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sense of vocation that underlies it. *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis* (2005), the wonderful previous work from Houlbrook on homosexual lives and urban culture, memorably recounted a description of him as a "method-actor" among historians, and this inclination undoubtedly endures. Yet the love letter made me wriggle—and not out of intellectual confrontation. I will have to beg the author's forgiveness for having not yet discovered the "erotics of the archive" in this way (dust makes me sneeze, unfortunately, and looped signatures of long-dead heroes, though thrilling, have never succeeded in offering quite *that* level of enjoyment). I jest; but in earnest, I do not think this piece "added value." This is unlike the other vignette, titled "We need to talk, Netley" (339). Here, Houlbrook outlines starkly his difficulty in reconciling the later discovery of Lucas's alcoholism and violence towards women with the impetus to heroize a subject pursued with such tenacity across archives and continents over many years, whose cunning even the reader finds herself admiring at times. There is an important subtext to this piece about the commercial imperatives of history writing and our responsibility to resist distilling subjects into the oversimplified categories of "heroes or villains," however appealing—and marketable—that might be.

My second criticism is the weight of successive contextual references that on occasion (in chapters 1 and 4), overwhelm the analytical thread, and may well test the attention of readers encountering the interwar period for the first time. On the whole, however, Houlbrook's intimacy with the cultural landscape of his era is a real strength of the book. Allowing him to situate the content, genre, and dissemination of Lucas's faked stories within the canon of high-, middle-, and low-brow literature then circulating, Houlbrook knits these references carefully into the web of "authenticity effects" on which Lucas drew in order to secure publication of his own "fakes." This is surely a definitive model for historians aiming to expose the broader resonance of their specific topic of research, vividly recalling Natalie Zemon Davis' *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1984).

In sum, *Prince of Tricksters* is an evocative and fascinating book that is sure to become required reading for future generations of historians.

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Nick Hubble and Philip Tew, eds. *London in Contemporary British Fiction: The City beyond the City.* Bloomsbury Studies in the City. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Pp. 232. $114.00 (cloth).
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2017.85

Slovoj Žižek's concept of the "parallax view" provides the theoretical touchstone for *London in Contemporary British Fiction: The City beyond the City*, a wide-ranging survey of London fictions in the twenty-first century's early years. In their introduction, Nick Hubble and Philip Tew find that London's population is fractured along financial lines—an elite minority and a majority increasingly impoverished in real terms—who cohabit the same space but whose perspectives are divergent, incommensurate even. This confrontation produces the "paradoxes that constitute London" (2). The literary texts considered engage this situation by presenting human, experiential accounts of the city. The essays in Hubble and Tew's volume are concerned with assessing whether urban identities and cultures established in London narratives are capable of resisting, interrogating, and subverting global processes shaping the city.

London's paradoxes take a number of forms—the relationship between country and city, the perspectives of lifelong residents and incomers, multiculturalism and universalism, and "the

https://doi.org/10.1017/jbr.2017.85 Published online by Cambridge University Press

irreducible intersubjectivity of the city itself" (10). This last derives "from its inhabitants' simultaneous status as individuals and as components of a greater mass" (13). Thus, the "real" London is "inherently paradoxical, and discernible only through its parallax gaps as an inscrutable presence always complicating any attempt to reduce the experience of the city to one of readily explicable cause and effect" (8). While most titles in the Bloomsbury Studies in the City series are tightly focused, these commitments account for the capaciousness of this volume, ranging freely over recent fiction as it does.

Tew's chapter on Ian McEwan's *Saturday* reads characters' recourse to "vicarious victimhood" as a way of processing social disturbance in the city space (30). Susan Alice Fisher's chapter on Ali Smith's *The Accidental* notices the gap between reality and simulacrum brought to focus in a narrative of a London family's holiday in the country, and the city's encroachment there. Sebastian Jenner focuses on similarly liminal landscapes in Will Self's oeuvre, especially *The Book of Dave* and its "fractal representations" of "real" London (50). Nick Bentley charts masculine violence and dehumanizing political systems in Martin Amis's *Yellow Dog*, which returns to the London geographies of his earlier texts but establishes ethical dimensions that were more ambiguous before. Tomasz Niedokos argues that Peter Ackroyd's gravitation towards the city of London (as opposed to Westminster) and its underlying ecclesiastical geography grants access to the sacred spaces of the medieval city. Ackroyd looks "beyond superficial changes to seek continuities" with a deep past (93). Doris Bremm assesses museums' function as "heterotopic spaces" of private contemplation and public gathering in texts by Ackroyd, Julian Barnes, and A. S. Byatt. Laura Colombino notices that in *London Orbital*, Iain Sinclair "confront[s] late capitalist urban culture on the battleground of imagination and aesthetics," countering the accusations of political quietism that have been made against him (114). Jung Su's work on Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* goes beyond the plentiful scholarship on multiculturalism in the novel by focusing instead on the role of emotions in the emerging structure of feeling in Smith's work. Anja Müller-Wood's chapter on Andrea Levy's *Small Island* makes a similar move towards human interactions at the level of character. Nora Pleßke focuses on the temporal liminality of underground London, configured by novelists Tobias Hill, Conrad Williams, and Neil Gaiman as an archive of the city's past and future. Mark P. Williams finds China Miéville's alternative Londons to be "cognitive estrangements" with which to grasp contemporary urban subjectivity. Lastly, Hubble compare's Zadie Smith's *NW* to antecedent texts by Virginia Woolf and John Sommerfield to chart a decline in working-class agency in the city.

While the volume's titular focus is contemporary British fiction, almost all of the novels and other prose works considered were first published in the earliest years of the twenty-first century—it is actually a portrait of London literature in the century's first decade rather than this one. This focus is accounted for in the volume's acknowledgments, which make clear that a number of the chapters started out as papers at a 2008 conference addressing "liminal London." Only Hubble's chapter on Zadie Smith's *NW* considers more recent work, though *NW* does not appear an anomaly because the text is, in many ways, of a piece with Smith's earlier novels. It is still common for "twenty-first century" and "contemporary" to be treated as synonymous, but as the millennial starting point becomes increasingly distant from the present moment, it might be time for new distinctions to be drawn. Potential candidates for the paradigm shift that defines the new now are plentiful but dependent on adopting a particular lens. Instead, some have opted for a rolling ten-year period to retain the currency of the "contemporary" label.

To raise this issue of period definition in relation to the volume under review is not to suggest it is out of date. Indeed, to read it is to be confronted with the continuing relevance, prescience even, of texts written as many as seventeen years ago. In the introduction's most apocalyptic sentence, Hubble and Tew suggest that "[s]ince the millennium, liminal London has simmered with the threat of meltdown as all the partly digested historical essences ever consumed by the sprawl threaten to spew forth" (10). While full meltdown has not occurred (yet), the tensions present in the texts considered, carefully identified and unpicked

https://doi.org/10.1017/jbr.2017.85 Published online by Cambridge University Press

by the contributors, have come to a head in 2016 with the vote for Britain's exit ("Brexit") from the European Union. From this historical perspective, those texts look like premonitions of some importance—cultural warnings of the divergence sown but not yet fully reaped. To follow this connection further is to complicate it a little. While the national vote was narrowly in favor of leaving the European Union, London voted clearly for remaining in. Perhaps Londoners, habituated to the longer-standing parallax gap that this volume identifies, were not prey to the fear of living with difference that informed voting away from the metropolis.

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DOMINIC JANES. *Oscar Wilde Prefigured: Queer Fashioning and British Caricature, 1750–1900*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2016. Pp. 288. $40.00 (cloth).
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2017.86

In his final chapter of *Oscar Wilde Prefigured: Queer Fashioning and British Caricature, 1750–1900*, Dominic Janes quotes Ellis Hanson's 1996 observation that "before Wilde, you could do a lot of camping without ever being called a queer," but, at the same time, that "it is difficult to recall a queer dandy before Pater and Wilde" (Janes 230). Present, then, but unexpectedly elusive, queer British dandies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries make an excellent subject of investigation for Janes, whose monograph seeks to restore to academic memory the Wildes who existed before Oscar Wilde and the role that representations of these men played in the development of twentieth-century queer culture.

Janes grounds his examination of queer public figuration in caricature and visual culture more generally. In the broadest sense, the question he asks is this: Is historical queerness in graphic form visually legible by modern viewers as well as by contemporaries of the prints? It is a good question, one that requires us to rethink our conclusions about representations of male effeminacy and the significance of popular visual culture across time. The answer Janes provides is complicated by a number of factors, many of which he acknowledges. Accepting the premise of his book requires, for example, that we set aside the arguments raised by queer theorists in the 1990s against reading what Janes calls a "sodomitical subtext" (143) into historical representations of effeminate men—equating effeminacy with sexual orientation, in other words. It also requires that we give up the notion long held by historians of gender and sexuality that homosexuality as an identifiable cultural category remained inchoate until the late nineteenth century. These two ideas have been fundamental premises of queer theory for decades, and Janes's upending of them will, I suspect, be met with some hesitation.

Another challenge that Janes's book presents resides in his primary texts, the illustrations, sixty-three of which are reproduced. He explains that the queerness of the images he examines lies primarily in the context of their interpretation (whether historical or contemporary) rather than in the images themselves (4). This means that a caricature's queerness might not be evident either to us or to eighteenth- or nineteenth-century viewers, whose interpretations of images are frustratingly hard to recover in any case. Keeping in mind that even if there were some kind of template of "well-established patterns of visual and bodily expression" by which "sodomites could recognize and meet others of like mind" (7)—a template established before Wilde and iterated in caricatures and prints—this template would be incredibly difficult to locate because, as Janes admits, queer fashioning resists reduction to single, uniform types (13).

Aware of the difficulty of looking for patterns among images that refuse to distill themselves into obvious types, Janes offers readers a chronological account of the visual evolution of the

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