pervasive eighteenth-century interest in the social, and in "manners and customs," rendered polarities between public and private highly problematic. By the early nineteenth century, their convergence was articulately conceded by, amongst others, the historian and critic James Mackintosh, a self-declared "novellophagist" and fan of Jane Austen.

Phillips's identification of different genres of history-writing is subtle and convincing. His purview includes well-known works of "philosophical" history, such as David Hume's *History of England* (though Edward Gibbon is given short shrift) as well as lesser-known works, such as Helen Maria Williams's *Letters Written in France, in the Summer of 1790, to a Friend in England.* In the latter work, the epistolary form becomes a powerful medium for developing affective possibilities that are constrained in traditional narrative structure. Yet the distinctions are not absolute. Through the process of "reframing," even classical narrative becomes infused with sentimental possibilities, while still serving traditional didactic and civic purposes. Hume was himself alert to this complexity, describing himself as the man who shed a tear for Charles I and the Earl of Strafford, while condemning their public conduct. Hume argued that historical distance permitted the kind of emotive appeal that contemporary royalist historians of the Civil War, notably Clarendon, eschewed. Yet in so doing he ran the risk of problematizing the distinction between private virtue and public conduct, not clarifying it as he claimed to be doing. His Scottish contemporary, Adam Smith, recognised that the reader was the ultimate authority in this kind of determination. Even Tacitius, by reputation the most tough-minded of classical historians, could be read as a sentimentalist.

This kind of evidence suggests that we now require a detailed study of history readership to complement Phillips's analysis of history authorship. This is not in any way, though, to imply a criticism of Phillips's richly textured achievement. My only quibble with this fine book is with the way in which it which it casually ascribes ultimate influence on the shaping of genres to the power of commerce and its supposedly attendant sensibilities. To privilege commerce in this way has become a clichéd assumption in studies of eighteenth-century culture. It is one, though, that requires ongoing scrutiny, not uncritical acceptance.

Brock University John Sainsbury

Modern Europe/L'Europe moderne

Tosca's Rome: The Play and the Opera in Historical Perspective, by Susan Vandiver Nicassio. Chicago, Illinois, University of Chicago Press, 1999. xxi, 335 pp. $45.00 U.S. (cloth), $19.00 U.S. (paper).

The theatre is rarely a successful venue for relating history accurately: the demands of dramaturgy will inevitably outweigh those of historical accuracy. The legitimate and the lyric stages are equally susceptible in this area, and the one has often

influenced the other. Schiller's rewriting of history to allow Mary, Queen of Scots, to actually encounter Elizabeth, Queen of England, had too much dramatic potential to omit in the interests of historical accuracy when the play came to serve as the basis for Donizetti's opera, *Maria Stuarda* (1834). While one might forgive a work containing one scene that stretches historical truth, it is likely best to turn a blind eye to what happened to the story of Joan of Arc after Schiller turned it into a play, itself subsequently cannibalised to provide a traditional love story for Verdi's opera, *Giovanna d'Arco* (1845). Is there any value, then, in studying these theatrical illusions passing as representations of history, or do they merely provide convenient fodder for the current interest in interdisciplinary studies? No study of a single work, including the one under present review, will validate either view completely. Nicassio's *Tosca's Rome* does, however, approach the study in a novel way, and is not without merit.

The libretto for Puccini's *Tosca* (1900) was based upon Sardou's play, *La Tosca*, (1887). Although both works were successful, the continued popularity of the opera ultimately silenced Sardou's play. The story contained in both is historically-oriented, with action that begins just before midday on 17 June 1800 and ends just after dawn on 18 June. The settings are real, historical characters are included (in larger numbers in the play than in the opera), and the shared plots are rooted in the Napoleonic era. Yet both works are examples of fiction which redefine the eighteenth century in light of nineteenth-century perceptions, and which distort historical fact for dramatic expediency. These considerations do not deter Nicassio, however, who states that "in certain circumstances, 'bad' history, distorted through the preoccupations and prejudices of its practitioners, can tell us as much as 'good' history" (p. 3). Indeed, "the subject of this book lies in the creative interaction between this 'redefinition' and the period as scholars are now coming to understand it" (p. 4). Certainly, Nicassio's perspective on the subject matter is unique: her first career was that of a singer, with the role of Tosca in her repertoire. She has subsequently taught history at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

The first two chapters of the book will likely appeal to more "traditional" academic interests. Here, Nicassio examines the genesis of the play and the opera with specific reference to the anti-clerical philosophies then prevalent in both France and Italy. An examination of the history of the relationship between the papacy and the city of Rome follows, revealing the tensions between church and state. These overviews are well documented, clearly presented, and contain numerous illustrations. For some, these two chapters will be the most successful parts of the book. The three chapters which follow are more problematic, however. Here, the author presents Rome during the late years of the eighteenth century as it would have been experienced by the three principal characters: Floria Tosca (opera singer), Mario Cavaradossi (painter) and the Baron Scarpia (the chief of police). Possible models for these characters from history are suggested, as well as the historical reality of each occupation. The author just escapes the charge of having written historical fiction (all three characters being dramatic inventions by Sardou) by concentrating on historical fact, but these chapters do not consistently transcend the artificiality of their premise. That said, opera singers and stage directors would benefit from reading this section of the book as a reminder of how

different Rome in 1800 was from what is commonly presented on the operatic stage.

The last four chapters examine opera scene by scene in terms of plot and character development, with the events of the libretto put into the context of the historical locations. Even a floor plan of the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle (the setting of Act I) is given. The detail which the author presents is admirable, but it also serves to point out the weaknesses of the musical analyses which are given. The latter are brief, often inconsequential, and, given that the author "makes no representations as to musical expertise," would have been better left to a co-author (p. 5). Certainly, the reader can find far more penetrating musical insights elsewhere, including Mosco Carner's *Cambridge Opera Handbook* for this opera.

Throughout, the book is lavishly illustrated, although the reproductions are not always ideally clear. The lengthy bibliography shows that Nicassio has cast her net widely and well. Her writing style is engaging; indeed, it is hard not to be won over by someone who describes her own singing career as "too brief to be called undistinguished" (p. xiv). Yet, ultimately, the book resembles a collection of related essays, in which the whole is not equal to the sum of its parts, a point further underscored by the lack of a satisfying conclusion. That said, the opening chapters will be useful for students of history, and the world of opera practitioners will profit from the remainder of the book.

School of Music, Memorial University of Newfoundland Paul F. Rice

Fontanka 16: The Tsars' Secret Police, by Charles A. Ruud and Sergei A. Stepanov. Montreal, Quebec, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999. ix. 394 pp: $39.95 Cdn (cloth).

In late nineteenth-century St. Petersburg, the address "Fontanka 16" became a shorthand for "secret police." From the 1830s until 1917, the tsarist secret political police, the Okhranka, was headquartered there. In co-operation with the military police — the Corps of Gendarmes — the Okhranka worked to detect and counteract subversion against the Russian state. By the time of the collapse of the Russian autocracy in February 1917, Okhranka informants kept watch virtually everywhere.

This wide-ranging study, a revised version of the authors' 1994 Russian-language work, focuses on the activities of the Okhranka and the Gendarmes from the 1880s to 1917. Charles A. Ruud and Sergei A. Stepanov have mined a rich collection of memoirs and archival materials to explore the psychology and workings of the secret police. They offer an illuminating picture of the Okhranka side in the cat-and-mouse game that the revolutionaries and the tsarist state played from the mid nineteenth century on. Indeed, a central theme of the book is the symbiotic relationship that existed between revolutionaries and police, and the considerable cross-over of personnel and methods between the two categories.

Ruud and Stepanov open by reviewing the evolution of the tsarist security apparatus from the sixteenth century through the formation of the first comprehensive secret police service under Nicholas I in 1826. The infamous Third Section of His Majesty's Own Chancellery tracked public opinion through censorship, the