Venus is a subject for which coy personifications and metaphors of seduction seem not yet to have gone out of style.) It is not hard to see why successive readers of Horrocks have taken him to their hearts. The Victorians, with Arundell B. Whatton's 1859 *Memoir* and a series of essentially fictional memorials and portraits, naturally led the way, bequeathing their vision of a pious and persevering young cleric, fighting ill health to perform first his Christian and then his scientific duty.

We, no less enthused by a local hero with his finger on the pulse of Continental astronomy, will still rejoice in the account of a young astronomer's greatest moment. Although touched by the thought of his work being cut short by tragically early death, Horrocks nevertheless comes across as wonderfully vital. The modern, positively reclaimed term 'geek' comes to mind in reading Horrocks's description of astronomers who 'immoderately delight in trifling things, which do not move others in the least' (p. 16). Something similar arises from his lauding of Kepler, 'the unparalleled prince of true astronomy' (p. 51), and his dismissal of the 'boasts' and 'impotent clamour' (p. 72) of Philippe van Lansberge and those who relied on his tables.

Apart from Kepler, Horrocks's greatest praise is for 'the recent and wonderful invention of the telescope' (p. 8). Despite writing three decades after the instrument was patented, Horrocks clearly felt that 'the Belgian telescope' still required a better reputation, and thus he affirmed the increased accuracy it allowed and defended it against those who suggested it could create illusions. It is eulogized in verse, as readers are urged to 'learn the wonders of such a great tube' (p. 11) and join him, lying in wait to spy Venus.

Being a review of a book published by Brill, this must end with the inevitable comment about cost. Ninety-nine euros for just over a hundred pages is steep by any measure. Given the accessible style of Horrocks's writing and Applebaum's translation, it is a shame that this should simply be a library-based reference work. The author's preface promises a full-length biography of Horrocks in the near future. It is much to be hoped that this does indeed appear, and that it is available at a price that places it within reach of significantly more pockets.

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Gregory Lynall, **Swift and Science: The Satire, Politics and Theology of Natural Knowledge, 1690–1730**. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Pp. ix + 209. ISBN 978-0-230-34364-1. £50.00 (hardback).
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Publishers regularly resort to two standby artists, Joseph Wright of Derby and James Gillray, for adorning the covers of their books about science and society. When contemplating the title of Gregory Lynall's first monograph, *Swift and Science: The Satire, Politics and Theology of Natural Knowledge, 1690–1730*, the designers at Palgrave Macmillan understandably plumped for a dramatic caricature, presumably deeming it inconsequential that Gillray's *Alchymist* appeared at the end of the eighteenth century and lampooned William Pitt (not even born until 1759) as a royal sycophant spending the Treasury's golden coins on distilling democracy into dictatorship.

This preoccupation with associative symbolism rather than hard historical accuracy characterizes Lynall's approach. I intend this not as a criticism but as a reflection on broad differences between the academic disciplines of English literature and history of science. In a verbal equivalent of caricature – an art form that ruthlessly exposes unpalatable truths by exaggerating beyond the limits of credibility – literary critics have little time for chronology, whereas historians plough unimaginatively through furrows of facts. Or, as Jonathan Swift did not say, experts on literature try to make sunbeams out of cucumbers, while explorers of the past are weighed down by the burdensome load of exactitude.

As a related but equally over-simplistic contrast, literary analysts place authors at the focus of interest, whereas historians of science pursue the routes taken by knowledge as it travels unpredictably through space and time, mapping its movements by investigating the afterlives of texts. Because Lynall is committed to examining Swift's role as a commentator on his own times, he picks texts apart in fine detail but largely excludes consideration of imitations, responses or later editions. A rare exception is his only reproduction of a Swiftian illustration, a 1754 image of the Laputan royal court, but he reads it as a direct representation of Swift's original intentions, first expressed in print almost thirty years earlier.

An extremely thorough and well-informed piece of scholarship, Lynall's book places priority on discussing how contemporary knowledge affected Swift's work rather than on any reciprocal part Swift may have played in shaping science. The secondary bibliography is peppered with articles by eminent historians of science whose names are familiar, yet are here enlisted to underpin a complementary process of interpretation. When they set about mining the rich resource of Swift's *oeuvre*, they mostly began by identifying themes relevant to scientific culture, and then illustrated the development and implications of each one by plundering such treasure troves as *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Battel of the Books*. Lynall has approached this topic from the opposite direction, structuring *Swift and Science* by Swift's works, and drawing in contextual details to amplify a fixed text. By adopting this strategy, he has created an excellent close reading of Swift that elaborates the cultural references pervading his publications in the early eighteenth century, but has little to say about Swift's long-term impact.

The Swift described by Lynall parodies the follies of experimental science in order to forge a rhetorical weapon for debates about establishing public authority. He deploys satire to challenge all human claims to ultimate truth, but sometimes becomes unwittingly trapped by that belief's illogical inconsistency: if you are suspicious of any appeal to universality, explains Lynall, then you cannot legitimately call on common sense as a benchmark. In five substantial chapters, Lynall relates individual Swiftian texts to five main scientific figures of the period: Robert Boyle, Thomas Burnet, Richard Bentley, Isaac Newton and Samuel Clarke. Unsurprisingly, he pays greatest attention to Newton, suggesting that as a close friend of his niece Catherine Barton, Swift had immediate access to household gossip. On the other hand, Newton's influence in this early part of the century was less hegemonic than Lynall assumes. Although he recognizes that the publication of a book does not necessarily mean that its ideas are immediately accepted or even understood, he is – like many other scholars – so swayed by knowledge of Newton's future domination that he overestimates its power during his lifetime.

For any researcher fascinated by Swift and his circle, Lynall has provided an indispensable guide to Britain's most penetrating satirical commentator on science, politics and religion – a worthy predecessor of Gillray, albeit in a different medium.

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Claudine Cohen, **La méthode du Zadig: La trace, le fossile, la preuve**. Paris: Editions de Seuil, 2011. Pp. 342. ISBN 978-2-02040-298-9. €23.00 (paperback).
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The history of palaeontology and prehistoric archaeology is an area which is seeing some timely expansion. Claudine Cohen, the author of numerous excellent works in these areas, has here produced a wide-ranging book which cuts across the philosophy and history of the deep-time sciences, providing methodological and conceptual orientation for the field along with a series of provocative and interesting case studies. Opening with certain questions: 'How can we know the prehistoric past of nature and man? How can we reconstruct 'lost worlds' and the development of extinct lineages?' (p. 11), Cohen uses the 'method of Zadig' of the title as the central organizing