

Sarah Hogan. *Other Englands: Utopia, Capital, and Empire in an Age of Transition*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018. xii + 256 pp. \$60.00. Review by JOSEPH P. WARD, UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY.

The central observation animating Sara Hogan's thoughtful new book is that early modern English works of social criticism, rather than being primarily nostalgic, frequently imagined that a better future could be found, either within or beyond England's shores. The quickening pace with which market forces undermined established social relations was both cause and consequence of the broadening of English engagement with oceanic exploration and mercantile endeavors. Utopian authors recognized the shifting economic and cultural terrain on which they stood, and they embraced the change they hoped would lead to progress in social relations.

Hogan grounds her argument in a reading of More's *Utopia* that reconciles the New Historicist and the Marxist treatments of the text. She locates the cultural power of this early sixteenth-century work in its ability to look both backward and forward, to engage with—as it observes—the changing nature of social and economic relations in England as well as the emergence of a capitalist world system. For Hogan, *Utopia* is “fundamentally a book about pronounced socio-spatial transformations, past, present, and future” (69). This emphasis on disjuncture is most obvious in the decision of fictional King Utopos to create an island by ordering a fifteen-mile wide trench to be dug across a peninsula that he had recently conquered. This spectacular undertaking, made possible through the coerced labor of vanquished people, would have struck More's readers as an example of the power of men to remake the world in their image. In this way, Hogan emphasizes, More's text is a striking statement of the role of (elite) human agency in ushering in the age of capitalism—there was nothing inevitable, or divinely directed, about this break with the past.

Islands often serve as metaphors for separation, but for early modern authors they also could be viewed as way stations for oceanic voyages, thereby making the distance between continents easier to traverse. This duality is evident in Hogan's reading of the island of Bensalem in Bacon's *New Atlantis*, which she sees as the manifestation of a fantasy of an emergent, early modern capitalist thought, with sci-

ence being the special provenance of a self-empowered elite bent on exploiting knowledge in pursuit of their own desires. Bacon's island is a sanctuary, a refuge from which engagement with the outside world could be manipulated with careful calculation. From Hogan's perspective, Bensalem is "both of and apart from the world" in a way that "negotiates anxieties about a burgeoning world system" by benefiting from "global relations without actually participating in them" (74). Although it is profoundly a fantasy about accumulation, *New Atlantis* also presents an ideal of the nation-state in its secure borders, its boundedness highlighting the importance of material control to an age of increasingly precise calculation: how can the value of a nation be determined without it being firmly bounded?

As desirable as boundedness may have been, it collided headlong with the ambition for colonial expansion. Here, Hogan reads Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland* as a utopian text because it imagines a reconstituted Irish society built upon English principles for the purpose of promoting English enterprise. Creatively borrowing from Naomi Klein's critique of neoliberalism following World War II, Hogan suggests in this chapter's title that Spenser's text reflected the sensibility of a "Tudor Shock Doctrine" in which the violent subjugation of Ireland would pave the way toward a promising future for the Irish as well as their English masters. Unabashedly aimed at promoting a new form of social stability in pursuit of commercial prosperity, *A View* "openly gives voice to the goal of replacing Irish and Anglo-Irish lords with improving landlords, eradicating customary claims to property through extra-economic force" (110). In its view of custom as an obstacle to progress, it serves as a participant-observer in the transition to a new stage of historical development.

Hogan's final two chapters focus on utopian works that project alternative forms of social relations to those found in early modern England. Isabella Whitney's "Wyll and Testament" offers a "future-oriented, urban, commercial ideal" while Aemilia Lanier's "Description of Cooke-ham" represents a "more nostalgic, enclosed rural retreat of aristocratic repose" (138). These female poets help Hogan to identify a significant strand of utopian writing among those who see the ideal society not in a far-away land but rather in a form of existence that is inaccessible to those without standing and indepen-

dent, economic means. She then turns to Gabriel Plattes's *Macaria* and Milton's *Areopagitica*, which offer challenging critiques of the power relations in mid-seventeenth-century England as well as those found in More's *Utopia*. Unlike More, however, they were writing in an age of inflamed political tension and ideological ferment, so these authors were engaging in debates about how a commonwealth should be organized that had the potential to be far more than theoretical exercises. Ultimately, for Hogan, Milton's "restless, mutable representation of truth may itself be understood as a testament to the emerging bourgeois ideology" present throughout his work (187).

And yet Hogan does not give Milton the last word. Instead, she uses the conclusion of her book to shine a light on the radical vision, and continued relevance, of Gerrard Winstanley. She insists that his *The Law of Freedom* "continues to possess a utopian function, educating our desire for a world without walls, classes, starvation, and violence" (190). She then notes how today's students who encounter early modern Utopian writings are inspired to look at contemporary issues in new ways, opening up the possibility that one path toward a brighter future would involve drawing inspiration from early modern texts rather than by following the guidance of "elites, and the capitalist state, to address the needs of the dispossessed, the jobless, the ill, the vagrant, and other precarious or marginalized populations" (191). Perhaps, after nearly four hundred years, Winstanley's time has finally arrived.

Hogan is skilled at interweaving her criticism with discussions of work by other scholars; very clearly, she sees her research as expanding upon and offering modifications to an established field of analysis. This approach makes for an erudite work that will benefit advanced students in Renaissance literature as well as established scholars. Compelling as her argument may be, Hogan's analysis at times rests needlessly heavily on sweeping generalities concerning the economy and society of early modern England. She is adept in discussing well-established, theoretical considerations of the emergence of capitalism—the works of Robert Brenner and Immanuel Wallerstein seem especially influential here—but much less comfortable engaging with the recent findings of scholars such as (among many others) Paul Griffiths, Alex Shepard, and Patrick Wallis, whose

research sheds valuable light on the lived experience of social and economic change at the level of the community. Similarly, although Hogan is careful to assert that “early English utopias, taken as a genre, narrate and reimagine the social and spatial transformations of the new world of emergent capitalism, though their politics, forms, and intentions are far from singular” (149), in her analysis non-material forms of human interaction, such as religion, are too readily assigned a subordinate station. It is very difficult to determine whether Hogan thinks anyone other than the highly literate authors she discusses had agency in early modern England.

It is certainly true that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries comprised, as the book’s subtitle suggests, an “age of transition,” but so, too, did the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A relative lack of concern to identify with greater precision the nature and timing of the transition in question casts a fuzzy shadow across the sharper contours of Hogan’s research. This is especially the case when it comes to the function of culture in the lives of the non-elite, who seem to huddle just beyond the reach of Hogan’s vision.

Andrea Walkden. *Private Lives Made Public: The Invention of Biography in Early Modern England*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2016. x + 206 pp. + 6 illus. \$70.00. Review by TANYA CALDWELL, GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY.

Typically, the invention of biography in early modern England is associated with James Boswell and Samuel Johnson in the eighteenth century. In this important study, *Private Lives Made Public*, the title reflecting her fundamental notion of “biographical populism” or the impact of published lives on revealing and shaping the individual as a social force, Andrea Walkden shifts the parameters for thinking about biography as a genre (14). Focusing on the political and social shifts engendered by the civil war and Interregnum, Walkden demonstrates the broader, less hagiographical processes at work already in the life writing of such as “John Milton, Izaak Walton, Samuel Clarke, John Gauden, Thomas Fuller, John Aubrey, Edward Hyde, the Earl of Clar-