

print culture indelibly associated with revolution, but—for example—“counterrevolutionary narrative could not help but enlist literary devices that had long catered to more salacious popular tastes” (p. 160). Gilmartin scrupulously avoids condescension toward these “reactionary” cultural projects: his interest lies not so much in “a straightforward logic of reaction” as in “the ambiguities of an enterprising and resourceful conservatism” (p. 7), of which Burke is an exemplary case even though, significantly, he is not a major presence in this study. One reason for this is to desynonymize “Burke” and “conservative”—as if either meant only one thing—and thus to illuminate the discursive and ideological range of counterrevolutionary writing in the period. Gilmartin’s counterrevolutionaries are rarely univocal: thus, for instance, he describes the work of Southey and Coleridge in the 1810s and ’20s as “a strikingly utopian effort” to achieve “a more stable foundation for the intellectual and literary enterprise by which the political establishment would be secured” (p. 212). As this remark suggests, Gilmartin’s prose is so fluent that it is easy to overlook the copious work of research and synthesis it represents.

Two books concerned with the “reform” or “condition of England” novel, Lesjak’s *Working Fictions* and Amanda Claybaugh’s *The Novel of Purpose: Literature and Social Reform in the Anglo-American World*, offer contrasting but complementary accounts of the relationship between social activism and literary form. Claybaugh’s subject is the relationship between nineteenth-century reform movements and the development of literary realism. Her project is twofold: to merge the artificially segregated literary histories of Britain and the U.S. during a period when social movements as well as literary markets had transatlantic constituencies; and to expand the usual understanding of “reform” novels from explicitly topical and didactic fictions such as *Felix Holt* into a broader consideration of the Anglo-American realist tradition. She borrows the term “novel of purpose” from the nineteenth-century literary historian David Masson, for whom it means “a genre grounded in the writings of social reform,” even though Masson and his contemporaries would have acknowledged that “some novelists take up reformist subject matter without having reformist commitments or intending reformist effects” (pp. 31–2). The vagueness of this definition constitutes its usefulness for Claybaugh, whose book explores the ways in which not only activists such as Dickens, but even writers as seemingly disengaged as Henry James, adapted subject matter and formal techniques from contemporary reformist writings. With separate

chapters on Dickens, Mark Twain, and Hardy as well as discussions pairing Anne Brontë with Elizabeth Stoddart, and George Eliot with James, Claybaugh's book is a highly accomplished work of traditional literary history and, like *Romantic Indians*, a timely intervention in transatlantic studies.

Lesjak's unabashedly utopian meditation on the relationship between labor and pleasure in the work of Dickens, Gaskell, George Eliot, Morris, and Oscar Wilde is much less a "genealogy" of anything than it is an attempt to recover an unalienated notion of labor from the fictional texts in which, Lesjak contends, the division between "necessary and creative activity" (p. 13) was formalized for nineteenth-century culture. This critical project unfolds most interestingly in the final two chapters, where Lesjak offers an impassioned defense of Morris's anti-utilitarian socialism and a surprise reading of Wilde that presents his aestheticism as an antidote to "the productive biases that have haunted much socialist thought since Marx." This contention puts Wilde in dialogue "with a particular strand of Marxism, a utopianism whose basis lies not in valorizing labor . . . but in a *liberation from labor*" (p. 198). Thus Morris and Wilde are reclaimed for a political project akin "to those of . . . Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri or Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge" (p. 13). Lesjak's fervor, political imagination, and supple use of post-Frankfurt school critical theory make this a consistently provocative book, as well as the best case I have yet encountered for the contemporary relevance of Morris's political thought.

Morris's peculiar blend of nostalgic medievalism and visionary socialism is also the focus of Waithe's learned study *William Morris's Utopia of Strangers*. Whereas Lesjak places Morris in the company of Walter Benjamin, Waithe treats hospitality as a keyword in the history of ideas, linking Romantic medievalism on the one hand with utopian writing on the other. He is particularly concerned with the extent to which Morris's understanding of archaic society exempts him from the Popperian charge that utopianism was the precursor to fascism—or, more generally, whether utopian social programs inevitably tend toward stasis and closure. Waithe's range of reference and command of Morris's oeuvre are truly remarkable—his discussion of the medieval revival, for example, takes in Thomas Carlyle, Benjamin Disraeli, Cobbett, A. W. N. Pugin, William Dyce, and Ruskin—although he is cautious in drawing conclusions; he praises *News from Nowhere* for its emphasis on diversity of opinion but admits that it has its limits. Waithe's Morris combines an anarchist's disdain for institutions with socialist beliefs and an ethos of liberal toleration.