

footnotes. The references in the printed book are — as the author himself states in the “Notes About This Book” (p. xv) — limited to the minimum necessary, while the richer note structure can be examined in the online version of the book (<http://www.cambridge.org/9780521877282>). The decision to minimize can also be seen in the limited literature list of “only” 10 pages (pp. 645–654), which is very useful for those interested in the topic.

With its nearly 650 text pages, Donahue’s volume is an impressive contribution to the knowledge on mediaeval societies, legal systems, and the different kinds of marriage institutions. Reading through such an immense amount of detail is an exhausting — but at the same time exceptionally inspiring — experience.

Kirsi Salonen
University of Tampere, Finland

ELLENZWEIG, Sarah — *The Fringes of Belief: English Literature, Ancient Heresy, and the Politics of Freethinking, 1660–1760*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.

At a moment of intense debate over the nature of the Enlightenment, Sarah Ellenzweig’s *The Fringes of Belief* comes as an added reminder of just how complex and contrapuntal intellectual history can be. By challenging the conventional secularization story that ties the advance of freethinking to the progress of radical and republican thought, Ellenzweig considers a string of literary figures, from Restoration to Augustan England, whose scepticism led them to make a series of conservative religious and political arguments. Focusing on John Wilmot, Aphra Behn, Jonathan Swift, and Alexander Pope, Ellenzweig emphasizes a shared debt to the freethinking rejection of Christian dogma that sharpened these authors’ sense of the importance of traditional religion for the stability of political society. Despite an occasional oversimplification, this engaging study will be of interest to literary scholars, historians, and scholars of the Enlightenment more generally.

The first part of *The Fringes of Belief* moves beyond Rochester’s and Behn’s libertine critique of Christian sexual morality by exploring the significance of their more philosophical and theological reflections. In the “Satyre against Mankind” and “Addition,” for example, Ellenzweig connects Rochester’s identification of reason and enthusiasm as indistinguishable to his correspondence with the freethinker Charles Blount. Rochester’s poetry embraces Blount’s contention that traditional religion should be upheld prudently, rather than rationally. In criticizing the religious enthusiasm of the English civil war, Rochester and Blount were thus at one in lauding the political benefits of traditional religion as a pious fraud. Contextualizing Rochester in this way makes good historical sense, as several scholars have previously demonstrated. However, the contrast made between Anglican traditionalists and freethinkers, on the one hand, and rationalists like the Cambridge Platonists, on the other, is made too quickly. Aside

from a lack of much detailed support, this contrast remains inattentive to the role of reason within rationalist theology and the large swath of shared terrain between so-called religious “traditionalists” and “rationalists.” In connecting Rochester to Behn, and both to freethinking, however, Ellenzweig is surely right to point out a mutual admiration of Epicurus and a shared unorthodox perspective on religion and nature. Through a study of Behn’s translation of Fontenelle and her fictional work, including *Oroonoko* and *The Widow Ranter*, Ellenzweig reveals a significant debt to freethinking in Behn’s conception of God, her understanding of nature, and her Spinozist interpretation of Scripture and miracles.

The second part of the book traces the influence of freethinking arguments through Swift and Pope to Voltaire and the French Enlightenment, beginning with Swift’s criticism of religious enthusiasm and inspiration in the *Tale of a Tub*. Ellenzweig takes Swift’s parody of the sartorialists and aeolists as naturalizing the causes of spiritual inspiration and divine essence indebted to the previous criticisms of Hobbes and Toland. The question becomes, then, whether or not Swift regarded Christianity itself as a tale of a tub, that is, a politically useful fraud. Turning to some of Swift’s other work for support, Ellenzweig finds further evidence for this allegiance in the “Argument against Abolishing Christianity,” “Sentiments of a Church-of-England Man,” “Some Thoughts on Free-thinking,” and the “Project for the Advancement of Religion.” Likewise, when Pope’s *Essay on Man* is read alongside letters exchanged between Pope, Swift, and Bolingbroke, it becomes clear that Pope too owes a significant debt to English freethinking. Pope thought that natural religion contained all the truths of revealed religion and, in the *Essay*, questioned man’s unique status within the Christian cosmos in heterodox terms. Ellenzweig also traces the controversy surrounding the *Essay*’s appearance in French and Voltaire’s reaction to it. While Voltaire had initially praised the *Essay*, he subsequently rejected its encomium “whatever is, is right” because it was inattentive to the conditions of evil and injustice. The political conservatism of English freethinking was, for Voltaire, incapable of providing the basis of a transformational Enlightenment project.

By narrating the politics of freethinking in early modern English literature in this way, Ellenzweig reminds us that the trajectory of Enlightenment intellectual history is as contingent, contested, even contradictory, as any other.

Kenneth Sheppard
Johns Hopkins University

KELLY, Catriona — *Children’s World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890–1991*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007. Pp. 714.

This meticulously researched and eminently readable book (which includes 95 pages of endnotes) tackles a vast subject — growing up in Russia — that extends from the last years of the Russian empire to the collapse of the USSR in 1991. The time period is further subdivided into four parts: the