David Haycock’s biography of William Stukeley offers a long overdue re-assessment of the best-known antiquary of the eighteenth century and revises traditional assumptions about the passive mode of observation of the eighteenth-century gentleman antiquary. Previous studies by Stuart Piggott focused on Stukeley as the progenitor of modern archaeological practice. Whilst Stukeley’s field work was undoubtedly accurate and articulated a precocious expression of archaeological theory, there are many other aspects to Stukeley’s intellectual career which fit rather less easily within a teleological model of the emergence of archaeology as a discipline. In order to accommodate these ‘eccentricities’ Piggott had to posit a sudden mental crisis or nervous breakdown, which caused Stukeley to abandon rigorous, worthwhile field work and to begin his esoteric speculations into druidic religion. These interests fatally compromised his archaeological insights and tainted his two major monographs, *Stonehenge* (1740) and *Abury* (1743). Although Piggott did modify his assessment in a second edition of the biography published in 1985, Stukeley’s druidism was still portrayed as whimsical eccentricity. Building on insights first developed by Michael Hunter, Haycock shows that Stukeley’s views were far from being as esoteric and fantastical as Piggott suggests, and also demonstrates that the idea of a caesura in Stukeley’s intellectual development is unsustainable. Stukeley’s interest in Druids, ancient religion, and the stone monuments of Avebury and Stonehenge co-existed from the earliest days of his field work. This, however, is only the minor theme to Haycock’s study. The major theme is the reconstruction of the intellectual background which shaped the development of Stukeley’s thought and influenced the direction of his studies and his interpretation of the evidence. Haycock establishes a context in which belief in a universal ancient religion, the *prisca theologica*, was not unusual; in which mathematics, natural history, and antiquities were mutually informing; and in which religious debate could be grounded upon the evidence of antiquity or of astronomy. It was a time when the boundaries between natural religion or deism and orthodox revealed religion were at times, wafer thin, but also defended with passion.

Haycock is particularly fortunate that Stukeley was a prodigious writer, a voluminous correspondent, and acquainted with many of the leading intellectual figures of the day. His published works represent but a small element of his total corpus, and Haycock is doubly fortunate that Stukeley’s unpublished collections have largely survived. He begins by taking us back to Stukeley’s education and early years as a Newtonian accolyte in Cambridge. It has, of course, been well known for many years that Newton’s extensive unpublished works were primarily concerned with matters of biblical chronology and the investigation of the *prisca theologica* and that he displayed heterodox views on trinitarianism. Whilst Haycock does not significantly modify current understandings of Newton’s intellectual world, his relationship with Stukeley, upon whom he exercised a formative influence, is
of greater interest. Stukeley, whose veneration extended to writing a biography of his hero, attempted to apply Newtonian principles in all branches of inquiry whether anatomy, botany, or antiquities. But Haycock also suggests a more direct intellectual relationship, arguing that Stukeley’s obsession with demonstrating the trinitarianism of patriarchal religion should be seen as an attempt to combat the Arian antitrinitarianism to which he feared Newton subscribed. This modifies the more generally accepted view that Stukeley’s target was the pantheism of John Toland, whose works, Haycock notes, Stukeley never cited in a negative context. If Stukeley’s ideas were forged in the trinitarian controversy of the 1720s, by the time that he had married Elizabeth Gale and acquired the £10,000 dowry which enabled him to publish *Stonehenge* and *Abury* at his own expense in the 1740s, the intellectual climate had undoubtedly changed. Although some appreciated the implications of his argument, it is hard to find many who read his texts for confirmation of orthodoxy, rather than for the description of Stonehenge itself. Stukeley’s work acquired a new audience in the latter part of the century in the general enthusiasm for Druids and bardic literature of the ‘Celtic revival’, although the reception of Stukeley’s work in this period is not one of the themes that Haycock addresses directly. Stukeley’s later publications were less highly regarded by his own contemporaries and receive less attention. His reputation in later life for eccentricity derived, as Haycock suggests, from his methodology and the enthusiasm with which he expressed his arguments, rather than the implausibility of his ideas per se. Amongst antiquaries Stukeley’s scholarly methods in a publication such as *A history of the coins of Carausius* (1757) seemed dangerously cavalier. An element of conjecture was deemed necessary to bridge the gaps between the isolated fragments of antiquity, but Stukeley carried that too far, and imposed his own preconceived theories – a cardinal failing in both natural science and the science of antiquities.

Stukeley was on the fringe of the intellectual community but the ideas that he adopted in the construction of his world of patriarchal Druids and ancient British civilization were common currency in his own time. Even his assertion that the idea of the Trinity could be traced in pagan religions had been anticipated by a number of seventeenth-century writers, including Newton. The final chapter in which Haycock considers Stukeley’s posthumous influence shows that his interest in ancient religion and biblical chronology was part of a tradition which persisted in intellectual circles well into the nineteenth century, and the connections which he attempted to trace between ancient British and eastern cultures gathered new strength in the latter part of the eighteenth century in the light of scholarship of orientalists such as Sir William Jones. This biography further complicates our view of science and ‘Enlightenment’ and reminds us of the danger of extrapolating only those elements of scientific inquiry and secularizing thought which can be seen to contribute to a notion of modernity. Figures such as Stukeley muddy the clear contrast which is sometimes drawn between the Ancients and the Moderns. Stukeley’s scientific methods were undoubtedly modern, but his reliance upon ancient authorities, his reverence for Roman culture, and his quest to rediscover the *prisca theologica*, to which his scientific inquiry was subordinated, gave him a foothold in the camp of the Ancients also. This picture of the scientific world of Newtonianism is very different to the breezy generalizations offered in Roy Porter’s recent interpretation, *Enlightenment: the making of the modern world* (2000).
The 1815 peace of Vienna was arguably the last one of its magnitude to be concluded without reflecting the pent-up passions of the masses which subsequently came to haunt statesmen in search of stable post-war orders. As Wolfgang Schivelbusch succinctly illustrates, there was a typical ritual that determined the behaviour of vanquished nations in the immediate aftermath of a crushing military defeat. At first, the losers shed the mores of the old regime, thereby expurgating overbearing father figures. Yet, as soon as the victors confront the vanquished with the balance sheet of defeat, the exuberant mood of relief gives way to a triple act of defiance. On the one hand, the losers portray their defeat as the result of the sheer material dominance of the victorious alliance. Since there was no honest fight between equals, there can be no disgraceful defeat. On the other hand, as they are eventually forced to recognize defeat all the same, loser nations make a stand for the moral superiority of their case. This being the mind-set after all illusions of magnanimity have evaporated, the vanquished then pledge themselves to redeem their temporarily eclipsed cause by learning from the winners first and striking back later. Schivelbusch employs this pattern as his vantage-point and takes a closer look at how it was modified in the American South after 1865, in France following defeat at the hand of Prussia, and in Germany in the wake of the Great War.

When the Confederate States saw their dreams of independence shattered and even their territory occupied by the unrelenting vanguard of Reconstruction, Americans in the South were at least able to find consolation in the myth of the ‘lost cause’. Decades of economic decay had already nurtured a cavalier attitude towards the intricacies of life in an industrial society. All hopes of a New South which young ‘Virginians’ harboured after the Civil War came to nought. The South slid even further down the competitive scale and ended up a virtual colony of the victorious and thriving ‘Yankees’. Still, the ‘lost cause’ subsequently acquired the status of an all-American myth which reflected the yearning for a paradise regained, inhabited by a virtuous and devout people. After all, the north might have despised any institutional forms of slavery, but granting equal rights for all Americans was certainly not what it had fought for.

The French experience of defeat in 1870 was hardly less excruciating. Crushed by Bismarck’s armies, France underwent fratricidal infighting when the Paris Commune violently opposed the harsh peace conditions and its docile French executors. However, despite the bloodbath which drowned the Commune, the ‘défense nationale’ had created the very basis on which the republican order was erected. Gambetta declared ‘la revanche’ the raison d’être of the Republic and also shrewdly turned it against the reactionary forces that ruled supreme in the decade after 1870. The Prussian victory was interpreted as the upshot of the by far superior German educational system, the playingfields of Potsdam, as it were. Therefore, thorough-going school reforms were launched and teachers became the revered cornerstone of the republican edifice. As the lost provinces in the east of France slowly faded into oblivion, the national myth obtained an imperialist outlook. Colonizing Africa in a ‘mission civilisatrice’ helped France to get over the humiliation of 1870. It was only the reckless ineptitude of German foreign policy after the turn of the century that
brought the question of Alsace-Lorraine back on to the European agenda and made Britain the improbable main ally in the ensuing confrontation with France’s new arch enemy.

Germany did not see a proper popular uprising in 1918. In fact, it witnessed the ignominious disappearance of monarchs who seemed glad to leave it to their republican successors to pick up the pieces. As Schivelbusch convincingly demonstrates, Social Democrats inadvertently dug their own political graves when reassuring the returning army that it had been ‘undefeated on the battle-field’. Thus, they created a potent myth which, along with the vicious right-wing accusation that the domestic front had stabbed the gallant troops in the back, handed the nationalists a stinging argument against the Weimar Republic. After Versailles, many extremists both on the left and the right portrayed Germany as the ‘world proletarian’ who must throw in its lot with the colonial peoples beyond the seas. They frankly welcomed the clean slate that emerged from the purge of the reactionary lame ducks of Wilhelmine Germany. Learning from the victors in the German case meant adapting to the latest propaganda technique which had, it was believed, contributed so largely to the demise of Germany’s will to fight. America now became the ‘formula of redemption’ (p. 303) and the city of Berlin went to great lengths to be a European version of New York or Chicago. Yet, even if the material aspects of modernity bore an American imprint, the cultural ingredients had to be of impeccably German descent. This strongly resembles the British concept of the late 1940s, that is, to play the Greeks to the American Romans as the Empire got sucked into the vortex of decolonization. The Nazis, of all movements, grasped the American way most eagerly by realizing that the amorphous masses could most swiftly be won over by exploiting the materialist-hedonistic trappings of modernity (e.g. the Volkswagen) rather than by relying solely on tedious ideological slogans.

Unfortunately, Schivelbusch’s extensive account of the German culture of defeat lacks the coherence of the American and French chapters. It reads more like a general essay on the tribulations of Weimar, with only few bright spots interspersed. Besides, one should ask how real and inclusive is such a thing as national culture or national psyche, terms that seem to have assumed a life of their own in recent years. Altogether, though, these are but minor shortcomings of a cogently argued and elegantly written study in comparative perspective.