

# REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS

Georges Campeau, *From UI to EI: Waging War on the Welfare State*, translated by Richard Howard (Vancouver: UBC Press 2005)

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED by Les Éditions du Boréal in 2001, Georges Campeau's work ambitiously traces the history of (un)employment insurance in Canada from its inception to the present. A legal scholar and activist lawyer who fought many cases for the jobless who were denied unemployment benefits, Campeau employs an approach that combines political economy with discourse analysis, and is generally successful in linking the two. It seems only appropriate that the first full study of the UI system in Canada was done in French in Quebec, and then translated into English. UI is regarded as a social right in Quebec to a greater degree than elsewhere in Canada, and UI demonstrations demanding more consideration for Quebec workers have been frequent occurrences in Quebec. The Bloc Québécois, which many Anglophones view as simply bent on keeping the federal government out of all social programs in Quebec, has been the most militant defender in Parliament of a return to the Liberal-era UI program, though they want the program for Quebec to be under Quebec jurisdiction.

Beginning with the familiar ground of unemployment insurance's origins in Bismarckian Germany and its spread throughout Europe, Campeau outlines the debates within Canada both before and

during the Great Depression that led first to an abortive effort to introduce UI by the R.B. Bennett government in its dying days, and the eventual introduction of a new UI bill by Mackenzie King's administration in 1940 after the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the UK had decreed that the Bennett bill, which lacked provincial consent, was *ultra vires*. Campeau observes that the battle between left-wing forces, led by the Communist Party of Canada, for non-contributory unemployment insurance, and the right-wing supporters of UI who demanded contributions from potential recipients, was just one part of a larger war. The "unemployment insurance" for which the left were struggling had little to do with traditional capitalist notions of insurance in which rates were assessed on the basis of risk, and benefits reflected the contributions that individuals made. It was simply a name given to a wage replacement for the unemployed to be paid from general revenues, that is a redistributive mechanism. Since, at the time, only the wealthy paid taxes, they would be forced collectively to repay workers for the greed of their individual members who had taken workers' jobs away. This would either place collective capitalist pressures on individual businesses not to dismiss workers, or would create a crisis in capitalism as the wealth of the rich was redistributed to the penniless *via* a state insurance program. Either way, the capitalists would be deprived of the reserve army of labour, so important to strike-breaking and maintaining low wages.

By contrast, the right wanted to preserve capitalist property relations and the existing distribution of wealth among social classes. So it defended the more traditional, “actuarial” notion of insurance. In both the Bennett and King UI bills, that meant depriving seasonal workers and domestic workers of the right to participate in UI at all since the risk of their losing their jobs was so high. It also meant tying benefits to contributions. Only about 40 per cent of the labour force was covered by the 1940 bill. Interestingly, Campeau misses completely the gendered character of these bills, and does not include Ruth Pierson’s important work on the issue in his bibliography. Campeau does, at other times, deal with gender issues related to UI but in a spotty manner.

During the Cold War, the reduced influence of the left, and especially the Communists, removed any notion of non-contributory UI from public debate. But the underlying struggle between “actuarial” and “social” approaches to UI continued, with business groups demanding a tightening of the program along lines of risk assessment, and trade unions and women’s groups calling for the program to embrace all workers subject to job loss, and with adequate payouts to all of the unemployed, regardless of what benefits they had paid into the plan. The post-war liberal consensus, in which workers were to receive sufficient benefits from the state (or “social wages”) to make socialism and militancy uninteresting to them, did result in gradual, if uneven, reforms of the UI program to include more workers. Fishers and others whose self-employment was largely illusory gradually came under UI. So did growing numbers of women workers, thanks to concerted campaigns by women’s groups as well as labour against such practices as the denial of UI to pregnant women or women with small children. In 1971, the program was extended to all but a small group in the labour force, benefits were raised, and maternity benefits were introduced. Again, however, Campeau, who recognizes the

importance of women’s groups in securing the gains of the 1950s and early 1960s, seems unaware of the key role played by the women’s movement.

The story after 1971 is the story of neo-liberalism. The 1971 changes, though introduced at a time when unemployment was beginning an initially slow rise, were accompanied by government optimism that the economy would remain stable and there would be no rush of UI-seekers. That optimism quickly evaporated, and the Tory federal campaign of 1972 featured an attack on UI recipients that had racist and anti-foreigner overtones, even though the campaign was led by the supposed “Red Tory,” Robert Stanfield. What began as minor cuts in the program here, there, and everywhere, became a mighty sword in the 1990s which ended with fewer Canadian unemployed persons being eligible for insurance payouts than had been eligible when the program was first introduced in 1940.

Campeau does make note of the social movements that fought the emasculation of the UI legislation at various turns, particularly in French Canada. But he does so in a rather cursory way, providing greater coverage of the continuing clashes in discourse between the right-wing and left-wing versions of EI. From the Mulroney government onwards, the ‘actuaries’ not only took over control once again of the UI agenda, but introduced new wrinkles that robbed workers’ contributions and made the insurance program mainly a cash cow for governments that were decreasing corporate taxes during a time of recession, thereby pushing up levels of government debt enough to create ‘deficit hysteria’. Contributions were raised while rules for eligibility were made tougher. This produced huge surplus revenues in the EI account, which governments transferred to general revenue. Here was the opposite of the 1930’s non-contributory UI: instead of general revenues paying for UI for workers, workers’ incomes would make up for shortages in general revenues.

Campeau's detailed account is concise, thorough, and easy to follow. Its weakness lies in a failure to disaggregate the unemployed. There is little sense here of the racialized character of either unemployment or the treatment of individuals by the Un/Employment Insurance Commission. Gender is taken seriously at times, ignored at others. Fortunately, Ann Porter's *Gendered States: Women, Unemployment Insurance, and the Political Economy of the Welfare State in Canada, 1945-1997* (Toronto 2003) complements Campeau's *From UI to EI*. Porter rarely concedes the existence of social class, but her book, read together with Campeau's more class-based reading, provides the reader with an excellent survey of the events and influences that have shaped today's EI system.

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Karen R. Grant, Carol Amaratunga, Pat Armstrong, Madeline Boscoe, Ann Pederson, and Kay Willson, eds., *Caring For/Caring About: Women, Home Care and Unpaid Caregiving* (Aurora, ON: Garamond Press 2004)

THIS IS a timely book, given the rapidly changing context for home care in Canada, and the lack of debate or transparency about government reforms occurring in this area of public policy that touches us all. Over the years, with no national standards for home care, the provinces have evolved a patchwork of voluntary, public, and commercial services to address the needs of Canadians requiring this type of care, the majority of whom are the elderly and the disabled. Yet, despite admonishments from politicians to the contrary, the bulk of responsibility for providing home care still rests with families, a situation that has not changed for over a century. Currently, a combination of economic restructuring and an aging population is putting mount-

ing pressure on families and communities to fill a gap created by diminishing provincial health budgets. Tensions are growing as governments redirect services towards acute care patients, and away from supporting the elderly and the disabled. In effect, an increasing number of us are being conscripted into providing care for relatives and friends, without being given the opportunity to debate the pros and cons of this shift in policy. The authors in this volume alert us to the fact that few Canadians have the necessary supports in place to fulfill this role without sacrificing their own health and long-term financial security. As well, it should come as no surprise that much of the writing in this collection examines the effects on women, who hold most of the paid jobs in this sector and are over-represented in the ranks of unpaid caregivers. Women also predominate as recipients of home care services.

In the name of neo-liberal ideology and fiscal restraint, the entitlement to home care is currently being rationed in a bid to curtail spiraling health care costs. The availability of new drugs and technology, and the shortage of beds, are used to justify the growing practice of rapidly discharging patients from hospitals. Contrary to myths that persist about the quality of life in rural communities, patients living in urban centres are more likely to have relatives and friends living with or near them who can be pressed into the complex and skilled role of caregiver. Many others must manage their care on their own, and the assistance they need is no longer provided in public health facilities. This trend raises the concern that the caring work taking place in homes remains largely invisible, and the writers give a detailed account of how this shift from public to private setting can bring many risks and challenges for both the care recipient and the caregiver. It can have detrimental effects on their relationship, on their long-term health and well-being, and on the quality of care provided.

These essays give us ample evidence of the value of home and community-based care, as well as pointing out the risks created in the current policy context, where home care is held up as a panacea for our troubled public health care system, yet the necessary supports to caregivers and care recipients are not forthcoming. Community-based services are one of the casualties of privatization and the incursion of the market system, and unpaid caregivers are becoming a substitute for a system under stress. The trend towards diminishing and "rationalizing" services is taking a high toll on various segments of the population, especially those for whom accessing services is difficult, including residents of rural and remote communities, Aboriginal Canadians, and Canadians with disabilities.

In the face of this swing towards neo-conservative reforms, the writers in this volume challenge us to think of home care as a public rather than a private responsibility. Rather than understanding it as an individual relationship between a caregiver and a care recipient, they encourage us to understand it as a collective responsibility. The authors challenge advocates and policy makers to envisage a national system that recognizes the rights, needs, and aspirations of those who receive care as well as those who provide it. Both research and practice show that an integrated and comprehensive community-care model works best and is also a cost-saver, as well as coming closest to the goal of respecting the autonomy and independence of both patient and caregiver. This volume contains examples of best practices, such as the Manitoba Continuing Care Program, which is useful information for policy activists and advocates. The Manitoba model erases the traditional boundaries between community, hospital, and home, and involves practitioners from a variety of disciplines in assessing and providing both short and long-term home care service, free of charge, based on need. It is a model that

should be given more consideration by federal and provincial policy-makers.

The contributors to the volume are all members of the National Coordinating Group on Health Care Reform and Women, several of whom are involved directly in First Nations health, social, and economic development. The essays bring together an extensive body of knowledge about the home care needs of Canadians, as well as the demands put on those who provide this care. The volume also contains recommendations for building a Canadian home care system that is premised on universal entitlement, and goes far beyond the present targeted, means-tested programs. A theme that underlies all of the essays is the toll being taken on women by the current erosion of public home care services. The 2002 Romanow Commission on the Future of Health Care acknowledged that home care is becoming a burden on Canadians, especially on women. Many of the essays in this collection give evidence of the gendered nature of home care and unpaid caregiving, an aspect that is too often overlooked in much of the literature on the welfare state. In their bid to map out a blueprint for a system that does not reproduce inequalities, the authors deconstruct many of the assumptions and stereotypes that distort our assessment of policies and policy options. For example, we still hold an image of rural Canada as having extensive, close-knit communities. This stereotype is used to justify the redirecting of home care resources away from rural areas. In fact, women in rural Canada often take on the role of unpaid caregiver because of a lack of alternatives, including inadequate or non-existent services, poor public transportation, and the persistence of traditional expectations towards women. Another myth is that the majority of the elderly are reliant on the state for care; in fact, many elderly Canadians are providing care, thus relieving the state of this responsibility. The mantra we hear from government about the disappearance of 'our caring society' is also shown to be

false; one in five unpaid caregivers in Canada are not blood relatives — they are neighbours or friends. Perhaps the most persistent myth is the notion that women have more time than men to devote to informal care. The male-breadwinner model of the family with women retreating from the workforce was short-lived and only predominant for a brief period following World War II. It was predicated on notions of family wages and a redistributive welfare state, neither of which exists today. Actually, women are more likely than men to leave the labour force to provide care because they are segregated into the lowest paying occupations and are over-represented in part-time and temporary work. Even though women provide most of the informal care to relatives and friends, few jobs allow them to take paid leave for this purpose, and three times as many women as men lose time at work due to caring responsibilities. Women's caregiving activities are directly linked to the growing phenomenon of non-standard, precarious jobs, where women are vastly over-represented.

As well, much evidence suggests that policy and legislation constructs women as caregivers. Thus, it is no surprise that in these neo-liberal times, women are being conscripted in large numbers into caregiving. In this volume, the authors challenge the assumptions that women have the skills, resources, time, and desire to provide care. They argue that caregiving is complex, skilled work, and our notion of who can provide care should be expanded to include those with no blood or marital ties. Regardless of who takes up this work, we must provide them with the necessary public supports to carry out this role. Finally, the authors caution us to be critical of policies that remove women from the workforce, even when accompanied by care-allowances. Women who drop out of the labour force run a high risk of finding themselves in poverty later in life, and also tend to be-

come isolated from informal and formal networks of support.

Part of this collection is devoted to analysing policy recommendations. One theme that emerges clearly is that in the current climate of fiscal restraint, it will be an uphill battle to ensure that caring work is visible and valued. A meeting of health care advocates in Charlottetown in 2001 proposed a declaration of rights, calling for care to be made available to patients in a culturally appropriate and non-discriminatory form, and for the protection of the rights of both care recipients and care providers, to ensure that this relationship is a voluntary one. We need to be increasingly wary of neo-liberal governments who are expanding the definition of the family in order to force unwilling "volunteers" into a caregiver role. Perhaps due to the fact that this collection pulls together a number of essays from authors in the areas of health care reform and women, there is some repetition throughout. The introductory chapter, by Pat and Hugh Armstrong, provides a useful framework for scholars who are embarking on research in this relatively new field of inquiry. The index is a helpful guide to the many themes that are raised in the book, and for those who are researching a particular issue, will prove helpful in locating the material most relevant to their search.

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Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, eds., *Mapping the Margins: The Family and Social Discipline in Canada, 1700-1975* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 2004)

IN ADDITION to their important monographic studies that began in the early 1990s, this is the third collection edited by one or both of Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau since 2002. With such a concentration of productivity, the anthol-

ogy under review here should be approached as part of their ongoing effort to promote fresh research on diverse topics. Their editorial work has elucidated emerging social and cultural themes. It is also highly cognizant of the international literature. While a broad period frame is embraced, from the beginning of the 18th century to the mid-1970s, Christie and Gauvreau have a good grasp on period shifts in politics, the economy, and cultures that impinge on generations of social change. In another collection, for instance, they highlighted a single decade of intense realignments, the postwar reconstruction period from 1945 to 1955. Thanks to their publishing program to date, new work on family, gender, community formation, citizenship, religion, and social discipline is now available to wide reading audiences, from researchers and graduate students to undergraduate instructors choosing reading materials for their students. So too with this book.

Thematically, *Mapping the Margins* offers twelve essays that consider the normative, conjugal family (of homemakers and wives and breadwinners and husbands, along with their dependant children), as a *marginalizing* force, a powerful model that often served to define those living outside of it. It served, in short, as a centrifugal ideal — one that spinsters, widows, unmarried mothers, orphans, the insane, the elderly, and reconstituted families constructed their own lives, both against and with. Throughout, this collection underscores the complexities of this model/reality relationship under the broad Foucauldian label of “social discipline.” It considers the varied ways that historical subjects actively mapped out their lives in counter-distinction to those supposedly ‘enduring’ nuclear kinship ties, the kinds of mother/father/children roles some historians have mistaken as ‘traditional’. As the editors state, they set out, first, “to examine the ways in which the family defined membership, dependency, and exclusion,” and to consider how the family itself became an “agent in artic-

ulating institutional and state constructions of marginality”; and, secondly, to assess “those who fell outside the demographic measure of the conjugal household, to test the prevailing historiographical assumption that the nuclear family was irrevocably normative in Western society.” (4)

The book is nicely framed. Both the co-written introduction and Micheal Gauvreau’s useful commentary at the end work very well, the latter bringing into focus both social scientific and historical constructions of the nuclear family through the 1945-1975 period. Each of the contributors uses their subject areas to map either case study or state jurisdiction histories of subjects living outside strictly nuclear family roles in eastern Canada since colonization. The intersecting variables of class, gender, ethnicity, and age, with a marked emphasis on histories in Quebec, Ontario, and the Maritimes, are addressed throughout. My only criticism of the volume concerns what it does not attempt — selections did not include western Canada. But it does, nonetheless, raise the issue of the marginalizing force of the conjugal family ideal, a concept that applies to work other historians are now pursuing on polygamy on the Prairies in the late 19th century, gay life in the same region in the 20th century, and the lives of Vancouver’s single, male hoboes during the years of the Great Depression. Both the conclusion and fulsome introduction to what the book does consider offer family history specialists an important conceptual statement concerning the conjugal model’s current status in studies of social control and discipline. Christie also introduces each of the book’s three sections through brief discussions that push readers to consider, thematically, what follows.

In the process, the editors consider how a surprisingly enduring myopia among historians has cropped up alongside the grand narratives of change in family structure over time: how, for instance, the displacement of the patriar-



chal family with the contractual family, or the rise of the 'modern' family of separate spheres in shifting contexts of settlement, commerce, and industrialization have led us to forget something important. Those who did not fit the traditional family mould were in fact defined, or defined themselves, in relation to it — as widows and widowers, orphans, unmarried mothers, the homeless, or the institutionalized — roles and identities were forged by the absence of an ideal kinship arrangement. The foundational touchstones today for students just beginning to consider the extent to which families in Western cultures have become modern, new, traditional, reconfigured, or reconstituted — Peter Laslett, Lawrence Stone, and Phillippe Ariès — are critically assessed in this introduction in light of work that includes Mary Beth Norton, Joanna Bourke, Lenore Davidoff, and Catherine Hall. With this new generation, family history beyond the conjugal unit has broadened considerably. The defectives, the indigent, the single men or women, or the "ambiguous" families (from Peter Laslett) are increasingly being seen as *part* rather than *separate from* the intersecting force of family ties. By mapping the evolving margins, of "broken" families, of "bachelors and spinsters," and of "institutions and marginality" (the book's three themes), both the editors and each contributor remind us of the cultural power of the evolving image of the stable and economically secured family household unit through the *longue durée* of nearly three centuries of family life in Canada. While the "nuclearity thesis," (6) (an awkward but, in the context of this book, understandable term) must be critically re-examined, both editors and authors are sensitive to its shifting significance across Canada's changing social landscapes.

Under the "Broken Families" rubric, Josette Brun begins with the impacts of death in New France, offering a quantitatively precise study of the kinship strategies of widows, widowers, and orphans

reaching maturity, strategies that changed with the life cycle to accommodate changing power relationships defined by wealth and patriarchy. Christie herself contributes perceptive interpretations of women in need, most from Upper Canada, beseeching material support through letters that spoke to what was owed through kinship ties, with, again, "the obligations of patriarchal governance" (92) always present.

From a close look at the "itineraries" of wives who became widows in 19th-century Montreal, Bettina Bradbury focuses on the impact of marital civil law, according to the Custom of Paris, on three cases — that of a poor widow, a richer one, and one who negotiated her economic rights at marriage, a legal loophole available within the marriage law. The contrasting outcomes are, especially in relation to each other, illuminating. Bradbury's article is part of a larger work in progress, and clearly an important one. Again, the power of a patriarchal family model, and the legal structures that secured them, are considered.

Finally in this section, Peter Gossage asks the question: were Quebec's stepchildren marginal by definition? Here, we find a revealing sampling of popular literature, oral histories, life writing, and legal records that extends a discussion that opens with two of Quebec's most famous orphans, Sir Wifrid Laurier and Abbé Lionel Groulx, neither of whom became famous because of their upbringings — or did they? Gossage considers the competing forces that, on the one hand, brought the place of stepchildren into a secured fold as members of reconstituted families, and, on the other, left them in varying degrees unable to share fully the same identities, roles, and privileges of their step-siblings. Again, the presence of patriarchal power was important, but in a different way. Fathers, more than mothers, sought to secure the presence of stepchildren within the family circle.

Under the "Bachelors and Spinsters" theme, Ollivier Hubert's study of bound-

aries separating respectable fatherhood from disreputable bachelorhood in rural Quebec takes seriously the source categories of reconstituted gossip and a critical reading of fictional representations: “instances of deviance,” he argues in a critique of the signs of rural mentalities, “are indications of micro-societies that leave no room for deviance.” (191) Hubert’s readings of the discourse of a parish priest and the novel *Jean Rivard*, penned by the Quebec writer Antione Gérin-Lajoie a few years before Confederation, are particularly sophisticated, reflecting a distinct style of historiographical discourse that does not shy away from subjective interpretation. Here again, Hubert, through his exegesis of this novel, recognizes the importance of fatherhood as a marker of respectable manhood, of manhood defined ultimately by patriarchal status.

I have not read anyone more versed in patterns of rural life in Quebec’s Eastern Townships than J.I. Little, who combines that wisdom with his gifts as a storyteller. Little examines the tale of a revivalist, Ralph Merry, son of the first settler at the Outlet of Lake Memphremagog, later the town of Magog. Merry’s life is retraced through his lengthy and detailed journal, kept from 1809 to 1863. Several times Merry tried, unsuccessfully, to publish his story as a man of God, as a throwback to the circuit riders of the northeastern States. But as a family man, Merry was marginal. Uniquely so in fact: because he suffered from ill health, because he never secured a steady means of providing for a family, and because he married late, at age 42. His life, through his telling record of it, Little concludes, shows how the radical revivalism that swept through this region tended both to challenge the patriarchal power of fathers and fatherhood and forestalled the trend toward domesticity that modern changes would eventually bring, even to places like Lake Memphremagog.

Finally, for this section, I felt a researcher’s connection to Gwendolyn Davies’ and Michele Stairs’ approaches to spinsterhood and bachelorhood. “How

does one reconstruct this year,” Davies asks at one point, “the life of an eighteenth century spinster in between the silences, the illnesses, and the ellipses in her diary?” Taking the ‘life-writing’ task on, of course, can entail a sort of ‘method’ reading of people’s private confessions, of trying to recreate (akin to ‘method’ acting) a deep sense of experience by becoming as immersed as possible in the feelings and experiences of a person, place, and era. This is what Davies offers. The lives of four spinsters are revealed through interpretations that speak to these single women’s strident efforts to remain connected to their social worlds, worlds in which family identity still played a part. In the next article, Michele Stairs extends the attention we can lend to subjective realms of living as a spinster or a bachelor. Stairs considers the typecasting connections one might draw between Lucy Maud Montgomery’s classical portraits of the spinster Marilla Cuthbert, her bachelor brother, Mathew, and the statistical and qualitative experiences of these familial categories on Prince Edward Island. She concludes, with convincing evidence that might deflate more daring notions, that popularized image and lived realities were often not all that different.

For those removed from the family circle by the rise of the Victorian-era institutions for the insane, the elderly, the orphaned, and the single mother, we start in the third and final section with a joint effort by James Moran, David Wright, and Mat Savelli. They follow a useful literature review of the family’s reliance on institutions for the insane in America, England, and Canada in the period with new data from the Hamilton Lunatic Asylum to test the ‘social control’ theses so popular in work done in the late 1970s and the 1980s. Eschewing a crude, Foucauldian approach, linking the ‘modern’ institution to madness, the authors consider, and quantify in useful ways, cases of mutual dependency that developed between the Hamilton asylum’s patients and their families.



In a comparable vein, Denyse Baillargeon stands on its head the notion (fueled by revelations of the ‘Duplessis orphans’ of the 1950s) of the Quebec orphanage as something far from a haven in a heartless world. She addresses the degree to which the Catholic church strove to nurture settings for “the best family that could exist,” (319) one close to God and His children. The gaze of the clerical elite that Baillargeon considers, in fact, looked down upon families, poorer families in particular. They were seen as the least able to provide the best settings for the best family values — Catholic, Christian, and morally communal, despite what Father R.P. Plomondon recognized in the mid-1920s as the ‘artificial’, boarding school setting provided for the children who grew up in them. (317)

Morality politics takes a different turn with Suzanne Morton’s overview of the history of unmarried mothers in Nova Scotia. Though her title and main focus delineates the 1945-1975 period, her contribution goes further back to include thoughtful references to rather common Maritime portraits in the novels of Frank Parker Day, Hugh MacLennan, and others: depictions of unwed mothers. Morton’s central points are that Nova Scotia is somewhat unique in having a history in the modern era of proportionally more unwed mothers; at the same time, the province’s public policy serves as a strong negative example of histories in North American jurisdictions and elsewhere of women being “made vulnerable and marginalized” by the politics of exclusion. Even after Canada’s centennial year, the province offered assistance that was “both inadequate and humiliating.” (343)

In the immediate postwar to centennial year period, James Struthers considers the single elderly, typecast as Canada’s “grizzled old men and lonely widows,” partly as a construct of public policy. The nation’s single elderly, especially women, were often the poorest of Canadians, shut out of the rising expectations of the Fifties by virtue of their seniority. The genera-

tion that survived two world wars and the Great Depression often faced more coping than comfort with the newly created 1951 universal “citizen’s wage” for seniors. At \$40 per month, it was at first glance a breakthrough — a universal Old Age Security payment to all over age 70. But what did it really mean? asks Struthers. Like Suzanne Morton’s take on shoddy support for Nova Scotia’s single mothers, he suggests, it was far less than Health and Welfare minister Paul Martin’s claim of unparalleled state “generosity.” (354) “[L]iving at the margins of the family,” Struthers concludes, dark images of the “tea and toast” or “rooming house” elderly subsisting without the aid of kin called into question the whole notion of a “citizen’s wage.” (372) Old Age Security became a kind of oxymoron.

Implicit in virtually every article in this collection is the positive force of the family’s ability to provide support, both psychologically and materially, weighed against the negative forces faced by those who cannot, will not, or simply do not fit into its many moulds across time. We should note that crossing the thresholds betwixt and between public and private existence, into the vortex of family relations as actually lived, can be a frustrating exercise, fraught with contradictions. In both private lives and the researcher’s attempt to reconstruct them, families can appear in all places and eras as oppressive, violent, and variously dysfunctional units that provide love, support, and sustenance. They can become a kind of illusionary, deadly flame, consuming members, young and old, living either too close to dangers within them, or too far from their embrace. In one era, religious fanaticism might flare; in another, pseudo-scientific condemnations of deviancy abound. Historians, too, should be cautioned against being quickly subsumed in their study. “If the family,” Gauvreau concludes, “was inhabited by these twin historical archetypes of the addictive personality and the politico-religious fanatic, was it indeed any

surprise that the study of this entity would, until very recently, be regarded as somewhat of a distasteful human quagmire, that would swallow alive any historian so unfortunate as to venture there?" (400) Fortunately, with this collection, no such appetites are satisfied, nor pitfalls encountered of inadequate methods or faulty approaches. Specialists will find its conceptual underpinning stimulating. Readers new to family history will find it an insightful companion to other work that focuses on nuclear family roles per se. Further attention by all should be given to this important approach to life on the margins of the ever-changing Canadian family.

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Kathy L. Brock and Keith G. Banting, eds., *The Nonprofit Sector in Interesting Times: Case Studies in a Changing Sector* (Montreal and Kingston: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University and McGill-Queen's University Press 2003)

IN THEIR EDITED collection, *The Nonprofit Sector in Interesting Times: Case Studies in a Changing Sector*, Kathy Brock and Keith Banting bring together a set of papers concerned with examining various aspects of Canadian nonprofit organizations operating in an environment characterized by profound change. This is the third volume in the "Public Policy and Third Sector Series" and the chapters here, as in the previous volumes, have their origins in a program of competitive research grants awarded through the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University. As such this collection represents a somewhat loose grouping of papers, and is marked by an unevenness common to edited volumes.

Brock and Banting state that "no one theme governed ... the works included" in this edition. (ix) However, an implicit theme captured in the book's title may be

said to unite the work. While the chapters range widely in their focus, "from the relationship of voluntary agencies with governments and funders, to internal decision-making of voluntary organizations, to the changing regulatory environment of organizations, to the difficulties of coordinated action among these organizations," (x) the common link is that each chapter is concerned with how nonprofit organizations have adjusted to function in a period of deep restructuring.

The importance of this volume rests in large measure in the growing significance of nonprofit organizations in our lives. Until recently the role of nonprofit institutions in society had been virtually absent from Canadian academic analysis and policymakers were also largely unaware of their contributions to the 'public good'. The contribution and role of nonprofits were so hidden from history, in fact, that they came to be referred to in Canada as the 'invisible sector'. *The Nonprofit Sector in Interesting Times* is part of a growing body of academic, as well as community-based, research aimed at uncovering the important place of this sector in Canada. Consequently, we owe a debt of intellectual gratitude to Brock and Banting for spearheading the "Public Policy and Third Sector Series," a collection that has added to our empirical and analytical knowledge of the sector.

It is important to observe that there is a certain lack of precision and some measure of confusion which surrounds the conceptualization of nonprofit organizations. Throughout this volume, as well as in other such works, numerous terms are deployed to identify the sector, including nonprofit, charitable, voluntary, and third sectors. These terms are catch-all phrases which attempt to capture that area between the private and state sectors, rather than concepts which embody a distinct approach to nonprofit organization. These terms can also convey different meanings. For example, the notion of the charitable sector suggests that nonprofit organizations have a legal status as incor-

porated charities, a distinction that is not enjoyed by the majority of not-for-profit bodies. Also, numerous institutions, like universities and hospitals, enjoy charitable status, but given their close relationship with the state it is questionable as to whether they are a component of the nonprofit sector or better understood as part of the 'broader public sector'. This speaks to the fact that the 'not-for-profit sector' remains largely a residual category that is significantly under-theorized. There is, however, a growing sense that a distinct grouping of institutions that are recognizably separate from both the state and the market and worthy of independent analysis do exist.

Brock and Banting provide an introductory chapter that is most useful for framing many of the challenges and changes facing the nonprofit sector in Canada today. One theme they identify arises out of a debate between Robert Putnam, as outlined in his classic work *Bowling Alone*, and Robert Reich's arguments in *Future of Success*. Putnam contends that our communities and civic life are in sharp decline because of the breakdown of our voluntary associational networks, i.e., fewer individuals joining nonprofit organizations. Reich, by contrast, asserts that people are still joining together for things like childcare, health services, and recreation but they are joining as consumers rather than citizens. In short, the altruistic goals of addressing 'the needs of strangers' are lost and the poor and the needy are increasingly left to fend for themselves in an ever more competitive world where self-interest rules. Both Putnam and Reich identify a common problem, the erosion of community and the role that nonprofit organizations can play in restoring social solidarity, a theme that is addressed in subsequent chapters.

Susan Phillips in her chapter, "Voluntary Sector — Government Relationships in Transition," examines the changing relationship between the voluntary sector and the Canadian state in the context of

neoliberal state restructuring. These changes include the downloading of many services to nonprofit organizations, the emergence of more collaborative relationships between the public and nonprofit sectors, and a renewed interest by governments of all political stripes in ideas of "citizenship," "volunteerism," and "self-sufficient communities." (18) According to Phillips, several changes necessitate the reform of voluntary sector-state relations. The first is the shift from a paternalist, dependent model of service delivery based on traditional notions of charity towards a civil society model characterized by a more empowering, participatory approach that emphasizes the creation of "enabling environments." (24) Such environments are ones where the state helps communities to help themselves, assists with capacity building, and promotes active citizenship, including incentives to donate and volunteer. But while the promise is for building deeper forms of citizenship within socially cohesive communities with strong social capital assets, the reality is that the logic of neoliberal governance structures promotes extreme individualism, a market-based form of consumer citizenship, and social polarization.

Phillips argues that traditional governance structures based on top-down bureaucratic methods of oversight are untenable within the contemporary environment that is increasingly more "horizontal, embedded and negotiated." (25) Also, while Phillips identifies moves such as the federal governments's Voluntary Sector Initiative as a step in the direction of creating a more meaningful working partnership between the nonprofit sector and the state, overall she remains skeptical of the outcome, given the overwhelming counter-tendency to embed neoliberal structural forms. Phillips' chapter gives us some of the tools in which to better understand these developments and it is by far the most conceptually advanced and satisfying paper in the collection.

Laura Brown and Elizabeth Troutt also offer the reader a most interesting study regarding cooperation and the stresses associated with the new relationships that are developing between the state and nonprofits. Drawing upon the Manitoba experience, the authors provide a useful set of analytical categories by which to understand this changing association. One point that comes out clearly is that new funding relationships between the state and nonprofit service providers are creating significant amounts of stress within the not-for-profit sector. They conclude that governments must act more as “system managers” of the sector, (214) rather than viewing themselves solely as funders seeking the biggest short-term bang for their dollars. The funding decisions of governments and the terms and conditions they attach to these funds greatly shape the stability and security of the nonprofit sector. Brown and Troutt conclude that better education for policymakers concerning the needs and realities facing the non-profit sector, sustainable and predictable funding, negotiated reporting and accountability requirements tailored to the capacities of the specific non-profit could all serve to increase the vitality of the sector and ensure effective provision of services into the future. Unfortunately, evidence points to the creation of a new funding regime for nonprofit human service providers based on contract financing which works to maximize state control while minimizing nonprofit autonomy; hardly the basis for building an independent and vibrant civil society.

Other chapters tackle issues associated with nonprofit financial planning and restraints in an environment of fiscal uncertainty; online charitable fundraising and the regulation of privacy; political advocacy and the challenge of maintaining tax-exempt charitable status; and the shifting role of nonprofits in public policymaking. The papers collected in this book approach their subject matter from various perspectives. The more

valuable contributions, like Phillips’ chapter, bring more theoretically enriched and critical analysis to their subjects. This is especially important if we are to fully comprehend the reality versus the rhetoric of nonprofit sector restructuring that is taking place under the inclusive title of ‘building partnerships’. Overall, this volume is essential reading for those interested in understanding the expanding place that the nonprofit sector is playing in our rapidly changing society.

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Janis Sarra, ed., *Corporate Governance in Global Capital Markets* (Vancouver: UBC Press 2003)

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE has become a business buzzword in the turbulent years since financial scandals at Enron, Tyco, Nortel Networks, and other leading global corporations wiped hundreds of billions of dollars from the portfolios of investors around the world. Legal experts, securities regulators, and business schools have since rushed in to fill the legal and moral void left by those scandals, with a range of proposals aimed at enhancing the integrity, transparency, and accountability of corporate management. Corporate managers and directors are now held to a higher governance standard thanks to initiatives like the US Sarbanes-Oxley requirements for financial reporting. Whether these measures, and other changes being designed and debated in many countries, make any noticeable difference to the efficiency of capitalism remains to be seen. An equally important, but less-discussed, question is whether these refinements to the managerial processes of the modern corporation will somehow make society a “better place,” more broadly defined — or, in fact, a worse one.

Indeed, on a superficial level the notion of “holding corporations account-

able” must seem rather appealing to a relatively broad cross-section of society, including many social and community advocates who have jumped on the corporate governance bandwagon. The language of “social responsibility” is often invoked in discussions of governance reform. Those calling for tighter control over corporate managers are often called “activists.” But to whom are they asking that corporate managers be held accountable? And on what criteria? These are important questions not always addressed by those, including those on the left, beating the drum for new governance standards.

Within this context, this recent Canadian collection — *Corporate Governance in Global Capital Markets*, edited by Janis Sarra of the Faculty of Law of the University of British Columbia — makes for an informative and thorough, but sobering, read. The thirteen essays contained in the volume were originally presented at a specialists’ conference on corporate governance held at UBC in 2002. They address several different dimensions of the corporate governance debate. An introduction by the editor, and her excellent theoretical survey in Chapter 2, provide a useful legal and economic context for the subsequent discussions, and a convenient introduction for non-specialists to the theoretical literature regarding corporate control and its central “principal agent” problem (namely, how do those who own corporations ensure that their hired managers respect their preferences and priorities). An accessible foreword by Purdy Crawford — the wise man of Canadian corporate governance — summarizes his views on recent reform proposals (including splitting the functions of CEO and Chairperson, and issues related to the composition and size of boards of directors).

Part 3 of the book contains three chapters considering the role of directors in more detail — including a novel look by Barry Slutsky and Philip Bryden at the unique governance challenges facing directors of Crown corporations. Part 4 con-

siders the special governance problems faced by distressed corporations — unfortunately, an all-too-common circumstance in Canada in recent years. Its three chapters will provide useful fodder for a public debate over Canada’s bankruptcy protection laws and procedures that will only intensify in the wake of the recent management debacle at troubled steel-maker Stelco.

Most *Labour/Le Travail* readers will likely be especially interested in the chapters contained in Part 2 of the book, “Shareholder Activism and Control: Accountability for Corporate Harms.” These four chapters provide a representative sense of the growing, but to my mind unconvincing, literature linking corporate governance with so-called “corporate social responsibility.” The chapters by Gil Yaron (of the Shareholder Association for Research and Education, a leading Canadian shareholder “activist” network) and Ronald Davis (now Associate Professor in the UBC Faculty of Law) consider the social responsibility angle on corporate governance most broadly. Both authors situate their arguments with respect to the notion of the “universal investor,” posited by Robert Monks and other writers, who have celebrated the rise of pension funds and other institutional investors as heralding a constructive new era in capitalism. The idea is that since these institutional investors hold the shares of many (or even most) corporations, and they tend to invest for long-term returns, they will possess economic interests that are compatible with (or even identical to) those of the broader society. Hence these investors can use their collective power (assuming a legal and cultural framework which facilitates this shareholder “activism”) to promote progressive social and environmental goals through the corporations which they own.

Yaron considers the extent to which Canadian corporate law allows for the sorts of interventions (such as shareholder resolutions) aimed at enforcing the will of these “universal” (and presumably

socially concerned) investors over corporate actions. Despite recent legislation which expands the legal space for these types of interventions in Canada, Yaron finds that many barriers remain, ranging from shareholder apathy to ownership concentration to inadequate proxy voting rules. Davis considers whether the activism of universal investors could be capable of restraining the negative actions of far-flung multinational enterprises. He concludes that it cannot sufficiently do this job (for various functional reasons, such as imperfect information and the uncertain framework of international law), and must be supplemented by government regulations to ensure that corporations respect “international standards.”

While both authors express caution about trusting shareholder activism with too much responsibility for moderating the excesses of global corporations, their underlying faith that activist shareholders would even have a *motive* for enforcing more humane and sustainable behaviour on corporations, let alone the *power* to do so, is open to serious question. Yaron is more honest than most advocates of this strategy, in reporting that pension funds own only about 10 per cent of all publicly traded equities (less informed writers on this subject still often claim, falsely, that pension funds own “most” of the stock market). Yet he never asks how socially aware pension investors might aim to exert influence over the other 90 per cent of capitalism. He summarizes research which superficially addresses the question of whether shareholder activism can “make a difference” on the behaviour and performance of companies. The evidence is quite robust that active pension fund interventions (such as those initiated over the years by CalPERS, the giant California public sector pension fund) will indeed lead to improved financial performance – measured by profitability, share price return, and other conventional indicators. Yet the vast majority of those interventions have been strictly aimed at governance issues and shaking up inef-

fective corporate management teams, not at promoting more “noble” social or environmental goals. So we should not be surprised that this “activism” leads to improved “performance” by those traditional measures. Whether the targeted corporations demonstrate any notable difference whatsoever in their social and environmental responsibility is an entirely different question, and Yaron’s conflation of the two issues is confusing at best. Indeed, many “social investment” advocates will deliberately portray Yaron’s evidence as “proving” that socially concerned investment strategies can match or even exceed the financial performance of traditional investment strategies, thus indicating that “ethics” and “profits” are not incompatible. In fact, however, Yaron’s evidence shows simply that investors who actively press managers to increase profits can in fact succeed in doing so. That’s a rather different conclusion, indeed. Canada’s largest occupational pension fund, the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan Board, has taken a similarly “activist” approach — buying an active 25 per cent stake in the non-union airline WestJet, and partnering with Maple Leaf Foods to shut down underperforming (and unionized) meat processing plants. The “activist” OTPPB has an exemplary financial record among its peer institutional investors, yet can hardly be attributed with having had a progressive impact on society through its investment strategy.

The central proposition of the “universal investor” model, that so long as investors are vested in a sufficiently broad range of companies then their interests will converge with those of society (since the negative consequences of actions of those corporations can no longer be “externalized” by those investors), is ludicrous: it implies society is simply a constellation of corporations, and denies the possibility of any conflict of interest (or potential for “externalization”) between those who own corporations and those (at home or abroad) who do not. A related implicit claim is that shareholding is now



universal across social classes (as well as being “universal” in Monks’ sense of portfolio diversification), yet evidence on the precarious (and growing) inequality of financial wealth ownership readily disposes of this claim. In fact, most Canadians have no economically significant stake in the stock market whatsoever (either directly or indirectly), and the vast majority of corporate equities are owned (directly or indirectly) by a surprisingly small elite of society. The mutual fund industry likes to pretend that investing is a socially “universal” pastime every February when they unroll their annual onslaught of RRSP advertising; but social scientists should dig a little more deeply before accepting the claim at face value.

In the end, the project of improving corporate governance is ultimately aimed at tightening the control of shareholders over the actions of corporations, in hopes of enhancing shareholder wealth. As editor Sarra states bluntly in her introduction, “The goal that flows from these notions is shareholder wealth maximization, aimed at an optimal return on investment of equity capital.” (xvii) It is not at all clear that corporations that function still more directly and ruthlessly in the interests of maximizing profit (and hence shareholder wealth), whether defined in the short-run or the long-run, will be at all more respectful or accommodating of working people at home or abroad, their communities, or the environment. Indeed, the reverse is quite likely the case. In this context, progressives should indeed be very careful what they ask for in the corporate governance debate, lest they get it — regardless of how often words like “accountability,” “responsibility,” and “activism” get thrown around. A more hard-headed left analysis of corporate governance initiatives, and how they relate to efforts aimed at holding corporations accountable to a more inclusive constituency (beyond just their shareholders), would be a most useful and timely contribution to this ongoing debate.

Jim Stanford  
Canadian Auto Workers

Alan Gordon, *Making Public Pasts: The Contested Terrain of Montreal's Public Memories, 1891-1930* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 2001)

ALAN GORDON's book on the construction and uses of public memory in the city of Montreal in the early decades of the 20th century represents a notable addition to the growing body of English Canadian historical scholarship, by H.V. Nelles, Ronald Rudin, and Colin Coates, among others, on the relationship between commemoration and political identity in French Canada. *Making Public Pasts* draws freely upon a wide range of canonical works on nationalism and collective memory, from the classic texts of Durkheim and Halbwachs to more recent influential studies by Eric Hobsbawm, Pierre Nora, Anthony Smith, and John Bodnar. Although Gordon does not explicitly situate himself in relation to the eclectic mix of theoretical and methodological approaches represented by these authorities, he clearly shares their assumption that memories, myths, and symbols (or “*mythomoteurs*,” to use his preferred term) both reflect and actively shape aspects of social and political reality. He is particularly concerned to show how images of the past, embodied in monuments, memorials, plaques, historic sites, and commemorative rituals, helped to constitute the competing nationalisms of English- and French-speaking Montrealers, and structure the power relations of a modernizing capitalist society.

Gordon begins by systematically describing the social, political, and geographical context of public commemoration in Montreal. He devotes particular attention to the urban landscape of the late Victorian city and its surrounding suburbs, with its squares, parks, and stately avenues, set against a background of accelerating modernization. The written text is enhanced by an extremely useful apparatus of period photographs of individual monuments, as well as maps, dia-

grams, and tables, which both illustrate Gordon's arguments, and enable the reader to assess his use of evidence.

With admirable thoroughness, Gordon documents and analyses the significance of the striking increase in commemorative activity that began around 1890 and extended into the early decades of the new century, which he attributes to the deliberate intervention of a new "heritage elite," drawn mainly from the overwhelmingly male ranks of the professional middle classes. Its members shared a common interest in awakening and mobilizing the historical memory of their respective communities in support of two very different nationalist projects. He provides a wealth of illuminating detail about representative members of this elite, such as the romantic Anglophone *litterateur* and ardent imperialist W.H. Lighthall, as well as the most important institutions through which their ideas about the past were disseminated to a larger public: the Antiquarian and Numismatic Society of Montreal, the Société Historique de Montréal, the federal Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and the Commission des monuments historiques du Québec, among others, which were responsible for erecting monuments, placing plaques on designated heritage sites, staging lavish historical pageants and processions, and so on. Gordon captures the cultural and political contradictions of their attitudes and values, which tended to combine an anti-modern nostalgia for a vanished, more "authentic" pre-industrial past with faith in material progress and capitalist prosperity; or, in the aftermath of the Great War, attachment to a nascent, autonomous nationhood with allegiance to the British monarchy and empire.

Gordon describes the gender and class biases of his heritage elite, which had no place for the memories of Irish workers, whose histories of forced emigration, economic hardship, discrimination, and labour struggle were almost wholly ignored in the official public sphere.

Women, meanwhile, were relegated to largely symbolic roles as personifications of timeless, abstract virtues, apart from the recognition accorded to a handful of exemplary figures like Jeanne Mance and Marguerite Bourgeoys. He discusses working-class efforts to forge an alternative collective memory, for example through the annual commemorative rituals of Labour Day. He also acknowledges the increasing agency of women in heritage activities in the early 20th century, through such influential organizations as the IODE, while insisting on — and perhaps overstating — their subordination to masculine agendas. But these examples of resistance to the bourgeois and patriarchal values of the heritage elite receive rather cursory treatment, especially given Gordon's stated interest in the relationship between public memory and the structures of power in Quebec society. They are subordinated to his main argument about the ethnic and religious "fissures" that divided his socially homogeneous heritage elite into two distinct, "fratricidal" camps — French, Catholic, and nationalist on one side, English, Protestant, and imperialist on the other — and how these divisions found expression in rival representations of Canada's past.

He argues, for example, that Montreal Anglophones viewed their city as a strategic imperial outpost, and sought, through monuments of British heroes and monarchs, public holidays like Empire Day and other commemorative devices, to legitimize a conception of national belonging that combined an almost feudal personal allegiance to the British crown with a solid bourgeois faith in material progress, capitalist enterprise, and political liberty. French Canadian heritage elites, under the ideological leadership of Abbé Groulx, were at the same time evoking mythologized memories of New France in the process of constructing the "historical novelty" of a unified, militant, "Catholicized" nationalism, which, according to Gordon, finally succeeded in vanquishing and co-opting its old *rouge*

adversaries in the aftermath of the Great War. Gordon provides numerous, richly detailed examples of the ways in which these fundamentally opposed conceptions of Canadian history and identity were reflected in disputes between French and English members of heritage organizations, and embodied in strategically situated sites of memory in the ethnically segregated neighbourhoods of Montreal.

Gordon is less interested in exploring the question of how the apparently irreconcilable tensions between Anglophone and Francophone discourses of memory and identity were negotiated and resolved, or at least contained. Yet one of the more surprising aspects of Gordon's account is how little overt controversy and conflict accompanied the attempts of the two communities to represent and promote their respective versions of Canada's past in a contested public sphere. Despite their frequent sophistication and originality, Gordon's readings of monuments and commemorative rituals do not always fully capture the "multivocal" nature of *lieux de mémoire*, in particular their ability to serve as vehicles of social and political reconciliation and harmony. For example, Gordon plausibly describes the unveiling of the imposing monument to George-Étienne Cartier in Jeanne Mance Park as an occasion for symbolically mending fences between English and French Montreal after the traumatic battles over conscription. Less convincingly, he attributes its role as a unifying symbol to the success of Anglophone heritage elites in recasting Cartier as a symbol of loyalty to the British connection. Gordon characterizes the monument as "a strange mix of British imperialism and Canadian nationalism," (89) without seeming to recognize that its effectiveness as a vehicle of reconciliation depended precisely on this element of political ambiguity. Neither the members of the committee that commissioned the Cartier monument, nor the racially mixed crowd that attended the unveiling ceremony shared a common, homogeneous memory

of Cartier — or of Confederation, the Great War, or the British Empire, for that matter. But Montreal's "heritage elites" seem to have tacitly agreed to disagree about the significance of symbols like Cartier, whose monument represented him as both an Angophile imperialist and as the defender of the rights of the French Canadian *patrie*. Spectators were free to pick and choose which Cartier they wished to remember and venerate. (Or they could accept both meanings at once — or neither.) But the fact that Cartier could be publicly claimed and memorialized by both groups helped to foster at least the illusion of consensus and *bonne entente* after the bitter conflicts of the war years. In other words, public memory both divided Anglophones and Francophones — as Gordon convincingly argues — and provided the means for overcoming or at least obscuring these divisions and mitigating their potentially corrosive effects. And if French Montrealers took issue with hegemonic British Canadian and imperialist constructions of the city's history, nothing prevented them from commemorating the past and honouring their heroes — Dollard, the martyrs of 1837, among others — on their own, counter-hegemonic terms.

A similar case can be made for the 1930 celebrations surrounding the unveiling of the monument to Jean Vauquelin, the commander of the French fleet which, against overwhelming odds, tried to relieve Quebec after its capture by Wolfe in 1759. Gordon dismisses the efforts of its organizers to use the event as an object lesson in ethnic harmony, mocking its supposedly "confused" and "comical" melange of French and British symbols, and "bizarre mix of contemporary politics with history." (118) But public memory, as Gordon himself argues, is almost always shaped by the political concerns of the present. In any case, I would once again argue that the variety and "confusion" of the symbolism surrounding the monument and its unveiling, which

Gordon derides, contributed to its popular appeal as a site of memory. The ceremony, which was staged by the local Saint Jean Baptiste Society on the eve of the *fête nationale* and attracted over 20,000 spectators, clearly struck a chord among the people of Montreal. By simultaneously allowing Francophones to celebrate their heroism and *gloire* in defeat, and Anglophones their magnanimity in victory, it could serve as another example of how the ambiguity of commemoration was used to empower both group identities, while masking the intractable points of difference between them behind a ritualized display of reconciliation.

A greater appreciation of the ambiguous, multivocal nature of symbols and rituals would also have strengthened Gordon's suggestive account of the redefinition of French Canadian nationalism in the 1920s. As it stands, his argument about the "Catholicization" of Francophone memory and national identity under the influence of Abbé Groulx and his followers can even, on the strength of his own evidence, be turned on its head. The rehabilitation of the *Patriotes* in 1926, for example, might just as easily be cited to demonstrate the accommodation of Groulx's elitist, clerical form of French Canadian nationalism to the forces of liberalism and modernity in Quebec society. The historical pageantry of the reinvented *fête nationale*, to which Gordon devotes an entire chapter, can be interpreted as a product of the moderately liberal nationalism of lay intellectuals like Victor Morin and Joseph Massicotte of the *SSJBM*. The extraordinarily elaborate, hugely popular *défilés* inaugurated by Morin and Massicotte in 1924 presented painstakingly detailed images of French Canadian history, organized around a series of grandiose themes, which, upon closer inspection, lent themselves to a surprisingly wide range of meanings and purposes (including the development of a mass tourist industry). These complex, multilayered spectacles, rather than forcing Francophone memory

and identity into the mould of a reactionary messianic Catholicism, arguably allowed all the disparate elements that made up modern French Canadian society — *rouge* and *bleu*, clerical and secular, rural and urban, industrial and agricultural — to unite under the banner of an increasingly pluralistic *patrie*.

Gordon's stimulating study of how the collective memory of the two "founding races" was shaped and exploited by contending elites in the ethnically polarized urban landscape of Montreal yields fresh perspectives on a number of important issues: the genealogy of the uneasily coexisting nationalisms of English and French Canada, the relationship between historical consciousness and civic identity, the origins of the heritage industry, and the Canadian experience of modernity, among others. One could wish for a more nuanced reading of certain key *lieux de mémoires*; important points are at times simply asserted rather than empirically demonstrated; and the theoretical framework does not always do justice to the complex and elusive subject matter. But the same reservations can be applied to almost every other contribution to this nascent field of historical research. They do not detract from the overall value of Gordon's book, which provides yet another example of how cultural approaches drawn from a variety of disciplines are breathing new life into the study of Canadian history.

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Patricia E. Roy, *The Oriental Question: Consolidating a White Man's Province, 1914-1941* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press 2003)

SEPARATING THE HISTORIAN'S own analytic voice from those of the historical actors to whom he or she is trying to give voice is one of the critical issues in writing a history of racism. Failure to main-

tain this separation can result in unwittingly reproducing the very categories and exclusions that need to be explained in the first place. When one relies exclusively on primary sources without critically engaging wider literatures and theories of racism, this result is all the more likely.

Patricia E. Roy's *The Oriental Question: Consolidating a White Man's Province, 1914-41* illustrates both the advantages and dangers of an approach relying almost exclusively on primary sources. This is the second of three volumes in which Roy traces the history of anti-Asian racism in British Columbia. The first volume, published a number of years ago, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914*, examined anti-Asian discourse and public policy in British Columbia until the beginning of World War I. This volume picks up where the former left off, bringing the story up to the eve of the forced relocation of Japanese Canadians on the west coast during World War II. The third volume covers the period from 1941 to the introduction of the points system and the supposed dismantling of racist immigration policies in 1967.

*The Oriental Question* has many of the same strengths and weaknesses of the earlier work. Like *A White Man's Province*, it is deeply rooted in the primary English-language sources and in newspapers in particular. This rootedness in the primary sources has always been one of the strengths of Roy's research and has allowed her to make finely shaded distinctions that escape less careful historians. Indeed, I was a bit shocked to learn (13) that Roy admits to not having read all of the newspapers published in British Columbia during the period under consideration. She has certainly read more of them than anyone else and this shows here in the way in which she treats the development of anti-Asian discourse as specific to time and place. For example, she is able to document how at various moments

anti-Asian feelings died down in one part of the province, only to pick up in another, and how such feelings were often specific to particular issues. She supplements her newspaper accounts with other available public records such as House of Commons and Senate debates, as well as archival sources and the diaries of leading protagonists. The result is a finely textured account that convincingly shows that while anti-Asian racism was never a monolith, it became consolidated in the image of British Columbia as "a White Man's province" during this era.

One of the virtues of the resulting account is the way Roy spins these very divergent sources about a series of isolated, even obscure, episodes into a credible narrative. In effect, she argues that after a period of quiescence during World War I, immigrants from China and Japan and their Canadian-born children were seen as "unassimilable," meaning incapable of ever being incorporated into the dominant British Canadian community. Even as the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 ended immigration from China, resulting in greater tolerance of the members of this community, fear mounted over Japanese imperialism, and ultimately over the presence of Japanese Canadians. In many ways this thesis is an elaboration of her "Fear of Asians" argument first put forward over 25 years ago, i.e., that as the century progressed anti-Asian sentiment shifted from a focus on the Chinese to the Japanese and that at heart these sentiments were based on a fear of Asian superiority and competition. Certainly subsequent scholarship on this issue will need to contend with Roy's findings and interpretations, e.g., that there was no significant gender component in the anti-Asian racisms of British Columbia's "white" population.

Like her earlier account, this one is also largely immune to issues of theory. As Roy explains, her argument "relies more on empirical evidence than on theories." (11) This is unfortunate since between the publication of her first volume

and this one a significant literature on racisms and their histories has appeared in Canada, a literature that has often benefited from being theoretically informed. Consider for example, the work of Constance Backhouse on the history of legal racism in Canada or Roy Mikki's account of the Japanese Canadian redress movement. One advantage of theory is that, when used properly, it leads to asking better questions. Roy largely takes racist categories at face value, treating them much the same way her sources do, and while her sympathies are not with the racists, she occasionally falls into the kinds of binaries that underlay so much anti-Asian racism, a tendency that does a disservice to her strong claim to the empirical. For example, she provides an account of the picketing of "Chinese" potato farmers by "white" growers on the Fraser Street bridge in March 1937. The picketing resulted in an assault on a truck driver, Chung Chuck. Roy is careful to describe Chung's injuries and notes that he also inflicted a minor knife wound on a Vegetable Board inspector. The police laid charges against Chung who also charged the inspector with assault. Both sets of charges were dismissed by the courts. Roy then notes that the Chinese consul condemned the picketers and that the CCF condemned the marketing board that was trying to fix prices and whose actions had led to the confrontation in the first place. She then points out, "*The Vancouver Province* denied that it was 'a racial issue' but sympathized with the board's efforts to keep the market for Canadians against an 'increasing tide of ruthless Chinese competition'." (141) She seems unaware of the problematic juxtaposition between "Canadian" and "Chinese" here. It is possible that her description reproduces the terms of the *Vancouver Province* editorial, but if so it is curious that these categorizations warrant no discussion. By contrast, Paul Yee's *Saltwater City: An Illustrated History of the Chinese in Vancouver* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre 1988) presents a rather different

account of this incident, one more sensitive to the racist nature of the conflict. We learn, for example, that Chung Chuck was not merely a truck driver, but one of the main growers who had successfully challenged the marketing board's restrictions in the courts. (80) Yee's reproduction of the *Province* editorial itself shows that it represented those behind the Chinese-controlled farms as "smart young Orientals, born in Vancouver and claiming all the rights and privileges of Canadian citizenship." (Yee, 83) While the editorial makes clear that these people were in the process of taking over, to the detriment of racialized whites, it appears that this Canadian/Chinese juxtaposition comes from Roy rather than the editorial itself. This in turn suggests that she rather misses the point that "the Chinese" were also "Canadian" and that an important historical question is how and why so many of their racialized "white" contemporaries did not see them as such or would not accept them even when they technically shared the same citizenship. In effect, she sees her sources as relatively straightforward descriptions of real differences rather than as artifacts of a discourse that continually created and recreated notions of racialized difference.

Roy's closeness to the English-language newspaper accounts meant that I often found myself hearing the racist voices, and relatively little in the way of antiracist voices. Indeed, I found myself wondering whether the English-language sources Roy relies upon do not also contain more of the voices of the members of the excluded groups themselves. Certainly by the 1920s and 1930s, British Columbia's population of racialized Asians included many who were literate in English and who did not hesitate to speak out against racist practices in letters to the editors and in various organized protests. The dominance of racist voices is compounded by Roy's necessary reliance on English-language sources and hence her failure to adequately consider the experiences of racism as lived by



members of British Columbia's Asian communities. In the early chapters, she makes an effort to include some references drawn from the Vancouver-based *Chinese Times*, the Chinese-language newspaper published by the Zhigongdang or "Chinese Freemasons," but these disappear in the later chapters even though this paper continued to be published. I suspect that this has less to do with a careful review of this paper than with her reading of the notes on its local news section compiled as part of the background research for Edgar Wickberg, *et al.*, *From China to Canada*, and preserved in the Chinese Canadian Research Collection at UBC. These notes become rather more spotty after the mid-1920s. Here some might also argue that had she conducted interviews with some of the survivors of the racist practices of this era, she might have had quite a different result. In the end, her book is more about the attitudes of racialized whites towards racialized Asians than it is about the social construction of racism.

Finally, I also wondered at her decision to end this volume on the eve of the exclusion of racialized Japanese from the west coast during World War II. While this may be the result of editorial decisions to preserve an extended discussion of this event for the third volume, something that might have been too large to include here, I cannot help but feel that an adequate understanding of racism requires appreciation for the consequences of racist and racializing representations, something that this volume cannot achieve if it does not also discuss the effects of a quarter-century of racist discourse in the destruction of Japanese Canadian communities.

Thus, in the end, the significance of this work is that, like the earlier volume, it catalogues English-language anti-Asian discourse in British Columbia. As such it is an invaluable reference for students of racism and of British Columbia's history. Its failure to problematize racist categories or to adequately consider the experi-

ence of racism from the points of view of those who were the objects of this discourse means that it fails to provide a convincing account of anti-Asian racisms. Racisms are not merely sets of linguistic practices on the part of members of racially privileged groups; they are dynamic relations of categorization, of inclusion and of exclusion, and of resistance. An adequate account of racism needs to be more alive to these dynamics.

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Jim Mochoruk, *Formidable Heritage: Manitoba's North and the Cost of Development 1870 to 1930* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press 2004)

THE "PROVINCIAL NORTHS," or the parts of the provinces lying north of the zone of agriculture, have not received a great deal of attention from professional historians. The reasons for this are obvious: although they contain a great deal of Canada's landmass, and in Québec, for example, make up four-fifths of the province, they do not have a large population, and therefore have proportionately little political power. Their economic importance to Canada has been as producers of natural resource products, chiefly minerals, forest products, and hydro-electricity. They have a large First Nations population, and their non-native population has, historically, been quite transient. They tend to be dominated by outside forces, located in provincial or national capitals, and although they have much in common with each other, there is very little cooperation or coordinated effort among them; northern Saskatchewan and northern Ontario, for instance, do not form a common front against what some would call the forces of internal colonialism that oppress them.

*Formidable Heritage* is an attempt to rectify this omission of interest in the case of northern Manitoba, a region which can

be defined in several ways, but is most usefully thought of as the region north and east of the agricultural belt of the southern part of the province. The central argument of the book is revisionist, an attempt to counter the triumphalism of the traditional accounts of the province's history. W.L. Morton's statement, in *The Canadian Identity*, that the main task of Canadians was to "make something" of the "formidable heritage" of the Canadian Shield, is the metropolitan, outside-directed and arguably exploitative interpretation against which Mochoruk directs this book. "The central argument of this study," he says, "is simple. When all of Manitoba was given in 1670, sight unseen, to a group of entrepreneurs whose primary goal was to exploit the natural resources of the region, a precedent was set that would be replicated all too many times in Manitoba's history, for this grant was both careless and callous in regard to the region's resources and to the rights of its inhabitants." (xiii) And, he says, the history of the region over the following 260 years consisted of variations on this theme. In fairness to Morton, though, it must be said that, given the chance for rebuttal, he would likely claim that this book is ahistorical in its approach, and that Mochoruk is approaching the 17th to early 20th centuries with the sensibilities of the 21st: given the spirit and customs of the times, how else were England and the Hudson's Bay Company supposed to deal with northern Manitoba in 1660, or with the other periods the book covers?

The bulk of the book is an account of the development of northern Manitoba in the interests of outsiders — first the Hudson's Bay Company, then the federal government, and then the provincial government, the latter two working in concert with private developers. Such development, prior to quite recent times, was usually carried out with complete disregard for the wishes of the region's inhabitants and for any environmental considerations. On the other hand, when no developmental prospects were on the horizon,

the region was simply neglected. When smallpox broke out among the Icelandic immigrants in the Interlake region, which is on the periphery of the province's north, the government first ignored them, then quarantined them, and a violent confrontation with the authorities was only narrowly averted; treaties were offered to the First Nations only when some developer became interested in their traditional lands.

One of the best parts of the book is Chapter Three, "The Entrepreneurs' North: The Land of Opportunity to 1900," in which the author takes aim at the Horatio Alger myth that lauds the process whereby active young men wrest a fortune out of the north. The chapter contains some of the book's most lively prose:

Told and retold by fawning journalists, hagiographers posing as historians, and uncritical local history committees, the careers of many entrepreneurs with interests in the north took on an almost mythic quality ... tales of rags to riches by deserving young men ... or David and Goliath parables of small companies taking on the northwest's economic giants .. Theo Burrows, who left the Ottawa home of his widowed mother at eighteen years of age to take a job on a survey crew in the wilds of the Lake Dauphin region and rose from this humble beginning to become the west's leading lumberman and the lieutenant-governor of his adopted province. (63-4)

Of course, as with the Alger stories, there was always a trick involved, and character and pluck turned out not to be the most important requirements for success:

all these "great men" and companies had feet of clay. More often than not, their business careers had been advanced by political favouritism, by successful attempts to limit competition, by the use of inside information, or any other advantage that would allow them to survive and prosper ... studying these "success stories" ... help[s] to document the general pattern of capital accumulation, concentration, and outflow from the north as well as trace[s] the evolving nature of the relationship between capitalists and the state. (64)

Chapter Six, "New Manitoba and the Fight For Equality, 1912 to 1922," is a hard look at among other things, the employment practices of companies in northern Manitoba in this era that should disabuse anyone of romantic notions of life in lumber and mining camps. Employers at The Pas who fired workers who lacked the money to leave the community, and bush camps where workers were almost slaves were common features of life in the region. Mochoruk cites the case of two workers in 1913 who borrowed \$25 worth of clothing and food from the McMillan company to enable them to walk the 100 kilometres back from camp to the The Pas:

No sooner had they arrived at The Pas than they were arrested. On the basis of information provided by the employer, it was established that they owed the McMillans \$25 for the goods taken out of the company store, plus ... various other charges ... As the local newspaper put it, "satisfied of their delinquency, the magistrate sentenced each to a prison term of six months, which should serve as a warning to others having similar inclinations. (206)

The rest of the chapters are equally informative about the realities of northern development and exploitation, and indeed, what makes this book particularly valuable is the enormous amount of research that evidently went into writing it. The 396 pages of introduction and text are supported by 90 pages of footnotes, some of them fairly substantive. Despite its size, weight, and rather relentlessly revisionist approach, however, the book is quite readable, and is likely to serve as the definitive work on the subject for a good many years.

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Jamie Brownlee, *Ruling Canada: Corporate Cohesion and Democracy* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing 2005)

NEOLIBERALISM in Canada began 30 years ago with the Bank of Canada's adoption of monetarism and Trudeau's use of wage and price controls to defeat an insurgent labour movement. While these policies were defended at the time as short-term necessities, they came to represent components of a more general restructuring process. Indeed, neoliberalism has been much more than a conjunctural economic fix or policy adjustment; rather, it has consisted of a systematic transformation of political, economic, and social relationships both within Canada and around the world.

Most social science has interpreted neoliberalism in one of two ways. For neoclassical economists, neoliberalism unshackles the market from Keynesian regulations. According to this perspective, neoliberalism realizes the inherent potential of capitalist markets and thus promises benefits for everyone. For Weberian or institutionalist researchers, neoliberalism is the outcome of technological developments that allowed for the globalization of investment and the restructuring of production processes. These technological and economic transformations occurred outside of the nation-state and thus contributed to the global power imbalances that exist today among capital, governments, and citizens.

Jamie Brownlee's new book, *Ruling Canada: Corporate Cohesion and Democracy*, offers a different conceptualization of neoliberalism and its effects on democracy, citizenship, and the state. For Brownlee, neoliberalism emerged not from naturalistic market processes or technological developments, but from a deliberate and well-organized effort of the economic elite to radically alter the political economy of Canada. Class struggle in the economy and at the level of the state was central to the neoliberal revolution. To defend this argument, Brownlee

focuses on the economic and political processes by which Canada's economic elite — its leading capitalists, corporate executives and directors, and their ideological and political supporters — advanced neoliberalism as a class program. Two questions guide the analysis: what economic basis allowed the Canadian elite to unite and mobilize around a neoliberal agenda? And what political mechanisms were utilized for achieving this end?

Answers to these questions are developed in three sections which integrate empirical data and theoretical interpretations. In Section One, Brownlee covers sociological debates on the unity and political capacities of the economic elite. He first reviews and critiques the theories of pluralists and structural Marxists and then develops his "instrumental Marxist" or "unity theory" approach. He insists that divisions amongst the elite are usually more tactical than strategic, and that "powerful *unifying mechanisms*" exist to facilitate political consensus and solidarity. (19) Sections Two and Three demonstrate how the Canadian elite unified around a neoliberal strategy and how they used their resources and connections to implement this strategy.

For example, Chapter Two analyses the concentration and centralization of capital in Canada and the ways in which this creates a "corporate structure that is conducive to elite cohesion." (53) The Canadian elite used mergers and acquisitions as well as diversification strategies to consolidate its control over the domestic market and to become more competitive globally. As an example, Brownlee reveals how Canadian conglomerates now "employ one-third of the Canadian workforce and account for one-half of total business revenue." (36) It is this growing intercorporate ownership that provided the elite with a structural basis for developing a class-wide strategy around neoliberalism.

Chapter Three continues the economic analysis of elite unity by focusing on interlocking directorships in the Canadian

economy. Brownlee makes five important points. First, Canadian capital is constituted by an elite network of directors who sit on the boards of the most concentrated industries. Second, these interlocks have integrated the circuits of industrial and money capital to such an extent that they now constitute "finance capital." (59) Third, Canadian finance capital is a "well-integrated and dense network of *nationally based* interlocking directorates" (66); that is, it is established by an East-West or pan-Canadian structure of corporate power. Fourth, "Foreign controlled corporations have only marginal interlocking status and are much more likely than domestic firms to be isolated from the network." (66) In other words, the top units of capital in Canada are Canadian-owned and operate independently from foreign interests. Finally, the development of finance capital provided the impetus for the internationalization of Canadian capital. Brownlee summarizes this argument with a quote by William Carroll, who writes that "transnational finance capital has radiated from Canada in a way that has not disorganized the national network, but has *embedded* it more extensively in a circuitry of global accumulation." (68) According to Brownlee, the development of Canadian finance capital through the concentration and centralization of capital and through interlocking directorships provided the structural potential for elite cohesion. In Section Three, which deals with the "policy formation network," Brownlee reveals how the Canadian elite developed a common political program in the form of neoliberalism, and how it organized to implement this program through the state.

For example, in Chapter Four, Brownlee examines intersectoral policy organizations such as the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. These organizations create forums for corporate leaders to discuss and articulate

long-term, class-wide strategies. Brownlee reveals how these policy organizations advanced neoliberalism through their close financial and political relationships to the Liberal and Conservative parties and to the corporate media. He also shows the decisive interventions made by these organizations around free trade, the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, debt reduction, military and foreign policies, and the Canadian Health and Social Transfer.

Chapter Five discusses advocacy think-tanks such as the Fraser Institute, the C.D. Howe Institute, and the Conference Board. These think-tanks are important actors in the elite network. Through their conferences, publications, submissions to parliamentary committees, and access to the corporate media, they “help business leaders to establish class cohesion and a common policy perspective, mainly by setting up regular meetings or roundtables between different sectors of the business community.” (106) Brownlee argues that these think-tanks also provide a veneer of legitimacy to the neoliberal agenda.

Chapter Six examines actors within the policy formation process that are often overlooked, namely, free enterprise foundations. Brownlee reveals how corporate and family foundations interlock with policy groups and think-tanks and thus create another network through which the elite exercises power. He also implicates free enterprise foundations in the development of neoliberalism in Canada, for example, through their funding of particular research, their recruitment and training of future members of the elite, and their projection of an image of corporate philanthropy.

Brownlee’s principal arguments, then, are two-fold: first, financial and institutional linkages among the Canadian economic elite facilitated forms of unity necessary for the development of neoliberalism. And second, this elite’s economic power was translated into political power through its policy organiza-

tions, think-tanks, and free enterprise foundations as well as through its connections to the media, the Liberal and Conservative parties, and the civil service. These economic and political resources were used to advance neoliberalism as a conscious class strategy to restructure the Canadian state and economy.

Brownlee concludes *Ruling Canada* with one chapter on the nature of the state under neoliberalism and another chapter on alternatives to neoliberalism. Chapter Seven makes two important points: first, that the state is fully integrated with the logic of neoliberalism and thus functions to reproduce and intensify this logic; and second, that regardless of such structural processes, the economic elite maintains a strong grip on governance and administration, making the state a “vital power base and set of organizing tools” for capital. (127)

While Brownlee paints a picture of a very powerful and well-organized economic elite, he concludes on an optimistic note. “Corporate domination” can be challenged, he says, because it “is not the culmination of a natural, evolutionary process.” (142) A “great deal of potential exists for citizens to alter current economic arrangements to realize the interests of the vast majority. Collective social action could change the public policy consensus.” (13) According to Brownlee, such a political mobilization must engage the state — as it is clearly a terrain of intense class struggle. Social movements must defend existing state programs and create new forms of democratic administration in the process of curtailing corporate power: “At present, the state is the only institution large enough to act as a counterweight to corporate power; therefore, short-term goals should involve defending, even strengthening, those elements of the state that are accountable to public input (which are the ones constantly under attack by private power). Opening up the state to democratic participation and improving the effectiveness and accountability of state regulation are

the most realistic interim strategies for dealing with the corporate threat and the practical problems of tomorrow — problems on which people's lives often depend. In the short-term, then, political activism that directly targets corporate power should be complemented by efforts to re-democratize the state and government. In the long-term, the inherent injustices of the centralized state system need to be challenged and ultimately dismantled." (152)

*Ruling Canada* provides a clear analysis of the Canadian economic elite and its ability to shape state policy. The text also does a good job of examining neoliberalism in the context of transformations occurring on a global scale. But the text could be strengthened in a number of crucial areas. For example, it should have included more *political economy*. While the text provides an excellent sociological description of the Canadian elite, it does not adequately conceptualize neoliberalism as a form of social power based upon the rule of finance capital (the coalescence of industrial and money capital as a result of concentration, centralization, and internationalization). The text discusses Canadian "finance capital," but it does not *theorize* it either in terms of capital's laws of motion or as a new configuration of social rule. Making such a theorization is crucially important for two reasons. The first is for understanding neoliberalism not simply as a class conspiracy, but as an expression of the workings of the capitalist mode of production. The second is for conceptualizing neoliberalism as a systematic form of social power, as a social logic organizing everything from macro- and micro-economic processes to governance and inter-state relations. The weakness of Brownlee's analysis is evident in his chapter on challenging corporate rule. His argument about engaging the state fails to comprehend how the state is fully implicated in the patterns of accumulation and social reproduction that characterize neoliberalism. For the Left to engage the

state, then, it must develop a clear *anti-capitalist* strategy, one that builds workers' and oppressed people's capacities to overturn the "centralized state system" and its underlying capitalist relations. While Brownlee mentions anti-capitalist formations such as People's Global Action, he could have analyzed these formations in greater detail.

Lastly, *Ruling Canada* could have said more on globalization and imperialism. Given the Canadian elite's new push for "deep integration" with the United States, it would have been interesting for Brownlee to discuss the relationship between the Canadian state and the internationalization of Canadian capital. For example, how does the state facilitate the expansion of Canadian capital? And how does this expansion reinforce domestic neoliberalism? Unfortunately, in the short section on "deep integration," Brownlee ignores Canadian imperialism and looks solely at the threat of "assimilation" to Canadian "sovereignty" and "quality of life." (125-6)

Despite these weaknesses, *Ruling Canada* is an important contribution to the study of Canadian political economy. The book provides substantial empirical evidence to defend its principal claims and should be referenced and debated in current discussions on the nature of Canadian capital and the Canadian state. The book is highly readable and could also be used in upper-level undergraduate courses. Most importantly, the book demystifies neoliberalism by naming the economic elite which benefit from it. As such, it opens the door for political action to challenge neoliberalism. Brownlee should be commended for contributing to this much-needed process.

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R. Scott Sheffield, *The Red Man's on the Warpath: The Image of the "Indian" and the Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press 2004)

THIS SUBTLE, interesting book by R. Scott Sheffield examines the image of the "Indian" as it was understood in the minds of English Canadians during the period from the 1930s Depression through to the end of World War II. The subject is emphatically the "imagined" Indian, not his flesh-and-blood counterpart. Throughout the text the author refers to the former as the "Indian" (in quotation marks), thereby continually calling the reader's attention to the distinction that lies at the heart of the book. This expository strategy largely succeeds. It fails only when Sheffield forgets himself and begins to make comments about the alleged disparities between real and imagined Indians. How can this be done, the reader wonders, when the author has limited his expertise to one of the paired terms?

The book differentiates between the "Administrative Indian," that is the "Indian" as perceived by the staff and officials of the Indian Affairs Branch [hereafter IAB], and the "Public Indian," meaning the "Indian" as viewed by the general public. Sheffield discovers the "Administrative Indian" in the correspondence files of the IAB, particularly those relating to schooling, enlistment and compulsory military service, Indian policy reform, and the postwar review of the Indian Act. The "Public Indian" is revealed through an exhaustive survey of the print media in English Canada, including daily and weekly newspapers, academic quarterlies, and such popular periodicals as *Saturday Night*. The author pays no attention to film and literature sources, which, he says, "reflected a relatively small intellectual elite and have already been the subject of scholarly attention." (12) The phrase, "reflected a relatively small intellectual elite," points to a weakness in the methodology, namely a tendency to emphasize the production, rather than the

consumption, of cultural material. Regardless of how small a number of people made films and newsreels, the key issue is the extent of their distribution and the meanings audiences attached to them. Sheffield states that newspapers "were not simply sources of opinions. They were also reflections of the cultural values and norms of the society in which they operated; they not only shaped and reinforced opinion, but also drew from an existing cultural toolbox, employing language and imagery that their readership would recognize." (13) This is true, but it does not go far enough. Sheffield seems to assume that the readers of newspaper stories interpret them more or less similarly and that their "common-sense" interpretation coincides with his own. Both are dubious propositions. Readers bring to texts their own viewpoints and cultural predispositions. They habitually recast information so that it conforms to preconceived opinions. This is especially true of texts that involve stories and symbols, as do many of the excerpts Sheffield cites. Such stories and symbols inherently carry multiple meanings; they always mean more than they say.

Ignoring or disregarding this methodological complication, Sheffield forges ahead with a clear, vigorous argument. He asserts that in the 1930s, the "Public Indian" was a contradictory amalgam of the "noble savage," an heroic remnant tragically doomed to extinction, and the "drunken criminal," the contemporary "Indian" laden with numerous character flaws. (The "drunken criminal" language is distasteful, but Sheffield believes that it accurately reflects the views of the time.) The "Administrative Indian" conformed to the latter stereotype because, as Sheffield explains, IAB personnel, immersed in the here-and-now of daily duties, were disinclined to brood over a romanticized past. Further, they formed a negative opinion of Indians, when the latter resisted the government's assimilation policies. Those outside the IAB, many of whom never saw an Indian and had no oc-

casation to visit a reserve, freely indulged their speculations.

With the coming of the war, the dichotomy between the “positive-historical and negative-contemporary” (70) versions of the “Indian” broke down. In its place emerged an image that was both positive and contemporary, the “Indian-at-war.” Canadians took comfort from the fact that during the bleak early years of the conflict, with France defeated and the United States and the Soviet Union still not combatants, First Nations people rallied to the cause. By 1943, as prospects for Allied victory brightened, the prominence of the “Indian-at-war” faded, although it did not disappear altogether. When Canadians turned to reconstruction and, in the parlance of the day, “winning the peace,” yet another image, that of the “Indian victim,” came to the fore. A country fighting to rid the world of a racist, oppressive regime could hardly countenance racism and oppression in its own backyard. Articles began to appear dwelling on the squalor of reserve life and the paternalistic, overbearing system of Indian administration. Editorials declared the irony of First Nations soldiers fighting for a country that denied them full citizenship rights, including the right to vote. A massive wave of sympathy, arising from a collective sense of guilt, overwhelmed the public and forced the Canadian government to re-examine its policies.

In January 1946 the minister responsible for the IAB announced that his department would no longer actively oppose the formation of Native political organizations. The following May the government created a special joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons [hereafter SJC] to collect evidence and consider revisions to the Indian Act. Out of the committee hearings, which lasted two years and generated extensive press coverage, there emerged the Indian as “potential citizen,” a construct that captured both the optimism of the era and the durable belief in assimilation as the best solution to the “Indian problem.” Sheffield deftly sorts

out the multiple meanings of “assimilation,” a term that referred variously to the social, economic, and cultural convergence of First Nations with the rest of society; the removal of legal and constitutional differences between status Indians and other Canadians; and the absorption through intermarriage of the “Indian” race into the larger population. The diverse interpretations mingled confusingly in public discourse, merging vaguely with the newly popular jargon of “integration.”

More than 150 submissions to the SJC came from Indian bands, tribal councils, chiefs, and Native-rights organizations, all of which received a boost from war conditions and the post-war revival of interest in Indian administration and legislation. Although the First Nations briefs differed on specific items, such as liquor rights and denominational schooling, they were united in opposing the policy of assimilation. The SJC seemed deaf to their message; the texts of the briefs meant one thing to the authors and quite another to the readers. As Sheffield observes, “terms like democracy, freedom, progress, citizenship, and equality were broad enough to accommodate a multiplicity of meanings, and indigenous leaders and spokespersons used such language almost as liberally as their Canadian counterparts.” (141) The SJC could not reconcile special rights with equality of citizenship; First Nations representatives, by contrast, based their claim for distinct national treatment on the treaties, which they regarded as the bedrock of their relationship with the rest of Canada. The final report did nothing to resolve the uncertainty. The Committee firmly endorsed the strategy of assimilation in keeping with the image of the Indian as “potential citizen.” To this end, it recommended increased powers of self-government for band councils as a means of fostering responsible citizenship. First Nations took the recommendation as an acknowledgement of their separate cultural identity and distinct status.

Sheffield, at the end of his study, discerns an underlying continuity in English Canada's construction of the imagined "Indian." He argues that from the 1930s to the postwar period the essential nature of the relationship between Canadians and the First Nations remained the same. It was based on "the deeply rooted assumption that English Canada's race, society, and way of life were superior to those of the 'Indian'.... Assimilation, although still founded on a conviction of racial superiority, was legitimized and renewed through liberal-democratic principles and confidence in the promise of scientific social engineering by an interventionist government." (178) The ambiguity of this passage centres on the problematic conjunction of racial superiority with liberal-democratic principles. Did the Canadian government misapply principles that are essentially valid, or are the principles themselves flawed by the erroneous presumption of universality? It is a mark of the quality of this book that it stimulates such broad questions, while satisfying our curiosity about a particular phase of Canadian history.

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Aaron A. Fox, *Real Country: Music and Language in Working-Class Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press 2004)

LOCKHART, TEXAS, is just south of Austin. It is, like many other peri-urban towns in North America, an affordable, working-class, not-quite-suburban place within driving distance of a rapidly expanding urban centre, and the rurality of its past may prove out of rhythm with its future. But the increasing spatial encroachment of city upon country is not matched in the realms of social life in central Texas. Indeed, Aaron Fox's wonderful book about music, talk, and class in Lockhart paints a vivid, detailed, and moving portrait of the material and sym-

bolic particularity of rural Texan white working-class life. The everyday weave of this life consists, he says, in "emplacement, embodiment, the organization of temporal experience and memory, and normative local understandings of emotion, subjectivity, and proper sociality," (21) an ensemble he bravely and convincingly labels "culture" (Fox is an anthropologist, writing from the discipline most haunted by the concept's demons). This "culture" is far from the strictly bounded, static and naturalized social substance that has justifiably given it a bad name. Rather, *Real Country* is built on what could only be called an intimate elaboration of regional white working-class culture, marked by empathy, but sensitive to unsaid and unthought resonances and contradictions. It is the product of almost 15 years of ethnomusicological and ethnographic research, during which time Fox talked with and listened to the participants in the local country music community, and gradually became musically and personally enmeshed in that very community.

The book is staged, for the most part, in a Lockhart "beer joint" called Ann's Place during the 1990s. Populated with a range of local characters, some of whom the reader comes to know well, Ann's Place is known in the region as a venue and haven for "real" country music, what Fox calls the "evaluative index" of a locally prized style of "feelingful," "authentic" (non-Top 40) country music. (103) (The reader can fortunately hear some of this music at Fox's website, [www.aaronfox.com](http://www.aaronfox.com).) Yet the cast members are themselves as much setting as they are players, for the real focus of *Real Country* is working-class "voice" in its dominant expressive modes: talk and song. Voice, Fox argues, "is a privileged medium for the construction of meaning and identity, and thus for the production of a distinctive 'class culture'," one through which working-class Texans construct and preserve "a self-consciously rustic, "redneck," "ordinary,"

and “country” ethos in their everyday life.” (20) This is not to say that Fox strips away the particularity of the community organized around Ann’s Place — and the music that is played and danced to and listened to there — to reveal some kernel of pure working-class expressivity. He is keen to underscore the individuality of each of the book’s main figures, and he has an almost novelistic approach to character development. An ethnomusicologist and professional guitarist, he spent his time at Ann’s Place playing and listening to music, recording conversations, and getting to know the idiosyncracies of many of the performers, staff, listeners, and other “regulars.”

To say, then, that “voice” — not voices — is the subject of this book is to say that *Real Country* is intended to bring ethnography, musicology, and linguistic anthropology into conversation with social theory in a manner that is theoretically and politically relevant far beyond Lockhart or Texas. And to the extent that this intention is realized, *Real Country* is a book about class, and about a critical aesthetics of working-class culture that cannot help but problematize the naturalized separation of the aesthetic and the political economic in labour and working-class studies more generally. It is also intellectually ambitious and sometimes technically complex: the nine chapters consider the voice as a site of the production and reproduction of time, subjectivity, emotion, gender, and performativity within the rural white working class, and Fox not infrequently calls upon the descriptive vocabulary of linguistics for precision. While this is of course justifiable — the book is about voice, after all — and rarely overwhelms, it does demand an unusual commitment from the non-disciplinary reader (and access to a very good dictionary). Like all good books, then, there is much to discuss here. But with the interests of *Labour/Le Travail* readers in mind, I want to focus the rest of the review on the question of class, and on what Fox calls “working class verbal art.” (229)

Any readers familiar with the work of Antonio Gramsci (or, more historically, E.P. Thompson) will recognize their legacies in Fox’s description of class as a “culturally mediated phenomenon.” (108) Indeed, although Fox only cites Gramsci once — and then in the context of a discussion of the organic intellectual (35) — the Gramscian vein that runs the length of *Real Country* can hardly be accidental. For Gramsci and Fox, culture is the precipitate of history; it encrusts all facets of everyday life, determining in its apparent “naturalness” the sense we make of our places and times, and of the trajectories of change. As Gramsci wrote in *Prison Notebooks*, “common sense creates the folklore of the future as a relatively rigid phase of popular knowledge at a given place and time” (New York 1971, 326). Culture as it emerges for Fox — summed up for him in an appropriately messy form in the adjective “country” (31) — is “a grammar of human response to experience.” (34) Voice materializes a discursive common sense that is embodied and enacted in the “polemical delineation of a class community.” (103)

Gramsci was interested in the construction of a theory of culture that would illuminate the politics of the very terrain of sense-making, one that would consistently denaturalize common sense, allowing the working class to construct new cultural spaces beyond the reach of bourgeois hegemony. In the contemporary US, however, this political strategy is turned on its head. In Lockhart, the cultural spaces in question are not new, but are instead those that are traditional and “authentic,” those that are, according to the “evaluative index,” “real”: real feelings, real people, real country. As such, the working-class culture of rural white Texans is not instantiated, according to Fox, in a critique of capital, but in a critique of neoliberalism and post-Fordism in the “key of nostalgia.” (91, 319) Inextricably bound to this critique, the “poetic obsession with loss and the looming presence

of the past” shapes the regional working-class aesthetic, and its dominant forms and modes of expression. In Lockhart, Fox suggests, the voice as “privileged medium” blurs the bounds between class art, class culture, and class politics.

I do not think this is an argument scholars of labour and working-class studies can hear too often. Indeed, if I have one substantial critique of *Real Country*, it is that while this inseparability is illuminated, the political-economic dimensions of working-class critique and agency — of what Fox is forthright in calling “class struggle” (253) — are given relatively very short shrift. If the “nostalgic, sometimes obsessive working-class gaze is precisely archeological,” (91) then the power-laden, often exploitative productive material conditions in which it and its constitutive critical rural voice emerged merit as close attention as does that which is called “aesthetic” and that which is called “cultural.”

That said, this is a creative, sophisticated, and beautifully written contribution to contemporary scholarship — best suited to graduate courses, if it is taught — and I enthusiastically suggest reading it and talking about it, if not singing about it (that may be warranted; I liked it that much, but not many want to hear me sing).

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Kathy M. Newman, *Radio Active: Advertising and Consumer Activism, 1935-1947* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2004)

IT IS DIFFICULT to write about causes or movements that experience infrequent or limited success, but American author Kathy Newman has done so thoughtfully, producing a book that prompts us to qualify our understandings of both radio advertising and consumer activism. *Radio Active* argues that radio advertising unintentionally moved listeners to recognize

that they possessed power as consumers. In that sense, as Sears Roebuck executive Arthur Price noted, radio advertising carried within it the “seed of its own destruction.” (158) Clearly, that seed never fully germinated, for radio advertising was, of course, the very engine of radio’s golden age in the United States, and it is still with us. Playing watchdog to it was a losing battle. Sponsors policed their own ad scripts lest they offend target audiences, but they relied upon the structure of the radio game to remain essentially unchanged — a commercial space with few regulations to protect consumers.

Newman begins by setting out her work’s contributions, which she characterizes as “revisions of the consumer/producer dichotomy.” (11) Complicating this task, she notes, is the ‘production’ of the audience on the part of the radio industry — particularly its advertisers and sponsors — an industry seeking to cultivate a close identification between a hit program and the sponsoring product. An unproblematic relationship between these elements meant a profitable advertising vehicle, but too heavy a hand, too repetitious a jingle, too biased a commentator would bring the threat of lower ratings or, in some more extreme cases, boycotts. The reaction to advertising also created its own intellectual and literary circles, peopled with advice-givers like Ruth Brindze and playwright and whistle-blower Peter Morell.

Consumption (and by implication strategic withdrawals of consumption like the boycott) is for Newman best understood as “a form of work.” This holds together well, especially when Newman is discussing the consumption of the ordinary goods most frequently linked with some of the most popular programs (coffee, razor blades, cereal), as buying these goods was clearly part of the (unpaid) domestic labour that fell most often to women. In this sense, even consuming leisure (or products associated with leisure) falls under the category of work, a departure from a clearer work/leisure division drawn by

historians such as Roy Rosenzweig and John Kasson. This is a strong departure, and the author might have spent more time early in the book qualifying this important theme.

Before Newman gets to stories of boycotts, soap operas, and the founding of the organization that now puts out *Consumer Reports*, we meet some of the intellectuals who laid the groundwork for our current understanding of advertising's impact. Paul Lazarsfeld and his short-term colleague at Princeton's Office of Radio Research, Theodor Adorno, need to appear early here, and they do. Adorno's articulation of a "process of listener awareness that could lead to the destabilization of capitalism as a whole" is what worried program sponsors and made 'radio activity' an important force when radio passivity would have been more convenient for sponsors and ad agencies. As we learn, Madison Avenue drove away some of its most talented people (like the disillusioned adman James Rorty), and the market-oriented work undertaken at the Princeton Radio Project was clearly anathema to Adorno. It is vitally important to see how radio is intellectualized, as this sets up some of the conceptual framework we need to appreciate the examples of anti-New Deal, anti-union commentator Boake Carter against the CIO, and the 'washboard weepies' (soap operas) that were churned out by writers like Jane Crusinberry. How listeners/consumers used these shows, at times rejecting plot twists and devices, demonstrated the fragility of the broadcaster-audience relationship.

Newman shows us that organized labour played a role, but perhaps a less active role than it might have taken. The CIO threatened or successfully conducted some boycotts, most notably a boycott of Philco radios initiated by CIO-affiliated Philco employees, a campaign which brought about the beginning of the end of Boake Carter's career. The *spectre* of labour seemed to have just as potent an effect when networks and advertisers fell

over themselves trying not to present a soap opera character who too closely resembled John L. Lewis. More important than labour organizations to the phenomenon of 'radio activity' were organizations that had the potential to mobilize their members *as though* they were taking strike action — consumer groups refusing to live up to the bargain implicit in the radio ad: patronize the sponsors of the shows you enjoy. Newman's shorthand for this bargain is listener goodwill. Advertisers seemed to be forever interested in maintaining it, and this reviewer certainly found it the sort of compelling theme that could have appeared more prominently throughout.

Perhaps Newman's weakest section comes near the end of the book, and it is a short lapse. Within the space of two facing pages (164-165), she has bureaucrat-turned-radio activist Donald Montgomery's National Association of Consumers [NAC] both folding "for good in 1957" and "collapsing in the 1960s." A few pages later, we are told that the magazine-style of on-air advertising (multiple sponsors buying time on one program) made its debut after the mid-1950s (177), and then (181) that this moment happened in 1960. The tantalizing suggestion (165) that the NAC gave an impetus to 1960s feminism would have been more satisfying to read about had it been followed up by a mention of some of those who were active in both causes or a brief explanation of some of the ideological or strategic congruities between the movements. Even though these examples treat a period outside 1935-47, more attentive editing would have caught these inconsistencies, restoring some impact to the final chapter and conclusion. Its lack is unfortunate, because the conclusion includes a tight and well-argued account of the impact of Frederic Wakeman's *The Hucksters*, a novel which played on public familiarity with radio advertising to drive its plot.

The tone throughout is familiar, friendly, and uncluttered. Comparisons of the *Major Bowes Amateur Hour* and the



current *American Idol* program, for instance, are welcome signposts for readers not familiar with some of the older shows. There are few hitches in Newman's prose, and most do little to damage the underlying meaning of the surrounding material. For example, how could Boake Carter be second to *both* Walter Winchell and Dorothy Thompson in syndicated readership? (90) Wouldn't he rank third, still not a mean feat given Thompson's and Winchell's well-known impact? Can "crescendo" (166) be used as a verb? Why not "crest"?

This book is an important and accessible contribution to both the history of radio and the history of the consumer movement. Underlying it is a fascinating perspective on the potential of the left in America, a subject that could easily become a magnet for one's interpretive energy. Fortunately, Newman resists a lengthy wallow in the woes of the left to show us more effectively that although the nascent consumer movement did not fundamentally alter the way radio advertising operated, self-identification as a consumer (especially a consumer with an awareness of the adman's agenda) could be a dramatic political and cultural statement.

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Janet Golden, *Message in a Bottle: The Making of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome* (London: Harvard University Press 2005)

THE SUB-TITLE of this book reveals at once its greatest strength and its unforgivable weakness: it treats Fetal Alcohol Syndrome [FAS] almost exclusively as a social construct. This is a strength because it helps explain why FAS as a concept did not exist before 1973, and allows us to understand that the causes, symptoms, and prognosis for FAS are subject to at least some debate even if a degree of consensus is emerging around

many of the issues surrounding FAS. It is a weakness however because, despite Golden's concession early on that FAS does describe a real phenomenon rather than just a social construct, she is never able to get beyond the relativizing and socially demobilizing language that characterizes so much of the linguistic turn. For the rest of this review, I will refer to FASD — Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder — rather than FAS because the former term is more all-encompassing, FAS referring to people with alcohol-related birth defects for which there are characteristic physical signs and FASD including those who have such defects but look "normal." I am the father of a marvelous young man with FASD, and so there's nothing very objective about this review.

Janet Golden, it should be said from the outset, makes a valuable contribution simply by producing the first monograph on the emergence of FASD as a recognized medical problem. For those unacquainted with fetal alcoholism, it refers to the brain injuries and physical problems that some babies are born with as a result of the transfer of alcohol from a pregnant mother's bloodstream into a fetus. As far as science has been able to determine, women risk their babies being born with FASD only if they drink during the pregnancy; it is not a case of an ovum or a sperm being damaged as a result of alcoholism on the part of its originator but of alcohol ingested during pregnancy causing damage to the brain of a fetus. People born with FASD have a continuum of problems, but common to most of them is brain injury that results in impaired judgment and limited self-control. Their memories are porous and they usually have some motor difficulties. None of the rules of behavioural psychology, themselves contentious in any case, apply to people living with FASD because the parts of their brain that control behaviour have been damaged to one degree or other. While some have normal IQs, mental retardation is common. Even those with normal or above-average intelligence of-

ten fail to thrive because their impulsiveness, short fuses, and inability (though not generally unwillingness) to follow too many orders makes it difficult for them to fit in.

Now, there is a strong liberal pseudo-anarchist thrust in the Foucauldian literature that would be immediately suspicious of any "label" such as FASD that normalizes particular notions of what constitute rational judgement, reasoned response to frustration, and acceptable responses to socially constructed authority. The term, "moral panic," is quickly erected as a barrier to discussion about whether particular regimes of punishment and deterrent have any validity. They are all invalid, in all respects, by definition, it sometimes seems. Janet Golden certainly uses the term, "moral panic," to apply to FASD, though she is careful to also indicate that it is applied to a social issue that she thinks has validity. She is not so much a Foucauldian as a typical historian of our age who has been shaped by the now omnipresent notion that discourse equals reality. This is not meant to be dismissive to the discourse missionaries who have, in fact, rescued scholarship in the social sciences and humanities from overly-schematic materialist dyads and from economic determinism. It is to say that a new pseudo-religion has been unveiled, which it is important to unmask at every (linguistic) turn.

If one wished to place Janet Golden on a continuum among practitioners of the new religion, she would be on the United Church end of it rather than a born-again. She wants to cling to the core beliefs of the dogma, but not to reject consideration of those who might be outside its parameters. So, for example, she believes that it is acceptable to ignore actual people with FASD — "It is not my intention to examine the lives of individuals, families, and communities affected by alcohol exposure in utero" (15) — while still using "the diagnosis of FAS as a window through which to view and interpret American culture and institutions." (15)

So what's wrong with seeing FASD as a social construct, and no more? Golden's evidence, though not her commentary, demonstrates the problem with trying to keep a healthy distance from the lives of people with FASD and their mothers while focusing on the impact of FASD on social debates that go beyond FASD. In one chapter, she deals with the American campaign for and against warning labels on liquor bottles regarding the dangers of drinking while pregnant. She presents the arguments of feminists on both sides of the divide. Opponents of warnings about liquor use that singled out pregnant mothers, she notes sympathetically, believed that it was all a plot of abortion anti-choicers "to establish a vocabulary of fetal rights in excess of the rights of the women in whose bodies these fetuses rest." (88) The effort to make people living with FASD collateral damage in the battle against anti-abortionists conflates fetuses that are to be aborted with fetuses that are to become human beings. Their opinions, mainly reflecting those of feminists in the US who are, on most issues, well within the confines of American bourgeois individualism, are only balanced by the views of feminists in the public health movement. But what about the mothers who give birth to fetal alcohol babies and the mothers, including birthmothers, adoptive mothers, foster mothers, and operators of institutions who raise these babies? Some historical searching on Golden's part would reveal what "choices" many of these women had, both about drinking during pregnancy and then raising the children afterwards. Many of the birthmothers are themselves sufferers of FASD and have little ability to resist drinking during pregnancy, even when they have the desire; others are simply alcoholics living in poverty and despair. Once the baby is born, most of these mothers, if they try to raise the child, fail, even if they have shed their alcoholism: raising these children requires many times the effort and many times the funds than average children. In

short, drinking during pregnancy usually leads to a mother losing the right to choose whether or not to raise her own child. So much for liberal shibboleths with no context of social class or social circumstances.

After Golden leaves the debate about pregnant mothers' responsibility for their children — which, unfortunately is limited to the rather unedifying debate about warning labels — she wades into the difficult waters of how courts have treated FASD-affected individuals. Here there is little question of her sympathies. She doesn't have the time of day for the hang-'em-high crowd who want to hold all individuals responsible for their actions and to write off brain injury as a rationalization rather than an explanation for why some people cannot be held accountable in the same way as others. I don't either, but there is a terrible contradiction among the liberally minded if, at one and the same time, we recognize that some people are born ticking time bombs to commit crimes and otherwise to lead unhappy lives, and yet reject all efforts to prevent their being born that way.

Of course, what efforts can be made to prevent their being born that way is the issue that stymies everyone. As Golden notes, efforts to institutionalize pregnant women at risk of bearing FASD babies are fraught not only with complicated civil rights implications but with the simple pragmatic fact that they cause alcohol-addicted women to hide their pregnancies from doctors and others and perhaps make matters go even worse for the fetus. But it is likely that a Cadillac service that turned pregnancy into a queen-for-nine-months experience would voluntarily attract many otherwise destitute women to agencies that rewarded temporary sobriety with treatment as a real citizen.

The dirty secret behind FASD, as with so much else, is class and race discrimination, usually the two combined. In the US, as Golden indicates, Native women are 33 times as likely as the general population

to bear babies with FASD. For African American women, the figure is six times that of the general population. While any woman who drinks during pregnancy, particularly if she goes on periodic binges or always drinks to excess, might bear a child with some alcohol-related damages, the women whose drinking patterns are most likely to produce a child with brain damage are marginalized women. An end to internal racial colonialism within North America, to super-exploitation of certain groups of women, and to patriarchy (and perhaps to capitalism which has created a liquor industry that has managed to turn a dangerous product into something glamorous and supposedly healthy, even fooling most labour historians) would all contribute immensely to ending FASD. But since none of this will occur in one fell swoop, a reformist campaign that focused on pregnant women who choose to continue their pregnancies seems quite defensible. The alternative, frankly, for Native people in both Canada and the US seems to be genocide, since the liberal defence of a woman's right to choose whether she drinks during pregnancy has, by now, become incompatible with Aboriginal peoples' demands for control of their communities and restorations of their former traditions (in communities where everyone has FASD, and Aboriginal peoples active in work dealing with the problems of people living with FASD insist that there are already such communities, colonialism will have succeeded in its goal of infantilizing the subject population).

Radical social intervention is needed not only to reduce and eventually wipe out FASD but also to deal with the damaged lives of the people who currently suffer from FASD, and their families, both by birth and adoption. Most people do not have the fancy salary and book royalties of the author of this review, and have neither the time, money, nor social influence to deal with the maze of difficulties that children and adults with FASD face in the schools, courts, workplaces, and commu-

nities. FASD adults living in poverty are a living demonstration of the fallacy of the Poor Law legacy of “less eligibility” and its comforting notions that those left at the bottom of the pile without help from the state will pull themselves up by their own bootstraps.

Janice Golden offers an historical account of why it took until the 1970s for researchers to recognize the impact of alcohol on a fetus, and the ways in which that knowledge was used, abused, or ignored in a variety of settings. But her book would be so much better if she had recognized that the lives of those with FASD and their families, as opposed to myriad social constructions, are the centre of the story of FASD. She ends with a beautifully written set of scenarios (170-71) that capture the complexities of FASD. But few of them appeared within the main body of the book. On a single day during the week when I am writing this review, a young man in Winnipeg with FASD, whose parents had complained that he lacked the 24-hour services required, was murdered, while another, in Lethbridge, was on trial for a brutal murder. It is likely that a large proportion of the people who are doing serious time in our prisons, perhaps a majority, suffer from FASD. One can over-determine the roots of FASD in colonialism and capitalism, as I tend to do, or try to locate the phenomenon mainly in discourse theory, as Janice Golden does. But there is little doubt that the costs to individuals and to society as a whole of the alienated lives and alcoholic bodies that produce FASD, and then of FASD itself, are incalculable.

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Daniel E. Bender, *Sweated Work, Weak Bodies: Anti-Sweatshop Campaigns and Languages of Labor* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press 2004)

FOR MORE THAN a century, successive generations of authors have penned, typed, and word-processed innumerable works, in Yiddish and English, about the immigrant Jewish labour movement in the American garment industry. Daniel Bender’s new book is the latest contribution to this voluminous historiography. Bender analyses “the United States’s first anti-sweatshop campaign,” (3) focusing on Jewish ladies’ garment workers in New York City and the union they created, the International Ladies’ Garment Workers Union [ILGWU].

Different generations of historians have addressed the American Jewish labour movement from a myriad of theoretical and political perspectives. Bender employs the theoretical methodology of the linguistic turn, in its feminist variant. The anti-sweatshop campaigns of the 1990s shape his political perspective. Bender maintains that Jewish women forced their way into an inherently male-chauvinist anti-sweatshop campaign, which consequently collapsed under “the burden of language.” (182) Bender’s employment of the lens of gender enables valuable insights into the complex dynamics of garment unionism. But these insights, ironically, are warped by the burden of Bender’s linguistic methodology.

Bender’s most important contribution is to break — or at least to re-excavate — historical ground. He is virtually the first historian in generations to dare to tread the polemical minefield of the Communist-backed garment insurgency of the 1920s. This insurgency was a key episode in American labour, Jewish, and radical history. It was the missing link between the pre-1917 socialist Jewish labour movement and Jewish Great Depression radicalism, heavily influenced by the American Communist Party. Jewish “red diaper babies” were a dominant compo-

ment of the New Left of the sixties. Many post-sixties historians, like Bender, themselves stem from a Jewish radical family background. Perhaps precisely because of this, they have tended to avoid this subject. The Socialist-Communist "Civil War" in the New York garment industry embodied everything America's New Left found distasteful about the Old Left.

As veterans of the sixties settled into academia, the 1909 "Uprising of the 20,000" New York shirtwaist makers, the first mass strike of women workers in American history, became a favourite topic in the field of women's history. But feminist labour historians also shied away from addressing the aftermath, again perhaps precisely because of its gendered aspect. A feminist interpretation of the "Civil War" might compel them to hail the Communists and denounce the Socialists.

Recent anti-sweatshop campaigns have facilitated a "return of the repressed." The sweatshop discourse of Progressive era America returned to the general social vocabulary during the Clinton administration. Immigrant garment unionism is no longer merely a lost nostalgic moment of American Jewish history. It is once again a contemporary concern. This inspired Bender to re-examine and re-analyse the often-told story of immigrant Jewish garment unionism.

According to Bender, the anti-sweatshop coalition that Jewish garment unionism embodied was created in a linguistic process. Its sweatshop discourse arose through a negotiated compromise between the race discourse of Anglo-Saxon policymakers and factory inspectors, and the class discourse of the immigrants themselves. The central trope of white middle-class sweatshop discourse in the 1890s was Jewish racial inferiority. Middle-class men feared that Jewish "comfort in filth" (37) would endanger the health of middle-class women buying clothing made by Jewish immigrants. The immigrants themselves ex-

plained the misery of the sweatshop in class terms. They saw their oppression as inscribed on their weakened Jewish bodies. This seemingly irreconcilable opposition was resolved through male Eastern European Jewish immigrants and Anglo-Saxon reformers discovering a common enemy — Jewish women in the workplace. A "calm, rational vocabulary of scientific reform," (78) centred on workshop sanitation and the elimination of gender disorder, replaced potentially explosive languages of class and race conflict.

The role of mediator was played by middle-class German Jews. They helped create a Progressive cross-class coalition. They also persuaded their Eastern European co-religionists that they too could enjoy American prosperity by driving women out of the workplace and becoming male breadwinners. They further persuaded their Aryan class brothers that Eastern European Jews could be profitably uplifted in the American racial hierarchy. Through Americanization, and in particular the imposition of American gender norms, the Jewish immigrant garment worker could be trained to accept the "manual work which falls his lot." (39) As Bender neglects to point out, German Jews played a major role in the garment industry in this period. They owned the large, modern garment factories suffering from competition from dirty, cramped East-European-owned sweatshops.

Jewish women garment workers did not passively accept exclusion from the workplace. Led by the middle- and upper-class white women of the Women's Trade Union League [WTUL], they crashed their way into this anti-sweatshop cross-class coalition through mass strike action. They accepted a temporary status in the workplace, ending with marriage, as the price of admission. But the strikes were "aimed as much at male workers and unionists as at employers." (101) The underlying issue of the strike was the sexual harassment of women to drive them out of

the workplace, or at least to establish a male monopoly over high-paid “skilled” labour.

The success of the strikes created something new in the American labour movement — mass organizations of women workers. Neither the top union officers nor the upper-class female social reformers of the WTUL quite knew how to control them. But when women workers sought leadership roles in the union, they were blocked by their own acceptance of the sweatshop “language of labour,” founded on gender distinction. They were compelled to adopt “contemporary languages of class, not gender, in particular, Communism.” (103) But this new vocabulary undermined the cross-class foundations of the anti-sweatshop coalition, and merely ended up bringing male Communists briefly to power.

Bender’s gendered re-casting of the history of Jewish garment unionism has logical elegance, and sheds fresh light on dark corners of American labour history. But he has to play a bit fast and loose with the facts to make his schema work. Firstly, his version has a major chronological defect. According to Bender, the foundation of the ILGWU in 1900 was the “culmination” of the male Jewish immigrant struggle for unionization. (11) The “Uprising of the 20,000” enabled Jewish women workers to force their way into the male-dominated anti-sweatshop coalition that the ILGWU embodied. Unfortunately for this schema, until 1909 the ILGWU was a feeble shell of an organization, perpetually on the brink of collapse. The “Uprising” preceded and inspired the 1910 “Great Revolt” of the male cloakmakers that transformed New York’s garment industry and created the “anti-sweatshop coalition” Bender describes.

Secondly, Bender’s focus on the role of sexual harassment in delimiting gender boundaries in the garment industry is powerful but misapplied. Bender views the idea of skill as a social construction. America’s women’s clothing industry is

an ideal test case for this theory, because before the Jewish immigrant wave, it had been a *female* industry. But technological revolutions made craft skill much less important, and physical strength much more. This made it possible for men to seize control of well-paid jobs from women, as Wendy Gambler notes in *The Female Economy: The Millinery and Dressmaking Trades, 1860-1930* (Urbana and Chicago 1997). Bender fails to recognize the key role played by physical strength because his analysis suffers under the “burden of language.” According to the terms of sweatshop discourse, “sweated work” created “weak bodies.” Therefore, “male garment workers could not rely on notions of muscular masculinity to claim dominance.... Instead, male Jewish workers grounded masculinity in sexual relations on the shop floor.” (109)

Bender convincingly describes how sexual harassment was used to create a gender monopoly over “skilled jobs” in the cloak trade, just as in other industries physical violence was used to create ethnic job monopolies. But he overlooks the obvious fact that the “Uprising” took place in the shirtwaist trade, not the cloak trade. In shirtwaist only the new long cutter’s knife, which Bender concedes required “little training but tremendous strength,” (207 n. 47) was a male monopoly. Well-paid, skilled women workers led the organizing process, as evident in Susan Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labour in the Immigrant Generation* (Ithaca and London 1990).

Bender’s evidence that rebellion against sexual harassment was an important component of the Uprising is an important part of the story. But his own narrative demonstrates that this rebellion was primarily directed at supervisors, not fellow male workers. (113-14) Women leaders either downplayed the issue of sexual harassment or cast it as something committed by foremen, not by class-conscious male union comrades. Bender ascribes this to the “burden of language.” He fails to see it as a conscious



tactical choice. For working women to defeat their primary enemy, the alliance between male bosses and male employees against women had to be broken down, not reinforced. Was direct confrontation with male workers really the best way to do this? Indeed, was not casting the issue as one of class consciousness and union solidarity the ideal way to do this?

Thirdly, according to Bender, the Uprising was directed by “elite and maternalist WTUL activists.” (119) The core strike activists, including Clara Lemlich the leader, were indeed WTUL members. But they were also veterans of the Russian Jewish socialist underground, members of the New York Socialist Party, and officials of ILGWU Local 25. Their backgrounds are traced in Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense and a Little Fire: Women and Working-Class Politics in the United States, 1900-1965* (Chapel Hill & London 1995). Bender is once again blinded by “the burden of language.” Since the WTUL controlled the strike’s “discourse” — i.e., its PR — Bender believes it ran the strike. Sometimes the medium is merely the message, not the message.

Lastly and most importantly, Bender casts the Communist-led rank-and-file rebellion against the ILGWU’s Socialist officialdom purely and simply as a continuation of earlier revolts against male dominance. Misdirected into a Communist language of class empowerment, this feminist rebellion destroyed the cross-class anti-sweatshop coalition that was the prize being fought over. Bender deserves credit for directing attention to the role of gender, which was indeed a key axis of conflict. But his monocausal interpretation of the “Civil War” in garment runs aground on the rocks of long-established historical fact.

Bender depicts the “Protocol of Peace” emerging from the 1910 “Great Revolt” as the embodiment of a cross-class coalition generally accepted by male Jewish garment workers as the solution to the sweatshop problem. In

fact, the ILGWU was ravaged for years by internal conflict centered in the male-dominated cloak trade. This conflict was temporarily resolved on the eve of World War I through the demise of the Protocol and the replacement of the previous apolitical ILGWU leadership by a new team explicitly identified with New York Jewish Socialism. The Communist rebellion against the Socialists arose from an alliance between the revolutionary idealism of women workers with the cloakmakers’ rebellion against cross-class coalitionism. The high point of the rebellion was the 1926 Communist-led male cloakmakers’ strike, an event that fits rather poorly into Bender’s schema.

Moreover, it should be remembered that if the real goal of the rebellion was to place female faces in high places, as Bender maintains, then this goal was achieved. The male leaders of the insurgency defected, were purged, or drifted into deep obscurity. Bender barely mentions its central female leader, Rose Wortis. After World War II, she was rewarded for her party loyalty by being placed at the head of the garment workers’ union of her native Poland. Juliet Stuart Poyntz, the theoretician of ILGWU health care initiatives for women, (145-149) became the theoretician of the garment insurgents’ efforts to seize control of union office. After criticism by Party leaders for “trade union opportunism” she rehabilitated herself, allegedly, by becoming a key player in Soviet intelligence operations in America, and disappeared under mysterious circumstances. Clara Lemlich, the original leader, consciously accepted the temporary status in the garment workplace that Bender treats as a compromise with male dominion. She married, dropped out of politics, raised children, and then joined the American Communist Party and became its organizer of working-class housewives. She became the poster girl for the classic Stalinist slogan of “building the family as a fighting unit for socialism” — and also

for CPUSA leader Earl Browder's slogan of "Communism as twentieth-century Americanism."

In fairness to Bender, it needs to be remembered that factual errors and misrepresentations are traditional for historians of this supremely politically charged chapter of American history. Bender is far from the worst offender. All previous accounts have been written by factional partisans with axes to grind. Why should feminist historians act any differently? Bender has provided a real service simply by reopening this can of worms. The "New Deal" alliance between the Roosevelt administration and the CIO, which shaped American trade unionism as it currently exists, was molded on the template of the "special relationship" between New York Governors Al Smith and FDR and "Jewish socialist" needle trades bureaucrats. If the "Protocol of Peace" was the "dress rehearsal for the New Deal," then the "Civil War" was the dress rehearsal for the post-World War II red purge. And the ILGWU's contemporary descendant, the linchpin of the "anti-sweatshop campaign" of the 1990s, cannot be understood outside of this context.

Bender's "discourse analysis" of Jewish garment unionism is seriously flawed by much too much attention to the Americanizing discourse of ILGWU officialdom. He unfortunately has a tin ear for the Yiddish-cultural discourse of the immigrants themselves. It is strange that a study of sweatshop language virtually ignores the "sweatshop poets" of the 1890s, who set the parameters of Jewish immigrant culture from their workbenches. Bender reduces this rich, complex cultural experience to the sentimental sweatshop victimization discourse of Morris Rosenfeld.

Bender adorns the cover with a striking artistic depiction of what he sees as the central trope of Jewish immigrant class consciousness. It depicts a weak, victimized Jewish worker drained of his lifeblood by a sweatshop vampire. Bender

maintains that the "Bolshevism" of female dissidence represented a "new language of class power that contrasted with earlier languages of class ... that cast workers, not as the vanguard of revolution, but as victims of vampire bosses." (157) Bender fails to realize that the "capitalist bloodsucker" was the fundamental trope of Russian labour radicalism, from the Jewish Pale to the Donbass coal mines.

The single gravest problem with Bender's version of ILGWU history is his disregard of its roots in the revolutionary Jewish underground of Tsarist Russia. Classic accounts of the history of the Jewish labour movement usually ascribed the explosion of mass garment strikes during the Progressive era to the flood of Jewish emigrés, radicalized by the Revolution and trained in trade unionism by the "Jewish Bund," which revitalized the movement in the aftermath of 1905. The Bund does not even appear in Bender's index.

In the epilogue, Bender attempts to draw lessons for contemporary anti-sweatshop campaigns from the ILGWU experience. But Bender accepts the cross-class-coalition framework of both the original version and the modern edition of anti-sweatshop coalitions. He does note the danger that contemporary sweatshop discourse could drown out the voices of the actual workers.

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Vincent J. Roscigno and William F. Danaher, *The Voice of Southern Labor: Radio, Music, and Textile Strikes, 1929-1934*, Vol. 19 of *Social Movements, Protest and Contention* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press 2004)

IN *THE VOICE OF SOUTHERN LABOR*, Vincent J. Roscigno and William F. Danaher seek to make a contribution both to social movement theory and labour his-

torigraphy. With respect to the former, they regard theoretical approaches to collective activism that stress only "issues of grievance, union influence, or strike success and failure" (xx) as of limited use in explaining the timing and character of social protest mobilization. Noting the highly dispersed character of the textile industry, they explore "the question of how processes relevant to social movement formation are manifested across space." They conclude that it was the confluence of indigenous culture, rapid technological development, and changes in national politics that help significantly to explain the militancy and solidarity that textile workers exhibited in the great 1934 strike. It was only in the brief period of the early 1930s that popular access to radio in the South meshed with decentralized ownership of broadcasting to provide opportunities for local musicians, many of whom had roots in the textile industry and whose songs often called attention to the plight of workers. At the same time, Franklin D. Roosevelt's radio-borne fireside chats conveyed a strong sense of entitlement to workers everywhere, nowhere more so than in the impoverished Piedmont villages.

The authors' examination of the relationship between radio and mill culture as primarily reflected in music constitutes their main contribution to labour historiography. Why was there such an explosion of broad-based worker-generated activism in 1934 and not before? Since mill workers' grievances long predated the great strike of that year, the explanation cannot lie in the simple facts of workplace mistreatment. To be sure, southern mill workers had earlier waged significant strikes, most notably in 1919-20 and at Gastonia and Marion, North Carolina, in 1929. But before the massive, Piedmont-wide 1934 uprising, strikes had been local affairs. Now, however, a quarter million or more southern mill workers walked out, exhibiting fierce militancy and region-wide solidarity in the face of harsh repression.

According to the authors, central to explaining the great textile strike are three overlapping themes that differentiate it from earlier job actions. The coincident expansion of radio broadcasting (and listening) throughout the upland South, the vigorous emergence of indigenous protest music, and the new presence in Washington of a president seen as a genuine friend of working people gave shape and cohesion to mill-worker activism. To demonstrate this point, the authors carefully plot out the geography of rapid radio expansion in the late 1920s and early 1930s, showing a close correlation between the existence of outlets and the nodes of worker activism. Station owners and managers relied heavily on local talent, just as a gifted corps of mill-worker performers became available to fill air time. Since many of the most popular singers and musicians were mill workers or closely connected to family and friends who toiled in the mills, their music resonated immediately and powerfully in the textile towns and villages. Moreover, a high proportion of the most popular songs, such as David McCarn's "Cotton Mill Colic" and the Dixon Brothers' "Weave Room Blues," spoke of workers' grievances, singled out employers for criticism, and endorsed collective response. The sense that a new regime in Washington, as personified by the charismatic FDR, provided government support for mill worker empowerment complemented this techno-cultural thrust to create a powerful, cohesive mass movement that triggered the mass strike.

In a spirited conclusion, the authors argue persuasively for the importance of cultural resources in the shaping of workers' responses to working and living conditions. Fellow sociologists will be able to judge whether this somewhat fortuitous joining of cultural, political, and technological forces constitutes a significant contribution to the development of mass movement theory. Social movement theory, they sensibly argue, must include consideration of workers' cultural re-

sources. And they are persuasive in holding that the combination of indigenous music and new technology helped to create a climate of cohesion and militancy in the early 1930s. This point, however, raises implicit questions as to how other configurations of popular culture and technological development might contribute, as seems to be the case today, to conservative patterns of political and social activism.

For historians, the authors' discussion of radio dispersion and its linkage with grassroots musical expression constitutes their main contribution. The basic story of textile labour relations and especially of the 1934 strike is familiar, as are the limitations of Franklin Roosevelt, the New Deal, and the National Industrial Recovery Act insofar as protecting workers' rights is concerned. Also well established in the historical literature is the rank-and-file character of the textile strikes, the ineptitude of the leadership of the United Textile Workers, and the harshness and efficacy of employer and state-conducted repression. Moreover, the authors do not inspire confidence when they confuse Section 7 (a) of the NIRA with the provisions of the NRA's Textile Industry Code. (102, 133) But their careful examination of radio's role in unifying otherwise parochial textile worker militancy adds an important element to the story of the great strike.

The University of Minnesota Press has not served these authors well. This book suffers from careless writing and copy editing. The authors' addiction to the passive voice sometimes threatens to rob mill workers of the agency that they otherwise herald. Lengthy block quotes drawn largely from mill workers' oral histories at the Southern Workers Project at the University of North Carolina do provide first-hand testimony but are not well integrated into the narrative. Misplaced modifiers and vague pronoun references abound. On two occasions, the authors remark that the importance of certain developments "cannot be underestimated,"

when in fact they mean the opposite. (64, 103) Firm copy editing should have caught these errors, thus permitting readers to contemplate the authors' contributions free from distracting gaucheries.

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Paul Buhle, *From the Lower East Side to Hollywood: Jews in American Popular Culture* (London: Verso 2004)

I WAS LOOKING forward to reading this book, and indeed it is encyclopedic in scope — a virtual who's who of Jews, left-wing and otherwise, on stage, on the screen, and in comics including, for good measure, a few whom Buhle feels might as well be Jewish, like Chaplin, and the cartoonist R. Crumb. I share Buhle's passions for Yiddish, and secular Jewish culture. The particular position of left Jews living in a hostile anti-Semitic world and in revolt against the limitations of what they saw as the ossified theocracy of a shtetl life controlled by the rabbis and the wealthy has contributed to a particular creative sensibility from the margins.

Buhle begins his book with two big questions: What explains the impact of Jews on popular culture, and what is "Jewish" anyway? He spends a lot of time on who is Jewish, and less on why it matters. I once had a husband who loved to make his heroes Jewish, so he called the ballplayer Mickey Mantle "Mickey Mandell." It seems that the non-Jewish, Yiddish-speaking Buhle has the same inclination to not only inform us of the disproportionate number of Jews prominent in popular United States culture, but wherever possible, who had a left secular Jewish history. Like Isaac Deutscher in his essay, "The Non Jewish Jew," even Jews who do not personally identify either with Jewishness or left-wing politics are, for Buhle, part of the picture. But Deutscher explained why rather more convincingly.

This book seems to always be in a rush. Buhle is eager to tell us how much he knows about everything, who he talked to or knows personally, and to draw political connections with the left wherever he can. He begins with three cartoonists — Harvey Pekar, Ben Katchor, and Trina Robbins. Two had parents who were connected with the communist newspaper, the *Morgn Freiheit*, and the third had a mother who read the paper. That's nice, but I personally also know of at least one son of a *Freiheit* reader who became a Wall Street stock broker and as far as I know, Abby Hoffman's father attended synagogue and did not read the *Freiheit*. In passing, the description of Katchor, and the cartoonist's work and life in the introductory chapter, provide some interesting observations, such as the author's comment about Katchor's "semi-conscious questioning of self-identity or self-location outside the bounds of either religion or nationalism." (12)

I must confess I got a little lost along the way as to exactly what his argument was in his broader exploration of Jews in various arenas of popular culture. Given the personal connections he had with so many people in the book, it seems a lost opportunity to not have asked his interviewees directly — what do they see as Jewish influences in their work, or what is their left-wing Yiddish speaking parents' legacy in their own creativity?

The publication of The National Yiddish Book Center, the *Pakn Treger* (Book Carrier) devoted a good part of its summer 1997 issue to various viewpoints on what is a Jewish book, and what the contributors considered their favourite Jewish books and why. The choices included Delmore Schwartz's *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities*, Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, as well as the popular pot-boiler *Amboy Dukes: a Novel of Wayward Youth in Brooklyn*. This was trash, eagerly and surreptitiously passed from hand to hand with the "good" "dirty" passages marked when I was in grade school

in the 1950s. Perhaps the most thought-provoking contribution was by the Israeli author Appelfeld, who made a distinction between what he called Jewish authors and authors of Jewish descent. Appelfeld includes among Jewish writers those like Kafka or Proust or Babel who wrote in European languages and did not necessarily deal with Jewish themes but whose feeling and thought and creativity were influenced by Judaism. While there are many authors of Jewish descent, in his view we no longer have Jewish authors.

Buhle has so much information to impart that, unfortunately, he doesn't take the time to explain the connections which for him are self-evident, or to do more than mention in passing what kind of a Jew or Jewish theme we are dealing with — what is Jewish, and what creators simply happen to claim Jewish descent, or what does it mean to have left-wing parents. It gets confusing. Thus, in the chapter, "From Jewish Stage to Screen," we've got Irving Berlin, Rogers and Hart, Gershwin, ARTEF — the radical and very serious Yiddish theatre troupe, a page or two on the cartoon character Betty Boop, the dame with the low-cut dress produced by the Fleisher brothers, a discussion of movie moguls such as Jack Warner, Louis B. Mayer, and David Selznik and a detailed description of the wonderful Yiddish films produced in Hollywood in the late 1930s, with reference sprinkled throughout to the devastating effects of the blacklist. I forgot to mention radio Jews like Eddie Cantor and Jack Benny are in there as well and I haven't even begun to list the many other themes and people that appear in this chapter.

As Irving Howe had pointed out, Jews were in the right place at the right time, but for Buhle this is but a corner of the reason for their strong presence in popular culture. As what seems to be further explanation of his point, he goes on to describe his meeting with the volunteer nurse in the Bronx of the famous writer, Sholem Aleichem, whose death in the Bronx is apparently significant to Buhle. The first

script for the film *Malcolm X*, Buhle mentions, was written by Arnold Perl, the black-listed author of "The World of Sholem Aleichem" performed in Jewish Cultural Centers. This, for Buhle is not coincidental. "The connection has the quality that shines like a beckoning North Star." (46) For me it doesn't. His method, he explains, "works mainly through analogy." I enjoyed the many mini-biographies throughout the book, but I want the author to explain why the narratives matter and what he sees as the linkages between them.

There is an affection and passion that Buhle has for the subjects in this book that is most appealing. He traces the enormous creative contributions from the Yiddishists of the Lower East Side in the first decades of the century to the Jews/ish presence on stage, in film, in the Blacklist, in the development of comics as an art form, and the contemporary self-identified Jew. The book ends with a visit to the forgotten artist and poet, Maurice Kish, in Brighton Beach and a note of nostalgia for a *Yiddishkayt* that is fast disappearing as the native speakers die off; but then we switch to Abe Polonsky, a survivor of the blacklist and a description of the films he made. Finally, Buhle indicates that the connection is about capturing "something of our common dreams." Buhle has more than twenty authored and co-edited books to his credit. I hope in the future he allows himself the luxury of honouring his heroes by dreaming in slightly slower motion.

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Daniel Wilkinson, *Silence on the Mountain: Stories of Terror, Betrayal and Forgetting in Guatemala* (Durham: Duke University Press 2004)

IN LATE JANUARY 2005, six Mayan campesinos were killed on a Guatemalan plantation; the campesinos said plantation guards had kidnapped a campesino for stealing fruit from shade trees. A few days later his tortured corpse was found. The class hatreds embedded in this event, captured on the evening news with police kicking corpses, are as old as the history of capitalist agriculture in Guatemala. They can be found in abundance in the documents from the 1870s forward, in the brief flowering of farmworker organizing in the 1920s, in the epic dictatorship of the 30s. Eating the fruit of the rich was legalized during the nation's only progressive era of the 20th century, the October Revolution, before the rule of the planters reasserted itself with a vengeance in the US-engineered coup of 1954 that opened the door to decades of death squad terror. After 1954 planters and guerrillas alike took these class relations as their guiding logic. Daniel Wilkinson's acclaimed *Silence on the Mountain* unlayers this history, succeeding beautifully on some counts, while on others it remains a better reflection of Wilkinson's journey than the journey of those with whom he spoke.

Wilkinson, the Harvard graduate with a scholarship to travel, is warmly embraced by a family of German forbears who own a plantation in the heart of the coffee belt. The author skilfully captures the Guatemalan elite, secure in their conviction that they have pulled themselves up by their bootstraps to become the guardians of the nation's prosperity — "omitted from the story were the many ways the government intervened in the economy to help industries, companies, and even wealthy individuals." (78) The woman who has inherited the plantation is troubled by the contrast between her father's mares who give birth in well-lit luxury and the field master's wife who goes



into labour in misery, darkness, and filth. Yet her sense of solidarity only goes so far. "Tell them about cars," she says referring to her father's workers, or "the simplest story, maybe just a story about buying a dress in the city, they would be in awe." (93) When those workers tried to claim some of her father's land under the agrarian reform of the October Revolution, and in a later generation when some joined the guerrillas, she believed that the leftists had unleashed a reign of terror. And she found it hardly credible that the military would commit atrocities. In her dual life as the wife of a North American professor she defines herself as a liberal, and in fact most liberals in the US respond in similar fashion when invited to trust in the respectability of the US war machine. Says a more crass member of the planter elite, "What are we to do with all these inditos blowing up bridges?" (214) The question is only rhetorical; as he spoke, the military was wrapping up the closing stages of its genocide in which 83 per cent of the estimated 200,000 civilians killed were Mayan.

The author of *Silence on the Mountain* explains in his courtesy call to the local military camp, "I'm working with the permission of the plantation owners." It is an entrée that amazes the son of a plantation book-keeper, who says of the owner, "she would never talk to me." This book-keeper's son plants what becomes the book's central question — what exactly happened on this plantation during the October Revolution with the partitioning of the land in 1952, two years into the presidency of Jacobo Arbenz? To pursue the answer the author shows up unannounced to gather revolutionary history and finds, "Here there was no excitement, no nervous laughter, no glimmer of hope. There was just fear." (136) Those who enter the Guatemalan countryside differently of course find a very different countryside, but Wilkinson discovers, "Whatever they were hiding about the plantation, it couldn't help that they saw me staying in the house of the owner or

showing up at their homes in her truck." (57) Wilkinson's book will have made an important contribution if young readers with the same inclinations think twice about how they enter warscapes. "Are you related to the family?" the plantation workers wished to know. (61)

The author offers a wonderful portrait of the distance that separates the Germans from their illegitimate progeny with Mayan women. Though one would have wanted more from the perspective of the children and their mothers, he garners from his elite sources that the unrecognized offspring cast their lot with the poor during the Arbenz era. In retaliation the planters generated vicious and baseless accusations against them. They sexualized these accusations — castrating a bull, raping women — in effect assigning their own aggressions to those who challenged their patronage. In miniature it mirrors the manufacture of racist stereotypes by the elite to vilify their mestizo relatives, a practice in which they have been engaging since the 1500s.

The book is a sort of coming-of-age story, and early in his pilgrim's progress Wilkinson visits the US embassy for a security briefing because his scholarship requires it. He leaves appalled by their lack of concern for his safety. Though the narrative doesn't mention it, the embassy in those years was being pilloried by a group of US citizens for backing Guatemala's military command in torturing themselves and their loved ones. As Wilkinson documents, it is an army that massacres civilians in revenge for its inability to win battles against the guerrillas, (250) an army that, to cite just one example, had one of the people he interviewed "beaten and interrogated, then left overnight in a tank of water. He had been able to breathe only by standing on his tiptoes until morning, struggling against fatigue and fending off the bloated corpses in the water around him." (127) Wilkinson went to Guatemala precisely because he knew of such things, yet in one of the opening vignettes the author and another foreigner

strike up a friendship with a soldier. They join the soldier for a visit to his hometown at the beach, which turns out to be an island where the villagers thought they had come to steal children. The soldier pulls his gun and saves the gringos from being lynched. The author's choice of company strikes an odd note, as does his eagerness to see rebels erupt from the landscape, but perhaps these doubts say more about my suspicions of government soldiers and Rambo scenarios than Wilkinson's judgement. "From some wealthy Guatemalan businessmen" he gets the idea of interviewing a fellow Harvard graduate, General Hector Gramajo, which leads to another well-drawn sketch, this time of the small-town elites who have bilked the poor, and in the case of some like Gramajo, scaled the ladder of class *via* the military.

Self-discovery takes a new turn when his motorcycle enters the picture, echoes of Che but with a difference. Wilkinson's retreat is the plantation house — the owner never seems to be there since like most, she has another home — and there he is free to sip beer on the patio while someone prepares his meals. His motorcycle becomes a protagonist — "no nature walk could give me the same rush I got charging through on my bike, reducing the continent's roughest terrain [this is literary embellishment] to a joy ride." He goes on, "Just the man and his machine against the mountain. It was the thrill of ... well ... conquest." (ellipses in the original, 153) He had just interviewed a slimy character named Mario who talks revolution and is rumoured to be a military intelligence officer. Offering to show the author poverty, Mario had barged into a campesino home with Wilkinson in tow, interrupting the parents, half-clad, to inspect their malnourished child; Mario pulls out tufts of the child's hair as it wails and the mother stands by paralyzed. (138-139) Wilkinson beats his retreat to the plantation porch to reflect on the events of the first half of the book. "They had refused to tell me how the agrarian re-

form had affected lives in their plantations. And by now I had grown tired of trying to make them ... when I saw Mario tugging at that kid's hair, it had occurred to me that my tugging at people's memories was not so different." (149) From this point the book hits its pace. Wonderful insights follow, though the author still approaches interviewing as a one-size-fits-all activity.

Another Harvard graduate, also a lawyer, who follows many of the same questions but does so more perceptively, is Jennifer Harbury, one of the US embassy's unwelcome guests. She married a guerrilla (a campesino from the coffee region) and unmasked CIA support for the Guatemalan military in her efforts to locate her husband's tortured corpse. Harbury sees the human weave of collective struggle. For example where Wilkinson argues "Here in Guatemala's coffee fields, employers met practically no resistance," (144) Harbury understands that workers in the coffee groves have never been sheep and their resistance would fill books; Jennifer Harbury's are available in English. Perhaps what distinguishes the two is Harbury's essential empathy with the poor, whereas by contrast Wilkinson seems appalled in the face of poverty: "we would forever be foreigners in one another's world." (347) He erects this barrier one suspects for purposes of protection, and remains very much within the traditions of his mentors. "What *did* remain strong among young Americans from expensive schools, however, was a faith in knowledge — that it was attainable and that attaining it was good — that a person could go anywhere, get to know the people there, document their situation, and so help improve it." (197) Such a stance — essentially it is charity — is of course offensive to many. For example in the immigrant and refugee rights organizing of the 1980s, Latino and African American organizers would often comment on white university youth who risked their lives documenting human

rights violations in Central America's wars, but whose efforts frequently failed to lead to any genuine reckoning with issues of race and class in their own lives. In labour and the non-profit sector, the phenomenon led to a host of do-gooders; in academia the graduate schools produced hundreds of young scholars who recast their forbears' more evident allegiance to empire, shifting the focus from US responsibility and the ravages of inequality to the realm of personal morality. While Wilkinson is wary of cross-border slumming, often he seems a prisoner of his training, firmly lodged as it is in European traditions that have guided generations of colonizers and settlers. He says, "a talisman of sorts for me in the years when I was first discovering the appetite for exploration" was a family heirloom, a coin from the "World's Colombian Exposition" with "a detailed engraving of the explorer's ship, the *Santa Maria*." (196) Apparently his education didn't broach the acts of sadism that characterized the command of that particular explorer. More surprisingly, the oversight was not corrected by years of visiting Guatemala, a majority Mayan nation which served as the continental headquarters to protest the power relations unleashed by the conquistadors; that campaign was in full swing during the 90s when Wilkinson was discovering racism in the coffee zone. Alongside his *Santa Maria* talisman he possesses others of similar provenance such as "Marlow on his famous quest into the heart of darkness. Marlow hated lies. He hated lies, he said, not because he was holier than the next guy, but because they possessed a taint of death. Telling history is always a political act." (305) Indeed. However we are in the presence here of a story line that requires a white hero against a backdrop of natives. Exotic and dangerous lands. The formula trumps reality. The German-Guatemalan planter saw savages when Mayan workers danced. Wilkinson sees "a circus in a horror movie" when students burn tires at night to protest bus fare increases (119) —

the image diffuses the horror, confuses it with the popular protest, when the nightmare lies in the paramilitary response to that protest. By this point the author has already proposed that the foreign human rights community is the seminal force capable of achieving justice in places like Guatemala, on the basis of his experience documenting the army massacre in Sacuchúm, San Marcos. He believed he was the first to record those testimonies, and while his presence was deeply appreciated, local organizers had in fact collected voluminous detail. In the book's closing pages he revisits the idea: he says about a community that waged a successful land struggle, "The key to Cajolá's victory" lay in the fact "they had been able to access people like me." He is dead serious. He has told us how he came to understand "the leaders of Cajolá had been guerrillas," (357) and one would hope this realization would invite a more nuanced reading of the role of guerrillas in social movements, as well as the relation between leadership and rank-and-file, but this is not Wilkinson's strength.

In the riddle he is trying to unravel — the years of the agrarian reform on his hosts' plantation — Wilkinson leaves out some of the more damning evidence from the archives that he read. I had published it several years earlier in a book on campesino organizing in that region during the October Revolution only because it was so dramatic, but almost excised it when I realized the family in question was joined by marriage to the most senior US academic writing on Guatemala, a gentleman known for his irascibility who inspired a Guatemalan intellectual to coin a term based on his surname — Adamsismo — in reference to "the anthropology of imperialism" which a number of Guatemalan scholars as well as Mayan leaders charge Richard Adams with cultivating. These are Wilkinson's hosts. While the author mentions the dirty work of the Central Intelligence Agency in bringing down the regime of the agrarian reform, (181) he does not mention that the

host professor's arrival in Guatemala involved providing his services to the US government as their mercenary army was mopping up after the 1954 coup; the US anthropologist interviewed jailed organizers. His future wife's family were staunch opponents of the ousted Arbenz and the agenda for democratic reform. Such affiliations are the soil in which political loyalties take root. Inexplicably, Wilkinson gives the couple pseudonyms, although they are instantly recognizable and have never shunned the limelight. In the end I can't help but wonder whether Wilkinson's gratefulness for their hospitality didn't silence him on that same mountain. Often when I was waiting for the bus in coastal towns I would see Wilkinson and his motorcycle; once when he was walking he mentioned that a reliable source had told him torture was conducted by the military on his hosts' plantation and his quandary was how to inform the owner. The fact was not unusual; probably all of the plantations in that region functioning as military posts practiced torture. But he chose not to include this finding in his book. For an anglophone audience he has consciously or unconsciously whitewashed his host family and their property in order to paint them as planters caught in the crossfire — another common trope that extracts the good fortune of the wealthy from the nexus of class relations he had earlier described so well.

In Latin America, even a significant portion of the centre believes there is dignity in people taking up arms to end tyranny. Yet many on the left in the United States argue there is never any justification for violence. Perhaps pacifism offers comfort in the belly of the beast, a disavowal of complicity. Wilkinson finally finds out who among the guerrillas burned his hosts' original plantation home in the years before he arrived. "Silverio may have been fighting for the welfare of Guatemala's poor when he set the house on fire. Yet, to the extent that this act of violence was intended to terrify the landown-

ers in the region, it should be considered an act of terrorism." (351) If writing history is a political act, here he joins the Guatemalan right in one of its favourite arguments. The issue is reduced to individual morality: burning planters' homes causes them anguish. Guatemala's landowners are a tough crowd and I would argue neither the rebels nor the planters thought burning the big house would sow terror; rather, as a guerrilla strategy it communicated revenge and among the elite it caused outrage. Aside from this question of interpretation, Wilkinson's empathy for his host family pushes him to a more startling claim — the decision to turn to revolutionary violence is terrorist. Context is everything: the guerrillas willfully destroyed property in a state that tortured hundreds of thousands of campesinos in order to preserve the planters' interests, a state that burned thousands of campesino homes with people in them. Wilkinson invites us to equate state terror and rebel violence in Guatemala.

Along the road that Wilkinson traveled there lives a catechist nearing 90 years old who never took up arms, though most of his family did. He pushes us to question the book's understanding of fire. "They kidnapped eight catechists. The military commissioners would get an order from the army and they would pull them out of their homes at night. For a year we slept in the underbrush, leaving at dusk with the whole family, the children were still little. One day we had just left and hidden, just that far away, when they arrived, they thought we were inside and they doused the house with gasoline then set it on fire, yelling — They're all going to die, they're dead! — You know something, we were nothing more than animals for them, that's right, animals" (my taped interview).

The author does not really touch the issue of killing in the name of revolution, clearly a distinct order of violence from torching property; the one example he lays out at length is told as a tragic love story. Three per cent of the civilian dead

were military commissioners or people involved in the death squads who were executed by the guerrillas. Some 93 per cent died at the hands of the right. The man he calls Silverio who burned his hosts' plantation turned to clandestine organizing years before the war started because the army had unleashed a wave of assassinations, and in particular, tortured the director of the local school for "calling a meeting to raise the level of education" (my taped interview). During this period — which the planters remember as a time of peace — hundreds of labour organizers were systematically kidnapped, then left with their eyes gouged out or other unspeakable injuries. Many of their children embraced armed resistance. Those who subscribe to the mainstream of human rights discourse would say that by doing so, the guerrillas became the evil they deplored.

At the risk of raising hackles, I would suggest this is a more elegant and evasive rendering of David Stoll's famous thesis that criticizes armed actors on the left (he singles out Che, Nelson Mandela, and Rigoberta Menchú). Stoll argues that the turn to arms by campesinos was and always will be flawed, and that it is, unavoidably, the work of elite ideologues. Both of these propositions crumble on closer inspection — of the archives, of the memories of campesinos who dared organize, and of the record of actions taken from 1944 forward, the year in which the poor began to dismantle the injustices that find their symbol in the burning of plantation houses. Their organizing in San Marcos long preceded the agrarian reform. Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini underlined the point recently when he said to thousands of campesinos gathered to protest open-air mining in San Marcos, in reference to those on the right who are accusing him of inciting the Indigenous to violence, "The politicians haven't realized that you are the ones making the demands. Hear me well, the day that we are not walking alongside the poorest among you, the humblest, the canecutters who

right now are working with your children in the harvest, on that day you have the right to say to us, — Bishops, you have turned traitor to the faithful. —" Where David Stoll gives voice to Guatemalan campesinos recruited by the military project, Daniel Wilkinson tries but fails to see the collective struggle named by the bishop. Wilkinson tells us, "It took four decades of violence to stamp out what the Agrarian Reform had created — the commitment to the future that those men had shared, the belief that they could transform their nation." (344) As a symbol of this hopelessness he paints a bleak future for a cooperative of former guerrillas who had just bought an abandoned plantation. (349) That community has since built houses and infrastructure collectively, and won fair trade contracts for organic coffee in the thick of one of the worst downswings in world market prices in modern memory (my interviews). Through their fair trade ties, they are building a marketing network for other campesino producers and in the meantime they have provided schooling for youth from neighbouring plantations as well as their own children, in a nation where public schooling is more an aspiration than a reality. Perhaps Wilkinson's point of departure prevents him from trusting the insane determination that has always informed the collective actions of the poor. To offer another example, the faceless wife of one of his main sources (a former guerrilla commander running a restaurant) is now organizing Mayan and campesina women across the region to end violence and build a livable economy (my interviews). In the book her husband mentions she was the first female combatant to join the rebels, but the author does not pursue the clear invitation to hear her story — it would have taken him to the murder of her father for campesino organizing in the 1960s, the murder of union organizers in the factories where she worked in the capital in the 1970s, the founding principles of anti-racism in the nascent guerrilla struggle led by her un-

cle, and her understanding as a mother of three daughters that “We were trying to change things not just for our own children, but for all children.” In conversation she is an utter cynic — about gains in women’s rights for example — but her actions have led to such changes as the criminal prosecution of guerrillas who beat their wives, joint male and female title to property, and an equal wage for women coffee pickers in the community of ex-rebels (her name which she is happy to have known is Aurora Gives Tambriz).

The elderly campesino who escaped death by fire (he requests anonymity) describes what he understands to be the abiding dilemma in a way that would surely annoy Wilkinson’s hosts. “Our cooperative was born out of the work of the church to end poverty in the early 1970s. I saw the homes of the rich there in Guatemala City, you can still see them. Twenty-story buildings for the politicians, the government employees, while for us [gesture for nothing]. One starts to see why we live like we do. So God said one day, in Beatitudes, — That’s enough, no more! They’ve eaten the fattest sheep of my people, they’ve taken the best milk. No more! My poor little sheep are coming, and the rich, just wait [gesture that they will be attacked with rifles]. — Ahh, it’s written, it’s the word of God. And what are those in power going to do? They rule, they rule. As for us, for talking a little, they want to take our lives. Allah, they want to [gesture for slit our throats].” The catechist is describing the present as well as the past. Across Guatemala, organizers are insisting that the homicides of today bear everything in common with those of the 1970s — that they are not the work of common criminals. Since 1999, over 50 human rights defenders have been killed. In this regard Wilkinson fails us. *Silence on the Mountain*, a book of frequent beauty, renders invisible ongoing histories of organizing on Guatemala’s plantations — campesinos who continue to act in “the belief that they could transform their nation,” even while the author insists

that such ideas have vanished and moreover, he charges the guerrillas with contributing to their demise. As so often happens in the analyses of US intellectuals, they obscure as much as they reveal.

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Douglas Hay and Paul Craven, eds., *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press 2004)

IN OCTOBER 1910, fifteen men were charged with a breach of the Master and Servant Act in Alberta. They had been hired by the firm of Foley, Welch, and Stewart in Wolf Creek to work as teamsters and labourers on a section of the Grand Truck Pacific Railway then under construction. The accused were part of a contingent of 140 men who had come west from Winnipeg, but on arrival in Alberta they refused to work on the terms specified by the contract they had signed. In court, each man was charged with “neglect[ing] to perform his duties when requested to do so by the command of his master,” and upon being found guilty was offered the option of a ten-dollar fine or fourteen days in jail.

I gave this small episode little consideration when I came across it a few years ago while researching vagrancy in Alberta. In this respect I was in good company, for any mention of the Master and Servant Act is notably absent in most Canadian reference books, survey texts, or even more specialized works on labour or legal history in Canada. Judy Fudge and Eric Tucker’s recent *Labour Before the Law*, for example, contains a solitary reference to the legislation. Indeed, as Bryan Palmer notes in *Working Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991* (1992), by the time that trade unions were formally legalized in 1872, the Master and Servant Act was



already “an anachronistic Act, and the class relations it tried to keep alive were a thing of the past.” (109)

That might be so, but as the sixteen essays in *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955* clearly demonstrate, for almost half a millennium the Master and Servant Act — in its numerous and various incarnations — was at the heart of the origins, rise, and eventual decline of the British Empire. First enacted in the wake of the Black Death in the mid-14th century as a reaction to the resulting labour shortage and upward trend in wages, the Master and Servant Act went on to become one of the cornerstones of the greatest movement, colonization, and regulation of labour that the world has ever seen. “From that point until the twentieth century,” note editors Douglas Hay and Paul Craven in their introductory essay, “the enforcement of employment contracts was almost entirely in the hands of the [gentry class] and their urban counterparts.” (5)

Three enduring features of the Act, they explain, were enshrined in thousands of separate statutes passed both in metropolitan London and more than a hundred imperial jurisdictions between the 16th and 20th centuries. First, employment relations were a *private* agreement or contract for work and wages; second, the legislation provided for summary enforcement of those agreements by local magistrates and JPs; and third, a worker’s breach of his or her agreement became a criminal rather than civil offence, with punishments including (depending on time and place) whipping, imprisonment, forced labour, fines, and the forfeit of wages earned. “Although their exact contours changed over time,” conclude Hay and Craven, “these were the elements that colonial governments adopted, modified, or rejected in creating labor regimes throughout the empire.” (6)

The essays that follow more than bear out this contention. Hay provides a sweeping but tightly structured overview

of the evolution of the Master and Servant Act in Britain between 1562 (the date of the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers) and 1875 (the Employers and Workmen Act, which effectively decriminalized employment offences). Christopher Tomlins, Jerry Bannister, and Paul Craven discuss the enactment and enforcement of Master and Servant legislation in its North American context, from the late 16th to early 20th centuries, while Michael Quinlan offers a useful contrasting and comparative study of similar legislation in the penal colony of Australia. Mandy Banton’s essay on how the Colonial Office attempted to manage “native” labour in the “tropical colonies” appears, aptly and symbolically, at the heart of the book, before the remainder of the contributions focus on those same colonies. Beginning with Mary Turner’s analysis of the transition from slave to “free” labour status in the Caribbean between 1823 and 1838 (possibly the pick of the book’s essays), we are introduced to the significance of labour legislation in British Guiana, South Africa, Hong Kong, Assam and the West Indies, West Africa, and Kenya.

“Master and servant statutes were everywhere the same, and everywhere different,” Hay and Craven contend. “This somewhat paradoxical statement is true at every level — applied, conceptual, even linguistic.” (14) The essays bear out this belief, too, spanning as they do not only a vast geographic territory over several centuries, but also the application of such legislation to different forms of employment, from chattel slavery to indentured service and apprenticeships to “free” labour. Added to this is the fact that not all the authors approach the subject with a similar goal or emphasis in mind. That said, however, there is a core consistency to the essays in that they, more or less, share three main concerns.

First is the development of Master and Servant legislation itself in each particular jurisdiction, and the degree to which it was directed more by the perceptions and

interests of legislators in London or by those of local legislatures. By focusing on this point of tension, the essays throw new light on the ties that bound the empire together.

Second, the contributors distinguish between the enactment of such legislation and its actual enforcement. After all, statute books may tell us much about the concerns of officials, but little of how effectively those concerns were met. In the case of Canada, for example, Craven notes that there was an apparent paradox between the state's eagerness to "pass a great deal of legislation," on the one hand, and the fact that "enforcement was sporadic, conviction relatively few, and punishments rarely harsh," on the other. This contradiction is resolved, Craven suggests, by the fact that "occasional exemplary" prosecutions served as a "useful reminder of superordination and subordination in a British society bordering the American republic." (175)

Finally, the essays share the belief that the law is "contested terrain," and that while Master and Servant legislation might have been used to prosecute and punish workers (as well as the unemployed, too), it also provided them with the means by which to challenge their employers' authority on occasion. Petitions against employers for their own breach of contract (primarily related to wages) appear throughout the book. However, these instances only serve to underline the fact that the law was weighted against labour in that employers, even when found guilty, did not face incarceration or physical punishment, but only an order to compensate their workers with the wages that were theirs by right, anyway. Yet it was this very imbalance of the Master and Servant Act, perhaps, that led to its eventual demise. Quinlan's essay on Australia, for example, underlines how the legislation served to aid political and organized resistance by workers in the 19th century.

Is all this enough? Does focused attention to the Master and Servant Act throw the rise and fall of the British Empire into

new relief? "Distinctions of class, race, age, and gender were coded into the legislation," Hay and Craven acknowledge, "and reified in differential rates of prosecution, conviction, and punishment." (36) Do the differences in experience, expectation, and response among the Empire's labour force — and these essays clearly confirm that there *was* a marked difference between, say, the life of an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company and a plantation worker in the West Indies — outweigh the basic commonality of life as a "servant" in the emergent empire of capital? If the essays here do not quite provide any clear answers, they nevertheless demonstrate why such questions are important and deserve our attention. They also serve to remind that the broad transition from slave to free labour, against the workings of the Master and Servant Act, was not an unmixed gain. "Free status," notes Turner, "introduced slaves to a differently calibrated but not less rigorous system." (322) Or as Hay and Craven conclude, "Freedom to choose one's employer did not imply the freedom to remain unemployed; if the master and servant acts did not themselves compel engagement and the whip of hunger did not suffice, then the head tax, land laws, or the law about vagrancy took up the burden." (33)

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James Epstein, *In Practice: Studies in the Language and Culture of Popular Politics in Modern Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2003)

NINETEENTH-CENTURY popular politics has long been the most dynamic and contentious subject within the historiography of modern Britain. For much of the 1960s through to the 1980s there was, however, something approximating a consensus as most students of the period accepted the New Left-inspired cultural

materialist approach, best exemplified by Edward Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963). During the 1980s some of those schooled in this method — notably Gareth Stedman Jones and Patrick Joyce — began to question its intellectual basis. They were particularly exercised by cultural materialists' belief that social being or 'experience' was the primary influence on consciousness and almost ineluctably led to class feeling. Instead, and in a variety of ways, detractors claimed ideas, texts, or 'discourse' structured consciousness. Those who took this 'linguistic turn' consequently questioned the importance of class identity to manual workers and stressed the importance of political projects other than socialism — the most important of which was, they believed, radical liberalism.

This collection brings together six of James Epstein's key articles and chapters published since 1986, that is since the linguistic turn had been taken, two of which (along with the introduction) take an overtly theoretical tack while four put his ideas into practice. Readers will be familiar with Epstein's work on popular radicalism and if the collection simply brought together some of his previously published work it should still be warmly welcomed. The book, however, does much more than that. It represents a pointed contribution to what Epstein refers to as the "new political and cultural history of modern Britain" and aims to "renegotiate the ground" between cultural materialists and those favouring discourse. As a result, there is much of interest for those interested in modern British history as well as the nature of the historical discipline as a whole.

It is in the introduction and the first two chapters that Epstein maps out his position. How far this can be described as a "middle ground," as is claimed, is open to doubt, for while Thompson's shortcomings are noted, Epstein often gives his former mentor the benefit of the doubt. He is however not uncritical of Thompson's central notion of 'experience,' conceding

this was conceived as too simply emerging from people's direct confrontation with the material world and neglected how it could be constructed discursively. Thompson is also taken to task for believing 'experience' led to the creation of a homogeneous and fixed working-class consciousness. There is nonetheless some special pleading. Thompson's materialism is, for example, described as "ambivalent," although it is striking, in retrospect, how much he shared with those crude materialists attacked by himself and others in the New Left after 1956. Most obviously, while Epstein is correct to note that Thompson was interested in using a wide variety of texts to make his case, he nonetheless read them informed by the same prior intent: to seek out expressions of class sentiment.

Epstein discusses the work of Stedman Jones and Joyce in two discrete chapters. The former's 1983 essay on Chartism was the first clear sign that there was trouble in store for cultural materialists, as there Stedman Jones stressed the importance of political language — rather than social and economic developments — to the movement's rise and fall. This led him to characterize Chartism as more of a late expression of 18th-century radicalism rather than a proto-socialist, class-based movement, as many cultural materialists were wont to do. Epstein takes issue with that conclusion by reasonably questioning Stedman Jones's emphasis on formal expressions of Chartist ideology and correctly claiming that, as political language is inherently and deliberately vague, it could be open to numerous readings. Thus, Epstein suggests Stedman Jones' failure to study how Chartism's many humble followers read the movement's public discourse meant he overlooked how they gave it a class meaning.

Epstein looks on aspects of Joyce's work more indulgently. This is partly because even since Joyce laboured under the auspices of the discursive approach he consulted a wider array of texts than Stedman Jones ever did, allowing him to

acknowledge the heterogeneous nature of working-class attitudes. Epstein nonetheless criticizes Joyce's employment of a new master category, that of "populism," to replace class — pointing to the paradox of a postmodernist doing such a thing. He also disparages Joyce's failure — despite his supposed firm grounding in social history — to take due account of how the populist language he describes was received, assuming (like Stedman Jones) that universal concepts were read in the same way by differing groups. In particular, Epstein questions what he rather kindly refers to as Joyce's "innocent" interpretation of Gladstonian liberalism, accusing him of too readily believing it assumed the character its leading exponents claimed it possessed.

The author is, then, keen to highlight how far both men's work has privileged the singular, formal content of the text over the many and various ways it might be informally read. This means, Epstein believes, they have both made a serious mistake in disregarding the continued importance of class sentiment within popular politics. He elaborates on the reasons why historians need to place text into context, and how they may accomplish this task in four chapters each of which tackles differing aspects of the subject, all seeking to underline the vitality of class feeling and liberalism's limited purchase. Perhaps the most important of these chapters contrasts the significance of the role of the 'gentleman leader' in early 19th-century radicalism and Gladstonian liberalism.

Epstein suggests that what has often been an unpleasantly antagonistic debate has resulted partly because most linguistic turners wanted to exaggerate how different their approach was to that of the 'founding fathers' of cultural materialism. They laboured under that obligation only because Thompson had so obviously influenced their own earlier work. Epstein's implication is that there is actually more common ground than the debate has hitherto allowed for. Yet, while Epstein is

happy to praise both Stedman Jones and Joyce when he thinks they are right and expresses any criticism in a guarded manner, this collection will probably not lead to reconciliation. In the introduction Epstein cites Raymond Williams with approval (as had Thompson) on the matter of language. Williams said language should be seen as but one element among many in the structuring of human agency but was not by itself constitutive: only idealists believed that. All the world is, then, Epstein suggests, not a text; there is such a thing as context, something that is material, precedes the text, and conditions its creation and interpretation. Thus, workers in the 19th century — for whom 'class' remained a lived, real thing — could interpret the meaning of words to best reflect their material interests rather than allowing themselves to be constructed by words. However moderately he may make this point, rather than building a middle ground, Epstein's work merely highlights a decisive difference of opinion that looks set to match cultural materialist against linguistic turner for some years to come.

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Regina Wecker, Brigitte Studer, and Gaby Sutter, eds., *Die "Schutzbedürftige Frau": Zur Konstruktion von Geschlecht durch Mutterschaftsversicherung, Nachtarbeitsverbot und Sonderschutzgesetzgebung.* (Zürich: Chronos Verlag 2001)

THIS BOOK is the first to fully document the debates and practices surrounding issues of gender and work in Switzerland from the final third of the 19th century into the near present. It admirably fulfills the aim of exploring the mutually interdependent development of gendered labour legislation within the structures and contexts of larger societal discourses. The research was financed through a gov-

ernment grant designed to shed light on issues of male and female equality and the social significance of gender in Switzerland, and explains the sensitivity of the authors to the Swiss debates of the early 1990s around issues of work, protective legislation, and compensation for maternity. Drawing on both the historical and contemporaneous debates, the authors demonstrate the continuity of the unwillingness of Swiss lawmakers to deal comprehensively with the securing of compensation and the improvement of conditions for working mothers as late as 2000, when the book went to press, an unwillingness that was based on often contradictory gender “norms” which developed historically.

The book is arranged largely chronologically, with the editors each taking responsibility for one or more chapters. Wecker provides a sophisticated theoretical framework in the beginning of the book, inspired in no small part by the work of Judith Butler and the idea of “doing gender” to explain the processes of interaction that have “naturalized” gender difference and its manifold social consequences.

One of the most interesting findings in the book was the initial peculiarity of 19th-century Swiss labour legislation when compared to similar western European legislation. Swiss labour legislation tended to deal with the regulation of male and female workers at the same time. Rarely did such legislation involve special amendments intended to protect women specifically. In the 20th century, this peculiarity of Swiss labour legislation began to fade, as both in practice and in newer legislation women workers were specifically targeted with restrictions on their freedom to choose certain types of labour, such as night work or work with toxic chemicals. Earlier legislation had already stipulated a period of absence from work during pregnancy and childbirth. This specifically female role became the basis for later forms of protective legislation. Missing from these forms

of protective legislation, however, was monetary compensation for women while they were off work for this reason. The contradiction between increased “protection” of women without concomitant fiscal recompense either in the area of maternity benefits or in other ways (such as setting up school cafeterias) forms a major theme for the book. This general pattern excluded women from certain types of (usually better paid) work in order to protect their reproductive capacities, but no serious attempts were made to compensate them for lost earnings.

In some aspects of labour legislation and attitudes towards working women, the Swiss case fits neatly with situations experienced in other European countries. Modernizing and rationalizing in rapidly developing white-collar work such as telegraph and office work meant that in areas where men (and sometimes men and women) had once worked for reasonable remuneration, the influx of women changed the perception and pay scale of the work involved. Legislation limiting women’s work tended to extend over time from proscriptions such as handling toxic chemicals during pregnancy to proscriptions to any women working with such chemicals. As Wecker remarks, (244) arguments about protecting unborn children or reproductive capacities were only used for women. Men working with dangerous chemicals were protected through legislation as workers, whereas women were excluded from certain work not as workers but for reasons of gender. In the final analysis, the discourse around protective legislation for women was part of a process that created and consolidated gender roles, gender differences, and gender hierarchies.

The authors were all careful to use a variety of sources to support the narrative structure of the book, including numerous archival materials, legal documents, government publications, legislation, newspapers, and magazines. The trilingual bibliography of secondary literature is impressively thorough and international

in scope, thus demonstrating an in-depth appreciation of German and American debates on gender theory and past and present debates on “women’s work” by the participants in this book.

It is unfortunate that there is at present no English translation of this book, as its findings are likely to resonate with issues of gendered work appearing in the Canadian context. The book will be an important resource for anyone interested in European women’s and labour history.

Rosemarie Schade  
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Sabine Hering and Berteke Waaldijk, eds., *History of Social Work in Europe 1900-1960: Female Pioneers and their Influence on the Development of International Social Organizations* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich 2003)

THIS TIMELY comparative study of social work in a European perspective presents papers from the conference “Designing the Social Sphere, a Challenge for Europe” held in Mainz in 2001. It crosses the divides between western, southern, and Eastern Europe (which are often treated separately) by also including contributions *inter alia* about Hungary, Roumania, and Lithuania. The broad chronological (late 19th and 20th centuries) and wide geographic spread makes for a useful overview of developments in social work under vastly different political regimes and diverse social and cultural conditions. The work is an excellent introduction for English speakers to the relatively inaccessible world of studies in Eastern and Southern Europe, and thus fills an important gap in our knowledge of international social work.

There are several approaches to the area of social work represented here. A large part of the book is devoted to introducing the biographies of women who were crucial in the development of welfare and social work in their respective

countries, but are virtually unknown in Canada and the United States. For example, Roxana Cheschebec writes about Princess Alexandrina Cantacuzino of Roumania. The intellectual and practical work of Hertha Krauss, whose career spanned the US and Germany, is explored by Beate Bussiek. Jelena Stassowa of Russia, and Mentona Moser of Germany (whose achievements are noted here by Elena Resch and Sabine Hering) were both instrumental in the International Red Aid, a communist welfare organization whose internationalism and anti-capitalism provides yet another example of organized welfare, albeit one that resisted the bourgeois states of Europe who were also building their welfare organizations. Kurt Schilde takes the story of the International Red Aid further than the biographies of Moser and Stassowa by providing national and institutional insights into this largely Moscow-dominated aid network which provided legal counselling, children’s homes, support for political prisoners, and help for political refugees. It was at times a huge organization, with, for example, the German section numbering some 504,000 in 1930, of whom 141,000 were women. (142) Dissolved in 1941, little has been written previously about this organization for reasons that have to do with the politics of the “two Germanies.” This gap has recently been filled by S. Hering and K. Schilde, eds., *Die Rote Hilfe* (Opladen 2002). In the west, its image was tainted by its purported connection to the Red Army Faction of the 1970s and 80s, and in the East it was neglected because many of its members fell victim to Stalinist purges. The inclusion of this highly important and gravely neglected topic serves to remind the reader of the extraordinarily wide range of charitable activities women were engaged in during the 20th century.

Two final areas of the book deal with the challenges and sources of archival research; there are also portraits of some of the most important archives and their holdings in this area of study. The book



ends with portraits of the authors and information about the "Network for Historical Studies of Gender and Social Work" which grew out of the Mainz conference.

The book is geographically and methodologically diverse, so I will limit myself to presenting just a few issues which were of particular interest to me. It was a pleasure to see the internationalization of Canadian social theory in the article by Mirja Satka, "Gender and the History of Social Work: Biographies of Male and Female Social Work Pioneers in Finland," which draws heavily on the insights of Dorothy Smith. The internationalization of ideas and frameworks is also described in many of the contributions, as for example by A. Boet and B. Waaldijk in their article on the Dutch social work reformer Marie Kamphuis, in Kerstin Eilers' look at the First International Conference of Social Work in 1928, and in Elke Kruse's revisiting of Alice Salomon's study of 1927, which was the first attempt to create an international comparison of social work training.

The book will be of interest to historians, social workers, and anyone with an interest in gender and women's studies in the 20th century. The contributions vary somewhat in quality, but are solidly researched and interesting in content and perspective. It is an important contribution in its field.

Rosemarie Schade  
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Deborah Foster and Peter Scott, eds., *Trade Unions in Europe: Meeting the Challenge* (Brussels: P.I.E.-Peter Lang 2003)

THE CHALLENGES European trade unions face are, by now, well documented. Bargaining decentralization, market liberalization, the growing dominance of multinational firms, the shift of employment from manufacturing to services, and the expansion of non-standard employ-

ment have all left their mark on a beleaguered and shrinking labour movement. At the same time that national unions are losing traditional forms of bargaining power and political influence, they face a new set of challenges as they seek to build institutions that will support collective representation in an increasingly integrated Europe. It is not quite so easy to find comparative analyses of how unions are responding to these challenges. Deborah Foster and Peter Scott's edited collection *Trade Unions in Europe: Meeting the Challenge* has an optimistic title without presenting much new evidence that would warrant such optimism. Nonetheless, its chapters provide a good road map of the various arenas in which unions are seeking to expand their role and engage in social dialogue, suggesting that while European labour may not yet be successfully overcoming the challenges of integration, they are at least beginning to face up to them.

The first two essays ask how unions are restructuring their organizations to more effectively influence policy-making at the European level. Waddington and Hoffman begin by analyzing union efforts to engage in structural and policy reform. To this end, they summarize recent shifts in union strategy, including efforts to recruit and retain members, union mergers, and new forms of international engagement. They are particularly concerned with the current lack of "articulation between the different levels of trade union activity," or strategies that link European, national, and workplace activities. (60) Jane Pilliger offers a somewhat more optimistic assessment in her discussion of coordinated union efforts to address gender inequality. She analyses the success of recent campaigns by the European Federation of Public Service Unions [EPSU] to improve the representation of women in decision-making positions in the EPSU and its affiliate national unions, and documents successes in both raising awareness of gender issues and increasing equal oppor-

tunity provisions in collective bargaining. While women are still underrepresented in decision-making positions, she argues that these efforts at the EU level are moving national unions toward greater acceptance of gender mainstreaming.

The remaining chapters provide detailed accounts of specific EU initiatives, analysing the influence of the EU “as an actor” on national unions. Pochet focuses on recent developments in European social dialogue, asking how debates over subsidiarity and the open method of coordination [OMC] have “created a specific space and roles for the social actors.” (89) He shows that each has a different logic, and thus as the debate shifts from subsidiarity (which conceives of a federal Europe with centralized actors) to the OMC (which is based on multi-level governance with coordinated actors), unions are forced to change their strategies. Instead of relying on European-level framework agreements, unions, employers, and policy-makers must increasingly interact on different levels to “Europeanize” national and regional policies. Keller asks more speculatively whether social partners will be able to establish a more encompassing system of social policy within this new framework. He finds that new structures are developing unevenly due to weak institutional supports, diverging interests, and the progressive shift from substantial to procedural regulation, making it unlikely that social dialogue will develop into a more coordinated form of European neo-corporatism.

The final contributions focus on two European institutions that have received a great deal of press in recent years: European works councils [EWCs] and the European Monetary Union [EMU]. Knudsen analyses the relationship between EWCs and trade unions, arguing that disagreements among national unions have limited the EWCs’ success. He finds that the new EWCs play a somewhat contradictory role, as they are dominated by unions and yet primarily used to extend regional or national bargaining rather than to build

more enduring forms of solidarity. Foster and Scott conclude with an analysis of how the EMU’s policies have created new challenges for public sector unions. The EMU has become a central actor in the politics of recent cutbacks in national welfare state provision and public sector employment as it pressures national governments to reduce expenditures. The authors document different union strategies to intervene, including social pacts that seek to meet the convergence criteria and union resistance to austerity measures — each of which has had varying success. They argue that this example raises broader concerns with how economic governance will be managed in an increasingly integrated Europe, given multiple and often conflicting interests in reform.

The chapters in *Trade Unions in Europe* together provide a thorough and well-researched contribution to the literature on union responses to European integration. The book is strongest in documenting the various obstacles this process has thrown in the path of trade unions still oriented to the nation-state, providing the reader with a comprehensive historical and technical background on a wide range of related topics. The authors convincingly demonstrate their expertise in the often complex relationships between national and European-level policies and institutions. The scope of topics covered is impressive, bringing together much descriptive material in a relatively slim volume.

One theme that runs through the book is the growing need for trade unions to develop more integrated strategies that connect their activities at the workplace, national, and European levels. As a catalogue of what unions are trying to do in this regard, it is an excellent reference. However, given the scope of material presented, there is a notable lack of comparative analysis or theoretical synthesis. The authors often combine general and sometimes vague prognoses of what unions should be doing (i.e., improving coordi-

nation between different levels of union activity) with very detailed descriptions of strategies and challenges at these different levels, without effectively connecting the two. The distinct struggles of national unions over social policy outcomes fall into the background amidst the sheer volume of material covered, making it difficult to draw clear conclusions about which strategies have been more or less effective.

These minor criticisms aside, Foster and Scott have brought together a unique group of essays addressing a range of issues that are clearly of growing concern to European trade unions. Raising more questions than can be easily answered seems to be part of the justification for this volume, and in this regard it provides an effective jumping off point for future analysis. *Trade Unions and Europe* should be valuable reading for both academics and practitioners concerned with the challenges unions face in an increasingly integrated Europe.

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Ola Bergström and Donald Storrie, eds., *Contingent Employment in Europe and the United States* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited 2003)

THIS VOLUME offers a wealth of information and analysis on contingent employment and provides an invaluable resource to scholars, students, and policy-makers interested in this expanding segment of the labour market. The book consists of nine chapters including in-depth examinations of six countries — the UK, Sweden, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, and the USA — as well as chapters devoted to exploring contingent employment from a more comparative and conceptual vantage point. The goals of the study are to analyse the increased use of contingent work in a number of advanced western democracies; to explore

the impact of labour market regulation and institutional frameworks on the functioning of contingent work in various national settings; and to consider policy solutions to some of the problems raised by the extensive use of contingent work. (xi) As a global assessment, the book successfully achieves these broad aims.

It is clear that national surveys of labour forces consistently and systematically under-report and misclassify individuals working in contingent forms of employment. Moreover, some countries are far less accurate in their identification of contingent employment patterns than others. Under these circumstances, making accurate readings of the size and growth of the contingent workforce becomes a precarious task. In addition, making comparisons across countries is complicated by these sampling problems. These limitations are acknowledged and addressed in this study in a manner that enables useful cross-national analysis, a significant achievement.

A related challenge is determining a common definition of the kinds of employment captured by the term 'contingent employment'. Ola Bergström operationalizes contingent employment as any form of "employment contracts or work arrangements that, from the point of view of the user, could be terminated with minimal costs within a predetermined period of time. This includes employees working on limited duration contracts (LDCs) or working through temporary work agencies (TWAs)." (1) This is, at one and the same time, a rather open yet limiting definition. Various authors in the volume use shifting boundaries respecting whom they include as part of the contingent workforce. For example, in some of the chapters self-employed workers hired by a firm for a defined task or time period are included while other contributions exclude such self-employed individuals. To some degree these differences are a manifestation of differently structured labour markets and how national statistics are collected as much as the individual

choices of the researchers. In the case of the chapter on the Netherlands, for instance, some self-employment work arrangements are included in their contingent work analysis, while in the chapter on Sweden they are not. More importantly, however, other forms of flexibilized nonstandard employment are largely excluded from the volume's analysis, thus limiting its reach.

In one of the most satisfying chapters, "Contingent employment in the UK," Surhan Cam, John Purcell, and Stephanie Taily examine this more narrowly cast grouping of "contingent workers" but they do so within the broader context of the growth of 'other' forms of flexibilized work like part-time and own account self-employment. They adopt an explicit political economy orientation that links the rise of Thatcherite driven political and public policy shifts with neoliberal economic and civil society developments and radical labour market restructuring. This holistic approach serves to ground our understandings of the strategic place that contingent work has come to occupy in economies featured by high unemployment and market-oriented deregulation.

It must be said that at times it is easy to get overwhelmed by the sheer volume of statistical and public policy development information presented. While the wealth of empirical evidence on contingent employment and its governance is valuable in its own right, it is easy to lose the central lines of argument in a forest of facts and figures. Consequently, the volume would have benefitted from a stronger interpretive thrust with rather less dedication to excessive detail. The British case study chapter, once again, offers a welcome antidote to this tendency for while it is rich in empirical detail the political economy focus of its analysis ties together what could otherwise be simply a dense rendering of 'the facts.'

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages that contingent work is said to bring with it. The most important positive attribute is the claim that its

widespread use helps to lower unemployment rates. But conversely and simultaneously it increases employment insecurity, and lowers wages and benefits, thus contributing to the overall diminishing of the quality of the job stock. This volume tackles these questions directly. Its conclusions are that contingent forms of employment expand rapidly during periods of high unemployment. This may in fact serve to create more employment opportunities, of a particular type, in tight labour markets. Interestingly enough, however, there is evidence from the country case studies that once economic recovery occurs and unemployment levels fall, the size of the contingent workforce does not significantly decrease in size. This is consistent with a more general pattern where restructuring opens up space for the displacement of standard employment — permanent full-time jobs — by other forms of flexible employment. Each successive period of restructuring since the 1970s has resulted in a higher plateau in the proportion of the labour force occupied by nonstandard work. This has occurred to such an extent that today there are many countries where flexibilized types of work have so eroded full-time jobs that they have become the *de facto* new work norm.

With respect to employment quality, the studies are in agreement that pay and benefit levels are lower and job security, by its very nature, far less for contingent workers than standard workers. In this regard the flexibility brought by contingent work is primarily a flexibility that is of greater benefit to employers than workers. The volume also observes that state regulation around contingent work can make an important difference in improving the wages, benefits, and job security provisions for these workers. In this regard TWAs can play a key role. TWAs can offer a point of longer term employment attachment for the workers, and workers in such settings can be more easily unionized and regulated by the state to the benefit of the employees. TWAs are not with-

out their problems in terms of the contingent employment relationship, however. For while they can improve many aspects of employment quality they also introduce the complication that workers have relationships with two employers at the same time — the agency and the employer the worker is contracted out to. With respect to issues like health and safety the existence of dual employers has made it difficult to determine employer responsibility in cases of work-related accidents and ill health.

Another central issue that the volume perceptively raises is the problem of 'training deficits'. Firms with no long-term commitment to workers have little incentive to invest in their human capital development. In fact there is a strong disincentive as such investments are likely to benefit competitor firms eager to poach 'trained' flexible workers. A labour market that is more and more characterized by the use of contingent workers is also one that under-utilizes the full range of skills of its existing workforce. Moreover, it creates polarization in the labour market between an ever shrinking number of core workers permanently attached to firms that receive employer sponsored training and an expanding army of flexible workers who do not. This dynamic runs against the stated logic of neoliberal policy that purports that human capital investments are essential to the success of modern economies.

In the final chapter of the volume Donald Storrie poses the key policy question, namely: can employer demands for increased levels of flexibility promised by contingent work arrangements be reconciled with worker desires for expanded regulation of contingent work to improve job security and overall job quality? This chapter provides a very good overview of the continuities and discontinuities regarding contingent employment trends and regulatory developments among the countries under study. The USA and Britain are home to the most deregulated contingent work regimes while Spain and

Sweden (because of high trade union density and the regulation collective bargaining brings) are the most regulated with the Netherlands and Germany falling in between. It is clear that in the cases of more regulated labour markets stronger measures of protection are extended to contingent workers. Storrie contends that greater use and regulation of contingent work through TWAs would be the best way of achieving a better balance between the interests of employers and employees. Nonetheless, there is recognition that contingent work by its nature is a highly desirable form of employment for capital because of the employer-friendly flexibility it introduces, especially with respect to employment security. The flexibilities offered by contingent employment create power asymmetries that are decidedly to capital's benefit and while regulation may help to mitigate their most negative effects on workers, it is not capable of eliminating the disadvantages to workers altogether.

John Shields  
Ryerson University

Russell Muirhead, *Just Work* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2004)

THIS BOOK has a catchy title — one which promises the reader an interesting approach to analysing and understanding contemporary work issues. Regrettably, the author does not deliver on this promise.

The author approaches the issue of work primarily from an individualist perspective. Work is a person's life's activity, the vehicle through which he or she seeks personal fulfillment and self-worth. From this perspective, the key challenge is to find the right 'fit' between an individual's aptitudes and interests, on the one hand, and the requirements of the job, on the other. Fulfillment is individual. The relationship between worker and em-

ployment is mediated through the operation of the impartial market based on the individual's contract of employment. True, the author acknowledges, the market does not always provide optimum opportunities for such fulfillment. Sweatshop labour and drudgery still exist. But Muirhead believes these kinds of restricting jobs are declining in numbers, while careers that offer opportunities for self-development and creativity have expanded dramatically in the US in recent years. In developing his argument, the author draws selectively on a number of different philosophical perspectives on work, citing the contributions of political philosophers including Aristotle, Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and John Rawls. An entire chapter is allocated to Betty Friedan's views of the impact of work on women. Muirhead examines work from various points of view, both descriptive and normative. Work is conceived of in terms of necessity — the necessity of earning a living. It is also conceived of as the counterbalance to leisure. And it is examined in terms of its role in providing a fulfilling and creative way of living where the 'fit' is a good one.

Muirhead's book does not challenge the *status quo* in any significant way. Capitalist organization of work (described by Muirhead as simply the impartial operation of the market) is assumed to be the only viable approach to organizing a modern economic system. Individual fulfillment occurs within this framework — but the framework itself is not questioned. Although the book contains an extensive, if selective, discussion of the approach of various philosophers to work issues, it is strangely devoid of the history of workers' collective struggles. In this respect it is fundamentally ahistorical.

Surprisingly, the author largely ignores the long history of working-class struggle to counter the abuses of capitalism and to establish greater collective, democratic control over the organization of work. The enormous efforts historically of working people, both in the US

and internationally, to secure decent wages, working conditions, job security, and dignity on the job receive almost no attention.

In a 204-page book, unions are discussed on one page and there is no mention of strikes or other labour struggles. The decline in US union density is dismissed as the result of inevitable changes in the US labour market in which workers have come to prefer the 'benefits' of mobility and job choice rather than the older — and outdated — approach of lifetime employment with a single employer. The following quotation gives a sense of how the author approaches this issue. "Working life today is less likely than in the past to be mediated by binding affiliations with institutions like unions and large institutions. Individuals have a more immediate relationship to their job, to the market and to the risks that markets impose. The decline in unions since 1950, for instance, has been profound. Although most people approve of unions, now only 14 percent of those in the labour force belong to one." (39)

After making this observation, the author simply moves on to other issues. Why unions are in decline despite continuing "approval" of most people is of little interest. The question of what the decline in union density means for most working people is not explored, nor is the link between this decline and the stagnation of wages in the US over the last 25 years, despite a dramatic increase in output and in the income of the top one per cent of the population. In short, there is no connection between work and class. There is also nothing about the relationship between working-class movements and the political sphere, either from a reformist or a revolutionary perspective. It is rather as if nobody thought that politics had anything to do with employment relationships.

The role of the state, outside of what the author views as failed Marxist states, is seen as largely irrelevant to the issue of finding the right 'fit' between individuals and their work. There is no discussion of



such issues as employment standards, health and safety regulations, or even rights such as freedom from discrimination or harassment at the workplace. One is left to infer that whatever these standards are and how — despite their obvious weaknesses — they came to be implemented in the first place is of little importance to workers. Rather, in a modern liberal democratic society, all these issues are resolvable through individuals exercising choice in their selection of employment opportunities.

While a book analysing contemporary work issues does not necessarily need to provide solutions to the problems it identifies, it would have been helpful if the author had indicated what should be done about some of them. Instead, the book is largely descriptive. The evolution of the market economy will, according to the author, continue to shape and reshape work. We can observe what it does to work, but we are only observers: it is not our role — or rather the role of workers — to attempt to reshape the market or take control of the work process. To the extent that there are problems, these can be addressed by individuals focusing more attention on ensuring that they get the right ‘fit’ between their personal aspirations and the employment they choose.

While the author implies that the book addresses broad philosophical issues which are universal in their application, the perspective of the book seems to reflect a rather more narrow, US experience in which market values are dominant, individual rather than collective values prevail, unions are marginal, and the organization of work is not an issue that is a legitimate subject of political debate — or government action. The concept of work as a social activity in which workers as a group or class have a collective interest — and an active role to play — is almost entirely absent from the analysis.

While this reviewer unquestionably has a different take on the role of work in society, he finds it difficult to comprehend how a book dealing with the issue of

just work can say nothing about strikes and devote only two brief references on one page to unions. It is a discussion of work from which workers are absent.

John Calvert  
Simon Fraser University

Andrew Ross, *No Collar: The Humane Workplace and Its Hidden Costs* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 2004)

MUCH PUBLIC and academic discussion about the workplace has in recent years focused upon the information technology industry. Workers in this sector are often thought to work in environments that are vastly different from workplaces outside of IT, and otherwise to enjoy unique perquisites and benefits. Andrew Ross seeks to reveal more about the functioning of the no-collar workplace, as he terms the information technology work environment, in *No Collar: The Humane Workplace and its Hidden Costs*. Ross is a professor in the American Studies program at New York University who provides many insights into the IT workplace. He reveals that the no-collar work environment is not markedly different from any other work environment as it is ultimately governed by the quest for profit and manipulates employees in order to achieve this objective.

Ross concentrates his analysis on the ubiquitous dot-com firms of the late 1990s, specifically on two in New York City. The staffs at Razorfish and 360HipHop felt the main impact of the new economy in the sense that their perceptions of working conditions were fundamentally altered by it. Employees believed that some kind of improved if not idyllic society could be founded within a corporate structure. This belief was buttressed by pervasive corporate discourse which suggested that the new economy enhanced the transfer of knowledge. Ross includes references to Elton Mayo's Hawthorne studies to substantiate his

view that the new economy workplace appealed to workers' need for recognition and fulfillment.

Ross conducted comprehensive field research for this study and witnessed first hand how workers became entranced with the no-collar ethos, then ultimately were betrayed by it. There was little organizational hierarchy at Razorfish or 360HipHop, and there were conscious efforts by managers to blur distinctions between themselves and their staffs. There was also little distinction between work and play as the latter activity was considered to enhance the former. Office parties were often raucous events that drew faithful staff attendance while affording yet another outlet for creative expression. Razorfish and 360HipHop grew in size during the expansion of the dot-com bubble of the late 1990s and their informal, seemingly nurturing work environments were sustainable as long as the firms were solvent, if not profitable.

The weakness with the no-collar system, as Ross ably shows, was its vulnerability under duress. Initial rounds of layoffs dampened employee enthusiasm for motivational initiatives and morale quickly dissipated. Ross's analysis is strongest when he delves into the hidden costs of the no-collar workplace. He shows that the fundamental hazard of this workplace is that it enlists workers' thoughts and desires in the service of salaried time. The long hours worked by the staff, their total allegiance given to the firm, and their subsequent rejection by it led staff members to feel a profound sense of rejection.

Ross's analysis broadens when he contextualizes the information technology workplace within the urban environment. He refers to IT employees as "sophisticated consumers of space" and notes that they prefer certain urban environments and experiences. (135) The workers described in this book often came from disparate backgrounds but they exhibited agency through style and attitude. They expressed sympathy for unioniza-

tion among some sectors of the economy, although few of them were unionized. Their managers were much more traditional as they were anti-union, and preferred to consider their workers self-employed. As the dot-com bubble burst, Ross found that workers at places like 360HipHop even began to revolt against the proliferation of technology in their workplace as it was robbing them of personal contact.

While IT employment is reputed to be personally enriching, we also see in this book that information technology is accelerating the casualization of work. The seemingly amorphous definition of employee utilized by IT managers has enabled them to refer to anyone, regardless of work status or tenure, as an employee. This does not bode well for the prospects of unionization, as Ross notes, or for the natural feeling of security that workers often need.

The main weakness of this book is its lack of both a clear methodological approach and a comparative framework. There are elements of both discourse and materialist analyses found throughout, but anyone reading this book may wish it possessed methodological clarity. The information technology workers whom Ross so ably describes are not adequately analyzed in relation to their peers in blue-collar or white-collar occupations. We would perhaps learn how different their work is from blue-collar or white-collar work had some comparisons between them been offered. There is considerable literature on the impact of technology on the workplace, such as the work by Harry Braverman and Graham Lowe, yet Ross did not reference it despite frequently describing a process of work degradation within the firms that he studied.

The penchant of no-collar managers for incorporating a cornucopia of loud music, long idyllic lunches, and quiet places for contemplation into the workplace is a continuation of a long tradition of the human relations systems founded in the early 20th century, but Ross draws no

comparisons between contemporary employer paternalism and its historical antecedents. The staff at Razorfish would have perhaps scoffed at the free sausages handed out to employees of the Swift's company in Chicago in the 1920s, but their meditation spaces and costume parties represented the evolution of paternalistic practices used by early 20th-century employers like the mid-west meat packer.

Issues of gender and race are also found throughout this book, but do not form a comprehensive part of Ross's analysis. Razorfish had offices around the world, and also included significant numbers of women throughout the staff and managerial ranks. Ross does not, however, look into issues of sexual inequality in the workplace. Instead, his proximity to his object of study, and frequent reference to workers at Razorfish as "fish," suggests that he may have subconsciously adopted the no-collar view of people as primarily being high-tech workers, rather than individuals with many potential identities. The staff at 360HipHop was predominantly African American and the firm was founded by prominent media personality Russell Simmons. The main crisis experienced by the firm was its takeover by Black Entertainment Television [BET], yet Ross does not delve into a discussion of how African American workers may have faced unique challenges in the high technology economy.

This book has much to offer despite the shortcomings mentioned above. Writing about the information technology workplace seems to have in many ways become the preserve of popular journalists and business academics. It is therefore important that Ross has written a well-researched, cautionary analysis of the IT work environment that is not deterministic or unjustifiably celebratory. Anyone reading this book will find that the IT industry is not particularly unique; nor are the workplaces operating in it.

Jason Russell  
York University

Stephen R. Barley and Gideon Kunda, *Gurus, Hired Guns, and Warm Bodies: Itinerant Experts in a Knowledge Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2004)

THIS BOOK fills an important gap by providing one of the first major research ethnographies of the high-tech sector, a major component of the knowledge economy. To date, serious social science research on the subject has concentrated on documenting or questioning the existence of such an economy. This has primarily involved charting the growth of the data and information components of the economy and documenting occupational shifts from primary (agriculture and extraction) and secondary (manufacturing) sectors to services (tertiary) and information (quaternary) sectors. Beginning with the work of Daniel Bell, analysis turned to the social, political, and cultural significance of these changes and with the critical work of scholars like Harry Braverman and Herbert Schiller, the debate was on.

Amid all the discussion of skills and power, there was very little work that examined the knowledge economy, and specifically the high-tech sector, from the perspective of the participants themselves. Specifically, the authors set out to provide what they call "an empathetic and rich description of the perspectives and practices of the people about whose lives social scientists made claims." (23) They find dominant institutional and free agent perspectives wanting because they neglect the voices of the people involved. The former, drawing on institutional history and social structural analysis, raised fears about the rise of a contingent workforce in this sector, cut adrift from the hard fought social contract that shaped labour and social relations in the period when manufacturing was dominant. The free agent perspective draws on neoclassical economics and provided the intellectual grounding for the rosy glow surrounding the dot-com boom.

Questioning these leading perspectives or metatheories, the authors try to make sense of what the range of actors in the industry have to say. They therefore aim to eschew general conclusions until the end of the book when they try to make sense of the fieldwork. Specifically, they carried out field work from 1997 to 1999 in staffing agencies which place technical contractors in high-tech jobs, interviewed 71 contractors across a range of high-tech fields, and finally carried out fieldwork at the firms that hire these contractors from the staffing agencies. Although Barley and Kunda generally stick to their bottom-up approach, the book is not without a framework, however lightly applied. Opening with Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage", they make use of a dramaturgical perspective that focuses on actors, roles, performances, and identities. This approach leads them to focus on the diversity of motives and dramas that take place in various settings. Rather than seeing a firm as a singular force with a unitary purpose, as they claim most social scientists do, the authors concentrate on the tensions that, for example, distinguish a company's senior executives who take the long view and its hiring managers who face "the everyday tribulations of managing technical projects". Similarly, the authors deconstruct the world of the staffing agency, distinguishing between the pressures to serve clients' needs, provide good placement service to contractors, and meet their own performance goals.

The book is particularly strong in examining the deal-making process that brings clients, contractors, and staffing agencies together. This is primarily because it recognizes that the needs and interests of all three are constantly changing, particularly since they operate in a volatile environment. As a result, standard definitions of roles and functions, and assessments of what constitute standard qualifications, compensation, work routines, and overall expectations are always up for grabs. As a result, all three are constantly renegotiating relationships

and redefining information. It is interesting to observe that at the heart of the knowledge economy, so little is certain and so much is left to the interpersonal dynamics of power plays and social construction. In essence, as they describe it, making deals amounted to a three-way market dynamic in which whoever was best able to control flows of information and definitions of key terms — contractors, staffing agencies, or clients — would emerge with the best deal.

After addressing the relationships among these three key participants, the authors hone in on the contractors and their lives on the job. As they see it, itinerant high-tech workers move between seeing themselves and being seen as commodities and as experts, and between the emotions of respect and resentment. In this regard, they are no different from other workers but with much less explicit attachment to a particular employer or task.

The final part of this four-part book shifts from a thick description of relationships and reporting on interviews with informants to mapping the meaning of this form of work. Specifically, they describe three forms of capital that define the opportunities and struggles of the contractor world. Contract work is about the development of temporal capital or the ability to manage, control, enjoy, and trade time. Some of this takes place in social space — what do you do with time, including down time? But it also takes place in rhetorical space. How do you explain the exigencies of time, the multi-faceted "flexibility," for example, to yourself and to others? Contract work is also about human capital, including how to deal with the need to avoid obsolescence through the discipline of continuous training and the luck of picking the right systems and technologies to emphasize. However attentive to developing new skills, contractors concentrating on learning systems and skills that fail to succeed in the marketplace will have wasted their human capital. Finally, contractors live in a world of social capi-

tal in which they must make choices about what social networks to join and which to leave and how to cultivate skills in both activities. The book concludes by examining the role of the contractor in the knowledge economy and ventures social policy suggestions in such areas as certifying skills and providing health benefits.

*Gurus, Hired Guns, and Warm Bodies* is a useful addition to the literature on working in a knowledge economy. It succeeds in providing the thick description that this field has needed for some time. However, it is not without its limitations. Written during the peak of the dot-com boom, the book is very much the creature of its time. With plentiful jobs, contractors could choose from many employers, enabling them to strike rich deals. The world of complex three-way market dynamics has changed significantly in the ensuing years of rapid decline in the industry. Barley and Kunda spend some time discussing the networks and organizations of this workforce but have nothing to say about the trade unions, like the Communications Workers of America, which have spun off organizations like WashTech and Alliance@IBM that have played an important role in organizing and providing information, benefit packages, and lobbying clout for all kinds of high-tech workers, including the contractors described in the book. This book goes a long way to understanding the nature of contracting work among skilled professionals in times of plenty. But the world of scarce jobs, outsourcing, and fights over immigrant visas is a very different one indeed.

Vincent Mosco  
Queen's University

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin 2004)

THE PERIOD from the "Battle of Seattle" in November 1999 to the terrorist attacks

of 11 September 2001 was one of excitement and hope for most supporters of progressive social change. The global justice movement was mobilizing in advanced capitalist countries around meetings of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and similar symbols of neoliberalism, proclaiming that "Another World is Possible" and beginning promising interactions with unions and community organizations. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* (2000) was the most celebrated theoretical work associated with the movement, although this dense text was neither a product of the movement nor read by many of its activists, at least in North America.

The years since 2001 have had a very different political character than the two that preceded them. This is especially true in the US and Canada, where massive but short-lived anti-war protests failed to stop the political retreat that followed 9/11. *Multitude*, the sequel to *Empire*, arrives at a time when serious interrogation of contemporary capitalism and prospects for change is much needed. What Hardt and Negri offer here is another tome that, as Alex Callinicos observed of *Empire*, is "as much a work of applied post-structuralist philosophy as it is a piece of concrete historical analysis." Like *Empire*, many of whose ideas it reprises, *Multitude* is a work of great ambition and scope that cites a wide range of scholarship in the social sciences and humanities. This short review is limited to the book's central theme.

*Multitude* opens with a discussion of a pressing issue that received little attention in *Empire*: war, which the authors identify as the main obstacle to democracy in the world today. The place of war has changed. War was once pushed to the margins of society as a state of exception, but in the emergent mode of global rule the authors dub Empire, "the state of exception has become permanent and general ... pervading both foreign relations and the homeland." (7) War is a form of biopower, producing and controlling so-

cial life. The enormous power of the US state, which received little attention in *Empire*, is acknowledged as a crucial feature of the age of permanent war. Discussing military doctrine, Hardt and Negri argue that US power must assume the form of a network to deal with the kind of asymmetrical insurgencies it faces in the age of Empire. Networks abound in *Multitude*, as the authors analyse the shifting forms of subaltern resistance from the Cuban and Chinese revolutions through to the early 21st century as a progressive evolution driven by the desire for more democracy, autonomy, and efficacy, culminating in the network form of the global justice movement.

The network form is spreading because this is the characteristic form of immaterial labour, which is dominant in the age of post-Fordism. Immaterial labour is absolutely central to *Multitude*. Immaterial labour is labour that creates immaterial products, including knowledge, emotional effects, and social relationships. Hardt and Negri are clear that most workers in the world today do not perform immaterial labour, but they argue that immaterial labour is hegemonic in a qualitative sense and is increasingly putting its stamp on other forms of labour and, more generally, on society. Immaterial labour, they acknowledge, is not necessarily pleasant work. However, it is brimming with positive qualities and radical potential. Immaterial labour produces cooperation, which is now external to capital rather than created by it. It is biopolitical, producing social life itself. It is dissolving the division between work and life. It is also increasingly shackled by private property and capitalist exploitation, understood as the parasitical “expropriation of the common.” (150)

By creating a growing qualitative commonality among different concrete kinds of labour, immaterial labour is the basis for the singularities acting in common that are the multitude. The multitude is the name Hardt and Negri give to the emerging formation of peasants,

wage-workers, the unwaged, the poor, migrants, and others that they believe is the collective subject capable of realizing a truly democratic and liberatory transformation of society. Modern revolutions have been making “a halting and uneven but nonetheless real progression toward the realization of the absolute concept of democracy.” (241) The multitude is at last capable of achieving this democracy, as the many demands for reforms raised around the world today suggest.

*Multitude* engages with issues that are key to understanding the world today. It does so from a perspective that is resolutely opposed to all forms of exploitation and oppression, and rejects the stance, common even among critics of neoliberalism, that a progressive alternative to capitalism is impossible or not worth discussing. But the extent to which these virtues raise a reader’s hopes and expectations is also the extent to which *Multitude* disappoints.

There are deep-rooted problems in the way *Multitude* theorizes contemporary society. The concept of immaterial labour, the lynchpin for the book’s central argument, is unsound and cannot bear the explanatory and political burden placed on it. It proposes that labour is increasingly outside of and against capital (an idea whose origins lie in the kind of autonomist Marxism that Negri helped to create in the 1970s). This allows Hardt and Negri to wax eloquent about its positive qualities and make it the basis of the multitude. They also argue that the line between work and life is being dissolved, one consequence of which is that Marx’s law of value no longer holds. Unfortunately, far from escaping from capital, labour in the world today is increasingly commodified and subsumed by capital.

The very examples given by the authors — Microsoft workers and low-wage workers forced to hold down multiple jobs (145) — suggest a very different and more plausible interpretation of trends in capitalism than *Multitude*’s: work for capitalist employers is devouring a larger



proportion of many people's lives. It is not Marx's theory of value (which the authors apparently misunderstand, since they wrongly suggest that Smith, Ricardo, and Marx held to the same law of value [145]) that is unsustainable but Hardt and Negri's notion of an immaterial labour whose cooperative and communicative dimensions exist outside of capital and whose products are "in many respects, immediately social and common." (114) This in an era of ever more extensive commodification? The idea that immaterial labour makes possible the emergence, without the involvement of any organized political forces, of the multitude as a collective subject able to transform society is also extremely unconvincing.

*Multitude* has little or nothing to say about a number of crucial developments in the contemporary world. For example, what are we to make of the rise in a number of countries of Islamism as a reactionary political force with mass appeal? Its analysis of "socialist" (Stalinist) societies is remarkably shallow. More broadly, *Multitude* does not theorize on the basis of concrete analyses of working-class and other social movements. There is no serious examination of how movements have been affected by capitalist restructuring, of the crises of social democracy, Stalinism, and "Third World" nationalist politics, or of how movements have responded to these challenges. Reading *Multitude* brings to mind what E.P. Thompson had to say about kangaroo-like theorizing that "proceeds in gigantic bounds through the conceptual elements, with the most gracious curvatures of thought," touching the earth only briefly between leaps. Boldly theorizing on the basis of limited observations is a long-standing habit for Negri, who was criticized for this by some of his comrades in the late 1970s, as Steve Wright recounts in his study of Italian autonomist Marxism, *Storming Heaven* (2002).

It is also unclear what the "postsocialist" anti-capitalist politics advocated by the authors really amount to

because their formulations about the real democracy of which the multitude is the bearer are so abstract and the book contains little in the way of clear strategic thinking. Hardt and Negri endorse Max Weber's critique of socialism, claiming that "contemporary forms of right-wing populism and fascism are deformed offsprings of socialism." (255) Surprisingly, they see potential in alliances in the South between "aristocracies" (local ruling classes) and the multitude — in other words, Popular Front-style cross-class alliances of the kind that have done so much harm to movements in Brazil, South Africa, and many other countries.

As a result of these problems, the book's hopeful vision lacks anything approaching a plausible grounding in an analysis of capitalism and social struggles in our time. Despite the authors' denial of a "preordained linear march toward absolute democracy," (93) *Multitude* suggests that the multitude is indeed on the march towards true democracy. Although it touches on issues that badly need serious study, such as changes in the organization of paid work within global capitalism, *Multitude's* dubious social theory and evasion of so many tough questions about class recomposition and politics make it a very limited contribution indeed.

David Camfield  
University of Manitoba

Peter Seixas, ed., *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2004)

THE TITLE may be intimidating enough to stop the casual reader, so you might try entering by way of the small cover illustration of a locomotive. There is a clue somewhere late in the book that this may be the locomotive of history. Indeed one of the problematics addressed in the book at least implicitly is whether that train is stalled on the track or still moving. The

volume itself is a collection of papers from a conference held in August 2001 under the title "Canadian Historical Consciousness in International Context: Theoretical Perspectives." The contributors include American, Australian, British, Canadian, and European scholars, and the book is introduced by Peter Seixas, director of the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness at the University of British Columbia. From our vantage point out here on the embankment, peering up into the coach windows of this impressive train, the reader is apt to see answers looming in and out of focus, much as often happens at historical conferences.

About half the chapters address explicit theoretical concerns. One of the underlying anxieties about the production and consumption of history is stated by Chris Lorenz in terms of the growing influence of "non-professional forms of historical representation," and he suggests professional historians give more attention to the more extreme domains of the human experience that popularizers often address. At a more general level, he also offers a classificatory schema for historical consciousness based on spatial and temporal markers. The appetite for classification is amplified by James Wertsch in an argument for the appreciation of historical narrative as a response to "schematic narrative templates" in which known events are regularly "emplotted" in historical determined interpretive contexts. Mark Salber Phillips makes a case for the virtues of microhistory and argues that the vaunted objectivity of the historian actually involves distinctions between what he calls formal, affective, ideological, and cognitive distances. The particular value of oral history is well theorized by Roger Simon, who points out the several functions, both ethical and pedagogical, of remembrance as a form of historical reckoning. Meanwhile, Jörn Rüsen argues (while proposing another typology of his own) that there remains a connection between historical consciousness and the moral function of history:

"Historical consciousness should be conceptualized as an operation of human intellection rendering present actuality intelligible while fashioning its future perspectives." (67)

These approaches are complemented by the chapters that address the problem at the level of practical challenges facing classroom educators. One useful study is a revised and translated version of a paper by Jocelyn Létourneau and Sabrina Moisan on the historical knowledge of young Quebec francophones; they point out that educators do not control the historical consciousness of students but work within a social and cultural context where knowledge is acquired from varied sources. Similarly, Peter Lee examines the challenges of equipping students (in England in this case) to consider competing historical narratives about their own country, with a view to acquiring the intellectual skills to live their own history in the present. Tony Taylor reports on the politics of school history in Australia, although a more direct comparison between Canadian and Australian experiences in this debate would still be helpful. Christian Laville contributes an astute essay on the origins of "historical consciousness" studies themselves as a response to the alleged destabilization of knowledge in recent decades. In considering the growing preoccupation with heritage and memory, he warns against the rise of a prescriptive historical agenda that undermines the traditional strengths of historical thinking. John Torpey concludes on a more skeptical note, suggesting that the forward march of history has been stalled by the absence of alternative social visions at the end of the century. In their absence we have "an avalanche of history" that, to mix a famous metaphor, "weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living."

Of course, Canadian historians explored this territory in a preliminary way several years ago with the debate over Jack Granatstein's *Who Killed Canadian History?* (unfortunately referred to in this volume as *The Killing of Canadian His-*

tory). There have been numerous critiques of that polemic, although no publisher has come forward with a companion volume of responses, which is itself a comment on the relatively poor elaboration of the debate in the public realm. The present volume is something else, for it drives the discussion into the high-end suburbs of intellectual discourse where even the vocabularies are still under construction. A reviewer in this journal cannot fail to note that the frames of reference here are for the most part those of empire, state, nation, and war and that categories such as class and gender are rarely mentioned on this journey. It is unclear if this is an accidental feature or a more general failure in contemporary historical discourse. As for the big questions, by the time we have inspected the illuminated windows of this train, the relationship between historical information and historical understanding, sometimes parsed for us as the tension between heritage and history, remains nicely illustrated but unresolved. Conference collections serve a purpose, but they probably need to be read selectively and strategically. The editor has helped with a series of short introductions to the sections. In my own case, one thoughtful colleague suggested, I might have found it easier to read the book from back to front. We might add as well that one's perception of a train depends on where you are sitting.

David Frank  
University of New Brunswick

Peter Steven, *The No-Nonsense Guide to Global Media* (Toronto: Between the Lines 2004)

TO WRITE a comprehensive introduction to the global media is a highly ambitious task; to do it in a slender volume of less than 150 pages is virtually impossible. Yet Peter Steven's *No Nonsense Guide to Global Media* succeeds in providing readers with a useful snapshot of the contem-

porary mass media as well as a good feel for the main schools of thought that have emerged in the study of culture and communication. Accessible, interesting, well-written and generally well-organized, Steven does an admirable job of balancing criticism of the corporate structures that dominate the production and distribution of commodified culture with a laudable sensitivity to the contradictory qualities of global media that open up spaces for cultural diversity and political struggle. Yet the book's strengths as a survey text also account for its principal shortcoming, namely a failure to develop a consistent, coherent or unified set of arguments about the contemporary significance of the media. Ultimately, Steven's constant oscillation between condemning the centralized power of dominant media on the one hand, and celebrating the virtues of active audiences and hybrid cultural forms on the other, leaves us somewhat unsure about what he (and we) are to make of the global media and their ambivalent effects upon individuals and society. In addition, the highly condensed and often fragmentary style of the book makes it difficult to engage with its content at any level other than as a set of interesting and well-researched but also compartmentalized (and often contradictory) facts and observations.

The book opens, for example, with a brief chapter composed entirely of statements from people around the world describing their own unique experience with local and global media. "I have recently read *The Life of My Choosing*, by Wilfred Thesiger, *The Fall of the House of Saud*, by Said Aburish and *Alice in Exile* by Piers Paul Read," writes one correspondent. "The book-publishing mergers are a problem and getting more so. Also the swallowing of independent bookstores by chains ..." (12) Such a stark juxtapositioning of multinational cultural diversity with cautionary words about capitalist restructuring sets the stage for the contradictory tone that characterizes much of the book. For Steven, such con-

traditions are reflective of a global media environment that is dominated by a homogenized, commercial monoculture yet simultaneously also provides the space for more creative, cosmopolitan encounters with alternative and even oppositional cultural forms. Yet insofar as the pleasures of the latter are constantly invoked, the dangerous tendencies of the former are, in effect, minimalized. Indeed, if the range of cultural practices described by Steven's acquaintances in the first chapter are at all representative of the offerings that globalization brings in its wake, then we seemingly have little to worry about.

Yet, as he often suggests in separate chapters on global media, political economy, technology and media and society, we actually have a great deal to worry about. In a boxed vignette from the section on global media, for example, Steven offers a brief description of the global reach of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, one of five or six media behemoths that control much of what we now see, hear, and read. He cites Roy Greenslade, a columnist for *The Guardian*, who observes that every single one of Murdoch's 175 newspapers worldwide offered editorial support for the Bush administration's 2003 invasion of Iraq. Steven's chapter on political economy nicely locates this exemplary anecdote within the restructuring of the global media that has occurred over the last two decades. In rapid succession, he offers succinct descriptions of key elements of the "howling, brawling global marketplace," including the concentration of ownership, formation of integrated media conglomerates, and the gutting of media policy and regulatory regimes at both the national and international levels. However, in an accompanying discussion of the emancipatory potential of new digital technologies, he makes the puzzling claim that "although the infrastructure of mega-computers, data switchers and satellite relays comprising the internet is as tightly controlled by largely US, political, military and corporate elites as any media

form ever invented, the flow of content remains as anarchic and potentially disruptive as in its early days." (52) Thus tight corporate control of the infrastructure seemingly has no effect at all upon the content? Such utopian optimism clearly flies in the face of the rapid commercialization of the Internet in the late 1990s. Once 'anarchic' patterns of use have been displaced, marginalized, or, more precisely, mapped over dense clusters of shopping and entertainment sites that are, as often as not, affiliated with corporate media.

Subsequent chapters on technology, mass culture as aesthetic practice and the effect of media upon society are equally schematic, ranging widely over the principal themes in each area, yet generally failing to deliver much of a synthetic narrative to bind these themes into a coherent unity. The treatment of technology — probably the best chapter in the book — offers a whirlwind tour through the many different perspectives on media technologies, from McLuhan's technological determinism to the diversity that 'blogging' allegedly brings to contemporary journalism. However, the limits of space condemn Steven to providing little more than a cursory summary of each point without any sustained attempt to assess their competing merits or develop a broader, more inclusive narrative about the relationship between media and technology. The social dynamics that drive technological change, for example, are condensed into ten separate themes — technology as solutions to problems, for realism, for spectacle, for privacy, for crowds, for consumption, for surveillance, for war, for globalization, for democracy — which are each dealt with in a single, short paragraph. Within the limits of such constraints, Steven does an admirable job and he certainly has a knack for condensing complex ideas into a few accessible and lively sentences. But it is ultimately a Pyrrhic victory, probably leaving the reader better informed about the range of debate on technology but ill-equipped to inte-

grate those positions into a more coherent analytic framework. A later discussion of media violence — the principal case study in the media and society chapter — repeats the same pattern: we learn, for example, that some maximize the negative effects of violence and others minimize them, but are left with little guidance as to which perspective is more convincing.

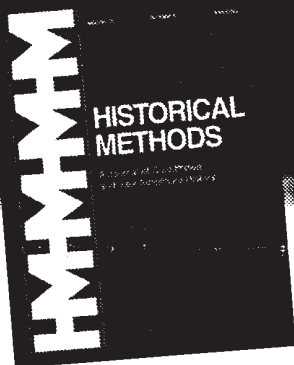
On a more positive note, the great strength of the book is its truly *global* focus. Taking his cue from the cosmopolitan cultural habits of his correspondents in the first chapter, Steven draws upon a wealth of examples from around the world, a refreshing change from most media studies texts that are rooted almost exclusively in the North American and European experience. This comes out most clearly and convincingly in a chapter on art and audiences that considers different ways of thinking about media content. Brief commentaries on Sufi singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Brazilian telenovelas, Chinese rock stars, and Nigerian video

films remind us of the diversity of local culture that often survives and occasionally even prospers within corporate media. Conversely, Steven relentlessly hammers home how coverage of the global South remains a glaring blindspot in the mass media: “in the US and Britain the *Survivor* series, set in Africa, took up most of the air-time for African coverage in 2001!” (125)

In sum, *The No-Nonsense Guide to Global Media* covers a lot of ground in a very short space, producing a text that is valuable as a cursory introduction to both the mass media and the multitude of contradictory perspectives that dominate its study and analysis. Yet this ambitious agenda ultimately compromises the book’s narrative coherence, limiting its utility for readers looking to develop a sustained, critical understanding of global media.

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