

Spongberg and other revisionist historians have called into question some of Bailey's assumptions. His focus on successful role-playing gives rather more autonomy to participants than they may have had. Moreover he seems to assume that most young men were unwilling or unable to find naughty girls, and therefore were forced to prefer parosexuality over the "real thing." But sufficient documentary evidence exists to show a much more mixed picture. Feminist historians have shown the very real dangers for example to women of supplementing one's meagre earnings behind the bar with a few sexual favours.

Bailey also remains impervious to, or perhaps bored by, one of the greatest sources of nineteenth-century working-class leisure, church attendance. Even if millions preferred the pub and music hall, thousands attended church services, following the star religious speakers with the same avidity that their peers attended their favourite music-hall performers. Many shopped around each Sunday, testing the speaking skills of different ministers; good entertainment value meant a sermon of at least an hour. Even if Bailey does not want to investigate these areas of leisure, they need to be mentioned in any consideration of popular urban performances. An unsophisticated Christian might feel quite "knowing" about city life after hearing a famous preacher or participating in the local YMCA. The full range of urban leisure is not discussed in this book.

Bailey at times seems to celebrate uncritically the rowdy drinking classes. For example he is disdainful of the second generation of music-hall stars in comparison with those of the 1860s and 70s. These swilling "swells" and the performers who parodied them are, for him, truer exponents of demotic leisure than the better-remembered later generation. Rather like business historians who love the driven and hard-driving pioneers more than those who lived within the rules and routines of capitalism, Bailey prefers the entrepreneurs who made and lost fortunes on gambling, speculation and entertainment to those who ran a good business. In the process he falls into the very problem that he criticises in other historians of popular culture: the originary moments are always best, to be followed by a decline into money-grubbing capitalism and straitlaced commodification. Bailey's celebration of urban popular culture is tinged with sentimentality. But I am happy to accept his nostalgia as a small price to pay for such inventive, compulsively readable history. This volume gives us a wonderful complement of fresh, creative, well-researched essays; students and colleagues will be borrowing and adapting his ideas and references for years to come.

Response

Peter Bailey

This has been like waiting for one's end of term report card or, a headier fantasy, sitting in Sardi's waiting for the early edition of the *New York Times* and the make or break notice of the show. Fantasy indeed, since the average academic has to be resigned to a much more delayed and fitful critical response, living or dying in the half light rather than the spotlight. But while not quite Sardi's, the review forum does telescope the usual process, delivering a concentrated jolt of attention while allowing the author the singular opportunity of a simultaneous public response. So here I find myself pondering a relative avalanche of critical judgment pronouncing my oeuvre variously awesome,

tiresome, no more than commonsensical, yet also inventive and even kinky—a rich range of cues for both basking and bitching. Not that I need resort to the latter, for overall these are generous critiques whose reservations are well measured and well taken.

There is a welcome recognition from all four contributors of the importance of leisure and popular culture on the scholarly agenda at large and for Victorian studies in particular. It is this sector in this era that generates the new sites and institutions that advance capitalism's strategic shift into consumerism and provide the prime settings for the construction of new forms of modern identity, consciousness and lifestyle, both personal and collective. Though from different specialties, the reviewers appreciate the general thrust of these essays which seek to combine newer theoretical modes with the historian's traditionally fine-grained attention to the sources. Like many of us I have been trying to accomplish the imaginative theoretical leap while keeping my empirical nose to the ground, an obviously fraught exercise. But for Michael Pickering I neither leap high enough nor far enough, succumbing to a "failure of nerve" in the brief formal excursus into theory offered in the introduction. I am genuinely sorry to disappoint him, for I respect his own venturesome work in reaching for a more fruitful liaison between theory-shy historians and the history-shy cultural studies crowd. In its treatment of theory the introduction was conceived as a succinct and accessible primer for students and non-specialists. The note on postcolonialism is ill-informed (I writhe in contrition) but otherwise, as I've learned from early consumer reports, it seems to work well enough. The mock pillorying of "theory" is a nervous tic left over from older intellectual skirmishes or perhaps a deeper sign of petty bourgeois insecurity that produces the defensive jokiness that Pickering finds irritating but others find, well, "entertaining." Though this is partly a matter of personal style it does raise more general questions of language and address in contemporary scholarship.

It is doubly ironic that while the various postwhateverisms have made language a deeply suspect medium and have urged more playful modalities the new scholarship remains immovably wedded to derivatives of the "plain prose style" of the scientific revolution (if perhaps not always plain enough). The need for other voices would seem to be particularly insistent in writing of popular culture and performance where the student can hardly be unaware of the painful incongruence between the sombre constraints of scholarly critspeak and the vulgar élan of its historical subjects. Thus Patrick Brantlinger feels impelled to bow out of his review with a cockney flourish. I'm not sure that this is the answer (in any case, Pat, don't give up your day job) but it does point to a far from frivolous question. "Did Foucault and Althusser Ever Play the London Palladium?" was how I tried to pose this question in the original title of one of the articles in the collection, going on to project what such an act might have been like had they done so; what was conceived as a suggestive heuristic device was disallowed as vulgar and offensive. Exactly! In similarly conservative terms, the preferred title for the book—*Champagne Charlie Meets the Barmaid*—was vetoed by the present publisher.

A recent reassessment of Harold Wilson, the postwar British prime minister, likens his style to a mix of Max Miller (a latterday music-hall star) and a Nonconformist preacher, which affords a connection with Martha Vicinus's strictures at my disregard of religion and the churches as a significant leisure site. I have written elsewhere in

acknowledgment of this important function but am prompted to add that, as Wilson demonstrated, church and music hall could be complementary as much as separate worlds whose distinctive rhetorics might be merged in a creative *mésalliance*. (Telling detail: “patter,” the word given to the comedian’s running line of comic chat between songs, derives from *paternoster*.) The amalgam was one of several such hybrid modes that enlivened popular culture and could be exploited not only to comic but to political effect.

Long reviled in the Victorian era as a monstrous corruption of popular taste (witness Cecil Sharp’s folkloric recoil), music hall was by the interwar years being celebrated as a quintessentially English institution, its heyday forever receding. My treatment of Champagne Charlie may, as Vicinus suggests, be coloured with a similar retrospective sentimentality but I would not want to be thought disdainful of later performers. How could one dare disdain Marie Lloyd for example, even at a distance? But then “Our Marie” might be an unfortunate test case for, as Veronica Kelly keenly susses out, my take on gender stops short of a satisfactory reconstruction of the meanings of performance for women. I hope this won’t sound like predictable blokeish apologetics to say that for subjects such as barmaids and chorus girls this was less a blindness of intention than a problem of evidence which might have been alleviated by more imaginative inferences. (Entry on report card: “Must try harder.”) As it stands my representation of this group seems to Vicinus to award them too great a degree of autonomy and security in the social and sexual *melée* of the big city. I accept this. I think it follows not from a disregard of feminist historiography but from the tendency to overcorrect in favour of subaltern agency in general that is a persistent strand in post-Thompsonian British social history. This reading can seem overfull of men and women successfully “making” their own culture, a gutsy accolade that may often be too optimistic. On the other hand there is an emerging body of evidence and interpretation that greatly qualifies Janet Wolff’s denial of the woman as *flâneur* or urban adventurer. And I’m reminded of Foucault’s suggestion that modesty was a woman’s form of (non)knowingness. Random thoughts on a challenging issue. . . .

Kelly deflates my own claims to a reflexive knowingness by identifying a suppressed postcolonial alter ego that I shall have to learn to acknowledge and exploit, not least because she suggests how instructive this perspective can be in providing further examples of the dynamic hybridity of popular cultural formation and its performative component. The Tichborne Claimant offers one obvious specimen, showing how a settler society offered wide open opportunities for the construction of a wholly new persona; that the Claimant went on to be a hugely popular turn on the British halls also demonstrates the popular relish for the always potentially subversive artifices of the performing self. As Kelly suggests, I have already been reproached for representing the collusive dialectic of the performer/audience relationship as evidence of a deeper level of engagement in the halls than in the contemporary theatre. I stand corrected: not only because there was a common audience for both, but because on similar grounds to those advanced by Kelly I would now argue for a more broadly deployed “popular modernism” articulated in the theatre, music hall and popular press of the *fin de siècle*. This was a dynamic complement to the aesthetic “high” modernism of the *avant garde*, more alert to the codes and protocols that translated into the effective negotiation of the dramas of everyday life. Popular modernism was the consumer’s

selective appropriation of the often delusive product of the new culture industries and what Adorno called “the sly naiveté” of their entrepreneurs.

As Brantlinger points out, advertising was a significant element in the new commercial amalgam, one that together with much else in popular culture needs further critical explication. Certainly late-nineteenth-century advertising was crucial in producing a new rationale of pleasure which displaced the moralised prescriptions of “rational recreation” with a more overt and unconditional celebration of “fun” and the “good time.” This discourse revalidated leisure as the consumer’s entitlement rather than the worker’s reward. Well before 1914 the new ideology was borrowing extensively from American popular forms in song, dance and showbiz vernacular. This transatlantic traffic—in both directions—also needs attention in any new research agenda. In general, historical scholarship on popular culture has been too parochial and would benefit from further cross-cultural perspectives. And as Brantlinger and Vicinus recognise, changes in popular culture have profound if elusive implications for mass politics and the interpellation of the subject as citizen as well as consumer. Pickering is right that cracking open the multiple ramifications of popular culture requires more incisive theoretical applications, though the historical landscape needs animating with real people as well as concepts.
