Public Drinking in the Early Modern World: Voices from the Tavern, 1500-1800 (review)

Sharon V. Salinger
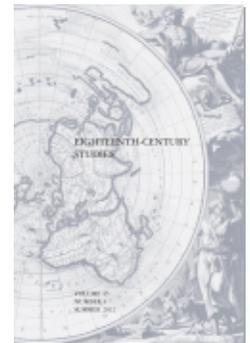
for children about Sunday observance. The transformation of the frame story in the second example would be clearer had Markey cut some of the general remarks on fable and devoted more space to the frame story in *The Fool*; the account of Henry Moreland's first five years is surely one of the most unusual depictions of childhood in the English novel, but is still not particularly well known.

By making available interesting new works by Anglo-Irish writers, Markey has made a very welcome contribution to the field of historical children's literature, in which the rarity of original editions, combined with the high incidence of anonymous works, has encouraged the tendency to riff on a handful of famous books instead of striking out into less familiar territory.

SHARON V. SALINGER, *University of California, Irvine*

Thomas E. Brennan, gen. ed., *Public Drinking in the Early Modern World: Voices from the Tavern, 1500–1800*, 4 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011). £350.00 / $625.00.

Thomas Brennan, general editor of this four-volume collection, opens his introductory essay with a question: Why did the historian go into the bar? But this is not intended as a joke. Taverns, and the drinking that took place inside them, were serious enterprises that offer historians an entrée into the most important sites of sociability in the early modern world. As the multiple editors explain, after the Reformation, when profane activities were banned from the church, public houses emerged as the main locus of social life. Thus taverns provide a view into a broad range of cultural and economic practices; they offer insight into how society gathered, did business, sorted itself out by status and gender, and consumed. And because public drinking took place inside the tavern, sociologists and anthropologists use it as a laboratory in which to study the role of alcohol. The ranting of religious and political leaders about the dangers of drink presents yet another vantage point: What values did the public house threaten? Whom did they fear abused drink? What were the social consequences of too much alcohol? Finally, the editors suggest that the efforts to regulate and tax drinking constituted some of the initial steps toward state building, thus enabling us to glean insights into rulers' views and agendas for their populations.

The documents in these volumes focus on taverns and drinking in early modern France (volume one), the Holy Roman Empire of the German nations (volumes two and three), and the North American colonies (volume four). (For unexplained reasons, a proposed volume on England was dropped.) Each volume reflects editorial decisions about what to include. The collection is intended for multiple audiences; for scholars who are working on taverns or topics related to the public house and drinking, it provides convenient access to texts from a variety of locations. These volumes are also a valuable addition to an undergraduate library, as they allow students to work with primary sources and tackle research projects, especially from a comparative perspective.

Broadly, this collection is intended to illuminate the character, function, and significance of drinking establishments. Because of the size and complexity of

the task, the editors did not set out to include every possible manuscript source related to the public house. Rather, their explicit guiding rule was to collect exemplary documents from the places where the most recent research has occurred on taverns and from which studies have been published.

What this collection does best is to reveal that taverns and drinking contributed to their respective societies in remarkably congruent ways. For example, in each region the largest administrative unit produced materials. In the Holy Roman Empire, laws, taxation, surveys, registers, and legal theory emerged from the level of the empire and territories. In France, these documents originated on the national level, and in North America from the individual colonies.

The laws regulating public houses and their patrons were also remarkably consistent, as were their critics. By the sixteenth century, a standard set of rules regulated public houses and drinking throughout the Holy Roman Empire. In each region, as well, theologians and pastors created documents lamenting tavern abuses, supplemented with occasional choruses by local magistrates. These tirades pointed most directly at the potential economic disaster that accompanied too much time spent inside the public house, as well as the possibilities for debauchery. Variations did occur within the realm of enforcement, waxing and waning based on the shrillness of the critics or the role of local political influence. However, legal sources reveal that authorities in each locale worried most about maintaining moral order and economic stability. Thus local and regional ordinances were linked inextricably with fears about tavern abuse and public drunkenness.

In each of the areas covered, anxiety over social control was tied to status; authorities pointed their collective fingers at the misuse of the tavern by the laboring classes and the poor, since these were the strata of society most vulnerable to the effects of tavern abuse. The tavern appeared poised to plunge these groups into chaos and debauchery. Such fears, however, were not expressed about the public houses that catered to society's elite, nor did anyone claim that over-drinking or spending too much time in the public house would destroy society's upper stratum.

In each region, publicans were held responsible for keeping good order inside their houses or else risk punishment. Pervasive as well were local laws requiring public houses to lodge overnight guests, as authorities needed to ensure that visitors to their towns would find appropriate lodging and food. Taverns were thus implicated in more than local sociability; their housing of travelers implied that commercial success was dependent upon how visitors were received, perhaps even influencing their willingness to continue doing business in specific locales.

For each locale, a section of documents is devoted to investigating tavern patronage: Who tended to patronize the public house? Were individuals or groups forbidden to imbibe? However, the editors do not agree on the extent to which patrons defined the role of the public house. The volumes on France and the Holy Roman Empire fit taverns within a discourse of inclusion or exclusion, suggesting that they were implicated in the social and economic structure of society. On the other hand, the editor responsible for the volume on colonial America treats public houses as an institution involved in community development rather than as "sociocultural constructs" (4:xii). But these different lenses still produce comparable categories of documents, though each editor cautions that the sheer variety of people who ate, drank, lodged, and sought conviviality mitigates against a comprehensive collection. Thus the focus is on the range of patrons, their reasons for gathering, and the boundaries governing who was or was not welcome. Particular patrons drew suspicion, and these categories typified each region as well.

In general, soldiers, who had a complicated relationship to the public house, were the least welcome. Quartering laws required that the owners of taverns and other buildings provide military men with lodging. This imposition, combined with the troops' sometimes forcible securing of provisions, was exacerbated by the fact that publicans usually were not reimbursed for their expenses. Soldiers raised concerns as well about maintaining order. While they were not the only potentially violent drinkers, they had a reputation for hard drinking and hard fighting, phrases that put fear in the hearts of tavern keepers seeking to preserve the peace and their glassware. Women inside taverns were also eyed with universal misgiving. While they did patronize the tavern for special events—engagement ceremonies, weddings, christenings, and more—and often in the company of their husbands, women who drank in public were suspect.

These collections intimate as well that rituals of drinking were essential in defining relationships. In early modern Europe, for example, when a craftsman arranged for supplies or a customer ordered a product, the transaction took place in the tavern and was sealed with a drink. When the military contracted with new recruits or journeymen signed on with a new master, these conversations also took place in the public house and were made official by drink. The elites followed the same pattern. They met in the tavern to negotiate a business contract or political agreement, and rounds of drinks finalized their work.

Among the largest sections in these collections are those containing documents devoted to violence and mayhem. They leave little doubt that tavern laws, and the accompanying moral outrage directed at the public house and drinking, were designed to maintain order. Each region provides ample evidence to support the claim that taverns were correctly identified as sites of disorder, a space where disagreements were acted out, to a large extent, because challenges and quarrels were fueled by alcohol.

The utility of this series is greatly enhanced by the essays that begin each volume and precede each section. These pieces allow the reader to put the documents into an appropriate context, since only rarely do particular topics warrant more than a few examples. They also provide points of comparison among the regions. But while it is clear that the topics concerning the tavern resulted in similar groupings and categories in which to place the documents, it would have been far easier for a reader to maneuver from place to place if the volume editors had all followed a specific organization of materials, using the same section headings and subheadings. For example, some documents appear to be unique to a region, but it is unclear whether this reflects the region, the extent of surviving documents, or the volume editor's preferences. Similarly, volume two contains a short, tantalizing section on the convergence of the tavern and the church. Documents chronicle the drink and food consumed by churchwardens, a short list of taverns owned or operated by clergy, and refreshments offered by tavern keepers to the old and infirm pilgrims on their church visitations. One item describes brewers of beer offering "to lubricate the throats dried out . . . by praying" (2: 118). While all of the regions contain numerous examples chronicling the oppositional relationship between drinking and religion, only for the Holy Roman Empire can we access materials on such a synergy. Was this a special instance found only there, or did the other editors overlook similar documents? More coordination among the editors and more transparency about choices would have strengthened the collection as a whole.

Similarly, documents for France and colonial America connect ordinances regulating drinking with sumptuary laws, further implicating taverns in maintain-

ing status hierarchies within society. In the linking of excessive drinking to status, alcohol joined the list of controlled items that included food, pieces of clothing, and gifts. What is confusing is how to interpret the need to place tavern patronage with other indicators of rank, given that the editor maintains that early American taverns provide a better understanding of development than of status hierarchy. By the same token, are we to conclude that the Holy Roman Empire did not have sumptuary laws, that alcohol was not included on the list of controlled items, or that the editor determined that these topics were of insufficient interest?

On the whole, however, this is a valuable collection for anyone interested in discovering how public houses fit into early modern life, and for those who wish to sample the variety of manuscripts generated. Few sites in the early modern world produced such a vast array of material, both the serious and the hilarious. Near sections on the law, you can read about violations; soon after reading the missives on the dangers of drinking, you'll find descriptions of the inebriated. *Public Drinking* does indeed beckon the historian to venture inside the tavern.

ERIN PARKER, *University of Toronto*

Lois E. Bueler, ed., *Clarissa: The Eighteenth-Century Response, 1747–1804*, 2 vols. (New York: AMS Press, 2010). Vol. 1, *Reading Clarissa*. Pp. xxv + 634; Vol. 2, *Rewriting Clarissa*. Pp. xx + 341. $520.00.

Famous for the controversy it caused and for the unruly sequels and parodies it inspired, Samuel Richardson's first novel *Pamela* is an important text for eighteenth-century reception studies. So, too, is his *Clarissa*, a book equally remarkable for the profusion of responses it provoked. Contemporary readers from Europe and North America had much to say about this gargantuan novel; Lois E. Bueler's two-volume collection lets us listen in on what she calls this "great conversation" by bringing together written commentary on and adaptations of *Clarissa*, some of which appear here for the first time in print or in English translation. Although more extensive critical analysis of the material would have enriched the first volume, Bueler's collection is a testament to the international flavor of *Clarissa*'s reception and the novel's impact on its readers. Reflecting the field's continued fascination with book history and the history of readers, this is a valuable resource for scholars interested not only in Richardson's works and the period's literature and culture, but also in abridgement, translation, biography, and pedagogy, subjects to which *Clarissa*'s readers frequently return.

Reading Clarissa, the first volume, sorts contemporary commentary on Richardson's novel into eight chapters: "First Reactions"; "Friends of Samuel Richardson"; "Obituaries & Biographies"; "Readers' Responses"; "*Clarissa* in Novels & Plays"; "Ethics & Education"; "Literary Criticism"; and "Looking Back: Barbauld & Her Reviewers." By conveniently assembling nearly two hundred reactions in one place, this volume reveals the wide reach of *Clarissa*'s influence and the fervency of the debate which it sparked. Even readers who admire the novel will find it refreshing to hear the complaints of Horace Walpole, who clearly takes delight in his own cleverness when he repeatedly quips that the "French have adopted the