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[See table of contents](#)

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# REVIEWS/COMPTES RENDUS

- Isla Carmichael, *Pension Power: Unions, Pension Funds, and Social Investment in Canada*, by Bob Baldwin / 227
- Catherine Dauvergne, *Humanitarianism, Identity, and Nation: Migration Laws of Australia and Canada*, by Harold Bauder / 230
- Judith Fingard and Janet Guildford, eds., *Mothers of the Municipality: Women, Work, and Social Policy in Post-1945 Halifax*, by Laurel Whitney / 232
- Krista Scott-Dixon, *Doing IT: Women Working in Information Technology*, by Jan Kainer / 234
- Kirsten Johnson Kramar, *Unwilling Mothers, Unwanted Babies: Infanticide in Canada*, by Mona Gleason / 237
- Constance Backhouse and Nancy L. Backhouse, *The Heiress Versus the Establishment: Mrs. Campbell's Campaign for Legal Justice*, by Joan Brockman / 239
- Jennifer Sumner, *Sustainability and the Civil Commons: Rural Communities in the Era of Globalization*, by Rod Bantjes / 241
- David T. Jannigan, *Environmental Illness in Nova Scotia, 1983-2003*, by Ella Haley and Marilyn Thorlakson / 244
- Robert Rutherford, *Hometown Horizons: Local Responses to Canada's Great War*, by Robert Cupido / 245
- Christopher Walmsley, *Protecting Aboriginal Children*, by Steven F. Hick / 248
- John Russo and Sherry Lee Linkon, eds., *New Working-Class Studies*, by Daniel E. Bender / 250
- Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America*, by Joan Sangster / 251
- Horace Huntley and David Montgomery, *Black Workers' Struggle for Equality in Birmingham*, by Colin J. Davis / 254
- Mark A. Lause, *Young America: Land, Labor and the Republican Community*, by Jamie L. Bronstein / 255
- Mark Simpson, *Trafficking Subjects: The Politics of Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America*, by Sarah Crabtree / 257
- Michael Zweig, ed., *What's Class Got to Do with It? American Society in the Twenty-first Century*, by Jason Russell / 259
- Christopher R. Martin, *Framed!: Labor and the Corporate Media*, by Gregory Taylor / 261

- Steve Vineberg, *High Comedy in American Movies: Class and Humour from the 1920s to the Present*, by Scott Forsyth / 263
- Gordon Myers, *Banana Wars: The Price of Free Trade: A Caribbean Perspective*, by Peter Clegg / 265
- Isaac Saney, *Cuba: A Revolution in Motion*, by John M. Kirk / 267
- Marion Gret and Yves Sintomer, *The Porto Alegre Experiment: Learning Lessons for Better Democracy*, by Peter J. Smith / 268
- Allyson Pollock with Colin Leys, David Price, David Rowland, and Shamini Gnani, *NHS plc: The Privatisation of Our Health Care*, by Ellen Annandale / 271
- Martin J. Wiener, *Men of Blood: Violence, Manliness and Criminal Justice in Victorian England*, by Lori Loeb / 272
- Nicole Pohl and Betty A. Schellenberg, eds., *Reconsidering the Bluestockings*, by Carla Hustak / 274
- Robert A. Ventresca, *From Culture to Democracy: Culture and Politics in the Italian Elections of 1948*, by Robert Leonardi / 277
- Sheba Marian George, *When Women Come First: Gender and Class in Transnational Migration*, by Habiba Zaman / 279
- Martha Alter Chen, Joann Vanek, and Marilyn Carr, *Mainstreaming Informal Employment and Gender in Poverty Reduction: A Handbook for Policy-makers and Other Stakeholders*, by Nickela Anderson / 281
- Leo Panitch and Colin Leys, eds., *The Empire Reloaded*, by Judith Soares / 283
- Robert Graham, ed., *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas. Volume One: From Anarchy to Anarchism (300 CE to 1939)*, by Saul Newman / 285

# REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS

Isla Carmichael, *Pension Power: Unions, Pension Funds, and Social Investment in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2005)

IT IS DIFFICULT not to be intrigued by the question. If hundreds of billions of dollars are being held in trust for Canadian trade union members in the form of pension fund investments, couldn't trade unions exert influence on the investment of this money to create a better world? If we magnify the number by a substantial multiple, we can pose the same question at a global level. These questions lie at the heart of *Pension Power: Unions, Pension Funds, and Social Investment in Canada*.

In one of the final chapters of *Pension Power*, Carmichael offers her assessment of the educational efforts that are required of the trade union movement with respect to the socially useful investment of pension funds. Much of this discussion is normative and prescriptive. But Carmichael also notes a range of activities that are indicative of the broad base of interest within the trade union movement in ways of making pension fund investments contribute not only to financing pension benefits, but also to creating a better working life. These initiatives include: two large and broadly based Canadian Labour Congress [CLC] national pension conferences which focused in part on this issue; the creation of the Shareholder Association for Research and Education [SHARE] by the trade union movement in British Columbia; trustee education programs of the

National Union of Public and General Employees [NUPGE]; and trade union collaboration with academic researchers on the issue. This list of trade union activities could have been extended in many directions. But, even as it stands, it gives an appropriate sense of broadly based interest in the issue. Earlier chapters give a sense of how this interest has been pursued to date based primarily on experiences in Canada and the United States.

Under the heading "Shareholder Activism," Chapter 4 looks at efforts to use shareholder positions in publicly traded companies to influence corporate behaviour. These efforts have focused mainly on issues related to corporate governance. But, they also include examples of pension shareholders addressing environmental issues and labour issues. Although the point is not pursued in depth, it is noted that strategy and tactics in this area vary in terms of the degree of ongoing engagement with companies that are involved in these efforts.

In the course of discussing "Unions, Social Investment, and Corporate Accountability," note is also made of the use of ethical screens as a guide to investment decision-making. Carmichael notes the use of screens as a basis for excluding certain investments, as well as their use in including investments. A variety of theoretical issues related to the use of screens is canvassed, including the question of their impact on the financial returns on an investment portfolio. In fact, however, there is not a great deal of Canadian experience that is reported in this area.

A final area of activity that is reviewed is economically targeted investing (i.e., investing with a view to combining financial returns with collateral benefits that may take such forms as job creation, regional economic development, meeting housing needs, and so on). The Caisse de Dépôt et Placement is cited as an important Canadian example of this genre of investing. (The Caisse invests the reserve funds of the Quebec Pension Plan along with the funds of public employee pension plans and certain other entities.) The investment of the labour-sponsored venture capital funds is cited as another significant example of this style of investing.

The discussion of economically targeted investments leads to the consideration of an initiative that forms a centerpiece for much of the discussion in *Pension Power*, namely the creation of a real estate development company called Concert Properties by a group of pension funds in British Columbia that are either jointly trusted by union and management representatives, or are solely union trusted. The historical origins of Concert as described by Carmichael are fascinating. The collaboration of the pension funds just noted is striking and unusual in itself. But, so is the cooperation between this group of pension funds and the municipal government, which faced the problem that commercial developers had abandoned the rental housing market in favour of condominium construction. The municipality had banked land that it leased to Concert (and its predecessor organizations) for rental housing development.

An important bit of contextual information that is not included in *Pension Power* is the fact that a much larger portion of union members in BC belong to jointly trusted or union trusted pension plans than in other parts of Canada. For a significant portion of the BC trade union leadership, there was no question whether they would take responsibility for pension fund investing; the question was how would they use that responsibility. Recent

changes in Quebec law tilt in that direction as well.

Carmichael's interest in Concert Properties is linked to her interest in the development of social accounting frameworks that would take account of social and economic benefits and costs, as well as financial risks and returns. Indeed, as she elaborates the definition of socially responsible investing in *Pension Power*, the use of these accounting frameworks is incorporated into the definition (more on this below).

For anyone who is interested in how a significant segment of the trade union movement looks at pension fund investment and its scope for contributing to the public good, *Pension Power* is highly informative. It is also animated by very strong convictions. Indeed, Carmichael argues that if unions take control of the vast sums of pension wealth and apply a progressive investment agenda to them, they will bring about a "radical change in the role that the labour movement plays in the economy." The strong convictions that underlie the argument give the book a clear energy that offsets, by degree, occasional lapses in cogency, and balance in the presentation of evidence.

There is ample scope for quarreling over the detail in *Pension Power*. For the moment, it may be more salient to address a small number of big issues to which *Pension Power* gives rise. Carmichael creates a tension between seeking financial returns on pension fund investments and seeking positive social and economic consequences. There is an ebb and flow to the acuteness of the tension as it vacillates between awkward compatibility and open warfare. But the tension runs through the book from stem to stern. The case for paying attention to social and economic consequences is ever-present. But, the issue that is not adequately addressed is why any heed at all is paid to financial returns.

In fairness, the issue is addressed in the context of discussing fiduciary duty. Carmichael properly notes that the very narrow construction of fiduciary duty that

emerged from the 1984 case of Cowan versus Scargill, which suggested that fiduciary duty precluded any and all non-financial considerations in investing, is now the outlier interpretation. But at a practical level, the issue is not addressed. Put somewhat differently, the role of financial returns on investment in the overall financing scheme of pension plans is not discussed and *Pension Power* ends up presenting an animated view of one side of what may (or may not) be a dilemma. All other things being equal, higher returns mean lower contributions and/or higher benefits. The positive pension outcomes that flow from financial returns may be shared in various ways between plan members and sponsors.

Given the purely financial risks involved in trying to achieve higher returns, the relationship between financial returns and other key components of the financing system should not lead to a headlong rush to maximize financial returns. Indeed, for reasons that have nothing to do with socially responsible investment, many pension professionals have gone in exactly the opposite direction as is manifest in the Boots Pharmacy plan recently holding 100 per cent of its assets in bonds. But, by the same token, one should not feel free to address the tension between social and economic outcomes and financial returns without acknowledging the role of financial returns. It would be a huge mistake for union pension trustees to try to address the question of social and economic benefits without understanding the role of financial returns in overall pension financing. To the extent that union pension trustees encounter a conflict between their desire to achieve social and economic objectives and the financial returns they have anticipated, either financial plans need to be revised or other objectives need to be sacrificed. This problem is not resolved by the development of social accounting frameworks. Trustees still have to have a clear framework for assessing any trade-offs that might exist between social and economic outcomes on

the one side, and financial outcomes on the other.

The social accounting frameworks promoted by Carmichael are well suited to the assessment of capital investment projects in real estate and, in principle, any other sector, whether the projects are financed by pension plans or by any other means. Unfortunately, it is typically only a minor fraction of pension fund investment that is so closely associated with new capital investment. In public securities markets, ownership claims and debt instruments are traded back and forth but the connection to specific capital projects is unclear at best. One can develop criteria for assessing the behaviour of the corporations and governments that issue stocks and bonds, but they would not have the marginal impact focus of those proposed by Carmichael.

As was noted above, one of the approaches to pension fund investing that is documented in *Pension Power* is shareholder activism. Again, much of this activity has focused on corporate governance issues as institutional investors have reacted against situations where corporate management and insider shareholders have profited at the expense of non-controlling shareholders, including pension funds. In addition, some initiatives have focused on environmental and labour issues. In principle, initiatives of this sort are likely to be relevant to a bigger portion of a pension investment portfolio than are Concert-type initiatives. It is interesting that Carmichael does not note any attempt to use shareholder activism to drive a company from a low road (cost reduction) to a high road (product and service quality, and innovation) path to profitability. Nor is this reviewer aware of one.

There is still a great deal of exploration to be done on the possible areas of active shareholder involvement and much to be done too in terms of measuring impacts. It is worth noting, too, that many of these shareholder initiatives that challenge corporate insiders are undertaken in

part with a view to enhancing the long-term value of shareholders' investments. Within this view, the tension between financial returns and social and economic outcomes that animates so much of *Pension Power* disappears. It is probably too much the world of Dr. Pangloss to hope that the long-term financial interest of shareholders will always line up with social and economic progress. But it is just as unlikely that they are always in opposition to each other. It is instructive too that many shareholder actions challenge the treatment of the corporation as a homogenous entity as *Pension Power* tends to do; many of these actions are built around the conflicting interests of corporate insiders and outsiders.

Initiatives of the sort described in various parts of *Pension Power* in which trade unions try to exercise control of pension fund investments in order to achieve both financial and non-financial objectives reflect a movement that has some history behind it, but is still in its early days. Despite the contradictions and dilemmas that go with it, it is also an agenda that needs to be explored as fully as possible. In this regard, I don't share Carmichael's view that we know we can change the world by doing so. But, I do think we have to find out what can and cannot be achieved in this area.

Also, for reasons that have nothing to do with socially responsible investing, employers who run pension plans for their employees face too many conflicts of interest on all aspects of their operation to be allowed to operate them on their own. Even if trade unionists were to reject root and stock the notion of trying to combine financial and non-financial objectives, they would still have good reason to want to be involved in all aspects of pension plan governance, including decision-making on pension fund investments.

Bob Baldwin  
Canadian Labour Congress

Catherine Dauvergne, *Humanitarianism, Identity, and Nation: Migration Laws of Australia and Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press 2005)

REFUGEE AND MIGRATION policies have moved into the centre of global public debate, particularly after the events of 2001 and their aftermath. Refugees and migrants are being constructed as threats to national interests and national security. Now, Catherine Dauvergne offers a fresh perspective of the relationship among refugee migration, humanitarianism, and national identity. This perspective suggests that humanitarianism shapes national identity not only because inviting newcomers from "non-traditional" countries of origin changes the demographic and cultural composition of the country, but also because nations express their cultural "essence" through assuming political stances towards the definition, treatment, and admission of non-citizens who need help. *Humanitarianism, Identity, and Nation* examines the latter aspect of the relationship between humanitarianism and national identity in the context of Australia and Canada. As a new volume in the Law and Society Series by UBC Press, the book has a clear focus on law and its interpretation by government, administration, and the courts. However, it also expands this focus by discussing the links between liberal political philosophy and the construction of individual and national identities.

The book consists of eight chapters (including the Introduction and Conclusion), which are divided into two parts. The three substantive chapters of Part 1 articulate a theoretical framework of how migration law and humanitarianism relate to national identity. In Chapter 2, Dauvergne borrows from social theory and social psychology to illustrate how law constructs and is constructed by national identity. Chapter 3 then funnels this discussion to a migration context. Chapter 4, which Dauvergne describes as "the heart of this book," (60) zooms in on lib-

eral political philosophy and its proponents to investigate the meaning of humanitarianism in the context of migration politics. This chapter leads to the conclusion that: "Humanitarianism provides a stand-in for justice in the immigration realm while reinforcing the boundary between an 'us' group and a 'them' group. Justice is a standard that implies, and applies, equality between individuals. Humanitarianism is the opposite; it is grounded in a specific type of difference created by material inequality." (72)

Dauvergne ties this observation back to the issue of national identity by suggesting that humanitarianism enables the members of a national community to define the "other" as the mirror image of the national self, and to characterize the nation as "good" by offering not only protection from humanitarian hardship to the identified beneficiaries, but also the prospect of a new identity. "Part of our humanitarianism is about ... applauding ourselves," (73) Dauvergne observes.

Part 2 of the book presents empirical evidence from studies in Australia and Canada for which the author reviewed legal cases and observed hearings. Chapter 5 examines the refugee admission processes and legal frameworks in the two countries, and how these processes and frameworks construct refugees as the "other" in opposition to national identity. Chapter 6 examines this "othering" process in the context of Canadian and Australian cases that do not directly fall under the refugee category, but in which admission is nevertheless granted (or denied) based on humanitarian grounds. The final substantive chapter investigates decisions by the highest courts of the two countries and reveals how rights discourses relate to humanitarianism, the situation of refugees, and the identity of the nation. A short conclusion summarizes the contributions of the book to the theoretical literature in law and the construction of national identity in Australia and Canada, and puts the book's theoretical and empirical findings in a wider context

of identity construction pertaining to migrants and nations at a global scale.

The theoretical project of the book — to bridge literatures on identity formation, nationhood, and liberal political philosophy in the concrete context of refugee and humanitarian migration — is novel and a welcome contribution to the study of migration and law. One of the book's strengths is precisely its theoretical perspective on humanitarianism from a position of law and political philosophy. However, readers with different disciplinary backgrounds may perhaps wonder why more literature on social and cultural theory was not included in the author's arguments. In my view, the case Dauvergne argues would lend itself to a more rigorous incorporation of post-structural and other contemporary approaches to identity construction and nationhood. This shortcoming of the book, however, should not be interpreted as negligence, but rather as an intriguing possibility to engage law and legal practice towards migration even deeper with contemporary social and cultural theory.

Another positive aspect of the book is the level of detail devoted to the empirical information presented in Chapters 5-7. Altogether, 135 pages of the 241-page book (the publisher incorrectly claims in a promotional flyer that it has 256 pages!) are devoted to these three chapters. Although most readers will appreciate the empirical rigour of the book, I think the presentation of the empirical evidence could have been tightened without compromising its persuasiveness. A tightening of the empirical chapters in combination with an expansion of the theoretical discussion would have resulted in a greater balance between the two parts of the book — at least in terms of numbers of pages devoted to each part.

Similar to the theoretical project, which Dauvergne initiates with this book, so is the empirical work far from complete. Fascinating questions emerge when the geographical context of the central argument, that humanitarianism is about



national identity, is extended to other traditional immigrant countries, such as the United States, or to countries that lack a strong identity as an immigration country, such as Germany or Switzerland, but nevertheless are committed to humanitarianism. The book has the potential to provide a conceptual anchor for future studies that seek to answer these and related questions.

As the audience of the book I envision primarily academics and students in law, political science, and migration studies. The latter, of course, encapsulates a range of disciplines throughout the social sciences, including anthropology, geography, and sociology. The readers of this journal may be interested in this book in order to obtain a perspective of migration politics that is not solely centred on economic gain and labour market regulation. The fact that the book is available in both cloth and paper — for \$75.00 and \$29.95, according to the publisher — makes it attractive to libraries and accessible to individuals and graduate students. *Humanitarianism, Identity, and Nation* presents stimulating and thought-provoking reading that I would recommend to anyone seeking to better understand the link between migration, nationhood, and identity.

Harald Bauder  
University of Guelph

Judith Fingard and Janet Guildford, eds., *Mothers of the Municipality: Women, Work, and Social Policy in Post-1945 Halifax* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2005)

IN TEN ESSAYS based around the theme of civic activism, this anthology charts the impact women's organizations had on shaping the changes that characterized Canadian social services in post-war Halifax. Incorporating the result of a five-year research project about women, work, and social policy, this collection

features contributions from the disciplines of history, social work, and healthcare. The focus is change at the local level, and two main themes emerge. The first is the theme of militant maternalism. Contrary to the image of the 1950s and 1960s as a period characterized by female domesticity, shallow consumerism, and conservative Cold War values, these essays depict women participating in public life and actively engaging in political lobbying through their volunteerism and membership in women's organizations. The second theme is the impact of the expansion of the welfare state on women's lives, and the efforts of the women's movement to influence these pervasive reforms. The essays chart how post-war women's organizations and activism went through a cycle of decline and renewal, and they provide grist for the argument that the women's movement has provided a more effective political voice for women than federal and provincial political parties.

For Nova Scotia, the decades after World War II were an unprecedented time of growth. Traditionally, Nova Scotians had relied on out-migration, subsistence production, occupational pluralism, and private charity to get by in difficult times. By the standards of the wealthier provinces, Nova Scotia was slow to develop its modern social assistance programs. Before 1945, social services in Halifax consisted of a network of voluntary organizations and religious groups. Three buildings on the Halifax urban landscape in 1960 symbolized the legacy of pre-war attitudes towards social welfare: the City Home or "poorhouse," the Catholic children's home, and the home for coloured children. Each of these institutions has an essay dedicated to it in this volume, chronicling its survival and transformation as part of the welfare state.

Halifax's first-wave feminist organizations provided women with opportunities to grow as public citizens and individuals and to contribute to their community; however, this was conceptualized mainly

from a white middle-class perspective. Policy matters that were of vital importance to these women included public welfare, housing, day care, employment, community development, legal aid, family planning, and support to women in crisis. Undoubtedly, maternalism helped to shape post-war policies and institutions and was a vital element in women's activism, because it recognized the value of women's unpaid volunteer work. However, at least two authors point to a lesson that is repeated elsewhere in feminist writing, namely, that maternalism can be a slippery slope. For example, even though post-war women activists established the legitimacy of single mothers as social assistance recipients, the state still regulated their sexual relations and threatened their children with welfare supervision, considering them to be the "less deserving" in a maternalist, moral hierarchy topped by the "deserving widow." Another example is taken up in the essay about the struggle for universally accessible daycare. Government involvement in child care began as early as the 1960s, but the motive of legislators was to provide a limited service to "needy" women and children. In the 1970s, joined by a vocal alliance of feminist activists, parents and childcare workers called for universally accessible early childhood education centres; however, their efforts fell on deaf ears amongst policy-makers, and the provincial government accused them of being "political agitators."

The essay on the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women is a bittersweet reminder of the fragility of some of the gains of the second-wave feminist movement. Created in 1977 as a response to the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, the Council was to advise the provincial government and provide services to women. Completely dependent on the government for funding, and with no formal links to the organized women's movement, its autonomy was constantly tested. In the end,

the agency can be credited for introducing needed reforms to human rights legislation, and for giving women's equality issues visibility in the province, but it remained a weak and isolated voice for change.

Compared with other major Canadian cities, the 1961 census reported Halifax to have a smaller percentage of married women working outside the home. This was not the case in the outlying communities in Dartmouth. Many African Nova Scotian mothers performed housekeeping or "day's work" for middle-class Halifax families. Limited by a lack of job opportunities, these women were the first generation of married African Nova Scotian women to work outside their homes in significant numbers. Their daily forays into the Halifax urban centre brought them into contact with a higher standard of living. Even after their children had grown up, many continued this work because it provided structure to their week, a break in the routine of their home life, and an opportunity to socialize with other women. Few considered moving closer to town because they enjoyed home ownership in Dartmouth. As domestic workers, African Nova Scotian women were part of an informal economy not regulated by the state, which gave them some control over their working conditions and wages. Once urban renewal projects took off in the 1960s and 1970s, many of these women took jobs in the day care centres, health clinics, and schools that were opening at the time.

The essay on the Voice of Women [VOW] illustrates how a feminist organization lead the way for change in Halifax. These activist women reframed their identities in the 1970s without rejecting their maternalist ideas. Muriel Duckworth and Pearleen Oliver were two leaders who possessed impressive talents and intellectual capacities. In a city where women did not enter politics until the 1970s, middle-class women's organizations were a way for women to become involved in the civic life of their community

and province. The Voice of Women brought together women from diverse circumstances who rose up against the Cold War domestic ideology that sought to constrict their role. By channeling their efforts against the male politicians they held responsible for the arms race, VOW members symbolized the maternalist desire for a less violent world for future generations. In Halifax, where one-quarter of the population was dependent on the military economy, VOW was unpopular in many circles, but it stood up to public criticism. Duckworth and Oliver used their affiliations with more conservative local civic organizations to help mitigate the impact. VOW was committed to coalition politics, community organizing, educational work, and political lobbying. "Everyone can do something" was its credo. Its successful outreach style was to work on local problems, and at the same time bring women to the larger issues, such as peace and foreign policy. As an organization that was a training ground for advocacy, VOW drew together civic-minded wives and mothers and succeeded in linking peace with other social justice issues; it also served as a successful bridge between first- and second-wave feminism. The Halifax chapter has many achievements to its credit, including standing up for a nuclear-free policy for Canada in the 1960s, protesting the US war in Vietnam, sponsoring two successful international women's conferences, and linking the international peace movement with the movement for racial equality in Halifax.

No female provincial or federal political candidates emerged in the metropolitan Halifax area until the 1970s; yet, as the essays in this volume aptly show, women in Halifax were instrumental in creating and reforming social services. At the same time, the transition to the welfare state also precipitated a decline in women's volunteerism. St. John Ambulance was one of the casualties; it represented a view of women's role that faded away quickly once women began entering the workforce in record numbers. The es-

says collected together here show that what sprang up instead was a new kind of advocacy, bringing together women of different classes, races, and professions. In coalitional and sometimes militant politics, Halifax women advocated for such issues as community development, public housing, adult education, and equal rights for the city's black residents. These women were the architects of Nova Scotia's vibrant social justice and peace movements, and they helped to transform Halifax into a more cosmopolitan city. This anthology should serve as an inspiration to scholars in other provinces and cities; hopefully, it is only the first of many to chart the contribution of women and women's organizations to social service reform and civic activism at the municipal level.

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Krista Scott-Dixon, *Doing IT: Women Working in Information Technology* (Toronto: Sumach Press 2004)

IN THIS TIMELY BOOK Krista Scott-Dixon offers one of the first, if not the only, account of Canadian workers' experiences negotiating the complex, and sometimes perplexing, world of work in information technology. Drawing on interviews with women working professionally (or semi-professionally) in a range of information technology [IT] jobs in the Toronto area, she undertakes a detailed study of their labour market situation, asking such questions as: what kinds of jobs are women entering? what opportunities have they found? what obstacles? what are their work conditions and how much are they paid? (15) *Doing IT: Women Working in Information Technology* answers these questions by weaving together an industry analysis with personal narratives from 62 interviewees who tell the "real story" of women working in the IT sector.

Although IT has been constructed, especially during the heady days of the dot-com boom in the 1990s, as the new nirvana for economic growth and prosperity that promises workers skilled in IT secure high-paying jobs in an expanding innovative field, the reality, as Scott-Dixon points out, is an industry undergoing tumultuous change which is more likely to offer moderately paid, precarious employment with limited economic gains for the economy. According to industry studies IT does not necessarily contribute significantly to increased productivity. (148) Nor is there an overwhelming demand for IT skills; in fact, industry analyses indicate "no evidence of a generalized shortage of technical skills." (68) Still, employment in IT grew significantly throughout the nineties, growing three times faster than the job growth overall of the Canadian economy between 1995 and 2000. (119)

It is against this backdrop that Scott-Dixon asks how women are faring in the IT industry. Are traditional gender job hierarchies being reproduced in the industry, or are women resisting sexist stereotypes and gender power structures, and moving into new employment categories customarily reserved for men? As new forms of IT work are being created, are women able to challenge masculine ideological conceptions concerning the value of technical skills and locate themselves in jobs offering greater skill and pay opportunities than those typically granted to feminized work? According to Scott-Dixon, "IT work for women is complex and contradictory, neither wholly negative nor wholly positive. IT work can constrain and liberate, restrict and empower women. Women's situation in IT both reflects and challenges norms of women's role in the labour force." (19)

In the first chapter Scott-Dixon situates IT work within a broader analysis of industry and occupational gender segregation in Canada which shows that women's domestic responsibilities consistently define their relationship to the

labour force: "Nearly one-third of women, compared to 11 percent of men, work part-time." (37) However, only 5 per cent of men say they chose part-time employment to help them balance their domestic responsibilities, while 42 per cent of women report choosing part-time work because of family obligations. In keeping with traditional expectations of women's domestic role, Scott-Dixon finds that women in IT wish to work from home in an effort to balance their domestic duties with paid employment (continuing a long historical gender employment pattern). However, they continue to experience stigmatization related to home-based work, as this respondent explains: "Something about a woman working from home still sounds like housewife." (40) Harkening back to the insights of early feminists Virginia Woolf and Betty Friedan, Scott-Dixon argues that women in IT are living out some of the same contradictions of middle-class housewives as in previous decades. While Betty Friedan spoke about the promise of fulfillment for the American 1960s housewife supposedly derived from her material privilege and maternal role, today women are told they will be liberated by technology as they have the ability "to mix and match jobs or even to create their own self-employment ... [which] should be making all of this [combining work and family] better for them, not worse." (46-47) But like the suburban housewife of 40 years ago, home-based women workers in IT experience dissatisfaction from their isolation, from competing demands juggling their paid and unpaid work, and from the perception that their work is not "real work."

Chapter two discusses how technical skill becomes gender-defined in IT. IT culture is infused with a sexist value system whereby what is "male" is valued and what is "female" is devalued. As Scott-Dixon explains, "skill supremacy is viewed as inherently masculine and imbued with macho values" while "women tend to be implicitly or explicitly ex-

cluded from the community of technical experts.” (69) She found that what is viewed as “technical enough” to adequately perform IT work, a rather elusive determination, is heavily decided by men who reside high up in the IT occupational hierarchy. (96) At the same time, however, Scott-Dixon observes a tension over “what counts and is valued as skill” and who gets to do IT work. (66) Because IT is a burgeoning new field, there is greater value placed on hands-on experience, something women may be more likely to acquire than costly formal credentials; this provides them with an opening (albeit slim) to enter the industry. Women have been able to carve out positions for themselves that men were less interested in pursuing, usually those combining traditional female skills with some technical know-how. The position of web designer is a perfect case example. Women represent one-third of web designers, whose average age is 32, but they are paid far less (under \$30,000) than many other job categories in IT and work some of the longest hours in the industry. (55, 60) Scott-Dixon goes on to explain that “as certain types of IT positions become less associated with ‘hard’ technology and academic computer science, more women appear to be performing them,” (56) and, as noted, at less pay. In fact, gender pay inequity permeates the industry and at least one study showed that men are paid more than women regardless of “fewer computer skills overall than women, particularly word processing and statistical/analytical skills.” (81)

Chapters three and four describe work in the lower-end service sector of IT. Interviews with call centre workers who were thrown out of better paying jobs after the dot-com debacle (or dot.bomb, as one interviewee referred to it) illustrate the increasing precariousness of the IT job market. Even well-educated, youthful workers who are well trained in the industry may find themselves in less than ideal circumstances as they are either underemployed, employed outside their area of ex-

pertise, or work temporarily, often part-time, and hold multiple jobs. Rebecca, once employed in a variety of IT jobs including managing a database for museum collections, is an ESL instructor, while Mike, downsized after Y2K, is working in a call centre. A second and related theme of these chapters concerns the promise of information technology for workers to control the location, scheduling, and pace of work. As the narratives of IT workers demonstrate, IT-related “work has both expanded and contracted work space and time,” (131) meaning that workers have to do more with less time, and may find big gaps during their work day/night which are filled with intermittent employment in different spaces and under different temporal conditions. Non-standard work, a characteristic feature of IT, operates in marginalized spaces (e.g., at home, fly-by-night operation), produces chaotic work time (e.g., split shifts, part-time), and is more likely to be performed by youth and women, especially in service jobs. As the information technology sector undergoes restructuring, IT work is becoming increasingly gendered.

Scott-Dixon demonstrates how gender is an overpowering factor shaping women’s experiences in the IT field. Throughout the book “gender,” more than any other social relation, dominates women’s experiences: from their education and training in IT, to their relationships with employers and co-workers, to the workplace and industry culture, and, perhaps, most importantly, in regard to their perceptions about the technology. As Scott-Dixon explains, information technology work is infused with gender qualities symbolically manifest, for instance, in technical terms such as “digital binary of 0 and 1 ... [where] the spiky linear ‘1’ symbolizes the phallic skyward thrusting male, while the ‘0’ indicates the lack, the void, the chthonic chasm of the female.” (98) In this symbolic schema in which the “female zero signifies nothingness” women are erased, made invisible, in the masculine techno culture. Indeed,

masculinized values seep into every dimension of IT work, a “fact of life” that is not lost on the women trying to establish themselves in what, in their experience, is a deeply hostile and alien world. As one respondent explains: “Male geeks are horrible, terrible, and unhelpful and incredibly misogynist ... I never got promoted and get constantly overlooked in favour of males. Guys didn’t like women coming into their little group.” (92) This woman explained to the author that while she was working hard to improve her skills for promotion, men spent their spare time downloading pornography.

I am struck by the immense force gender exerts in this industry, both symbolically in the culture of IT work, and in actual material terms where women are systematically discriminated against in employment in such areas as pay, promotion, and occupational designation. This is why Scott-Dixon’s contention that “women’s awareness of their own situation allows them to make choices from options they feel are available to them” (22) does not sit well with me. While I agree there are times women may resist gender norms, the narratives of women IT workers convey a dominant masculinized discourse that overrides almost any attempts to defy the gender power hierarchies inherent in IT work.

This excellent book should be read by anyone interested in women and work, and would make an excellent contribution to a sociology, labour studies, or women’s studies course syllabus. Scott-Dixon’s writing is animated and accessible, and her use of personal narrative offers a fascinating look into the work lives of the “new” IT work force in the expanding knowledge economy.

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Kirsten Johnson Kramar, *Unwilling Mothers, Unwanted Babies: Infanticide in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press 2005)

THE TITLE OF Kirsten Johnson Kramar’s book immediately piqued my interest as a feminist historian. It evokes disturbing challenges to powerfully gendered notions of women and the nation. “Normal” and “good” women welcomed motherhood, as much of the 19th- and 20th-century discourse from a wide swath of experts insisted. Robust and well-cared-for babies from “good” stock represented the bedrock of a strong nation, social reformers repeatedly argued. Infanticide marked a direct challenge to that goal, and infanticide law, traditional interpretations argued, issued forth the patriarchal state’s disciplining power. Poor working-class women, both married and single, who failed to fulfill their roles by killing their newborn babies, were the primary targets. Kramar’s nuanced examination of criminal justice treatment of infanticide over the 20th century, however, complicates this traditional reading of the state’s complicity in criminalizing and medicalizing socially constructed notions of women’s “deviance.”

Johnson Kramar, a sociologist at the University of Winnipeg, challenges traditional interpretations of infanticide law by feminist scholars, such as Carol Smart, who cast it as a heavy-handed attempt by the state to medicalize deviance and control women’s sexuality. Johnson Kramar argues that this interpretation is ahistorical and ignores the often idiosyncratic logic of criminal justice. These two forces, she shows us, must be considered in concert. Highlighting the criminal justice perspective, Johnson Kramar casts the infanticide provision as a necessary legal “end run” around juries’ typical refusal to ask for the death penalty in cases brought before them. She asks her readers to rethink the state’s motivation for introducing the infanticide provision in 1948. What was the response to women charged with killing their newborn babies before



1948, and what developed in legal wrangling afterward? Using an interdisciplinary approach that combines historical, sociological, and legal scholarship, the author relies on critical discourse analysis of a range of cases from the period before the 1948 infanticide provision was introduced and afterward, concluding with cases in the late 1990s.

The infanticide law was passed in Canada in 1948. Prior to this, Crown prosecutors could choose from a range of optional charges dealing with maternal neonaticide: murder, manslaughter, concealment, and neglect to obtain assistance in birth. Prosecutors were often thwarted in their attempts to secure the death sentence for women charged with killing their newborn babies. Since the burden to prove that a live-birth had preceded the alleged crime fell to the Crown, coroners' testimony became pivotal. If this burden was left unsatisfied, juries were likely to only permit charges against the women on lesser charges. The concealment charge tended to reign supreme before the 1948 provision and reflected a number of social factors: neonaticide was difficult to detect, particularly in an era of widespread home births with few if any attendants; legal proof both of live infant birth and willful intents had to be firmly established; and juries tended to recoil from invoking the death penalty. Johnson Kramar argues that this was due in considerable part to juries' sympathizing with the females accused. Infanticide, she contends, was interpreted by juries as a "social" crime in which the killing of newly born babies was placed in "socio-economic context." At trials, issues of poverty, social shaming, as well as the "unique experiences of pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation" were routinely discussed. Juries, according to her, were often sympathetic to the women accused, particularly because they were understood as victims of inordinate and unforgiving social pressure not to have illegitimate babies.

In order to address what it perceived as lost convictions, the House of Commons

adopted the infanticide provision so that consistency of conviction might be assured. Johnson Kramar argues then that the development of the infanticide provision did not reflect new medical, social, or psychological thinking. Rather, it was a strategic crime prevention move. No longer able to draw on lesser charges of concealment of birth or neglect at birth, defendants, it was hoped, would have fewer "outs." In 1955, the infanticide law was amended so that prosecutors no longer had to prove both intent and "reproductive mental disturbance." After 1955, live birth and intent were the focus.

There are contemporary trends that this book is intended to trouble and disrupt. In particular, Johnson Kramar is concerned about current tendencies to charge young women who are alleged to have killed their newborn babies under the new category of "child abuse homicide." Weaving from past to present, Johnson Kramar's overarching concern, and her motivation for utilizing a historical perspective on infanticide law, is succinctly offered in the introductory chapter: "the feminist discourse on women's reproductive responsibility, advanced in order to secure freedom of choice and to decriminalize abortion, has been appropriated by law and order advocates and incorporated into legal discourse in order to further retributive aims directed on women on behalf of the baby ... [who] ... in turn, has acquired quasi-legal status." (14) In the context of the fate of the infanticide provision, she maps out why feminist activism needs to counteract the erosion of women's legal standing and the overarching context of social inequality in which women become pregnant.

Johnson Kramar's study helpfully makes feminist scholars rethink the complicated connections between the state's interest in protecting and policing reproduction, the protection of children, and the burden on particularly poor single mothers. There are some notes of caution. In explaining the tendency for juries to decry the death penalty for neonaticide,

she argues that in the early 20th century "people sympathized with the everyday hardships faced by single mothers with illegitimate babies, and they understood that there were extreme economic and emotional hardships connected to raising babies for single working-class mothers."

(14) Surely this overstates the case. Expressions of mercy in legal cases need not reflect a larger sympathetic attitude to infant killing by unwilling mothers. If such sympathies were indeed widely held, single motherhood would have carried little social stigma or economic hardship over the 20th century. But this was clearly not the case as the work of Margaret Little has demonstrated. Single motherhood was routinely punished, and continues to be punished, in both subtle and overt ways in Canadian society. That the death penalty was deemed abhorrent to juries need not be equated with increased sympathy for killing newborns.

Similarly, her cautions about conservative-driven agendas shaping current cases of newborn killing are provocative but perhaps raise more questions than offer conclusions. The federal government's contemporary desire to replace the infanticide provision with "death by child abuse/neglect," according to Johnson Kramar, marks the supremacy of infant rights at the expense of the mother. But this raises uncomfortable questions, first about the difference between the value of the life of an infant versus the value of the life of a child, and, second, about the value of infant life outside the courtroom and penitentiary. If contemporary child poverty indicators for Canada are to be believed, for example, widespread trends towards heightened protection of children are complicated at best in this country. Perhaps like the 1948 infanticide law provision, the charge of child abuse/neglect is best understood as a legal convenience, and less an attempt to discipline women. This study is nevertheless an excellent reminder that the law reflects and challenges the values society embraces. It also has a habit of turning in on itself and purs-

ing its own idiosyncratic agenda, quite apart from and often against the interests of those it is expected to serve and protect.

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Constance Backhouse and Nancy L. Backhouse, *The Heiress Versus the Establishment: Mrs. Campbell's Campaign for Legal Justice* (Vancouver: UBC Press 2004)

PROFESSOR CONSTANCE BACKHOUSE and Madame Justice L. Backhouse have republished Elizabeth Bethune Campbell's riveting book *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (Boston: St. John's Rectory 1940), an autobiographical recounting of Campbell's run-ins with the legal establishment in Ontario over the mishandling of her mother's estate by her uncle, William Drummond Hogg, a well-respected lawyer in Ontario and Chair of the Toronto Trust Company. Campbell vividly describes her numerous court actions and encounters with the lawyers, the trust company, and the judiciary between 1925 and 1930, in her efforts to right the wrongs done to her mother's estate. The Backhouses describe Campbell as "a woman of formidable intellect, wit, and sarcasm, with a determination of steel" (3) and her writing style as "effervescent." (xiv) As a result, every reader, including this reviewer, has a difficult time not reading Campbell's book in one sitting. It reads as well as the best 'whodunit' novel. The fact that she "almost married" William Lyon Mackenzie King (248 n.14) adds further intrigue to her story.

Although her book was dated 1935 and not published until 1940, Campbell ends on a high note — her success as a self-represented litigant before the Privy Council in England in 1930. Her success was quite an accomplishment as Campbell was not trained in law, and apparently it was unusual for the Privy Council to de-



cide in favour of a litigant who had lost in all lower courts. As the first woman to appear before the Privy Council, Campbell recognized that her achievement might have "paved the way for more sensational victories by women better equipped" (190) than she was. Campbell left England thanking God with a "satisfied heart" and wondering what would happen "should politicians ever succeed in abolishing the right of Appeal to her Majesty's Judicial Committee." (164) Appeals to the Privy Council were abolished only nine years after she published her book.

The media followed Campbell's case with great interest, often referring to her as the "Privy Council Portia" or a "Canadian Portia" and making detailed references to her physical appearance and wardrobe. For many years to follow, the book's critical stance on the legal profession and the judiciary was sufficiently controversial that Osgoode Hall's library copy was "kept under lock and key in the Librarian's Desk." (xiii) It circulated in the legal profession as "an underground copy" that the legal establishment "couldn't do anything about" and seemingly "wanted to suppress." (xv) Given its attack on the legal establishment and the judiciary, "a ticking time bomb" (3) is an apt description.

In many respects, the Backhouses provide the reader with two extremely well-written, integrated books for the price of one. *The Heiress Versus the Establishment* consists of Campbell's book, and the Backhouses' fascinating Introduction and Epilogue along with 81 pages of footnotes to Campbell's book (that are as long as the book itself) to confirm and elaborate on Campbell's account, and to capture and analyse the social, political, and regulatory context within which Campbell was forced to seek justice. An Appendix lists the sequence of 23 legal proceedings arising out of the estate dispute between 1922 and 1935.

Although Campbell ends her book with her success at the Privy Council, the Backhouses in the Epilogue pick up on

Campbell's continuing struggles to enforce the Privy Council's judgement. Over the next five years, Campbell fought a tough battle to collect costs and interest. In fact, the Backhouses list more motions and court actions after the Privy Council decision than before it.

At first, Campbell tried the "kind and lenient" approach, designed simply to collect what was owed to her. (169) Perhaps frustrated with her lack of progress on this front, in 1931 she brought a motion in the Supreme Court of Ontario to have Hogg removed from the Rolls of the Law Society because his actions of submitting false accounts, altering book entries, and refusing to pay monies held in trust were "unbecoming a Barrister and Solicitor." (167) She did this despite the fact that the discipline of lawyers had been delegated to the Law Society of Upper Canada in 1876. Hogg's response was to file an affidavit suggesting Campbell was "not of sound mind," to which she responded that she was not "of unsound mind, unless it be a mark of unsoundness of mind to want one's money paid one." (169) She thought she was rather generous for not pressing criminal charges. (169) Hogg remained on the Rolls. In 1932, Campbell brought her request to have Hogg disbarred to the Law Society, at which point it appears as though the Law Society sat on the complaint for two and one-half years. (169)

Campbell's generosity towards Hogg was exhausted in 1934. After unsuccessfully trying to move the Law Society to disbar Hogg, she laid a private information against Hogg in Ottawa police court alleging forgery, false pretences, theft, and perjury. (177) The information was initially refused, but she was successful the second time. However, charges against Hogg were dismissed because the magistrate found no proof of "any fraudulent intent." (297 n. 32) It appears as though Campbell prosecuted her own private information. Having exhausted all legal avenues, Campbell, "quite out of keeping with [her] stature and character," picketed the Trust Company. The Back-

houses suggest that the “stress and pressure” may have caused her “to unravel to some degree.” (177) However, this seemed to be a rather sensible reaction to her treatment by the company, following her efforts to seek justice through more formal means. Campbell “treasured her memories of her Privy Council victory” to her death in 1956. (226) Unfortunately, the detailed documentation of her case, which she also treasured, was not kept following her death.

The Backhouses raise a number of interesting questions. On the issue of self-representation and legal education, they ask: “What does it tell us about the efficacy of legal education, offered exclusively to the few admitted to the monopolistic, self-governing legal profession, that a woman without formal education and completely untrained in law could master the intricacies of legal procedure and substantive legal argument, to emerge victorious at the Privy Council?” (23) Although judges will write anonymous blogs and informally complain about dealing with unrepresented accused, anecdotal evidence indicates that many self-represented accused are successful. Campbell’s encounter clearly illustrates why. She was sufficiently immersed in her case to interrupt her counsel on numerous occasion to correct them. The Backhouses describe such interruptions as “unseemly” and Campbell “at her most difficult.” However, one “bright” lawyer Campbell was dealing with “despised preparation.” (216) He was in obvious need of correction. In his later autobiography, the lawyer confessed to having explained to Campbell that he and Hogg were fellow-benchers and that she would be better off with another lawyer. (216) Madame Justice Backhouse suggests that Campbell’s story and that of another self-represented litigant, who probably should have been successful before the Privy Council and was not, be a lesson to her as a newly appointed judge to resist “concluding too quickly” that self-represented litigants do not have a case even

when other judges have decided against them. (xvii) Madame Justice Backhouse is being too modest in not suggesting that this is an excellent lesson for all judges.

In raising questions about the discipline of lawyers, Madame Justice Backhouse muses: “as a former bencher of the Law Society of Upper Canada, I wondered whether the Law Society today would show similar reticence in disciplining prominent members of the profession and benchers who had been proven guilty of grave breaches of trust.” (xvii) Although there have been improvements through the use of more permanent professional staff by law societies, a number of contemporary reports by the *Fifth Estate*, the *Toronto Star*, and the *Ottawa Citizen* indicate that many of the problems of delay and reluctance continue today.

I would highly recommend these excellent books for anyone concerned with professional monopolies, self-regulation, and élitism in the legal profession and the judiciary. The three authors provide insightful commentaries on all of these contemporary issues.

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Jennifer Sumner, *Sustainability and the Civil Commons: Rural Communities in the Era of Globalization* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2005)

THE DUST JACKET and introductory chapter of this book promise a theoretical analysis of the contested concept of “sustainability” and a utopian vision for sustainable rural communities struggling for their survival in the current round of neoliberal globalization. These are both attractive projects. Reading this book has further convinced me that they are important projects that deserve academic attention, in part because the conceptual and political problems that should be tackled here are either not tackled well or are not tackled at all.

The meaning of “sustainability” was initially framed in terms of the “limits to growth” discourse of the 1970s. There has since been a greater recognition of the power of technological substitution to overcome the constraints of finite resources. For some economists “sustainability” is used to mean “long-term economic viability” with little or no reference to ecological constraints. Sumner rightly rejects this sort of definition but not for ecological reasons. In fact she leaves us uncertain where she stands on the ecological implications of the term. Without being articulated to some clear ecological analysis, the term “sustainability” means little more than “viability,” and can be co-opted to any project of maintaining a *status quo* — the viability of economic growth (as in “sustainable growth”) or the viability of rural communities (as in “sustainable rural communities”). The key here is that conceptual vagueness allows the aroma of environmental virtue to linger (we after all still expect the term to carry it) even while its source is unclear.

Sustainability needs to be reconceptualized within the context of the ecological crises of the 21st century which are not so much about limits as about the uncontrolled and possibly uncontrollable proliferation of possibilities. Climate change (curiously never once mentioned in this text) is the defining challenge both for sustainable strategies and for conceptualizations of sustainability. Climate change condemns us to radical social change. We must either revolutionize our greenhouse gas generating systems or face an increasingly extreme and unpredictable weather “environment” that will have revolutionizing effects on all rural communities that depend upon extraction from “nature.” Biotechnology will increasingly be touted as a technological fix for environmentally stressed agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. Biotechnology has the potential to revolutionize food and fibre production, allowing it to be further restructured on an industrial, spatially indiffer-

ent model and, in this way, further calling into question the very notion of the “rural.” These issues are apparently not on Sumner’s radar.

Sumner’s strength is the simplicity and single-mindedness of her moral vision. It is a vision that, at least in the abstract, few on the left will quarrel with. It also proves to be a weakness when it comes to the kind of conceptual analysis that I think needs to be done. Sumner abstracts the moral content from Gramsci’s analysis of hegemony and Habermas’s schema of dialogic versus monologic communication. From these she fashions two continua of virtue: counter-hegemony is good, and hegemony bad; dialogic is good, monologic bad. These can be mapped in two dimensions creating a square of virtue in one corner of the map. To these she adds a third moral dimension taken from McMurtry who distinguishes between a “money code of value” and a “life code of value.” Mapping the third dimension creates a box in the corner of a three-dimensional moral space (the figure is on page 74). Let us call it “the moral box.” Once she has constructed the box, Sumner’s analysis consists of seeing whether things — social reality, social projects, conceptual constructs — will, or will not fit into the box. This is how she rejects the economistic conception of sustainability. It is too monologic and favours the money code of value.

Her moral contrasts are drawn too starkly and she applies them in ways that are often incoherent. For instance commodification, as an expression of the money code of value, is bad. Uncommodified household labour, Sumner tells us, is good for the family farm (no analysis of patriarchal exploitation here). However, she also wants to point out the injustice of rural women assuming the burden of providing services abandoned by the state. She seems oblivious to the fact that in (rightly) championing paid labour in this context she is abandoning her neat moral dualism. Sumner’s affection for the welfare state — indeed it is central to her

vision of utopia — is difficult to square with her moral theory. The welfare state and rural cooperatives are for her consummate examples of the “civil commons,” that she, quoting McMurtry, defines as “the vast social fabric of unpriced goods, protecting and enabling life.” The term encompasses common property traditions plus mutual aid. She gives no rationale for favouring examples of the civil commons that are clearly organized on a commodified basis over traditions of uncommodified mutual aid admired by other utopians including Marx and the anarchists. Nor does she seem aware of neo-Marxist analyses of the welfare state (as well as of cooperatives) as implicated in projects of (capitalist) hegemony and as expert-driven, monologic forms of social administration. Politically, she favours the nation-state without acknowledging debates within the utopian tradition on decentralized structures of power.

The welfare state is necessary in Sumner’s utopia in order to subsidize North American rural communities. Low density residential patterns in the countryside cost more per person to provide with physical infrastructure and social services. (They also result in significantly more greenhouse gases per person than dense urban patterns.) States in the developed world have subsidized not only these residential patterns but also rural economic pursuits with amenities like government wharves, agricultural marketing boards, and tariffs. Were Sumner really serious about taking a global perspective and including voices of the “majority world” in her dialogic utopian future, she would have at least to *consider* the fact that those who speak for farmers in the South oppose agricultural subsidies in the North. The North’s hypocrisy in asking the South to eliminate tariffs while refusing to reduce their own massive agricultural subsidies is one of the main reasons for developing nations’ resistance to the World Trade Organization. Sumner is silent on this issue as well as the related issue of her utopian ideal for world trade.

Does she favour localism in agricultural production? If not how does she deal with the ecological cost of long distance shipping? If so, how does she address the putative economic costs to rural communities?

Sumner too easily assumes that North American rural communities are worth preserving in their current state. She includes in this preservationist embrace communities that are busily mining coal, overharvesting forests, planting monocultures, and spraying biocides. It will simply not do to pretend that these are recent deviations under pressure from economic globalization. Complaints about Canadian farmers and foresters “mining the land” and despoiling nature to supply international markets reach back at least to the early 20th century. Rural economic pursuits are organized capitalistically, and rural communities often develop “cultures of complicity” to legitimate their roles in resource exploitation. Urban migrants to these communities seeking “nature” or a romantic countryside ideal increasingly challenge these cultures of exploitation. What is Sumner’s take on this? “Inmigrants” create tensions and undermine rural community solidarity and are therefore one of the modern threats to rural communities. A more productive approach would be to focus on actual communities struggling towards *ecological* sustainability (often informed by creative ideas from urban newcomers) and ask what lessons others could learn or what policies might sustain these and similar initiatives.

Sumner also promises a solution to the problem that all utopians face of how we get from here to there. She is hampered here by a weak analysis of power. Apart from vague and sunny references to the existence of “globalization from below” building the civil commons, we are given very little to go on. Perhaps we are meant to close our eyes and believe: “This new understanding of sustainability, allied with the cooperative human construct of the civil commons, depends on feedback,

evolves through negotiation, adapts to change, includes social learning, encompasses reflexivity, builds diversity, respects equity, encourages cooperation, and thrives in participatory democracy.”

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David T. Jannigan, *Environmental Illness in Nova Scotia, 1983-2003* (Halifax: Fernwood 2003)

THIS BOOK DISAPPOINTS because the author is locked into a biomedical mindset and unable to really understand the health problem known as “Multiple Chemical Sensitivity” [MCS] or the precautionary principle. Jannigan simply needs to examine the growing body of scientific literature documenting conditions which come under this new health disorder. The Danish Environmental Protection Agency reported in 2005 that MCS is “a new health disorder which has been described during the last 20 years,” and “is a real condition. MCS differs from the common scientific understanding of illness because the condition is always manifested by multiple non-specific symptoms from different organs at the same time and because these symptoms may occur after exposure to chemicals at very low concentrations.”

Jannigan uses similar tactics to companies defending themselves against accusations of causing occupational and/or environmental pollution problems. He discredits “physician-advocates” for workers with MCS complaints, implies repeatedly that MCS is psychogenic and that MCS “fears” were fanned by media reports, and denies that MCS is a recognized health problem.

With the construction of energy efficient buildings, researchers developed an awareness of “Sick Building Syndrome” which involves physical reaction of staff to poor air flow and contaminants that are locked inside these sealed buildings. For

example, when the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation moved into a new energy-efficient building in downtown Toronto, many staff presented with health problems related to emissions from the new building materials (formaldehyde in many of the building materials such as carpets and furniture), volatile organic compounds in paints, and emissions from photocopiers, printers, and new computers.

One of this review’s authors was a member of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee at Athabasca University [AU], and concentrated on addressing health-related concerns in our air-tight building such as maintaining proper air flow and flushing contaminants (e.g., emissions from glues, paints, new carpets, photocopiers) from the building. We were fortunate to be able to consult with an architect who advised us on eco-friendly building design and building materials. Unfortunately, at the time, AU did not follow her advice and continued to use paints and glues and install new carpets that emit gas into a sealed building. The staff was granted one concession — they would be notified in advance about renovation projects involving new carpets, glues, and paints, etc.

Jannigan lacks the ability to examine health problems through a holistic lens. He approaches the problem of MCS through an administrative approach, empathizing with administrative staff rather than with workers who present with complaints related to MCS. While he provides a detailed costing of the investigation, treatment, and renovations involved in several case studies in Nova Scotia, he fails to consider the long-term costs of MCS to individuals, their families, and society at large. These costs include the inability of people with MCS to reach their full potential in education or work productivity, and are likely much higher than what seems to be a large expenditure to detect and repair problems. It would seem to make sense to use precautionary principles in attending to air quality concerns in

buildings before acute problems turn into chronic conditions.

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Robert Rutherford, *Hometown Horizons: Local Responses to Canada's Great War* (Vancouver: UBC Press 2004)

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY of Canada's participation in World War I has until recently been dominated by official military and diplomatic histories, and more popular narratives of battles and campaigns. They have typically focused on those engagements — the Second Battle of Ypres, Passchendaele, the Hundred Days, and above all the capture of Vimy Ridge — in which Canada's citizen soldiers particularly distinguished themselves. Viewing World War I as the crucible of Canadian nationhood, they show how the scope and scale of its sacrifices and contributions to the Allied victory contributed to the achievement of constitutional autonomy and national sovereignty in the interwar years. The general theme of this body of work might be summarized in the clichéd proposition that modern Canada "was born on Vimy Ridge."

With the exception of the traumatic upheavals of the conscription crisis, the home front was relatively neglected. However, military historians have now begun to turn their attention away from the killing grounds of France and Flanders, and the activities of generals and politicians, to consider the social and cultural impact of World War I: addressing such issues as systems of voluntary recruitment; federal reconstruction and resettlement policies, and their relation to the evolution of the modern welfare state; the plight of returned veterans; and the attempt, after the Armistice, to construct a hegemonic collective memory of World War I that sought to invest its unprece-

dent horrors and losses with a transcendent meaning and purpose.

All of these studies share a broad national perspective that, apart from the growing cleavage between Francophone Quebec and the rest of Canada, does not take much account of the pluralistic nature of Canadian society, and the range of responses among different groups, regions, and localities to the experience of war. One prominent exception was John Thompson's pioneering account of the social and economic impact of World War I on the Canadian West. But his example did not inspire many imitators, at least not in the short term.

Robert Rutherford's book, however, joins a growing body of work — Ian Miller's *Our Glory and Our Grief: Torontonians and the Great War* is another notable example — that is concerned with revealing how the war was experienced and understood in local terms, at the level of individual communities; in this instance, of three medium-sized "hometowns" representing the regional diversity of Canadian society in 1914: Trois Rivières, Guelph, and Lethbridge. Their approach is based on the assumption that the impact of major historical events on complex, pluralistic modern societies is far from uniform, but varies widely, according to such factors as class, gender, ethnicity, and, above all, locality.

Rutherford's study suggests that the effects of World War I on Canadian society can only be fully apprehended by narrowing our focus down to the level of the individual community. For most ordinary people on the home front, separated by thousands of miles from the battlefields of Europe, the experience of war was largely mediated by local factors. Rutherford shows how most of their information about the war, from the progress of military campaigns to the imagined plots and conspiracies of enemy aliens, was filtered through the medium of the local press. He explores the consequences of a system of enlistment that,



until the advent of conscription, was largely organized on a local basis. New recruits joined "community regiments" that preserved a strong sense of local patriotism and identity. The meanings and purposes of Canada's participation in the war were represented and enacted in an endless round of community rituals — parades, "send-offs," sermons, speeches, and so on — organized by local voluntary associations and staged in familiar public ceremonial spaces. Popular attitudes towards enemy aliens, which, as the war progressed, became increasingly marked by outbreaks of paranoid hysteria, were at least partly determined by the relative proximity of German, Austro-Hungarian, and other suspect ethnic groups. Until the federal government intervened in the latter stages of the war with the introduction of state-directed measures to finance the war, the vast, nation-wide relief effort directed at the families of enlisted men took the form of local fundraising campaigns, organized by middle-class voluntary organizations, under the umbrella of the Canadian Patriotic Fund [CPF]. The activities of the CPF, according to Rutherford, were as much directed to the preservation of local social hierarchies and power relations as to the alleviation of economic hardship. Rutherford's microhistorical approach reveals the complex, contested nature of the response to conscription that went beyond a simple dichotomy between Francophone Quebec and English Canada. In largely Francophone communities like Trois Rivières, he finds voices of moderation like Joseph Bernard opposing conscription in the name of British liberty and a pan-Canadian nationalism premised on the idea of Confederation as a pact between the two founding races; while in western Canada, the truculent and intolerant imperial nationalism associated with English Canada and the Union government was tempered by radical demands advanced by local labour and farmer organizations for the conscription of wealth as well as manpower. By focusing on the wide-ranging contributions of local Impe-

rial Order Daughters of the Empire [IODE] chapters and other women's organizations to the war effort, as well as the faintly ludicrous activities of Home Guard units mobilized in defence of their neighbourhoods, Rutherford develops a more nuanced picture of the consequences of World War I for gender roles and identities. Similarly, Rutherford uncovers the often vexed relations between civilians and soldiers, and the significance of the prolonged post-war debate about the most appropriate ways of honouring returned veterans and commemorating the "glorious dead," by analysing how these issues were confronted and resolved locally. So, for example, in Guelph, the treatment received by recuperating veterans in a nearby military hospital brought latent resentments between soldiers and civilians bubbling to the surface; while in Lethbridge, a decade-long, frequently acrimonious debate over the best means of memorializing the sacrifices of the city's veterans saw the wishes of the returned men overruled by local civilian élites.

Rutherford is arguing, therefore, that for the majority of Canadians who did not serve in the Canadian Expeditionary Force [CEF] and endure at first hand the horrors of trench warfare, the meanings of World War I — what ordinary people believed, felt, and understood about the cataclysmic events taking place in Europe — were largely shaped by local circumstances. Canada may have been born on Vimy Ridge. But the birth was announced and its significance was interpreted in Guelph, Lethbridge, Trois Rivières, and countless other communities, large and small, in articles and speeches, sermons, parades, thanksgiving services, and other forms of social communication. The nature of these interpretations was in turn shaped by the peculiar characteristics of each community: its major industries, class structure, ethnic profile, and so on. Rutherford therefore begins his study with a long detailed chapter, studded with statistical tables, graphs, and maps, estab-

lishing the social, economic, and physical parameters of his three chosen "hometowns." However, he then abandons this conventional structural analysis in favour of a largely cultural approach that is concerned with determining the nature and influence of local communications networks, and analysing the role of public rituals and other forms of symbolic action in mediating experience, generating social meaning, and constructing usable pasts. But he is not of course claiming that World War I can only be understood as a manifestation of the local. One of the great virtues of Rutherford's study is the way in which he ties the micro-historical analysis of local urban cultures to events taking place beyond their parochial boundaries. Rutherford does not treat his three hometowns as isolated, self-contained communities, but places them within a complex web of "reciprocal linkages" to the state, the "surrounding social world," and "history itself," represented by the war raging in Europe. (271) The boundaries between the national and the local were permeable and fluid. The war may have been experienced and comprehended in local contexts, making use of the social and cultural materials available within limited "hometown horizons." But Rutherford shows how under conditions of modernity these horizons were constantly shifting and expanding, admitting various influences from the wider world in a continuous process of communicative exchange. He conceptualizes this relationship by drawing upon John Bodnar's well-known distinction between "vernacular" and "official" culture. The collective identity of Americans, Bodnar argues, has been largely shaped by the more concrete, intimate associations, memories, and allegiances of locality, ethnicity, and class rather than the abstract patriotic values of a homogeneous national culture. Rutherford identifies a similar dichotomy between vernacular local and official national cultures in early 20th-century Canada. But he also identifies numerous points of contact be-

tween them, arguing that the ability of national political élites to impose their interpretations and procedures on the periphery depended on the extent to which messages emanating from the centre intersected with local interests and perspectives. Rutherford's analysis has also benefited from his engagement with anthropological theories of ritual and symbolic action, associated with such key figures as Clifford Geertz, Catherine Bell, and, above all, Victor Turner. Turner's conceptions of social drama, *communitas*, and liminality inform Rutherford's accounts of how cultural practices such as ritualization were deployed to define and valorize social boundaries and hierarchies — between soldiers and civilians, men and women, workers and middle-class élites — and also to transcend and transform them.

The principal shortcoming of *Hometown Horizons* is the discrepancy between the suggestive, stimulating questions it continually raises and the cautious, rather anodyne answers that Rutherford in many cases provides. His arguments and interpretations are almost always surrounded by a thicket of qualifications that threatens to drain them of vitality and interest. Meanings and effects are invariably ambiguous and contingent; relationships are shifting and reciprocal; ethnicity, gender, class, and other explanatory factors are conscientiously invoked without a clear priority being assigned to any of them; traditional social hierarchies and gender relations are both reinforced and undermined. This urge to cover every possible angle and hedge every analytical bet is reflected in Rutherford's dense, at times opaque, prose style, with its abstract vocabulary, complex syntax, and long, run-on sentences, full of qualifying phrases and clauses.

Rutherford has an impressively thorough grasp of the inherently ambiguous and multivocal nature of cultural practices. And he brings considerable theoretical subtlety and sophistication to the task of unpacking their layers of meaning. But



at the end of it all, one also longs for some forceful, unequivocal, even provocative conclusions. Does Rutherford believe, for example, that locality was the most crucial determinant in shaping our collective response to World War I and negotiating our encounter with modernity? Would he endorse the view that the modern Canadian nation-state (as Alon Confino has argued with respect to Germany) was constructed as a local metaphor? Does he think that the many-sided involvement of Canadian women in the war effort at the local level served to emancipate them from traditional roles and constraints? The likely answer in each case would be both yes and no. Rutherford will not allow himself to skate out on such potentially thin historical ice. It is unfair to criticize Rutherford's book for conforming to current norms of historical scholarship. But one is left wishing that cultural historians would more often combine their methodological boldness with a willingness to hazard some startling and unpredictable theory or hypothesis which, even if it turns out to be untenable, might serve to arouse strong opinions and stimulate fruitful debates.

As it stands, however, Rutherford's main theme — the value and necessity of local studies for a complete understanding of the domestic impact of World War I — is convincingly demonstrated. It should act as a catalyst for further research into the responses of other hometowns to the challenges of total war and other 20th-century crises of modernity.

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Christopher Walmsley, *Protecting Aboriginal Children* (Vancouver: UBC Press 2005)

THERE IS NO BETTER way to uncover the context and inner working of social work with Aboriginal children than through an analysis of how social workers them-

selves create meaning for their work. Christopher Walmsley goes straight to the heart of the matter with his well-written account of how social workers describe and explain their daily work with Aboriginal children. Although the book is entitled *Protecting Aboriginal Children*, the reader is left wondering whether or not child welfare with Aboriginal children does more harm than protection. The book is welcome as it is one of only a few that discusses this topic, which is surprising given that Aboriginal children are grossly overrepresented in the overall population of children taken from families and placed in substitute care.

The book is a popularized version of an academic thesis. By moving the theoretical and methodological discussions into appendices, the book frees the casual reader from theoretical deliberations and goes straight to the practical and useful information. The analysis is based on nineteen in-depth interviews conducted in 1998 and 1999 with BC child protection workers who work extensively with Aboriginal children. The interviews include both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal social workers and the distinctions displayed in the book are revealing.

The book weaves an intricate story that looks first at the national and provincial historical context, the sociopolitical context, and finally the organizational and community contexts. If one is looking for a comprehensive overview of the context of child protection with Aboriginal children, particularly in BC then this is a must read. The historical account is an accurate portrayal of how well-intentioned people can participate in a system of policies and systems that are unjust and oppressive. Perhaps if non-Aboriginal policy-makers and social workers began by honouring First Nation perspectives and truly listening, then a suitable system could be developed.

The story of Aboriginal child protection is one of many stories of unjust treatment of First Nations peoples in Canada. It is a story of colonization in which the

government sought to assimilate the First Nations people to free up lands for settlers. In the field of child protection the operators say that they are truly interested in the best interests of Aboriginal children. So the question remains, how is it that a system comprised of well-intentioned people can operate to so severely victimize a particular group in society? Walmsley's account tells us much in this regard. His detailing of the organizational context in the BC Ministry of Children and Family Services [MCFS] compared with that of Aboriginal child protection organizations is very revealing. The MCFS environment emphasizes standardization, control of practice, high caseload, huge paperwork demands, and high staff turnover. The Aboriginal organizations emphasize community partnership, respect from management, open dialogue about practices, and smaller caseloads.

One might argue that the striking difference is due to bureaucratic size, but Walmsley's discussion of how social workers think and talk as a group about their work uncovers a more complex social reality. His research found that social workers, particularly non-Aboriginal social workers, express their practice as power-oriented practice or policy-oriented practice whereas Aboriginal practitioners in Aboriginal agencies articulate family-oriented practice or community-oriented practice. Power-oriented practice reflects an awareness of power difference between Aboriginal families and child protection authorities and attempts by workers to maximize this differential. The outcome is to reproduce relations of domination and subordination similar to that of residential schools or the sixties scoop. The policy-oriented representation of practice emphasizes following the dictates of child protection policy and, according to Walmsley, is probably the dominant form of practice in the province. This representation of practice attempts to reduce uncertainty and fear. It avoids "making waves" and reprisals from employers. The family-oriented and commu-

nity-oriented representations see the strengths of families and communities in protecting children. They are based on trust and partnership.

The above distinctions in representations of practice are glaring, with significant implications for Aboriginal child protection policy and practice. In my opinion, Walmsley does not develop the analysis enough. He attributes the difference to MCFS's "large centralized bureaucracy" that "emanates a climate of fear and reprisal" compared to small local Aboriginal organizations that are "respectful and supportive." His solution therefore is a decentralized model of service delivery. I think that this is an oversimplification. In his concluding remarks on the historical context, Walmsley states that "whether social work practice is a function of colonial and class relationships circumscribed by the regulatory framework, or whether there is a measure of independent analysis, reflection and judgment on the part of the practitioner is unclear." (18) Here, Walmsley is struggling with the age-old question of the interplay between structures and the everyday practice of social work. It is refreshing that Walmsley did not jump to some functionalist argument. However, an ethnographic component to the original thesis might have enabled Walmsley to dig deeper and explicate how child protection practice is organized by and articulated to the organizational and legislative context and the larger social relations of society.

The book is not as strong in its description and explanation of practice using the social representation theoretical approach that is detailed in an appendix.

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John Russo and Sherry Lee Linkon, eds., *New Working-Class Studies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2005)

EVERY ONCE in a while a book comes along that all labour historians should read and own. *New Working-Class Studies* edited by John Russo and Sherry Lee Linkon is one of those books. The book reflects the remarkable achievements of Russo and Linkon in founding and codirecting the Center for Working-Class Studies at Youngstown State University. Their success in building a new kind of multidisciplinary working-class studies that can appeal simultaneously to working-class students as well as to humanities and social science scholars shines through in this important new book.

The book reads as a moment of reflection as some of the leading practitioners of the new working-class studies have paused to evaluate the parameters of a field in construction and to identify the work that remains to be done. It is easy to imagine that in a few short years, as more teachers discover what Michael Zweig calls here the “working-class majority” and as the Youngstown State working-class studies conference continues to grow, this volume could be reedited and reissued with an entirely new set of powerful essays. The essays here are mostly short and thematic, laying out topics, methods, and teaching strategies for a new field. They must, therefore, be considered collectively. This is not a collection from which to read selectively; it should be evaluated in its totality for the challenges the essays together present to labour history and cultural studies. Labour history can rightly be accused of methodological insularity, largely unwilling and incapable of moving beyond social history or of incorporating ideas beyond the field of history. Cultural studies, while unquestionably multidisciplinary and innovative, has been resistant to working-class themes and questions.

One of the real advances of the new working-class studies, in general, and this volume, in particular, is in identifying a wealth of cultural production by and about working people. This book traces the terrain of the new working-class studies by describing the representations of class and work within poetry, autobiography, film, and popular music. But as Rachel Lee Rubin correctly argues in her discussion of working-class studies and popular music, addressing what Michael Denning has elsewhere described as the working-class “accents” of American popular culture is not simply a question of introducing new topics. New methods must be imagined. As Jim Daniels suggests, working-class poetry, for example, is distinctive insofar as it is often production about production, written in response to difficult and disheartening working and living situations. One must examine the poetry for its “impulse,” a ‘deep’ reading that demands moving beyond metre and image to histories of lived experience. Similarly, as Tom Zaniello on film and as Rubin on music both demonstrate, elements of popular culture must be explored for how they are used by working-class subjects. This process of appropriation — what might be called re-production — is crucial for determining individual and social meanings.

Working-class production — whether that is the material of cultural work, waged or salaried labour, or unpaid work — cannot be examined in isolation, set apart from use and the sedimentation of meaning. The country music song, for example, must be examined for the experience of its writer and performer, as well as for its received meanings, the site of its singing, and the way it is remade and, often, rewritten to match new contexts. The examination of working-class culture, therefore, depends on what the editors call “intersections” between fields and methods. Thus, Elizabeth Faue offers a reappraisal of the way working-class consciousness is mediated through gender, and David Roediger explores the inter-

twining of class and race. Both highlight the importance of looking beyond the traditional sources of union records, for example, to literature, autobiographies, and memoirs.

Their insights capture the way working-class studies has depended on a cross-fertilization among disciplines and a consciousness of what it means for the classroom. Working-class studies has flourished in the social sciences. For example, economics, as Michael Zweig demonstrates, is revisiting the issue of class. The humanities, like literature, have rediscovered that class matters. Paul Lauter offers new ways of reading and defining working-class literature.

Yet, interestingly, historians have been some of the most reluctant to engage with this multidisciplinary field. As the book demonstrates, working-class studies poses a potent challenge to recent trends in labour history. Faue describes working-class studies as a direct inheritance of the new labour history of the 1960s and 1970s. However, labour history has since then focused increasingly on institutions and unions and, ironically, while it has produced wonderful work on issues of race and gender, has been less successful at theorizing class. Thus, despite the important focus on culture in the early New Labour History, the best work on class is being done outside of history, in literature and anthropology programs.

While working-class studies challenges the fundamental direction of labour history, many of the same questions that have long dogged labour historians still need to be asked of working-class studies. Because of its multidisciplinary base in the humanities and social sciences, conceptions of class vary broadly in the volume. It is grounded at times in economic conditions and, elsewhere, in identity. It is useful to resist the urge to define class narrowly. Yet the inability of cultural studies to engage critically with issues of class can be explained partly through the difficulty of theorizing class and the working class. Even in this vol-

ume, working class becomes reduced at times to the experience of work. Can the working class be understood equally in terms of leisure or is the experience of recreation always mediated through that of work? Moreover, despite the important plea of Kimberly Phillips in her study of African Americans and the question of class to expand our understanding of labour, factory work still seems to loom as the defining experience of labour.

Finally, in his comparative oral histories of deindustrialization, Alessandro Portelli suggests an important reminder to consider the relation of the nation and the state to working-class studies. Working-class studies has largely been developed in the United States by scholars working on American topics. As scholars beyond the American border begin to engage with its insights, it is all the more important to explore how conversations about work and class exist within national as well as transnational contexts.

But this is work for new volumes and for new sessions at the Youngstown State conference. *New Working-Class Studies* is a wonderful collection of accessible theory, clear and personal writing, and pointed challenges. It captures the incredible potential and achievements of a field still in production.

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Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2004)

DOROTHY SUE COBBLE's book on "labor feminism" in the post-World War II years has already been highly praised, and rewarded with the Philip Taft Labor History Book Prize for 2005. The commendations come well justified. This is an important book in the field of labour history, one which sets out a fresh perspective on the labour movement in the

post-war years, and one which will undoubtedly shape debates in the field for years to come. A compelling look at a generation of women activists whose contributions have been marginalized to date in both women's and working-class history, *The Other Women's Movement* is characterized by immense breadth and depth in its research, and sophistication and nuance in its argumentation.

For at least the last decade, feminist historians, Cobble among them, have been contesting and revising the "June Cleaver" popular image of these post-war years, challenging the notion that Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* spoke about, or to, working-class and African American women. While other interventions in this debate have often concentrated on localized topics or specific unions and occupations, Cobble's book offers a much broader, national study, with sustained attention to race, class, and gender in the making of women's union politics. *The Other Women's Movement* is a masterful account of a generation of activist women dedicated to the labour movement and to the feminist ideal of removing sex discrimination in the workforce. They campaigned for "economic" or "full industrial citizenship" (4) for women, promoting goals quite different from those espoused by liberal equal rights feminists of the time. For one thing, the labour feminists' strategies to achieve equality involved women's participation in civil rights organizations and the trade union movement, alongside working-class and African American men who, in fact, often dominated the top leadership of these groups.

Cobble, however, points out that feminist historians need to look at leadership differently, exploring the second tier of female leaders in the labour movement, especially those dedicated to alleviating the burden of low wages and uncertain working conditions for wage-earning women. She sets the context for the emergence of "labor feminism" well, looking at structural changes in the workforce af-

ter the war, as well as the political influence of a renewed labour movement after the 1930s, with industrial unionism offering a "vocabulary and ideological framework" upon which women could base their demands. (15) A new group of labour feminists dedicated to gender issues was built from a cross-class alliance of working-class women and college-educated labour researchers and leaders, located both in large industrial (and male-dominated) unions like the UAW [United Automobile Workers] and more female-dominated unions like the ACW [Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America]. This cross-class alliance resembled earlier coalitions of middle-class "social feminists" and working-class trade unionists of the pre-World War I era — for example, the Women's Trade Union League — and Cobble suggests that her labour feminists were inspired by this earlier generation of women of the Women's Trade Union League era, though these connections are not explored at great length. For the post-World War II labour feminists, it was now the state, in the form of the Women's Bureau, which provided an important social and intellectual glue for their efforts, linking labour feminists nationally through regular conferences that built a common political esprit and fostered the connections necessary to lobby for their goals.

Cobble also provides informative biographical accounts of some of the major figures of this group, from the better known Caroline Davis of the UAW to the fiery organizer of waitresses, Myra Wolfgang, and importantly, she indicates the critical role that African American women, like the UPWA's [United Packinghouse Workers of America] Addie Wyatt and Gloria Johnson of the IUE [International Union of Electrical Workers], played in this coalition, not only as organizers but as catalysts for others to embrace civil rights issues. Her coverage of specific issues, such as the campaign for equal pay for work of comparable worth is always judicious and

thorough; she puts the demands of the labour feminists in their historical context, highlighting the reasons why this generation of women leaders focused on the issues and tactics that they did. Most, as she shows, did not challenge the sexual division of labour, nor were they ready to demand an altered division of caring labour in the home, even for overburdened working mothers. Their strategies stressed the elevation and re-valuing of women's labour, both economically and socially, with attention to the different needs of working women as mothers. Because of this emphasis on both women's equality and difference, labour feminists faced off politically with equal rights feminists in the National Women's Party, still intent on promoting the Equal Rights Amendment.

One of the compelling chapters in the book is the discussion of this conflict and its final denouement; it was a heated and passionate debate that pitted middle-class, professional, white women against working-class activists intent on keeping protective legislation for working-class women. Cobble provides an excellent account of the way in which white liberal feminists and their allies drew on racism to further their cause, and the public debate Cobble describes between Betty Friedan and Myra Wolfgang provides a powerful picture of competing feminist visions, dispelling the myth that feminism was a homogeneous movement by any stretch of the imagination. Another important legacy of Cobble's book is its role in further dispelling the notion that feminism had only two "waves" in the 20th century, in between which there were simply troughs of inaction and apathy. This post-war period was not one of the doldrums for working-class feminism, quite the contrary, and as Cobble suggests, these labour feminists provided a basis upon which future generations could build — even though their feminist politics would prove to be quite different.

Though this is a story of the post-war years, the Cold War has something of a

ghostly presence in Cobble's book, certainly acknowledged, but not given the attention or explanatory power that other labour historians have awarded it, in explaining shifts in union politics in these years. Some historians have even suggested that the Cold War sapped the energies of unions and prevented coalitions that might have strengthened the demands for gender justice. Cobble may well disagree, but it would have been interesting to see this issue debated more openly.

The labour feminists Cobble brings to life might be characterized, by and large, as respectable radicals; as she notes, they were "left-liberals, concentrated in CIO unions that shared an anti-communist agenda and favoured close ties with the Democratic Party." (28) Although they certainly challenged prevailing economic and social values and institutions, save for a few, they looked to a more moral capitalism and a system of "mixed" social provision, both state and privately funded, as the solution for working women. Cobble is clearly sympathetic to this energetic and committed generation of women leaders and activists, with their stress on a pragmatic politics of reform, working within the trade union movement and lobbying the state to alleviate the oppressive working conditions facing women workers. The frustrations that this generation of feminists sometimes faced from an entrenched white, male union leadership are explored less fully, perhaps in part because these women, dedicated to the labour movement, did not openly discuss these problems out of a sense of union "loyalty." Some younger women in the next generation of activists, in the 1960s and early 1970s, were far more critical of the union leadership and bureaucracy, turning to grassroots and Left tactics, at least for a time. Although they were dismissed by the labour feminists as "sectarian" (203-204) and unrealistic, one hopes that a future study might examine this next generation of labour and socialist feminists with more sympathetic insight, offering the same kind of



careful contextual analysis that Cobble gives the post-World War II labour feminists.

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Horace Huntley and David Montgomery, *Black Workers' Struggle for Equality in Birmingham* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 2004)

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA, has attracted a host of recent historical studies. The city and its surrounding communities were symptomatic of the racialized New South. Birmingham was a new city with its birth in the late 1870s. Its location was centred on an abundance of coal, iron ore, and limestone — all the key ingredients to make iron and steel. But Birmingham's meteoric rise was also based on a large pool of cheap labour. Although unable to successfully recruit large numbers of immigrant workers, the steel and coal companies could always rely on black workers as a source of exploitable labour. As earlier studies have shown, the push and pull of the rising city, known as the Magic City or the Pittsburgh of the South, created opportunities for both poor rural blacks and whites. This outstanding collection of oral histories is based upon hundreds of oral histories that have been collected by the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. Under the guiding hand of Horace Huntley a vast repository of the Civil Rights Movement's foot soldiers has been captured. In this outstanding study, Huntley and Montgomery have focused on those men and women who traversed the dangerous worlds of trade union organization and civil rights agitation. The book begins with a brief introduction by Montgomery that tries to synthesize the disparate voices. In this he succeeds admirably. All the main themes are encapsulated in the introduction that includes migration, police brutality, segregation, company towns, the roles of the Communist Party

and trade unions, state and federal action, and the defining experience of the Civil Rights Movement. Above all, Montgomery frames the book by concentrating on the voices of workers. It becomes immediately clear that Birmingham was seen by most of the respondents as a way out of the crushing poverty and exploitation of Alabama's rural life. Another common theme is how migration was fueled not just by economic and social uplift, but also by familial relations. Time and time again, it is shown that rural workers followed brothers, sisters, and cousins to the new city. As the respondents moved to Birmingham during the 1920s through to the 1950s, they experienced the numbing brutality of segregation in the workplace, and, of course, in public life. At work, they encountered segregated seniority lists, and little chance of advancement from labouring jobs. For women, there were few opportunities other than domestic labour in the homes of skilled white workers, or of élite citizens living over the mountain in Mountain Brook. The daily grind of traveling on segregated buses and street cars, and working in segregated factories made for a frustrating existence. But as the interviews show most did not accept the racist treatment. There was always a breaking point and they exercised the only power they had and that was to walk off the job. The domestic worker who could not get at least one Sunday off per month to attend church merely walked out of the house and found another job. Males switched from one industry to another. What helped such movement was a steady supply of jobs as the city continued to experience economic buoyancy until the late 1960s.

Although some of this history has already been documented, what gives this collection its strength are the voices that capture the black experience. Just as vital, the collection goes further by highlighting the critical links between work and church. For the respondents their Christianity fueled resistance to racism on the

job. So, whether actively challenging mistreatment at work, or pushing trade union officials to act, their religious identification gave them sustenance to carry on the fight. Indeed, the organizations were complementary. Many of the respondents played dual roles in the church and the union hall. Trade unions, for example, helped bail out the children who had been jailed during the 1963 street demonstrations. Many of the foot soldiers of the Alabama Christian Movement led by Fred Shuttlesworth were active in trade union caucuses. These same workers became guards protecting churches from the ever-present danger of bombing by the Ku Klux Klan. So, fighting for dignity on the job moved outside into the segregated streets, stores, and buses. Such dual activity emboldened some to take enormous risks. In one case a black worker "sat in" with a friend during a college football game at Birmingham's Legion Field. Such a feat in front of 60,000 rabid football fans makes for chilling (and thrilling) reading (both men were beaten for their token efforts). Giving the collection a further insight into the world of the worker are testimonies from whites. Two are chosen, one a female worker and trade union official, the other a labour lawyer. Each in their own way gives critical insight into how some whites were able to transcend the racism of the period. Just as informative, the subjects also explain how the federal government was used to better their lot. Starting with New Deal legislation through to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC] black workers filed suits to win important gains in terms of job allocation and seniority.

All in all, this is an exceptional study. It gives the reader a series of snapshots of life and work in Birmingham. The oral history structure of the book takes one into a world that seems so far away but yet is a mere few decades old. Having lived and worked in Birmingham for the last fifteen years, one does not have to rely on ghosts for historical insight. The people

who fought the labour and civil rights struggles are still much in evidence. This book can only cement an appreciation of their efforts and sacrifices. Due to its structure of representing the spoken word, there are, however, questions left unanswered. For many of the subjects, World War II and the Korean War held a special place in their lives. But this reviewer would like to know more of that formative experience, and its impact on their return to Birmingham. Baseball is also mentioned but could be elaborated upon. Most companies had baseball teams, segregated of course. Did the black baseball players enjoy the privileges of such activity? Many of the players from the industrial leagues moved on to the Negro Leagues; indeed Willy Mayes, son of a miner, played for the Birmingham Black Barons. But these criticisms are merely questions that can be easily answered. Perhaps the promised second volume might go beyond the workplace and church, and take us into the ballparks and pool halls too. In any event, this volume will stand on its own as a way to capture voices and contextualize them.

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Mark A. Lause, *Young America: Land, Labor and the Republican Community* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press 2005)

THE NATIONAL REFORMERS, antebellum working men who crafted a movement advocating the right to land for the landless, were ignored by historians for decades after the publication of the first book-length treatment of their movement in 1941. Over the past two decades, the National Reformers have undergone a surprising resurgence. They have been studied as part of the process of American class formation; in terms of their relationship to the New York Anti-Rent move-



ment; in terms of their relationship to the Democratic party; and alongside the Chartists as part of a transatlantic land-reform movement. Mark Lause adds to this flourishing literature with *Young America*, a history of the internal politics and the leadership of the movement, and the relationship of the movement with the political trends of the time.

The National Reform Association was founded in New York by George Henry Evans, longtime editor of the *Working Man's Advocate*, and a group of other veterans of the working men's movements of the 1830s. Calling for free farms for actual settlers, limitations on landownership, and the exemption of homesteads from seizure for debt, the leaders of the National Reform movement made their ideas remarkably pervasive — at least throughout the North — in a short time.

The National Reformers' innovative methods and willingness to ally themselves with like-minded groups ensured them a national audience. Masters of propaganda, they used the press to their advantage, but also held regular meetings and sent speakers to evangelize in the countryside. They made common cause with any logical ally, appealing to Socialists, to Fourierites, and to cooperators, by proposing land monopoly as a general framing device through which other aspects of oppressive social relations could be understood. The National Reformers also allied promiscuously with representatives of any political party, as long as the politician would commit to National Reform goals. Lause helpfully traces the relationship of the National Reformers to, variously, the Democratic party, the Free Soil Party, and the Republican party (the founder of which, Alvan E. Bovay, was a National Reformer well before he was a Republican). In some states, like New York, National Reformers were elected to the state assembly, and helped to craft policy on issues like homestead exemption.

While the ideologies and discursive strategies of the National Reformers have

been discussed elsewhere, Lause adds to our knowledge on this topic by emphasizing the way in which the National Reformers crafted their own version of history, summoning up both the Roman republic and the American Revolution. Lause also emphasizes the extent to which National Reformers were conscious of class — and makes a compelling argument, if class is defined as perception of differing interests between employers and employees.

Lause argues that National Reform as an independent movement died out in 1848-1849, when its platform was co-opted by the Free Soil party. Whether or not this is really true depends on what is seen as most important: the administrative organization of the association, and the existence of its newspaper, *Young America*, or the persistence of its ideas and their permeation into the political culture. In fact, as Lause himself shows by following National Reform leaders into the 1850s and 1860s, the movement had more of an impact than it had had during its brief era of administrative cohesiveness.

During the 1850s, individual leaders continued attending Industrial Congresses, annual meetings at which many different labour-oriented reforms were advocated and discussed. Many National Reform leaders and members joined the Brotherhood of the Union, George Lippard's pro-worker secret society, in which land reform continued to be a central plank. While some leaders became wrapped up in, and arguably derailed by, spiritualism, others spearheaded the campaign to flood Congress with petitions from all over the Northern half of the country, advocating free homesteads for actual settlers. There were even attempts to settle Free Kansas with land reformers.

Lause has previously written about the Greenback-Labor movement, and his greatest contribution in *Young America* is the unprecedented attempt to draw together the National Reformers and late 19th-century greenbackers, socialists,

and populists. One might have thought the 1862 Homestead Act was the culmination of the land reformers' desires; but according to Lause, the National Reformers did not sit on their laurels. Some National Reformers volunteered for Civil War service — a gesture that Lause assumes was due to their desire to create a free and level playing-field for labour.

In the 1870s, land reformers contributed to American sections of the International Workingmen's Association, and helped to make a better distribution of land important tenets of the Greenback-Labor, Socialistic Labor, and Populist parties. More importantly, by introducing the land question to thousands of urban working people, National Reform paved the way for the enthusiastic reception that Henry George received. Yet even as the early land reformers had done these later movements such service, Lause argues, they did the memory of National Reform a disservice by classifying it as a utopian movement out of step with both scientific socialism and the tenets of modern sociology.

It is clear throughout *Young America* that Lause, who has already written about George Henry Evans, greatly sympathizes with his historical subjects and their idealistic project. Unfortunately, that sympathy occasionally leads to strained readings of the evidence. On the topic of slavery and black equality, Lause depicts the National Reformers as uniformly non-racist. In fact, leaders of the movement spanned a continuum: some were clearly dedicated to the elimination of all slavery, but others invoked the language of "wage slavery" not out of common cause with black workers, but rather to expose the horror of *white* workers being inappropriately consigned to slavery. The argument that National Reform welcomed black participation is particularly untenable, since Lause notes only one black participant. Lause's argument that the National Reformers had a militant arm and were prepared for violence seems intended to reinforce his vision of them as

class-conscious proletarians rather than bourgeois reformers. It is not, however, borne out by the great body of the evidence from which Lause has selected his few examples.

Because *Young America* is an institutional history of the National Reform movement, Lause begins his story with its founding in 1844 (although he does include a brief biography of George Henry Evans). The decision not to discuss in detail the roots of the movement, both in terms of ideology (the physiocrats, Thomas Spence, Thomas Jefferson) and personnel (the trades' union movement and working men's movements of the 1830s) means that this short treatment omits much of the essential historical context.

As a result, the book would be problematic for assignment to undergraduates, but students of labour history will find that it is an essential and thought-provoking contribution to the field.

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Mark Simpson, *Trafficking Subjects: The Politics of Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2005)

SCHOLARS HAVE fought for years to challenge the myth of American exceptionalism, to displace the archetype of the rugged individual, and to incorporate the stories of slaves, American Indians, women, and immigrants. In his bold and skilful work, *Trafficking Subjects: The Politics of Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America*, Mark Simpson not only adds to this valuable body of literature, but also challenges the ways in which growth and expansion have signified progress in traditional narratives. Utilizing a concept he terms the "politics of mobility," he frames his work around "the contestatory processes that produce different forms of movement, and that invest

these forms with social value, cultural purchase, and discriminatory power.” (xiii-xiv) Put simply, Simpson maintains that in order to understand past struggles for social justice, we must understand the contest over the freedom of movement.

Drawing from a range of sources, Simpson explores the place of travel in the American consciousness as well as the laws, customs, and ideologies that shaped disparate travel experiences. The core of *Trafficking Subjects* is thus an investigation of “how mobility, as a process, a practice, and a social resource, comes ... to be distributed, invested, directed and determined.” (xvi) In each of his four chapters he traces the process by which travel became commodified and regulated during the 19th century, arguing that most often, forced movement (or compulsory stasis) was a result of industrialization and developing ideologies of race and gender. Thus, he seeks to “historicize and critique the traveling ideal that ... treats as universal the common condition and capacity of all persons, what are in fact the dispositions, privileges, and values ... of a particular social class.” (xxiii) The result is a smart and valuable contribution to the historiography that challenges the illusion at the center of both American modernity and identity: the claim of “spatial expansion as progress.” (xx)

Simpson begins his analysis with a close reading of Thomas Gray’s *Confessions of Nat Turner*, arguing that Nat Turner’s weapon was his illicit mobility. The foundation of power in the plantation system was the white man’s ability to control the movement of slaves as well as the movement (dissemination) of information. Thus Turner’s education, organization, and mobilization of the black community threatened not only the continuation of the slave system but also the racial hierarchy and identity of the South. Such resistance further provided an opportunity for slaves to redefine their identities, as they experienced empowerment through exercising the freedom of move-

ment. It therefore became imperative that Gray present the authoritative account in *Confessions*, as the white community needed to reassert the control it had lost as a result of the slave revolt and the wild rumours that ensued. Simpson’s analysis of the function of race and mobility in Nat Turner’s revolt was strong and convincing, yet I was left to wonder how gender norms influenced the phenomenon he so aptly described. Given what we know about rumour as an expression of women’s voice, power, and movement, might Gray’s *Confessions* have been an attempt to reassert male power as well? If so, then Simpson’s framework also provides an excellent lens for understanding the codes of white — and black — masculinity at work in Gray’s account.

Building on his analysis of the regulation and diffusion of knowledge, Simpson asserts that triumphant narratives of “progress” have served to silence the political struggle, conflictual social relations, and violence endemic to American history. In order to uncover these tensions, he reasons, readers must question the lofty motives and simplistic conclusions of 19th-century authors, as many are influenced by — indeed even funded by — the quest for expansion. Thus, “philanthropic extension and discovery fold ... readily into ‘commercial prosperity’,” proving that the travel writing industry and the imperialist project are mutually constitutive — each serving to silence its opponents and victims. (35)

The interimplication of mobility and secrecy structures Simpson’s survey of the Civil War period, a time during which “crises of motion [became] crises of knowledge.” (59) As the US government attempted “to secure social relations within the nation’s imagined community by requiring its subjects to aid in policing illicit mobility,” an individual’s movements became as much a threat as they were a political statement. (59) He re-reads the Fugitive Slave Law, stories of the Underground Railroad, and Sarah Edmond’s *Nurse and Spy in the Union*

*Army*, revealing how each jeopardized the ability of the federal government to enforce its laws and advance its military campaign. As escaping slaves and female spies used costumes in order to resist the restrictions that race and gender placed on their mobility, they blurred lines of identity and claimed the freedom of movement previously denied to them.

Finally, Simpson considers “disciplinary pace,” a term he employs to describe the modern effort “to make bodies in motion the objects, not agents of their velocity.” (93) This is his strongest claim and most significant contribution, as he analyzes the ways in which industrial capitalism seeks to isolate the individual and regulate his/her time and movement in order to maximize profit and undermine collectivism. These efforts not only govern the formation of an individual’s identity but also shape social relations among the population at large. He includes an interesting discussion of the necessary — but dangerous — figure of the migrant worker and the ways in which it contributed to the political, economic, and social projects of capitalism. Created by the economy, owners and politicians manipulated the image of the “tramp” and his freedom of movement (vagabondage) in order to assure his marginalization from society. Thus, those workers who fell victim to the excess of disciplinary pace were excluded from the very social system it had created.

*Trafficking Subjects* is a fine contribution to the literature detailing the 19th-century market and transportation revolutions. Simpson’s readings of the texts were insightful and persuasive. Yet, as a historian, I wished that he contrasted — or at least contextualized — his analyses a bit more with other first-hand accounts. Several recent studies have given new voice to the slaves, women, and workers Simpson accesses through his material; this work would provide even richer historical detail to his arguments. As Simpson ably explains, the United States, as a capitalist nation, needs at once to expand and to stand still. It needs to

grow to capture more resources and markets; yet this movement destabilizes government by undermining its ability to police the mobility of its subjects. His epilogue, “Movement Time,” reminds us that this interplay between movement and restriction has grown only more complex in this age of globalization and the rejuvenated American empire. Thus, while Simpson successfully demonstrated “the obsessive will [of the United States] to proscribe the mobility of some and compel the mobility of others,” he nevertheless ends his book with a call to mobilize. (130) For only through a collective movement can we undermine disciplinary pace and utilize the politics of mobility to our advantage.

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Michael Zweig, ed., *What’s Class Got to Do with It? American Society in the Twenty-first Century* (Ithaca: ILR Press 2004)

FEW TOPICS make capitalist elites in the United States writhe more than class conflict. This is presumably because they would much rather have the American populace acquiesce to a social and economic system that advantages a minority and seriously disadvantages the majority, rather than have discussions of class lead anyone to have revelations about introducing a new system. Class-based analysis has fallen from prominence in the United States in recent years, a fact that Michael Zweig notes in his introduction to this collection of essays that seek to address this problem. This book covers a lot of ground, and provides a good introduction to a mode of analysis that should be at the forefront of the social sciences and humanities in the United States.

Class used to form one part of an analytic triumvirate that included gender and race. However, as Bill Fletcher and Sue Cobble show in their essays, the latter two

variables have tended to eclipse the first in the past couple of decades. Fletcher, in particular, argues that there has been a failure within academic circles to appreciate the impact of race on class. Other analytic approaches — particularly whiteness — have instead grown to prominence. However, class is shown here to be inextricably linked with other variables including gender and race.

Successive American governments, from Reagan up to the current Bush, have skilfully used neo-liberal rhetoric to dismantle much of the social welfare state that was erected during the 1930s and 1940s. Francis Fox Piven argues that neo-liberalism has had an important influence on social welfare policy. Piven illustrates that there is little question that neo-liberal politicians have effectively demonized those who are reliant on social welfare programs. Class has thus played an important role in the shaping of government policy.

This book clearly shows that the American economy does not equally distribute wealth. In the most engaging essay in this collection, Gregory De Freitas and Niev Duffy show that working-class youth are particularly disadvantaged in the United States. Young workers experience a lower rate of unionization than their older peers, more difficulty accessing higher education, and substantially lower wages. This analysis further illustrates the complexity of class as it shows that class conflict, if based on such variables as access to education and wage differentials, could manifest itself through generational conflict. Challenges with access to education are particularly difficult as young members of the working class also face the prospect of having to work while going to school. Michelle M. Tokarczyk provides an interesting analysis of this problem, as well as showing the class structure that can exist in a university setting.

The main difficulty of this book is that it is an attempt to engage the vast issue of class in a relatively short 183 pages. This

effort, while timely, led to the unfortunate inclusion of essays that, while being quite informative, do not necessarily reveal enough about class in America in the early years of the 21st century. Globalization appears here in essays by Leo Panitch and Katie Quan. The former includes an analysis of the meaning of 9/11, and the latter discusses American workers in relation to those in other countries. However, for the American working class, globalization has not simply meant cheering the war in Afghanistan or purchasing goods made in low-wage countries, it has also meant catastrophic job loss and deindustrialization. Curiously, there are no extensive discussions of blue-collar job loss in this book despite the impact that this has had on the working class.

Class-based analysis is a framework founded in Marxist thought, but Marx only appears in this volume through references to *The 18th Brumaire*. Marx's major critique of capitalism, *Das Capital*, is absent. Hegemony is mentioned but Antonio Gramsci is not. Zweig and his colleagues are right to bring class back to academic analysis, but bringing back the theory behind it is also necessary. This book would have benefited from a brief chapter on how theory applies today. While Zweig is right to say that class-based analysis has fallen out of favour, a broader explanation why would have helped strengthen the arguments presented by the various contributors.

Organized labour is discussed by Michael D. Yates, but he focuses primarily on the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations [AFL-CIO] and the effect of 9/11 on the federation. Recent events like the creation of the Change to Win Coalition and the phenomenal growth of unions like the Service Employees International Union [SEIU] and Unite-HERE confirm that the AFL-CIO does not entirely represent the future of the American labour movement. The future of organized labour and its role in the lives of the working class may be more promising than Yates suggests. A

discussion of working-class politics would also have been a welcome addition to this book. Yates touches briefly upon labour's interaction with the Democratic party, but no essay is devoted entirely to labour and politics. Numerous studies have shown that many working-class voters voted Republican through the post-World War II decades — markedly so during the Reagan years. Zweig would have better served his readers by devoting more attention to politics.

Recent studies of the working-class experience — notably Lizabeth Cohen's *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York 2003) — have suggested the importance of consumer culture in shaping the American working class. Citizenship is in many ways equated with an individual's ability to participate in consumer culture. Zweig may have better served his readers by deleting one of the articles on globalization and instead including one on consumerism as it has been so central to the working-class experience in the United States.

William K. Tass mentions E.P. Thompson in his essay, and a quotation of Thompson's which he references — "class happens" — leads to my last criticism of this book. (72) Thompson also suggested that classes do not form in isolation, and instead form in relation to each other. Tokarczyk and Barbara Jensen touch upon this problem in their essays but they focus upon the role of education in shaping social class and this does not provide a sufficient insight into how and why classes exist and interact in America. We also do not see why mentioning social class causes fits of indignation among the capitalist class. Are American capitalism and its social system so fragile that they cannot bear a little scrutiny?

This book is an admirable attempt to bring class-based analysis back to the forefront of academic discourse, despite its short length and somewhat uneven content. Capitalism is in many ways the ideology that does not speak its name de-

spite its vast influence. Indeed, discussions of class have become the object of scorn within broader public discourse in the United States. However, as Zweig and his colleagues have shown here, class does indeed matter and class-based analysis is still an excellent method of critiquing capitalism and the divisions that it causes.

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Christopher R. Martin, *Framed!: Labor and the Corporate Media* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2004)

ONE WOULD be hard-pressed to dispute the argument that organized labour has been given a rough ride in the mainstream American media in recent decades. The sources and effects of this mixture of corporate sympathies and selective omission are the focus of Christopher Martin's valuable book, *Framed!: Labor and the Corporate Media*. Along with providing background to the current media-labour environment, Martin gives thoughtful analysis to five key recent events for organized labour in America: the closing of a GM plant in Willow Run, Michigan, in 1991; the American Airlines flight attendant strike of 1993; the 1994-1995 strike in Major League Baseball; the United Parcel Service [UPS] strike of 1997; and the World Trade Organization [WTO] protests in Seattle. Each case presents unique circumstances and varying degrees of setbacks and success for labour. In surveying the greater picture, Martin sees a consistent thread running through the coverage of each case: the mainstream media approach their audience not as citizens but as consumers, framing the stories in such a way as to appeal to the purchasing power of the general public. The empirical and theoretical evidence brought forth in Martin's book is a strong addition to the study of contemporary organized labour, as well as an argument for how the



greater structural forces involved have powerful implications for media content.

While the author surveys the usual media suspects (Big Three networks + *New York Times* + *USA Today* and others) and draws some convincing conclusions from his selective content analysis, the weakness of this study lies in the omission (save for a few paragraphs) of a study of the greater structural imbalance inherent in the American media system. Those outside America might find themselves asking, "What does one expect when you allow a communications system to develop as the sole domain of the business sector?" In that sense it is hardly shocking that a media environment long ago deemed best left to the free market should promote values associated with free enterprise.

Not only do the collective aspirations of working people suffer under this current media regime, but also the concept of the press as an essential component of a healthy democracy. Martin writes, "Instead of facilitating a public sphere ... the news media have fostered a consumer sphere, in which public discourse and action is defined in terms of appropriate consumer behavior." (5) This book ably demonstrates that such a paradigm is not necessarily always to the detriment of the aims of labour, provided workers frame their struggle in a language and style more suited to consumerist values than the more traditionally expressed goals of workers' rights and social justice. Martin shows how the UPS workers used this consumptionist frame to their advantage because so much of the public were users of UPS services and had a personal connection with many in the UPS workforce. In this instance, the public could recognize "the connection between production and consumption." (163) This UPS workers' victory did little to dispel consumer-oriented news as a fact of American life; it just showed that it could on occasion work to the union's advantage.

Conspicuously and ominously absent from the current media coverage of orga-

nized labour are any sense of a greater collective good for working people and the role media should aspire to play in a democracy in maintaining an informed citizenry. Martin plainly states: "By addressing all of us as consumers, the news media diminish citizenship to mere purchasing behavior." (52)

The "frames" referenced in the title are, according to Martin, inescapable when contemporary American media offer stories involving organized labour. They are: the consumer is king; the process of production is none of the public's business; the economy is driven by great business leaders and entrepreneurs; the workplace is a meritocracy; collective economic action is bad. (8)

While there is a conspiracy-like element to such sweeping generalizations which some, in particular those generally adverse to union causes, may resist, the examples Martin has selected are sufficiently varied and strongly supported as to lend credence to his thesis. His assertion that "class-based debate [is] missing from the public forum of the mainstream national news" (17) is admittedly hardly a new observation and Martin traces the comment back to sociologist Warren Breed in 1958. (45) When workers' causes are now discussed in American media, it is often with regard to how personal purchasing habits are affected.

The greatest tangible impact of this class-free approach, and Martin's strongest chapter, is his analysis of the coverage of the GM plant closing in Willow Run in the early 1990s. With so many lives directly at stake (4,000 workers lost their jobs), Martin demonstrates how the media framing of the story, whether intentionally complicit or not, effectively advanced the cause of the corporate ownership. Martin convincingly argues that journalists covering the story showed a clear acceptance of the "lean and mean mythology" (79) touted as necessary by business interests. The most obvious and inflammatory case of this disposition reveals itself when Martin clearly demon-

strates how the journalists were *de facto* accomplices in the corporate managerial practice of ‘whipsawing’ by playing the GM communities of Arlington, Texas, and Willow Run against each other. Of the 68 national television and newspaper reports surveyed by Martin, none asked why a competitive atmosphere between Willow Run and Arlington was necessary. What followed was a series of concessions by the two communities in a desperate attempt to save jobs, eventually lost by the Willow Run workers.

All of Martin’s recommendations in his conclusion are concerned with potential union strategies to combat how they are ‘framed’ by media (198) and, aside from a mention of ownership plurality, do not deal with the structural difficulties inherent in the American media system. But it would serve Martin well to look beyond American borders to get a sense of a larger media picture. While this book clearly demonstrates the growth of consumer-based media and how the odds are against any pro-union coverage in America, not nearly enough time is spent examining how this situation is the result of American media policy. Among developed nations, the United States stands virtually alone in its insistence that private market forces drive the media. There are alternatives. While private broadcasting in European countries has expanded in recent years, the European Union [EU] actively promotes the use of national public service broadcasters by member states (see EU Amsterdam protocol). Canada and Australia have also developed mixed public/private systems. By contrast, public service broadcasting remains a weak afterthought in the American system. It is this idea of “public service” that is so lacking in the American context — a point which seems relatively obvious to the outside observer. Even given the plurality of ownership that Martin sees as a necessary step, the goal of all privately owned media is to promote products, not to maintain an informed citizenry.

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Steve Vineberg, *High Comedy in American Movies: Class and Humour from the 1920s to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield 2005)

THIS BOOK provides a concise, accessible, and entertaining critical tour through some of the most beloved and celebrated of Hollywood films. The tight focus of this genre study is on those comedies of the upper classes filled with charming characters, sharp banter, and delightfully romantic, if often bittersweet, resolutions.

Vineberg’s favoured sub-genre, high comedy, or interchangeably comedy of manners, is rooted in the English and French theatre, from Congreve and Sheridan to Marivaux, “modernized” by Wilde and Coward. Vineberg is interested in how this aristocratic lineage interacts with the democratic and egalitarian ideologies of America, and with Hollywood’s inveterate populism, to produce the cinematic variations he follows from the twenties to the contemporary.

Vineberg begins by distinguishing Hollywood’s high comedy from all its other comic traditions — including romantic, burlesque, hard-boiled, situation, sentimental, parody, satire, farce, and black comedy. This exhaustive list is collected by example — for burlesque, the Keystone Cops to the Farrelly Brothers; for parody, the benign spoofs of the Austin Powers series — to tell us what high comedy is not.

Then, Vineberg provides high comedy with a much more elaborate set of fourteen conventions that define it over the decades, luxuriously familiar to experienced Hollywood watchers. These are films set among the rich — if no longer the literal aristocracy of Europe, an élite of money — and the expected costumes, settings, objects, and elaborate social rules of the wealthy. We expect a special style among the élite, above all “extraordinary conversation” — the sparkling wit, spontaneity, and vitality of these golden people. He is thrilled by the theatrically



descended acting styles that embody this high style. This is the charm of a liberal world with the comic liberation of alcohol and worldly appreciation of the erotic. The plot and character conventions become thematic as well; such films resolve in conservative and optimistic fashion, in a charmingly make-believe *status quo*. Just as important for Vineberg, they often combine their light touch with melancholic profundity. This elaborate mélange of style and themes allows a rather artificial categorization of films that are in or out of consideration — this judgement by genre definition can be annoying — but Vineberg is supple enough to see that what he cherishes in the high comic has migrated into other kinds of comedies and even further afield across Hollywood history.

Vineberg begins his historical chronicle in the twenties and thirties. Hollywood creates a vision of Europe in many adaptations of European plays: “Paris, Vienna, and Budapest settings became metaphors for elegance, exoticism, magic.” It is a fantasy that sells in America and back in Europe. Many of these silent comedies, talkies, and even musical operettas, engaged the steady stream of European directors, writers, and actors who were emigrating to California from the mid-twenties on, an importation and integration of foreign artistry that continues throughout Hollywood history. Vineberg memorializes this classic Hollywood: the early American performances of Dietrich, or the masterful comedies of Lubitsch — *The Merry Widow*, *Trouble in Paradise*, *The Shop around the Corner*.

The heart of the book explains the particularly American style of high comedy that develops in the thirties. This importation is from Broadway, especially the plays of Philip Barry. Vineberg presents loving evocations of the most famous films — *The Philadelphia Story* and *Holiday* — and the sublime performances of Cary Grant and Katherine Hepburn. This is entertaining criticism, though Vineberg

skates over long-time feminist objections to the ways in which matrimonial resolutions tame Hepburn’s feisty heroine. It would also have been interesting to square the films’ class conservatism with the politics of the screenwriter, well-known Communist Donald Ogden Stewart.

The most interesting sections of the book focus on films not usually considered comic. Vineberg uses high comic conventions to explore class in classic dramas — *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *The Letter*, *The Heiress*, *Dodsworth*. Vineberg even firmly declares that “there were no pure high comedies” made in Hollywood from 1940 to 1969. But he follows the high comic into thrillers, film noir, and melodrama. He has original takes on diverse favourites: *Rebecca*, *Strangers on a Train*, *Caught* and the melodramas about Hollywood, *The Bad and The Beautiful*, *A Star is Born*, *Sunset Boulevard*.

Like many film historians, Vineberg considers the late sixties and early seventies to be a new golden age for Hollywood. With little to say about why this might be, Vineberg delights in smart, young directors who re-invent the comedy of manners — often refiguring the aristocracy as “hip” or media celebrities — in a period filled with memorable hits. Vineberg is impressed with the gentle satires of Paul Mazursky — *Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice*, *Alex in Wonderland*, *Blume in Love*. He compares *Shampoo* to Renoir’s *Rules of the Game* to underline the painful melancholy that runs through all these comedies. But, to Vineberg, the modern master of high comedy is Robert Altman and *Nashville* its finest American accomplishment. These are some of the very few high comedies Vineberg considers to have a political edge, albeit darkly pessimistic.

The contemporary examples of high comedy Vineberg finds are few and far between. Later work by Mazursky and Altman — *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*, *The Player*, *Gosford Park* — and a

few brilliant singular films, foregrounded against the Hollywood fodder by his generic lens — *The Ice Age, Six Degrees of Separation* — are highlighted.

The limitations of this book flow from its narrowly defined ambition. Vineberg offers a particular kind of film scholarship, genre criticism, the most popular reading of film for both makers and audience. This gives the book vitality: the provocation of the reader — what, not a word about *Bringing Up Baby*!? However, the evaluation of genre films and the judgement of performance that is important to Vineberg's emphasis on style are notoriously slippery and populist discourses and the book often becomes mere plot reprise, then magisterial judgment in a "best of ..." ranking, more tasting than analysis.

Similarly, Vineberg avoids the obscurantist jargon of Theory that has plagued film studies for years but uses a casual under-theorized approach. Most important, Vineberg proposes no serious definition of class — sociological, historical, or political — so the study remains on the level of the films — impressions, nuance, style, and status — with no sense of actual class position, or class as relationship, or change in class structure. Scholarship on class and film has recently returned to film studies in important ways: the representation of the working class, the labour and politics of film creators themselves, the intersection with race and gender. Vineberg's focus on the upper class in these comedies is welcome but narrow; we are shown that the films reflect class, and ideals of class, in America and that class becomes a spectacle for pleasurable consumption. But the argument remains undeveloped.

Finally, the book rushes through eight decades but there is little sense of historical periodization or causation. (I pondered the announcement that "the war years coarsened the sensibility of Hollywood movies" for a long time.) In recent work, film historians have considerably widened the study of film with archival

research and a deeper contextualization in both political economy and media culture. Vineberg brings theatre back into our understanding of Hollywood but provides a gloss, not a film history.

This is a book rather like the comedies it celebrates — witty and graceful, wearing its erudite roots in theatre history lightly, but leaving us with a sharp sense there is something to explore more deeply.

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Gordon Myers, *Banana Wars: The Price of Free Trade: A Caribbean Perspective* (London: Zed Books 2004)

ISSUES SURROUNDING the international banana trade have entered the public's consciousness over the last decade via the long-running United States — European Union [EU] banana trade war. The banana industries of the Caribbean, particularly those in the countries that constitute the Windward Islands, have been undermined as a consequence of this transatlantic confrontation. The combination of strong US opposition to the EU's preferential banana market favouring Caribbean producers and the rulings of the World Trade Organization [WTO] has forced many Caribbean banana farmers to look for alternative employment. However, the opportunities for diversification are limited, and the result has been increasing unemployment, poverty, and social dislocation in these small island states. The present volume by Gordon Myers, a former civil servant in the now defunct British Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food, and now European representative of the Caribbean Banana Exporters' Association, provides an insider's account of the transatlantic banana war. Myers also attempts to critique the international trading system more generally, and to suggest new arrangements in the EU that will enable the

remaining Caribbean banana industry to survive into the future.

The volume is divided into 23 chapters, as well as an appendix that provides a useful chronology of the main events in the banana war between June 1992 and February 2002. The work is bookended by a foreword written by Ralph E. Gonsalves, prime minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and an afterword by Edison James, former prime minister of Dominica. Both men have been heavily involved in defending Caribbean banana interests since the early 1990s, and offer interesting personal commentaries on recent developments. However, the main reason to read this volume is to benefit from Myers's considerable insight into the politics of the banana trade. There is an excellent explanation of the legal issues underpinning the US-EU banana dispute of the 1990s. Indeed, this is the best and most clearly written account seen by the reviewer. Other highlights include a lucid description of the original EU banana market regime established in 1993 that would soon precipitate US intervention and an even-handed assessment of the less well-documented negotiations involving the major parties to the dispute after the second WTO panel in April 1999. The volume also identifies a number of earlier challenges against preferred access for Caribbean bananas entering the European market. A rarely mentioned case from 1983 is cited in Chapter Six, when a small fruit-importing company sued the British government over the procedures for the issuing of banana licenses. Such insights provide a valuable context for understanding the battles that would later be fought over the importation of Caribbean bananas into the single EU market.

Beyond the trade disputes, Myers considers the important changes in market conditions which have undermined the viability of Caribbean bananas in Europe, and particularly in their traditional United Kingdom market. The increasing power of large supermarkets to dictate production patterns and to shape consumer tastes

has placed an additional burden on struggling Caribbean banana farmers. Since supermarkets account for over 80 per cent of UK banana sales, and deem bananas to be a loss leader in attracting more customers to their stores, all banana producers but particularly the less-efficient Caribbean ones have been hit with lower prices and more onerous and expensive packaging and presentation standards. As Myers so clearly illustrates, the cutthroat competition between supermarkets, added to a world surplus of bananas, has led to an increasingly harsh market environment for Caribbean banana producers. A possible solution to such market conditions, as well as the harmful rulings of the WTO, is the development of niche fair trade and organic bananas, and Myers assesses the market potential of these in some detail. However, his conclusions are not encouraging. Myers argues that niche products can only make up a small percentage of overall sales, and these will depend on sufficient amounts of traditionally produced bananas to render a weekly shipping service economically viable.

Although Myers provides important insights into various aspects of the Caribbean banana trade and the international banana war, the volume does not meet all of the author's intended objectives. In particular, the book does not present an adequate analysis of what policies the EU and Caribbean governments and exporting companies must follow in order to maintain a viable banana export industry in the Caribbean. In addition, the final chapter on reforming the WTO is too much of an afterthought to offer a substantial contribution to the ongoing debate. Other problems with the volume include the lack of a central hypothesis which means that the book overall lacks a unifying rationale, while the absence of proper referencing and a detailed bibliography limits the volume's wider academic value.

However, perhaps the most significant weakness of the volume is that the author was not prepared to delay completion of the manuscript until the final phase of the banana conflict was concluded. Contro-

versy over the banana issue was reignited in October 2004 when the European Commission opened negotiations to move to a tariff-only regime by 2006, which was part of a deal struck in 2001 between the US and the EU to end hostilities. The Commission suggested a tariff level of 230 per tonne for “dollar” banana imports (Caribbean bananas would retain their access under a tariff quota at zero duty). In March 2005, Latin American governments, believing that a figure closer to 75 per tonne would be more appropriate, asked the WTO to consider the validity of the EU’s suggested tariff. The WTO ruled against the EU tariff level in July, arguing that it would “not maintain total market access” for Latin American suppliers. In response the EU lowered its proposed import duty to 187 per tonne. However, in late October the WTO again rejected the EU’s proposals on the same grounds as its previous ruling. On 29 November 2005 the EU reduced further its proposed import duty on Latin American bananas to 176 per tonne, which was then cleared by the WTO as acceptable. In light of these recent developments, it would have been worthwhile for Myers to hold off publication until the tariff level had been agreed. By doing this the author could have gone further than existing books that have considered the transatlantic banana dispute (see for example, T. Josling and T. Taylor [2003], *The Anatomy of a Trade Dispute*; and P. Clegg [2002], *The Caribbean Banana Trade: From Colonialism to Globalization*) and provided a more complete and original account of the subject matter. As it stands, the volume, although published in 2004, contains little information after 2002 and as a consequence is not substantially different from other books already available. However, the volume can still be recommended as an account of the experiences of a dedicated official who has acted in the best interests of the Caribbean banana trade for over 30 years.

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Isaac Saney, *Cuba: A Revolution in Motion* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing/Zed Books 2004)

THIS BOOK is a useful primer on a variety of aspects of contemporary Cuba, and sets out to puncture a number of myths about the Cuban revolutionary process. It does so in six chapters dealing with history, governance, racial identity, criminal justice, and the role of the United States. Saney, who has extensive experience on the island, provides some useful insights, consistently offering a provocative analysis.

The strongest chapter of the book is Saney’s thoughtful analysis of the Cuban political system. He shows that the dominant liberal democratic paradigm has many shortcomings, counterposing the revolutionary democratic model of Cuba. In particular the oft-misunderstood (and extremely emotional) question of “human rights” is contextualized well. Likewise he analyses the generational shift in Cuba, and the increasing role of a younger generation in political life. The Cuban model of governance is complex — but is far more representative than many believe. Saney argues, and argues convincingly, that the myths shared by many about the revolutionary system need to be dispelled. His demythifying of the complex Cuban political system is particularly noteworthy, and adds a useful contribution to this debate.

In contrast the fourth chapter (on crime and criminal justice) is disappointing. It is overly technical, badly in need of explanatory footnotes, and in general adds little to the debate about the socialist justice system. One gets the sense that Saney tried too hard to shoehorn his own personal interests in the Cuban legal system into this chapter — and this somewhat forced approach leaves the reader occasionally bemused at the prolix discussion. The space could have been better used in expanding either the introductory chapter or the fifth chapter on US-Cuban relations. Here he analyses well the extent

of US designs on the island since the early 19th century, but needs to examine in more detail the role of the Cuban American lobby which has held US policy towards Havana hostage for several decades.

Isaac Saney is to be commended for his initiative, and his industry, in providing this useful overview of the most recent phase of the revolutionary process. The first chapter is an exhaustive overview of some of the key elements of Cuban political history, and in particular his analysis of the "Special Period" (following the implosion of the Soviet Union) is worth noting. Inevitably, however, in such a broad overview, there are several areas which call for a greater analysis — such as a detailed study of pre-revolutionary Cuba, the political thought of José Martí, in many ways the precursor of Fidel Castro, and the latter's revolutionary manifesto, *History Will Absolve Me*, following the abortive attack on the Moncada garrison in 1953. A more detailed analysis of these aspects would have aided the reader to better understand the bedrock ideology of the government.

More serious is the need for a greater overall balance in Saney's analysis, which is at times simplistic and often errs on the side of wishful thinking. A greater variety of sources needs to be consulted in order to provide a more complete picture, and alternative, more critical views would be desirable. Saney might well reach the same conclusions and much of his analysis is indeed very solid, but at times the hectoring tone and lack of balance are disconcerting. His condemnation of capitalism is understandable, but occasionally he errs on the side of simplicity, such as when he notes that eradication of racism will only come with an end to capitalism. (120) At times the enthusiasm and ideological concerns appear to get ahead of Saney's analysis, when a more dispassionate approach might be more useful.

A final (minor) criticism. The book appears to have been rushed. There are, for example, numerous typographical errors

(I caught twelve misspelled names), and an erratic use of Spanish accents (most are omitted). A greater number of footnotes would also be helpful, allowing the author to develop several areas which are at present barely touched upon.

That said, in many ways the weaknesses of the book are also its strengths. This is undoubtedly a broad-brush treatment, presented convincingly, of a complex revolutionary process. In writing this book and despite the occasionally naive observations, Isaac Saney has therefore provided a useful primer on the Cuban revolution. It is thoughtful, well developed, and expressed with vigour and enthusiasm. As an introduction to the Cuban revolution, it is informative and helpful, and is well worth reading.

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Marion Gret and Yves Sintomer, *The Porto Alegre Experiment: Learning Lessons for Better Democracy* (London: Zed Books and Toronto: Fernwood 2005)

AT THE OUTSET of the decade Porto Alegre, Brazil, became a symbol of hope for many on the left, first as the initial home of the World Social Forum [WSF], second for its experiences in direct democracy and municipal participatory budgeting [PB]. Both represent attempts to create new public spaces and re-animate democracy. While the WSF has received the most attention, PB has inspired considerable interest on its own if the more than 150,000 hits found online on the subject is any indication.

One of the better academic discussions on PB is this contribution by Gret and Sintomer originally published in French in 2002 as *Porto Alegre: L'espoir d'une autre démocratie*, a title that better captures the flavour of the book. This is a comparatively slim but thoughtful work that raises many critical questions about participatory democracy stemming from

PB. Among them: Are participatory democracy and social justice incompatible? (No) Are participatory democracy and good government incompatible? (No) Is there hope for a radically democratizing democracy? (Yes)

This book, however, is not a paean to Port Alegre's experience in PB, but rather a probing examination of its origins, structures, process, and challenges. The book is divided into four primary chapters each of which addresses key facets of the Porto Alegre experiment. The first chapter, for example, addresses the creation of PB in Porto Alegre in 1988, a city of 1.4 million in southern Brazil and a longtime stronghold of the Worker's Party [PT]. Critical to the emergence of PB was a revitalization of the democratic left in Brazil's transition to democracy after nearly two decades of military dictatorship which began in 1964. Particularly relevant was the creation of the PT with its bases of support in the trade-union movement, liberation theology Christianity, and extreme-left currents. The PT took to heart the shortcomings of bureaucratic socialism in Europe, rejecting authoritarian, technocratic hierarchy in favour of a more radically democratic identity. The road to power for the PT began at the local level where, riding a wave of urban democracy in 1988, the PT won control of more than 30 cities including Porto Alegre.

Soon after taking power in 1988 the PT began an innovative experiment in radical social democracy through the introduction of PB, an open and democratic process whereby citizens can meet, deliberate, and make democratic decisions about city expenditures. PB is not, however, an exercise in budgetary self-management by citizens but rather an exercise in joint governance by representative municipal bodies and citizens who assume direct decision-making power by means of what is described as the participatory pyramid.

How the PB works is at the heart of the second chapter. For many citizens the key to PB is the participatory pyramid, a complex structure functioning at three levels

within an integrated system. The participatory pyramid is the connecting link between the city executive consisting of the mayor and city administration with civil society. The participatory pyramid is organized on both a territorial basis (composed of the sixteen districts of the city) and a thematic basis around city-wide issues, five to six in all.

The foundation of the participatory pyramid is the micro or local level which draws small groups of people from area neighbourhoods. Here citizens establish local priorities, most often, but not exclusively, infrastructure, for example, paved streets, sewers, and water lines. They also select speakers who will take their cause to the plenary assemblies at the district level which compare priorities from the micro level, make recommendations for district priorities, and select delegates who take these priorities to the third or Participatory Budget Level [COP]. COP, in turn, works closely with the mayor's office, city administration, and civil society associations and makes a recommendation on overall budgetary priorities which are discussed and approved by the municipal assembly. The final recommendation is determined within three critical parameters: 1) a logic of democracy based on turnout at lower level meetings; 2) a logic of re-distribution to recognize needs of the least inhabited and poorer areas of the city; and 3) a technical logic which incorporates technical feasibility criteria of the city administration used to assess the viability of certain proposals. The third logic has been hotly contested and measures have been taken to ensure the city administration does not exercise *de facto* control over the process. All said, this is a very demanding and complex process which takes place in four phases over a year and which required a re-organization of the city administration to accommodate the participatory pyramid.

The next question the authors address in their third chapter is crucial: does PB work? Is it effective? Here two sets of



measures, internal and external, can be used. Internally, the authors tick off a list of successes — greatly improved infrastructure in poor areas, the best public transportation in Brazil, a tripling of daycare centres, a tripling of children attending school, much greater investment in the health care sector, significant improvements in municipal governance including greater transparency, accountability, efficiency, reduction of corruption, and the elimination of patron-client relationships in budgeting. In terms of social justice, the PB has been particularly successful. The working class has become a prominent collective actor benefiting significantly in terms of redistribution. Women are also included in greater numbers than ever before. Finally, in terms of citizen involvement, the PB has become a school of democracy.

Externally, one can point to the spread of the PB process to more than 100 cities in Brazil, to other cities in Latin America and Europe with growing curiosity in Canada. The United Nations has praised PB and has designated Porto Alegre as the Brazilian city with the best quality of life. The improvements in city governance have attracted the attention of the World Bank which has warmly endorsed PB as a model for the Global South, extended low-cost loans to the city, and posted extensive information on PB on its website.

While the authors suspect the ulterior motives of the World Bank, they do not sufficiently grasp the implications for Porto Alegre and PB to be embraced by the bank. This has become a sensitive issue in Brazil including an attack by João Penha, a member of the PT's left wing, on the "Trap of the Participatory Budget" in which he asks "why has the World Bank characterized the PT city led government of Porto Alegre as the 'best pupil' of the World Bank and IMF?" The PB, according to Penha, is little more than an instrument of the World Bank through which the poor manage their own oppression. Penha's criticism serves as a reminder to the left on how its experiments in democracy can

be potentially co-opted by capitalist interests but the criticism does not do justice to the theory and practice of PB. Gret and Sintomer, in fact, depict a very different reality. For example, under PB Porto Alegre was able to extricate itself from a severe financial crisis and raise local taxes in a progressive manner from 85 million reis (about half that in US dollars) in 1988 to 246 million reis in 1999, much of it in the service of social justice. (54)

To be fair to the authors they recognize in chapters 3 and 4 that PB faces many challenges and has shortcomings. For example, while women are very much a part of PB, feminist issues per se, are not. Immigrant groups are also marginalized. The system is very complex and citizen knowledge of it is shaky. It also demands considerable time of participants bringing to mind the quip of Oscar Wilde that "the problem with socialism is that it takes up too many evenings." Indeed, one might ask the readers of this review if they would give up two nights a week for a year as unpaid citizen delegates on COP. Probably not. One must also ask might such experiments burn themselves out on their own accord if more leisure time is not found for citizens, particularly the poor, faced with the daunting challenge of simply making a living. PB is indeed a fragile system. Legally, it has no standing in Porto Alegre's municipal law and could be "eliminated if the mayor so decided." (27)

The final chapter raises critical questions about PB that will certainly interest readers. For example, how can the dangers of institutionalization be overcome? Can PB move to higher scales of government? How universal and transferable is it?

While it is not a shortcoming of the authors it is unfortunate that the book does not take us up to date through Lula and the PT's first two years in power. For many on the left Lula has been a disappointment, kowtowing to the institutions of global capitalism. In this regard, the alignment of Raul Pont, the PT's mayoral candidate

in the fall 2004 municipal elections in Porto Alegre, with the national party line was no doubt a contributing factor in his defeat. Elsewhere, Brazil's remaining PT administrations are moving to the right. Does this mean the end of PB? This is not certain. What is certain is that this experiment, even if short-lived, is a remarkable accomplishment for the left. Even if the Brazilian left has to start all over again, it will have an inspiring legacy to build upon. For those who want to learn more about the Porto Alegre Experiment, short-lived or not, this book comes highly recommended.

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Allyson Pollock with Colin Leys, David Price, David Rowland, and Shamini Gnani, *NHS plc: The Privatisation of Our Health Care* (London: Verso 2004)

POLLOCK PULLS no punches: there is a disaster unfolding in the National Health Service [NHS] of epic proportions. With its pro-business stance the New Labour government has pursued a programme of radical marketization set in train by the Conservative administration of the early 1980s. The outcome has been the systematic undermining of its founding principles of comprehensiveness, universality, and equity of care. At the time of writing this review in early 2006, controversy surrounds proposals to turn primary care trusts (the work of general practitioners) away from the provision of care and towards the commissioning of care. If these changes go ahead, traditional core services such as district nursing (providing care in non-hospital settings, such as patients' homes), family planning, maternity care, and cervical screening could be contracted out or privatized. The Secretary of State for Health believes that the government has substantially won the argument about the use of the private sector to treat NHS patients and announced that

the time is ripe to increase the pace of reform. The market imperative in health care continues apace. The critical issues raised by Pollock are therefore as relevant today as they were two years ago when the book was published.

There has been a divergence in health policy in the UK following political devolution of Scotland and Wales. The book focuses on England which is seen as fast becoming the "laboratory and test bed for market-driven experiments." It is concerned with health care at the system level, not the experience of patients or those working in the NHS, and concentrates on three areas: hospitals, primary care, and long-term care for older people. By recording what is happening in the NHS, Pollock aspires to convince politicians and policy-makers of the need to reassess current policy and re-establish a commitment to universal health care by replacing the ethos of individualism and competition with collectivism and compassion. The crux of her argument is that the founding principles of comprehensive, universal, and equitable care were secured effectively through the integration of funding and service delivery; that is, when no money changed hands. The internal market of the 1990s severed this link and made treatment dependent on the ability of the purchaser (initially general practitioner budget holders, currently primary care trust commissioners) to pay. Rather than look to more politically contentious solutions to financial problems, such as the privatizing of funding periodically proposed by other political parties, New Labour has so far concentrated on the privatization of provision. Pollock argues that it has sought to convince the public of the rightness of its ideologically driven pro-business policies by a twin approach of denigrating the NHS by likening it to a Stalinist bureaucratic monolith and touting the superiority of the market under the guise of patient choice.

The market was stimulated by the Private Finance Initiative [PFI, now called public-private-partnerships or PPPs]. PFI

permits consortia of bankers, builders, and service operators to raise money on the government's behalf and, in return for a contract, to design and build hospitals and other facilities, and operate support services for a 30-year period. Responsibility for paying back the debt and interest to shareholders rests with the hospital out of its operating budget for patient care. Pollock emphasizes the damage that is wrought as hospitals seek to resolve the affordability problems that arise from meeting PFI payments by making new hospitals smaller, reducing beds, and reducing service provision. The NHS, with its current £80 billion turnover and wide range of activities, is a fertile ground for companies seeking to make a profit. This has been stimulated by the recent extension of PFI to clinical services. The involvement of foreign companies, which have for some time sought access to the NHS pot, has been facilitated by negotiations within world trade organizations in the General Agreement on Trade in Services [GATS].

Pollock identifies the first NHS Foundation Hospitals (in 2004) as a "drastic further step towards a fully marketised system." To all intents and purposes they are the nail in the coffin of the NHS. Foundation hospitals are outside of Department of Health control. Their non-profit-making status is in name only since they are free to enter into contracts with the private sector which can charge fees and distribute profits to shareholders. Pollock predicts that availability of services to patients will be secondary to financial viability and growth. Unglamorous and costly care, such as mental health and refugee health, is highly likely to be cut back.

The book is well written and easy to follow, even for those unfamiliar with the NHS. Pollock's analysis of the source of the current problems facing the NHS is adept but not without controversy. The trenchant criticism of the market imperative rests on the strongly held opinion that the NHS was neither an experiment nor a

mythical utopia which, for more than 50 years, delivered high-quality care on the basis of need to "most patients most of the time." In Pollock's view, the so-called "affordability problem" that prompted the public discontent that politicians have been so ready to exploit to the ends of privatization, could have been averted if the NHS had been funded on the scale of other EU health systems from the start. Others will undoubtedly maintain that the NHS has become a bottomless economic pit that no amount of funding can fill. Pollock's political broad sweep focus on "financial starvation" of the NHS leads her to demur from considering other non-market reforms in any detail. Attention is therefore directed far more to the diagnosis of the problem — and it is this that Pollock does very well — than to future solutions. The book ends with a plea for all concerned to wake up and fully appreciate how grim the situation really is, before Britain's National Health Service becomes indistinguishable from the US health care industry. Objections have certainly been heard in recent years. For example, a House of Commons health select committee of MPs has recently (early 2006) produced a highly critical report on the proposed reforms of primary care, which it describes as incoherent and confusing. But to date objections like this have been piecemeal, sporadic, and short-lived. It therefore remains to be seen whether Pollock's wake-up call will be heeded or if it is too late to turn back the clock.

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Martin J. Wiener, *Men of Blood: Violence, Manliness and Criminal Justice in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004)

FEMINISTS TODAY might logically assume that the legal penalties and social stigma attached to rape, wife-beating, and

other forms of male violence against women are a product of feminist actions within the last 40 years. Martin Wiener argues convincingly in *Men of Blood* that the roots of intolerance for male violence against women lie in the Victorian redefinition of masculinity.

Building on the connections between culture and crime which he charted broadly for the 19th century ten years ago in *Reconstructing the Criminal*, Wiener aims this time to look at gender in 19th-century criminal justice history. While there have been histories of women as murderers and of female criminality, relatively few historians have used masculinity as a lens to understand changing perceptions of the male criminal. This alone sets this work apart. Wiener's goal is to "understand the meaning and treatment of serious violence, especially against women, in Victorian England." (xii) He argues that masculine criminality was undergoing a significant reconstruction in this era, manifested principally in a diminished tolerance of men's violence against women.

It is a meticulous study based on a careful reading of several thousand rape and homicide cases in the assizes, the highest courts of original jurisdiction, spanning nearly a century and the entire nation. Wiener considers every case of spouse murder that went to trial and a large sample of spouse manslaughter and other homicide and rape cases. The very scope of his qualitative readings is impressively ambitious.

The overall trends charted by Wiener are intriguing. He finds that in the Victorian period male-on-male killing declined markedly. Dueling was outlawed, prize-fighting became a more regulated and less bloody sport; even fist fights became less respectable. In the early 19th century pub and street fighting were seen as deeply rooted in working-class culture and a fist fight that resulted in death might be treated indulgently by the law if it was deemed a "fair fight." But increasingly male-on-male violence was stigmatized

and curtailed by the law. Wiener sees this growing intolerance for male violence as being partly a reflection of the heightened urgency of the "civilizing" mission, as numbers of poor Irish came to England during the Famine, as the transportation of convicts ceased, and as the working class gained political power in towns after the Reform Act of 1867. Nonetheless, it remained true that as long as weapons were not used, the curtailment of male-on-male violence throughout the Victorian period could be selective.

In contrast, Weiner sees a much more dramatic change in how the courts and society regarded male violence against women. When their victims were women, men were convicted and punished with ever more severity. Wiener looks at two main categories of crime: rape and murder. Chapter Three on "Sexual Violence" is perhaps most controversial. Here Wiener argues not only that sexual assault was taken more seriously in the 19th century, but that the prosecution and conviction rate rose markedly. There were two main developments. First, the idea of "without her consent" gained prominence. Courts were more sympathetic to women in situations where it was difficult or impossible for a woman to resist an attack. A woman who lost consciousness through intoxication, for example, could not give her consent. Extreme youth might exclude resistance, as would an employer-employee or teacher-student relationship. Second, there was a new emphasis on character. Feminist historians have claimed that the emphasis on character put the victims on trial. Wiener argues that it often had the opposite effect; if a woman had a reasonable claim to chastity, she could use her good character against a man, even across class boundaries. The result was that there were more prosecutions for sexual assault resulting in convictions than ever before.

If sexual assault was regarded more harshly, so was murder, but only when the perpetrator was a man. Whereas women who committed infanticide or who mur-

dered either lovers or husbands were increasingly viewed sympathetically as victims (of illicit intercourse, abuse, or abandonment), men who killed women were prosecuted and convicted with greater frequency and were allowed fewer and fewer excuses. Traditionally, a man who killed his wife could claim to have been provoked by verbal abuse, habitual drunkenness, or sexual infidelity. If he did not use a weapon and if he was drunk when he killed her, that all worked in his favour. But even these traditional excuses in the Victorian period were unlikely to result in an acquittal. A man now had to show not only that he had a "bad wife," but that he himself was of good character and that the killing of his wife involved one angry blow, rather than a sustained beating. If his past or the death itself demonstrated brutality, the courts would not demonstrate leniency for a man who killed his wife. In the Victorian period the only likely way to escape conviction for wife killing was to plead insanity. In spouse murder, jury verdicts of insanity increased from 12 in the 1880s to 23 in the 1890s. The insanity defence was hardly an attractive one though; while a man escaped execution, he was doomed to life in an asylum. And there were no guarantees it would work. The overall trend was towards an increasingly negative view of men who killed their wives.

Wiener's explanation for this growing intolerance for men who rape or kill women is that ideals of masculinity changed the society's broad view of male violence. Instead of bravery, self-assertion, and physical prowess, Victorian society valued honour, reasonableness, and self-restraint. The domestic ideal meant that there was a sharpened image of women as moral, spiritual, and religious, but also as weak and fragile. Men were seen as stronger, energetic, and rational. The ideal meant that there were not only changing expectations for women, but for men. Men should protect women, employ discipline to check their aggressive impulses, and use reason rather than brawn

to settle their disputes. To do otherwise was to reveal oneself as brutish, without reason, and uncivilized.

All of this is an appealing argument, but it is difficult to prove. Wiener draws mostly on court cases for his evidence with occasional references to press reports and popular fiction. His argument is based more on informed conjecture to account for the trend within his cases, than on showing evidence of nonviolence within the popular culture. It raises questions beyond the boundaries of this book. For example, if Wiener had included assault cases, cases where men beat their wives but did not kill them, would his conclusions be as convincing? And what about cases that were never prosecuted? Was there a tolerance for wife-beating in Victorian England that never showed up in court?

This is a fascinating and provocative book based on a prodigious amount of research. It is highly recommended for those interested in legal and gender history and for anyone curious about the roots of our own social attitudes towards violence.

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Nicole Pohl and Betty A. Schellenberg, eds., *Reconsidering the Bluestockings* (San Marino: University of California Press 2003)

NICOLE POHL and Betty A. Schellenberg's compilation of essays, *Reconsidering the Bluestockings*, makes a profound contribution to the depth of historical perspective on the Bluestockings. This collection presents a number of new ways of thinking about the Bluestockings through imaginative analyses that illuminate unexplored dimensions of the Bluestockings. A number of stories emerge from this collection that allow for the exploration of feminism, subjectivity, the body, sociability, political conscious-

ness, and desire through the lens of the Bluestockings. In many ways, this collection reveals the fragmentation of the Bluestockings in their separate individual pursuits beyond the literary circle, their geographic distance, their differing interests, and their divided nature as individual subjects. This collection undoubtedly fulfills the aspect of Pohl and Schellenberg's vision of the Bluestockings as "an entity that functioned relationally" but does not clearly indicate how this was "collectively articulated." For the most part, the essays focus on the first generation of Bluestockings, with particular attention paid to Elizabeth Carter, Elizabeth Montagu, Sarah Scott, and Elizabeth Vesey. These essays either focus on an individual Bluestocking or on a relationship between two or three Bluestockings but devote little attention to how the Bluestocking Circle operated as a collective. This is an important consideration if one is to view the Bluestocking Circle as anything more than an arbitrary grouping of privileged literary women.

While this collection is to be commended for revealing the multifaceted character of the Bluestockings, it also reflects the limitations of England-centred accounts of the Bluestocking Circle. Although Pohl and Schellenberg allude to Montagu's visits to French salons, and the Bluestockings in Dublin, there is no attempt to consider how the Bluestockings may have envisioned their communication as transcending nation. A number of essays firmly root the Bluestockings in an England-centred narrative. For instance, Elizabeth Eger's "'Out rushed a female to protect the bard': The Bluestocking Defense of Shakespeare" argues that women's praise of Shakespeare allowed them to act politically by contributing to the construction of Englishness. Gary Kelly's "Clara Reeve, Provincial Bluestocking" reinforces the Englishness of the Bluestockings by defining Clara Reeve's identity as a Bluestocking through her old Whig politics. Emma Major's "The Politics of Sociability: Public

Dimensions of the Bluestocking Millennium" further roots Bluestocking identity in the framework of English patriotism by arguing that the Bluestockings' millennialism inextricably tied patriotic duty to Anglicanism.

Deborah Heller's essay hints at the possible implications of an exclusive focus on the Bluestockings in England. Her "Subjectivity Unbound: Elizabeth Vesey as the Sylph in Bluestocking Correspondence" poses the question of why Elizabeth Vesey as a symbol of the Bluestockings has not been given more attention by historians. One reason may be Vesey's Irishness and her Dublin-based literary circle. Heller argues that the Bluestockings' construction of Vesey as the 'Sylph', a mysterious figure that had extraordinary powers to transcend geographic distances, was a discourse available to the Bluestockings to articulate their transgression of gender roles. However, Heller's work is silent on the workings of the Dublin literary circle and its interaction with those in England. Heller also fails to suggest what Vesey's Irishness may have contributed to the representation of her as a mysterious Other and, therefore, fails to deeply contextualize Vesey's presence in Ireland. Related to the problem of reinforcing an England-centred account is the lack of a sufficient analysis of how metropolitan spaces could facilitate a network of circles.

This collection is particularly strong in its depiction of women's intellectualism and its meaning for the practical realities of women's lives. Elizabeth Child's "Elizabeth Montagu, Bluestocking Businesswoman" argues that Montagu's intellectual curiosity extended to the processes of coal-mining and her involvement in the economic activities of her husband's life were mutually reinforcing aspects of her identity. Montagu's inquisitive mind was stimulated by knowledge of coal-mining while her material wealth allowed her to provide patronage to scholars and comfortably pursue her own liter-



ary ambitions. Betty Rizzo's "Two Versions of Community: Montagu and Scott" argues that the contrast between Montagu's vision of an intellectual gathering of the affluent and Sarah Scott's vision of a supportive female philanthropic group reflected the different ways that they understood their roles as women. Harriet Guest's "Bluestocking Feminism" argues that gender consciousness emerged among the Bluestockings because their dismissal of the political realm's corruption led them to assert their rightful presence in the literary realm. While these essays skilfully examine women's consciousness of their position in society, they significantly overlook how domestic relationships affected women's intellectualism.

Another significant oversight in this collection is the little attention devoted to emotionalism. There is a notable absence of a discussion as to how the Bluestockings reconciled their intellectual ambitions, commitment to conventional ideas of women's virtue, and the assumption of women's emotional and less rational nature. Jane Magrath's "'Rags of Morality': Negotiating the Body in the Bluestocking Letters" presents a fascinating look at the Bluestockings' construction of a gendered mind-body dualism. However, Magrath's analysis does not suggest the place of emotion in this equation. This is important given the high value attributed to emotionalism, sentimentality, and sensibility in the late 18th century. Susan Lanser's "Bluestocking Sapphism and the Economies of Desire" devotes considerable attention to desire. Lanser's work reacts to historians who have insisted on rejecting the association of Bluestockings with lesbianism. Lanser claims that the expression of desire needs to be considered in terms of a range of sexualities. One of the most important points Lanser makes is that historians tend to overlook feelings in their explanations of the past. One important oversight in Lanser's work is the issue of expressions of intimacy between men and women. If historians are to

take the approach of conceiving of a range of sexualities seriously, then there needs to be equal attention devoted to intimacy between men and women in historical work on desire.

Not only should historical work on the Bluestockings address their intimate relationships but it should also consider the ways in which their scholarly activities were part of a sense of the possibilities of intellectual partnerships between men and women. Susan Staves's "Church of England Clergy and Women Writers" offers an insightful analysis of the supportive networks established between clergymen and the Bluestockings. This essay is the token contribution in the collection devoted to the issue of Bluestockings' intellectual cooperation with men. Missing from this collection is any sustained analysis of the meaning of masculinity and how it affected the nature of men's involvement in the Bluestocking Circle. Attention to masculinity would also deepen an understanding of how the Bluestockings positioned themselves within a gendered discourse of rationality.

Despite the oversight of key issues like the operation of the Bluestocking Circle as a collective, male-female intimacy, emotionalism, and masculinity, this collection successfully expands the possibilities for understanding the Bluestockings. More importantly, this collection generates further questions about the Bluestockings. For instance, it inspires a questioning of how the Bluestockings cultivated an intellectual image through material culture. How did fashion and consumerism play a role in construction of an intellectual image for men and women? The collection's considerable emphasis on the Bluestockings' incursions into the public sphere suggests the need for further attention to personal practices.

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Robert A. Ventresca, *From Culture to Democracy: Culture and Politics in the Italian Elections of 1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2004)

ROBERT VENTRESCA has written an important book on the 1948 elections. It is the first of its kind in English and it reveals many things that other works on Italy's first parliamentary election after the ratification of the 1948 Republican Constitution have not clearly analysed, such as the impact of the 1948 electoral campaign on all future Italian elections from 1953 to 2006. I want to discuss the contents of the book by looking at three distinct elements: the documentary sources used to buttress the analysis, what the 1948 election campaign and results tell us about the external factors that have operated on the Italian political system in the post-war period, and how the memory of 1948 has influenced internal party relations within the Italian political system.

With regard to the documentary sources used to support the analysis, the book uses the numerous studies that have appeared in English in articles and chapters in books touching directly or indirectly on the election and the transition of the Italian political system between 1946 and 1948. Where the book is weakest is in the use of Italian sources. Here, the selection is not as thorough. It is more selective and the articles and books that are cited are not always the most pertinent to understanding the political event under discussion. An example is provided by Ventresca's citation of Giorgio Bocca's biography of Palmiro Togliatti, the secretary of the Italian Communist Party [PCI] from 1943 to 1966 while omitting mention of Paolo Spriano's five-volume history of the PCI that provides an ample discussion of inter-party developments as well as the party's relations with other political forces on the Italian left in the run-up to and aftermath of the 1948 election. In addition, there are other histories of the Italian Christian Democratic Party [DC] that are not cited to provide a more

in-depth view of what was happening within the ruling centrist party and how the 1948 election result was subsequently managed by the Christian Democrats.

The real winner of the 1948 election was undoubtedly the DC which within five years was able to sterilize Luigi Gedda's Civic Committees and rebuff Pope Pius XII's demand in 1951-1952 for the DC to coalesce with the Monarchist and Neo-Fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano [MSI] in order to keep the city government of Rome out of the hands of a leftist coalition. From 1954 onward under the leadership of Amintore Fanfani the DC undertook to build its own autonomous political party organization that made it independent from the Church, Catholic Action, landowners, industrialists, and the Americans. One other missing piece of the puzzle is what happened in southern Italy between January 1947 (DeGasperi's trip to the US) and December 1947 when the centrist coalition was forged. There is a suggestion in the book that DeGasperi used the support of the far-right Uomo Qualunque and surviving Fascist organizations during this period, but there is no systematic discussion of the repression exercised by the government in collaboration with Fascist squads and the Mafia in suppressing organized labour, land occupation movements, and leftist parties in the name of social order and political stability. What political prices were paid for this support? An alarm bell should have sounded in his ear as he cites in passing that Lucky Luciano made statements in support of the DC on the radio. (63) In 1948 Luciano was not in a US jail but rather was living in style in Naples under the watchful and at the same time benevolent eyes of the Italian justice system. What deal did Mario Scelba (the Minister of the Interior, who was from Sicily) and/or DeGasperi make with the Mafia for their grassroots support during the election? This is also one of the legacies of 1948 that has taken the Italian political system 58 years to shed with the capture on 19 April 2006 of the boss of

bosses, Bernardo Provenzano, who has lived as a fugitive for 40 years close to his family and “business” interests in Corleone, Sicily.

Ventresca describes quite clearly how the 1948 election represented a watershed event for US foreign policy. In 1948 the US convinced itself that the DC was going to lose and that the Marxist parties would consequently organize an armed insurrection as was undertaken in Czechoslovakia in February 1948. The author argues that, in part, this hysteria was encouraged by DeGasperi and his government as a means of extracting favours and aid from the US. A convincing case is made that the breaking of the logjam in the US Congress created by Republican reluctance to fully finance the Marshall Plan was to a great extent attributable to the upcoming Italian elections. However, US hysteria also led to the creation of the CIA’s dirty-tricks and covert intervention program by James Angleton and William Colby who then went on to use their bag of covert tricks in other countries where the results were less positive, and sometimes utterly disastrous (e.g., Cuba and Vietnam). We can observe that the ability to whip up hysteria based on little information on the ground as a justification for covert and even overt US intervention is still with us today. Ventresca does not mention it, but DeGasperi and other DC leaders never felt completely at ease with US domination of Italian foreign policy and sought in European unity an alternative and more balanced orientation of policy options. Thus, Italian support of the 1950 Schuman Declaration may have been in part encouraged by the lessons learned in 1948.

The third element that is extremely interesting in the Ventresca account of the 1948 election is how so many features of that campaign have continued to permeate Italian national parliamentary elections to the present day: freedom versus dictatorship, Catholicism versus atheism, communism versus democracy, good versus evil, truth versus falsehood. In 1948 the charge was that communists ate babies. In

the 2006 election the outgoing prime minister stated that in China babies are boiled and ground up to make fertilizer. What also is similar between today and 1948 is that the losing side never admits to having made mistakes or that, in the end, the winning side conducted a better campaign and was more successful in getting out its core voters. Instead, defeat is attributed to the nefarious undertakings of the other side in stealing ballots and nullifying the votes of the opposing camp, and finally the loser never admits to defeat. The losing side always hopes for a better day in the future when the tables can be turned on the current winner. Fair play has never been part of Italian political discourse in facing electoral defeat.

What Ventresca does not emphasize enough are the positive outcomes from the 1948 election. The events between 18-19 April and 14 July 1948 — that is, between the election results and the attempted assassination of Palmiro Togliatti — did not cause the PCI to mount any attempt at armed insurrection. On the contrary, the leadership around Togliatti kept a strong hold on the party activists and did all in their power to bring PCI mobilization within the confines of parliamentary politics. By 1951 Pietro Secchia, the leader of the “insurrectionists” in the party, had been effectively marginalized to be substituted by a large group of leaders, such as Giorgio Amendola, who had always favoured the parliamentary road to power. It is this initial group of reformist leaders that gravitated toward Togliatti which allowed the PCI to transform itself into the PDS in 1991 and eventually into today’s DS [Democratic Party of the Left]. The second positive result of the 1948 election was that the contents of the Republican Constitution became the common patrimony of a broad spectrum in the Italian political system, that is, left, center, and right. The years that followed the 1948 election were characterized by the slow but steady implementation of the Italian Constitution and all of its innovative elements, from a national system of

regional governments to the creation of the Constitutional Court and the self-governing Council of the Judiciary that has kept the control of the judiciary free from existing governments. How far-sighted this provision was became abundantly clear to Italians during the last five years under the Berlusconi government. Finally, the other positive aspect of the 1948 election result was that DeGasperi and the leadership cadre of the DC were, in effect, *social* Christian Democrats, who may not have introduced reforms immediately but did do so over a reasonable period of time (i.e., between 1950 and 1970). Their reform of land tenure, education, social services, pensions, economic incentives for artisan and small enterprises, gender equality in the workforce, and civil rights have served to gradually change Italy from the backward, agricultural economy that predominated in 1948 to the vibrant socio-economic and political system it represents today.

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Sheba Marian George, *When Women Come First: Gender and Class in Transnational Migration* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2005)

BASED ON ethnographic research for Sheba George's PhD dissertation, this book explores a key question in migration literature: What happens when women as labourers migrate first and the men follow later as dependents? The book examines the pattern of female nurses' emigration from Kerala, India, to Central City, a pseudonym for a metropolitan city in the United States, and the consequent implications for gender relations in three different spheres — home, work, and the community. Inspired by feminist literature, George delves into how transnational connections reproduce and transform gender- and class-based power

relations among these immigrants. Although drawing from R.W. Connell's work *Gender and Power: Society, The Person, and Sexual Politics* (Stanford, CA 1987), George, unlike Connell, looks at the larger context where gender relations are transferred across spheres.

This book is the outcome of ethnographic research over three years (1994-1997), focusing on members of the Orthodox Church both in Kerala and in Central City. George interviewed 29 heterosexual couples in Central City, women and men separately. Further, she interviewed priests, bishops, and church leaders whenever she could. In addition to conducting focus-group interviews with nurses, nursing administrators, and teachers in Kerala, George used an innovative method — she interviewed people who were family members of Central City's interviewees, but lived in Kerala. Thus, the ethnography transgressed geographical boundaries.

George clearly followed rigorous research ethics guidelines in laying out her research framework. Being an insider gained her several advantages, including having relatively easy entry into the "Keralite" church-based community in the US as well as in Kerala. At the same time, George's age, marital status (single), and her role as a researcher created tension and posed challenges. George skilfully navigated these challenges within her community. Another challenge George successfully handled was transmitting her findings without reinforcing existing stereotypes about the South Asian community, especially the objectification of "Keralite" Christian social relations. George's lucid language, as well as her candid description of her fears, tensions, and challenges, capture the reader's attention. Students and researchers eager to explore immigrant communities must read this ethnography.

This work effectively illustrates the complex transnational interactions between the sending community and the receiving community that have sustained

the stigmatization of nurses' labour in Central City despite the positive evaluation of this labour in the US. Indeed, a transnational institution such as the church provides a space where immigrants re-claim the status they held in their country of origin.

To comprehend the significance of the nurses' labour, George explores not only demand for and supply of nurses in the United States, but also the women's informal network that facilitates the immigration process. By examining the nurses' work experiences, George examines the challenges nurses encounter, including racism when procuring a license and negotiation required in a racialized work environment. Immigration experiences of the nurses sharply contrast with the experiences of their husbands: while the nurses moved upward, their husbands moved downward due to their status as dependents and the non-recognition of their credentials. Providing a historical context, George describes nurses' migration from India since 1914 pointing out that English missionaries portrayed nursing as noble, a Christian service, possibly recruited nurses from the Christian community, especially from less-well-off families in Kerala. However, George reminds readers that nursing actually has a low status in India, where deep-rooted cultural and religious practices identify nurses' labour as "dirty" and "polluted." Although nurses' economic independence empowers them individually, culturally prescribed, gendered, and class-based practices in India overshadow these women's transformations. In contrast, in the US nurses gain autonomy, and consequently challenge gender and class norms both within the family and within society — what George perceives as a "democratization" process.

In George's study, the significant change of gender and class relations due to the nurse's paid labour has far-reaching consequences for gender relations in the household. George explores the household division of labour in three arenas:

childcare, housework and cooking, and financial decision-making. Using four sociological categories of households — traditional, forced-participation, partnership, and female-led — George illustrates several variations that developed in the division of household labour. The post-immigration process forced most couples to make some changes in the domestic sphere. Interestingly, all the men were forced to do some household chores and eventually lost their "patriarchal status" in the family and in wider society. The changes in the domestic sphere also expanded male participation in the church and the church-based community.

Immigrant congregations are mostly male-run due to the gendered nature of immigration. The intense demand for male participation ultimately reinforces male privilege. Despite challenges from second-generation women, some priests, and upper-class women, George argues that the church still reproduces traditional female roles. Consequently, men assume power and privileges in this sphere that they have lost at work and at home. Despite nurses' financial autonomy and the professional status that elevates their power at work and at home, these women still uphold the feminine role in the church. George points out that class mobility has taken place in the church, where leadership positions are being held by nurses' husbands displacing men who had higher status in Kerala. In general, transnational connections to Kerala produce a number of advantages, but perpetuate oppressive gender and class relations in a number of ways in this immigrant community.

Despite this book's valuable contribution to the information about transnational migration, it has a few flaws, none of them fatal. First, although George claims a feminist influence, women's voices do not predominate in her analysis; as a result, women's agency is undermined. By using formal names such as Mrs. Matha and Mr. Lakos, George significantly deviates from a feminist princi-

ple, that is, using first names. Indeed, by using Mr. and Mrs., George reproduces hierarchical gender relations at work, home, and the community. Second, by focusing on nursing as a profession, George reproduces the same class bias that she criticizes in the Christian community in Kerala. Third, George's overemphasis on individual resistance and self-esteem overshadows the collective resistance of the nurses. Indeed, the author's exploration of "democratization" of gender relations in the household as well as in the wider society defeats the feminist principle of equal, and more specifically, egalitarian relations. Finally, elaboration of concepts such as patriarchy and transnational in the introduction could have helped readers comprehend the book's theoretical underpinnings. The analysis could be further benefited if nurses' labour could be tied to the larger capitalist economy and its accumulation processes.

As an insider, George successfully navigates many rough terrains, including the issue of violence in the immigrant community. Researchers working in areas such as transnational migration, family and gender studies will find the book a useful contribution to their fields.

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Martha Alter Chen, Joann Vanek, and Marilyn Carr, *Mainstreaming Informal Employment and Gender in Poverty Reduction: A Handbook for Policy-makers and Other Stakeholders* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat 2004)

*MAINSTREAMING INFORMAL Employment and Gender in Poverty Reduction* provides valuable evidence and direction for improving many aspects of informal employment relations, particularly for women living in poverty. Martha Alter Chen, Joann Vanek, and Marilyn Carr's central argument is that in recent poverty discussions, importantly in the Millen-

nium Development Goals, an essential aspect of poverty is left out of the debate — employment, especially informal employment. They call this omission the "missing link," mapping the link out and joining it together with a concern for gender issues and the changing nature of informal employment into strategies for poverty reduction.

In tackling this issue Chen et al. direct the book towards a very specific audience, the over-scheduled policy-makers and other stakeholders in the poverty debate. The authors provide the necessary background to the historical debates surrounding informal employment. Also, they examine competing theoretical perspectives — neoclassical economics, gender analysis, and informal labour market analysis — on the interconnections between globalization, growth, and poverty, exposing the theories' strengths and weaknesses. The focus on the audience of policy-makers and other stakeholders limits part of the book's appeal as the discussion of the theoretical perspectives is not new to readers with a background in the globalization debates. This limitation also extends the book's appeal past the busy policy-maker; the text would be useful for those just entering into the globalization debates because of its clear history and explanation of the key theoretical perspectives deployed. However, the authors' sustained focus on issues of gender and informal employment offers a useful argument and evidence to an audience already engaged in the globalization debates, not just policy-makers. Their orientation gives nuance and context to debates that rarely address the lived experiences of the working poor, women in particular, in a detailed and contextual manner.

The book is organized into five chapters. In Chapter One, "Employment: The 'Missing Link' in the Poverty Debates," Chen et al. provide a brief history of the growth-poverty debates, then provide definitions of key terms such as poverty and globalization. They make their case for the inclusion of employment into the



debate, making the distinction between the absolute level of employment and the nature of employment as key to understanding the depth of poverty for most working poor. They state that the working poor cannot get out of poverty due to being primarily employed in the informal economy which translates into lower incomes, higher financial risks, and higher rates of social exclusion. By refocusing the terms of the poverty debate to examine the substantive issue of poverty and quality of employment, the authors present a useful perspective from which to approach developing understandings of informal work.

Chapter Two, "Informal Employment, Gender and Poverty," notes discovery of the informal economy as a persistent aspect of modern capitalism in 1972 via fieldwork from the Kenya employment mission. They map the three dominant schools of thought on the informal sector: the dualist school for whom the informal sector is separate from the formal economy; the structuralist school that regards the informal sector as subordinate to large cost-reducing capitalist firms; and the legalist school for whom the informal economy consists mainly of micro-entrepreneurs who wish to avoid time and costs of formalizing their work. Chen et al. use a broadened definition of informal employment that includes all work without formal contracts, worker benefits, or social protection. This broadened definition of informal aids in examining informal employment in developed nations as well as in developing nations. They note a high degree of gender segmentation as one moves down the status ladder of informal employment, with the lower rungs characterized by less pay, less access to rights, and more likely to be occupied by women. These statements are backed with empirical evidence from several different countries as well as a detailed case study on the global horticulture value chain.

Chapter Three, "The Changing World of Work: Linking Economic Reforms-Gender-Poverty," has three key sections.

The first maps the impact of economic shifts on poverty and gender relations, and analyses what these changes mean for the informal economy. The second provides the necessary empirical evidence for their claims regarding the positive or negative impact of economic reforms and the quality of those reforms. The authors demonstrate that while there have been new economic opportunities created the terms and conditions of the employment created often exclude the working poor from taking advantage of them. This chapter exposes how those in the informal economy, including women, are integral to the economy of their countries and the global economy. Finally, the third section explores the changing nature of work and its impact on the informal economy.

In Chapter Four, "Decent Work for Informal Workers: Promising Strategies and Examples," a plethora of evidence is provided detailing the various pathways of responses to trade liberalization and its associated risks and opportunities. Using the four pillars of the International Labour Organization [ILO] Decent Work Agenda, Chen et al. mark out four policy goals: promoting opportunities, securing rights, promoting protection, and promoting voice. The highlight of this chapter is the sheer diversity of examples and strategies for assisting the informally employed. This chapter is one of the book's greatest strengths; unlike many critiques of globalization and economic restructuring, it identifies ground-level solutions and strategies for improving the lives of the working poor. Also of importance is the necessary supporting strategy of collecting statistics and improving the existing methods of data collection on the informal economy to make the contributions of this sector visible to policymakers.

Lastly, Chapter Five, "Informal Employment and Gender: A Strategic Policy Approach," starts from the necessary assumption that all policies affect the informal economy and that policies affect men and women differently. Chen et al. call for

informed and comprehensive policies, created by various actors and the informal workers themselves. They reiterate that the informal economy is not just people trying to avoid government regulations and that this sector will not disappear; so it needs to be addressed in formal policies. The four goals previously mentioned translate into particular policy strategies: the promotion of labour-intensive growth, the need for protection of informal workers from market shifts, the improvement of the quality of their jobs, increased market access for the self-employed, protection of migrant workers, and social protections for informal workers. The policy process should aim to mainstream the importance and concerns of informal workers in a gender sensitive manner that is context specific, as well as participatory and inclusive. There are four key policy areas that need to be addressed: macroeconomic policies, the regulatory environment, labour policies, and social protection policies.

The overall strength of this book is its sustained attention to informal employment and gender issues tied together with a consideration of poverty issues all of which is backed up with strong empirical evidence from across the globe.

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Leo Panitch and Colin Leys, eds., *The Empire Reloaded* (London, New York, and Halifax: Merlin Press, Monthly Review Press, and Fernwood Publishing, 2004)

IN THIS PERIOD of history when academic and popular works are still proclaiming the victory of capitalism over socialism and the intellectual left has been careful to avoid any reference to Marxism and revolutionary change, it is good to encounter a critical study on the nature and impact of imperialism, which, in this period, has taken on a qualitatively

new character. This critical examination of the "new" face of imperialism, mainly seen as US supremacy, in global politics and economics, is offered by two noted scholars, Leo Panitch and Colin Leys, in their recent work, *The Empire Reloaded*, an edited collection of seventeen essays.

This title, *The Empire Reloaded*, suggests that empire, in this present phase of imperialism, has recharged itself with new ammunition to maintain its dominance in a world characterized by the primacy of capital, the embrace of militarism, attempts at cultural homogenization, moral bankruptcy, economic and political chaos, ideological confusion, and anti-systemic movements. This new ammunition expresses itself in the "new" but old ways in which the US maintains its supremacy in a cast of capitalist powers. The supporting content speaks to the ways in which US imperialism has extended its reach, intensified its support of allies, and tightened its clutches on some of the leading capitalist powers through economic, political, and cultural penetration. Based on an analysis of two pillars of imperialism, finance and culture, the collection gives some insight into how these pillars have been transformed into weapons of conquest and plunder in various significant regions of the world: Africa, Asia, China, Europe, India, Latin America, and Russia. At the same time, however, the work points to the cracks in imperial domination and the rifts in empire brought about by the contradictions inherent in systems of domination and subordination and unequal relations of production, exchange, and distribution. While these contradictions have led to revolutionary outbursts in all epochs of history, the authors are careful to avoid committing themselves to any notion of an alternative sociopolitical system which would seek to resolve such contradictions. Despite this, the work seems to confirm, to a large extent, the validity of existing theories of imperialism, particularly Lenin's often critiqued theory of imperialism which speaks to the dominance

of monopoly capital in the international political economy, and the various methods used by the imperialists, in this case the US, to maintain their dominance. Of these methods, financial capital is one of the critical ways in which dominance is sustained. However, *The Empire Reloaded*, by highlighting culture and cultural penetration and the move towards the encouragement of local accumulation of capital by the agents of imperialism, has brought a new dimension to Lenin's theory.

While the theme of the work focuses on a study of imperialism, the articles are somewhat disparate. The book opens with Vardya Burstyn's insightful essay, "The New Imperial Order Foretold," which aptly provides the context for the ensuing discussions and gives meaning to the book's title. In a unique approach, the author brings to life Orwellian and Huxleyan dystopias in a fusion in her analysis of the new imperial order. Specifically, she speaks to the real but unreal world of the US presenting it as a two-faced dialectical world characterized by wealth and comfort and deprivation and pain. But, it is an order that embraces artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, virtual living and dying, and features of totalitarianism on which its total existence is guaranteed. This essay makes excellent reading.

The essays by Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin and Christopher Rude, "Finance and American Empire" and "The Role of Financial Discipline in Imperial Order" respectively speak eloquently to the role of finance and the financial oligarchy in holding imperialism in place. Boris Kagarlitsky's "The Russian State in the Age of Empire" seems somewhat out of place, but, nonetheless, it provides the reader with an inside view of the way in which Russia's opportunistic leadership opens itself to co-optation in a continuing rivalry between the US and Europe. Paul Cammack's "'Signs of the Times': Capitalism, Competitiveness, and the New Face of Empire" also speaks to this rivalry

in the case of Colombia where European competition has created problems for the US by making that country's leadership in the world of imperialism problematic. A complementary "Terror, Capital and Crude: U.S. Counter Insurgency in Colombia" authored by Doug Stokes allows for a deeper understanding of the way in which US imperialism uses counter-insurgency to stabilize and maintain capitalism in Colombia and to promote its narrow interests through manufacturing consent.

Patrick Bond's concern about the political inconsistency displayed by South Africa in relation to US-led imperialism is captured in his insightful piece, "US Empire and South African Subimperialism" which raises the question, in Bond's own words, is South Africa "talking left and walking right"? And, Yuezhi Zhao's well-researched "The Media Matrix: China's Integration into Global Capitalism" examines the role the US media plays in seeking to 'integrate China' into the capitalist sphere of influence. Continuing in the cultural mode, Scott Forsyth's "Hollywood Reloaded: The Film as an Imperial Commodity" analyses the ideological and political importance of the action film in the global spread of imperialism and in celebrating individualism and US "triumphs."

On the idea of alternatives and challenges to US dominance, John Grahle's "The European Union and American Power," Frank Deppe's "Habermas' Manifesto for European Renaissance: A Critique," and Dorothy Bole's "The EU and Eastern Europe: Failing the Test as a Better World Power" all challenge the view that Europe's socio-political and economic example, based on a "social Europe," provides a desirable alternative model of social and economic existence to what an imperial US has offered. But, Stephen Gill in "The Contradictions of US Supremacy" clearly indicates, like Burstyn, that US supremacy is declining and is being confronted by a global liberation movement which notes that "another world is possible." This view is critically

supported by Vivek Chibber in “Reviving the Developmental State? The Myth of the National Bourgeoisie,” Gerard Greenfield in “Bandung Redux: Imperialism and Anti-Globalization Nationalisms in Southeast Asia,” and Harriet Friedmann in “Feeding the Empire: the Pathologies of Globalized Agriculture.” All carry a common theme: the need for critical analyses of imperialism and past developmental models and strategies by social movements as a first step in challenging the existing dominant social and economic forces.

Leys’s telling conversation with British radical Tony Benn brings together the intent of the work to provide the inner dynamics of the way in which US imperialism is seeking to colonize and recolonize the world. It is this order that seeks to dominate the capitalist world through subterfuge, terror, militarism, and raw exploitation, but it is an order which is being resisted locally and globally through anti-imperialist movements.

As a whole, *The Empire Reloaded* carries its message well. Its interrogation of imperial domination and social resistance means that it is very relevant, quite perceptive, and thought-provoking. It is also grounded in sound scholarship and can be recommended as a useful text for students of political studies.

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Robert Graham, ed., *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas. Volume One: From Anarchy to Anarchism (300 CE to 1939)* (Montreal: Black Rose Books 2005)

ANARCHISM, as an anti-authoritarian political philosophy and revolutionary practice, has a long and rich history. Rather than being a unified doctrine, anarchism is a heterogeneous series of ideas and theories which arose in different historical periods and cultural contexts. Its sheer

breadth and diversity is shown in the eclectic series of writings that Graham gathers together in the first volume of his anthology of anarchist thought. From the writings of early 4th-century Daoist philosophers through to the revolutionists and Communards of the 19th century and the anarcho-sindicalists of the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s, Graham presents a panoramic array of anarchist thinkers and activists, and, in doing so, explores an elaborate genealogy of anti-authoritarian thought.

While Graham is right to point out in his Preface that anarchism as a conscious political philosophy only emerged in the 19th century — Proudhon was the first to call himself an “anarchist” — libertarian and anti-authoritarian ideas have been around for much longer. Without wanting to adopt a naturalist terminology, we might say that there has always been an anti-authoritarian ‘impulse’ that has arisen at different historical moments and in different social contexts. This ‘impulse’ is not so much an essential dimension of the species being, as Bakunin believed, but rather a kind of radical emancipative imaginary, and an ethics that continues to raise the problem of authority, unmasking its claims to legitimacy, rationality, and inevitability. It is an ethics that says, *despite the claims made by the apologists for sovereignty — like Hobbes and Locke — that there need not be a State or centralized forms of political and social authority based on coercion and violence; that there need not be hierarchy and inequality; that the domination of institutions over individuals, of capitalists over workers, of men over women is neither natural nor inevitable, that these power relationships and authoritarian structures have a history that is violent and bloody, and are based on imposition rather than consent.*

This book is symptomatic of a growing interest in anarchism and a revitalization of the anarchist tradition, a tradition that for so long has been marginalized and overshadowed by Marxism. Indeed, with

the collapse of Marxism, we might say that a new spectre is haunting our societies today — no longer that of communism but of anarchism. Of course, certain strands of classical anarchism draw on elements of Marxism — particularly in its analysis of the capitalist economy — and, moreover, the goal of both is the same — a collective society based on free association. However, where anarchism departs from Marxism is in its analysis of centralized political power — in particular the institution of the State — seeing it not only as the condition and basis of economic exploitation, but also a fundamental impediment to revolution, not as a neutral tool that could be used to advance socialism. The radical innovativeness of anarchism lies in its analysis and critique of political power, as well as its insistence on a revolution that is libertarian and spontaneous.

Now that we have seen the eclipse of the Marxist project, in the wake of the manifold failures of the communist state system that emerged in its name, it is time to reinvoké the anarchist tradition. Perhaps anarchism can serve as the reference point for the radical political struggles of today. A number of contemporary conditions suggest this possibility: the aggressive reassertion of an authoritarian state under the pretext of “security,” even, and especially, in our so-called liberal democracies; unprecedented economic inequalities and concentrations of wealth as a result of the intensification of capitalist globalization; and, lastly, the emergence of new struggles and identities — not only the “new social movements” such as feminism, environmentalism, and gay struggles, but also the broadly termed “anti-globalization” movement — which suggests a radical politics no longer based on the centrality of the proletariat, and which contests multiple forms of domination and exclusion.

These could be seen as conditions for the anarchist moment in politics today. However, any revitalization of the anarchist tradition must also involve a rethink-

ing of some of its key categories and concepts. In the epistemological conditions of “postmodernity,” many of the theoretical assumptions of classical anarchism — such as the evolutionary/dialectical view of human progress, the essentialist and rationalist conception of the subject, and the vision of society as being based on a natural harmony — are increasingly difficult to sustain. However, the abandonment of these “metanarratives” does not lead by any means to the abandonment of the anarchist tradition as a whole. What is central to it — its radical analysis and critique of power, its anti-authoritarian ethos, and its commitment to a radical politics of emancipation and egalitarianism — can be rearticulated and applied to contemporary political struggles. Any sort of rethinking of anarchism — any sort of politics of “post-anarchism” — must involve a serious reflection on the tradition of classical anarchism, which Graham so comprehensively covers in his anthology. The ideas of not only Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Proudhon, but also Stirner and La Boétie have never been more relevant. For instance, the latter’s essay *On Voluntary Servitude*, from which there is a brief excerpt in this book, shows us that any consideration of political authority, and any form of radical politics which seeks to contest this, must first consider the problem of the subject’s willing complicity with the power that dominates him/her.

Many different strands of anarchist thought are represented in this book — Daoism, collective anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism, individualist anarchism, and so on. The assorted fragments of anarchist writings are arranged into different historical periods, themes such as Art and Anarchy and Anarchy and Education, as well as the different cultural contexts in which anarchist ideas appeared — there are texts here from not only Europe and Russia, but also Japan, China, Korea, and Latin America, reflecting the universal appeal of libertarian ideas. There are considerations of subjects such as revolution-

ary strategy, philosophy, historical events such as the Spanish Civil War and the Paris Commune, as well as art, love, and marriage. The strength of this book is in its bringing together into a single volume these diverse writings, some of which have never been published in English before. It will serve as an excellent introduction to the anti-authoritarian tradition, and an important resource for the scholar of anarchism.

However, the eclecticism and sheer panoramic scope of the book is a weakness as well as a strength. Graham includes too many different writers here, and the excerpts from their writings are often very brief, some no longer than a page and a half, making it difficult at times to gain anything other than a superficial introduction to their work. It would perhaps have been better to have fewer thinkers and a more extensive and in-depth treatment of their work. Also, while a brief biographical context is provided for each writer, there is no real anal-

ysis of their work, or of how their approach to anarchism might differ from others. The reader is given only a very de-contextualized exposure to anarchist ideas. While Graham wants to allow these different thinkers and writers to speak for themselves, the book would have benefited from commentary which situated their ideas in a philosophical and political context.

Despite these limitations, however, this book is a long overdue survey of the classical anarchist tradition, bringing to the English-speaking world previously untranslated anarchist texts from different cultural and historical settings, thus reflecting the diversity and richness of the anti-authoritarian tradition. Moreover, the book is a testimony to the renewed interest in, and ongoing importance of, anarchism today.

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