

Barry Reay. *Popular Cultures in England 1550-1750*. London & New York: Longman, 1998. Pp. ix, 235. Paper, \$18.95; ISBN 0-582-48954-7.

Gordon Marsden, ed. *Victorian Values: Personalities and Perspectives in Nineteenth-Century Society*. London & New York: Longman, 1998. Second edition. Pp. xi, 292. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 0-582-29289-1.

If you can tell a book by its cover, then the covers of these two books reveal the differences in their eras and their approaches. Barry Reay's *Popular Cultures* features a detail from William Hogarth's *March of the Guards to Finchley* (1750) which captures a typically busy Hogarthian moment of boisterous pursuits. Local girls flirt with soldiers, a curious couple smoke pipes, and two prize-fighters square off in a lively crowd. Gordon Marsden's *Victorian Values* offers an entirely different slice of English life: a detail from John Ritchie's *A Summers Day in Hyde Park* (1858). Ritchie's English men and women enjoy a more genteel and controlled scene, featuring a family resting on a bench under a great tree. Hogarth and Ritchie are only a century apart, but their captured moments are world's apart—as are *Popular Culture* and *Victorian Values*.

Reay is Professor of History at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. His *Popular Cultures in England 1550-1750* is published in the Longman "Themes in British Social History" series. Reay is eminently suited to his task, having published widely in the area of Early Modern English cultural history, including articles in *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (1985/88), which he edited. This survey focuses on seven topics, each with its own chapter: "Sexualities," "Orality, Literacy, and Print," "Religions," "Witchcraft," "Festive Drama and Ritual," "Riots and the Law," and "Popular Cultures." Drawing primarily on secondary sources, Reay provides detailed footnotes, a four-page bibliography with recommendations for each chapter, and a six-and-a-half page index. There are no illustrations.

"Popular cultures," Reay notes, is a difficult term to define. Here is his fullest attempt: "The term popular cultures is not intended to imply some firm, exclusive division between popular and elite, high and low, great and little, or learned and unlearned. Nor is it to be taken to indicate cultural homogeneity among the subordinate: the 's' in cultures represents the subcultural splinterings (or segmentation) of locality, age, gender, religion, and class. The keywords for this history are: ambiguous, complex, contradictory, divided, dynamic, fluid, fractured, gendered, hybrid, interacting, multiple, multivalent, overlapping, plural, resistant, and shared." You should be able to gauge the usefulness of this text for your own class by Reay's struggle to define his term.

The chapters are uneven, with the most successful ones ("Festive Drama and Ritual" and "Riots and the Law") the most concrete. The least successful is his first ("Sexualities"), which spends much of its space on defining itself theoretically. Reay's materials range from the early sixteenth century into the mid-nineteenth. For example, Teaching History 25(1). DOI: 10.33043/TH.25.1.46-48. ©2000 Charlie McAllister

the sixth chapter ("Riots and the Law") begins with riots in 1740 and wanders into the post-1750 era, "the real age of rioting." Overall, this volume is best suited for a graduate-level course in Early Modern English cultural studies. Here students will find the major scholars, themes, and evidence.

Marsden's *Victorian Values* was first published in 1990 as a collection of sixteen articles from *History Today*. This new edition adds four articles. Asa Briggs, whose classic studies on Victorian England inspired the series, provides a brief forward and one of the essays ("Samuel Smiles: The Gospel of Self-Help"). The remaining articles are "'Kindness and Reason': William Lovett and Education" (Brian Harrison), "'Cultivated Capital': Patronage and Art in 19th-Century Manchester and Leeds" (Janet Wolff and Carline Arscott), "Dickens and His Readers" (Philip Collins), "Pugin and the Medieval Dream" (Nigel Yates), "New Men? The Bourgeois Cult of Home" (John Tosh), "Titus Salt: Enlightened Entrepreneur" (Ian Campbell Bradley), "Building Bridges: George Godwin and Architectural Journalism" (Robert Thorney), "Gladstonian Finance" (H.C.G. Matthew), "Ministering Angels: Victorian Ladies and Nursing Reform" (Anne Summers), "Josephine Butler: Feminism's Neglected Pioneer" (Trevor Fisher), "Joseph Chamberlain and the Municipal Ideal" (Derek Fraser), "Herbert Spencer and 'Inevitable' Progress" (Robert M. Young), "Stewart Headlam and the Christian Socialists" (Edward Norman), "William Morris: Art and Idealism" (Charles Harvey and Jon Press), "Mary Kingsley and West Africa" (Dea Birkett), "Attic Attitudes: Leighton and Aesthetic Philosophy" (Stephen Jones), "'Commanding the Heart': Edward Carpenter and Friends" (Sheila Rowbotham), "The Quest for Englishness" (Paul Rich), and "Diamonds are Forever? Kipling's Imperialism" (Denis Judd). The new essays for this second edition are by Butler, Harvey and Press, Judd, and Tosh.

Each essay is well-written and illustrated with one or two images. Each contains a brief bibliography for further reading. There are no end- or footnotes, as in the original *History Today* publication. *Victorian Values* is a nice collection for an advanced undergraduate course on Victorian England. The topics and figures offer a wide range of the conflicting values that characterized the Imperial Age. However, one might recommend that students read Marsden's rambling, personal, historiographical introduction after visiting the other essays. Marsden struggles to perform the dual function of introducing the new edition, summing up current scholarly thinking on Victorian England, and making Victorian England relevant to today. Look for reflections on Prince Charles and his late wife Diana.

Reay and Marsden share a sense that their chosen chronological eras are marked by paradoxes, which Marsden claims "is the predominant characteristic observed the more one peers into the workings of the Victorian world." Both books attempt to

recapture a sense of the British past. However, their emphases differ sharply, with Reay most comfortable with the world of Hogarth and Marsden with Ritchie.

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**R.W. Davies.** *Soviet Economic Development from Lenin to Khrushchev.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. 82. Cloth, \$39.95; ISBN 0-521-62260-3. Paper, \$11.95; ISBN 0-521-62742-7.

**Raymond Pearson.** *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. Pp. 138. Cloth, \$55.00; ISBN 0-312-17405-5. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 0-312-17407-1.

Each of these books is part of a series written to provide succinct and readable overviews of specialized topics "for students and their teachers." Between them, they provide a comprehensive picture of some very important elements of Soviet policy.

The process of industrialization in Russia, Davies tells us, was in some ways not so very different from that of Western Europe and the United States. Peculiarities were introduced by the fact that Russia had a huge peasant population well into the twentieth century, that wars and revolution distorted economic change, and that it suffered huge population losses during the world wars, the revolution, and collectivization. A large role for government in the industrialization process was introduced to overcome such disadvantages, even under the Tsars. The Soviet Union's ability to negotiate the first stages of industrialization despite worldwide depression, and to engineer its own continued growth and expansion through 1965, provided a politically important demonstration of successful economic transformation to the less developed world. The conclusion argues that this success also influenced western economic thought in important ways. In the first half of the book, the author succinctly discusses the characteristics of three different economic systems that followed one another in Russia, each with its own significant role for the state: the late Tsarist economy, War Communism (1918-1920), and the New Economic Policy (1921-1929). The text is in some ways quite basic; little prior knowledge of Russian history or of economics is assumed, and the policies of War Communism, for example, are compactly explained. On the other hand, the text provides a sophisticated summary of extant research, introducing the reader to the major historical debates. Telling and thought-provoking examples help to place economic issues clearly in their political and social context. The second half of the book is dedicated to an examination of the "administrative economy" until 1965. The high rates of Soviet economic growth are carefully examined for their impact on living standards and for developing structural problems. As the Soviet economy matured, and new social and political conditions developed, high defense expenditure, insufficient growth in agriculture, and the need for greater