

Sport

Peter May

THE REBEL TOURS

Cricket's crisis of conscience

344pp. SportsBooks. £17.99.

978 1899807 80 2

The Rebel Tours is a history and analysis of the seven cricket teams to tour South Africa between 1982 and 1990 in defiance of the international sporting boycott. These unofficial national teams played so-called Tests and One Day Internationals against “official” Springbok XIs.

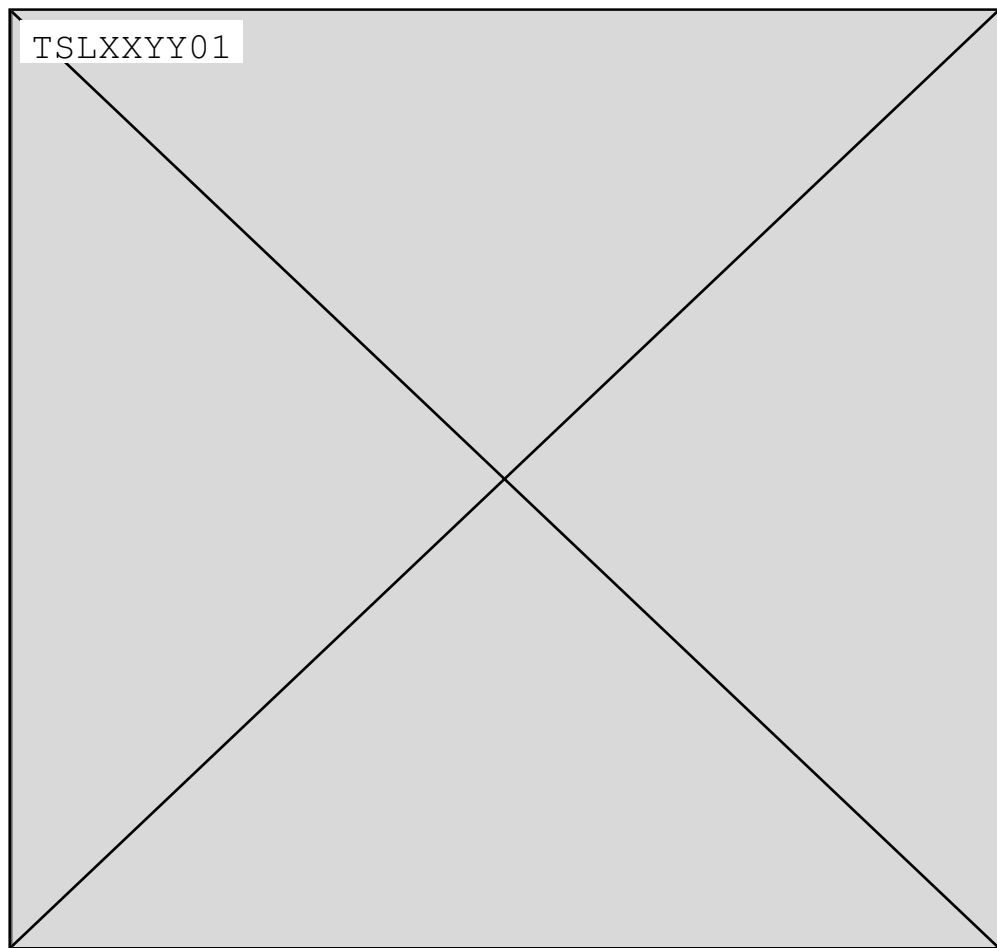
In its dealings with apartheid, cricket was always more contentious than other sports. The presence of the Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan and West Indian international teams caused what Peter May calls the “crisis of conscience”. The English cricket authorities feared that a Packer-style team of leading white players would go to South Africa and leave second-string teams to play formal Tests against the non-white nations.

As May’s chronological account makes clear, there were always double standards and Pharisaisms. There were lesser race concerns in rugby – Maoris in the New Zealand team were made “honorary whites” during tours. Golfers and tennis players – white ones, anyway – could visit South Africa without punishment. In the 1970s touring cricket sides could field multiracial teams but Springbok XIs were either black or white. Cricketers considered as rebels and traitors by some were seen as pioneers and crusaders by others.

May describes how many of the players involved “ignored or declined my enquiries; only one offered the unimprovable, irony-free response, ‘What’s in it for me?’”. For most cricketers, the sums offered for playing in South Africa were impossible to turn down, even when it was revealed in 1986 that the tours were funded by the South African Cricket Union and its sponsors via 90 per cent tax rebates from the ruling National Party. Despite the hype, rebel teams were typically half-first XI/half-second XI in representation and playing strength. Players such as Peter Willey – an effective England all-rounder but no Botham – were discussed in awed tones by South African newspapers. The West Indies of that decade, however, had virtually a spare team of outstanding (and impeccable) players that could not force their way into the first-choice Test squad. The rebel West Indians represented what May calls “the greatest coup and the deepest affront”. The 1983–4 team captained by Lawrence Rowe was the only rebel side to win a “Test” series in South Africa, but many of those players faced professional and personal rejection when they returned to the Caribbean.

Mike Gatting went to South Africa in 1990

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as captain of what turned out to be the last unsanctioned tour, when Nelson Mandela’s release was imminent. Pictured on the book’s cover, Gatting, John Emburey and David Graveney of that 1990 team all later assumed important coaching or administrative roles in English cricket. Nobody emerges with credit from Peter May’s meticulous and detailed account of the rebel tours.

STUART GEORGE

History

Sam Willis

THE FIGHTING TEMERAIRE

323pp. Quercus. £25.

978 1 84724 998 2

In August 2005, BBC Radio 4 ran a poll to find the nation’s favourite painting. The outright winner was Turner’s “The Fighting Temeraire, Tugged to Her Last Berth to Be Broken Up, 1838”, receiving over a quarter of all votes. Sam Willis tells the story of this famous warship in the first volume of his Hearts of Oak trilogy, which will focus on iconic stories from the Age of Sail.

Willis offers an engaging biography of the *Temeraire* and gives a detailed picture of life in the sailing navy. He binds these two subjects together in clear, accessible prose so that each informs and enriches the other. Details from the lives of key contemporary figures, including Admiral Boscawen and Olaudah Equiano, add interest. His arrangement of themes is governed by a loose chronology focusing on key battles, which he describes with gusto.

Early chapters deal with the French warship, *Téméraire*, captured during the Seven Years’ War and taken into the British fleet where it saw distinguished service. Sailors thought it unlucky to change a ship’s name but could or would not pronounce it cor-

rectly, so the ship was known as “Timmera”. Her complete refit allows Willis to compare French and British shipbuilding techniques and to offer lesser-known details such as the superiority of British pumps and blocks. In 1798, the name “Temeraire” passed to a ninety-eight-gun ship launched to fight Napoleon. Willis follows this ship’s naval career from glory days at the Battle of Trafalgar, when its crew saved Nelson’s flagship at great cost by engaging the Spanish *Santisima Trinidad*, the largest ship in the world, through its long decline as prison hulk and supplies depot in the 1820s and 30s.

Willis’s book is infused with his experience and knowledge of seafaring. For example, he notes the usual slow build up to any naval battle, inevitable when the enemy might be spotted fifteen miles away and warships sailing at 2–3 knots took hours to close the distance, and a test of nerve for crews. Beautifully illustrated with maps and colour plates, the book also has useful appendices featuring ship plans, and poems and songs about the *Temeraire*. Willis offers narrative rather than analysis and adds little to our appreciation of Turner but his book will please maritime enthusiasts.

MARGARETTE LINCOLN

Film

Alistair Cooke

ALISTAIR COOKE AT THE MOVIES

Edited by Geoff Brown

366pp. Penguin. £20.

978 1 84614 111 9

Spanning seventy-five years, from Cambridge juvenilia to obituaries of old friends, *Alistair Cooke at the Movies*, a collection of that celebrated broadcaster’s reports on film, opens windows into the history of a medium. Here are to be found evocations of

Hollywood in the 1950s (“the city is thick with ne’er do wells of every description – ex-waitresses who will never get near a studio; fifth-rate playboys who skipped their home towns; desiccated old couples from the Midwest come to live out a hollow old age in the monotonous sunshine . . . broken-down crooners, showgirls, unsuccessful models, burlesque dancers, movie-struck high school girls sitting up on drugstore stools . . .”), eyewitness accounts of the industry’s panic over the threat of television in 1958 (“to hear that the movies are in radical trouble and could pass away is a shock and a shame”) and, twenty years later, almost identically, over video (Cooke frets that “the home-recorded programme” could become “as popular and inexpensive as a long-playing phonograph record”), as well as more sombre illustrations of cinema’s power. After watching a news-reel in 1938, Cooke describes an unforgettable tracking shot as the Japanese delegate quits the Assembly of the League of Nations: “there is no speech and hardly any sound, just the camera weaving and darting a yard away, step by step with this silent and frightening little man”.

The highlights of this thorough volume are Cooke’s reminiscences of his meetings with the stars wherein his intimate style is most abundantly apparent, whether visiting a washed-up Groucho Marx on the set of a television abridgement of *The Mikado* in 1960 (“Groucho is crowding seventy, but his energy belies and makes more touching the extreme frailty of his body”), witnessing Humphrey Bogart’s appearance in court in 1949 and noting in the mêlée which results outside that “somebody stepped on an old lady’s terrier and there was the unmistakable crunch of bones” or, best of all, sitting beside Greta Garbo (“every man’s harmless fantasy mistress”) at a screening, after which, in his “small, pathetic attempt at conversation,” she turns out to have “only one thing on her mind: the awful price of vegetables”.

JONATHAN BARNES

Literary Criticism

Scott C. Lucas

A MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES AND THE POLITICS OF THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

275pp. University of Massachusetts Press.

£??; distributed in the UK by ??, £34.50.

978 1 55849 706 1

It is good to have a book about *A Mirror for Magistrates*, still one of the most scandalously neglected works of English literature. *A Mirror* was probably the most popular secular book in print in the second half of the sixteenth-century. It started life as the brainchild of William Baldwin, the driving force behind a collection of verse lives of English rulers, *A Memorial of Such Princes, as since the time of king Richard the seconde, have been unfortunate in the Realme of England*, which was stopped by Mary’s regime as too confrontational. It eventually emerged as a *Mirror* in 1558. The collection subsequently went through a bewildering number of editions and transformations during Elizabeth’s reign, as new parts were added and old ones rediscovered. Nevertheless, the basic formula of the work survived: a series of stories of the high and mighty who came to bad ends,

either through their own abuse of power, or a series of unfortunate circumstances. Accordingly, later governors could learn from their posthumous tales of woe and try to avoid the mistakes of the past.

As Scott Lucas shows in this meticulously well-researched work of historical scholarship, *A Mirror* was relentlessly topical, as befitted a work that sought to adapt the familiar genre of “mirror for princes” literature to a wider audience and to make it more obviously relevant to anyone who had to govern (a “magistrate”). He shows how the tale of the downfall of Edward Seymour, the “good duke” of Somerset and the first Lord Protector of the young Edward VI, was used to show that the real villains of the piece were those who destroyed him, leaving the monarch and Somerset relatively free from blame. Somerset’s tale, contrary to the popular conception of *A Mirror*, insistently attacks mystifying metaphysics, showing that the “good Duke” was not punished by divine intervention, but “the lamentable effects of bad luck and the ‘noughty time’” in which he lived.

More impressive still is Lucas’s reading of the fate of the poet Collingborne, executed for his political rhyme against Richard III: “the catte, the ratte, and louel our dogge, / Ruleth all englande vnder a hogge”. According to Professor Lucas, the tale is a plea for freedom of speech, for poets to speak their minds, especially in the time of tyrants, a message that haunted the literature produced during the reigns of the Tudors and Stuarts.

ANDREW HADFIELD

Ernest B. Gilman

PLAGUE WRITING IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

312pp. University of Chicago Press. \$35;

distributed in the UK by Wiley. £24.

978 0 226 29409 9

Ernest B. Gilman’s rich, absorbing book examines literary engagements with plague, focusing on the London ravages of 1603, 1625 and 1665. While responses in Catholic Europe made use of an iconography of suffering saints (Saint Sebastian, Saint Roche), Protestant England stripped away such mediation and so faced “a kind of representational darkness”. Plague in England was thus understood through language: as something to be written about, but also itself as a form of writing, its victims inscribed with “God’s Tokens”, marking sin. While Gilman discusses pamphlets and mortality bills, his focus rests on four well-known attempts to “write out” plague: Ben Jonson’s epigram on the death of his seven-year-old son (“his best piece of poetrie”); Donne’s *Devotions*, “Anniversaries” and plague sermon of 1626; Pepys’s Diary; and Defoe’s genre-bending *A Journal of the Plague Year*, purportedly “Written by a Citizen who continued all the while in London”, but published in 1722, fifty-seven years after London’s affliction, while plague ravaged Marseilles.

Gilman describes how attempts to reconcile plague with theodicy gave way to an increasingly secular engagement with disease, as the physician gradually (but never wholly) replaced the divine. But this is not a story of secular progress: Gilman argues that the stories the modern West tells itself about medicine – those heroic twentieth-century

narratives of science’s triumph – are now under acute pressure. Any “dominant triumphalist paradigm” has been shaken to the point of exhaustion by AIDS and super viruses. *Plague Writing* is thus written without the condescension of history, and remains alert to the degree to which language, metaphor and genre not only shaped early modern constructions of plague, but also (as Susan Sontag argued) continue to shape notions of disease today.

Gilman reads with tremendous precision, finding nuance everywhere. Not all his contentions convince: the idea of an “uncanny liaison” between moments of plague and Pepys’s delight in his rising wealth – a form of compensation, Gilman suggests, amid disease – weakens when one realizes that Pepys’s diary is at all times concerned with financial accounting, and indeed seems to have started as a series of financial notes, later revised into narrative. Gilman’s decision to concentrate on familiar (what he calls “exemplary”) printed texts is defensible given his interest in formative constructions, but this canonical corpus (there is nothing in manuscript) is a missed opportunity, particularly since critical work on plague writing in the past decade – by Margaret Healy and Jonathan Gil Harris, among others – has opened up the field. Nonetheless, Gilman’s book is a remarkably careful, self-reflective analysis, and a valuable addition to the subject.

ADAM SMYTH

Architecture

Ken Worpole

MODERN HOSPICE DESIGN

The architecture of palliative care

122pp. Routledge. Paperback, £24.99.

978 0 415 45180 2

Modern Hospice Design is more of a report than a book, really, but it is thought-provoking none the less. Ken Worpole traces a path out of the darkness and into the light: from the Victorian asylum or sanatorium, devised, to punish the sick, to the hospice movement and its assertion that even those who can’t be made well by clinical medicine are entitled to be treated by the medical profession with, not just dignity, and something like love.

Architecture has a role to play in this: the very sick must have peace, privacy, nice colours, access to nature’s beauty outside, no more medical hardware lying around than is necessary. Inevitably, close attention is paid to events in Scandinavia; Alvar Aalto is quoted in his belief that architects must build “for man at his weakest”. Humane alternatives to the dark-satanic-mill tradition are cited, and mined for potential lessons: the almshouse, the Begijnhof. The growing legacy of Maggie Keswick Jencks, in whose name a series of drop-in centres for cancer sufferers has begun to be built to designs by famous architects, is discussed – and a certain broadmindedness is evident from the author’s suggestion that hospitals and hospices could learn something from the hotel trade.

Of course, no architect will be able to obscure the fatal function of the hospice altogether – and no patient, or client, of such a place would be taken in by a facetious

attempt to do so. They are about making the best of a bad lot. You might not mind being in a grim Victorian hospital if you knew or believed you’d be leaving it under your own steam in the near future. We owe those whom we can’t prevent from dying a congenial environment to die in – that much seems obvious (though not entirely apolitical: some would presumably say that the very idea of a hospice represents an intrusion of secular public-sector values into the proper domain of the family or the church). Rogers Stirk Harbour’s Maggie’s Centre in west London has landed the practice with the Stirling Prize last year, and it is indeed a remarkable piece of work (all the more so when one considers the hygienic austerity of Rogers’s previous designs). But the day may come when the dying want something other than peace and stillness, an unthreatening water feature, or non-denominational “meditation space”.

KEITH MILLER

Fiction

Jean-Paul Sartre

THE LAST CHANCE

Roads of Freedom IV

Translated by Craig Vasey

223pp. Continuum. Paperback, £14.99.

978 1 84706 551 3

This volume presents for the first time in an easily accessible single volume the texts which were to form a continuation of Sartre’s *Les Chemins de la liberté*, published as a trilogy in 1945 (*L’Age de raison* and *Le Sursis*) and 1949 (*La Mort dans l’âme*). It also constitutes a stimulating reflection on the challenges and opportunities presented by the task of translating Sartre. The texts which Craig Vasey has translated under the title *The Last Chance* include “Strange Friendship”, published as “Drôle d’amitié” in Sartre’s journal *Les Temps modernes* in 1949, and the more fragmentary “The Last Chance”, included as an appendix in the 1981 Pléiade edition of Sartre’s *Oeuvres romanesques* as “La Dernière chance”. These stories, which derive from Sartre’s own experiences as a prisoner of war in 1940, illustrate his post-war attempts to contest Stalinism before his communist “conversion” in 1952. The “strange friendship” in question is a fictionalized account of Sartre’s dealings with Paul Nizan, the latter branded as a traitor by the Party after he resigned in 1939 in the wake of the Nazi–Soviet pact. “The Last Chance” reunites Mathieu and Brunet, the trilogy’s protagonists, in a satisfying though rather staged debate between the philosophy teacher and the militant on morality and politics. But this volume is much more than a literary-philosophical curiosity. Many admirable passages of typically Sartrean narration, such as Mathieu’s dream at the start of the second section of “The Last Chance” or Moûlu’s off-set murder in the concluding section, make these stories worth reading. The translator’s voice is audible in this raw, American-English translation. Vasey does not shy away from rendering the crude language of the original, which could have sounded coy in British English. The translated text and the accompanying discussion together offer an interesting commentary on Sartre’s original, from the justification of the use of the preposition “of” in the title (as against previous renderings in

English as “The Roads to Freedom”) to a perceptive analysis of the relationship between tense usage, existentialist philosophy and Sartre’s fictional technique. This book will make readers want to go back to the first three volumes – and that is a testimony both to Sartre and to his translator.

ANGELA KERSHAW

Essays

Serge Soupel, Kevin L. Cope and Alexander Pettitt, editors

ADVENTURE

An eighteenth-century idiom:

Essays on the daring and the bold as a pre-

modern medium

343pp. AMS Press. £??.

978 0 404 64858 9

A few months before his death in 1754, Henry Fielding endured an adventure. It began with the sclerotic author, whose arms, legs and stomach had been swollen grotesquely by dropsy, being hoisted on to the ship that would take him, for his health, to Portugal. Of those watching from land, he observed, “few . . . failed of paying their compliments to me, by all manner of jests and insults”. Fielding continued to record his impressions as he headed for the Continent, the result being a poignant, defiantly witty and posthumously published book: *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*.

If this was one type of adventure, the *Journal* itself suffered another – a textual one. There are several types of adventure examined in the course of *Adventure: An eighteenth-century idiom*. Daniel Defoe and James Boswell go to Scotland (separately, that is); there is the cross-dressing Hannah Snell, and that spiritual adventurer John Bunyan. In Fielding’s case, his *Lisbon Journal* was altered before first publication to make it “bland”, Andrew Varney writes, “where Fielding was decidedly acerbic”. Something like the author’s original only entered the public domain, providentially, because of the Lisbon earthquake of November 1755; the publishers had a “pertinent” title on their hands, and duly cashed in.

Kevin L. Cope and Alexander Pettitt describe adventure as “a central but frequently elusive topic” in eighteenth-century life and literature – central because, for a start, this was a time when “adventuring had become an art form, a means of exciting aesthetic states of mind, stirring sensibilities, and eliciting the newly popular sense of sublimity”. This collection of essays makes those connections freshly visible, and has some satisfying, artistic moments of its own.

In his account of Lord Orford’s Fenland cruise of 1774, for example, H. J. K. Jenkins manages to bring in Captain Cook, the Hell-fire Club, Lewis Carroll, the American War of Independence, and all the pleasures and perils of navigating the waterways between Lakenheath Lode and Peterborough. Reflections of the worsening American crisis appear in Orford’s dealings with the locals, while reports of cannibalism in New Zealand inspire a joke about one passenger’s failure to report back to the Fenland “Fleet” before nightfall. But the name of the ship that brought back those reports? Adventure. Perhaps the topic was not so elusive after all.

MICHAEL CAINES