brien convincingly advances plot, mood and character development through these situations. Thus, Maturin is slowly inducted into the complex universe of a warship over many novels, his grasp of terms gradually increasing but never becoming secure or reliable, which in turn becomes the focus of humour and plot development. For example, in The Thirteen Gun Salute, Maturin in a moment of vanity attempts to dazzle government envoy George Fox with his mastery of nautical jargon, but when his explanations are accidentally revealed to be inaccurate by the sailors, the proud Fox considers himself to have been deliberately misled, causing complications in the professional relationship. Similarly, various major and minor characters require or give exposition within the novels, thus usefully informing the reader as well.

But O’Brien is also confident enough to allow arcane language to have its own effect, even if it is obtuse to most readers. Biographer Dean King notes that ‘He trusted the power and poetry of words. Standing alone, they accomplished more, even if only partially understood, than they would with prosaic

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12 See for example the author’s notes in Master and commander (Waukegan Il, 1977); The Mauritius Command (Waukegan Il, 1979); The Ionian Mission (Waukegan Il, 1982); The Far Side of the World (Waukegan Il, 1985).

13 Author’s note, The Far Side of the World.


15 Bayley, ‘In which we serve’, p. 36.

16 King and Hattendorf, Harbours and high seas, p. 1.
definitions'.17 O’Brian also tries to have his characters speak in the various dialects of the time, and even his own prose to some extent reflects the diction of his chosen period. He avoids anachronism, both in the world of his characters and in the language, he uses to describe them. Ollard notes the extraordinary achievement of having every element of the novels, from surface external details to ideas and manners, ‘observed and described with the exactitude of an expert’, and it is the assurance with which O’Brian handles such matters that convinced one reader that ‘we are in the safest possible historical hands’.18

His dense use of detail and jargon creates the effect of overwhelming authenticity, but also occasionally of intimidating scholarship and of preening. Critical reactions are divided on this score: some praising his ear for just the right dialect and tone while others note his comic ineptness at reproducing certain dialects and his combative need to crush others into submission with the weight of his knowledge.19 However, there is no doubt that, despite occasional lapses, O’Brian’s capacity to create a complete sense of a former age is vital to the success of his novels. Film mogul Sam Goldwyn accurately observes, ‘Lifestyle was the essence of his books. He really wasn’t interested in plot. He said it himself. He said he was far more interested in fabric’.20

Underpinning the fabric is the way O’Brian closely models his stories on historical events. The flamboyant life of Lord Cochrane provides inspiration for Aubrey and Maturin at the start of their career in Master and Commander, and also in the later The Reverse of the Medal, while HMS Surprise, The Mauritius Command and The Fortunes of War are also closely grounded in historic events. Many supporting characters, ships and events are drawn from history, strengthening the impression of actuality. In the early novels, where O’Brian has tweaked events to suit his purpose, he usually alerts the reader in a foreword, thus improving the credibility of the rest of the material with the admission. However, when he enters his extended fictional time of 1813-1814, he trusts his authorial credibility and largely abandons the practice of justifying himself to his readership.

Alongside the formidable accuracy of his historical material, the impression of historicity and realism is also built through the literary dimensions of the series. O’Brian has created work which compares with great literature, primarily through his wonderfully engaging, complex characters, but also through his carefully constructed plots and mastery of style. It is through this persuasive interior world, the psychological reality of his characters, that O’Brian maintains the reader’s illusion of having entered into an earlier age. Comparisons with other writers in the popular Napoleonic naval fiction genre highlight this. Forrester’s Hornblower is an interesting character, if somewhat anachronistic at times, but the novels are otherwise populated with stock figures. Authors such as C. Northcote Parkinson and Alexander Kent are accurate enough with nautical detail but create heroes as wooden as their ships inhabiting a social world as flat as their personalities. Despite being notorious for his inability to maintain close male relationships in real life, O’Brian has realised one of literature’s most dynamic friendships in Aubrey and Maturin, characters as interesting and complex as any in literary art.21 He himself said, ‘The essence of my novels is human relationships and how people treat each other. That seems to me to be what novels are for. They permit some pretty close examination of the human condition’.22

O’Brian’s development of female characters has sometimes been criticised, and his personal antipathy to children finds repeated voice in the novels.23 The exception is Maturin’s emotionally deprived daughter Brigid, who may reflect O’Brian’s own sense of a lonely childhood.24 There may be

17 King, Patrick O’Brian, p. 65.
21 King, Patrick O’Brian, p. xvii.
22 Cited in McGregor, The making of Master and commander, p. 3.
23 Bayley, ‘In which we serve’, p. 29; Tolstoy, Patrick O’Brian, p. 399.
24 P. O’Brien, ‘Black, choleric and Married?’, in Cunningham, Patrick O’Brian, p. 16.
some reservations about the two central characters of Aubrey and Maturin. Aubrey’s innocence ashore and brilliance at sea at times is carried too far, as is Maturin’s intellectual and moral superiority.\textsuperscript{25} Both suffer an extraordinary number of severe wounds and illnesses, and a pair of medical reviewers describe Maturin’s heroic self-surgery of extracting a bullet from under his own ribs as ‘pure fantasy’.\textsuperscript{26} Other fantastical elements are the monastic garden that Maturin discovers in \textit{The Thirteen-Gun Salute} and his massive overreaction to the sting of a platypus in \textit{The Nutmeg of Consolation}. The two characters find themselves in an amazing number of sea battles, but in defence of O’Brien, his battles are sometimes few and far between; it is only the cumulative effect of twenty novels that produces this impression, and any given novel is realistic in the frequency of its action scenes.

Despite these criticisms, O’Brien’s characters are a major achievement, which a few indulgences do little to undermine. The medical critics, while unconvinced by aspects of Maturin, conclude that his polymath accomplishments are not far off the mark compared to some sound historic examples of the era, while Ollard considers the magical garden as ‘useful in undercutting the high degree of historical accuracy’.\textsuperscript{27} The characters of Aubrey and Maturin reflect to some degree the author’s own highly complex personality, with Maturin in particular increasingly acting as the author’s alter ego, even to being the Irishman that the Anglo-German O’Brien affected to be.\textsuperscript{28} Critics note the general absence of sentimentality in the portrayal of the characters, for O’Brien endows his heroes with their fair share of the weaknesses and follies of humanity, and he can kill off major supporting characters such as Maturin’s dashing wife Diana or Aubrey’s faithful coxswain Barrett Bonden with a chillingly distant cold-bloodedness that leaves the devoted reader stunned.\textsuperscript{29} Even the minor characters shine with individuality. Richard Snow summarised the importance of O’Brien’s characters:

\begin{quote}
But in the end it is the serious exploration of human character that gives the books their greatest power: the fretful play of mood that can irrationally darken the edges of the brightest triumph, and that can feed a trickle of merriment into the midst of terror and tragedy. O’Brien manages to express, with the grace and economy of poetry, familiar things that somehow never get written down, as when he carefully details the rueful steps by which Stephen Maturin falls out of love.\textsuperscript{30}
\end{quote}

O’Brien’s sure handling of plot also contributes to the sense of historicity. By refusing to formulise, he reproduces the randomness of real life. His narrative skill is praised for its ‘endlessly varying shocks and surprises – comic, grim, farcical, and tragic’, and his light ironic humour distinguishes him from his nautical fiction competition and again raises the comparisons with Austen.\textsuperscript{31} O’Brien’s historical persuasiveness is based on his layering of minute, acutely observed historical detail, couched in the language and sentiment of the period as well as grounded in historic actions. While he pays attention to accuracy in his general portrayal of the period and of particular events within it, he is even more attentive to an aspect of history too frequently overlooked by conventional historians: the minutiae of little facts that shaped the daily lives of ordinary people. By marrying this attention to domestic detail to his outstanding literary skills, working within yet transcending the established codes of literary realism to create an astonishingly realistic emotional fictional world, O’Brien generates the impressions, sensations and emotions of inhabiting a past age, and blurs the genre boundaries that could otherwise define his period fiction.\textsuperscript{32}

\begin{thebibliography}
\item Bayley, ‘In which we serve’, p. 39.
\item Surawicz and Jacobson, \textit{Doctors in fiction}, p. 19.
\item Ollard, ‘The Jack Aubrey novels’, p. 25; Snow, ‘An author I’d walk the plank for.’
\item Snow, ‘An author I’d walk the plank for.’
\item King, \textit{Patrick O’Brien}, pp. 329-329; Binyon, ‘Review of \textit{The Mauritius command}’.
\item King, \textit{Patrick O’Brien}, p. 260.
\end{thebibliography}
The movie *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* (Peter Weir, 2003) has a very difficult task to accomplish. Being based on O’Brian’s fiction, its representation has a twin standard to meet: that of being true to history and to O’Brian. Furthermore, it also has to work as a stand-alone movie for the many who know little of either. For all audiences, however, it has to create a sense of historical realism. Weir and his film crew went to considerable effort to achieve this, and the techniques used form an interesting comparison with O’Brian’s fiction. Again, a publishing industry sprang to life with several volumes explaining the making of the film and the history of the Navy of the period.\(^33\)

The difference in approach of course was that O’Brian’s fiction is made up of words, whereas the film is constructed primarily from images. Weir makes the beautifully informative observation about a film maker working from a novel:

> And the first thing you do when you pick the book up as a film maker, [holding an O’Brian novel by the spine and gently shaking it] all of the words fall out onto the table, and all you’re left with is, you know, the cover, the front cover and back cover and the skeleton of the plot and the ghostly shape of the characters, and you have to replace that prose with images. And it is the most extraordinary experience to attempt to do that. And I think that has been the great challenge with O’Brian, is to provide a kind of way of telling his story visually that would equal his prose or at least do it justice.\(^34\)

Historians, and literary critics, can overlook the essential truth that Weir highlights here: that film is not a written text and requires a different starting point. History books and novels use words; to that extent one can compare the genres. But film uses images as its primary means of communication, with dialogue and other sound effects as additional means. The change of medium requires film makers to seek the visual equivalent of the words of a book. Because images, especially moving images, are simultaneously more literal and more general than words, the way in which meaning is generated, shaped and understood in film follows a different process. When a book speaks of a historical artefact, it can describe it in words with some precision; however, a film shows an actual, specific artefact (even if it is a constructed prop imitating a historical one), thus being a more concrete particularisation of history. At the same time, an image’s meaning is more open to interpretation, thus a film is typically more polysemic than the written text. And, as with translations from one language to another, translating a written text to a visual medium raises the problem of combining both the denotative and connotative dimensions of the original text. Images, by their very nature, are significantly more connotative than words, leading to film generally having a greater emotional impact in comparison to the written text, which usually has a greater capacity for conveying facts, data and rational thinking.

Despite the differences, the media-specific techniques resemble each other to some extent. Weir and his crew tried to match O’Brian’s attention to detail, both because this is what is required to give a film the look of authenticity and because they were dealing with O’Brian’s material. Weir comments, ‘It was the fabric, the clothes, the very nails on the deck … it was that I thought I had to acknowledge’. Leon Poindexter, the shipwright engaged to transform the frigate *Rose* into *HMS Surprise* for the film remarks, ‘Often a movie is ruined because the details aren’t right … The historical accuracy just isn’t there and there are so many flaws that it just becomes kind of silly. Also, Patrick O’Brian was very fussy about detail and getting it right, and I think we’ve also gone to great lengths’.\(^35\)

Like O’Brian, Weir surrounded himself with the paraphernalia of the period to help create the mood while he was script writing. When it came to visual detail, the film makers had a replica of Admiral Lord

\(^{33}\) For example, B. Lavery. *Jack Aubrey commands: a historical companion to the naval world of Patrick O’Brian*, (Annapolis MD, 2003); McGregor, *The making of Master and commander*.


Nelson’s cutlery set made, though it appears in shot only momentarily. Rope for the ship was custom-made to have the left-hand lay of the period. Clothing, hammocks, shoes, lanterns, guns and the rest of the paraphernalia that cluttered an early nineteenth-century frigate were handmade at great expense to create the right 'look'. Similarly, the sound crew went to great lengths to record the actual sounds of various cannon and the sounds of shot hitting timber or flying through the air. The Horn storm sequences were carefully assembled from an amalgam of actual storm footage from the Horn, footage shot in the Fox Studio tank at Baja, Mexico, and Computer Generated Images (CGI) in order to create a 'realistic' storm for the movie. The makeup was carefully researched, and even teeth were distressed to match the period's standard of dental care.36

Weir made no attempt to portray O’Brian’s physical descriptions of Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin, considering this to be a side issue to capturing their essential character and friendship. However, in another feature specific to film, he went to great lengths to hire extras from the newly opened Eastern European nations, mainly rural Poles, having noticed while watching footage of the fall of Communism how: ‘They’ve not had those ‘Kodak’ moments; no concept of an image to project to the screen’. He felt this captured an innocence and authenticity of a pre-media age.37

To create the illusion of realism, Weir and his crew had to bend reality in many ways. For example, the literal realism of the storm footage from the Horn was enhanced with tank and CGI footage to create a storm that would impress movie goers. Similarly, while the sound crew went to great lengths to record actual guns firing, they were not always happy with the results, and edited them in order to generate a kind of hyperrealism, a sound which audiences would think was realistic, and which would match the effect they wished to achieve in the film. The balance between authenticity and cinema was exposed by a crew member’s comment, ‘you realise that these things are well researched and they actually work on camera’.38 In the end, a movie must appear realistic, regardless of how realistic that actually is.

This is an important element to keep in mind when discussing the way in which cinema and history interact. The impression of historical reality has taken on its own proportions as multiple historical movies have created particular genre expectations which, if not fulfilled, can leave audiences claiming that it was not ‘realistic’. Of course, most movie goers have no experience of the actual realism of what they have seen; the realism is measured against what they have come to expect from other similar movies. Hence for example, the huge sprays of splinters when cannonballs strike the ship are grossly exaggerated, but necessary to create a cinematic impression.

While Weir and his crew followed a similar principle to O’Brien in authenticating their story by the accumulation of thoroughly researched minute detail, film has its own unique codes of authenticating its representations. As film imitates the process of human visual perception, and as sight is our most trusted sense, it has a high degree of self-authentication through this mimicry. Add to this the codes of realist cinema, whereby the process of film making is largely hidden from the audience, and film develops a naturally high level of credibility. And because cinema’s primary appeal is emotional, rather than rational, the impression of reality is stronger through reduced analysis.

And just as O’Brien added significantly to the power of his history through the successful exploitation of the literary conventions of his writing, so too Weir has used the cinematic conventions of film in attempting to authenticate his work. However, his efforts are markedly less successful than those of O’Brien. Weir has followed the conventions of Hollywood narrative cinema too closely to the detriment of the impact of the film, both as a movie and as history. The historical flaws result from attempts to make exciting the drama of the film, such as the time it takes to decide to cut loose the fallen mizzen-mast at the cost of the life of popular sailor Warley, or the French launching a surprise attack when the British

36 D. Prior, In the wake of O’Brien, in which Peter Weir and co. embark on adapting the Far side of the world to the screen, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003; McGregor, The making of Master and commander, p. 28-29, 42; The hundred days; D. Prior, On Sound Design: a first-person account of the efforts of Richard King in his endeavour to bring to life the aural world of Aubrey and Maturin, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
38 McGregor, The making of Master and commander, p. 88.
board the Acheron. Making Aubrey think of disguising his ship after seeing one of Maturin’s insect specimens also runs against the grain of both history and the novels, and weakens its effectiveness. The worst is when the ship’s master, Mr Allen, commits screen suicide by saying out loud when boarding the Acheron that no-one is there. Predictably, sadly, he is instantly shot in the head. Yet the film has its moments of subtlety and texture, as when Aubrey casts a lingering admiring look at an Indian beauty in a canoe alongside, having just bellowed an order about not letting women aboard. Unfortunately, despite all the loving attention—or perhaps in part because of it—the movie is nobly tame and predictable. Nikolai Tolstoy approved of it on behalf of his stepfather, arguing that O’Brian ‘would have been delighted with his meticulous concern for historical accuracy and, much more importantly, the subtle nuances of the attractively eccentric friendship between the principal characters’. But as a number of reviewers noted, it is filled with outstanding elements, yet the whole fails to satisfy. Its mixed reviews more or less matched its box-office reception. In this sense, it is perhaps the opposite of Weir’s greatest piece of historical movie making, Gallipoli, which was hugely successful as a piece of cinema, yet disappointing in aspects of its history.

So, unlike O’Brian, the film fails as a convincing historical piece not so much because of its few historical lapses, but because it fails to persuade as a piece of cinema. According to some reviewers, it was too boys-own. But in the process it illustrates the strong similarities to historical fiction, although it uses a different medium to achieve it. Both historical fiction and historical movies must succeed both as history and as fiction. The history is achieved through the layered accumulation of acutely observed, minute, usually domestic, detail, while the fictional dimension is achieved by creating an emotionally and psychologically believable world. Both novelist and film maker achieve the first; only O’Brian succeeds completely in the latter, by respecting genre conventions but refusing to bow to them. With character-driven, realistically unpredictable plots, O’Brian creates a world that resembles the real; Weir’s plot is more linear, its outcomes are more predictable and his characters more limited in scope.

Perhaps the element of historical fiction with which historians struggle the most is the fictional recreation of an interior emotional world. Yet as this study demonstrates, historical fiction has the power to reimagine the lost interior emotional world of the past, offering a historical insight that conventional history can rarely give. To be successful, historical fiction must respect two superficially separate disciplines, that of history and that of fiction. In fact, failure in either can undermine the historical impact. It is O’Brian’s great achievement that he has been able to marry the facts of history to a fictional mode while maintaining every appearance of reality in both historical and fictional genres. In this dynamic, each element acts to reinforce the other, indeed sometimes covering for minor lapses in the other. Weir has impressed with his efforts to recreate a cinematically historically accurate world, but has failed in the attempt to create a truly persuasive fictional world. But in that failure, one can still see clearly the dynamic interplay of history, fiction and film which gives to modern audiences’ emotional immediacy to an otherwise distant past.

References


41 Taylor, ‘Crowe Becalmed’.


**Articles**


'Physical disability' or 'hypochondria of pinchbeck passion?': The role of sexology in the diagnosis of a lesbian identity in Britain, 1900-1930

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Introduction

In 1928 the British government was forced to confront female homosexuality during the obscenity case against Radclyffe Hall’s novel, The Well of Loneliness. The publishers, Jonathan Cape, argued that Hall had produced an honest account of sexual inversion; a medical congenital abnormality or ‘physical disability’, and was justified in informing her readership and pleading for social acceptance.1 Meanwhile, sections of the mass media reported that female homosexuality was nothing more than ‘a sort of hypochondria of pinchbeck passion’, implying that same-sex female relations were a flawed and temporary imitation of heterosexuality.2 Both descriptions originated from theories of the homosexual circulated in the medical community since 1900; the former, which left the ‘invert’ innocent, and the latter, which named a new and dangerous ‘pervert’. This paper shall argue that by 1930 the authorities had utilised the sexological language to make the separate models synonymous, and were able to diagnose and condemn a visible female homosexuality.

Existing studies of lesbian history are invaluable but have often been overshadowed by an effort to create a wider ‘lesbian and gay’ narrative which has led to oversimplification. Whilst the LGBT+ community is a force for strength in modern-day culture, a unified past is ahistorical. As Merl Storr commented, ‘the body of scholarship known as “lesbian and gay studies” has produced a “lesbian and gay” history of sexuality – including sexology – which has unwittingly flattened out some of the history’s contours’.3 It needs to be acknowledged that the chronological paths taken to an LGBT+ present are highly gendered and therefore disparate. Michel Foucault’s theory of sexuality suggested that the increasing scientific study of sex in the early 20th century transformed homosexuality from an act into an identity.4 Historians such as Jeffrey Weeks utilised this theory to create a narrative for male homosexuality which neatly tracked the positive progression of the ‘sodomite’ to ‘homosexual’; the ‘pervert’ to ‘invert’.5 Yet, this narrative does not fit women. Female homosexuality was never made illegal in Britain, so sexology formed the first public acknowledgement. Far from being a key stage in the formation and liberation of the homosexual, for women, sexology marked a diagnosis of abnormality and public condemnation of a previously invisible behaviour.

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There are several key case studies which have been simplified to apply the ‘lesbian and gay’ progressive narrative to women’s experience: sexology emerged in 1900, was utilised in the libel case of (in)famous dancer Maud Allan in 1918, which in turn paved the way for the emergence of the blatant invert Radclyffe Hall and her protagonist, Stephen Gordon. This historical narrative has been incorporated in later developments of the lesbian community, and credited for the origins of the ‘butch/femme’ coupling. However, such a reading has streamlined the origins of lesbianism, and ignored the multitude of possibilities for female same-sex desire in the period 1900–1930. Even the majority of lesbian, feminist historiography fails to acknowledge not only how overwhelmingly heteronormative the sexological construction of the lesbian was, but how one-sided. Despite extensive care and effort by academics to define the varying degrees of masculine lesbianism, little study has acknowledged the feminine lesbian, though she surely did exist. She is proof of alternative queer identities; not visibly homosexual, but not heterosexual either. These women have been ignored by history – regarded alternatively as victims, manipulators, and heterosexuals.

When studying the history of sexuality and gender it is essential to establish and define terminology so as not to risk ahistoricism. Lesbian historiography has conscientiously avoided anachronism whilst still attempting to narrate a consciously ‘lesbian’ history. Lillian Faderman’s iconic study focussed on ‘romantic friendships’, and stressed the potential of both emotional and physical intimacy between women without the conscious adoption of a homosexual identity. Adrienne Rich, meanwhile, in ‘Compulsory Heterosexuality’ (1980) theorised the ‘lesbian continuum’; a model which allows for the placing of all women throughout history on a scale of ‘lesbian’ feeling or activity, without forcing the historian to make definite assertions. The Medievalist Judith Bennett offered the most accepted term of ‘lesbian-like’, which allows for both the claiming of a lesbian past, with the constant reminder of the instability of the term. Bennett argued that ‘no word has transparent meaning, now or in the past, surely we need not single out “lesbian” as a word that must be proscribed’. This paper shall acknowledge the historiographical debates which have occurred since the emergence of lesbian history as a discipline and embrace Bennett’s sentiment, but will utilise the technique of the Early Modernist Valerie Traub. In The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England, Traub wholly embraced the word ‘lesbian’ but italicised it at every use, to highlight the instability of the term. The direct use of the italicised lesbian in this paper also hopes to evoke queer theory; the incongruous formatting highlights the incongruous nature of the word, and works to destabilise the accepted historical heteronormative narrative.

The Sexological Invert

Sexology was an essential component of Foucault’s renowned History of Sexuality: the relationship between patient and sexologist resembled that of confessional and Catholic priest in pre-

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Reformation Europe and created an acceptable space to discuss sex.12 With this, Foucault challenged the 'repressive hypothesis' that sex went undiscussed until the late 20th century, and instead that 'scientia sexualis' represented an enlightenment. Figures such as Karl Heinrich Ulrichs and his theory of the third-sex Uranian, or 'Urning', in his pioneering studies (1864-5), or Magnus Hirschfeld and the establishment of the 'Institut für Sexualwissenschaft' (the 'Institute for the Science of Sexuality', 1919-1933), certainly did represent a revolutionary study of sexuality and marked a transition of knowledge from religious to secular. According to Foucault, a range of new sexual identities were produced and individuals learnt to recognise themselves 'in the impersonal, medical descriptions'.13 However, it is important to note that while the impact of sexology was evident in Europe, in Britain its presence was less obvious. Sexological research was limited to the medical community and was more often treated with distaste than interest. In 1896 The Lancet described Havelock Ellis and John Addington-Symonds' Sexual Inversion as a subject which 'touched the very lowest depths to which humanity has fallen'.14 In 1898, Sexual Inversion was banned in Britain after being deemed 'obscene' and Ellis was forced to publish in America.15 Moreover, despite the British Medical Journal's [BMJ] opposition to the obscenity ruling, Ellis's theories were rejected and it was upheld that homosexuality was linked to degeneration and sickness, in concurrence with The Lancet's view that Ellis failed to 'convince medical men that homosexuality is anything else than an acquired and depraved manifestation of the sexual passion'.16 Despite Ellis now being regarded as a leading British sexologist it is clear that at the time his influence did not live up to the Foucauldian narrative.

The work of Havelock Ellis was pioneering, if not initially accepted. Sexual Inversion was published in 1896. Building upon Ulrichs' 'Urning', Ellis described the invert as a sexed body with the opposite gendered soul. A congenital invert was born with this diametric combination and was unable to change their innate behaviours and desires towards the same sex. Ellis described the female invert through case studies and concluded that they were interested in traditionally masculine pursuits from a young age but were harder to identify than male inverts because of the lack of criminal status.17 Such women often dressed in male attire when possible or were indicated by their 'brusque, energetic movements, the attitude of the arms, the inflexions of the voice, the masculine straightforwardness and sense of honour, and especially the attitude toward men, free from any suggestion either of shyness or audacity'.18 There was also the implication of physical difference, through firm muscles and a deep voice.19 Edward Carpenter published sexological work ten years after Ellis, and pursued similar theory. In The Intermediate Sex, Carpenter described a true female invert as an 'aggressive person, of strong passions, masculine manners and movements, practical in the conduct of life, sensuous rather than sentimental in love, often untidy, and outré in attire; her figure muscular,
her voice rather low in pitch; her dwelling-room decorated with sporting-scenes, pistols, etc. On one hand it appears that these theories of the female congenital invert offered a radical identity to the female homosexual. On the other, deviant desires were repackaged to fit the heteronormative couple (one invert as the 'male' partner, with a 'female' lover). Yet even so, if Foucault was right and sexology did eventually disseminate and was utilised by individuals to identify themselves, the female invert could indeed form the origins of the modern lesbian.

However, there is an important flaw in the sexological theory and subsequent historiographical conclusions. When constructing the masculine female invert, the sexologists found themselves at a loss to explain the apparently 'normal' female partner. To fit the heteronormative model they had created, the partner of the invert could not be an invert herself; she must be feminine, yet still attracted to women. Ellis clearly struggled in his description and contradicted himself when attempting to describe their physical appearance: 'they are women who are not very robust and well developed, physically or nervously, and who are not well adapted for child-bearing, but who still possess many excellent qualities, and they are always womanly'. It is apparent that a man such as Ellis could not conceive of a woman/woman relationship without a male figure, and equally could not imagine a woman who, despite being 'normal' in almost all visible and psychological characteristics, would choose a female over a male partner. This is due in part to previous centuries’ constructions of the ‘tribade’ in which women could only partake in same-sex acts if one partner had an oversized clitoris, and there could be penetrative intercourse. The phallocentric conceptions of sex lived on, yet the existence of the physically endowed tribade was undermined by the growing acknowledgement of the hermaphrodite and, as such, medical commentators were often at a loss to understand or explain lesbian sex. Due to this uncertainty, the invert’s partner (or in other words, the ‘female’ partner) received only a page’s worth of attention in Sexual Inversion, and Ellis’s lack of sympathy and understanding is encapsulated in his suggestion that ‘they are the pick of the women whom the average man would pass by. No doubt, this is often the reason why they are open to homosexual advances.’ It is this problem of the non-inverted female homosexual which challenges Ellis’s sexological model. But consideration of such women’s existence proves the availability of multiple lesbian identities. Whilst the Foucauldian development of sexual science did create and name identities, it also maintained knowing silences and flexibility.

Whilst sexological theories were not initially adopted in wider society, ideas slowly gained traction throughout the period 1900-1930. Yet by 1930, the masculine woman was understood as a combination of congenital and acquired homosexuality. This combined figure worked to stereotype and condemn the female homosexual. Marked from birth, the invert was most definitely ‘other’ from society. Yet she was undeserving of sympathy because of her chosen perversion. An article published in the BMJ in 1922 epitomises this characterisation: that inversion could be accepted as a ‘state or condition’, but if someone who was afflicted acted on their desire then they were a ‘sexual pervert’. This model of the invert allowed for a visible figure to be persecuted; a masculine woman was clearly recognised and

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21 Ibid.
23 Ellis, Sexual Inversion, p. 133.
avoided, and could be used as a deterrent to the ‘normal’ woman. Such a model was utilised in the condemnation of *The Well of Loneliness*. In a statement given by leading practitioner in mental and nervous disorders in 1928, Maurice Beresford Wright, O.B.E. claimed:

> There are the active Lesbians, and those who yield to the active ones and are regarded as passive Lesbians. The active Lesbian is practically always abnormal, that is, she has male instincts, desiring to satisfy them by association with females. She is, to use a common expression, a “hunter,” and is on the look-out for the rather younger, weaker, more yielding, more genuinely feminine women, whom to seduce and persuade into yielding towards her Lesbian desires and acts, which is, in a sense, comparable to the action of a man in persuading a woman to yield to his sexual acts.26

Hostility to the idea of sexual inversion as an affliction rather than conscious decision is also evident in the reaction to Carpenter’s work. Whilst *The Intermediate Sex* was not banned as *Sexual Inversion* was, it received unfavourable recognition from the medical community. In 1909 a BMJ book review began with a mocking rhyme, poked fun at the origins of the term ‘Urning’ (implying it came from ‘urinal’), and claimed that ‘these articles reiterate ad nauseum praise and laudation for creatures and customs which are generally regarded as odious’.27 Both Ellis and Carpenter were motivated to write such work to challenge the 1885 Labouchere Amendment which made any sexual interaction between males illegal which had led to Oscar Wilde’s guilty verdict.28 Whilst such motivations were noble and fit cohesively with the male homosexual Whiggish narrative, the sexological theories actually worked to implicate women in homosexual acts for the first time and at last created a visible female homosexual, leaving any independent woman vulnerable to accusation.

**Feminism and Backlash**

Thus far it has been shown that sexological theories were not widely accepted by the medical community and that, despite the radical nature of said theories, they were ultimately founded upon heterosexuality. This section will highlight issues which made the legacy of sexology even more complex, and problematize its place in the history of homosexuality. Firstly, the ‘masculine woman’ of the early 20th century emerged simultaneously in a different form: the suffragette. This powerfully independent female figure served to question the gender norms which sexual inversion theory relied upon. Secondly, the libel case of Maud Allan is considered; as a theatrical dancer neither Allan nor her supposed lovers were recognisable as ‘inverts’, and offer an alternative lesbian identity in the period. Lastly is the proposed law amendment of 1921 which would have made female homosexuality illegal on the same grounds as male. The failure of the Bill to pass again reveals the ambiguous, diverse nature of lesbian relations in the period and the struggle of the authorities to define characteristics which could identify them.

Suffragism began to gain popularity as a movement from the late 19th century and campaigned for the education and welfare of women as well as the priority of the female vote, alongside the development of sexological thought. Sheila Jeffreys forcefully argued in *The Spinster and her Enemies*.

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28 D. Cohler, *Citizen, Invert, Queer: Lesbianism and War in Early Twentieth-Century Britain* (Minneapolis, 2010), p. 4.
Kathryn Shaw: ‘Physical disability’ or ‘hypochondria of pinchbeck passion?’

(1985) that the two were closely connected. From her perspective of radical second wave feminism, Jeffreys argued not only that female sexuality had been defined by privileged white men, but that homosexuality had been utilised as tool by sexologists as a smear campaign against suffragism. In intervening decades, Jeffreys’ uncompromising narrative of sexology as misogynistic has been challenged, yet strengths remain. For example, Carpenter’s understanding of female Urnings is based on the belief that women had been ‘oppressed and unfairly treated by men’, causing them to draw ‘more closely together and to cement alliances of their own’. The connection between a lesbian woman and a suffragette continued into the century, with the New Statesman commenting in 1928 (the advent of female suffrage for all women over 21) that the ‘vulgarity of lesbianism’, had ‘original roots no doubt in the professional man-hating of the Pankhurst Suffragette movement’. In addition, Jeffreys coined the term ‘pseudohomosexual’ to describe the ‘passive’ lesbian partner; one ‘real’ invert could cause lesbianism to spread among normal women, with suffrage circles being particularly susceptible. Yet, her definition holds less similarities to the ‘femme’ model of lesbianism, and more to her own construction of the ‘political lesbian’ within the Women’s Liberation movement. Therefore this adds an extra complication; alongside the congenital invert and passive partner, there was the potential for a strategic lesbianism deliberately employed to disrupt patriarchy.

There was a more connected relationship between sex and gender in comparison to modern scholarship which allows for separate schools. As Laura Doan argues, there was far more fluidity around notions of gender inversion, gender deviance, and sexuality, and it is with such fluidity that the history of lesbianism should be written. There have been several (often controversially received) attempts to unearth the lesbian past of many prominent political women in the period, such as Octavia Wilberforce, Louisa Garrett Anderson and Louisa Martindale. But, as Judith Bennett warned, there is the risk of creating ‘a fetish rather than a history’, if too much artistic license is employed in retelling histories without source authority. For example, Octavia Wilberforce spoke openly about her overwhelming affection and love for her companion, Elizabeth Robins, and commented in her diaries that her parents grew concerned about their attachment. Yet her 1950s autobiography had the benefit of hindsight and as such she was careful to make clear that her earlier affections were not ‘homosexual’. However, her disgust at the possibility of marriage in her youth was still startlingly; the ‘horror’ and ‘revulsion’ at the thought of being bound to a man certainly begs a more complex reading

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31 Carpenter, The Intermediate Sex, p. 78.
40 LSE, 7OCW/FL558, The Eighth Child, p. 204.
than assumed heterosexuality. Therefore, historians should be wary of applying hetero- or homosexual readings onto such historical figures, and instead be open-minded to more complex readings that work outside established orientations. Jeffreys was right to identify the sexist bias and the ability of the authorities to use the threat of lesbianism as a deterrent to women who were sympathetic to the suffrage cause, but it did not mean that lesbianism did not exist within suffragism. Instead, there were more flexible identities available to women, conforming neither to the sexological definitions of a self-conscious identity, nor to the innocence of female friendships.

Another major contributing factor to shifting gender roles was war. Women were key workers in wartime industry with 7,310,500 in some form of war work in 1918. The war represented a Bakhtinian carnivalesque period, and it is possible that true inverts thrived during WW1 due to the requirement to exploit their practical masculinity but such toleration was limited in time and not synonymous with homosexuality. As historians of gender have commented, it was difficult for women to lose the social standing they had gained in the war and return to domesticity after a period of independence. At the time, medical commentators went so far as to suggest psychological implications which would mean that modern social conditions are compelling women more and more to model themselves on men, which, except in rare cases, inevitably causes intrapsychic conflict and division of interest', indicating that the female mind was actually altered. Some also suggested that due to the imbalanced ratio of men returning from the Front, some women were forced out of the heterosexual couple, unclaimed due to the decreased pool of potential husbands. Writing a decade after the war, Lillian Barker CBE, governor of H.M. Borstal for Girls, gave a statement of professional opinion on the phenomena of lesbianism. She claimed that 'the moment is one of great danger, when there are nearly two million women with what are purely natural instincts, which cannot be satisfied by reason of the surplus of women over men'. She indicated that population imbalance caused lesbian behaviour, implying that any single woman could be suspect. Therefore, the women who worked in traditionally masculine professions as well as those who were left single after the war further complicated the preconceived model of female homosexuality. They may have aroused suspicion contemporarily, but without a widely understood model of female homosexuality, nothing could be done to police them.

The perfect example to illustrate the combination of fear of female autonomy and the post-war moral panic of an unstable Britain is found in the 1918 libel case of the professional dancer Maud Allan. Allan was Canadian-born and well known for her performance of Salome, an adaptation of Oscar Wilde’s stage-play performed in 1918 at the Royal Court Theatre. However, in February, Noel Pemberton-Billing published an article, 'The Cult of the Clitoris' in his newspaper The Imperialist, which implicated Allan as a lesbian. The 'Cult' of which he wrote was an extension of a story published in January, which reported the existence of a German 'Black Book' containing 47,000 British names susceptible to blackmail due to their 'perverse' sexual desires. Pemberton-Billing’s attack was carefully constructed

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41 Wilberforce was ’staggered by the horror of such thoughts’ in LSE, 7OCW/FL558, The Eighth Child, p. 84, similar to Stephen Gordon’s ‘dumb horror’ at being proposed to in: Hall, The Well, p. 105.

42 Interestingly, there was a simultaneous moral panic in America due to the rise of companionate marriage and the figure of the ‘flapper’, as shown in Christina Simmons, ‘Companionate Marriage and the Lesbian Threat’, Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies, 4 (1979), pp. 54-59.


46 NA DPP 1/88, statement from Lillian Charlotte Barker CBE, 1928.

and claimed Allan to be ‘a lewd, unchaste, and immoral woman and was about to give private performances of an obscene and indecent character, so designed to foster and encourage unnatural practices among women, and that the said Maud Allan associated herself with persons addicted to unnatural practices’. The article never became more explicit, and instead used knowing allusions to the play and the legacy of Oscar Wilde. With support, Allan sued Pemberton-Billing for libel and was brought to court in June 1918. In her study of the case, Lucy Bland argued that it was ‘the first British trial in which the defendant drew on sexology as a part of his defence’. Indeed, Pemberton-Billing based the majority of his accusations on the fact that Allan had read works of sexology and was familiar with terminology. There was hesitation to even read the word ‘clitoris’ aloud in court and at one stage the judge questioned the meaning of ‘orgasm’. Although Pemberton-Billing won the case, it was because he chose to revoke his accusation of lesbianism altogether. The theory around sexology was still so vague as to fail to create a criminal profile that Allan could fit; as a seductive dancer she did not resemble the masculine woman, and her ‘immoral’ familiarity with terminology failed to resonate with a court who did not understand it themselves.

Moreover, Allan’s supposed lovers failed to fit the framework of inversion. The most famous was Margot Asquith, wife of the Liberal ex-Prime Minister, who paid for Allan’s Regent’s Park apartment for twenty years. Judith Walkowitz argued that the connection between Allan and the Asquith’s was made as a deliberate attempt by Pemberton-Billing to implicate the former Prime Minister as vulnerable to German influences. As such, this formed another reason for Pemberton-Billing to abandon his explicit accusations of lesbianism. If the wife of the British Prime Minister could be guilty of lesbian behaviour, then surely any woman could be suspected of perverse desires and create a mass moral panic. Other members of the audience were not named, but a report in the Daily Chronicle noted that the vast majority were women to the extent that ‘it might have been a suffragist meeting’. This link to suffragism indicates how public women-only activity was viewed with suspicion. The threat of the ‘invisible’ lesbian increased, with Pemberton-Billing having little proof to paint Allan or her lovers as invert. Furthermore, Marie Stopes’s famous sex manual, Married Love was published in early 1918, which included explanations of human anatomy, including the clitoris. As such, if knowledge of the word was enough proof of lesbianism, then an extensive number of women were accusable as circulation of the marriage guide led to a sixth edition by the end of the same year. More importantly, it was again a blindly phallocentric view of sex which impeded the labelling of female homosexuality; without an explicit act, such as sodomy, male authorities failed to find a solid accusation to level at

53 Jennings, Lesbian History of Britain, p. 95.
Allan. The ‘unnatural passions’ went unnamed, and therefore added to the invisibility of the female homosexual.

The moral panic created by the possibility of the invisible lesbian was clear in the 1921 debates which surrounded the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. On 3rd August, the House of Lords debated the Bill in relation to Clause 3, which read that ‘any act of gross indecency between female persons shall be a misdemeanour, and punishable in the same manner as any such act committed by male persons under section eleven of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885’. This would have made female homosexual behaviour illegal to be in line with male homosexuality. The debate began with reluctance to speak of ‘a most disgusting and polluting subject’, and the Earl of Malmesbury believed that the best course of action was to wait until ‘these unfortunate specimens of humanity exterminate themselves’. There was a unanimous belief that the majority of women could not even comprehend lesbianism, as the Lord Chancellor commented that ‘of every thousand women, taken as a whole, 999 have never even heard a whisper of these practices’. As such the Clause was rejected and the entire Bill was thrown out. Yet it was not only due to the Lords’ disbelief and disgust, but also the knowledge that it would be ‘extremely difficult to get any evidence against persons accused of this offence’. Due to the lack of understanding about what sex between women would look like, as well as the absence of visual indicators to reveal such women, the House could see that to pass such a Bill would be to increase discussion whilst actually inhibit the ability to police such relations.

The Well of Loneliness

Due to growth in moral panic which surrounded female suffrage and deviant sexualities, alongside the failure to pass legislation in 1921, there was an increasing need for a language with which to talk about lesbianism. In 1928, the vocabulary of inversion and the image of the masculine woman became suddenly commonplace both in official channels and the mass media thanks to the publication and subsequent banning of The Well of Loneliness. Radclyffe Hall’s novel follows the life of a woman named Stephen Gordon, the quintessential model of Ellis’s female invert, and the trials she must face to cope with her ‘burden’ of nature, ending in the loss of her true love, Mary Llewellyn. Laura Doan and Rebecca Jennings have both argued that The Well symbolised the emergence of female homosexuality as ‘a pivotal event in crystallising notions of the modern lesbian’. Jeffrey Weeks commented that the case against The Well and Radclyffe Hall was ‘for women, an equivalent social impact to the one the Wilde trial had for men’. Whilst it is true that The Well represented an integral part of the history of the female homosexual, Hall’s legacy has not been equal to that of Oscar Wilde. Because the novel and publishers were on trial rather than Hall herself, female homosexuality was not under scrutiny in the same way male homosexuality had been in 1895. Rather than acknowledgement of ‘the love that dare not speak its name’ in women, the obscenity trial of 1928 marked the construction of a recognisable, archetypal masculine lesbian. This allowed for both the social ostracism of the masculine woman as a

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58 Ibid., p. 567, 570.
59 Ibid., p. 574.
60 ‘Ibid., p. 570.
64 As shown by sources in Oram and Turnbull, Lesbian History Sourcebook, p. 196-200.
figure of fear and condemnation, and the erasure of ‘normal-looking’ female homosexuals from existence. In 1928, Stephen was found guilty, but Mary was erased.

_The Well_ tells the story of Stephen’s life, with her sexual inversion evident from birth and confirmed to the reader through the study of Ulrichs and Krafft-Ebing by her father, Sir Philip. After growing up as a social outsider, Stephen finds love in the manipulative, married American, Angela Crossby, before being humiliated and rejected first by Angela and then by her own mother, Lady Anna. Stephen eventually finds success as a novelist and explores the Bohemian _lesbian_ subculture in Paris before serving as an ambulance driver in WW1. There she meets Mary Llewellyn, who becomes her partner in post-war France. Eventually Stephen decides that she cannot give Mary the happiness she deserves and deliberately drives her into the arms of a man, Martin, by pretending to have an affair with another woman. Stephen is then left alone and pleads to God for ‘the right to existence’ for herself and other inverts. Hall used Stephen’s tragic tale to evoke sympathy for the female invert and explain that homosexuality was innate. Interestingly, despite the later controversy, _The Well_ initially received favourable reviews, with claims that the novel ‘handles very skilfully a psychological problem which needs to be understood in view of its growing importance’. Many approved of the explicit connection to sexological expertise, as the _Daily Herald_ claimed ‘she has given to English literature a profound and moving study of a profound and moving problem’, whilst the _Tatler_ suggested that ‘certain facts must be faced and, however unpleasant they may be from the normal point of view, it is better to face them – and to seek to understand them – than to persecute them ruthlessly’.

However, the inevitable backlash came with James Douglas’s infamous review in the _Sunday Express_ on the 19th of August, in which he claimed he would rather ‘give a healthy girl or boy prussic acid’ than _The Well_. Douglas attempted to refute the theories of inversion, and argued instead that homosexuals were ‘damned because they choose to be damned, not because they are doomed from the beginning’. Following such a review the government intervened and the Home Secretary William Joynson-Hicks requested that the publishers should withdraw the novel because he believed that ‘the book would tend to corrupt the minds of young persons if it fell into their hands’. They agreed but sent moulds to France, and on 5th October 250 copies were intercepted at Dover and shortly after, proceedings began against Jonathan Cape under the Obscene Publications Act 1857. It was heard that ‘these unnatural offences between women which are the subject of this book involve acts which between men would be a criminal offence, and involve acts of the most horrible, unnatural and disgusting obscenity’. In fact, _The Well_ is infamous for its lack of any sexual content, the most explicit reference being between Stephen and Angela when ‘she kissed her full on the lips, as a lover’. However, for the newspaper readers who would greatly outnumber those who read the actual novel themselves, _The Well_ was indeed portrayed as gratuitous perverted smut. Far from being given a liberating voice, _lesbianism_ was at once thrown into public knowledge and condemned alongside sodomy. Once the initially accepting reviews were forgotten, ‘inversion’ became synonymous with ‘perversion’, and the masculine woman became a figure of condemnation rather than acceptance.

The shifting definitions of sexological terms are essential to note when studying this case. Although historiography is very conscientious around the use of the term ‘lesbian’, other words such as

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68 Ibid
69 NA, HO 144/22547, letter from William Joynson-Hicks, 21 Aug. 1928.
71 Hall, _The Well_, p. 162.
‘invert’ are not tracked so closely. In the primary texts of Ellis and others, the model of the homosexual couple is of one partner as the ‘true invert’, with a gendered soul at odds with the sexed body, and a ‘normal’ female partner. In this dichotomy, it is implied that the true invert suffers with a congenital condition and cannot be helped, whilst the second partner is morally dubious and could be ‘fixed’. However, I argue that when ‘inversion’ was called upon in the courts in 1928, the ‘true invert’ was defined as encompassing both a congenital abnormality and an immoral perversion. This allowed for the societal blame to fall solely upon her shoulders; not only was she the source of abnormality, but evoked it in others and spread the ‘disease’ of lesbianism whilst allowing for any interested ‘normal’ woman to be free of blame. This new definition of the invert was found in the persisting language of ‘corruption’ which surrounded the case. The Home Secretary continued in his condemnation of the novel and claimed that it ‘supports a depraved practice and that its tendency is to corrupt, and that it is gravely detrimental to the public interest’. Royal physician, Sir William Henry Willcox described lesbianism as ‘a vice which, if widespread, becomes a danger to the well-being of a nation, and where in history it has been prevalent in any nation this has been usually one of the indications of the downfall of that nation’. In his verdict on 16th November Sir Chartres Biron claimed that he was ‘amazed at that contention being put forward’ (referring to Ellis’s theory of inversion) which revealed that despite the claim that the trial was about the obscene nature of the novel alone, the verdict effectively categorised female homosexuality as acquired, rather than innate.

The argument that the government used at the obscenity trial of The Well to make a wider statement on lesbianism is supported by the awareness of how much media attention the case would attract. The day after Douglas’s damning review publishers wrote to the Home Secretary suggesting that ‘a wide and unnecessary advertisement has been given to the book’. On the following day, 21st August, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Sir Archibald Bodkin, also advised that ‘a prosecution would undoubtedy give the book further advertisement’. Yet, the publicity already received from the Sunday Express article, combined with the pre-existing anxiety from the Maud Allan case and the 1921 debates meant that it would be prudent to make a stand against certain behaviours. The enactment of the Representation of the People Act which granted the vote to women on equal grounds to men in July 1928 would have also caused uncertainty around the increasing independence of women. To create a verdict which allied the masculine woman with perversion would be to stigmatise both female homosexuality and female independence. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that a presiding judge Sir Robert Wallace labelled The Well as ‘more subtle, demoralising, corrosive, corruptive, than anything that was ever written’.

In her study of the 1928 obscenity case, Esther Newton argued that ‘the existence of a lesbian who did not feel somehow male was apparently unthinkable for Hall’ and that ‘Mary’s real story is yet to be told’. It is certainly true that the character of Mary received no attention either at time or in historiographical analysis since, which is a great oversight. For the authorities, this allowed for the blame for lesbianism to fall solely on the masculine woman. Because the trial was against the publication rather than the content itself, the story was referred to in relatively brief terms, but enough to reveal a very specific reading and bias. In The Well, Angela Crossby is manipulative and very much

72 NA, HO 144/22547, letter from William Joynson-Hicks, 22 Aug. 1928.
74 NA, HO 144/22547, statement delivered by Sir Chartres Biron, 16 Nov. 1928.
75 The Daily Express, 20 Aug. 1928.
76 NA, HO 144/22547, letter from Sir Archibald Henry Bodkin, 21 Aug. 1928.
takes advantage of Stephen, rather than the reverse. Yet when the 'Angela case' was described in court, Biron claimed that Stephen 'seduced her and persuaded her reluctantly to indulge in these horrible practices', and made much of the fact that Angela was a married woman.\textsuperscript{79} Mary meanwhile, is admittedly described as young and innocent in the novel, but is very sure of her own mind. She tells Stephen ‘all my life I’ve been waiting for something… I’ve been waiting for you’.\textsuperscript{80} When Stephen tries to keep her at arm’s length for her own protection, Mary insists on pursuing, even claiming ‘I forced myself on you’, and later ‘what do I care for the world’s opinion?’\textsuperscript{81} Yet none of this is accounted for in the court, and instead Stephen is the conniving seducer in the ‘Mary incident’, with Mary as an unwilling ‘victim’.\textsuperscript{82} It was necessary for the trial to portray both Angela and Mary as victims because they represented every ‘normal’ woman in society and if they could be guilty of homosexual desires, then by implication any woman could be a lesbian with no visible indicators. With Stephen as the only aberration in an otherwise feminine and traditional womanhood, the possibility of ‘decent’ women committing homosexual acts was negated.

Such a model was also applied to the press coverage of ‘female husbands’. The case of a female husband had long been a staple story for the tabloid press, with the eventual discovery of true gender portrayed as a pantomime device of mistaken identity.\textsuperscript{83} Yet in the two years between 1928-9, there were two cases which were treated with greater severity. In April 1928, the case of Lillian Arkell-Smith was reported, in which she was revealed as living under the pseudonym of Colonel Victor Barker since 1922. After being arrested on bankruptcy charges, Barker was discovered to be a woman and transferred to a female prison. More shocking than her lengthy deception however, was her marriage in 1923 to Alfreda Haward. Haward was questioned in court, and it was revealed that not only had the two women shared a bed for five years, but that she had actually known Barker when she was still Valerie. Yet, ‘in reply to further questions, Miss Haward said that Barker courted her as a man and she believed he was a man’.\textsuperscript{84} The fact that the court was apparently prepared to believe Haward, as well as the lack of opinion from the newspaper indicates that the reader was left to deduce Haward’s guilt, or believe her ludicrous innocence. Barker however, was described with exaggeration: ‘the size of a Falstaff, the policeman who led her into court was puny by comparison’.\textsuperscript{85} She was given the sole blame for giving a false statement on the marriage registry. A similar case occurred a year later when timber carter William Sidney Holton was revealed as a woman on admittance to hospital for fever. Yet in this case the ‘wife’s’ story was even more unbelievable. Mabel Hinton apparently not only believed that Holton was a man, but that ‘he’ had fathered her child. The Daily Herald reported that Hinton claimed “Holton never aroused my suspicions in any way,” said the woman. “I always believed Holton to be a man, and I cannot believe otherwise.”\textsuperscript{86} The paper described her as ‘bewildered’ by events. The reader would clearly infer the awareness of Mabel Hinton, and perhaps even suspect sexual contact between the two women, after implication of the child. Yet, there were no accusations of homosexuality and Hinton was able to adopt the identity of the duped wife, and maintain her status as a heterosexual woman. The definition of inversion as popularised by the obscenity case against The Well was therefore put into practice in these

\textsuperscript{79} NA, HO 144/22547, verdict notes delivered by Sir Robert Wallace, 14 Dec. 1928.
\textsuperscript{80} Hall, The Well, p. 339.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., p. 352, 353.
\textsuperscript{82} NA, HO 144/22547, verdict notes delivered by Sir Robert Wallace, 14 Dec. 1928.
\textsuperscript{83} For extensive examples and context, see Alison Oram, Her Husband was a Woman! Women’s gender-crossing in modern British popular culture (Oxon, 2007).
\textsuperscript{84} “Col. Barker” in Dock at the Old Bailey, Daily Herald, 25 Apr. 1928.
\textsuperscript{85} ‘No Law Against It’, Daily Express, 28 Mar. 1928.
\textsuperscript{86} Daily Express, 10 May 1929.
cases, leaving the masculine partner to take all the blame and the ‘wife’ exempt from any lesbian implication.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, multiple lesbian identities were available for the female homosexual. Although the most familiar figure of the archetypal masculine lesbian did emerge in the period 1900-1930, this only formed one option and did not necessarily inhibit homosexual behaviour. Instead, the ‘passive’ female partner was also an emergent figure, though received far less attention. Because lesbianism did not have the same long reputation and history as male homosexuality, there were not existing stereotypes such as the ‘sodomite’, to call upon as immoral. The ambiguity over what constituted sex between two women made it difficult to criminalise lesbian behaviour, and the social existence of the female homosexual was complicated further by the changing gender dynamics of war and the successful campaign for suffrage. This prompted the authorities to quell disorder by creating a scapegoat of the masculine woman, and alleviating any blame or suspicion from the ‘normal’ decent woman. The extent to which the intentions of the authorities were deliberate was revealed after Radclyffe Hall’s death. In 1946 Una Troubridge appealed against the ban of *The Well of Loneliness* to allow for the publication of a posthumous collection of Hall’s works. Her efforts were rebuffed, and the Home Office declared that ‘it would be most undesirable to have the question re-opened. The 1928 proceedings provide a fixed point regarding one aspect of sexual morality in a field where it is peculiarly difficult to establish any satisfactory standards’. This shows that a ‘fixed point’ in the history of homosexuality does not need to be a blanket change in criminal law, but that one case has the potential for a decades-long legacy.

The legacy of Radclyffe Hall and the sexual invert did mark an important historical reference for later developments in lesbian communities. However, the history of the lesbian should not be limited to the emergence of a visibly masculine woman. It has been shown that there were other ways to live as a female homosexual that were invisible to the authorities. Consideration of this forgotten past is essential to modern-day perceptions of lesbian identity. Lesbianism is generally less present than male homosexuality in mainstream media, often with only undeniable, bold, stereotypical figures breaking through. Various studies have produced findings which dismiss such stereotypes, but perceptions remain, which can be harmful especially to young women who feel they do not conform to socially propagated models of sexuality or gender.

Ultimately, the entire history of sexuality should be studied with more flexibility and an acknowledgement of the uncertainty of the conclusions drawn from historical sources. An LGBT+ narrative does not work, and when applied can further silence marginalised groups. Although it was not the subject of this paper, the emergence of sexology can also be read as a specifically transgender narrative. Such academic work is beginning to emerge and should be embraced by the existing scholarship surrounding sexology. There is no reason why Radclyffe Hall cannot represent an important figure in both lesbian and transgender history. The multiple narratives which can be

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87 NA, HO 144/22547, Letter from the Home Office to Messrs Peter Davies Ltd. on behalf of Lady Una Troubridge, 12 Mar. 1946.
produced serve to destabilise preconceived norms and allow for greater flexibility in social labelling of sexuality and gender today.

Most importantly, as well as reconsideration of existing historical sources, there should be a wider acknowledgement of the silences in the historical record, and the potential they hold. This paper has focussed on a clear silence, that of the female invert’s partner. Yet there are other women who have been unaccounted for; as Bennett suggested, the history of single women can be completely reinterpreted. Often disregarded as ‘failures in a game of heterosexual courtship and marriage’, when viewed through a queer lens the potential of such women is reassessed and more narratives are available aside from the ‘sexless and lonely’ legacy which a heteronormative model allocates.92 History has a duty to acknowledge individuals who did not fit the social norms and were ignored by their contemporaries. We must answer the call which was pleaded in 1928, and give them the right to existence.93

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93 Hall, *The Well*, 496.


Kathryn Shaw: ‘Physical disability’ or ‘hypochondria of pinchbeck passion?’

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The Jews of Najrān:
Their origins and conditions during pre- and early Islamic history, 525 -661 CE

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Abstract

The present study examines the main aspects the history of Judaism in Najrān from 525 to 661 CE. It begins by evaluating the contribution of research in the field of current study. This paper examines the controversy surrounding the date of the arrival of Judaism and its spread among Najrānite. It discusses the conditions of Najrānite Jews from the end of the Kingdom of Ḥimyar prior to the advent of Islam. The study focuses next on the conditions of the Najrānite Jews, who in early Islamic times became subject to new laws that strongly influenced certain aspects of their lives.

Introduction

During the time following the end of the Kingdom of Ḥimyar around 525 CE, and prior to the early decades of Islam, there appears to have been scant interest in the Jews of Najrān among primary sources, and this is also true of recent research.¹ True, the Christian community was the major group within the Najrān population, in addition to polytheists, but Jewish people also formed a major part of its society at that time. The reason for this lack of interest may be due to the focus of Christian and Muslim sources on Christians and polytheists, and later on Islam, and so unfortunately these sources, written by Eastern Christian and Muslim authors, provide very few details of the history of Jewish community in Najrān.

In this respect, Ali scans the available sources for the history of the Jews in the Arabian Peninsula and concludes that it is hard to find any Jewish works written during the period under study.² For the history of Judaism in South Arabia specifically, recent scholars such as Stillman, Ahroni and Tobi acknowledge that there is an absence of Jewish material concerning the history of Jews during the time under discussion, except what can be learnt from early Muslim and Christian sources.³

Most studies, including those by Wolfensohn, Stillman, Ahroni, Abū Jabal and Tobi pay special attention to particular issues regarding the existence of the Jews in Najrān such as the conversion to Judaism among the people of South Arabia (Yemen), the conflict between Judaism and Christianity in the reign of the Ḥimyarite King Dhū Nuwās (Yūsuf As‘ar Yath‘ar) around 525 CE and the conditions of South Arabian Jews at the advent of Islam.⁴ For Najrān, however, the area of the present research, it is difficult to find any specific study examining the context of the Jewish presence in Najrān as a major community

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in the context of religious pluralism, even though there are a number of studies discussing the political, social, intellectual and economic history of Najrān.\(^5\)

One study, written by Lecker, examines several issues regarding the Jews of Najrān, such as the claim that the Jewish faith arrived in Najrān in the 10th century BC, the spread of Judaism among the southern tribes, including the Banū al-Ḥārith bin Kā'b in Najrān; and the relationship between Najrānite Jews and the Muslim authority after the former became subject to two covenants given by the Prophet Muḥammad to his representative in Najrān, 'Amr bin Ḥazm and to the delegation of Najrānite Christians around 630 CE, until both communities were expelled by the Caliph 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb in 641 CE (20 AH).\(^6\)

However, Lecker’s main research focus is on the practice of Judaism among the Kinda tribe, and his discussion seems to be based only on accounts reported by Muslim historians such as al-Balādhūrī (d. 892 CE/279 AH), al-Ya’qūbī (d. 897 CE/284 AH), Ibn-Ja’far (d. 948 CE/337 AH), Ibn-Ḥazm (d. 994 CE/384 AH) and Nashwān al-Ḥimyārī (d. 1178 CE/573 AH).\(^7\) These historians offer insufficient details of the Jewish history in Najrān and, in particular, regarding the extent of the spread of Judaism, the ties of Judaism in Najrān to Jewish people in Hijāz and Palestine, as we only learn the few details offered by the Prophet Muḥammad’s covenants with the Najrānites, which subjected the Christians and Jews of Najrān to Muslim authority, as well as the controversial issue of the expulsion of these communities from Najrān.

Therefore, Eastern Christian sources such as the Book of the Himyarite, the Letter of Simeon of Bēth Arshām and the Martyrdom of Aretas furnish valuable details explaining the relationship between the Jews of Tiberias and their co-religionists in South Arabia, particularly in Najrān, during the 6th century.\(^8\) These sources also shed some light on the policy of the Abyssinians towards the Jewish community after their entry into Najrān.\(^9\) Here, it is marked that the writing of most previous Christian sources preceded Muslim sources two centuries at least. This can be seen in the Book of the Himyarite and the Letter of Simeon of Bēth Arshām which were written by unknown in the sixth century CE because both works are included with direct accounts that were reported by characters who witnessed the persecution of Najrān Christians around 518 CE.\(^10\)

The present study aims to discover the most significant elements of the history of Judaism in Najrān in light of additional details offered by Eastern Christian and Muslim sources together. These elements include the arrival of Judaism, its spread among the Najrānites and the conditions of Jewish community during pre- Islamic and early Islamic history. This must be connected dynamically to the political, social, religious and economic conditions of Najrānite Jews during the period under study.

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\(^{9}\) Anonymous, 'Kissat Istishhād Al-Qīdīs Al-Ḥārith, p. 85; Moberg, The Book Of The Himyarites, p. xxxix.

The origins of Judaism in Najrān

Although Judaism was apparently the first monotheistic religion to arrive in Najrān for a considerable period of time, no precise date for this arrival has been found. The only way to reach an answer is to correlate this with the history of Judaism in South Arabia, since Najrān was consistently a major part of the ancient Yemenite states, in particular during the Sabaeans and Ḥimyarite periods. In this respect, there are two rival accounts of the arrival of Judaism in Najrān.

In the first account, the existence of Judaism in Najrān can be dated back to the reign of the Sabaeans governor of Najrān, al-Qulūmmās bin al-Afâ'â, who converted to the religion of King Solomon, known in Islam as the Prophet Suleiman, around the 10th century BC; this governor was subsequently responsible for the spread of Judaism among his people during this ancient time. This account seems to be based on Biblical and Qur’anic texts which date the arrival of Judaism in Yemen to around the 10th century BC, as mentioned, when the Queen of Sheba accepted the call of Solomon, the King of Israel, and converted to his religion. These Biblical and Qur’anic texts are discussed by several researchers, who divide them into two groups: Lecker, who is in the first group, describes the story of al-Qulūmmās as a “historiographical legend” because of the absence of documentary evidence, while Abū Jabal sees that southern inscriptions say nothing about an exact time for the arrival of Judaism in Yemen. Both researchers claim that what is reported of the encounter between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba may be a legend rather than a historical account. In the second group, Stillman and Mahran believe the Biblical and Qur’anic suggestions and agree that the existence of commercial relationships between South Arabia and Palestine favours the idea that the Jewish faith reached Yemen. This can be seen by the number of Jews who resided near stations on the trading route for incense and spices. Mahran also offers further evidence relating to the Qur’anic text, which explicitly refers to the Kingdom of Sheba, its great power, and its people’s worship of the sun, which corresponds to epigraphic and archaeological research.

With regard to the Najrānite Jews, the suggestions by Mahran and Stillman accord with the fact that many Jews chose to live in and around the city centre of Najrān where the camel caravans stopped, as most of them worked in trade, hand crafts and financial activities, which required living near the market centre.

The second account is reported by a group of Muslim storytellers, who relate that the arrival of Judaism in South Arabia took place at the beginning of the 5th century CE, when King Tūbb‘a Abū Karība As‘ad became the first Ḥimyarite ruler to convert to Judaism. This story recounts that King Tūbb‘a

13 Kings 10:1; Chronicles 9:1–12; Matthew 12:42; Surat al-Naml 20-44.
16 Stillman, Jews Of Arab Lands, p 3; Mahran, Dirāsāt Tārīkhīyah Min Al-Qur‘ān, vol. 3, p 134.
18 It is important to inform that most Muslim sources we adopt here rely on the oral tradition that were transmitted by early Muslim storytellers in writing much information of their works. Most of those storytellers lived during the first three centuries of Islam. See: F. Rosenthal, A History of Muslim Historiography (Leiden: Brill, 1968), p 69; al-Ya‘qūbī, Tārīkh Al-Ya‘qūbī, vol. 1, p 298; ‘A. Ibn-Hishām, and M. Ibn-Iṣḥāq, The life of Muhammad (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p 8; A. Ibn-Khaldūn, Tārīkh Ibn- Khaldūn Al-Musammāt Kitāb Al-Ibar Wa-Diwan Al-Mubtada’ Wa-Al-Khabar Fi Ayyām Al-‘arab Wa-Al-‘ajam Wa-Al-Barbar Wa-Man ‘āsharahum Min Dhwā Al-
invaded Yathrib (the previous name for Medina), but two Jewish rabbis visited his camp and persuaded the king to stop the war and return to Yemen with his army because Yathrib might become the home of a Qurayshī prophet emigrating at a later time. Then King Tūbb’a took away both Jewish rabbis, who accompanied him on his journey back to Yemen and convinced him to convert to the Jewish faith.19

In the second part of the Muslim account, King Tūbb’a adopted Judaism as the official religion of his country and undertook to spread it among the peoples of southern Arabia.20 The two rabbis of Yathrib played a significant role in preaching about Judaism throughout the Ḥimyarite provinces, including the northern areas that included the Ḥimyarite region of Najrān, and as a result, the new religion received a significant number of converts among the peoples of southern Arabia, although others remained polytheists.21

In the region of Najrān, the two Muslim historians al-Ya’qūbī and Ibn-Qutaybah state that Judaism gained a number of converts during that time, particularly among the people of Banū al-Ḥārith bin Kā‘b.22 Unfortunately, these Muslim historians did not provide many more details of the activities of the Jewish missionaries, the religious practices, or the extent of conversion to Judaism amongst the people of Banū al-Ḥārith bin Kā‘b. The account reported by these historians simply states that "some of the Banū al-Ḥārith bin Kā‘b converted to Judaism".23 This particular account leads us to deduce that the number of converts to Judaism among the Najrānites appears to have been smaller than in other southern regions, mainly Ḥadramawt, ‘Adan, Ṣan‘ā, Za‘fār and Kinda, where Jews gradually formed a large proportion of the population. As evidence, the number of Jewish people in Najrān by the time of the invasion by the Ḥimyarite king around 518 CE was small, while the presence of Jews in Za‘fār, the capital of the Ḥimyarite kingdom, for example, seems to have been larger.

Ali and Wolfensohn argue in favour of the authenticity of the King Tūbb’a story, as a historical phase in which Judaism was adopted as the official religion of the Ḥimyarite kingdom, but not as the date of the arrival of Judaism in the region.24 Both believe that Judaism had already become established before the reign of King Tūbb’a, by suggesting two main causal factors: the existence of commercial connections between Yemen and Palestine and the immigration of Jewish groups to southern Arabia due to Roman persecution.25

Beeston considers that the story of King Tūbb’a Abū Karība As‘ad might refer to a conversion to the "Rahmanist cult", rather than to Judaism.26 Meanwhile, Lecker disagrees with this view by offering a fragment of this account reported by a Kindite Jew living in the pre- and early Muslim period.27 According to Lecker, this account "speaks explicitly on the conversion of Ḥimyarite to Judaism".28 In other words,

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20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.


23 Ibid., p 27.


25 Ibid.


the story of King Tūbb’a’s conversion to Judaism and his adoption of it as the official religion of the Himyarite kingdom is very possibly correct, because one of those who told the story had received the details from his grandmother, who was a witness to those events.

For the present researcher, the story of the King Tūbb’a Abū Kariba As’ad’s campaign to Yathrib is likely real historical event despite it perhaps legend elements, especially his debates with the two Jewish rabbis. An important inscription in the Dawādmi town in Saudi Arabia at the moment records that the the King Tūbb’a Abū Kariba As’ad and his army that consisted of several southern tribes crossed through this place in his wars against some rebelling tribes and the Lakhmid kingdom in the north. The inscription text clearly refers to political conflict here but the commercial factor was most probable present because of increasing the importance of the caravan route between the south and north of Arabia in that time. That all provides strong evidence to accept the possibility of invading Yathrib and Mecca by the King Tūbb’a due to the commercial importance of both cities on the caravan route. As a result, the commercial factor may be play role in transmitting Judaism from Yathrib to South Arabia.

In total, as the previous researchers propose, it seems very likely that Judaism had existed in Najrān, as in other Yemenite regions, from early times, probably from the 10th century BC, rather than from the time of the story of King Tūbb’a Abū Kariba As’ad, which took place at the beginning of the 5th century CE. This suggestion is further supported by the reports from two Christian historians, Philostorgius and Theodorus Lector, and by epigraphic research. These two historians agree that Judaism had arrived several centuries earlier, perhaps since the meeting of King Solomon and Queen of Sheba, but its converts were still few in number compared to the worshippers of the sun, the moon and local deities. The significance of both these Christian accounts is that they reveal further details that describe the status of Jews in South Arabia as being a small community living among a majority of polytheists. Notably, both Philostorgius and Lector lived during the 5th and 6th century CE, possibly during the reign of King Tūbb’a, which makes both reports reliable in confirming that Judaism existed in Yemen before his appearance.

The second piece of evidence is the funerary inscription of a Himyarite Jew, discovered in Palestine, which may date back to the first century CE, and which reports that he came to trade but died and was then buried in a Jewish cemetery. This important inscription gives reliable and indirect evidence that Judaism reached South Arabia before the reign of King Tūbb’a. It also provides another significant piece of evidence for the existence of commercial relationships between ancient Yemen and Palestine, which may have contributed to the spread of Judaism in southern Arabia for several centuries before the birth of Christ.

However, it is difficult to reject the Muslim accounts completely, due to a number of reliable reports which support their authenticity. Ibn al-Kalbī reports one significant account, which narrates that many polytheists of Himyarite and Hamdān abandoned the idol Ya’ūq and Nasr in order to convert to Judaism.

Correlation between the al-Kalbī account and Piotrovski’s observation of the inscriptions

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31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.


of southern Arabian temples can clearly be seen. These inscriptions show that the disappearance of the worship of traditional gods seems to be a remarkable feature in southern Arabia during the 4th and 5th centuries CE. Al-Kalbi’s and Piotrovskii’s accounts agree that what happened during the reign of King Tubb’a As’ad Abū Kariba is that Judaism became the official religion, replacing the worship of polytheistic forms.

As a result, the story of King Tubb’a probably indicates the acknowledgement of Judaism as the official religion of Ḥimyarite after many centuries in which the Jews were a minority and a form of polytheism remained the official religion.

The status of Najrānīte Jews during the Pre-Islamic era (500-622 CE)

During the time preceding the rise of Islam, the Jewish community of Najrān passed through three main political reigns: Ḥimyarite, Abyssinian and Persian. These reigns affected several aspects of the presence of the Jews in Najrān, particularly the spread of Judaism among Najrānites, the practice of religion and the relationships between the Najrānīte Jews and the society around them.

In the first quarter of the 6th century CE, the Najrānīte Jewish community played a major role in the history of Najrān. Judaism was already an established influence, as can be seen from the existence of several synagogues, particularly around the town centre. According to the Book of the Ḥimyarites and the Letter of Simeon, these synagogues were under the rule of a number of Jewish rabbis who had come from Tiberius. These accounts provide clear evidence of a connection between the Jews in Palestine and the Jewish community of Najrān which seems to have begun as far back as the 5th century CE, if not before. Moreover, the accounts given by the Book of the Ḥimyarites and the Letter of Simeon offer further evidence of the Jewish religious activities which these rabbis undertook, such as transmitting the Torah, teaching Hebrew and performing Jewish rituals of worship, which will be discussed in detail later.

Moreover, it is very probable that Palestinian Jewish rabbis worked to spread their religion not only among the Najrānīte people in the town, but also amongst the Bedouins, the Banū al-Ḥārith bīn Kā’b in particular, as related by Muslim historians.

By the time of the invasion of Najrān by the Ḥimyarite King, Dhū Nuwās around 525 CE, Jews represented a major part of multi-faith Najrānīte society, in addition to Christians and polytheists. Christian and Muslim accounts largely agree that the Najrānīte Jews invoked the help of the Ḥimyarite king, which resulted in the massacre of Christians known as al-Ukhdūd (trench), but the difference here is in the details of the context of the story. The Christian version states that the dissemination of Christianity in Najrān created serious tensions with Judaism, and this resulted in violent actions against Jewish synagogues. The Muslim accounts, however, do not refer to the destruction of a Jewish synagogue, only indicating that a Najrānīte Jew invoked King Dhū Nuwās because Christians had killed

36 Ibid.
37 Ya’qūb, Al-Shuhadā’ Al-Ḥimyarīyūn, p 92; Shahīd, The Martyrs Of Najrān, p 45.
38 Ya’qūb, Al-Shuhadā’ Al-Ḥimyarīyūn, p 92; Shahīd, The Martyrs Of Najrān, p 45.
39 Moberg, Book Of The Ḥimyarītes, p cxxiii; Ya’qūb, Al-Shuhadā’ Al-Ḥimyarīyūn, p 45.
41 Moberg, Book Of The Ḥimyarītes, p cxxiii; Ya’qūb, Al-Shuhadā’ Al-Ḥimyarīyūn, p 25.
his sons. Both Christian and Muslim accounts agree that Abyssinian (Ethiopian) military intervention was the most serious reaction to the persecution of Christians in Najrān, and that it led to the collapse of the kingdom of Ḥimyarite and the death of its final ruler Dhū Nuwās.

The circumstances of Najrānite Jews during the period of Abyssinian occupation has been an interesting question for recent research. The claim is that the Abyssinian campaign must have persecuted the Najrānite Jews and destroyed their synagogues, and may have dispersed them to many areas across Arabia. For Tobi, however, the lack of available information means that there is not a clear picture of the circumstances of southern Arabian Jews under this new Christian rule. He agrees with Ali in considering that Judaism may have receded somewhat after the collapse of the Ḥimyarite kingdom, but not to the extent that Shahīd and Ahituv suggest, because Judaism in Najrān and other south Arabian towns alike maintained its existence among southern Arabian societies.

A valuable statement offered by the Book of the Ḥimyarites reveals some of the obscurity surrounding the status of Najrānite Jews under Abyssinian occupation. This book reports further details on the arrival of the Abyssinian King Kālēb in Najrān after destroying the capital of the Kingdom of Ḥimyarite, Ẓafār, and killing many Ḥimyarite Jews. In Najrān, most Jews survived the massacre because they tattooed their hands with the sign of the Cross. The book claims that the Abyssinian king understood this deception, but tolerated it, as he said: “Although these are not worthy of pity because they have crucified their Lord and murdered His servants, nevertheless, lest they should think that the victorious Cross is not a strong place of refuge and a deliverer from all evils to all who seek shelter by it, those who show on their hands the victorious sign of the Cross of our Saviour and Him who makes us victorious may live either because they are believing...”

This statement clearly shows that the Abyssinians avoided further violent actions against the Jews of Najrān after the overthrow of the Ḥimyarite state. This can be understood in the light of some southern Arabian inscriptions that provide important details on relevant aspects of Abyssinian policy during the reign of the Abyssinian governor of Yemen, Abraham when he died after failing in his armed campaign against Mecca. Abraham’s aim was to extend his military and political dominance and support the position of Christianity throughout the occupied regions, including Najrān, by sending missions and

46 Tobi, Jews Of Yemen, p. 4.
47 Ali, Al-Mufaṣṣal, pp. 6, 541; Shahīd, ‘Byzantium In South Arabia’, p. 56; Tobi, Jews Of Yemen, p. 4; Aḥituv, Jewish People, p. 131
48 Moberg, Book Of The Ḥimyarītes, p. cxxviii
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 The remainder of the sentence is missing in the original text. Ibid.
52 Abraham is known as Abraha al-Ashram in Muslim sources, who ruled Yemen until 571 CE.
rebuilding its great church. He also tried to win the friendship of tribal chieftains to support his rule by performing other construction works, notably rebuilding the Ma'arib dam.

The aim of this moderate policy in general, and in Najrān in particular, may have been to maintain the stability of the Abyssinian rule throughout the Yemenite regions and thus to make economic gains by ensuring the safety of the commercial route that passed through Najrān and other southern cities under the rule of the Abyssinians. Moreover, the Jewish community did not seem to have formed a great enough number to threaten the existence of Christians in Najrān after the collapse of the Himyarite Jewish domination.

The Abyssinian rule over Yemen continued for about 50 years until the Himyarite Jewish leader Sayf bin Dhi-Yazan defeated them with Persian military support, although he did not rule for long, as he was later killed by his own guards. The death of Sayf led to South Arabia falling under foreign occupation again, this time under the Persian commander Vahriz, who came to support the Yemenites against the Abyssinians.

During the period of Persian rule, the conditions for Jews likely improved and Najrān became a major centre for Judaism, in addition to Ḥadramawt, Kinda and Himyarite, and enjoyed the semi-independent tribal rule of the Banū al-Hārith bin Kā'b and their Christian allies. Under this rule, the Najrānite Jewish community led a peaceful life, as did Christians and polytheists. Hence, they found in Najrān a suitable place to trade, practise crafts and engage in cultivation. As evidence, Ibn-Ḥabīb narrates a significant story of a commercial partnership between nobles of Mecca, in particular ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalīb Ibn-Ḥāshim, the Prophet Mohammed's grandfather, and a Jewish trader from Najrān. This commercial partnership offers direct evidence for the commercial health of the Najrānite Jews during that time of pre-Islamic history. Also, it can be concluded that the positive stability gave Jews the freedom to worship in synagogues, hold religious festivals and perform religious rituals.

From the accounts above, we can understand that Judaism had converts among the Najrānites in addition to possible non-Najrānites Jews coming to trade, and the presence of those Jewish people would have been in both the urban centre and the rural Bedouin areas. However, during the three different historical periods, when Yemen was ruled in turn by Himyarites, Abyssinians and Persians, the size of the Jewish community in Najrān apparently remained small in comparison to Christians and polytheists. Therefore, the political and religious impact of Judaism, in particular after the end of the Jewish Himyarite state, was almost non-existent, as can clearly be seen in the dominance of the tribal polytheistic rule of

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56 Ibid.
the Banū al-Ḥārith bin Kā‘b and their allies in the Christian community. A possible explanation for this minimal impact is that the Jews of Najrān were not keen to disseminate the Jewish faith among the Najrānites, but simply focused on economic activities such as trade, cultivation and banking interests, which helped them to develop their wealth.

It is thus reasonable to assume that the practice of such economic activities by Jewish people would have contributed to the growth of the Najrān economy, as noted in the rising Najrān market becoming one of the most developed Arab markets during the pre-Islam time. As a result, it may also be assumed that the majority of Najrānites, in particular Christians and polytheists, positively accepted the existence of the Jewish community as a part of Najrān society. Thus, all this seems to have enabled the Jewish community to enjoy freedom in practising their religion.

**Najrānīte Jews under Islamic rule (631 - 661 CE / 10 - 40 AH)**

Perhaps the first indication of the Jewish presence in Najrān in the Islamic era is given by al-Balādhurī and Ibn-Ja‘far, who report an important account of the Jews of Najrān concerning the written covenant between the Prophet Muḥammad and a deputation by the Christian community of Najrān in 630 CE / 09 AH. Both authors relate that Najrānīte Jews entered into the written covenant together with the Christians but as subordinates of them. Unfortunately, neither writer provides any more details explaining, for example, that possibly Jewish representatives accompanied the Christian deputation to meet the Prophet Muḥammad or how those Najrānīte Jews became subject to the Prophet Muḥammad’s covenant. Nonetheless, by reading the details of this covenant, it is important to point out that the covenant specifically states “to Najrān and their followers the protectorate of God (jiwār Allāh) and the pledge (dhimmāh) of Muḥammad the Prophet...” This particular statement means that all the terms of the covenant could include other communities living in Najrān in addition to the Christians. Thus, we can confidently assume that al-Balādhurī and Ibn-Ja‘far mean in their statement that the Jewish community of Najrān enjoyed the same rights as those given to Christians in protecting houses of worship and freedom of religion and community authority in local matters, in exchange for paying the toll tax (Jizyāḥ) in the same way as other People of the Book across Arabia.

The second account referring to the Jews of Najrān is offered by the Prophet Muḥammad’s official decree to his first governor in Najrān, ‘Amr bin Ḥazm, in 631 CE / 10 AH. In this decree, the Prophet ordered ‘Amr bin Ḥazm to protect the religious freedoms of the Jews and collect no more than a dinar per year (or equivalent in garments) per adult as a poll tax. This was the same as for the Christian community. Furthermore, Jews (and Christians) who converted to Islam were to be considered as Muslims, with the same rights and duties.

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61 It is widely agreed that the time of Islamic era began with the emigration of the Prophet Muḥammad to Medina in 622 CE.
66 Ibid.
From this decree, it is clear that the Prophet Muḥammad adopted a fixed standard in his policy towards non-Muslims in Najrān, whether Jews or Christians. Thus the content of the decree of ‘Amr bin Ḥazm confirms what is assumed above for the Jews of Najrān; namely, to enjoy the same rights as those given to Christians in the protection of their properties and synagogues, and freedom of worship.

After the Prophet’s death, the Muslim state was ruled by the Righteous Caliphs (successors), beginning with the first Caliph, Abū-bakr al-Ṣiddīq. This caliph renewed the Prophet’s covenant for non-Muslims in Najrān by another written accord in 632 CE/11 AH.67 The renewed accord contained the same rights as those offered by the Prophet before, particularly protecting religious freedom, practices of worship and places of worship.68 From this accord, the status of the Najrānite Jews seems to have been one of peaceful enjoyment of religious freedom and the practice of economic activities as a non-Muslim community.

Muslim sources are still silent, however, in relation to the Jews of Najrān until 641 CE/20 AH when the second Caliph, ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb, evicted the Christians of Najrān to Kūfah in Iraq.69 Muslim historians such as al-Baladhurī, al-Ṭabarī (d. 923 CE/310 AH) and Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233 CE/630 AH) report that the Jewish community was also driven out of Najrān and were compensated with new properties in a town near Kūfah, known later as Najrāniyyat al-Kūfah.70 These historians, however, did not come to an agreement concerning the actual reason behind the eviction of the Najrānite Jews, except that they argued for the expulsion of the Christians in particular.71 Most of them agree that one of the Prophet Muḥammad’s clauses prohibited the practice of usury (Ribā), but those Najrānite Christians still practised it in their economic activities.72 However, local historians in Yemen such as al-Alawī (d. 9th CE/3th AH), Ibn-Ya’qūb (d. 10th CE/4th AH), Ibn al-Mujāwir (d. 1291 CE/690 AH) and Al-Thaqafi (d. 12th CE/6th AH) recorded that Jews and Christians remained existing in Najrān during the 9th, 12th and 13th centuries, and their presence was significant in property ownership, trade and crafts.73

Here, a clear contrast between the two groups of historians arises question of how Jews and Christians remained in Najrān while ‘Umar’s decree states that they must leave the region. Tobi supposes that this decree was only fully applied to the Christians and Jews of Najrān’s city centre, but not to those who settled in other villages and towns in the area.74 The link between the ‘Umar’s decision and geographical site as Tobi suggests appears at not an important value. Instead, there seems strong relation between ‘Umar’s decree and two major clauses of the Prophet’s first covenant. One of them clearly refers that the practice of usury is forbidden whereas another one stipulates that the other members of the Christian and Jewish communities will not be responsible if one of them commits a transgression.75

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68 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
75 Tobi, Jews Of Yemen, p. 36.
Therefore, Caliph 'Umar most likely order them to leave Najrān but at the same time he took the second clause into consideration, by allowing those who were not involved in practicing usury to remain. The decision to expel Christians and Jews from Najrān was likely only implemented for those who practiced usury. As a result, some Christians and Jews apparently remained in Najrān as a part of its population.

Conclusion

The date of the arrival of Judaism in Najrān is a controversial issue, but it seems to have developed over a long period in which the number of Jews was small, until King Tūbb’ā acknowledged Judaism as the official religion for Ḥimyarites, including the region of Najrān. From the evidence one can deduce that Judaism arrived in Najrān via two main communities: the Jews of Palestine and the Jewish community of Yathrib in Ḥijāz. During the period under study, the conditions of the Jews of Najrān were often impacted by what happened to their co-religionists in Yemen, as can be seen in the receding of Najrānite Judaism under Abyssinian occupation but its subsequent flourishing under Persian rule, and later under tribal rule, prior to the advent of Islam.

During the early Muslim era, the circumstances of Najrānite Jews were regulated by Muslim rules for non-Muslims. These laws offered Jews a measure of peace and protection, as can be seen in the freedom of religious practice, the protection of property and the right to economic independence, whilst respecting Muslim law. From this one can deduce that the conditions of Najrānite Jews became closer to those of the Christian community rather than those of other southern Arabian Jews. This can be observed in the offer of one official accord for both communities, regulating their conditions under Muslim rule. Therefore, Najrānite Jews and Christians were entitled to the same rights and duties, to equal freedom of religion and protection of property. This equal treatment can also be seen clearly in Umar’s decree to expel both communities from Najrān and send them to Iraq, but provide compensation in the form of property. That also can be assumed in remaining a part of Jews in Najrān who did not involve in practising usury.

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The use of personal correspondence and popular media, while not new, has recently taken on a life of its own in the field of historical research. Instead of leaving the telling of history in the hands of official records, historians have shifted their focus to these intimate narratives, giving readers an “on the ground” view of the events that helped shape our past. While these documents, taken within no context but themselves, cannot be seen as a full view of the events that helped shape these moments in history, in conversation with each other, they begin to explain the popular views that gave rise to the ideals of our collective existence. Timothy Tackett casts an eye towards these popular narratives within the context of the French Revolution. Using the personal correspondence, journals, diaries, and popular media of over a hundred French figures, Tackett proposes that the emotional motivations behind the Revolution deserve just as much academic attention as the political ones.

While Tackett spends time on every phrase of the revolution until the end of the Terror, his primary focus is the conditions in which the terror came about. How, Tackett muses, does a revolution that starts as an unwillingness of the Second Estate to pay Louis XVI more for his financial malfeasance turn into an absolute revolt of the Third Estate, led by the likes of Robespierre and his bourgeois allies? The use of media and correspondence is the first piece of the puzzle that Tackett offers. Through personal correspondence, the educated members of the Third Estate are able to share their ideas with one another. Some of the correspondence used gives us insight into the simple animations of the political machine, while others give us a view of the personal lives of those responsible and how they affected the actions and planning of those in charge. We learn that Robespierre, while educated and successful, spent his early years borrowing money to stay afloat, all the while influenced by his own upbringing that, while not of peasant stock, was one that, in its loneliness and poverty, led to the radical views that would eventually usher in the deposition of the monarchy. The emotional weight is stark: Robespierre evolves from an idealistic proponent of Republican thought into, in Tackett’s view, a hell-bent revolutionary, determined to preserve the ideals of France at whatever cost.

To say that Tackett’s volume focuses solely on the major players of the Terror is short-sighted. Views are presented from both men and women, both those in France and those on the outside (including France’s colonies, primarily Haiti, which would be swept up in the fervor of its own revolution shortly thereafter) and of people from all different forms of birth, profession, and nationality. One thing that remains constant, however, is how the revolution changes these individuals. A nation stuck in feudalism becomes, in short order, one reformed through the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The views of those involved follow this shift; an idea once seen as inconceivable becomes a reality simply through the determination of the players involved. Tackett does a brilliant job in capturing this groundswell of shifting emotions, and, in his research, finds that, in conversation with modernity, the heroes of France during the terror would be viewed as domestic terrorists. As much as this volume could be seen as excusing the

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excesses of the Reign of Terror, instead it should be argued that Tackett offers nuanced reasoning for how such emotions can evolve from the high ideals held by those who incited Revolution in France.

Tackett’s book comes to a climax with the trial of Louis, with letters and articles flying back and forth between subjects in a dizzying manner. Views are given, received, adapted and tossed aside with blinding speed; what one claims in private correspondence to be inconceivable becomes a promoted view in popular press soon thereafter. Allies become enemies, loyal French become traitors, and a revolutionary frenzy develops, all played out in the public and private thoughts put forth by Tackett’s subjects. If the book has a weakness, it is in the fact that the correspondence and personal thoughts presented represent only the thoughts of what would have been the educated of France. This, however, is unavoidable in the context of the primary source material. Very little has been written on the thoughts of the uneducated masses that made up the majority of the oppressed in France, and, thus, we are forced to rely on the opinions of the educated in regards to what the uneducated were feeling. In this regard, Tackett does a wonderful job in striking a balance in presenting the views of all classes involved. It would be easy for such a volume to become either a bemoaning of the loss of status of the upper class or a dedication to the fervor of the bourgeois leadership of the Revolution. Tackett, however, steers a center course, providing insight in how all views are presented.

The Coming of the Terror in the French Revolution provides research in an area of revolutionary France that is sorely underrepresented: the on-the-ground views of those who hold responsibility for the evolution of high ideals into popular terror. By using personal writings, correspondence, and popular media to build his case for the emotional revolutionary process, Tackett explores new ground. This book joins the canon of a long list of must-reads pertaining to one of history’s more extensively researched topics, by providing a fresh new perspective into an event that changed the course of human history in a short span of six years.

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At least since the appearance of The Cheese and Worms and the Life of Martin Guerre in the early 1980s, the modesty screen that divides history from biography has looked increasingly fragile. Historians today are increasingly comfortable with constructing their accounts from the ungraded, unvarnished and potentially worm worn timber of subjective individual experience.

Celia Hughes’ Young Lives on the Left: Sixties Activism and the Liberation of the Self fits this expanding seam of research. Hughes’ book provides ballast for the ongoing historiographical project of moving beyond the hackneyed caricatures, slogans and images that still form our primary points of reference when discussing the 1960s. This makes Young Lives a worthy addition to the growing body of work that’s serving to build up a richer and more nuanced picture of the changes that took place during the mid-20th Century.

Young Lives seeks to reconstruct the “psychic” states and experiences that shaped the personal growth, development and political outlooks of left-wing activists. Delving into the realms of psychology, Hughes’ work challenges traditional notions of what constitutes a source fit for historical study. The primary material that forms the basis of Young Lives is largely comprised of oral testimony from participants in the social movements and far-left political parties that characterised the landscape of radical left-wing Britain in the 1960s.

Despite her subjects’ radicalism, the degree of continuity expressed in her subjects’ lives can be striking. Showing that the “liberated self” forged by the contradictions of post-war affluence was rooted in longer standing traditions and cultural formations.

She cites the testimony of Bob Light, a working class Trotskyite from East London. Light describes how events like Vietnam and the crushing of the Czech Spring led him to reject his father’s Communist Party politics (pp. 89-95). However, he also says how his father’s values, his dreams of a better world, and internationalist outlook served to inspire him. In a similar vein, a number of respondents cite how they struggled to reconcile sexual liberation and Marxism with the Christian faith they were raised in (pp. 39-49, 118).

Hughes shows how the landscape and experiences of childhood - the socially visible and psychologically submerged markers of class - shaped adult experience. Gilda Peterson, who left Hartlepool to study at the University of Birmingham, was left wondering “where the works were” upon her arrival at Birmingham’s suburban campus (pp. 120-121). Peterson later explains how in addition to throwing herself into radical politics, a sense of dislocation from the overwhelmingly middle class environment that she found herself in encouraged her to join the Longbridge Austin’s women’s hockey team (pp. 120-121).

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Hughes' source base shows she is working in fresh territory. Aside from the work of participants in the movements that she describes - like Sheila Rowbotham - almost all her research is comprised of oral testimony (p. 49).

This allows Hughes to build up a rich picture of the backgrounds and formative experiences that a generation of radical activists shared in the 1960s. She is right to argue that their ideas and causes continued to shape conceptions of the self and personal identity to this day. On a different, underplayed note, the ways Hughes traces the networks that interlinked groups like the LSE Student Socialist Society, and the Tufnell Park Women's Group (an organisation that proved pivotal the development of second wave feminism in the United Kingdom) will doubtless prove invaluable to future scholars as the field continues to open up. Her approach to unravelling the kinship between groups should interest scholars of other periods, whilst her focus on how gender shaped activist groups and activist relations should aid historians of sexuality and gender.

On the other hand, her method at times lends itself more to description than analysis meaning you can be left feeling that Hughes is merely describing states of feeling. She does a good job of explaining why certain actors felt a certain way, however, at times it seems like this doesn't link into a wider narrative. Unlike, for instance, in the work of Carolyn Steedman, another historian who pierces the boundary between history and biography (who Hughes cites as an influence), there can be something of a lack of focus.

This however, is doubtless because whereas other historians of subjectivity such as Steedman or Matt Houlbrook, tend to focus their attention upon a single subjectivity, or a closely knit group, and then build out from there, Hughes goes in for a wide ranging approach. This is understandable given the range of subjects that she was able to speak to and the current paucity of studies of the period.
Over fifty years after illegally declaring independence from the United Kingdom, there remains much historical work to do on the settler society of Rhodesia. Though it generated a huge amount of commentary and analysis at the time (1965-1980) 'white Rhodesia' then dropped under the radar, only to resurface again in the last few decades. During this time, imperial historiography has changed profoundly and studies of phenomena like decolonisation have taken on a new salience. The peculiar case of Rhodesia provides an opportunity to interrogate the conventional wisdoms of decolonisation – both how to 'do' a history of it, and what 'decolonisation' itself is. Law's study is a welcome addition to both the specific history of white Rhodesia and also much broader debates upon the end of Empire.

In the last few decades, the heterogeneous nature of white Rhodesian society has been firmly established. In this new climate the position of gender within white Rhodesian society remains relatively under-studied. Since the advent of 'new' imperial history many fruitful and revealing studies have emerged analysing the place of women in colonial societies but, as Law points out, white women are frustratingly absent from many political studies of white Rhodesian society. This lends a sense of urgency to the book as it works to address these significant and lamentable literary lacunae.

The ambition of the work is commendable and, for such a comparatively short book, a great deal of ground is covered. Law adroitly illustrates the profoundly-gendered nature of society in the 'white man's country' of Rhodesia, going back to the early colonial period of the 1890s. She shows how settler women were integral in creating the Rhodesian nation, perpetuating and enforcing colonial notions of civilisation, race, and domesticity, 'literally and metaphorically turn[ing] Rhodesian pioneers into settlers' (p. 35). In this historical overview, Law is also careful to point out that alongside prominent upper and middle-class women like Ethel Tawse Jollie, a complicated character who was instrumental in keeping Rhodesia from joining with South Africa, there were women such as Daphne Anderson, whose life was characterised by the permeability of the social, cultural, and racial barriers that other white women worked so hard to maintain.

The bulk of the book is concerned with the role women played in 'liberal' politics in Rhodesia between 1950 and 1980. Over several chapters, Law not only illustrates the activities and struggles of white women in what might conventionally be considered as the 'public sphere', but also undertakes a deconstruction of white Rhodesian 'liberal' politics at a critical period in the country's history. Through several in-depth case studies of the experiences of women such as Diana Mitchell, Eileen Haddon, and Miriam Staunton, Law teases out the peculiarities of white Rhodesian liberalism, a movement not

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1 Here 'Rhodesia' refers to the country formally known as 'Southern Rhodesia', which became independent as Zimbabwe in 1980, as distinct from 'Northern Rhodesia', which became Zambia in 1964.
necessarily synonymous with liberalism as we would understand it today. Indeed, this is one of Law's central points, as she rightly encourages us to reconsider our understanding of the terms 'liberal', and political 'left' and 'right' as we apply it to the white Rhodesian example. She illustrates the 'struggle within the struggle' that took place as women like Diana Mitchell sought to advance the cause of gender, as well as racial, equality from the often circumscribed positions within these frequently misogynistic movements.

The main body of the work does an excellent job in further disaggregating white Rhodesia in the critical period of 1950-1980, and shows how the place of women in white society was hotly contested in the Rhodesian public sphere, not just in the activities of political parties but through the letters pages of The Rhodesia Herald, the country’s most popular daily newspaper and a fertile source of white Rhodesian opinion on a whole range of matters. She demonstrates the frequently contradictory positions held by women on gender, race, and class, further complicating our picture of gender in this period. Unfortunately, the focus upon 'liberal' oppositional politics precludes any detailed study of the positions, roles, and attitudes held by those women who supported, or were involved with, the ruling Rhodesian Front (RF) party, which would no doubt make a fascinating companion piece to this study.

Finally, the book ends with an extensive piece of oral history work, as Law interviews a wide range of women who lived in Rhodesia about their experiences and memories. Using this as a way to challenge notions of 'neat' decolonisations, she accurately shows the effect of time and events upon memory and historical understanding, showing how many of her white interviewees continued to subscribe to distinctly colonial worldviews decades after Rhodesia disappeared. In her conclusion she notes that these views provide a counterpoint to the liberalism of the women in previous chapters, conceding that 'women who subscribed to the various incarnations of white liberalism were a minority in settler society' (p. 165).

Law's book makes a bold and essential contribution to the growing literature on white Rhodesia in the post-war period, as well as broader understandings of empire, decolonisation, and gender within settler societies. Furthermore, it ably demonstrates how we can use the oft-overlooked example of Rhodesia as a lens onto wider trends which stretched far beyond the borders of this small southern African settler society.
The volume contains papers presented at the eponymous Dumbarton Oaks symposium in 2011. This conference was held parallel with the “Treasures of Heaven” exhibition in the Walters Art Museum. While the exhibition and its catalogue was concerned with relics and reliquaries in the Middle Ages under broad terms, *Saints and Sacred Matter* mostly focuses on Byzantine and eastern (mainly Islamic and Jewish) material. There is also an interesting parallelism to note: some of the objects analyzed in the present volume were presented in the exhibition and some authors published studies both in the catalogue and this book. *Saints and Sacred Matter*, however, should not be treated as only an extension of the exhibition catalogue, its discussion of lesser-known Byzantine reliquaries are a highlight of this volume.

The richly illustrated volume contains fifteen studies which deal with a great variety of topics. The first chapter by Jaś Elsner (‘Relic, Icon, and Architecture: The Material Articulation of the Holy in East Christian Art’) explores how reliquaries can enshrine the sacred into a hidden space, while their container can still enable access to it and emphasize its content through visual representations. Elsner demonstrated his argument through reliquary pendants of the True Cross and St Demetrios, which can be opened in a similar manner as books or sacristy doors, thus providing a controlled enshrinement of the relics by their owners. Julia M. H. Smith (Relics: An Evolving Tradition in Latin Christianity’) presented how our modern definitions of relics can be traced back to the nineteenth century, which essentially differs from the medieval conception that did not classify them and moreover included a much wider range of materials and forms.

Ra’anan Boustan (‘Jewish Veneration of the “Special Dead” in Late Antiquity and Beyond’) argued that fifth through eighth-century Jewish writers developed a novel approach to relics utilizing the Christian tradition that eventually transformed the Jewish attitude towards the dead in ways which could not have been predicted at the outset. Nancy Khalek (‘Medieval Muslim Martyrs to the Plague: Venerating the Companions of Muhammad in the Jordan Valley’) presented the tombs of three significant Companions of Muhammad and elite military commanders who died not on the battlefield but of the plague. She claimed that since they still died while engaged with jihad these “non-battlefield martyrs” became equivalent with the jihadi martyrs and their tombs offer excellent examples of relic veneration in Islam. Through the example of sixth-century ampullae from the Holy Land, Patricia Cox Miller (‘Figuring Relics: A Poetics of Enshrinement’) emphasized the dual metaphysical and tactile aspects of religion which involves objects in an inextricable manner.

Derek Krueger (‘Liturgical Time and Holy Land Reliquaries in Early Byzantium’) offered a new interpretation of pilgrim art from the Holy Land from the sixth and seventh centuries. He connected changes in the imagery to changes in the liturgy, and interpreted the Christological cycles of the illuminations of the Rabbula Gospels and pilgrim tokens as liturgical sequences. Ann Marie Yasin (‘Sacred Installations: The Material Conditions of Relic Collections in Late Antique Churches’) showed...

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how during late antiquity, relics, after a brief procession through the city, were buried permanently under the altar. Through their subterranean setting they became an architectural part of the church. However, as Yasin contended, the clergy paid attention to commemorate the deposition and the name of the saint(s) by setting down inscriptions of either a slab, a floor mosaic, or as part of the monumental decoration system of the church. The study of Vasileios Marinis and Robert Ousterhout ("Grant Us to Share a Place and Lot with Them": Relics and Byzantine Church Building (9th–15th Centuries)) complements the study of Yasin, presenting how the post-iconoclast relationship of relics and architecture differed from the late antique one. They showed that while icons did not have a standard location within the church building, access to relics was generally strictly controlled in the middle Byzantine period.

Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen ("Spolia as Relics? Relics as Spoils? The Meaning and Functions of Spolia in Western Medieval Reliquaries") showed how spolia enamels in thirteenth-century reliquaries were included as relics in their own right and also as remains of older reliquaries. She suggested that the meaning and function of relics and spolia were interchangeable, and moreover considered different medieval perceptions of them. Cynthia Hahn ("The Sting of Death is the Thorn, but the Circle of the Crown is Victory over Death": The Making of the Crown of Thorns’) presented the evolution of western reliquaries of the Crown of Thorns. Hahn juxtaposed the way of distribution of Thorn relics by Saint Louis to ecclesiastical institutions in a "Crusader manner" and by the Valois kings to the most important courts and churches in lavish reliquaries. Alice-Mary Talbot (The Relics of New Saints: Deposition, Translation, and Veneration in Middle and Late Byzantium') examined relic veneration of the so-called "new saints" who were recognized in the middle and late Byzantine period. The revival of hagiography in the period indeed offers great potential for studying the process of the translation and veneration of their relics, and also how the corporeal remains of the holy persons became sacred relics.

The study of Holger A. Klein (Materiality and the Sacred: Byzantine Reliquaries and the Rhetoric of Enshrinement') engages with the duality of matter and supernatural power within reliquaries. He argued that these extraordinary things cannot be classified purely as objects or signs, but they can blur the boundaries between these categories. Klein was also concerned with critical questions behind the rhetoric and hierarchy of enshrinement and how the relics represented the whole miracle-making power of saints. The study of Jannic Durand (Byzantium and Beyond: Relics of the Infancy of Christ) is concerned with the relics of the Infancy of Christ. Durand demonstrated that the Infancy relics already appeared as early as the Passion relics, and were often included in True Cross reliquaries. Beside aiming to collect the Infancy reliquaries, Durand also suggested that these relics originated from the Holy Land but arrived to the West through Byzantium. Kishwar Rizvi (The Incarnation Shrine: Shi‘ism and the Cult of Kingship in Early Safavid Iran) examined the process of creating the image of charismatic kingship in sixteenth-century Safavid Iran. He focused on the textual, pictorial, and architectural representations, connected with the Safavid dynastic shrine in Ardabil, which can be placed into context with the reinvention of the dynastic history of the new rulers who themselves embodied sacred rulership.

Instead of a conclusion, Anthony Cutler's (The Relics of Scholarship: On the Production, Reproduction, and Interpretation of Hallowed Remains in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, Early Islam, and the Medieval West) study stands as the last chapter of the volume. Cutler offered an overview on the different (or often similar) approaches towards relic veneration in the Christian and Muslim world. This variety is one of the most exciting advantages of the volume as a whole. The comparative attitude is a key feature throughout the studies, not only examining different cultural approaches, but also
Krisztina Ilko: Saints and Sacred Matter

differences in the same cultures across different periods. The volume is a valuable contribution towards relic studies by going further beyond the boundaries of the western world.

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What did it mean to be Black in revolutionary Uruguay? The question increases in complexity if we think of communal identity as a dynamic process rather than as a fixed state. This moving target requires the scholar of identity to simultaneously extricate its various elements and track those elements’ reactions. Alex Borucki offers just such a distillation in From Shipmates to Soldiers: Emerging Black Identities in the Río de la Plata.

Borucki presents identity as the product of several different shared experiences, arguing that Africans and their descendants found commonalities in the endurance of slave voyages, service in militias, and participation in urban associations. These common experiences encouraged individuals in the Río de la Plata region (encompassing much of present-day Uruguay and northern Argentina) to consider themselves part of a community with shared values and interests. While earlier scholars have generated a lively debate over the relative impact of African origins versus conditions in the Americas, Borucki aims to show their interconnection. The fusion of these different experiences along with a great deal of regional movement generated new possibilities for self-understanding.

Borucki deftly weaves together demographic data, legal documents, visual images, and memoirs. After an introduction to the history of the area and the themes of the book, Borucki’s first chapter describes the foundation of the Black population of the Río de la Plata between 1777 and 1839. Quantitative data shows that during these peak years of the slave trade at least 70,000 people were forcibly brought into the region. The sheer volume supports the argument that the bulk of the Black populace in the region shared the experience of slave voyages. Chapter Two, “Shipmate Networks and African Identities, 1760-1810” builds upon this, using marriage-witness statements to contend that the bonds developed in slave passages endured. Such friendships became the foundation for the new networks of Black militias, confraternities, and tambos described in the following chapter. Borucki strikes a fine balance by highlighting the agency of Black leaders and associations while also showing the confines within Spanish rule. Associations often re-worked existing structures of power to achieve their own goals: using approved militias and confraternities to petition legal authorities, phrased in the rhetoric of Catholicism and loyalty to the crown. The tambo was a public ritual, meeting, and meeting-place, derived originally from West Central African funeral practices. Borucki suggests that while Black colonial militias were dominated by freemen, and the tambos, by enslaved Africans, confraternities (such as the Catholic brotherhood of St. Balthazar) allowed people from both groups to intermingle and form new networks.

The fourth chapter examines militias in the revolutionary/early independence period, arguing that black soldiers fought in those factions most aligned with their own interests. By the 1830s Black men composed much of the Uruguayan infantry. The following chapter examines “African-Based Associations, Candombe, and the Day of Kings, 1830-1860”. Candombe, a successor of the tambo, referred to performances of music and dance of African origin. The largest candombes were performed on the Day

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of Kings, a Carnivalesque Catholic devotion. The Day of Kings became a site for the assertion of a Black Uruguayan identity; for instance, many participants wore military uniforms.

The final chapter discusses “Jacinto Ventura de Molina, a Black Letrado of Montevideo, 1766-1841”. He was exceptional, deriving considerable social mobility from his status as a letrado or man of letters. Yet his life also echoes the shared experiences that made for a wider Black identity in Río de la Plata. Molina’s parents endured slave voyages. Molina himself served as a lieutenant during the British invasions and he wrote appeals and petitions for confraternities. His writings voiced a Black identity founded upon combined African, Atlantic, and Platense experiences. Borucki’s case study of Molina crystallizes the developments catalogued in the rest of the book, making for an especially engaging culmination.

This mixing of historical strategies is the greatest strength of the monograph. Borucki seamlessly integrates big data and personal stories, approaching the issue of identity from both macro and micro positions. This makes for a fresh perspective on the important but under-studied issue of Black identity in a region that would later come to be seen as essentially White. As part of the University of New Mexico Press Diálogos Series, From Shipmates to Soldiers succeeds in provoking further discussion. The nature of the sources largely restricts the analysis to the activities of men; hopefully future research may incorporate women more fully into the story of Black identity in Río de la Plata. Also, this inquiry focuses on urban centres, particularly Montevideo. It may be productive to test Borucki’s thesis in the context of smaller towns and rural areas. Such a study might further advance the question Borucki briefly considers in his conclusion: how Black contributions to the nation became erased in official history and popular memory.

From Shipmates to Soldiers will interest a variety of specialists including scholars of Black history, military history, South America, nationalism, and Atlantic studies. More broadly, Borucki has made a significant contribution to identity studies, encouraging all of us to continue the dialogue.

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In 2017 India, formally the jewel in Great Britain's imperial crown, will have known seventy years of independence. Similar milestones are also true for other colonial holdings in recent years. Kenya celebrated half a century of free rule in 2013, with Uganda having achieved the same distinction the year prior. Hence, we are forced to confront an undeniable truth, that within a short while all living memory of the colonial period will have passed. Yet, it could be argued that discussion of Britain's colonial heritage has never been more heated. The protests which surrounded a statue to Cecil Rhodes at University of Oxford’s Oriel College, and the ongoing compensation claims from alleged former detainees during the Mau Mau Emergency in Kenya, demonstrate that the British Empire still holds a prominent role within political and social discourse in the modern world. Therefore, it is within this climate that a monograph such as that produced by Douglas H. Johnson is so timely and welcome.

Empire and the Nuer: Sources on the Pacification of the Southern Sudan, 1898-1930 is a deeply useful text for all those who work on the topic of North Eastern Africa. Rather than an analytical piece, the monograph is a collection of various primary sources which cover the major events of the British efforts against the Nuer people. This event is particularly significant for the contributions of E. E. Evans-Pritchard, a speech by whom is used as the monograph's epilogue. An anthropologist, and later Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford, Evans-Pritchard was engaged by the Sudanese government in producing a study of the Nuer people, with his work being amongst the first ethnographic studies of its kind. While today it may be the newest country in the continent of Africa, the history of South Sudan is a long and troubled one, from this initial “pacification” by the British, and through two civil wars, before finally seceding in 2011. By Johnson's own admission, the tumultuous nature of South Sudanese history from the second half of the twentieth century onwards may mean that there are those who feel that events from the turn of the century hold little relevance to today. In actuality, there are works which do tackle these later events and specifically the experiences of the Nuer people, for example, Hutchinson's Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War, and the State, and Falge's The Global Nuer: Transnational Life-Worlds, Religious Movements and War.

Comprised of thirty items, including colonial reports and interviews with Gaawar and Dinka peoples, Johnson’s piece helps to further develop existing dialogues in Condominium historiography.

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1 While Evans-Pritchard would publish extensively on the Nuer people, his trilogy of monographs would present perhaps his most significant contribution, specifically: The Nuer. A Description of the Modes of Livelihoods and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People (Oxford, 1940), Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer (Oxford, 1951), and Nuer Religion (Oxford, 1956); See Document 30.

Previously there had been an emphasis placed on how it was the personalities of the colonial administrators in such settings which dictated foreign policy, for example the work of Collins and Daly. Yet, Johnson seems to wish to highlight a differing factor, specifically the motivations of these individuals. He explains that such works do not fully appreciate how significant these value sets were, and the influence they had in potentially shaping actions. Of course, this shouldn't be construed as the monograph being presented as a definitive anthropology of imperial administration of Sudanese territory, something that Johnson never states it is. Instead, he explains, "...a textual critique of the official record can uncover both the values and sentiments of administrators and administration, just as a textual critique of ethnographic writing can reveal the theoretical biases of what was once presented as objective anthropology" (p. xxxiii). Therefore, the monograph can be better described as a progression of literature that surrounds colonial officials within an imperial Sudanese setting, and a further addition to Johnson's extensive writings on North Eastern Africa.

The sources that are contained within the monograph do help to give some impression of the various conflicting motivations that existed in the colonial community with regards to how the administration of Sudan should be undertaken. Johnson notes that there was seemingly an ongoing dichotomy of tactic in relation to governorship of the territory, shifting between the use of force and appeasement, or as the author puts it, "...aggressive and conciliatory approaches" (p. xxxii). The documents included by Johnson do help to articulate this conceptual discussion, with various items demonstrating the pursuance of one specific school. For example, Document 5, a report by Captain H. H. Wilson from the 10th March, 1905, shows a clear display of aggression, with Wilson sending a message to Deng Lanka in which he accuses the prophet of being a bint, Arabic for girl (p. 30). By contrast, in Document 7 we see an effort to improve relations with the same individual through more cordial means. This document, a report from the 1st March, 1907, and produced by Major G. E. Matthews, details the result of a meeting with the prophet Deng Lanka, during which various gifts were presented to him. As noted in the report, "[i]n setting out this present, Diu was induced to appreciate the fact that it was no mere deed of gift from man to man, requiring reciprocal favour from him, but was a symbol of Government's good will and protection, with the expectation from him in return of definite and loyal service" (p. 57).

Ultimately, this piece will be invaluable to any student of Southern Sudan or North Eastern African history. While it is true that this territory's past has been deeply eventful, this should in no way detract from the significance of the turn of the century period, or the usefulness of such a monograph, especially in the current socio-political climate that exists towards Britain's colonial memory. Curiously, no other place would a work like this be more appreciated than in Sudan, where there has been a specific attention attached to previous historical literature. Johnson himself amusingly explains, "[w]hen I was gathering evidence on South Sudan's borders in 2007 a civil servant in Bentiu produced an extract from one of Coriat's reports, which he said he had found in a 'very old book', unaware that I had edited it" (p. ix).

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In this monograph Raphael Lyne boldly uses cognitive theory to explore how English authors remembered during the Renaissance, and how they encoded those acts of memory into their imitative works. Lyne approaches the imitative tradition through the lens of intertextuality, a term which here encompasses a vast array of ways in which texts can connect and refer to one another. The book is divided into two sections, both of which open with detailed yet readable discussions of particular theories in cognitive science. Lyne explores the relatively early theoretical developments within the field, arguing that the ‘development of questions and processes ... reveal where the points of tension and interest arise’ (p. 15). This confident use of cognitive science and literary analysis makes the book of interest to practitioners of interdisciplinary research, as well as scholars of early modern literature, culture, and memory.

The first section examines questions of implicit and explicit poetic memory. Lyne discusses the customary opposition of allusion and intertextuality, choosing instead to conceive of them as co-operative, complementary aspects of “poetic memory”. His method is grounded in theories of memory science that hypothesise that associative and conscious cognitive processes take place simultaneously in the human mind. This hybrid model suggests that whilst the mind automatically accumulates associations over time, developing memories into behavioural systems, mental processes can also be consciously controlled. Even if these associative and conscious processes are distinct, they are combined in memorial activity. Lyne uses Hayman and Tulving's model of “implicit” and “explicit” memory, explaining in detail the textual experiments they used to derive this theory. In essence, Lyne hypothesises that explicit memory is analogous to allusion, as both work with relatively ‘complete and coherent’ semantic material. Implicit memory, and by extension intertextuality, operate via ‘superficial and fragmentary surface features’ (p. 30).

Lyne acknowledges the various problems this throws up for a literary study: namely how to distinguish a surface feature from substantive theme. Over the next two chapters, he provides a number of detailed case studies, examining Jonson and Milton’s use of classicism, and Shakespeare’s Sonnets. The chapter on Milton and Jonson sometimes succumbs to the difficulty of writing about allusion and intertextuality: the need to provide glosses and guidance for readers can cause the argument to stall, caught up in editorial detail. However, Lyne convincingly uses these comprehensive close-readings of “Lycidias” and Jonson’s Epigrams to dissolve the distinction between consequential themes and surface features. He suggests that the difficulty of distinguishing between these two aspects clarifies the vicissitudes of memory.

The third chapter, examining Shakespeare’s use of Ovid and Erasmus in the Sonnets, is the strongest in the volume. Lyne argues that within the Sonnets we can see the processes of intertextuality in poetic creation at work. We witness the poet trying to combine their sources in a variety of different ways throughout the sequence. In Lyne’s configuration, this approach speaks to ‘the question of whether memories are truly owned or not’ (p. 112). The Ovidian and Erasmian elements are not cleanly assimilated, but ‘have lives of their own’, pointing towards the difficulties of controlling memories.

This thought continues in the second section, “Intertextuality, forgetting, and the schema”. In Chapter 5 Lyne gives accounts of various theories of memory, from Underwood’s model of direct

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interference and "unlearning", to Jones' 'fragment' model of memory. Lyne uses these to consider how Wyatt both remembered and forgot Petrarch, positing that to a certain degree "forgetting" is necessary for artistic creation. Wyatt's attempt to control his Petrarchan sources is a "battle", 'to impose himself on his own mind, and to impose his poem on its predecessors' (p. 158).

The final chapters turn to drama. In Chapter 7 Lyne explores how Shakespeare dramatizes Plutarch in Antony and Cleopatra. He argues that divergences from the original demonstrate the 'erosive aspects of memory' (p. 166). The multiple voices of drama move this away from a fragmentary model of memory, instead demonstrating how history is shaped in retelling by different psychological viewpoints.

Finally, the focus turns to Jonson’s Catiline, and its inclusion of near direct quotations from Cicero. In this chapter Lyne brings out both audience and reader responses to the play, reformulating Barton's argument that Jonson “should have known better” than to quote Cicero at such great length to suggest that Jonson's decision to do so is extremely telling. In Lyne’s view of the play, these wholesale quotations demonstrate Jonson’s ‘enormous sense of responsibility to the past’ (p. 237). Lyne argues that this enacts a form of control over both the self and the memory.

Particularly in the final chapters, there is a sense that the reaction of the reader or playgoer to these memory acts should be considered further. The selection of well-known literary examples opens up questions about how these "memorials" are in turn remembered. This could be a fruitful line of enquiry for others to take up, using Lyne’s cognitive approach to literature.

The work is most exciting in the path it breaks for scholars working on interdisciplinary projects. Lyne acknowledges the common problem faced by literary critics trying to incorporate "scientific thinking" into their work: that this process too often takes place on "science’s" terms. By complicating the simplistic scientific/objective and artistic/subjective divide, Lyne opens the space to ‘understand [cognitive science] on the terms of the outsider’s own field’ (p. 36). His description of the literary examples as ‘experiments, of a sort, to be set alongside scientific experiments, rather than seen as a kind of data to be worked on’ is particularly helpful (p. 16). In arguing that literary intertextuality can illuminate theories of memory Lyne offers an exciting new way to approach imitative works.

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