

Men After War. Stephen McVeigh and Nicola Cooper, eds. New York: Routledge, 2013. \$125.00, paper, 207 pp.

Reviewed by Brenda Sanfilippo, University of California Santa Cruz

As I write this review, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs is involved in a scandal that has already caused its leader, General Eric Shinseki, to resign. This incident, which revolves around how veterans were not assigned care at VA hospitals, is not the first such since the Global War on Terror (GWOT) began in 2001. Reporters, political scientists, economists, and many others have revealed lengthy wait times, substandard conditions, unnavigable bureaucracy, and manipulations of diagnoses for veterans at military and veterans' hospitals around the country. Yet as the war in Iraq has ended and the war in Afghanistan draws down, more and more veterans will return home with visible and invisible war wounds, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injuries, in need of forms of care, treatment, and assistance to reintegrate into their communities.

This reintegration is often imbricated with notions of masculinity, as military service has long been considered a crucible for testing and proving manhood. Indeed, war's values are often coincident with what we associate as positive male characteristics: strength, fortitude, bravery, stoicism, honor, friendship, and unflinching sacrifice. Yet while war can make a man, war's wounds—physical and mental—can, in the words of Elaine Scarry, unmake him. Through the stigma attached to psychic trauma, as well as through the loss of limbs, eyesight, and, most significant in any discussion of manhood, male genitalia following explosions, the GWOT has presented a number of ways in which military masculinity has been tested during and after combat.

In 2013, Stephen McVeigh and Nicola Cooper collected a number of interdisciplinary and even multidisciplinary essays that examine how representations of military masculinity have both shaped and been shaped by their

contemporary moments. Their collection, *Men After War*, which belongs to the Routledge Research in Gender and History series, is organized chronologically and in thematic groupings that give some sense of how concepts of military masculinity operate through different spaces and times. Using varied analytical approaches and objects of study that include literature, film, disability studies, history, political science, and medicine, McVeigh and Cooper ask us to question what we think we know about men after war by looking at how ways of thinking about and treating veterans have changed throughout modern history. By de-naturalizing the treatment of veterans and constructions of military masculinity, these essays open up a space for conversations about the varied physiological, psychological, and affective consequences of war.

The book covers roughly 250 years of war and war representations in the United States, Great Britain, and Europe. The authors are primarily located at Swansea University in Wales, although they work in a variety of disciplines that engage with war. In the first cluster on the American Revolution, Caroline Nielsen and Daniel Blackie analyze representations of the returning “Old Soldier” as well as the handling of war disability in the early American republic. David Anderson describes the construction of the “Lost Cause” in the postbellum South as a nostalgic memory project that permitted both Southern pride and Northern reconciliation. Essays on modern industrial warfare begin with Julie Anderson’s analysis of how St. Dunstan’s, the premier institution for blind veterans after World War I, was able to recuperate these men’s masculinity through training and physical fitness, while Martina Salvante explores treatment of combat disability in Italy during this same period. Wendy Gagen’s work on the telegraph “company man” opens up the concept of the veteran to consider how masculinity operated among men fulfilling an essential wartime function without serving in combat.

Among the most interesting chapters, especially for those in literary studies, are those in the final section of the book. Sarah Trott argues that we can see the effects of World War I in “hardboiled” detective fiction by writers, and war veterans, such as Raymond Chandler. Essays by Ian Roberts and Sophie Smith consider film and fiction about the often-neglected Bosnian War and, like Gagen, expand the notion of the veteran to consider not just warriors but “peacekeepers.” Finally, Daisy Neijmann discusses the literary history of Icelandic occupation from the moment Britain occupied the island in 1940 until the United States removed troops in 2006. Neijmann’s essay in particular demonstrates the persistence of war beyond the time and space of combat.

While these essays cover a wide variety of topics and approaches, with special attention to the kinds of war stories that are often occluded or ignored, *Men After War* does not explain its selection process for why certain wars are included or excluded from the collection. More interestingly, it also omits the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. While the essays frequently try to understand masculine identity under pressure by deconstructing military “hegemonic masculinity” (2), none of the essays considers how the GWOT has changed notions of war as a proving ground for men. In particular, the growing inclusion of women in a previously homosocial domain has added new pressures on military masculinity. Both the United States and Great Britain have recently decided to eliminate formal bans on women in ground combat, effectively recognizing that the changing weapons, tactics, and strategy of the GWOT have involved women in combat all along. Although several essays explore how women were culturally conscripted, so to speak, in reconstituting male masculinity, the collection temporally and thematically stops at the moment before large numbers of American and British men and women are placed in combat side by side. Perhaps it is still too soon to understand how the combat inclusion of women is changing military men and representations of military masculinity; nonetheless, ignoring the effects of the full integration of military men and women is surprising because the collection concludes with essays on the invisibility of rape in critical analysis of warfare. Considering the Pentagon’s own estimates on the extent of military sexual assault, these references to rape seem to only hint at a major concern in the political and civilian communities about men in and after war. Yet even as the composition of the fighting force changes, *Men After War’s* multiple approaches to trauma, disability, recuperation, and reintegration have broad appeal for readers in a variety of disciplines and anyone with an interest in how service members, male and female, are treated after combat ends.

These homecomings are increasingly marked by local and national news describing pandemic military suicide, homicide, sexual assault, domestic violence, alcohol and substance abuse, reckless driving, and other criminal behaviors. In light of reports about veterans as both perpetrators of violence and victims of governmental neglect, McVeigh and Cooper ask two critical questions that sum up the thinking behind their project: how does the state and larger society perceive these men when they return home? And who is responsible for their care? As the civilian community is becoming more and more geographically, experientially, psychologically, culturally, socially, and affectively distant from the military, these concerns seem to hit home only when a spectacular act of violence or neglect

occurs. McVeigh and Cooper do not suggest solutions to these problems for our present moment, but they offer a rich historical and cultural record of how states and societies have treated—or mistreated—men after war.

Wars cut across and through spaces, times, identities, and bodies; *Men After War* suggests the possibilities when scholars are willing to cut across their own disciplines. When that happens, we can see what war has always done to men. They come home heroes. They come home missing memories, ideals, or limbs. They come home in coffins. What is certain is they are coming home. How will we meet them when “after war” is now?

The Outpost: An Untold Story of American Valor. Jake Tapper. New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2012. \$29.99, hardcover, 673 pp.

Reviewed by Meaghan A. Kelly, University of Kansas

On a blistering July day at Combat Outpost Keating, nestled at the bottom of three mountains in the Kamdesh Valley of Nuristan Province in Afghanistan, Captain Robert Yllescas wrote home to his friends and family:

It's like a chess game. . . You have so many moves and options any one person can move. Now when we think of the game of chess we know the rules. . . imagine the game with no rules, you don't get to see the other person's move and he may move several times and you don't know and you play it in the dark. To top it all off the board can be turned around at any given time. That is what it is like out here and I have to crack the code and hope I have the right information to make the best decision. (359)

Jake Tapper's *The Outpost: An Untold Story of American Valor* catalogs this unique game of chess using a cross-genre approach that blends a journalistic, bipartisan tone with visceral literary realism. Tapper transforms readers into critical thinkers and scrutinizing consumers of media as he records the collective memory of the most dangerous and ill-advised counterinsurgency mission during the Afghanistan War.

Tapper's experience as a journalist and White House correspondent is immediately apparent in the structure of the text. It is divided into three books, each with a preliminary roll call provided: great care is taken to log every soldier's name, rank, and association before the narrative begins. The structure is the first piece of evidence that Tapper is able to blend his journalistic methodologies with engaging literary features. *The Outpost* participates in the epic tradition by dividing the text into three related but thematically distinct books that catalog the soldier-heroes' seemingly insurmountable journey through the synchronously hellish and beautiful landscape of Nuristan. In choosing this organizational strategy, Tapper connects his narrative and the epic poems that catalog the journeys of great warriors. The content, while primarily journalistic and mimetic of the straightforward realism championed by World War authors, rewrites the literary historiography of the soldiers' experiences by combining allusions to Alexander the

Great, whose conquests and war strategies were studied by the Outpost's namesake First Lieutenant Ben Keating, with modern day superheroes (CPT Alex Newsom was affectionately dubbed "Captain America" by his fellow soldiers). This is a fitting reflection of the Afghanistan War itself, as the American and Allied soldiers were equipped with modern warfare strategies and technologies, yet found themselves climbing the same terrain and encountering a similar enemy encountered by Alexander the Great and other imperial forces. Reminders of the nations that occupied the same territory and that were greeted with the quintessential guerrilla tactics of the terrorist organization subsidiaries are littered throughout the towns, their skeletons haunting the landscape and the American soldiers who happen upon them: "the shells of the Soviet personnel carriers were constant reminders of the historical determination of the enemy" (143). Some of the most fatiguing aspects of the text are the constant considerations of the Rules of Engagement by the American and Allied forces while the insurgents take advantage of their enemy's indecisiveness: American troops attempt to make the best and most ethically sound calls, during which the terrorist groups attack without discretion.

Indeed, the enemy fighters in Nuristan established an early system of fighting based in deceit and secrecy that maximized the shelter and difficult mountain-landscape and insured their survival against occupying forces; it is only logical that they would continue that style of combat for however long it retained its efficacy. This becomes particularly problematic to relay to readers when paired with the province's extreme isolation from the modern world: many soldiers reported having to explain to the villagers that they were not Soviet troops and that the USSR no longer existed. As the genre expectation is that the soldiers will be telling their stories using Tapper as a mouthpiece, one can anticipate a fairly ethnocentric and primitivized depiction of the Nuristani people, and understandably so: the soldiers offering their viewpoints must retain a clear delineation of good and bad, enemy and ally (though this is complicated by the sudden turn to counterinsurgency). Tapper is cognizant of this potential problem, particularly in a society in which consumers of media so readily adopt journalist and pundit opinions as their own. He mediates these potentially exoticizing observations by taking on the narrated I to give historical and cultural points of reference for the reader, a responsible and admirable demonstration of global mindfulness, and a consideration often absent from contemporary mainstream media. For example, First Lieutenant Ben Keating justifies his viewpoints by expressing his belief that "the insurgents the United States was battling in Afghanistan were evil; in Kandahar, when given a chance to kill the enemy, he was aggressive. He [Keating] thought of those allied

against his country as murderers and rapists, and he believed in the rightness of killing them”(148). While he is specifically speaking about the insurgents, who are clearly differentiated from the general village population, Tapper is aware that this may be received as a blanket statement for the Nuristani people as a whole. He takes literary and journalistic liberty in taking on Keating’s voice and thoughts, expressing that

he [Keating] was coming to recognize the humanity of the Afghan people. He enjoyed his interactions with the local populace, as when he shared tea with an elder who regaled him with stories about being a soldier in the 1960s and confided his hopes for the future for his four-year-old grandson. . . The Afghan people just would not stick their necks out far enough to side with the United States and their own government against the insurgency—and he didn’t blame them. Their reluctance was part of their DNA, after centuries of occupation by various powers. (148)

While the initial statement labeled the people rapists and murderers, Tapper is careful to demarcate the insurgents from the general population and re-humanize the village people as citizens who are operating under historical and cultural ideologies that are unfamiliar to the majority of the world.

Although these potentially problematic instances do occur within the text, they become fewer and farther in between as the soldiers’ stay at the valley outpost extends. In mirroring the governmental indecision regarding the war, the text brings contradictions to the forefront of the discussion, tracking the often uninformed and ill-advised governances from their institutional origins to their disastrous implications for soldiers who must carry those orders out on the ground. One of these contradictions was the initial denial of “nation-building” from President Bush that evolved into a full-blown counterinsurgency mission, complete with hiring village contractors to help build schools and establish clean water supplies for surrounding villages. Suddenly, “American Diplomat” was now a part of the job description.

Gaining the trust of the Nuristani people and the Afghan National Army was a continually exhausting process, particularly because the terrorist hold on the village permeated both the government and the landscape. Tapper casts the Hindu Kush mountain range as a co-conspirator, an additional enemy that was just as responsible for soldier casualties as the insurgent attacks. The soldiers became literate in the geography of Kamdesh only by exploring it by foot. Preparing for

missions was based almost solely in speculation. Often, when Close Air Support or Medevacs were called in during insurgent attacks, pilots could not even land their helicopters to assist the wounded or provide more supplies. Throughout the text, soldiers call in desperate pleas for help over all systems of communication; more often than not, that help never arrives. This particular obstacle, when encountered by severely underprepared troops, becomes the representational example of how government leadership indubitably failed its servicemen and women.

Tapper's ability to create a bond between the reader and the character-soldier compounds this notion of institutional failure. Each key character is introduced by giving background information on his life before the military and cataloging the trajectory of his career and personal life up to the present point. Within the span of a few pages, the reader feels they know and connect with the soldiers, understanding their innermost struggles and farthest reaching hopes. Then, in a literary mimesis of the brutality of war, the reader witnesses the gruesome deaths of these brave and determined men: they are taken from the world of the text just as quickly as they are introduced. The action continues, placing the reader in a position familiar to soldiers: there is no time for grief or mourning, as combat does not stop for casualties. If the soldiers are living in the hell of Nuristan, their families and loved ones are perpetually existing in purgatory, unaware if their soldiers are traveling through an inferno or reveling in the salvation of success. Just as Tapper creates a connection between the reader and the soldier, the text often travels back to the home front, illustrating the agonizing uncertainty experienced by those the soldiers left behind in the States. By creating these emotional bonds between the reader and the soldier-characters and their families, the insensitivity and perceived abandonment by the US Government increases exponentially. One of the most resounding instances of this is when Captain Robert Yllescas is mortally wounded in the field, and Tapper catalogs his journey from Afghanistan back to the United States, living through multiple surgeries and drug-induced comas in an attempt to save his life. President George W. Bush visited Dena while Yllescas was still comatose, mustering up tears and offering a verbal apology. After this particular episode, one cannot but help feel like they have just bore witness to a grave injustice: Robert Yllescas gave his life for his nation, and President Bush gave his family a teary apology and a signed baseball cap alongside a platitude from the war that was given more time, money, and supplies: three things that would have greatly increased Yllescas's chances of surviving deployment in the first place. This juxtaposition, and many others like it, reiterates the deep chasm between governmental decision makers and the troops on the ground, leaving the reader unsettled and deeply disturbed.

Dena Yllescas is one of a handful of female significant others profiled, and it is clear that the author wants to emphasize the importance of home-front support in regards to the success of deployed soldiers. However, one must be critical of the lack of female soldier-heroines within the text. Though a few female soldiers are included, Specialist Jessica Saenz, a human-intelligence collector, and an unnamed Apache helicopter pilot, the accounts with which they are associated are disappointingly brief and teeter on the edge of belittlement. Saenz appears in the text during a time intel on village life and politics is being gathered. She is described as collecting intel from the village people, and because of her gender, the women try to offer her their children to raise in the United States. One cannot help but notice the anecdote's steadfast conformity to heteronormative gender roles, downplaying her abilities from a militaristic standpoint and bringing her gender to the forefront of the conversation. The other accounts of female soldiers follow suit. To compound this problematic pattern, Outpost Keating's resident female dog, Cali, is given substantially more page space and credit for protecting and serving the men before she is promptly shot in the head for aggression toward a Nuristani citizen.

The final impression offered to readers regarding the soldiers of 3-71 Cavalry and the supporting battalions is a follow-up on Ed Faulkner, Jr., a Specialist who was deeply entrenched in a drug addiction and dead-end lifestyle before joining the military. Although Faulkner's story prior to enlistment is not considered unique, the severity of his Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder makes him a representational figure upon which to conclude the narrative. Rather than encouraging the young Specialist to focus on his physical and emotional well being during his recovery time, Faulkner encountered pressure from his commanding officers to re-enlist; when that pressure was met with resistance, the prodding encouragement turned to humiliation and emasculation. Faulkner fell deeper into his untreated PTSD, and soon returned to the sanctuary of his drug addiction. Tapper's decision to end the account on this note thrusts the issue to the forefront of the reader's mind, and asks them to consider the perturbing pattern that has so readily arose within the text: the institution that provides them honor and adoration is the same institution that, without reservation, further hinders their success in the field and on the home front to the point where some have been completely abandoned by the brotherhood that once saved their lives. Ed Faulkner had once seen the military as his safe haven, and was devastated when it suddenly drove him back into the psychological inferno of addiction and PTSD.

The Outpost is a skillfully written text that is accessible to a broad audience: those familiar with the Afghanistan War or military efforts in general will be

impressed with the author's attention to detail, and a more general reader will find it informative, engaging, and enlightening. With incredible journalistic detail and literary effect, Tapper allows the reader to revel in awe of both the skill of our armed forces and the ineptitude of our governing figures, turning each consumer of his text into a critical consumer of media. However, the author has created a double-edged sword, as there is a glaringly obvious lack of female soldier-heroines in the text. Though Tapper is complicit in this discriminatory pattern of the public-facing military image, he remains highly determined to impart a global consciousness on his readers and challenge the powerful ideology that is American exceptionalism. The concerns of Keating's kin and loved ones revolve around the memorialization that is naming a temporary Outpost after a fallen comrade, but the publication of *The Outpost* insures that the men killed in action will only die one death: their names will be uttered in the minds and mouths of every reader who encounters this text, keeping their memories and legacies alive.

Watching War. Jan Mieszkowski. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012. \$24.95, paper, 246 pp.

Reviewed by Meaghan A. Kelly, University of Kansas

Jan Mieszkowski's *Watching War* is an impressive product of interdisciplinary research methodologies: by drawing from a variety of theorists, writers, journalists, and photographers, Mieszkowski provides a comprehensive discussion of the spectacle of war and the evolution of the onlooker-participant dynamic. Starting from the Napoleonic era, which primarily relied on narrative-based testimonies of war, and moving to our current state of war-saturated media coverage, Mieszkowski attempts to answer the following questions: in what ways have people attempted to make sense of the chaos of war, and are we any closer to fully understanding the experience of battle? While it becomes clear over the course of the text that there is no single answer to these questions, *Watching War* provides a fascinating journey through the theoretical, artistic, and social explanations for why people attempt to order the inherent chaos of military conflict.

The text is divided into four chapters that reflect different modes used to document and discuss war: 1. "How to Tell a War Story," 2. "The Witness Under Fire," 3. "Looking at the Dead," and 4. "Visions of Total War." Additionally, these chapters are book-ended with an efficient introduction and conclusion. The introduction is a workhorse, providing the historical and theoretical questions that necessitate the text's production. Mieszkowski believes that the Napoleonic construction of war, which he refers to as the Napoleonic War Imaginary, sets the precedent for all future discussions of battle by those outside of the war machine itself. This schema is one of a fantastical "total gaze" (9): the concept that war can be contained and seen from a holistic viewpoint, allowing the bystander to have a well-rounded understanding of the strategy behind each party's movements that lead to a rational conclusion. This troubled many of Napoleon's contemporaries, such as Wordsworth and Coleridge, who believed that the bystanders-as-consumers and war-as-product duality was a dangerous one, as it made mass violence commonplace, desensitizing those who viewed it and those who participated in it. One can make the indisputable claim that those concerns remain in the twenty-first century.

The first chapter delves head first into the Napoleonic ideology of war: an epic mythos that claims the battlefield is one where history is definitively won or lost, where war comes to its logical ends of victory and defeat. Of course, this is an incredibly illusory paradigm, yet is one that has been difficult for humankind to leave behind: over and over again, writers, painters, journalists, photographers, and

filmmakers attempt to experience the truth and clarity of participating in war, only to discover that it is difficult to even see anything due to the dense smoke of artillery fire and the unpredictable weather conditions. Drawing on influential war theories like Hobbes's bifurcation of actants and events and Rousseau's view that war is inherently misrepresentational, Mieszkowski discusses the foundational tension that "war demands to be explained but wreaks havoc with any teleological model of history; war demands to be viewed but is distinguished from random violence by the difference between what it is and what it offers to be seen" (39). From this, the text presents a variety of well-known military participants and bystanders who attempted to overcome this tension and make sense of war. Particularly engaging is the author's discussion of Victor Hugo's depiction of the battle of Waterloo in *Les Misérables*. Working from the inherent unknowability of war established by the author in the introduction, the discussion meets its conclusion that "Hugo's *Les Misérables* narrates the Battle of Waterloo only by exposing the limitations of traditional third-person battle narratives, confirming Rousseau's fears about the futility of studying individual clashes of troops" (55). This example is illustrative of Mieszkowski's ability to combine highly theoretical texts like that of Hobbes and Rousseau with accessible, well-known cultural staples like *Les Misérables*, which allows the reader multiple points in which to access Mieszkowski's argument.

This pattern of accessibility is continued in Chapter Two, which analogizes the war spectacle to that of a theatrical production: the soldiers and commanders as the actors, the civilians and media as the audience. Just as a drama's meaning is shaped and altered by the audience, so goes the dynamic of the war participant and onlooker. Mieszkowski relies heavily on Carl von Clausewitz's theories of combat staging, which discuss the binaristic functions of the battlefield: first as a visual representation of order and hierarchy, then as evidence for war's wholly incomprehensible nature. While early war testimony focused on narrative and artistic representations of war, Clausewitz believed that the reader/viewer struggled to negotiate the two tendencies, as the writer's and painter's struggle to do the same was apparent in their depictions. Mieszkowski chooses to incorporate two first-hand accounts, attempts to place the reader in the middle of the battle scene, that have counterproductive (and often somewhat humorous) results: Fabrice from Stendahl's *Charterhouse of Parma* is a particularly illustrative figure, who often has to ask if he is witnessing a real battle rather than a wayward skirmish, and explains that military terminology like "under fire" simply means a time where you cannot see anything. With further examples like the figure of Fabrice (including a fascinating discussion of panoramas), it becomes clear that in any war narrative, written or painted, there is always something missing, something left out

of view and therefore unattainably desirable to the viewer; but, as reliable as the unknowability of war, we will never stop trying to see it.

The advent of photography ushered in a new, yet still illusory, era of attempting to portray the entire truth—the objective and knowable facts of war and death. Chapter Three, “Looking at the Dead,” discusses the use of photography in constructing the historiography of war and brings the discussion to a modern focus. Here the discussion connects back to the foundational construction of battles and war histories from the Napoleonic period: rather than providing an objective and untampered truth, photographs of active and fallen soldiers often perpetuate an abstract mythology of conflict, counterproductively distancing viewers from the facts. It is at this point in the text where the writing can tend toward the convoluted: there are so many connections between contemporary media practices and the earliest depictions of war that the author quickly weaves in and out of time periods and theorists within single paragraphs, a difficult terrain for readers new to the discourse to navigate. However, these transcendent connections are so compelling that one easily forgives this potentially alienating tendency. For example, Mieszkowski’s analysis of the mythological storyline and obfuscating manipulation of Alexander Gardner’s 1863 *Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter* may be one of a Civil War era photograph, but its applicability to modern photographs like Eddie Adams’s 1963 *Saigon Execution* is undeniable: using a medium that assumes an objective and factual basis is only an assumption and not reflective of the fact that photographs, like written and painted narratives, are subjective constructions. One would be remiss to receive these constructions at face value without considering the interpretive and artistic filter through which they are being presented.

The paradoxical effects of attempting to provide an objective, rational view of war and battle is epitomized in total war theory, which is the focus on Chapter Four, “Visions of Total War.” The chapter opens with a cartoon of high military officials imagining each move and countermove of the enemy, charting their progress and their potential direction in order to theorize their own plans of assault. According to Mieszkowski, this objectification of the soldier, as a pawn in an elaborate game of strategy, inevitably leads to a de-sanctification of human life. In total war, the unknown soldier is unknown from the moment he puts on his uniform, far before his body is unrecognizably mutilated and placed in a white-washed cemetery. Mieszkowski uses a lesser-known novel by William Faulkner, *A Fable*, to analyze the effects of total war on the individual soldier and in turn what that means for the public’s conception of the soldier. The mere fact that tombs are made in order to memorialize the unknown, and in broader terms memorialize the

pervasiveness of modern battle, reveals that “the most pernicious ‘achievement’ of total war may therefore be the way that it hinders the ability of any individual agent to be representative of agency as such” (165). Mieszkowski ends the chapter with a powerful discussion of total war as not only disallowing onlookers to distinguish one individual soldier from the other, but as refusing any participants, bystanders or active fighters, any type of subjectivity or self-identification that is divorced from the all-encompassing total war machine.

The text concludes on a contemporary note, addressing the modern concern predicted by Coleridge and Wordsworth, who Mieszkowski includes in the introduction: will the over-saturation of death and gore in the media make the public desensitized and complacent in regards the injustices that cause war? With the advent of smartphones and portable technologies, almost anyone can have a safe first-person experience of battle if they have access to a computer or a video game console. In fact, many of these technologies are being used to simulate war experiences in military training, further distancing the enactor from the act, the killer and the killed. Jan Mieszkowski’s *Watching War* is an essential text for any interdisciplinary scholar interested in conflict, politics, and media, both in their historical and current iterations. Not only does this text provide a deft analysis of the evolutionary mediums of viewing war and the consistent audience desire to make order out of chaos, it also stands as an impressive example of interdisciplinary research methodologies and the power of connecting academic and popular cultural resources for a comprehensive discussion with multiple pathways for access. I highly recommend this text for any burgeoning interdisciplinary scholar, not only for the wealth of knowledge it provides a topic that transcends time, politics, and culture, but also for its sophisticated example of interdisciplinary discourse.

Glorious Misadventures: Nikolai Rezanov and the Dream of a Russian America. Owen Matthews. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013, \$28.00, hardcover, 400 pp.

Reviewed by Kristine Swain, United States Air Force Academy

Americans celebrate and often romanticize the Lewis and Clark expedition that followed the US acquisition of western lands from the French. After traveling across the US and wintering near the Columbia River in what is present day Oregon, Lewis and Clark set eastward for their return journey. Russians recall a very different expedition, which ironically passed within five miles of Lewis and Clark unaware of each other's presence. In March 1806, the Russian Nikolai Rezanov and his crew of malnourished, sick and ill-humored Russians sailed uncertainly into San Francisco Bay desperate for supplies from the newest and northernmost Spanish outpost. The Russians had already laid claim and established a toehold in present-day Alaska. Although the bounty of fur had enriched the Russian American Company, the settlements themselves were poorly administered and barely scabbled out an existence with the limited resources and hostile native peoples. Nikolai Rezanov, however, was a man with a vision to transform Russia's position in the New World to one of a major player and major benefactor of the riches available. Sailing into the Bay with his exhausted crew and his dress uniform hanging off his gaunt frame, Nikolai discovered a prosperous and efficiently administered Spanish outpost and the beautiful daughter of the Spanish commandante to whom he would soon betroth.

Owen Matthews' *Glorious Misadventures* traces Rezanov's rise from a mediocre military officer to a successful leader of the Russian American Company (RAC) and appointment as a royal chamberlain for the first Russian round-the-world expedition. It then follows Rezanov's subsequent travails as his mission to open trade with the Japanese fails utterly, his consternation with the dismal state of affairs in Russia's American colonies, and his desperate mission to the Spanish port of San Francisco seeking badly needed supplies and an opening for Spanish-Russian trade. Filled with ardor for his strategic vision of Russian dominance from Alaska through to present day California, Rezanov died on his return journey to St Petersburg, never able to petition the Tsar for a post as Ambassador to Spain facilitating his return to the New World and his nuptials to the lovely Conchita.

Matthews is well placed for this, his second book on Russian history. In 2008, he published the critically acclaimed *Stalin's Children*. He studied Modern History at Oxford University, served as a correspondent in Bosnia and Moscow and later became *Newsweek's* Moscow Bureau Chief. He currently is a contributing editor to *Newsweek* residing both in Moscow and Istanbul. Having Russian family ties and spending time in his youth visiting Russia in the waning days of the Soviet Union, Matthews is clearly sympathetic to Rezanov's plight as a man with a vision to transform Russia into a great nation whose efforts are constantly thwarted by political realities and short-sighted vision amongst Russia's leaders. Although Matthews does not overtly compare Rezanov's travails to modern-day conundrums, it is not a far stretch to discern a commentary on Russia's current failings as a state mired in authoritarian leadership plagued with poor decision making. Matthews' almost wistful tone towards the end of the book draws the reader to the conclusion that the Russia that might have been, if the opportunities and riches of the New World had been theirs, would be a far better place than today's Russia.

This well-researched and documented work provides the reader with a detailed, chronological narrative—equally fascinating to both the scholarly and non-scholarly reader. Some readers will welcome Matthews' provision of detailed historical background while others might find that meandering into details challenges the continuity of his narrative on Rezanov. For example, in his chapter entitled "The Final Frontier," Matthews provides a detailed history of the settlement of Siberia. Although interesting and relevant to the book, the reader might find the level of detail distracting from the main narrative. Although interesting, his meanderings through related topics sometimes leads the reader a bit far from the narrative and interrupts the flow of material.

Matthews' prologue and introduction do aptly set the scene for Rezanov's quest to establish a well-ordered company (modeled on the British East India Company) that would take on the critical task of bringing Pacific America under the Russian crown. Rezanov believed that failure to embrace such a momentous opportunity would be a "crime against posterity" (10). Although he begins his book with the scene of Rezanov's engagement to Conchita at the Spanish San Francisco Mission, Matthews will disappoint those looking forward to a detailed accounting of this romantic liaison, as it is largely covered only in the final chapters of the book. However, the author does successfully trace the ill-fated struggle of our flawed hero's dream of a successful and powerful Russian hold in the New World.

Rezanov's imperial vision of successful Russian colonization, did, in the early 1800s seem a real possibility. Sadly for Russia, this dream fizzled and died,

overcome by subsequent political decisions. Russia's leaders remained focused elsewhere and never prioritized the acquisition of America. Rezanov, however, despite his many failings, did overcome his conservative, obsequious beginnings to become a more independent-minded thinker. His earlier belief that the company should use criminals who would be under tight control of their colonial masters dramatically reversed upon observation of the economic prosperity and ambition of the Spanish settlers. His more enlightened view was that paid property owners allowed to embrace a capitalist spirit created a prosperous society that could enrich and strengthen the motherland. He made numerous suggestions to improve administration and earning potential for Russia's Alaskan colonies which were duly noted and subsequently ignored.

Rezanov did leave behind a reasonable volume of official correspondence, but at times, Matthews must often speculate on Rezanov's true feelings. In his letters back to St Petersburg, Rezanov portrays his relationship with Conchita as merely advancing Russia's interests. Matthews derives from his tone a very likely real affection. Matthews balances his narrative with accounts from other members of Rezanov's expeditions. These accounts are largely unfavorable pointing out Rezanov's flaws: arrogant, overbearing, prone to depression, and erratic behavior. Matthews does highlight the more colorful failings among Rezanov's associates. He describes a Lt Count Fyodor Ivanovich Tolstoy, first cousin of Fyodor Tolstoy the painter, with the following words, "of all the querulous, arrogant drunks in this, most mismatched of ship's companies, Tolstoy was to be the most dangerous and disruptive" (144). Another member of the crew, Fourth Lieutenant and Map Maker Herman Ludwig von Lowerstern bemoaned the crew's condition during the crossing of the North Sea pointing out "the moaning and throwing up is endless"(147).

Matthews brings closure to his narrative with a detailed epilogue addressing Russia America, Rezanov's friends and enemies, Conchita and the legend of Rezanov and Conchita. After Rezanov's death, the RAC did expand south as far as Fort Ross (in present-day Sonoma County, California), but it was never prosperous. Rezanov had foreseen that only by expanding beyond the fur trade would the RAC remain viable but such vision was wasted and the company's fortunes began to decline after 1802. After all Rezanov's efforts to cultivate a relationship with the Spanish, in an ironic twist, Mexico offered in 1827 to allow the RAC to claim further parts of California in exchange for recognizing the Mexican Republic. The reactionary Tsar Nicolas I, in power at the time, refused. In 1825, the RAC became tainted with treason when many of its associates participated in the Decembrist

Revolt. The RAC provided these young men with world travel and exposure leading to a desire for change and the willpower to take action. Unfortunately for them and the RAC, the Decembrist Revolt failed and ushered in a more oppressive, conservative atmosphere in Russia.

While the US nurtured and thrived due to their imperial ambitions in Pacific, Russia's ambitions did not bring similar prosperity. This book, true to the best Russian literature, is a tragedy. Rezanov died before securing the Tsar's support for his strategic vision, Conchita spent the remainder of her life pining and waiting in vain for the bridegroom who never returned, and Russia squandered an incredible opportunity which could have set the country on a vastly different and potentially more prosperous future.

Our Lives, Our Fortunes, and Our Sacred Honor: The Forging of American Independence, 1774-1776. Richard R. Beeman. New York: Basic Books, 2013. \$29.99, hardcover, 528 pp.

Reviewed by Mike Crane, United States Air Force Academy

“When in the course of human events ... We hold these truths to be self-evident...” I’m pretty sure the vast, vast majority of Americans who were here before attending the eighth grade have heard these words. I can say with full honesty that I pondered these words even before the eighth grade, to the degree that a child of that age can possibly ponder such things. And I can also say with a measure of certainty that I didn’t have a lot of answers to show for all that pre-adolescent pondering.

The late, great radio commentator, Paul Harvey, from time to time mentioned these phrases as part of a larger story, and always mentioned them as part of a Fourth of July broadcast, at least as far as I can recall. By the time I was old enough to hear these words on a car or truck radio while driving, they made a little more sense to me. At least I could say that the term “self-evident” meant something to me by the time I was old enough to drink *and* vote. And Mr. Harvey always added the part about “our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor,” which I had *not* heard back in the eighth (or even the eleventh) grade.

And now, all these years later, I understand about as fully as I ever will the real meaning of “our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.” And then I had the good fortune to pick up this book. The basic, skeletal concepts that I came to understand through life experience have been given flesh, blood, and human features. These stories are *real*, and one is tempted to say, “You couldn’t dream this stuff up.” For me, at least, the volume transported me to another time and place, almost as if these individuals were my contemporaries.

The Adamses, John and Samuel, are somewhat well known. John Hancock achieved a measure of immortality with his gigantic signature. But the other names are nowhere near as well known. Consider some of the other signatories: Robert Treat Paine, Thomas Cushing, and John Rutledge, for example. Even more to the point, many informed readers believe the vision that emerged from the Continental Congress, resulting ultimately in the Declaration of Independence, was uniform (or at least very nearly so) from the outset; nothing could be further from the truth. The colonies and their representatives each had their specific agendas and worldviews.

A large number of delegates were lawyers. That should come as no surprise, but a significant number, in a rather different situation from today, were merchants or other professionals. Some were fabulously wealthy by colonial standards of the time (the Rutledges sailed from Charleston to Philadelphia on their own ship), while others were of rather modest means. Delegates from the same colony didn't necessarily see the issues facing them eye to eye, either. That anything was accomplished at all seems, in retrospect, rather remarkable; no wonder some historians and other observers have labeled the outcome "the miracle of Philadelphia." But more importantly, from the reader's perspective, the real-life story is far more interesting, far more dramatic, than any fiction (and a note to readers who consider history a dry, dusty topic: I submit that such readers will find this book far from stereotypical). Indeed, the old saying fits: truth is stranger than fiction. And, as a result, far more interesting.

The early stages of the Congress demanded attention to such mundane things as where to meet. At the same time, larger questions pressed in the delegates' minds: what *was* the goal of the Congress? What were they seeking? Sam Adams and Patrick Henry come immediately to mind on one hand, inasmuch as they agitated for sovereignty from the earliest stages. Others, such as George Washington were enigmatic (Washington had served in the Virginia legislature, the House of Burgesses, for sixteen years, and though his outward demeanor was always calm and cool, he quietly supported—and fully—the firebrand Henry). George Mason, also of the Virginia delegation, staunchly opposed the slave trade and attempted to see it ended by introducing a resolution for that specific purpose.

Perhaps most interesting: the delegates from New York and Pennsylvania, in stark contrast to Adams, Henry, and the enigmatic Washington, sought reconciliation. That is, they desired to secure their rights as Englishmen, *under the British Crown*. This view was far more prevalent in 1774 than most informed readers realize. And the story of how that all changed is superbly covered in this volume.

Richard R. Beeman is a senior faculty member at the University of Pennsylvania, where he holds the John Welsh Centennial Professor of history chair. His scholarship spans more than forty years, having completed his Ph.D. in 1968. Among his other works are *Plain Honest Men: The Making of the American Constitution* and *Patrick Henry: A Biography*. Beeman is not only qualified to write this book; indeed, he is in his element.

For years, historians have been trained to seek bias in historical works, not to discredit those works or the writers as such, but to orient them in historiography. If Beeman has a bias in this work, it is toward the Constitution; to borrow shamefully

from Patrick Henry, if this be bias, let us make the most of it. Beeman clearly loves his subject, and that is a good thing; indeed, it is a Good Thing. As one who has sworn to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States on more than one occasion, I have a difficult time seeing this as bias in more literal terms.

In recent years (about three decades, actually; only to a historian could thirty years be termed “recent”), historiography has been oriented toward race, class, and gender. The lion’s share of academic scholarship during that period has followed that trope. This book does not. “It may be too bad that dead white European males have played so large a role in shaping our culture. But that’s the way it is,” historian Arthur Schlesinger famously wrote in *The Disuniting of America*, “You can’t erase history.” Beeman clearly tells a story that could be considered unwelcome in some circles. Fortunately, he has told the story.

Radio commentator Paul Harvey opined frequently during his on-air career that the United States was fortunate to have had what he termed “an excess of leadership” in this period. It would be difficult to read this book and not reach the same conclusion.

And most importantly, in that excess of leadership, one encounters a few rich men who were bankrupted, and even a few who died as a result of their signature. One encounters a group of men who risked, in Benjamin Franklin’s words, “hanging together.” And Franklin, when he said “hang,” he meant “by the neck until dead.” These leaders risked everything for the sake of future generations, and some of them lost their individual gamble. I don’t know that I would have been that brave, had I lived all those years ago and been faced with such a decision. You couldn’t dream this stuff up...

Gordon Wood, Professor of History Emeritus at Brown University, described the work as, “A solid and lucid account of the momentous years leading up to the Revolution by one of early America’s expert historians. [T]he story of those two years ... has never been better told.” Indeed.

The *Federal Lawyer* stated, “Richard Beeman’s account of the movement to American independence is gripping, even if the reader knows the subject well and has no doubt as to how it ends....We are fortunate to have as readable and cogent account of it as *Our Lives, Our Fortunes and Our Sacred Honor*.” I could not say it better myself. Highly recommended.

Engineers of Victory: The Problem Solvers Who Turned the Tide in the Second World War. Paul Kennedy. New York: Random House, 2013.
\$30.00, hardcover, 436 pp.

Reviewed by Jason McClure, United States Air Force Academy

Perhaps no event in world history has been more thoroughly covered than the Second World War. In addressing this most destructive event, authors tend to approach the conflict from two angles. The first is from the perspective of high-level leadership: the government leaders and senior military commanders who made the decisions that led to victory or defeat. The second is to present the conflict from the perspective of the individual: the airmen, soldiers, sailors, and citizens who lived through this most trying period. But between the individual stories and the grand gestures is the level of those who translated leadership guidance into success, the “middlemen.” Paul Kennedy describes this group as engineers, defined loosely as those who carry “through an enterprise through skillful art and contrivance.” These engineers represent the focus of *Engineers of Victory*.

Kennedy’s analysis addresses the period from the end of 1942 until the summer of 1944 as the vital and deciding period of the entire war. During these pivotal months, the onus was on the Allied powers to identify and execute measures to solve five problems that were necessary to ultimate victory. The first problem to solve, moving supplies across the Atlantic Ocean, was a daunting yet necessary task requiring a rapid and effective solution to keep the Allied war effort afloat. Secondly, the Allies needed to secure command of the skies over Europe as a precondition to an invasion of Western Europe, but solving this problem would cost the British and American bomber forces hundreds of thousands of lives before a solution was realized. Thirdly, the Allies needed to stop the German blitzkrieg which had ravaged Europe since 1939. In the Pacific Theater, overcoming the “tyranny of distance” required the US to develop a massive combat and logistical infrastructure to carry the war from the Hawaiian Islands to the Japanese homeland. And lastly, moving that infrastructure forward required the US to develop the capability to assault heavily-defended coastlines from the sea, which many military theorists had deemed impossible following the failure at Gallipoli in the First World War. Kennedy’s analysis is broad, considering the economic, political, geographic, strategic, operational, and tactical considerations that played into the resolution of these five major problem sets, carrying the Allies to ultimate victory.

Among the most intriguing elements of Kennedy’s work is that he intentionally avoids identifying solutions to the above problems as silver bullets. All too often, scholars tend to assess developments such as the arrival of the T-34 tank

on the Eastern Front as singularly decisive elements to victory. Kennedy does a thorough job of dismissing such notions by reminding the reader that war is a complicated and chaotic affair, and platforms such as the T-34 are but cogs in a much larger machine. The T-34 certainly played an influential role in Soviet success as an effective military machine by 1945. But *Engineers of Victory* points out that the T-34 enabled the Soviets to conduct warfare in a manner that had been developed during the interwar years, and was refined through the crucible of war. The refinements in both doctrine and machine (the initial T-34 performed quite poorly) were the result of “middlemen,” such as Soviet factory managers and technicians who implemented gradual changes, making the Soviet Army of 1944 a nearly unstoppable force. That force, when combined with hundreds of thousands of American trucks provided through the Lend-Lease Act, was able to execute the “deep battle” doctrine envisioned by Mikhail Tukachevsky in the late 1920s, pushing the *Wehrmacht* from the Caucasus to Berlin.

Another dimension Kennedy addresses is the perception of inevitability. From the twenty-first century, it is easy to fall into the tendency of viewing the outcome of the Second World War as inevitable; one clear example of this tendency is examined through the arrival of the P-51 Mustang in the skies over Western Europe in 1943. The introduction of the P-51 is typically viewed as the key ingredient to Allied success in the Combined Bomber Offensive. Its arrival as a long-range escort enabled the Anglo-American bomber offensive to turn the tide of the costly war of attrition initiated in 1941, permitting the Allies to achieve aerial supremacy over Western Europe by May 1944. But the Mustang was not initially developed as an air superiority fighter, and it was only through the recognition and persistence of a handful of men that it was mated with the Rolls-Royce Merlin engine to become the most dominant fighter of the Second World War. Initially marketed to the British as a ground attack fighter by North American Aviation, it took the insight of RAF test pilot Ronnie Harker to recognize that the aerodynamically superior Mustang was simply underpowered. Once the Merlin 61 engine was substituted for the factory installed Allison, the P-51 outperformed all other aircraft. But the Merlin 61 engine was in high demand by RAF Fighter and Bomber Commands, and the capacity of British industry to meet demand was already overstretched. The American military-industrial complex was not interested in producing the Merlin engine, resulting in a nearly insurmountable obstacle to mass-production and fielding. It took pressure exerted by a handful of well-placed Americans at the middle level of the US war effort such as Assistant Secretary for Air Robert Lovett, Assistant Air Attaché to England Thomas Hitchcock, and Battle of Britain veteran

Major Donald Blakeslee, to break the logjam and bring the Merlin powered Mustang into full production. Again avoiding silver-bullet arguments, Kennedy demonstrates that leadership was essential to the equation as well. Taking command of 8th Air Force in January 1944, Lt Gen James Doolittle's insistence on the propagation of the Mustang in the European Theater and release of fighters from tight formation escort to broad sweeps allowed Allied forces to maximize their advantages and destroy the *Luftwaffe*. Thus, Kennedy demonstrates how the achievement of command of the air was the cumulative result of the actions of several "engineers" and insightful leaders throughout the process rather than an inevitable technological development.

Wars are not won and lost by the Roosevelts, Churchills, and Stalins of history. Senior leaders identify a path to follow, wave their arms, and magic happens. Historians do not often examine the inner-workings of that magic, because doing so does not present the most compelling story. But these inner-workings are absolutely essential to understanding how victory was achieved. In *Engineers of Victory*, Paul Kennedy has demonstrated conclusively that the middlemen, staff officers, low-level public officials, and representatives from the private enterprise linked leadership vision with front-line warriors to solve the major fundamental problems the Allies faced in the decisive months of the Second World War. In so doing, Kennedy has broadened our understanding of the term engineer beyond the technical domains, encompassing a broad swath of fields vital to ultimate victory.

These engineers were able to recognize opportunities for improvement and seize the moment to produce the methods and systems which overcame the Axis powers. Victory was not inevitable, nor was it achieved because of the arrival of some panacea which turned the tide. It was the sum of a host of interdependent actions aimed at achieving the same broad goals, a lesson that our nation would do well to remember as we develop future generations of "engineers" in a society that increasingly emphasizes science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) at the expense of the humanities and social sciences. Perhaps a broader approach would serve our nation well in the future.

The Elizabethans. A.N. Wilson. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011. \$30, hardcover, 432 pp.

Reviewed by Andrea Trocha-Van Nort, United States Air Force Academy

Historian John Lukacs has suggested that only writers of fiction pen memorable monographs: A.N. Wilson's *The Elizabethans* would confirm the affirmation. His detailed portraits of key figures of the period are compelling—Elizabeth, of course, but also Raleigh, Walsingham, Burghley, Leicester, Mary Stuart, Drake, Sidney, and Gascoigne, as well as others less well known but equally brilliantly rendered. With each chapter, Wilson explores this monumental period through their eyes and experiences.

Wilson's most forceful claim that the world created by the Elizabethans did not come to a close until our times permeates each chapter. His book in fact connects the inspiration of Elizabeth's reign and her times to the modern world most convincingly and comprehensively. "We have lived to see the Elizabethan world come to an end" begins the preface (1); only by marking its close, suggests the author, can we accurately gauge its historical value and implications.

Wilson's research remains solidly anchored in the age in question, though regular references are made to the long-lasting effects of events. Interestingly, the book begins with a thorough discussion of the "Irish difficulty," which isn't a frequent prelude to Elizabethan history, though indeed its undercurrents permeate Tudor history. Wilson builds an historical view of Ireland, dating from Henry VIII to shortly after Elizabeth's reign, outlining the major setbacks for the Irish from Henry's Reformation tactics to the Irish "wild man" narratives that would proliferate later in the century. Wilson's point of entry to the monograph is therefore a most unflattering one for the Tudors, but it constructs the foundation for the pre-colonial mindset that had begun to evolve. This early chapter prepares the reader for "The New World" chapter that follows, as the writer begins to focus more closely on the expected, such as the Reformation, the new learning, and, interestingly, the life and library of the Queen's astrologer, Dr. John Dee. Attention is also paid to the difficulty of acting as female regent post-John Knox. As proof of the misogynistic *air du temps*, Wilson quotes Deputy Sir John Perrot: "Silly woman, now she shall not curb me, she shall not rule me now...to serve a base bastard piss kitchen woman" (9). Elizabeth, Wilson points out, was smart enough

to take Knox's criticism of women monarchs intelligently; only by marrying would she resign power over England to a foreign prince, yet an unmarried, unrivaled Elizabeth would deliver that power unto herself (38).

Parts Two and Three of the book focus on the 1570s and 1580s, respectively. Effects felt in England from the major events of the 1570s, especially the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, are approached with careful attention to detail regarding the complicated events themselves, but also with close consideration of the people involved, their motivations and brutal machinations. Sir Phillip Sidney's presence in Paris, in Walsingham's ambassador's residence on the days of the massacre, becomes Wilson's justification to write of the personal, of Sidney's friends dragged from the safety of their homes and violently murdered in the streets. Ramifications of the event are related by another Englishman, Timothy Bright, who was also at the embassy in Paris and who would later produce a shortened version of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Wilson notes, "he was one of the many Englishmen who had reason to regard Foxe's book—ghoulish as it may seem to modern taste—to be no more than an accurate account of the Counter-Reformation, red in tooth and claw" (111). The perspective Wilson provides in each of these historical reckonings is masterful; one gains a sense of the scope of the tragedy that was St. Bartholomew's Day, and of the absolute perfidy and barbarity of its perpetrators.

For the present reader, Wilson's discussion of the 1580s is among the very best available today. He debunks views by historians and commentators that make light of the Spanish Armada, suggesting that we have been long conditioned to see the event through the climax only—the providential (or if one is Spanish, disastrous) storm—a view which obscures the fear that seized England over the very real threat of the execution of their captured queen and their country swiftly and violently returning to Catholicism. The author also astutely links the attack to the Spaniards' anger over the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, the captivating lynchpin in Phillip's designs to take possession of England. Mary was a devoted correspondent of Phillip II, even during her captivity: indeed, her letters to the Spanish monarch were found concealed in beer barrels (232). When referring to the quatercentenary of the Armada, Wilson asserts that "if the Armada's religious aspect made it arcane in 1988, its political importance seemed to have been swept away by history" (245). He mentions the high alert in England that is often neglected: "trenches were dug across fields. Forts were repaired. Beacons were constructed at strategic points all down the coast from the lizard to Kent, and up from hillside to hillside throughout the island, to the Midlands, to Nottingham, to Durham, to York" (251). The author strives to make this battle personal: the captains of the immense Spanish ships,

their aristocratic family histories, descriptions of the young and impressed aboard who hadn't much of a choice in the matter, the incredible losses (20,000 of the 30,000 who set sail (259)), and the horrific conditions of the venture all bear out the cruel and incalculable forfeiture of human dignity and human life for the Spaniards.

Part Four covers the close of Elizabeth's reign, looking forward to the American adventures to follow. Wilson praises the clairvoyance of those of "Homeric status" (340) who could grasp the real stakes of holding lands in the new world, stakes beyond the obvious and immediate financial gains. "We know what the American future held, which makes the early colonization of Roanoke, and the far-sighted optimism of Raleigh and Hakluyt, all the more extraordinary to contemplate" (340). Part Four returns the reader to the Irish crisis, to Essex's desertion and rebellion, Elizabeth's resultant bitterness, and the quiet close of her life. Wilson concludes with parallel reflections from *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*, the last two of Shakespeare's tragedies staged during Elizabeth's lifetime. On *Hamlet's* capturing the last years of Elizabeth's reign he writes:

...into this reworking of a popular piece of theatrical hackwork he poured everything—the national identity-crisis, as London awaited the death of one monarch and the arrival of another; the mood of public disillusion as Elizabeth's reign ended; the doubts and anxieties that thoughtful men and women felt about politics, religion and philosophy. (367)

Wilson notes that Hamlet speaks so effectively to Elizabethan concerns and on so many levels that one is like to forget that the play is set in Denmark. To this effect, the author reminds the reader that "Elsie" was a common nickname for Elizabeth, and thus all that happens in Elsinore reflects Elizabeth's realm (370). "Elizabeth, like Hamlet, could see the calamitous effects of too great a precision and too great a decisiveness in political life" (371). *Hamlet's* loose ends are suggestive of a great period in twilight, without the advantage of any foreknowledge of future events to lighten the outcome.

I have only a few points to make for this new cornerstone of Elizabethan studies. First, of a historical order, Jim Ellis has recently and convincingly put into question Elizabeth's long-supposed "censorship" of Gascoigne's masque, an element that is critical in the development of Wilson's chapter devoted to Elizabeth's visit

to Kenilworth in 1575.¹ Wilson reads the sojourn as Leicester's attempt to woo Elizabeth back to England, to bring her to avoid a suit from "the frog," Catherine de Medici's youngest son, François, Duc d'Alençon. Ellis notes instead less sensational meteorological reasons for Elizabeth's cancellation of the masque.

My second point concerns certain portrayals which I believe would have harmonized far better with Wilson's extraordinary prose had they been more refined. His description of Mary Stuart's execution lacks humanity: the axeman, "reaching for the luxuriant auburn hair ... intended to hold up the victim's head. But the hair, like so much about her, was fake. He found himself ridiculously holding up a red wig. What rolled away from him on the platform [was] the grizzled, close-cropped grey head of a prematurely-aged crone" (241). Shocking in its indifference here, "crone" undermines Wilson's pathos elsewhere, such as when mentioning the "heartrending" coffins of Queen Anne's eighteen babies (242). On the same page, he deems Elizabeth a "childless old maid," and later he describes an aging Elizabeth with a "turkey throat" (345) and in "physical decrepitude" (352). Each of these instances wants the compassion of the temperate language elsewhere employed.

Finally, the author conflates the properties of a more common figure of copious language—here, doublets—with hendiadys, a far-narrower figure of speech. Doublets, as shown on 366 when discussing Cranmer's language, include "Almighty and most merciful father," "erred and strayed," as well as "the devices and desires of our own hearts." The author counts these as hendiadys, which is in fact a more complicated figure wherein one of the words in the pairing typically would modify the other, as in "the sound and the fury" which could be reduced to "the furious sound." Effectively, hendiadys is most common in *Hamlet*, as the author asserts, but the definition given should be more precise. I do not disagree that copious language like Cranmer's popularized a splitting into two in an effort to intensify ideas; hendiadys, however, is a much more subtle usage that is not simply a "stylistic tic" (367) gleaned from the century's waxing legalese.

With *The Elizabethans*, Wilson reminds us that the term the "British Empire" was coined by Elizabeth's astrologer, Dr. Dee (34), aptly describing the isle's new potential after the tumultuous reigns preceding. The book's tribute to the engaging, intelligent minds behind this vast enterprise—that did indeed culminate and close in the last century—provides a much-needed encompassing view of those who created the age, from the better to the lesser-known.

1 "Kenilworth, King Arthur, and the Memory of Empire." *English Literary Renaissance* 43.1 (2013): 3-29.