a uniform lack of explanation of complex nomenclature, and of the many changing factions in both Gaelic Irish and Anglo-Irish communities. Even the ambitious Gill history series with its aim of presenting specialist scholarship to the general reader, suffers in this area. These volumes were also rather unattractively produced with compressed print, few paragraph breaks and very few further references (see Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland in the Middle Ages*, 1972; Lydon, *The Lordship of Ireland in the Middle Ages*, 1972; Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 1972). These deficiencies in older material have been well addressed by Duffy in this book. He explains in sufficient detail for the generalist and beginner audience the historiography of the period in the introduction, thus arming the reader for future forays into further research in the area. The inclusion of clear maps and explanations of some the conventions of Gaelic-Irish names are also most welcome.

The book is divided into seven chronological chapters starting with the situation in Ireland on the eve of the invasions of the Anglo-Norman adventurers in 1189 and ending with the political equilibrium between the descendants of these adventurers and the descendants of those they displaced on the eve of the Tudor conquests at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The chief attraction of this book is its clarity of style and its success in rendering the complexities of the political situations understandable to the non-specialist. The notes and bibliography, though by no means exhaustive, do include the most recent scholarly articles and books as well as the most important of the older material, too much of which is not available in Australia. Overall this readable survey is highly recommended for anyone wishing to have an authoritative overview of this sometimes obscure period in Irish history with well chosen references for further reading. Duffy is to be congratulated with having achieved this difficult task.

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The publication of Lynne Hunt’s *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History* is timely in two important respects. First, it comes at a time when there has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of secondary school students who have chosen the French Revolution as a subject of study, and it offers a valuable thematic collection of documents that will be accessible to readers at this level. It is also sufficiently comprehensive to offer a useful documentary survey for university students and general readers who wish to examine the ideals and the achievements of the French Revolution in the domain of human rights. Secondly, the anthology serves as a useful reminder, at a time
when revisionist historians such as William Doyle are questioning the achievements of the French Revolution, just how impassioned the debate was, and how difficult and intractable some problems seemed to be. Robert Darnton may well remind us, in *The Kiss of Lamourette*, that the French Revolution was a bold and exhilarating project to 'make the world anew', involving not only the complete administrative reorganisation of France, but the creation of new social relationships, even of new ways of perceiving the world. The present generation, fascinated and horrified by the grisly spectacle of the last stages of the Terror depicted in a film such as Wajda's *Danton*, needs to be reminded of the full breadth of the idealism and generosity of revolutionary ideals. This is not to say that Hunt offers either an apology or an idealisation of the revolution; her decision to include documents relating to the process of debate, instead of limiting herself to the finished documents that were its end product, does much to reveal the power of material interests behind many important decisions, notably the abolition of slavery.

Lynne Hunt's choice and grouping of documents is both discriminating and assured. The first section of the anthology deals with the attempt to define human rights before 1789, and contains the most pertinent documents from the *philosophes* as well as from some less well known documents by anti-slavery activists. The second section deals with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, and is most useful because it includes examples of the debates that preceded the actual declaration. These documents allow us to look beyond the great certainties of the Declaration, to explore the hopes, as well as the very real doubts and fears, of the deputies to the National Assembly as they contemplated the legislation. The third, and longest section, deals with the difficult question of the ongoing debate about citizenship and rights during the revolution.

Hunt usefully problematises this question further by dividing the debate into four main issues, all of which vitiated the magnificent universalism of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. It is here that the historian will find the richest and most provocative controversy, for the French, like the Americans before them, had to struggle with the painful paradox of having made a sweeping declaration of universal principle that was not then applied to all members of society.

Hunt explores first the issue of the redefinition of political eligibility, which divided citizens into 'active' and 'passive' citizens, in essence, propertied and non-propertied people. Secondly, she turns to the important question of how the French Revolution dealt with religious minorities, and gives special emphasis to the position of Jews in France. Thirdly, she examines the important issue of slavery, which the revolutionaries did not abolish until 1794. Finally, she examines the important problem of the formal exclusion of women from politics (an exclusion which lasted, in France, until 1944), a long-standing injustice in any terms, and particularly incomprehensible in a country where women had played such an important intellectual role in the Enlightenment, and such a crucial direct role in the crowd action of the French Revolution. Readers will be intrigued by the terms of the debates regarding the closure of women's revolutionary clubs, which reveal that the male deputies of the Convention had clearly felt a dual challenge to their authority: the contestation of class offered by
the sans-culottes, and the contestation of gender offered by increasingly militant women. In all four cases Hunt not only includes all the key documents that one would expect to find in such an anthology, but also contextualises them with a stimulating array of less well known documents. The end result is that lecturers and teachers who find that their students are curious about the *contradictions* between the universalism of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen and the actual programme of inclusion into the national body politic will have the terms of the debate set out clearly before them, with due attention to the full range of opinion.

Finally, Hunt has made some attempt to take account of the important visual culture of the French Revolution, and to include some of the images by which the revolutionaries attempted to translate political principles into pictorial form. The front matter does not contain a list of illustrations, but each image is accompanied by a useful explanatory caption. The two portraits of famous men (Rabaut Saint Etienne and Sieyès) are perhaps less interesting than those dealing with the issue of slavery, including a rare example of an engraving known to be by a female artist. There is, however, only one illustration dealing with the important issue of the representation of women, a subject that surely deserves greater pictorial treatment. The most notable omission in terms of illustration, however, is an example from the corpus of images that express the optimism and idealism of the period 1789-90, when the government proceeded apace with the massive reorganisation of the nation. The artists of the time registered the sense of hopefulness and excitement in beautiful images which celebrated the end of privilege and the application of civic equality in the ideal of citizenship. In doing so, they created a new iconography of the three orders of society working together to create what they hoped would be a regenerated society founded on humane and enlightened principles. Such images would do a great deal, in juxtaposition to the documents, to remind us of the original ideals of the revolution.

In terms of French Revolution studies, Hunt’s anthology is comprehensive, innovative and well-balanced. It also reconceptualises the traditional debate over the revolutionary record on human rights in terms of the contemporary world. Most students of the revolution would be aware that the American and the French formulations of human rights have profoundly influenced our own understandings of the concept today. Hunt’s comments serve to remind us of the concept of the ‘long revolution’: while neither the American nor the French Revolution immediately extended human rights to all members of society, both served to initiate a long-term process of debate in which the rights of women and of slaves would ultimately be addressed. The greatest perplexity of the contemporary world, however, is that we are learning that, in another sense altogether, these ‘universal rights’ are not universal at all. She reminds us that one of the greatest problems the Western democracies face, in international and diplomatic forums, is the accusation that human rights are an invention of Western civilisation, and one which they seek to impose on other countries. Nations as different as China and Indonesia have sternly warned the Western democracies and the United Nations that they should not seek to impose their own values upon countries with radically different societies and cultures. This is
a contestation that throws us back to re-examine our own assumptions about the nature of human rights; if we declare that certain rights are universal, then we assume that they will of course be perceived as universal by all people, irrespective of political traditions and social differences. Clearly, as Australia seeks to define its position in the Asia-Pacific region, this question of human rights will continue to be a crucial point of debate for future politicians, diplomats and business people who have to deal with foreign governments. If we are to judge from the performance of contemporary Australian politicians, who seem to struggle to reconcile domestic concern over human rights with foreign challenges to the very concept, these important matters of principle, and of conscience, will not easily be translated into practice. It is very timely, then, to be reminded of the fundamental terms of the great revolutionary project to define human rights, and of Western society’s own long struggle to realise that project.

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There are two enduring, yet contrasting, images of Edwardian Britain. One is that of an Indian summer of British greatness, an era in which the sun never set on the British Empire. The other is of a time of mounting social unrest overshadowed by the dark clouds of an impending war. Most studies of the Edwardian years are premised upon one of these two views — glory or doom — but David Powell offers a new perspective, one which reassesses traditional accounts of early twentieth century Britain.

Powell’s primary concern is to present ‘a fresh assessment of the severity or otherwise of the “Edwardian crisis”’ (p. viii). In order to do so, he examines the fundamental problems and tensions which confronted Edwardian Britain — constitutional and party conflict, suffragette militancy, trade union and Irish unrest — and asks whether these issues were interconnected and whether they seriously constituted a revolutionary threat to the political and social system. In posing these questions, Powell consciously situates himself outside the dominant Halevy/Dangerfield paradigm which defines Edwardian Britain as a time of generalised crisis and semi-conscious revolt, and thereby presupposes an answer to such inquiries. It is, therefore, primarily in relation to the Halevy/Dangerfield paradigm that Powell considers the depth and severity of the Edwardian crisis.

Powell contends that, to the extent that one can speak of a crisis at all in the Edwardian period, it was a political and not a social or economic one. For Powell, however, politics is merely that which takes place within the parliamentary arena. Hence, given this rather narrow conception of politics, Powell concentrates primarily on constitutional matters and examines the viability of Edwardian liberalism in the face of competition from the Labour left.