

granted wives separation orders from abusive husbands on the testimony of troubled neighbors, but as Susan Amussen and Joanne Bailey have told us, those neighbors usually expected such women to endure their suffering a very long time before providing that crucial “participation” that might move those courts to act. Enhanced magisterial authority in this area a century later may not have served the interests of women any better. But did it serve them any worse simply because the decision-making power now lay in the hands of a few justices of the peace? To put the case in more general terms: did a change in “the means” by which the law achieved (or failed to achieve) its purposes demonstrably serve “the ends” of “the people” any better (or worse)? For that matter, a number of scholars of social and legal life in the Tudor–Stuart era have begun to question whether or not the quest to find “agency” among those who were structurally disadvantaged has been pressed just a little beyond the bounds of plausibility. It may not matter how “open” or “participatory” any legal system was (or is), in formal terms, if the more powerful operative realities of social life were—and remained—deeply engrained hierarchical, economic, and ideological ones.

Lemmings also tilts against that body of scholarship that argues for the increasing public scrutiny of parliamentary doings, especially after the basic right of newspapers to publish the debates was conceded in the early 1770s. To be sure, the influence upon Parliament of such scrutiny is easily overstated. Such influence did exist, however, and it might sometimes indeed have been more powerful, in an era before the onset of unshakable governing majorities sustained by systemic party discipline, than perhaps it is in our own day. Similarly, although Lemmings doubts the power of petitioning, his perspective overlooks that recent and substantial recrudescence in scholarship which argues that petitioning (and instructions to members of Parliament) really did turn the tide in the most compelling public moral issue of the late Georgian age: the slave trade.

Most strikingly, perhaps, Lemmings does not devote overly much space to considering the role of the enormous social changes of the eighteenth century—urbanization, population growth, economic expansion and transformation, and all their attendant pressures—in providing an essential impetus for many, if not most, of these changes. If officials increasingly sought to streamline the administration of the law by reducing such time-consuming features as jury trial for petty offenses, it must fairly be said that those officials had a vastly greater volume of business to process by the early nineteenth century. One might also question the degree to which Lemmings (and, to be fair, several other recent historians) have argued that levels of criminality were primarily a perceptual matter: a function of “moral panic” driven by an ever more pervasive newspaper press that boosted circulation figures by provoking bourgeois anxieties. In all probability, there really was more crime taking place, especially by the late eighteenth century, than ever before.

Such broad reservations and specific queries should come as no surprise. They are a natural reaction to books of such breadth and ambition as this one. Lemmings has mastered a vast and wide-ranging body of secondary writing, as well as a very substantial amount of primary source material. He has produced a volume that will provoke both admiration and criticism. Above all, he has written one that demands engagement. For those of us who study the law and its workings in the Hanoverian age, it will be virtually impossible to ignore.

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ALYSA LEVENE. *The Childhood of the Poor: Welfare in Eighteenth-Century London*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Pp. 264. \$85.00 (cloth).
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Alysa Levene’s research has helped to shape our understanding of everyday life among the poor, child health, and welfare in eighteenth-century London since the publication of her

doctoral dissertation on the London Foundling Hospital in 2007. This book builds upon this excellent body of scholarship and brings together her focus on the history of welfare and childhood.

Levene draws on a characteristic wealth of sources, including predominately parish records from St. Clement Danes, St. Martin in the Fields, St. Paul Covent Garden, St. Botolph, St. Sepulchre, St. Mary Lambeth, and Marylebone together with the institutional records of Christ's Hospital, the London Foundling Hospital, and the charitable records of the Marine Society and the Stranger's Friend Society. She brings these together with a wealth of contemporary writing on poverty and poor children. Her training as a demographic historian leads her to utilize an innovative demographic and statistical technique to flesh out the complex historical contexts of poor children in eighteenth-century London. She is less interested in individual life stories, though there is much mention of these, than in an aggregated view of young people and the responses to their poverty. This approach reveals directions in policy and practice. For purposes of definition, children under the age of 13 are her focus, and she spends the first part of the book sketching out the variety of family forms within which poor children live. This careful stitching together of diverse sources using new methodological techniques allows her to piece together a patchwork of poor children's lives in chapters on family life, parish nursing, parish childcare, the workhouse, outdoor relief, charity, community, friends, and family. She demonstrates how these contexts were often deprived and desperate and usually a consequence of fragmented family life. Her findings are powerful and evocative, and provide much food for thought and future research.

Children in the eighteenth century became an important focus for writers and campaigners on poverty. While their parents vexed the minds of reformers, who became increasingly suspicious of their motives and held responsible for their deprivation, children escaped blameless. Though they were appearing in ever larger numbers, they could not be held accountable for their circumstances. Eighteenth-century reformers put their hopes in poor children because they were "malleable" and had potential as future workers (4). This shift in understanding occurred within a demographic context of falling child and infant mortality.

Most of the book covers previously unexplored terrain, and the depth and breadth of her research on this subject shines a fresh light on the varied lives and circumstances of poor children in the city. She shows how different parishes practiced different systems of parish nursing. The ages of children sent to nurse varied, and so too did the time they spent in the homes of nurses. Some parishes were systematic in their systems of care; homes and nurses were carefully inspected and supervised, while other nurses were left to get on with the task at hand. Some nurses clearly took pride in their work and professional identity. What is of particular value is that Levene does not provide us with just a snapshot of life at one time, but her methodology allows her to track the long-term experiences of poor children, as they moved from the workhouse in the city to life with a nurse in the country, and back again. Her research reveals that parish officers often viewed poor families with sympathy, and the bonds between parent and child were sometimes valued and nurtured. The plans of parents and the parish did not always diverge, and different models of care were sometimes supported by the Poor Law. Parish officers were also aware that poor children who stayed with their mothers were more likely to survive than those who were separated. As others have also shown, poor mothers were sometimes allowed to nurse their own children with parish support. Other children benefitted from long-term foster care while their parents remained in touch, or at least aware of the location and circumstances of their children. Chapter 5 shows how even the most desperate parents tried to retain control, limited though it may have been, over the lives of their progeny. Levene's chapter on children's experience of the workhouse is particularly valuable. She shows how children often experienced the workhouse in diverse ways. Poor children could use the workhouse to access health care and training not available to them outside of this context. Her final chapter reveals that despite the aid offered by the parish and within institutions like the Foundling Hospital and Christ's Hospital, the majority of poor children were

helped most by individuals in their midst— family, friends, and neighbors. Unfortunately, the sources remain largely silent on this process.

By the early nineteenth century, the poor had a far wider range of health and welfare options in times of need than they had before. This was particularly the case in London, if not elsewhere. The Poor Law, however, remained crucial for those hoping to escape the poverty of their birth (177). This is a humane and compassionate work that forces us to acknowledge, once more, the complex and varied routes that poor children traveled in the eighteenth century.

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KAREN LIPSEGE. *Domestic Space in Eighteenth-Century British Novels*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Pp. 232. \$85.00 (cloth).
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In his work on eighteenth-century London, architectural historian Peter Guillery reminds us that “houses are principally interesting because people lived in them.” Karen Lipsedge’s first book usefully connects houses and people by comparing “real” buildings and interiors with fictional accounts of domestic space from the 1720s to the 1780s. The core of the work assesses how four novelists—Samuel Richardson, Fanny Burney, Eliza Haywood, and Frances Sheridan—wrote about rooms. Lipsedge’s main interest is each author’s representation of interior and garden spaces, but the book is particularly noteworthy for how it sets these literary scenes against the reality of the domestic environment. Her careful reading of literary space generates an interplay among houses, people, and social action that offers insights into the changing relationship eighteenth-century individuals had to the rooms they inhabited.

The first chapter discusses the architectural history of the polite houses that served as settings for the novels, followed by three chapters focused on fictional encounters with different rooms: public rooms such as parlors and drawing rooms, private spaces such as closets and dressing rooms, and exterior garden spaces. Rooms carried meanings that eighteenth-century audiences understood. Lipsedge identifies the 1750s as a break from older social conventions where the parlor and private closet (old) were replaced as settings by the drawing room and dressing room (new), which coincided with the increased differentiation between male and female spaces. As “real” room specialization changed and shifted, this process was revealed in the settings adopted by an earlier novelist like Richardson and a later one like Burney.

There is much to appeal across disciplines here, although this is perhaps the blessing and the curse of such a project. As a result, several interesting topics might have been developed further. First, Lipsedge is in some respects evaluating a fiction of a fiction. In her “detailed overview” (17) of “real” Palladian houses in chapter 1, the architects and theorists she discusses—Roger North, the Earl of Shaftesbury, Isaac Ware—all in their own way created fictive spaces. While many larger houses built during the eighteenth century naturally drew on these writers for guidance, well-informed master builders or regional architects often constructed smaller genteel houses that reflected but did not altogether replicate architectural pattern and advice books. In the same way that few houses today look like a decorator’s magazine, it is questionable how many members of genteel society really followed the strictures of pattern book literature carefully. By not clearly delineating styles and sizes of houses, Lipsedge risks losing the nuance that would have been evident to an eighteenth-century readership. Several works dealing with architecture and interiors might have helped to illuminate her arguments, most notably John Cornforth’s *Early Georgian Interiors* (Yale, 2005), Andor Gomme and Alison Maguire’s *Design and Plan in the Country House* (Yale, 2008), James Ayres’s