

on the marginalised figures unable or unwilling to participate in ‘useful’ economic activities” (32).

More importantly, though, *Crime and Empire* is an example of the increasing attention to “the mutually defining relationship of center and periphery” (Reitz) in Victorian studies. Moreover, in Mukherjee’s aim to “read the cultural and ideological histories of the colony and the ‘centre’ not as separate but as enmeshed entities” (9), we can see how vital this metropolitan-colonial symbiosis is to a re-examination of the old problem of the novel and its relations to the dominant ideology. Mukherjee gathers together the evidence for the now standard argument that novels narrate their own “troubled distance from dominant ideologies” (7) – they trench and interrogate, are complicit and oppositional. Early on, he quotes Lennard Davis’s *Resisting Novels*: “Like any complex social formation, novels are highly ambivalent in their message [. . .] Novels can offer in their heroes and stories various kinds of opposition to stasis and power, but at the same time it would seem that the formal elements of the novel add up to a social formation that resists change” (6). In the impossibility of extricating the contradictory radical and authoritarian impulses of the novel, Mukherjee sees the impossibility of keeping “the colonizing/metropolitan and the colonized societies” (2) safely distant from one another. This is one of the most interesting and important insights of this rewarding study.

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Tim Dolin

***Ever Yours, C.H. Spence*, edited by Susan Magarey with Barbara Wall, Mary Lyons and Maryan Beams. Kent Town SA: Wakefield Press, 2005. v + 392. 23 illustrations. ISBN 1 86254 656 8. \$39.95 (hardback).**

The Face on the Five Dollar Note

Ever Yours, C. H. Spence adds to the already considerable number of publications on the life and work of Catherine Helen Spence, an iconic figure in Australian colonial history; so distinguished in fact that her face was chosen to grace the five dollar note at the commencement of the twenty-first century.

In this volume the Editors have assembled Spence’s *An Autobiography* (1825-1910); her Diary for the auspicious year 1894 (when South Australian women won

the vote); and a selection of her correspondence with the suffragists Alice Henry and Rose Scott during the years 1894 to 1910. The Introduction to each section and the many contextual references provide a wide-ranging picture of contemporary social, political and literary life in South Australia and beyond. The illustrations – most of them contemporary photographs – are an additional source of pleasure. This collection is not only a work of meticulous scholarship, but an exceptionally attractive production for which the Editors (above) and Wakefield Press are to be congratulated.

Spence's *An Autobiography*, completed after her death in 1910 by her friend and colleague Jeanne Young, was first published by the *Adelaide Register* in 1910, again in 1975 by the Libraries Board of South Australia, and appears in this volume in a fully annotated version. Her life exemplifies the best traditions of Victorian philanthropy and social activism, in this case transplanted to the colony of Adelaide, which was itself an example of high-minded Victorian planning and enterprise. Spence, who arrived in Adelaide when she was fourteen, worked all her life for education and for the care of the young and destitute. She had a firm belief in the moral benefits of a good environment and argued against the contemporary belief that vice and criminality were inherited and therefore inevitable. During her lifetime Spence was responsible for three groups of orphaned children and cared for her mother until her death. It was only then that she could devote her full attention to her political activities.

Spence did receive two offers of marriage and rejected both; the first on premises which would appear strange to most of us. According to Spence: “[The offer] might have been accepted if it had not been for the Calvinistic creed that made me shrink from the possibility of bringing children into the world with so little chance of eternal salvation [. . .]” (*Autobiography* 45).

It's little wonder that she eventually rejected her gloomy Calvinist inheritance for the kinder precepts of the Unitarian Christian Church. Having made that decision, she writes, “the cloud was lifted from the universe” (*Autobiography* 64). She preached in Unitarian pulpits in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and, eventually, in England and the United States.

Spence's literary output was considerable and varied. She is best known now for her novels, but her journalism and polemical works sustained her financially for most of her life. Her *Autobiography* details the vicissitudes for a colonial author, especially a woman, in dealing with English publishing houses, and extracting from them her meagre royalties. Her *Clara Morison: A Tale of South Australia during the Gold Fever* (anonymous, 1854) created quite a stir in the colony because of its frank evaluation of the devastating effects, for women and children in particular, of the gold rushes. One of the first novels about Australia by a woman, it was followed by six other fictional works, all of which are discussed, some in passing, in the *Autobiography*. Her last full-length work, *Handfasted*, a visionary utopian novel, was considered so radical in its time that it remained unpublished until 1984.

The *Autobiography* gives us Spence's own account of her career as a public figure, a campaigner for social and electoral reform and a promoter of proportional representation or, as it came to be called, effective voting. Proportional representation is the system used in, for instance, the allocation of seats in the Australian Senate. Spence was the world's first female political candidate, standing, unsuccessfully, for election to the 1897 Federal Convention to finalise the Constitution for the new Commonwealth. She was Vice-President of the Women's Suffrage League of South Australia, worked for the Effective Voting League of South Australia and spoke on electoral reform throughout Australia. Her correspondence with John Stuart Mill and her conversion to his views on proportional representation led to her public lectures, in the United States and Britain as well as Australia, on the inequalities of the voting system.

One of the most valuable aspects of the *Autobiography* is the editorial footnoting which identifies, in some detail, each organisation and individual named. These not only provide a picture of the rich diversity and hierarchy of Spence's Adelaide, but also of its cultural activity. The colony, it seems, was a hotbed of ideas. For instance important books were read in Adelaide almost as soon as they appeared in London. Long before she met J.S. Mill or corresponded with him, Spence had read, and was inspired by, his *Principles of Political Economy* (1848). She had been lent it by the two brothers of Mill's wife, who also lived in Adelaide.

Spence was an ardent networker. She made friends wherever she went and made sure that she met the most interesting and important people. Her friends and acquaintances and her prolific correspondence with them are discussed at length in the *Autobiography*. She had made a point of meeting George Eliot as well as J.S. Mill on an early trip to England and was particularly proud of the letter from Eliot which is reproduced in the *Autobiography* (92). In the United States she met important literary and political figures such as Oliver Wendell Holmes, William Lloyd Garrison and the famous Unitarian preacher the Rev. Charles Ames, who shared her enthusiasm for social reform. She was welcomed by them and almost always invited to speak in their particular areas of interest.

The Diary for the year 1894, most of which Spence spent abroad, forms the second section of the book, while her correspondence with the suffragists Rose Scott and Alice Henry during the years 1894 (when South Australian women won the vote and, almost accidentally, the right to sit in the state Parliament) to her death in 1910 forms the third section. Both help to humanise Spence and add a further dimension to her interests and achievements. In her *Autobiography* Spence takes little credit for the South Australian victory but perhaps she was too modest. It's true that she had considered electoral reform to be far more important than the enfranchisement of women (*Autobiography* 77) but, as the letters to Scott and Henry make clear, she enthusiastically worked towards and embraced the latter.

The remark of a gentleman on one of Spence's country tours – "What a good thing it is, Miss Spence, that you have only one idea." – was unfortunate. He was

commenting, according to Spence, on her “singleness of purpose towards effective voting” (*Autobiography* 165). This volume moves far beyond that “one idea”; it celebrates the whole range of Catherine Helen Spence’s philanthropic, social and political achievements.

Shirley Walker

***Bombay to Bloomsbury: A Biography of the Strachey Family*, by Barbara Caine. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. xvii + 488, 37 illustrations. ISBN 0-19-9250340. \$80 (hardcover).**

In 1899, Leonard Woolf went up to Cambridge, where he became friends with Lytton Strachey and Thoby Stephen. All three were members of the Shakespeare Society and the Apostles, and all shared George Moore’s passion for friendship. The “menace of money” had hung over the Woolf family since their father’s death, but Leonard was a welcome visitor in the Stephen and Strachey households. He spent three successive summers with the Stracheys in large country houses. “They stand out in my memory as the most remarkable family I have ever known, an extinct social phenomenon which has passed away and will never be known again” (Woolf 187). This was a large, lively family, whose distinctive voice (Woolf calls it the Strachey “cadence”) was often raised in “deafening” argument. Woolf recalls Sir Richard, sitting reading in the midst of a “verbal hurricane” and Lady Jane, who “had a passion for literature, argument and billiards” (Woolf 189). As he observes:

The Strachey and Stephen families both belonged to a social class or caste of a remarkable and peculiar kind which established itself as a powerful section of the ruling class in Britain in the nineteenth century. It was an intellectual aristocracy of the middle class. (Woolf 186)

Barbara Caine’s biography analyses this Anglo-Indian family’s place in the ruling class, and the power that accrued to them through Richard Strachey’s role in imperial administration. Her account of the family history focuses on generational change, the shift from the parents’ Victorian values and involvement in social reform to their children’s embrace of modernity.

Her study began as an inquiry into the history of feminism. Jane Grant, later Lady Strachey, found in women’s suffrage a cause that she could be passionate about. She wrote to her husband after J.S. Mill’s speech in support of suffrage in the Commons: “If I were stopping in England for good, I should go in hot and strong for this cause” (Caine 61). First, however, she educated her children. Later, she carved