

Neo-scholastic years, avoided criticism as Modernist, thanks to a misreading by the Bishop of Limerick and came back to centre stage thanks to pre-Vatican II theologians. C. Michael Shea suggests more work is needed on similarities between Newman and contemporary German theologian, Johannes Adam Möhler (p. 296). Newman had skirmishes with authority regarding his 'sensus fidelum' essay. King revisits the issue and alerts all shades of opinion to the 'highly rhetorical' nature of Newman's article in *The Rambler* (p. 281). Paying attention to literary forms is surely a basic requirement! Abraham referred to Newman's 'pessimism' (p. 316), an impression often taken from sermons, where the subject matter is of a serious nature. There are numerous instances where Newman's prose lifts the human spirit and touches of the poetic and musical. Newman thought he wrote better after playing Beethoven: 'Perhaps thought is music'.¹¹ Sullivan regards Newman's vision of the university a 'rhetorical device' lifting our vision from the mundane (p. 554).

American historian Patrick Allitt¹² argued that on both sides of the Atlantic, converts (mostly in the wake of Tractarianism) dominated Roman Catholic intellectual life between 1840 and 1960. After crossing the Tiber their creative skills did not atrophy. They joined a small, cautious English community of surviving recusants being swelled by a large mass of poor Irish migrants. They reshaped this into a community better educated, more confident of its identity and vigorous in its pastoral mission. Among the thousands of followers on either side of the Tiber, Newman remains a towering figure. These essays will help readers of Newman appreciate the 'very long shadow' he continues to cast.

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Judith Maltby and Alison Shell (eds.), *Anglican Women Novelists from Charlotte Brontë to P.D. James* (London: T and T Clark, 2019), pp. xvi + 274. ISBN: 978-0-5676-6585-0. RRP £27.99 (pbk), £85.00 (hbk).

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'Why Women; Why Anglican; Why Novelists?' is the title of the editors' introductory chapter to this volume of collected essays focusing on the fiction of Charlotte Brontë, Charlotte Tucker (better known under the sobriquet, A.L.O.E), Margaret Oliphant, Charlotte Yonge, Evelyn Underhill, Dorothy Sayers, Rose Macaulay, Barbara Pym, Elizabeth Goudge, Noel Streatfeild, Iris Murdoch, Monica Furlong and P.D. James. Each essay is prefaced by an image of the author. In attempting to provide an answer encompassing this diverse band of writers, the editors variously cite a feminist impulse to recuperate the reputations of novelists now less well known,

¹¹C.S. Desain (ed.), *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman. XXII. Between Pusey and the Extremists: July 1865 to December 1866* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 9.

¹²Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Converts: British and American Intellectuals Turn to Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), p. ix.

an interest in detecting common features in their handling of Anglican belief and practice, and shared themes which run across two centuries of fiction. As such the enterprise is designed to awaken readers to a neglected Anglican tradition. The reasons for this neglect are identified as in part the way women were for long sidelined from Anglicanism's institutional strongholds while silently, and latterly less silently, ministering to its male homosocial structures of authority, and in part the comparative indifference displayed by Britain's cultural elite to Anglicanism, when Roman Catholicism and Dissent provided richer territory for the study of those challenging society's norms.

It is notoriously easy to criticize such anthologies for their exclusions of personal favourites. In this case, however, I feel that the principles which apparently operated in making this selection require a little further unpacking, and are more deserving of discussion than the occasional quibble with an individual essayist's opinions. The volume's privileging of the Anglo-Catholic tradition would, for instance, have merited further investigation. By placing Brontë and Tucker, their main representatives of a more Protestant theology, at the start and then proceeding, by way of Oliphant – an unorthodox but perceptive commentator on account of her upbringing in the heart of Scottish Presbyterianism – to a slew of post-Tractarian novelists, the effect is to suggest that the Oxford Movement effectively took over the cultural heart of Anglicanism. (The Tracts for the Times, by the way, were aimed at the clergy, not the wider literate adult population as one essay implies on p. 32.) While it might have re-enforced the underlying impression of an ecclesiological trajectory, it might have been worth starting the collection with an essay on Hannah More's *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809), a prime example of hijacking the domestic romance tradition for the purposes of Anglican Evangelicalism.

The introduction and Francis Spufford's 'Afterword' would also have benefitted from considering why Anglo-Catholicism has provided so fertile a ground for women novelists. As the example of Yonge's fiction suggests, the doctrine of reserve, combined with an aesthetic which emphasized the symbolic, encouraged a literary tact unavailable to Evangelicalism's dominant impetus to preach the gospel in and out of season. Perhaps, too, Anglo-Catholicism's embrace of confession provided a more hospitable and forgiving spiritual environment than Protestantism for the remarkable number of the women novelists featured here who entertained long affairs outside the bonds of holy matrimony. I also regret the decision to limit the collection to deceased novelists. In effect, despite a brief editorial nod to the talented fiction of Catherine Fox, who provides a generous encomium to this anthology on the dustjacket, this has the effect of underlining Anglicanism's decline from existing at the heart of the nation's social structures.

Perhaps the biggest question of all – how to define an Anglican novelist – finally remains opaque. Claiming to be an Anglican atheist, or agnostic, is undoubtedly a fashionable position for today's senior intellectuals – Sir Martin Rees and Sir Philip Pullman spring to mind, and Iris Murdoch features under this banner in the present collection. However, this claim often goes little beyond affirming a cultural nostalgia for the routines and literature of Anglicanism, often combined with assent to a Christian ethic voided of all supernatural beliefs, so that, as church attendance dwindles yet further and such memories die out, it only serves to underline that such Anglicanism will soon disappear from the national consciousness.

In this collection Anglicanism emerges as an umbrella term stretching from residual fondness for the Prayer Book and King James Bible to an intimate knowledge of the daily rhythms of parochial communities, and even to markers of more active involvement such as retreat leadership (Underhill). To what extent modern feminist agendas have been imposed retrospectively, to insist, for instance, upon a repeated attention to spinsterhood as an honourable condition, and then elevate this to forming part of a conscious female Anglican literary tradition, is a question worth raising. A slight uncertainty persists throughout as to the book's likely readership. Some essays work at the level of general introductions to an author and their work, though even in these information more helpful to students of history and literature is often contained in extensive endnotes. The more interesting essays reflect at greater length on the tensions that exist between Anglican doctrine and the conventions of a particular fictional genre, or they engage with the tension between Anglican doctrine and the temperament or convictions of the individual author: an exemplary essay on P.D. James does both.

In that the Church of England for at least half of the time period covered by this book played so central a role in the life of England's literate upper and middle classes (and despite the inclusion of the Scottish Oliphant and the Irish-born Murdoch this is largely an English story) it must remain debatable whether an Anglican tradition of female fiction can be legitimately detached from these novelists' use of successive vogues for Gothic, social, domestic, detective or crime fiction. Whether anything as cohesive or self-referential as a tradition exists, or not, one can only echo Rose Macaulay's words: 'Thank heaven for the C. of E., which grants so much license & liberty of thought, so much free criticism, so many reserves & speculations & interpretations' (p. 115).

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Doctrine Commission of the Anglican Church of Australia, *Marriage, Same-Sex Marriage and the Anglican Church of Australia: Essays from the Doctrine Commission* (Mulgrave, VIC: Broughton Publishing, 2019), pp. iv + 312. ISBN 978-0-6482659-4-8. RRP AU\$34.95.

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In September 2017, the General Synod asked its Doctrine Commission to 'facilitate a respectful conversation' about the matters contained in the title of this book, which is the result of the request. The book contains eighteen essays in four sections: 'Context', 'Scripture and Hermeneutics', 'History, Theology and Ecclesiology', and 'The Case For and Against'. The authors are drawn from across the Australian Church. Eight of the eleven authors are members of the Doctrine Commission and all are Anglicans. Overall, the entries are in pairs representing the opposing viewpoints in the debate, which I could characterize as 'conservative' and 'progressive', as Michael Stead does in his opening essay, regardless of the specific subject being addressed.