hypermale' (138) nature of techno-libertarianism. The favourable coverage by *Wired* of George Gilder is presented as evidence that techno-libertarianism is sexist, if not overtly, then at least subconsciously. The long hours and arduous work practices common in Silicon Valley are, according to Borsook, yet further proof of the anti-female techno-libertarianism promoted by *Wired*.

'Cybergenerous' is the title of the chapter that deals with the alleged lack of high-tech, and by implication techno-libertarian, philanthropy. High tech firms are strongly criticised for their practice of 'dead-rat' (200) giving. That is, like cats, they give what they consider to be most valuable, not what people actually want. Typically their dead-rat is a gift in the form of technology. As Borsook quite rightly points out, giving technology without offering to support it, or where there are more pressing concerns, is a clear example of dead-rat giving.

But Borsook doesn't leave it there, choosing to attack the lack of patronage of the arts by high-tech firms. These companies are criticised for giving too narrowly, in that they prefer to give to education in computer science and engineering, or to charities with easy to quantify output, rather than the arts. Techno-libertarian geeks are accused of being 'know-nothing philistines' (190) because of their alleged lack of artistic taste.

This last point brings into the open the underlying conflict in *Cyberselfish* between the numerically literate technologists/geeks and the humanist 'arty' crowd. At one point, Borsook recounts the story of a run in with a techno-libertarian who was attempting to court her via email. The encounter climaxes with Borsook emailing her suitor a criticism of libertarianism that draws the reply 'I bet your article will make you look good with your arty friends.' Borsook replies in her book with 'Voila! The ancient nerd-rage at being slighted by the (to him) attractive art student . . . subtly damned by the strangely impenetrable community of shared subjective values of humanities geeks' (62). Borsook's comments do not help her overall argument in any way, but simply show that she is as prone as any techno-libertarian to acting like a 'spoiled teenager' (233) when the mood suits her.

Ultimately it is this open hostility towards technologists, geeks, nerds, cypherpunks and other alleged representatives of techno-libertarianism which is the book's undoing. While there are a number of interesting issues raised in *Cyberselfish*, many of those who could benefit from the insights Borsook has to offer will never read beyond the introduction of this book. The reason? Right from the opening pages, Borsook makes her hatred of the techno-libertarian culture well known.

According to Borsook, techno-libertarianism is 'dangerously naïve and, at its worst, downright scary'. Beneath its shiny surface she has 'sensed nastiness, narcissism, and lack of human warmth, qualities that surely don't need to be hard wired into the fields of computing and communications' (5). She considers philosophical techno-libertarianism to be 'a kind of scary, physchologically brittle, prepolitical autism' (15). Throw in Borsook's foray into the pyschosexuality of cypherpunks and the overall impression of this book is that of a longer, but no more mature version of Borsook's, geek boy meets humanities girl encounter. Techno-libertarianism may be painted as cyberselfish, but Borsook's style makes her out to be a cybersook.

By making her personal hatred of all things libertarian so blatant from the start, Borsook potentially alienates readers who do not already share her position. From her introduction Borsook has not only been judge and jury of techno-libertarian culture, but has executed the prisoner as well. This is unfortunate as those who do venture past the introduction to *Cyberselfish* may have difficulty in accepting Borsook's analysis as an unbiased critique of techno-libertarianism. *Cyberselfish* will frustrate those whose concept of libertarianism and technology is not shared by Borsook, but the book may still be a worthwhile read as an insight into Silicon Valley life and the attitudes of its critics.

Reviewed by Heath Gibson

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The Representation of Business in English Literature

Introduced and edited by Arthur Pollard

Institute of Economic Affairs, 2000, 182 pp. £12
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Literature and business, as we know them today, are both features of the same modern world, yet from the very beginning the relationship between them, at least in English literature, has frequently been strained. The art of writing has come to rely on publishing as its means of dissemination. Publishing is a commercial undertaking that is notorious for its ruthlessness and lack of sentiment. Writers themselves have often, though not always, tended to view business in general in a negative light, while at the same time finding it an essential source of inspiration. Whether positive or negative in outlook, this book testifies to the fact that there are indeed riches to be found in the literary treatment of business.

The essays collected in this book constitute a valuable survey of the way in which English writers have viewed business from the 18th century to the present day. Daniel Defoe, the author of what is usually credited as the first novel in English, *Robinson Crusoe*, himself dabbled in business to varying degrees of success. The story of Crusoe can be read as a cautionary tale about the dangers of imprudence in commerce. Crusoe ends up alone on his island as a result of overreaching himself in his business ventures. Ultimately, we are told, he 'triumphs over adversity by learning to be both pious and prudent'. The novel can thus 'be read as a paean of praise to business practice'.

The positive attitude expressed by Defoe is exceptional among the writers of his time. Others such as Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, Oliver Goldsmith and Laurence Sterne viewed the rise of capitalism with disdain or even alarm. They were more inclined than Defoe was to criticise and satirise such issues as the corrupting power of materialism, rural depopulation and the slave trade. The conservatism and nostalgia that form part

of English cultural values were offended by the emerging new economy, a pattern that is repeated down the centuries.

For many of the subsequent generations of writers, the onset of the industrial revolution invariably meant the loss of something difficult to pin down but which might best be described as soul. The writers of the early 19th century were disoriented by rapid social change. Romantic poets such as Wordsworth and Shelley reacted with hostility and sought to extol the moral virtues of a disappearing rural idyll. In her novels, Jane Austen poured scorn on 'trade', regarding it as an occupation beneath the notice of genteel society. At the same time, she was well aware that the frivolous lifestyle enjoyed by her characters did have to be paid for somehow, even if, as in *Mansfield Park*, it was by the slave labour on plantations in far-flung corners of the British Empire.

The establishment of urban population centres linked by railways, a development accompanied by the expansion of the financial sector gave rise to new fears, and new sources of inspiration. Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, Elizabeth Gaskell and other major novelists spent many a three-volume anatomising their society, in particular tracing the circulation of money and dramatising the intimacy between commerce, law and politics. In *Little Dorrit*, Dickens's villain, the financier Merdle, lies at the heart of an intrigue that affects the lives of the other characters without some of them ever having heard of him. The idea that there were hidden forces at work that could instantly enrich or impoverish untold numbers of families and individuals was one that Dickens used to demonstrate the pervasiveness and impersonality of business activity. At the same time, it is possible to be an honest businessman, though the currents of fortune may run against you.

The leading writers of this period were themselves business-minded. Mass literacy started to become a reality and thus a whole new marketplace for fiction and journalism was opened up. The concept of copyright also gained strength, allowing writers to trade in their intellectual property. Dickens criticised his society and profited by doing so. He was an astonishingly industrious author and astute businessman who had by the end of his life amassed a decent sized fortune.

The convergence of commerce and literature that seemed possible in the high Victorian period fell apart in the early 20th century. While the greatest writers of the latter part of the 19th century were also among the most popular, the first half of the 20th century saw a wide gap open up in this respect. Some members of the modernist movement—notably Virginia Woolf—poured scorn on fellow writers who deigned to talk about business. At the same time, the likes of Arnold Bennett, H.G. Wells and Joseph Conrad drew on their personal experiences in various trades to present a more sophisticated treatment of the subject than had previously been attempted.

The irrational protest against the modern world that seems an inevitable by-product of technological change is felt in the work of many of today's writers. The rise of state-funded literary grants, coupled with the rapid expansion in sheltered workshops known as university arts faculties, has meant that some of them have felt free to bite the hand that does appear to not feed them, even if business does in fact fund universities through taxes.

It is a curious fact that so little of our highbrow, or, for that matter, popular, entertainment has anything to do with the world of work, and, by extension, business. When working people are depicted in any great detail, it is generally only when they are members of some gory profession like the police, doctors, forensic pathologists, lawyers or publicans. Business does not tend to feature at all unless there is a murder or a mistress involved.

Over three centuries of rapid change, certain fundamental truths about the representation of business in literature may be established. One is that no matter how hostile a writer might be to the idea and effects of business, it is a measure of their artistic range the degree to which they know what they are talking about. Many of the most revered authors who assay such topics as love and death are much less convincing when it comes to other aspects of everyday life. On the other hand, there are writers—often underrated—who show us transcendence and universal truth in the humblest of business activity.

It is important to note that this book is confined to English literature. The American attitude is different, lacking the same degree of residual snobbery associated with 'trade'. An obvious illustration of this point would be Tom Wolfe's novel *A Man in Full*, which makes the effort to explain what it means to be in business and the responsibilities and risks involved. Compare Wolfe's robust and sympathetic realism with, say, Julian Barnes's *England, Their England*, in which the arch capitalist protagonist is little more than a stereotype.

A useful companion for readers interested in the American perspective is provided by Robert A. Brawer's *Fictions of Business*. I know of no study of the representation of business in Australian literature, but a list of titles would include Frank Hardy's *Power Without Glory* and Peter Carey's *The Tax Inspector*, to name two of the more obvious examples. The plays of David Williamson would also be relevant.

These essays, all by senior literature academics, are crisply written and intended for the educated general reader. I was impressed by how lively they are and I can certify that they free from academic jargon.

Reviewed by Simon Caterson

Arts and Economics: Analysis and Cultural Policy

by Bruno S. Frey
Springer Verlag, 2000, 250pp.,
$US54.95, ISBN 3540673423

In *Arts and Economics: Analysis and Cultural Polic*) Bruno S. Frey seeks to accomplish two things. First, to use economic analysis to stress the social value of art and defend it against a 'crude business' view of art. Secondly, to apply rational