kind of intellectual history which fashions a “great chain of ideas” from links of loose analogy. But Zaret’s emphasis on the commercial and the material aspects of print culture as the motors of political change does sometimes leave one wondering about ideas. In those principled defences of public debate that did emerge, especially in Leveller writings, can we really attribute all to the exigencies and consequences of print? Zaret sees precedents in earlier religious, especially Puritan, writings that also encourage probative reading, but he downplays their importance for later developments. To classical republicanism, he allows no causal influence at all. In an epilogue, however, in order to explain later developments, particularly Locke’s seminal accommodation of public opinion into his theory of political authority, Zaret posits a sudden (disputable, I think) confidence in the reason of “the people,” attributable (also disputably) to the twin causes of the “rise of deism” and the “rise of science,” as exemplified by the foundation of the Royal Society. Here, I suggest, Zaret falls into hedgehog ways himself.

The one idea to which he himself is clearly committed is the normative status of liberal-democratic ideology. The teleological thrust of the book, even of the title, suggests this; the book is implicitly about how “our” democratic principles began, and mid-seventeenth century material is measured according to how close it is to “our” way of thinking. Thus, the tiny minority of Leveller writers represent, in a way familiar from the looser kind of intellectual history, a kind of heroic crest. To some extent, Zaret makes his one idea transparent: one of his explicit intentions in writing the book is to counter the pessimism of postmodernism and critical theory about the contemporary public sphere, by showing that the culprits so often cited in the “death” of the public sphere (commercialization and an unprecedented proliferation of text) were in fact the very phenomena which gave rise to the public sphere in the first place. Nonetheless, Zaret’s evident loyalty to liberal democracy leaves unquestioned the persistent power of this admittedly very useful political model, originating in seventeenth-century England, to uphold rather uneven standards of admission into the public sphere. Locke and the Levellers may have had more faith in the people’s input than their predecessors, but “the people” then, and still to some extent now, were normatively male, property-owning, European, and white.

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William Slights. *Managing Readers: Printed Marginalia in English Renaissance Books*. Editorial Theory and Literary Criticism. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001. Pp. xii, 298.

William Slights’ *Managing Readers: Printed Marginalia in English Renaissance Books* offers a meditation on the power of the sidenote. Opening with spectacular examples of the marginated book in Erasmus’ *Moriae encomium*, Spenser’s *The Shepherdes Calender* and Jonson’s *Sejanus*, Slights argues that the sophisticated

and ample annotation featured in these works does more than simply advertise humanist traffic with the past; it connects these works and their authors to the controversies of their times.

Having established a broad intertextual function for printed marginalia, Slights sets out a theoretical framework for understanding the power of annotation in the “paradoxical centrality of the margins.” Slights’ “theory of margination” involves looking at the early modern sidenote’s relation to the main text through the lens of post-structuralist conceptions of edge and center, alterity, and referentiality. He maintains that annotation has the power to mediate the text and manage the reader.

From here Slights’ vision of marginalia’s power unfolds, chapter by chapter, as he shows the annotational process in action. His method is to show the heyday of the marginal note in various sets of historical circumstances. His aim is to assess “the cultural work done in the margins of early modern books.”

In Chapter Three, Slights examines a selection of Bibles, printed in English between 1525 and 1611. He argues that Biblical translation and marginalia were a locus of interpretive speculation, despite a general undercurrent of “interpretive anxiety.” He sees rival Christian groups struggling to contain interpretive possibilities in the marginal material. “Each time an elaborately marginated Bible rolled off the press,” he concludes, “it was followed by one or more modestly annotated versions with just enough marginalia to counteract . . . the more bizarre glossarial excesses of the previous one.”

In Chapter Four, Slights looks at multiple versions of marginalia in one book — John Dee’s *General and Rare Memorials* (1577). A work of “national scripture,” this text was designed to persuade England’s decision-makers to establish a royal navy. Slights views the elaborate and revised marginalia in surviving copies of this work as a collaboration between the author and the printer to influence national policy. Dee’s diligence in the margins, and the elaborate techniques utilized by the printer, John Daye, create a volume that, Slights says, “leaves no doubt that its makers viewed the printed page as an instrument of direct political influence.”

Slights turns to the impact of politics on marginalia in Chapter Five. Looking at books published in 1605, he argues that the various crises of authority in that year “made it imperative to colonize the text along its borders.” Referring to marginal material here as the “exoskeleton” of a text, and emphasizing the “interventionist politics” of annotation in 1605, Slights kicks the power of the margins up another notch.

Slights moves to marginalia’s impact on the writing of history in the next chapter. He sees the margins, risen to “lateral pre-eminence on the page,” as the place where alternative stories and new attitudes toward the writing of history were laid out in printed works of English history. This marginated page, he claims, shaped how readers understood the idea of history. Indeed, he makes a case for Shakespeare’s *Richard II*’s being derived, in important ways, from the marginal material of the chronicle histories.

In the final chapter, Slights turns from printed histories to polemic. Looking at a number of printed controversies, including pamphlets written under the name of Martin Marprelate (1588, 1589), Slights argues that the marginalia in these works constituted systems of response to previously printed words that created a “dialogic effect.” Readers, caught up in the charged atmosphere of the fight, were shaped into a partisan audience. With the power thus to engage readers, Slights’ vision of marginalia as an important tool for reader control comes to a close.

Interpretation, then, is both dangerous and desirable, and it is the argument of this book that printed marginalia in early modern English books, variously composed by authors, printers, publishers or editors, manage reader formation and “limit the reader’s interpretive freedom.” *Managing Readers: Printed Marginalia in English Renaissance Books* is also a welcome expository text, which sets out “the full range of annotational possibilities in the period.”

It appears to me that this mix of argument and exposition in Slights’ study creates a dual text that, like the marginated page itself, is rather too rich. In offering a survey of “the annotational endeavor” and “a theory of margination,” Slights gives the reader food for thought, as well as instruction in how to consume it. In short, Slights’ dual text limits our interpretive freedom even as it invites us to ponder the complexities of the sidenote phenomenon.

Slights’ concern with text precludes a consideration of early modern scholarly attitudes to cultural space. The humanist disciplinary regime involved a massive inscription of cultural space by classical and theological textual authority. This cultural space included the nooks of a newly private domestic scene: mottoes written on doors, windows, a ring, a cup, even a biscuit, please Erasmus in his educational treatises *De Ratione Studii* and *De Pueris Instituendis*. (Montaigne’s library, by the way, was decorated with maxims in Greek and Latin.) It also included unconsidered moments in the daily expanse of time: Vives’ regimen in his *Introduction to Wisdom* entails imprinting the intervals taken up with conversation, eating or sleep, with edifying instruction. It even extended to those at the margins of the socio-political scene, women and children. The defenses of girls’ and women’s education by Erasmus, More, Elyot and Vives attest to an inscription of cultural space in the humanist educational project that went right up to the edges of the socio-political “page.”

My intent here, in introducing another way of looking at the space of writing, is not to challenge Slights’ argument about marginalia, but to expand its import. Slights’ focus on the sidenote’s relation to the centered text is just too limiting; it misses the much more extensive way in which inscription was a form of humanist social control. This said, Slights’ survey of printed marginalia offers a valuable guide to the annotational endeavor of the era, and his disquisition on the power of the sidenote makes an important contribution to current critical thinking on the space of writing.

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