

the wall of the lounge”. Beacham devotes a page to the showmanship of its castle devices, and the unparalleled opportunity that this building offers to “experience the heady mix of Arthurian drama and late nineteenth century luxury that Trevail intended for the visitor . . . . Melodramatic it may be, but as a stage set for Trevail’s tourist theatre it is a triumph”. He also provides a delicious description of Frederick Glasscock’s “Fellowship of the Knights of the Round Table of Arthur”, which opened nearby in 1933, with its “walls of Polyphant and Tintagel stone, floor of Polyphant inset with patterns of the round table in red porphyry and the cross of the knights in white elvan” (another eye-catcher that stood beyond the pale for Pevsner). As Beacham amply demonstrates, there remains so much more to Tintagel than its ruined thirteenth-century castle.

Beacham does not attempt to improve on or expand everything that his predecessor wrote. Rather pleasingly, both the 1951 and the 2014 editions begin with the tiny settlement of Advent, and Pevsner’s fairytale opening describing St Adwena’s Church, a medieval building “in a lonely spot just off the edge of Bodmin Moor”. Beacham notices the tower’s eight pinnacles; Pevsner did not. But Pevsner was almost always able to conclude his description with the church’s silver, thus: “Chalice by Fons of Exeter, the usual 1576 date”, whereas such valuables are locked up or stowed in a local museum now. At the other end of this gazetteer, there is the far western hamlet of Zennor, which Pevsner dispatched in his usual businesslike way with a brief résumé of its church and local Neolithic tombs. Beacham’s tour of Zennor is far more prolix, bringing in the old school-house, rectory, cottages and pub and opening with a honey-sweet pen portrait of “an especially lovely and unspoilt churchtown, its modest buildings gathered unassumingly around the church and churchyard and giving immediately into the fields of the rich prehistoric and medieval Penwith landscape”.

In Penzance, Pevsner noted that the town was burned by the Spanish in 1595, so that “nothing older survives, and not much either that could belong to the seventeenth century”. Drawing on a huge array of research sources, Beacham paints an antidote to this bleak picture which feels far truer. He finds a captivating town, “beautifully set within the generous arms of Mounts Bay . . . a place set apart, at the end of the line . . . the most surprising of all Cornwall’s historic towns with an enjoyably diverse architectural personality”, a fishing settlement turned resort town, which slumped in the twentieth century and is coming back to life. His description of the Egyptian House in Chapel Street is a case in point, the showroom built in the reign of William IV for a dealer in fossils and minerals, its door flanked by “fat closed papyrus bud columns reminiscent of the inner courts of Egyptian temples and shrines”, its windows with “torus mouldings, shaped in situ . . . to represent bundles of reeds lashed together”. This truly astonishing building was ticked off by Pevsner as “a crazy front in a consistent if not correct Egyptian style”.

Herein lies the difference between these two “Pevsners”, written sixty years apart. Germanic correctness has been supplanted by something more English, closer to Betjeman’s poetical evocations of standing stones, holy wells and the small fry of fisher cottages, miners’ terraces, tabernacles and windy tamerisk-fringed holiday houses.

## Illuminating retrievals

THOMAS KEYMER

Steven Moore

THE NOVEL  
An alternative history: 1600–1800  
1,024pp. Bloomsbury. £25 (US \$39.95).  
978 1 4411 8869 4

Thomas G. Pavel

THE LIVES OF THE NOVEL  
A history  
360pp. Princeton University Press.  
£24.95 (US \$35).  
978 0 691 12189 5

on realism, inwardness, contradistinction to romance, or any other limiting factor, technical or thematic. A novel is “a book-length work of fiction”, written in prose; whatever the period, whatever the style, any such book is a novel. Even with this capacious definition, Moore can’t resist his inclusive instincts, so that “book-length” turns out to mean forty pages, and numerous fact–fiction hybrids make the cut, too: intriguing generic mongrels like Ginés Pérez de Hita’s *Las guerras civiles de Granada* or Delarivier Manley’s *Adventures of Rivella*. At the outset he considers – though he stops short in practice – the candidacy of Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* and Descartes’s *Discours de la méthode*. The *Dunciad* is there by analogy with *Pale Fire*.

As his huge chronicle of world fiction unfolds, Moore works in a brisk account of *Marriage à-la-mode* by William Hogarth as a graphic novel, and includes fascinating material about the survival of medieval *prosimetrum*, isolated oddities like Anna Seward’s *Louisa: A poetical novel*, and the breakdown of the prose-verse binary in German Romanticism. In some respects we’re back in the carefree world of E. M. Forster’s *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), where generic

definition “will not take a second” (oh dear, yes) and gets no further than “a fiction in prose of a certain extent”. But Moore has none of Forster’s languid assumption that nothing before Richardson and Fielding is worth the effort of picking up. He reads everything he can, and his prodigious appetite for forgotten fiction, together with his eye-popping struggle to get through it all, becomes an entertaining running theme throughout the book. Only rarely does he admit defeat, and when he does, it hurts. Of Madeleine de Scudéry and her seventeenth-century *romans de longue haleine* (one of which, *Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus*, decorously recounts its heroine’s trials in more than 2 million words), Moore writes: “I’ve given four months to this woman, I need to move on. She would charge me with ‘inconstancy’”.

The advantages of Moore’s broad scope are obvious and real. He writes with gusto and acumen, and even when he takes against an author or work, he does so with engaging verve. Among his early victims – since the book is organized by national boundaries, and only then chronologically – are Sophie von La Roche for *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (“the plot is trite and the tone treacly”) and Søren Kierkegaard (“this dis-tempered grouch”) for disliking Schlegel’s *Lucinde*. Next comes the unfortunate Friedrich Hölderlin, whose *Hyperion* is “an epistolary novel in lyrical prose of surpassing beauty”, but at the same time “a bit stilted (and kinda gay)”. Further back in the German tradition, Moore allots generous space to all those works that Auerbach’s Turkish libraries didn’t have, and though his claims for their significance are too casual to make real headway – “Just as the *Continuation* anticipates *Robinson Crusoe*, this short novel [*Die Landstörtzerin Courasche*] anticipates Defoe’s *Moll Flanders*” – he constructs an eloquent case for seeing Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen as a pioneer of the grotesque, with “a grim, grunt’s-eye view of war”. There are countless illuminating retrievals in his Herculean chapters about fiction in France and Britain (265 and 362 pages, respectively: Mme de Scudéry, take that), and the book is a trove of unexpected discoveries throughout. Moore is especially good at drawing out the literary and material self-consciousness of much early fiction. In *Le Roman comique*, Paul Scarron’s narrator harps on the difficulty of organizing his work into a coherent whole; in *Le Roman bourgeois*, Antoine Furetière considers inserting blank sheets for frustrated readers to fill in with scenes of their own; in *Laméris*, Charles de Fieux de Mouhy pretends that thirty crucial pages have been cut from his text in the censor’s office. With these and numerous other examples, the list Moore later gives of self-reflexive novels before Sterne is longer than Shklovsky could have dreamed. At the same time, he corrects a longstanding confusion in critical editions of *Tristram Shandy* between Scarron and Furetière, where a *Roman bourgeois* first appeared in England under the opportunistic title *Scarron’s City Romance*. Footnotes like this lay bare Moore’s guilty secret, the bluster and cheek notwithstanding: he’s a scholar at heart.

But he is also a feisty controversialist. Unimpressed by the severity of Ian Watt’s canon, he ridicules – though only, of course, by caricaturing – literary histories that identify *Robinson Crusoe* as “the first novel” or Richardson’s 1740 debut as “Year Zero . . . a B.C./A.D. demarcation to indicate the sea change that occurred in British fiction after it appeared”. Defoe bears the brunt of Moore’s attack: *Moll Flanders* is bland, prolix, vague and sketchy, with weaker credentials as a breakthrough in realism than “the better criminal novels like *The London Jilt*” – *The London Jilt* being an obscure whore narrative of 1683: vigorous, to be sure, but also invisible. Until Broadview republished this anonymous work in 2008, it survived in a single copy at Harvard University. Richardson fares little better. *Clarissa* turns out to be *Le Grand Cyrus* all over again, and though Moore makes it to the end of Angus Ross’s 1,500-page Penguin edition (his first attempt runs aground after the first of four volumes in the Everyman edition), his eyes are plainly beginning to glaze over. In this novel’s struggle between “angelic Clarissa Harlowe . . . and diabolic Lovelace”, Moore complains, “the clichéd adjectives are Richardson’s, and repeated ad nauseam”. Yet Richardson is a good deal more creative with his clichés than that. In the original edition, “angelic” occurs roughly once every 200 pages, normally in ironic contexts. There are just four occurrences of “diabolic” (in fact “diaboliacal”), none with reference to Lovelace. The nausea about cliché is self-induced. And though Moore makes no criticism of Watt here for establishing Richardson’s modern reputation, he takes Terry Castle to task not only for calling *Clarissa* “the eighteenth century’s supreme fictional masterpiece”, but also for missing a supposed lesbian subtext between Clarissa and Anna. Here – to recall Castle’s day in the stocks some years ago about Jane Austen’s sleeping arrangements – is a case of damned if you do, damned if you don’t.

Instead, Moore’s hero is Watt’s also-ran, Henry Fielding, praised for just the qualities of literariness and flaunted artifice that Watt (notoriously) thought irrelevant to the main high road of novelistic realism. Realism is a problematic term for Moore – sometimes used to mean mere plausibility, sometimes cynicism, sometimes grotesquerie, only rarely Watt’s strictly formal concept – but he is consistently acute about Fielding, above all for the metafictional pyrotechnics of *Tom Jones*. And this is Moore’s valuable emphasis all along. Some may find his account of the emergent novel as forever proto-modernist, or post-postmodern, heavy-handed or grating: the “modernist ambiguity” of Prévost, or Crébillon’s “uncannily modern” *Égarements du coeur et de l’esprit*; Francion’s resemblance to Robert Coover, Mme de Lafayette’s to Thomas Pynchon, Cyrano de Bergerac’s to Kurt Vonnegut; the amazing ability of “a 21-year-old student writing at the end of the Ming Dynasty” (Tung Yueh, in *The Tower of Myriad Mirrors*) to “create a fiction that anticipates in so many particulars the works of Carroll, Freud, Kafka, Jung, Joyce, and Borges”. But Moore is right about the playful self-consciousness that suffuses so much pioneering fiction of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and his energetic study conveys the freshness of this fiction with insight and wit.

In *The Lives of the Novel: A history*, Thomas G. Pavel translates and updates his classic study, *La Pensée du roman* (2003), and calls

on Moore’s “Beginnings to 1600” volume to buttress his case for the novel as an ancient phenomenon with widely dispersed global roots. Pavel has none of Moore’s ambition for comprehensive description, however, and one senses he wouldn’t be seen dead with *Le Grand Cyrus* (though he does offer a wry tribute to the heroine’s unruffled way with evil brigands). Instead, he offers a brisk critique of the mid-twentieth-century approaches that still influence modern debates – Watt’s social and intellectual history, Mikhail Bakhtin’s history of narrative techniques, György Lukács’s “reflective history of the novel” – and proposes an alternative view of the genre better able, he suggests, to connect its pre- and post-realist phases. Central to this account is an ongoing dialectic between idealizing and satirical strains of fiction, analogous to Michael McKeon’s dialectic of truth and virtue, though only passing reference is made to McKeon. With this comes a secularization thesis concerning “the slow, diversified, halting movement from souls to hearts to psyches as the center of novelists’ attention”.

Pavel sustains this argument through deft, incisive readings of instances ranging in time and place from the *Ethiopian Story* of Heliodorus – rightly, he stresses the crucial importance of early modern translations of *Heliodorus* into several European languages – to the modernism of Proust, Musil and Joyce. Along the way, and despite his focus on early sources, he emphatically restores 1740 as a generic watershed, not because of *ex nihilo* innovation but because *Pamela* achieved “an unprecedented synthesis of the moral splendour of the idealist novel, the inner tremors described by the pastoral and the elegiac story, the picaresque’s closeness to everyday life, and the unity of action perfected in the novella”.

Pavel is keen to distance himself from the historical formalisms of both Watt and Bakhtin, and protests that the latter “makes the history of narrative techniques into a mere inventory of formal features”. Yet in practice he organizes much of his own book in terms of narrative traditions or fictional subgenres defined by formal features, and this can be a limitation. *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* are perfect raw material for his soul-to-psyche model of generic development, but by constraining these novels within his discussion of the picaresque, and saying almost nothing about the no less pertinent tradition of spiritual autobiography, he misses the opportunity to see his crucial shift foreshadowed within a single novel. His disinclination to quote Defoe’s text on these key distinctions – Moll’s yearning soul, her sinking heart, her burdened mind – deprives the argument of nuance. But Pavel is far stronger on the Anglo-French lines of influence he sketches out for later decades – epistolary interiority in Richardson and Rousseau, ludic virtuosity in Sterne and Diderot – and gives masterly accounts of *Madame Bovary*, *Middlemarch* and less widely known nineteenth-century landmarks like *Os Maias* (1888), by the Portuguese realist Eça de Queirós. For this novel’s protagonist, “the most insupportable thing about realism was its great scientific airs, its pretentious aesthetics deduced from an alien philosophy . . . when it was simply a matter of describing a washer-woman sleeping with a carpenter”. Yet it was always more than such a matter, and Thomas Pavel is a superb guide to the range and enduring power of the realist mode.

## Lives cut short

KATE HEXT

Walter Pater

IMAGINARY PORTRAITS  
Edited by Lene Østermark-Johansen  
321pp. MHRA. Paperback, £9.99 (US \$15.99).  
978 1 907322 55 6

Writing on a square scrap of paper in 1878, Walter Pater reflected on his first “imaginary portrait”: “Child in the House: *voilà*, the germinating, original, source, specimen, of all my *imaginative* work”. This is a rare moment of self-revelation from a man whom Henry James described as “the mask without the face”. Pater’s magical-realist short stories, or “imaginary portraits”, may be the most personal of his writings; they are almost certainly his most successful fictions. Despite their importance in Pater’s slim oeuvre, though, they have, like most of his work, been out of print for decades.

Lene Østermark-Johansen’s expanded and scholarly edition of Pater’s *Imaginary*



“The Bride, the Bridegroom, and the Friend of the Bridegroom”, 1868, by Frederick Hollyer

*Portraits* (1887) is thus most welcome. It presents a witty, compelling, even experimental Pater, playing deftly with different genres, structures and voices, to remind us how his literary forms shaped and haunted the fictions of Vernon Lee, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Sepulchral metaphors readily come to mind when discussing Pater’s fiction, and in *Imaginary Portraits* his life-long fascination with the classical idea that “some of those whom the gods love die young” is given free rein. Most of these homoerotically charged “portraits” have at their heart a promising young man whose life is senselessly cut short. Denys, in a rewriting of the Dionysus Zagreus myth, is torn from limb to limb by a crowd inflamed by the desire for intense sensations; Emerald Uthwart, a young disgraced soldier and reserved aesthete, suffers a drawn-out and mysterious death in his childhood home; Duke Carl, a follower of

Apollo, is killed accidentally by an invading army on his wedding night. Rare survivors, like Florian Deleal in “The Child in the House”, are left forever *in medias res*, for, as Pater wrote to his editor on submitting this story, “I . . . mean readers, as they might do on seeing a portrait, to begin speculating – what came of him?”

These fractured *Bildungsromane* are lent poignancy by their setting in a series of historic moments of conflict and renewal, from medieval France to nineteenth-century Germany. In Pater’s first and most famous work, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), such pivotal moments had promised to resurrect an aesthetic sensuality dormant since classical Greece. In *Imaginary Portraits*, sensuality is altogether darker, lapsing often into violence or self-destruction. These stories become elegies for, rather than celebrations of, Pater’s hedonistic declaration in *Studies* that “To burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life”. This sentence echoes through *Imaginary Portraits*, as it echoed – often hollowly – through Pater’s life. If “success in life” is to burn always with a hard gem-like flame, then these protagonists are failures, embers after just the briefest blaze.

Although it bears the same title, this is not exactly a new edition of Pater’s 1887 work. That slim volume contained only four stories to which Østermark-Johansen has added six more to provide a truly representative collection of Pater’s short fiction: beginning with “Diaphaneité”, presented to Oxford’s Old Mortality Society in 1864, and ending with “Apollo in Picardy”, published in *Harper’s Monthly Magazine* in 1893, less than a year before his death. Pragmatic re-presentation of Pater’s writing is in evidence elsewhere too, and to good effect. After all, Pater’s ambiguous distinction of being a highly influential, much-cited but little-read *fin-de-siècle* author is in large part a mark of the fact that his prose can be difficult. He wrote long, labyrinthine sentences, the meanings of which are further obscured by multiple allusions to classical mythology and the history of art. In this new edition, Østermark-Johansen’s introduction and critical apparatus (including well-chosen appendices from Heine and the Goncourts as well as other works by Pater) masterfully mitigate this problem. She combines an encyclopedic knowledge of Pater’s influences and allusions, and an astute understanding of his works and life, with enviable lightness of touch. Pater himself resisted the idea of illustrating his works, but this edition very successfully restores the visual allusions of his writing with the inclusion of nineteen pictures alongside the text.

Handsome yet inexpensive, *Imaginary Portraits* is the first in a new series of annotated and affordable critical editions of aesthetic and decadent literature, under the editorship of Catherine Maxwell and Stefano Evangelista, and with the arresting title of “The Jewelled Tortoise”. Devotees of Huysmans will recall that in *À Rebours* that unfortunate creature expires under the weight of the stones with which the decadent Des Esseintes has studded its shell. MHRA’s admirable venture will surely better sustain its own gem-like flame.



Lovelace’s Kidnapping of Clarissa Harlowe, 1867, by Édouard Louis Dubufe