The Strait Gate: Thresholds and Power in Western History. By Daniel Jütte (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2015) 384 pp. $40.00

Only recently have social and cultural historians begun to show serious interest in some of the more mundane and ubiquitous features of the built environment. Yet structures, such as balconies, as Cowan has demonstrated, were more than just architectural ornaments; they played a central role in the practices constituting everyday life and, as in the case of the doors and gateways that are the subject of this book, represent an immensely fruitful site for interdisciplinary investigation.1

The “spatial turn” across the social sciences generated an accentuated awareness of the importance of boundaries between different kinds of space—public and private, sacred and profane, rural and urban, domestic and foreign—and their function in political and social life and cultural practices. Moreover, the new focus on “emotion” has heightened awareness of the complex feelings invoked by place. These themes run through Jütte’s book, which addresses the “question of how the door achieved the crucial role it has played in Western culture toward the constitution of the categories of internal and external” (17). In his richly detailed study, Jütte proceeds to analyze the technological and material development of doors and doorways, together with architraves, hinges, knockers, locks, and keys. Ranging from humble domestic portals to magnificent church doors, princely entrances, and imposing city gates, he paints a vivid picture of their stories and their roles in cultural history and everyday life.

Focusing primarily on early modern Europe, with occasional forays deeper into the past and other cultures (notably Japan), Jütte borrows from anthropology and early modern political, religious, social, and cultural history to examine doors not only as physical gateways but also as sites of power, inclusion, and exclusion and as signifiers of separation and hierarchy that created distinctions with deep moral and ideological dimensions.

The doors of the past, like the portals of the contemporary web, were sites of passage and liminality, embodying people’s hopes and anxieties. They represented gateways to other worlds, both material and metaphysical, rich in symbolic meanings—hence their popularity with artists, who often used them as allegorical devices. Historically, doors hosted special events, such as the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg where Martin Luther was supposed to have posted his Ninety-Five Theses. However, as Jütte skilfully shows, even such exceptional events were embedded in the complex network of social and cultural practices constituting everyday life. Not surprisingly, the door is best understood as a “social and cultural convention” embedded in a “wider context of cultural and everyday history” (10).

The Strait Gate constitutes an important contribution to cultural history, illuminating our understanding of the early modern world. Its well-chosen illustrations provide apt support for the text.

Jill Steward
Newcastle University


This short but ambitious book, latest in Bloomsbury’s Writing History series, surveys not only crime but popular and official reactions to it, from ballads to prisons, starting in the eighteenth century and continuing into the present. Although focused mainly on academic historians in Britain and America, Knepper reaches with apparent ease across to Europe, with occasional forays into Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

The book’s organization is as simple as its subject is vast. After a brief introduction and then a chapter on “Legal History” tracing the origin of the genre, the next six chapters are organized around a series of “challenges” to prior approaches: “Statistics, Trends, and Techniques,” mostly borrowed from sociology; “Evolution and Psychoanalysis”; “The British Marxist Historians”; “The City and Its Criminals”; “Foucault’s Project”; and “Women, Gender, and Crime.” Knepper finishes with a nearly anti-climactic (British) “Empire and Colonialism,” most of its findings already anticipated.

Each chapter begins with the pioneering studies of historians and others who challenged existing models, followed in roughly chronological order by responses, whether positive/negative or fundamental/corrective. Knepper weighs gently into these conversations as they proceed, before ending each chapter with a generally balanced and commonsensical “conclusion.”

Knepper’s persuasiveness will depend on the topics, some of which inspire passionate opinions. The use of statistics, despite continuing questions about sources, is clearly here to stay. The conversation about crime and urbanization is by now only a little more controversial; empirical research on several continents has long discredited the older sociological theory that criminal disorder was an inevitable consequence of population growth. But arguments about the remaining subjects are more spirited, and even though both psychoanalysis and Marxism have lost some of their earlier appeal, feminism and gender surely have not. The chapter about Michel Foucault is sui generis: The enigmatic Frenchman seems to flummox Knepper as much as he does the rest of us, as he mirrors his subject with several apparent hedges and self-contradictions.

If any theme may be said to run throughout the book, it is loss of confidence. Whatever their views about the incidence of crime, Whiggish Victorian historians in their official responses were sure that they were
both describing and inspiring institutional progress. The same faith was at least partly shared by positivist sociologists early in the twentieth century. Yet, although some more recent observers still hold to this optimism, most have become far more skeptical, divided even as to what “progress” might mean.

That much of the book should be as useful to students of historiography in general as to students of crime in particular is all the more impressive because Knepper is not a historian but a criminologist by trade. Moreover, his research is remarkable. Whereas most of the other books in the Bloomsbury Writing History series involve edited contributions by a number of specialists, Knepper summarizes, or at least references, hundreds of different sources, from several disciplines, by himself.

Brevity can be the soul of wit, and there is no lack here—a case in point, Foucault has “left historians bewitched, bothered, and bewildered” (147). But compression has its price; given so many authors and arguments squeezed into little more than 200 pages of text, the book has to dismiss many of them in only a sentence or two. The result—this impressive book—is worth it.

Roger Lane
Haverford College

*Why Do We Do What We Do? Motivation in History and the Social Sciences.* By Ramsay MacMullen (Warsaw, Poland, De Gruyter Open Ltd., 2014) 158 pp. $112.00 cloth or free, via open access, at http://www.degruyter.com/viewbooktoc/product/455233

This immensely erudite book ranges over various social- and behavioral-science disciplines to probe affinities with the historical concern for figuring out what motivates people and groups, while also explaining why historical methods are necessarily distinctive. The result is an engaging conversation about disciplinary relations, both positive and negative. It is not, however, as clear-cut or useful a probe of human motivations as the title implies.

MacMullen offers scattered historical examples to illustrate the kinds of motivational concerns that historians should explore in dealing with their interest in change over time—what motivated, say, American revolutionaries or abolitionists or, in Rome, upper-class benefactors of public monuments? Biographical issues are not germane; the focus is on group behaviors, with special attention to non-elite sectors whose impulses may be particularly difficult to probe. Thus, MacMullen lingers on some of the classic sociohistorical studies of crowds.

The book is partly organized into disciplinary segments. The chapter addressing psychology contains useful comments about the limitations inherent in certain cultural databases and the tendency to focus on individuals, but MacMullen evinces a concomitant willingness to utilize
disciplinary findings, particularly about child-rearing results. An ensuing section deals with classic anthropological studies of primitive peoples, again with some reservations about the limitations in findings. MacMullen does not systematically explore sociology, though he utilizes Max Weber and others in his discussions. Economists receive extended treatment, especially regarding an understandable concern about the resort to rational–actor models (and other scientific approaches that assume undue rationality).

The book ultimately singles out the importance of cultural analysis as holding the real keys to human motivation. MacMullen is clearly delighted with the erstwhile cultural turn in his own discipline (the study of classical Greece), though he also explores approaches through moral philosophy. National–character frameworks gain surprisingly favorable treatment, with emphasis on Western and Confucian cases (MacMullen’s wider cosmopolitanism flags to some extent at this point). The cultural approach also justifies some compelling observations about why historians should strive for reasonable explanations rather than some impossible standard of exactitude.

MacMullen’s impressive reading list may favor classic works more than recent ones, though it includes important examples of the latter. Bronislaw Malinowski is cited for Tahiti, but not Robert Levy. Herbert Simon, and the decision–making strategy that he termed satisfying, is conspicuously missing from the survey of the economists. The interest in the cultural approach does not extend to recent efforts in fields like the history of emotions, and neuroscience receives short shrift.

Ultimately, the book suffers from a lack of cohesion. It does not offer any extended case study that combines the various disciplinary contributions into an illustrative effort to elucidate motivational issues. Instead, it offers acute observations about a number of disciplinary emphases. Historians will certainly enjoy the kind words that MacMullen has for their distinctive contributions. The book might usefully circulate in wider interdisciplinary discussions in which historians are involved, though counter-arguments or amendments from the social sciences would not be out of place.

Peter N. Stearns
George Mason University


This book provides a creative and revisionist approach to the subject of abortion. Reacting to the impulse of earlier scholars to impose the Augustinian–inflected decretals of the high Middle Ages back on an earlier period, Mistry challenges previous assumptions that early Christianity emphatically opposed the classical world’s tolerance for abortion. The result is a much less categorical analysis—one not so much concerned
with finding an “answer” to whether abortion was permissible than with drawing a nuanced picture.

Mistry’s approach is avowedly inspired by Peter Biller’s *The Measure of Multitude: Population in Medieval Thought* (New York, 2001) in its focus on what medieval people thought about population, as opposed to what scholars think about medieval demography. By the same token, Mistry aspires to tell “the history of how individuals and communities, ecclesiastical and secular authorities, construed abortion as a social, religious, and political problem . . . and the neglected variety of their responses” (3). Thus, he takes “the worm’s eye view rather than the bird’s eye view” (14)—a method that also accommodates the neglected areas of gender and social status. The end result is a productive ambiance of ambiguity.

Mistry’s analysis is characterized by careful and adroit readings of an unusually wide variety of sources. For instance, in his discussion of classical and late antique society (Chapter 1), one of the most memorable testimonies is from the Christian Tertullian and his shocking description of late-term abortion with its tacit acknowledgement of the possible need for such a procedure. The penitentials’ new-found concern about abortion among the regular and secular clergy (Chapter 4) is complemented by the suggestive appearance of the hagiographic trope of the errant nun whose pregnancy “miraculously” disappears. In Mistry’s hands, Hincmar of Rheims’ famous intervention in the divorce of Lothar II and Theutberga receives novel treatment as a case study of abortion (Chapter 6). The final chapter (Chapter 7) focuses on abortivi (aborted fetuses)—their possible standing in the resurrection and their association with a wide array of mostly negative symbols. Throughout the work, the life of St. Germanus of Paris is used as a leitmotif. The saintly fetus had miraculously resisted its mother’s efforts to terminate her pregnancy through an ingested abortifacient. Mistry’s analysis illuminates subsequent hagiographical efforts to “abort” the miracle itself.

Despite the indeterminacy that necessarily arises from the emphasis on multiple voices, Mistry remains attentive to the important question of change over time. He assesses how perceptions of abortion morphed from a female offense to one that is more gender-inclusive, and he traces the evolution in the motives commonly attributed to abortion—starting with an attempt to conceal sexual transgression or preserve beauty and progressing to a mutual decision by spouses, a clerical avoidance of scandal, and a last resort forced by poverty. He is also sensitive to how the early conflation between contraception and abortion eventually gave way to the ninth-century treatment of contraception as an offense in its own right.

This book is both learned and thought-provoking. The fact that it raises many more questions than it can possibly answer is all to the good.

Dyan Elliott
Northwestern University

In The History of the Union of Great Britain (Edinburgh, 1709), Daniel Defoe wrote about the political phenomenon of the Anglo-Scottish Union. For him, it was not simply about political strategy or reason of state. Instead, he believed that in the complex politics of the day, divine providence was at work: “By what strange Mystery, concurring Providence, like the Wheel within all their Wheels, center’d them all, in Uniting the Nations” (47). Defoe had become convinced that in politics, as well as in commerce, “consequences” were decided not by the “Designs of Parties,” but rather by “The Nature of Things.” In modern terms, life was controlled by “self-organizing systems” and these systems had their own logic. The message was clear: A certain faith was necessary that human events would be guided by God, whether humans wanted it or not.

This is the central argument of Sheehan and Wahrman’s ambitious book. As their title suggests, theirs is an attempt to provide the intellectual and cultural origins of ideas of invisible hands, and market forces. Rather than focusing on economic intellectual history—a vast topic—they instead examine philosophical ideas and scientific movements, all of which expressed the idea that “wheels within wheels” controlled events. Much in the way that Max Weber, in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1905), looked at religious ethics to understand the origins of capitalism, this book looks at scientific culture and what the authors call the idea of “self-organization” to understand the rise of the idea of the invisible hand in in eighteenth–century intellectual, political, and economic life. There are many histories of free-market thought, but this approach is original. Scholars such as Franklin and Daston, among others, examined the ideas and culture of probability in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but no one attempted to show how an entire mindset emerged, across numerous fields, that attributed events not to fortune, as the ancients and humanists had, but to a machine-like order of the universe.¹

Sheehan and Wahrman turn to the history of science to show that thinkers, inspired by René Descartes, Carl Linnaeus, and Isaac Newton, began to look for “God-given motion” in human and animal life, as well as celestial earthly events (33). What is fascinating in this survey is the convergence between the path-breaking natural sciences of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century and their relationship to faith. The order on display in the world, claimed the theologian Ralph Cudworth, following Descartes, came from God, or transpired “magically” (35).

made the planets, animals, and blood move, but it also situated human events. Religion fused with science created a Weltanschauung.

This thinking about order and what drove it came to the fore during the financial bubbles of 1720. Some French and English observers of both the Mississippi and South Sea Bubbles attributed the crashes to the intervention of God, or, as Thomas Greene, the Bishop of Ely, put it, to the “design” of his judgment. Thomas Gordon, the great publicist and anti-corruption crusader, agreed. He wrote that “fraud” was in the “secret springs and machines” and needed to be corrected by “divine regularity.” Disorder, the authors claim, had found its antidote in this causal system, based partly on science and partly on belief. Politics, Gordon inferred, also needed corrections, though in this area, his notion that human transparency and political criticism could also serve to correct the broken clockwork of society was distinctly more secular than Sheehan and Wahrman recognize. Thinkers such as Le Mercier de la Rivière, David Hume, and later Adam Smith echoed the sentiment with regard to economics, espousing the idea that economic “equilibrium . . . establishes itself necessarily” (251). On this basis, Sheehan and Wahrman claim a direct link between this culture of “self-organization” and the theory of laissez faire.

Without question, the authors have provided a fascinating view into the growing culture behind the idea of divine order in the eighteenth century. Yet their claim that this sense of order and its ensuing economic theory emerged from something entirely new in the eighteenth century is not wholly convincing. Missing throughout this whole story is the idea of natural law. From such seventeenth-century thinkers as Jean Domat, Pierre de Boisguilbert, and François Fénelon, to the eighteenth-century physiocrats, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot and Smith, early liberal thinkers shared a belief in an old idea of natural law—that nature had an originating order, given by God, and that economics should follow this law. What they wanted was either an enlightened king, or, in John Locke and Smith’s case, an enlightened population to make decisions in accord with this order, rather than letting corrupt financiers or misguided government ministers interfere. In the French case, a good absolutist king was the only divine hand who could free society and literally laisser faire. To recognize self-organization in the events of world was not a response to chaos, but a demand to recognize a possible pre-existing order. Indeed, when eighteenth-century figures like Turgot referred to the market, they cited divine providence and natural law. The old religious ordering of the world remained the basis of their template.

A book cannot do all things. In this case, the authors have chosen to focus on certain aspects of scientific and intellectual history, leaving out a vast literature of economic history about free markets and natural law. This neglect is a shame. Works by Magnusson and Hakonnsen not only would have strengthened parts of their core argument; they also would have shown that figures like Turgot, Hume, and Smith retained an old religious language of natural law, fused with Enlightenment ideas, and
that theories of natural law were pertinent to their discussion. Rather than applying the modern term *self-organization*, they might have been more mindful of the terms that thinkers like Smith actually used. Yet, whatever flaws this book has, it has the virtues of creativity, original research, and usefulness. It reminds us that economic thought does not emerge in an intellectual vacuum but in a rich and complex culture that spans disciplines and, indeed, cultures.

Jacob Soll
University of Southern California

**Children and Youth in Premodern Scotland.** Edited by Janay Nugent and Elizabeth Ewan (Rochester, N.Y., Boydell Press, 2015) 235 pp. $99.00

This book is a timely contribution to a field currently undergoing a burgeoning resurgence following the relatively dormant period between 1990 and 2010 when responses to the foundational work by Ariès and De Mause during the 1960s and 1970s had dwindled. The contributors’ brief is not only to show the possibilities of recovering the experiences of children and youth from a variety of backgrounds within a wide range of sources but also to illustrate how “the lens of age” can “further our understanding of broader historical issues” (3).

The range of sources and methodologies deployed within this single volume is prodigious, demonstrating that efforts to recover the agency of one of the most frustratingly inarticulate groups in the historical record can be richly repaid. The varied worlds of children and young people are glimpsed in royal archives, debt litigation, letters and diaries, archaeological finds, Gaelic song, lyric literature, family portraiture, newspapers, legal reports and inheritance disputes, and marriage negotiations. The contributors—all experts in the social and cultural history of late medieval and early modern Scotland—bring an impressive range of critical skills to these source materials, involving the interpretation of literary, legal, visual, and material archives. Efforts to include observations of children furthest removed from sites of privilege lay behind two of the collection’s highlights—Stuart Campbell’s chapter about the archaeological remains of children’s playthings, either mass-produced at a distance or locally forged for purchase by households with relatively limited resources, and Dolly MacKinnon’s unearthing of thirty-two slave children/youths in premodern Scotland, many of whom occupied a “liminal space that

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was neither familial nor free” (124), particularly when they were the biological offspring of their masters. All contributors remain mindful of the variation in childhood experiences on the basis of social status, gender, race and ethnicity, familial circumstances, childhood phase, and regional custom, while also seeking to establish the common denominator between children of diverse origins and those within different settings.

The issue of children’s agency is, appropriately, central to the analysis of most of the chapters. The experiences of royal and aristocratic children revolve around their socialization and acculturation into the dynastic aspirations of their milieu. Nugent’s exploration of the fosterage of young Archie Campbell of Argyll between 1633 and 1639, Heather Fraser’s analysis of the fosterage ties celebrated in Gaelic song, and Heather Parker’s discussion of child betrothals during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries make clear that the children involved were far from mere pawns in their parents’ aspirations; instead, they served actively as “the glue” binding elite families together (48).

Privileged offspring, such as the Hunter Blairs (whose representation is covered insightfully in Nel Whiting’s chapter), and kings in waiting (discussed by Mairi Cowan, and Laura E. Walkling and Cynthia J. Neville) were not the only children who were able to negotiate the heavily freighted expectations pertaining to their class and gender. Cathryn Spence’s chapter about young women informally apprenticed to learn the craft of perling (lace making) exposes a source of economic agency in return for servitude—in contrast to the lyrics idealizing young women as future wives and mothers explored by Sarah M. Dunnigan. The complications and contradictions surrounding the relative opportunities for legitimate and illegitimate children, as represented in inheritance law and inheritance disputes (discussed by Katie Barclay), adds a further complicating factor to the dynamics of parental investment and understandings of “natural affection.”

This volume refreshingly situates children within a wide variety of contexts well beyond the parent–child dyad that has traditionally dominated the history of childhood. It alerts us to the multifaceted dimension of intergenerational relations, involving not just kin but also fictive kin and unrelated allies; to the mobility of premodern children; and to the rewards of recovering traces of childhood from as many sources as possible.

Alexandra Shepard
University of Glasgow

$105.00

The editors of this volume stress its contribution to two themes that have informed much recent scholarship about the British imperial world. One
is the mutually constitutive relationship between metropolitan Britain and its overseas territories, often labeled the “new imperial history.” The other is the array of cultural networks that connected the British and other peoples, creating what some have characterized as a “British world.” Integral to both approaches is the notion of culture, which the editors employ in a loose and capacious fashion, identifying it with “leisure, family organization, ideologies, legal cultures, religion, and scientific practice” (2). The eleven chapters that follow address these and other topics in a variety of chronological and geographical contexts, as well as across a range of disciplinary perspectives.

Among the regions of the world that garner attention in the volume are the Caribbean, China, India, the Ottoman Empire, and West Africa. The chronological scope of the volume extends from the mid-eighteenth to the late twentieth century. Contributors approach their subjects from intellectual, legal, literary, economic, and other points of reference. Philippa Levine, whose chapter opens the volume, traces the connections between nakedness and primitiveness in British visual representations of non-Western peoples. Next comes the late Christopher Bayly’s intellectual genealogy of British radicals who were critical of British rule in India and sympathetic toward its subjects. The third chapter, Philip Harling’s study of debates about sugar duties, reveals the tension between free trade and free labor in the post-emancipation British West Indies.

The rest of the book is no less varied. Michelle Tusan examines the growth of British humanitarian diplomacy in the late Ottoman Empire. Martin Wiener compares the legal controversies provoked by two late Victorian officials, one in Trinidad and the other in Bengal. Crosbie traces the development of Irish religious and administrative networks in India. John Carroll discusses what the British residents of early nineteenth-century Canton thought of China and the Chinese. Hampton follows with an analysis of Hong Kong’s reputation as a haven for Victorian economic values no longer welcomed at home in the decades preceding its transfer to China. Christopher Hilliard traces the influence of the Cambridge literary critics Frank R. and Queenie D. Leavis on New Zealanders and other colonial scholars. Tillman Nechtman shows how the nabobs introduced Indian dress, foods, animals, and architectural styles to eighteenth-century Britain. Lastly, Bronwen Everill points to a parallel development in nineteenth-century Sierra Leone, where Afro-Victorians introduced British norms and practices.

There are a number of insightful, rewarding chapters in this volume; taken together, they give a good sampling of current trends in British imperial historiography. Although it is unreasonable to expect the contributions to mesh as seamlessly as the editors’ thematic framework promises, the individual chapters expose strains in that framework, especially when read in conjunction with one another. The question that arises is whether it is meaningful to characterize the “fluid, porous and mutually influencing sites” of cultural engagement that appear so richly abundant throughout the volume as a “British world” (5). In other words,
can the “pluralized nature of ‘British’ imperial culture” be characterized as a “culture” at all (11)? By placing British in scare quotes in the preceding sentence, the editors themselves seem to concede reservations about the premise that underlies the title of this volume.

Dane Kennedy
George Washington University


Fog was an important part of London life from the 1830s until the 1960s, although it existed earlier and has just recently returned. Fog outbreaks can still cause trouble—suspension of transport, accidents, and deaths through breathing its noxious pollution. But it is now far less devastating than the so-called “peasoupers” or “London particulars” of the earlier period. Nonetheless, the present fogs, which are apparently caused by automobile emissions, are hardly insignificant, though they are white rather than black or yellow, far less filthy, and not disposed to cover people and objects with black soot. The earlier great fogs were caused, at first, by the industrial use of coal, but increasingly, as the nineteenth century progressed, by coal’s domestic use. The friendly hearth was much valued and heavily resistant to change. Not until July 5, 1956, when an effective Clean Air Act was passed, did the air begin to clear; even so, a devastating fog arose in December 1962.

Reasons other than the coziness of a coal fire at home probably prevented action earlier. The economics of the situation may not be sufficiently explored in this study. Was it the decline of the coal industry that helped to fuel, so to speak, the interest in diminishing coal’s deleterious effects? Agitation about the need to do something about the really dreadful fogs certainly arose from time to time. After all, fog could bring London traffic to a virtual standstill and cause numerous accidents, and it had a reputation for encouraging crime and increasing the death rate. The only ones who seemed to profit from it were the boys who offered their services to guide people who had lost their way through the miasma—some of them probably pickpockets.

The major thrust of this enjoyable study, however, is not an analysis of the social and economic aspects of the London fog but rather its artistic and primarily literary representations. The book contains a surfeit of murky illustrations of figures and objects dimly perceived. Artists tended to love the aesthetic aspects of the fog, most notably foreign ones such as James McNeill Whistler and Claude Monet; authors tended to depict the fog more negatively as symbolic of evil and conducive to crime, most notably murder. The number of foggy days in London reached its highest number in the 1880s and its most horrific association with murder in Jack the Ripper’s killing spree, although his murders were actually committed on clear nights.
What dominates this study is the discussion of great and minor texts in which London fog plays a major role. Indeed, Corton expounds on the plots of these novels and stories at greater length than is necessary to make her points. She has much to say, appropriately, about fog in Charles Dickens’ masterpiece *Bleak House*, as well as in some of his other novels. Particularly intriguing is the role of fog in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Relevant works by Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and John Galsworthy are also included, along with numerous comparatively unknown novels, detective stories, films, and short stories in which London fog plays an almost always malevolent role. This fog of legend made women especially vulnerable to harm, although sometimes it brought young lovers together.

In a passing comment, Corton claims that coping with fog may have made Londoners better able to cope with the Blitz—a proposition that seems highly unlikely even though Londoners treated both phenomena with a certain degree of stoicism. Corton fails to explain sufficiently why Parliament and the public ignored the serious consequences of fog in their daily life as long as they did. It must have been more than the love of a cheery hearth. She touches on the role of vested interests but fails to explore it in any depth, preferring to survey representations of London fog in art and fiction.

Peter Stansky
Stanford University

*Balfour’s World: Aristocracy and Political Culture at the Fin de Siècle.* By Nancy W. Ellenberger (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2015) 414 pp. $50.00

Arthur Balfour was British prime minister from 1902 to 1905, and he served as foreign secretary in David Lloyd George’s wartime coalition. Today he is remembered, if he is remembered at all, for the “Balfour Declaration” of 1917—a British promise to secure a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine.

In a long political career that lasted from 1874 to 1929, Balfour held the three great appointments (Privy Councillor, Knight of the Garter, Order of Merit) and every senior government post except Home Secretary. A landed Tory but not a reactionary, Balfour was a philosophical skeptic who nevertheless followed Benjamin Disraeli and Randolph Churchill in understanding the democratic need “to strike the popular imagination” (6). His uncle was Robert Cecil (Lord Salisbury), the greatest Conservative of the age, and his godfather was Arthur Wellesley (Duke of Wellington), the greatest conservative of any age. More to the point, in this book at least, Balfour moved in a number of social circles blessed with the grace and opportunity to write letters and keep diaries that yield some sense of what it was like to be young and privileged and modern at the turn of the twentieth century.
Balfour was interesting, and his world was both great and small. But this book is not written as a biography or even as a political biography, though some might see it, at a stretch, as a cultural history. Ellenberger offers it as a history of the emotions as applied to the private lives of Balfour’s closest friends, including Lloyd George, Reginald Herbert (Lord Pembroke), brother and sister George and Mary Wyndham, and sisters Laura and Margot Tennant. The book is not self-consciously interdisciplinary, though Ellenberger can bring in literature and social psychology when she feels inclined. Her sources—personal papers mostly—are trivial only for those who think that private lives do not matter. Her main rhetorical device involves strapping private and public events back to back to see how they swim—a courtship here and a war there, a personal secret and a public policy, a cabinet tiff and a family re-shuffle, and so on. She calls this technique “braided narrative,” which is a nice phrase, but it works only when the narrative intent is strong enough to know what is being braided. She writes toward the end that her main intention was to present “experiments in reconstruction from . . . fragmentary and disparate sources” (299). She indicates at the beginning that her theme is the reconstruction of “a new ‘emotional regime’ in the world of the British political elites” (8)—a “tempered, supple, amiable, animated” interior world, “freed from vehemence” (9). What she means is anyone’s guess. Whatever it is, the book offers no evidence that it is new.

Ellenberger does, however, bring her readers to some fascinating places, including country-house parties, secret assignations, hunt meets, desert campaigns, dinner party tête-à-têtes, and so on. Charles Booth once defined the poor as those who were unable to enjoy private lives; in this book, for once, we are allowed to eavesdrop on the lives of the rich. Ellenberger is at her best when she has a particular venue, or syndrome, to explore. Her 1982 doctoral thesis studied the late Victorian Cambridge “Apostles” (the members of the secret Cambridge Conversazione Society, founded in 1820), whose close bantering world, plus women, provides the model for Balfour’s. She notes various forms of loyalty and connivance. She is good on gentlemanly “habitus.” She provides some astonishing declarations of the heart that remove some of the blush from this as the age of the high imperial stiff upper lip. Women were increasingly powerful in Balfour’s world, feminists or not, as well as extremely important to him personally. As for homosexuality, and rumors of it, as chief secretary for Ireland, Balfour had to suffer a great deal of homophobic attack from political opponents generally seen as more liberal and progressive than he—particularly from Charles Stewart Parnell and the nationalists.

To the insider, much of this world was banal, coded, and managed for effect. To the outsider, it could seem magnificent. That Ellenberger occasionally writes in a star-struck fashion reminds us that she would not be the first American to be impressed by the British aristocracy, alive or dead—or, as in this case, “reconstructed.”

Robert Colls
De Montfort University

In this meticulous study, Devaney uses public spectacles to trace changes in the toleration of religious minorities on the Castilian frontier during the late fifteenth century. Although his overall conclusions do not differ significantly from those of other scholars working in the field, this monograph provides a major methodological contribution to the study of public spectacle, the frontier, and the end of convivencia. The greatest strength of this work is its multidisciplinary approach. Devaney blends insights from various types of sources—royal, local, and private chronicles; archival materials; law codes; town plans; and popular literature among others—to produce a study that illuminates the life and values of the frontier and the deterioration of religious co-existence that went hand in hand with the conquest of the Kingdom of Granada.

In Part I, Devaney reflects on the possibilities and limitations of interpreting medieval spectacles, arguing that an examination of their contexts yields a richer reading of the sources. Thus, the analysis of contemporary discourses about public performance can help to unearth those responses by spectators that went unrecorded by the sources. Likewise, an investigation of public space and its meaning to local residents helps to understand how a spectacle was both defined by its organizers and perceived by its audience.

In Part II, Devaney relies on three well-known and well-documented episodes—public entertainments arranged by Miguel Lucas de Iranzo in 1460s Jaén, the religious procession that sparked an anti-converso pogrom in Córdoba in 1473, and Corpus Christi processions in Murcia of the 1480s and 1490s—to construct a narrative of the progressive erosion of a specific frontier arrangement of “amiable enmity” toward religious minorities. He uses these public events to ascertain the thoughts and values not just of the ruling elites but also of the lower classes, the intended audience for these spectacles. He advances a dynamic model in which spectacles, harnessing popular feeling and validating already held ideas, served to strengthen and extend the marginality of religious minorities.

Devaney is particularly successful in his use of urban history and discussions of the social functions of theater. He considers the urban layout and demographics of the various quarters of Córdoba to highlight the socioreligious background to the pogrom of 1473, extending previous, and more general, scholarly explanations of tensions between Old Christians and conversos in the city. He is able to identify processions, such as the one that sparked the riot, as one of the means through which the Cofradía de la Caridad (Fraternity of Charity) strove to maintain the traditional Old Christian character of a neighborhood that had received a significant influx of New Christians.

In the example of Murcia, Devaney analyzes the processions of Corpus Christi as public spectacle but also as theater, since the parades
included a series of representations of sacred plays along the way. Regrettably, none of the plays have survived; the texts would have provided further richness to an already engaging case study. Nonetheless, through insight drawn from Corpus plays elsewhere in Spain and in England, Devaney is able to show how these festivities figured into the formation of a communal identity that reinforced the dominant role of Christianity.

This exemplary study will be read with profit not only by scholars of the Iberian frontier but by those interested in public spectacle, religious minorities, and urban culture in the later Middle Ages.

Rosa Vidal Doval
Queen Mary University of London


On April 27, 1462, Pius II performed a reverse canonization, condemning Sigismondo Malatesta, lord of Rimini (1416–1468) to hell. This event and the reactions to it produced a black legend regarding Malatesta. But D’Elia sees the “extremely pagan court culture” surrounding Malatesta as “a prime example of the challenge to Christian values inherent in the very idea of Renaissance” (3). He traces the pagan themes that dominated the Malatesta court in art and architecture (particularly the Tempio Malatestiano commissioned from Leon Battista Alberti), but, above all, in the _Hesperis_ of Basino of Parma (1425–1457), a Latin epic poem celebrating Malatesta’s valor in war, and in the treatise on the art of war by Roberto Valturio (1405–1475), depicting Sigismondo as an ideal commander. There are also surviving poems by Basino, Porcellio (1405–1484), and Roberto Orsi (1420–1496), extolling Malatesta’s infatuation with the younger Isotta degli Atti (1432–1474).

The bulk of the book addresses the depiction of Malatesta court culture with a few nods to comparative environments (Ferrara) or sources of humanistic influence (Florence and Venice). D’Elia sees the revival of classical Greek studies as especially important in a community like Rimini, particularly so for the literary models that Basino and Valturio cultivated. Malatesta thrived on the image of himself as a valiant and athletic warrior in the Homeric mold. D’Elia holds the literary image of Sigismondo against his actual exploits, triumphs, and defeats, in the employ of different Italian cities as a well-known _condottiere_, notably in comparison to Ferrante of Naples (1423–1494) and Federico da Montefeltro (1422–1482). Malatesta also cultivated astronomy, Epicureanism, and even pagan sacrifices. All of these achievements were proclaimed by poets like Basino, operating from “the humanist conviction of the power of words to move people and a quasi-religious belief in the divine nature of poetry” (232).
The wealth of detail in the reading of Valturio’s and Basinio’s fairly obscure works tends to overwhelm the historical realities of Malatesta’s rule, perhaps because D’Elia does not discuss it until the last chapter. There we finally learn of Malatesta’s continued defiance of papal pretensions regarding Rimini, his defeat by Montefeltro, and his reception of Rimini back as a fief from the pope, not to mention evidence of a plot by him to kill Pope Paul II (1417–1471). Right up to his death, Sigismondo “continued to live a publicly pagan life, even as he was forced into Christian observance” (273). Yet, even though the contrast between the ecclesiastical ritual condemnation of Malatesta and his pagan style serves D’Elia’s purposes well, paganism was not the reason why Malatesta fell afoul of the pope. Continued defiance of papal fiscal and military demands are what angered a pope who, as D’Elia notes, was himself an accomplished humanist and no stranger to sensuality. The bull accompanying the reverse canonization accused Malatesta of various sexual crimes and of murdering his brother; it did not cite paganistic practices as a justification for his condemnation.

There will be those who may want to contest D’Elia’s notion of the essential paganism of the Renaissance and Sigismondo’s rating “as the epitome of Burckhardt’s ruler, the self-asserting Renaissance individual who crafts his state as a work of art” (283). But they will have to do so by their own analysis of the Tempio Malatestiano and the works of Malatesta’s court poets. D’Elia has mounted a substantial case.

Thomas Kuehn
Clemson University

Communities and Conflicts in the Alps from the Late Middle Ages to Early Modernity. Edited by Marco Bellabarba, Hannes Obermair, and Hitomi Sato (Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 2015), 251 pp. €22.00

Two novelties distinguish this recent collection. They are not methodological, but procedural. First, it has gone global. One of its three editors is Japanese, as are four of the fourteen contributors. Consequently, the other novelty is that its findings, ordinarily presented in Italian and German (as befits the Italo-German Institute where the volume originated), all appear (with assistance from three translators, one of whom is also Japanese) in occasionally opaque European-Union English (the spell-check function preserves several howlers, for example, “week” instead of “weak”).

Thematically, the volume has minimal coherence. Nearly all of the contributors work within the paradigm of “communalism” developed by Blickle and his Swiss student Jon Mathieu. Geographically, communalism undeniably flourished best in Alpine regions; its largest and most durable political successes were the Gray League and the Valais federation. However,

this volume imperfectly conceals the geographical boundaries between its mostly regionally based scholars (four from the Italo-German Institute itself, with three others based in Trent or Bolzano, plus Lombardy and Piedmont) and some of its Japanese contributors, who investigate a few widely separated—and far from Alpine—regions of late medieval and early modern Central Europe, stretching from Basel-land to the border between Bohemia and Bavaria.

Readers will encounter a wide variety of late medieval conflicts of various types, mostly involving communes in the southern Alpine valleys under Tyrolean suzerainty. The causes for these recorded disputes range from pasture rights or unjust tolls to a village miller’s dubious measuring (240–244). Several involve friction about ecclesiastical privileges, including the extremely large area required by a Carthusian foundation in the uplands of an Alpine valley (65–71). In one extreme case, the Bishop of Trent pardoned a village in 1492 after its “unruly youths” had lynched their chaplain and burned his corpse; less than two weeks later, the benefice was entrusted to a new priest, who was duly informed of the reason for this sudden vacancy (99–100). By far the most brutal episode is a witch-hunt in a bilingual Alpine valley near Trent. Its most suggestive finding is that twenty of the twenty-eight condemned women had brothers, sons, or husbands who had supported a major 1503 protest against their episcopal captain; bypassing the Bishop of Trent, its spokesmen appealed directly to the emperor at Innsbruck (122–123). Seldom has a widely disliked rural official been capable of wreaking such rapid and devastating revenge!

Unsurprisingly, the most informative chapter comes from Vicenzio Lavenia, the only conference participant based south of Rome. His exemplary survey of witch-hunting across the Italophone southern Alps (151–164) emphasizes the similarities and differences between a first cycle around 1500, led by ecclesiastical witch-hunters based in northern Italy, and a much later cycle in roughly the same zone, led this time by local secular authorities acting outside the control of a now-skeptical Roman Inquisition. Lavenia also gets credit for suggesting a plausible explanation for the mythologized foundation legend of a cenobium near the Tridentine/Venetian border that had been donated by a noble clan with a remarkable tradition of fraternal hostility (230, n. 27).

William Monter
Northwestern University

_When Movements Anchor Parties: Electoral Alignments in American History._
By Daniel Schlozman (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2015) 288 pp. $95.00 cloth $29.95 paper

Only by aligning with parties can movements create the possibility of not merely influencing policy but of transforming a polity. Only through
parties, Schlozman argues, can social movements in the United States hope to rule. Movements, which are evanescent, rarely lasting for even a generation, must “confront parties” if they are to exercise any lasting influence over law and policy (18). In this confrontation, movements offer ideas, connections to social groups and voters, volunteers, and money. Parties, in return, offer power, or the chance to shape the “contours of politics” (242, 246).

In the nineteenth century, parties had independent access to the resources necessary to obtain and maintain political office: They had their own money, their own organization, and their own benefits (like patronage jobs) with which to reward their supporters. But the reform of the Progressive Era left parties less autonomous and more dependent on outside groups for the resources and connections necessary to win elections. As a result, each of the great parties in American politics came to depend on—and be defined by—a social movement that anchored it in society: The Democratic Party was anchored by labor unions, beginning in the New Deal, and the Republican Party was anchored by white evangelicals, starting with the time of Ronald Reagan.

In a series of exquisitely detailed chapters that form the heart of the book, Schlozman gives a powerful account of the intimate and sometimes tense relationship between the Democrats and labor on the one hand, and the Republican Party and evangelicals on the other. Each is a story of mutual cooptation, in which victory and influence are offset by chastened ideals and frequent frustrations. Schlozman couples his historical account to a simple rational-choice framework wherein movement and party leaders ally only when it is in the interest of each to do so. The tricky thing for all involved is that these interests are difficult to discern, and pursuing them involves risk, judgment, and political skill, or the ability to “leverage opportunities at critical junctures” (106).

As Schlozman’s analysis shows, the alliances of American parties and social movements need not have unfolded as they did. The Democratic Party and the unions might not have found a way to work together. Nor were evangelicals forced to marry the Republican Party. The outcome, which profoundly shaped the electoral alignments that define American politics today, was the product of a series of unforced strategic choices made by movement entrepreneurs and partisans in turn. To amplify the point, Schlozman pays careful attention to a series of movements that failed to anchor parties, such as the abolitionists and Republicans following the Civil War, the Populists and the Democrats at the turn of the twentieth century, and the antiwar activists and Democrats in the 1960s and 1970s.

As this book reveals, the movements that have anchored the Republican and Democratic parties—evangelical churches and unions—are themselves struggling to retain their hold on society. In part because the Democratic Party never succeeded in establishing a legal regime favorable to unions, and in part because unions themselves have come under attack (first by Republicans in power and more recently by both
Democrats and Republicans), the share of the labor force that belongs to unions is at a 100-year low. Amid the forces of secularization, evangelical religion’s hold is also weakening. Unions and churches continue to offer parties brute resources—money, volunteers, and organizing capacity—but they may not be offering the same kind of anchor, or tether into the society, that they did in the past.

Without these anchors, the parties themselves will become like marketing machines—merely “brands” that convey a bit of information but fail to connect to society, thus threatening to sever the state from the interests of ordinary citizens. Movements need parties if they are to have any chance of transforming the polity, and parties need movements if they are to succeed in connecting the distant and formidable institutions of state power to popular purposes.

Will the parties of tomorrow find alliances with anchoring movements? As Schlozman argues in this major contribution to American political development, there is no necessity at work. The answer depends on party leaders and political entrepreneurs with uncommon political skill. Yet, the vitality of democracy depends on such alliances. Without them, as Schlozman shows, citizens lose the power to give definition and purpose to politics.

Russell Muirhead
Dartmouth College


Scholars have studied the Cherokee from many angles, ranging from political, diplomatic, and economic histories to interdisciplinary explorations of race, gender, class, and kinship. Smithers offers a new take on the history of the Cherokee, their experiences as a diasporic people. Focusing on the years between 1756 and 1945, and largely unfolding in linear fashion, The Cherokee Diaspora underscores the importance of migration and settlement. The pressures of settler colonialism prompted many of the Cherokee in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to relocate to different areas of the Southeast, while others moved farther afield beyond the Mississippi River. This vanguard of migration to the West, Smithers argues, occurred on an unprecedented scale, only to be eclipsed by near wholesale displacement during the removal crisis. Migration and resettlement continued thereafter, as individuals, families, and kin groups scattered across the United States during the Civil War—the subsequent period of allotment and assimilation—and later during the termination and relocation era of the twentieth century.

Regardless of era or destination, the Cherokee in diaspora sought to maintain a distinct sense of themselves. Critical to this endeavor was the rise
of the Cherokee nation-state and the multiracial elites who, though often splintered, sought to protect Cherokee peoples and lands. What emerged, Smithers writes, was Cherokee attachment to a new political homeland, the Cherokee Nation in present day Oklahoma, and an ancestral homeland in the southern Appalachians (which also served as a political homeland for the Eastern Band Cherokee). The post-removal political homeland was especially important because it gave the Cherokee across the continent a “political focal point on which to fix their allegiance” (116).

A major sub-theme of the book is how these two homelands became important to Cherokee identity, particularly legal identity, and how Cherokee leaders struggled to define citizenship. This issue assumed greater urgency during and after the Civil War as a shrinking territorial base became threatened by “intruders,” many of whom claimed Cherokee citizenship. Forced “to determine who was and was not Cherokee,” officials enacted laws and erected bureaucratic impediments to inhibit the path to citizenship (175). Smithers notes that race often played a critical factor in deciding the fate of citizenship applications, resulting in many “African Cherokees” being denied both citizenship and a legitimate claim to Cherokee identity (222).

The Cherokee Diaspora covers its extended chronology well, treating removal as only one moment (albeit a traumatic one) of a longer diasporic history and converging the Eastern Band and Cherokee Nation into a singular analysis. Smithers draws upon an array of scholarship and extensive archival research to explore the interconnected concepts of migration, memory, and identity. Interdisciplinary approaches influence the work, but Smithers’ methodology is squarely grounded in the field of history. Scholars from other disciplines will find much to like in this book, but they would also expect more. Anthropologists, for instance, would require such a study to be informed by ethnographic fieldwork and a consideration of contemporary Cherokee voices, thereby making the work more of an “indigenous history.” They would want to know more the contribution of clan membership and identity to a sense of belonging throughout this long era of migration and resettlement. Nevertheless, Smithers provides a nuanced and convincing analysis of the Cherokee diaspora. His account, at its essence, is “a story of how the Cherokee became a diasporic people, and continued to be Cherokee” (24). It is a story well worth telling.

Tyler Boulware
West Virginia University


Before the 1850s, American law treated running water as essentially a public good for the benefit of all landowners along a water course.
The idea of privatizing a stream—of diverting it and selling the water for a profit—was unheard of. That situation changed during the California gold rush, when water was transported and sold to miners far from rivers. The courts, in turn, developed the doctrine of “first possession,” giving a property right in running water to the first claimant—the rule used to this day in Western states.

Kanazawa’s book is about the evolution of first possession and other rules governing water as property. It also integrates two different approaches to the study of legal change—that of law and economics and that of history. He likens the relationship of these disciplines to the Indian parable of the blind men who each touch one part of an elephant only to find that their descriptions of it differ wildly from one another, to the point of being irreconcilable. Kanazawa’s noble goal is to draw on both fields to produce a more complete understanding of the development of water law.

As background, Kanazawa describes mining and mining rules in vivid detail. His history of large-scale projects, such as river turning and tunneling, should become the standard reference. But his account is no mere summary of existing literature; Kanazawa draws on a vast array of original sources to show that, for instance, the miners’ egalitarian rhetoric did not always match the reality on the ground, where small groups managed to control outsize shares of some diggings.

Similarly, Kanazawa offers an accessible but thoughtful introduction to the law and economics view of property law, namely, that it reflects an “implicit cost-benefit calculus, in which new forms of property rights supersede existing ones when it is beneficial” (33). The gold rush is a natural experiment to test this theory, because water requirements changed as mining moved from streams to “dry diggings.” Kanazawa shows that the law did indeed adapt to changing needs. It made little sense to privatize water when the miners worked along streams, using the water on the spot and allowing the runoff to return to the channel. As miners moved to the dry diggings, however, where they relied on water supplied by ditches and flumes, the courts crafted a rule of first possession to support investment in this infrastructure. On the novel question of water pollution, the courts developed the economically sound rule that polluters were strictly liable for harm to downstream neighbors. Dam owners, in contrast, were liable in negligence only for bursting dams; Kanazawa suggests that this view made some sense with regard to miners who took up claims downstream from an existing dam and thus “came to the nuisance.” In sum, he finds that the rules that emerged were “not perfect” but “could have been a lot worse”—a refreshingly nuanced conclusion compared to some Panglossian law and economics positions.

Throughout, Kanazawa shows how interest groups, technology, miners’ assemblies, legislatures, and courts competed and combined to shape the law. The rule of first possession, he writes, became the definitive rule only when the gold rush had ended—when small-scale, labor-intensive
mining declined, to be replaced by large-scale, capital-intensive mining methods.

Kanazawa’s melding of empirical history and law and economics is impressive. At times, however, Kanazawa disregards the many other forces at work and treats the courts as independent and impartial actors struggling to craft efficient property rules. This is but a minor failing, however. In the end, Kanazawa’s emphasis on the complex factors shaping water law, in the 1850s and also in today’s California, is compelling.

Andrea McDowell
Seton Hall University

Strangers on Familiar Soil: Rediscovering the Chile-California Connection. By Edward Dallam Melillo (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2015) 325 pp. $40.00

Anyone who has been to both California’s Central Valley and central Chile can attest to their similarities in climate and terrain. In Strangers on Familiar Soil, Melillo digs deeply to demonstrate the important relationship between the two places and the lasting impact—often unacknowledged—that each has had on the other.

The book knocks down myths. California and Chile, despite their claims of exceptionalism, are more connected than their leaders like to claim. Each claims an ethos of independence, but each depended on the other for development. Chileans were central to building the highly diverse California metropolis of San Francisco, which was flooded by migrants from virtually everywhere because of gold. A particular sector of the city called Chilecito, for its concentration of Chileans, even became a target for white criminals. But whites also quickly realized that Chileans knew more about mineral extraction than they did and started to copy their techniques. As one miner from Long Island described in 1849, “been diggin with a Chilian, they understand mining very well” (73). Simultaneously, the concept of manifest destiny gained appeal in the United States and, flying in the face of reality, it denied the importance of any foreign influence.

Melillo shows how this history has become invisible—how Anglos in San Francisco ate bread made with Chilean wheat, planted Chilean alfalfa, and went to work in buildings constructed by Chilean laborers. But within a short amount of time, Californians took such changes for granted, proclaimed progress as U.S.-driven, and forgot their Chilean origins. Chileans (like other foreigners, especially Mexicans) were also harassed, attacked, and lynched, all in the name of civilization. Indeed, the tone of the book reflects such injustices, lamenting that Chile received the short end of the transnational stick. Californians brought
wine knowledge and Monterey pines to Chile, for example, but those gifts had negative social and environmental repercussions. Californian academics in the 1960s celebrated scientific exchanges in which they received more than they gave (though, to be fair, they called for their termination after the 1973 coup). As Melillo notes, “Chile’s landscapes underwent profound transformations to supply the ingredients for California’s increasingly ravenous metabolic cycles” (200).

The biggest drawback to an otherwise fascinating book is that the main argument is sometimes overstated. It is debatable whether Henry Meiggs, who for a short time lived in California, was singularly responsible (as a “human vector”) for completely reshaping the Chilean working class (113). In other cases, like the Chicago Boys, there is really no California connection at all. Melillo concludes with a call for scholars to take transnational connections and diasporas more explicitly into account when analyzing putatively domestic issues. That point is well taken, and the book serves as a potential model for how to do so.

Gregory Weeks
University of North Carolina, Charlotte

**Bone Rooms: From Scientific Racism to Human Prehistory.** By Samuel J. Redman (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2016) 373 pp. $29.95

Acquisition, curation, repatriation, and reburial—these are but a few of the elements in the controversies that surround human remains and museums. Redman explores this complex history, beginning with the expanding nineteenth-century project to understand human diversity and the more remote past. The resulting collections—from battlefields, excavations of Native American cemeteries, and private estates—found their way into museum “bone rooms,” where experts gathered and organized bones from all parts of the world. The roster of often-competitive players includes such luminaries as Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber, and Ernest Hooten, as well as Ales Hrdlicka, who amassed the Smithsonian Institution’s vast collection.

Initially, much of the research revolved around eugenics. But, as Redman points out, institutional histories and the collection of human remains were closely connected, as were visitors’ reactions to the skeletons on display in museums. He begins with two chapters covering discoveries that captivated broader audiences, such as studies of race. Then he examines the history of the medicine-based Mutter Museum in Philadelphia and the San Diego Museum of Man, which was thought, in 1915, to have the largest exhibition involving race and prehistory—one of the first attempts to blend artistic representations of anthropological ideas with actual skeletons and mummies. Human remains in museums, in fact, provided a striking mirror of the rise and fall of scientific racism in the
United States. As theories of racial classification became discredited, however, scholars shifted their focus to a longer view of human history. New discoveries changed ideas about anthropology both inside and outside museums.

Redman’s intent is to provide a context for the history of “bone rooms.” He does not enter fully into the current debates surrounding such collections, nor into the ethical issues that surround them. The numbers of Native Americans alone that were in the collections are staggering—about 500,000 in U.S. museums alone and another half-milllion in European institutions. The early history of these remains was dramatic; their acquisitions were often motivated by ego and intellect and sometimes by an unethical desire to acquire more skeletal material than competitors could. Today, we tend to view the complex moral issues surrounding such procedures as repatriation more in terms of a craving for scientific knowledge than a mere lust for accumulating specimens. Whether such exhibits as Body Worlds, or the displays in Las Vegas casinos, are morally acceptable ways to treat deceased humans in the first place is another matter altogether. We have inherited a delicate legacy. How do we show respect, acquire new knowledge from human remains, and also redress past wrongs?

Bone Rooms is a beautifully written, meticulously documented analysis of a complex and little-known history involving scientists, human remains, and museum visitors. Redman provides us with the murky historical background that underlies our ongoing study of humanity. We could not ask for a better introduction to a sometimes shameful chapter in our scientific past, often fueled as much by pride and greed as by scientific inquiry. Both the general reader and any scholar working on human remains will enjoy this important book.

Brian Fagan
University of California, Santa Barbara

Making the Empire Work: Labor and United States Imperialism. Edited by Daniel E. Bender and Jana K. Lipman (New York, New York University Press, 2015) 374 pp. $89.00 cloth $35.00 paper

Scholarship about the history of U.S. empire has proliferated of late, but this volume has an innovative contribution to make. As the title suggests, it aims to bring together U.S. labor history and imperial history, centering the experiences of workers across the U.S. empire while bringing a transnational perspective to U.S. labor history, traditionally focused on the domestic realm (or, in this context, the metropole). U.S. Empire, as the editors explain in their excellent introduction, is best seen not as a collection of territories but as a far-flung system of labor mobilization and coercive management. Following in the well-trodden footsteps of William Appleman Williams, the editors and contributors
frame U.S. empire primarily in economic terms, as an empire of capitalist expansion.¹ But unlike Williams and his early followers, who focused primarily on the machinations of the capitalists and their enablers in Washington, this volume seeks to recover the perspectives of the millions of workers who labored in U.S. capital’s expanding domains.

This volume, it should be noted, does not present the U.S. empire as ubiquitous, all-powerful, or monolithic. Rather, its contributors, a group of scholars working at the cutting edge of this field, trace in fine-grained detail the contours of the racialized regimes of labor recruitment, circulation, and management, that were constructed to harvest the fruits of the tropics or to build an archipelago of U.S. military bases in the Pacific. This focus on imperial labor systems provides a useful framework for rethinking the relationship between labor and immigration histories, as workers circulating into and around the U.S. empire became part of a “multitiered system of labor relations” in which “domestic” and “foreign” spaces and workers were intimately entwined (19). This move also shifts the spotlight away from (usually white) industrial workers on which labor history has traditionally focused and turns it toward the agricultural laborers who predominated in colonial spaces, as well as the military labor (and attendant sexual work) that underlay the United States’ growing global military complex. For these workers the empire represented, at different times and places, both opportunity and oppression, and their responses to it ran the gamut from calculated collaboration to outright resistance.

This volume focuses on the circum-Caribbean and Pacific spaces that are the typical historiographical stomping ground of writings on United States empire. Hence it has little to say about such crucial regions as Southeast Asia (besides the Philippines) or the Middle East. (Has there been an industry more central to U.S. power in modern times than petroleum?) Moreover, despite the volume’s ambition to de-throne 1898 as the fulcrum of U.S. imperial history, most of the chapters hew to the traditional timeframe of the historiography of U.S. empire, from the end of the Civil War to the 1930s, leaving readers to wonder what happened to those labor regimes, and the power structures that underlay them, in the post–World War II era. Nevertheless, the book succeeds in offering a rich, illuminating view of colonial labor within the U.S. empire. It is recommended to anyone interested in the history of U.S. regimes of labor and migration as well as in the history of the United States in the world more broadly.

Erez Manela
Harvard University

Unterman’s *Uncle Sam’s Policeman* is a delightful romp through more than 100 years of the United States’ pursuit of fugitives from the law. She begins her study by exploring the ways in which the United States’ determination to follow the rule of law in the 1880s allowed embezzlers, for the most part, to walk across the Detroit–Windsor (or El Paso–Ciudad Juárez) bridge to evade the rule of law. She ends her study a century later when the United States adopted the practice of extraordinary rendition (extralegal kidnapping) in order to place potential terrorists into black sites and locations such as Guantanamo that are beyond the reach of the law.

The meat of the book focuses on the crimes of mobility that emerged as a result of new technologies that facilitated greater flows of goods and higher levels of economic activity. On the one hand, the availability and accessibility of railroads and steamships increased the likelihood that employees would engage in opportunistic embezzlement. On the other hand, telegraphs, passports, photographs, and fingerprint cards helped policing agencies to catch criminals if they did not get too much of a head start. Who had the advantage, state agents or fugitives? The answer was neither. Even though U.S. law actually prevented the U.S. government from pursuing fugitives across borders, it did not prevent U.S. corporations from hiring private detectives, such as the Pinkertons, to do so. These detectives often engaged in a series of confidence scams, such as hiring women to seduce male fugitives into crossing back into the United States where they could be apprehended.

Canada and Mexico (the locations to which fugitives were most likely to flee) and other Latin American countries were not necessarily in favor of changing their laws to make extradition back to the United States easier. Certain Latin American countries, like Honduras, even viewed embezzlers as excellent sources of investment capital, often actively encouraging them to stay. The United States responded to the limitations imposed by its law by trying to establish a series of bilateral extradition treaties, envisioned through the lens of the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary. By creating an “empire of justice,” the United States aimed to enforce the rule of law around the world (or at least the Western Hemisphere). Unterman effectively explores the terms under which the United States eventually permitted the extradition of its own citizens to other countries as well as the assumptions about whiteness and U.S. nationality that led to a backlash against the extradition of white U.S. citizens to developing countries, which were often viewed as incapable of providing justice for them.

Unterman’s book makes two important contributions. First, it demonstrates that the United States and its allies began to interpret laws to affect policy outcomes, regardless of the original intent. The move
from extradition to deportation, for example, shifted the grounds for expelling fugitives from the judicial to the executive branch, speeding up transfer even as it undermined due process. Second, the book alters the focus from the ways in which immigrants, terrorists, and others were able to penetrate the sovereignty of the United States to the ways in which the United States has increasingly and routinely violated the sovereignty of other nations, even when doing so was against international law. Back during the gilded age, the United States was loath to commit such intrusions simply as a matter of principle.

Andreae Marak
Governors State University

By Dan Bouk (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2015) 304 pp. $40.00

This book is about the uses of “big data” in the rapidly expanding insurance industry a century ago in the United States. Appropriately, the author is a member of the working group Historicizing Big Data at the Max Planck Institute. The big data from a century ago is an insurance company’s collection of information about individual applicants that was used to decide who should receive a policy and at what price. The detailed information, which often included standardized medical and credit reports, was stored in summary form on individual file cards. This process, according to Bouk, gave rise to the “statistical individual”—a construct much in evidence today.

Bouk based his study on the archive records of the Equitable Life Assurance Society of America and the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York, as well as the papers of individuals who were central to the big-data enterprise in the insurance industry—Louis Dublin, Irving Fisher, Frederick Hoffman, and Alfred Lotka. Bouk complements this material with an extensive list of secondary sources.

The effects of the analysis that insurance companies performed on the data were many and varied, and Bouk covers them well. On the negative side, the data collected contributed to discrimination against blacks since the statistics based on them showed blacks to be poor insurance risks. Also included in the class of poor insurance risks were large numbers of people in the southern states; decidedly fewer insurance policies were offered in that area of the country. On the positive side, these data benefited the movement to promote better health, which troubled those insurance companies that saw their purpose as solely selling insurance. Others felt that an activist approach would change the mortality

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1 I receive personalized coupons from my local grocery store based on my buying patterns during the past few years.
patterns in the population, leading to longer lives and thus to increased premium income for, and deferred payouts by, the companies. Insurance-data analysis also stimulated new medical insights. Insurance underwriters traditionally rated thin people as bad risks, under the impression that thinness was a strong indicator of tuberculosis, until the new data showed otherwise; being overweight was a bigger risk factor with regard to mortality.

The collection and analysis of yesterday’s big data (which pales in comparison with today’s) by the insurance companies relied on such new technologies as the Hollerith card sorting machine, index cards, the typewriter, and even carbon paper that enabled paper copies. Not unlike the case today, the big data of the past did not necessarily drive the technology; the Hollerith machine was developed originally to process the 1890 census of the United States. Bouk, however, allot’s only a few sentences to the importance of technology; the focus of the book is on the effect of the data collected, not the technology behind it.

Readers versed in statistical methods will find Bouk’s treatment of the Armstrong Investigation of 1905 into insurance practices interesting. The actuary Emory McClintock came under fire for his use of arcane smoothing methods, especially in determining income related to the distribution of dividends to policyholders. The smoothing methods pioneered by actuaries like McClintock and heavily criticized in the investigation have been refined and developed over the past 100 years to become a key tool in a statistician’s toolbox. Such discussions make How Our Days Became Numbered well worth the read.

David Bellhouse
University of Western Ontario


Most students of international politics assume that states’ foreign and security policies are calculated expressions of rational self-interest. Those of a “realist” bent privilege national interest and systemic pressures and constraints, such as the international distribution of power; “liberals” privilege the interests of powerful domestic actors; Marxists privilege the interests of economic classes; a few privilege the interests of specific individuals, primarily national leaders. Almost everyone assumes that narratives do not matter—that they are outcomes or epiphenomena of policy, not causally significant permissive conditions or constraints.

Krebs disagrees. In this fascinating and erudite book, he argues that no foreign or security policy is possible that is inconsistent with a dominant social narrative about what is important and what is prudent. A dominant narrative is “a realized hegemonic project,” “a social fact, not
an object of active political challenge” (5). In “routine times,” debates about policy take place within the dominant narrative; in “unsettled times,” competing narratives vie for dominance. What predicts success, Krebs argues, is a function of three factors—structural context; the institutionally determined narrative authority of the contestants; and the rhetorical strategies that contestants adopt, which, broadly speaking, fall into either an “argument mode” or a “storytelling mode.” Argument works best in settled times; storytelling works best in unsettled times (42). Counterintuitively, Krebs claims that policy failure can reinforce a dominant narrative and policy success can open space for a new one—a pattern, he insists, that can be rendered intelligible by means of the “linguistic turn” that he advocates and seeks to demonstrate, but not by competing analytical approaches.

To buttress his claims, Krebs uses a combination of detailed case studies—successful and unsuccessful attempts by U.S. presidents (institutionally authoritative narrators) to advocate specific policies and/or change dominant narratives—and both qualitative and quantitative content analysis. The case studies include Franklin Roosevelt’s attempts to convince the American people to embrace a more interventionist role in the early stages of World War II, and Ronald Reagan’s attempts to legitimate his efforts to undermine the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Krebs uses quantitative content analysis of presidential statements and speeches to assess the rhetorical mode, and qualitative content analysis of editorials in *The New York Times* (generally liberal editorially) and *The Chicago Tribune* (generally conservative) to gauge the durability of what he calls “the Cold War consensus.” He uses less-detailed discussions of key events—such as the Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnam War, and the attack of 9/11—to flesh out the analysis of key inflection points, and counterfactual argument to reinforce his assessments of the role that rhetorical strategies played in both successes and failures. Given the sheer number of moving parts in Krebs’ orrery, such methodological eclecticism is both appropriate and welcome.

Readers will judge for themselves whether, at the end of the day, Krebs has made a compelling case. I agree that narrative context is important and that presidential rhetoric can make a difference—though whether major or marginal is difficult to decide. What might give readers most pause is Krebs’ energetic attempts to discount the explanatory power of psychology (for example, 55, 93). Language is, after all, software; psychology, being hardware, is more basic. Cognitive and motivational psychology provide ample resources for making sense of people’s receptivity to competing narratives, which are, in fact, merely “schemata” by another

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1 Krebs rightly qualifies this statement when he notes that “no narrative is classically hegemonic, in the sense of rendering resistance impossible”; that “narratives are not nearly as coherent as they claim”; that they are “necessarily fragile”; and that “narrative stability is relative and temporary” (21).
name. Cognitive and motivational psychology also immediately render intelligible such phenomena as an escalating commitment to a losing course of action, which, contrary to Krebs’ account, is neither counterintuitive nor poorly understood. Social psychology provides the resources for “scaling up” individual psychology. My general impression was that Krebs treats psychology as an enemy when it is, in fact, an ally. But perhaps I would have been more receptive to Krebs’ counter-hegemonic analysis in these unsettled intellectual times had he employed more of a storytelling than an argumentative mode.

David A. Welch
Balsillie School of International Affairs
University of Waterloo


What do environmental impact statements, unit pricing at supermarkets, and the torture memos of the George W. Bush administration have in common? According to Schudson, they are all examples of information derived from what he calls “the new culture of disclosure” that developed during the 1960s and early 1970s (276). Although we take for granted that citizens have a right to know what their government is doing, that demand for transparency has a surprisingly recent provenance—one that this provocative study sets out to explore.

Now a value in itself, openness affects more areas of contemporary life than is immediately apparent. It is, Schudson contends, responsible for phenomena that range from the pressure for accountability within the federal bureaucracy to the willingness of physicians to tell patients that they have cancer. Not only has this new call for candor brought hitherto taboo subjects into the public domain; it has also transformed the American polity. We currently live under what Schudson and a few political scientists describe as a “monitory democracy,” in which the public keeps a constant eye on the people in power (25, 230).

Significantly, despite its emergence during the political upheavals of the 1960s, transparency was not an objective of that decade’s social movements; rather, it was, in many respects, the inadvertent by-product of other reforms that used disclosure as a tool for constraining the power of the federal government. Its progenitors were little known politicians

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and mid-level bureaucrats—“the second lieutenants,” as Schudson calls them (270). The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), for example, was the baby of John Moss, a fairly obscure California congressman who had been campaigning against official secrecy since 1955. A concurrent drive by other liberals to democratize Congress weakened the power of reactionary southerners by eliminating secret voting in the House of Representatives.

Schudson’s other case studies reinforce his argument that sunshine was never a goal in itself. With regard to consumer and environmental protections, for example, although sporadic scandals brought attention to the need for action, there were no powerful interest groups calling for greater transparency. Rather, the reverse took place: Increasing access to information allowed reform movements to flourish.

Credit for the new regime also goes to the press—newly analytical and, by the mid-1960s, no longer deferential to the powers that be. In this context, Schudson’s argument becomes circular; he attributes much of the success of his behind-the-scenes heroes to their ability to manipulate the media. Moreover, despite acknowledging that the greater access to information both provoked and benefited from judicial action, Schudson pays insufficient attention to litigation as a key political actor.

In the final analysis, Schudson believes that the spread of critical thinking that greater exposure to higher education produced in the 1960s explains why the culture of disclosure developed when it did. This thesis may be provocative, but it is hardly persuasive. If only the academic community had that much power. Even so, in this thoughtful and imaginative account of a previously overlooked transformation, Schudson has given us much food for thought.

Ellen Schrecker
Yeshiva University


This far-ranging book traces the origins of Mestizo culture in colonial Mexico. MacLachlan follows the parallel trajectories of the two imperial civilizations of Meso-America and Spain from their tribal beginnings to their establishment as dominant regional powers. He examines the early migrations and political and economic developments of each civilization, and also looks closely at religion as a determinant of culture. The Spanish invasion disrupted Meso-American culture and set the course for the emergence of Mestizo culture.

In this synthetic, interpretive work, culture and religion are the most prominent players. MacLachlan argues that the imposition of language was the “key transformative violence associated with imperialism” and that religion and language “express a unique consciousness
that governs all else” (7). In addition, MacLachlan explicitly states that race was not a determinative factor in the course of history. According to him, Mexico eventually became a “unifying culture, not a racial one . . . . Purity of blood was secondary to belief and culture” (249). In fact, the book does not include a strong argument for why Europeans became dominant over time, or why the new Mestizo culture in Mexico had overwhelmingly Christian features. The chapter about the conquest contains suggestions that the Europeans possessed superior technology, but MacLachlan does not claim that this superiority accounted for European success. He credits Hernán Cortés with several astute decisions as a diplomat and a soldier, but also with mistakes. At several points, MacLachlan infers that a slightly different decision on the part of the Aztecs could have ended the Spanish threat in Mexico.

MacLachlan describes the political economy of the Aztecs as exploitative, averring that it did not foster economic development. The Aztecs extracted tribute from subject tribes without returning services of any kind. Their empire was unsustainable. By comparison, MacLachlan argues, the early sixteenth-century economy under Spanish control provided attractive economic opportunities to indigenous peoples. These new opportunities may well have been profitable enough to make revolt unlikely, even though the native population numbered 25 million and the Spaniards only a few hundred thousand.

According to MacLachlan, the most problematical policy area was the Spaniards’ insistence that the natives convert to Christianity. At the same time, the Crown disallowed natives to become part of the priesthood, leaving the indigenous peoples—who were intrinsically religious—essentially orphaned. In cultural terms, MacLachlan sees the handling of religion as a fatal mistake, the result of which was the survival of many prehispanic beliefs and cultural traits within a hybrid Mestizo culture. Yet, the charge that the imposition of Catholicism on Meso-America was mishandled seems contradictory since MacLachlan later points out the religious parallels between the two civilizations: “The religious similarities, disconnected from an understanding of the underlying theology, made confusion inevitable but facilitated amalgamation” (251). The priesthood aside, this complementary aspect of the two cultures would seem to provide a more positive narrative for the emergence of the Mestizo culture.

MacLachlan suggests that the success of Spanish dominance owed much to the demographic decline in the mid-sixteenth century from disease. However, a contrary view, persuasively argued by Kellogg, claims that neither disease nor force can account for the Spanish level of dominance so much as cultural hegemony, which she demonstrates to have occurred in the areas of law and domestic life.¹

This book takes a disinterested view in the historical events leading to the conquest. It posits neither civilization as intrinsically correct or superior. Instead, MacLachlan looks at the historical events and cultural developments in terms of how each civilization pursued its own interests to achieve a stronger and more efficient state—a healthy perspective for students who wish to understand the emergence of Mestizo Mexico.

Elizabeth Kuznesof
University of Kansas


Placing the 1843 conspiracies and rebellions of rural slaves and free blacks that occurred in Matanzas in the context of the black Atlantic, Finch explores the actions and ideology of this segment of the African diaspora and the causes of the insurgencies that evolved into the most important and studied Cuban revolt, that of the 1844 “Escalera.” Her sources are Cuban, Spanish, and American archival materials, including the correspondence of colonial functionaries; the personal papers of slave owners; and the testimonies of plantation slaves and free black insurgents.

Finch believes that the “Bemba,” “Triunvirato,” and Escalera rebellions illuminate how the slaves’ social institutions, culture, and gender are critical in explaining the grassroots organizations of resistance that slaves created in Cuba and other territories of the Americas. Hence, Rethinking Slave Rebellion engages the conversations about slave resistance in the British and French Caribbean, informed by Craton’s Testing the Chains, Hart’s Slaves Who Abolished Slavery, and Fick’s The Making of Haiti.1 These writers revealed the autonomous agency of plantation slaves in constructing networks and organizations to make revolution.

Finch’s study also adds to the works on slave resistance in Cuba, especially Paquette’s Sugar is Made with Blood and Barcia Paz’s The Great African Slave Revolt of 1825.2 Although her methodology and arguments are similar to those of Barcia, she locates the central difference between her study and the contributions of these scholars in her use of gender analysis in unpacking not only the composition of the black protest movements of 1843 and 1844 but also their origins and objectives.


Underlining the contributions made by urban slaves and free blacks for attacking the institution of slavery in Cuba, as advanced by Paquette and other historians, Finch counters with an argument that emphasizes rural slaves and free people of color as an active cohort of conspirators and rebels. Animated by the local and regional clandestine organizations that linked transatlantic networks and events that sought to destroy both slavery and colonialism, rural slaves and free blacks, along with their leaders, “engaged in dangerous talk, subversive ideas, and rebellious plans . . . [and] built the growing insurgent project, shaping its contours in radical ways” (7). Thus did they inspire the men and women of the Escalera conspiracy of 1844 and, according to Finch, spark the beginnings of the anticolonial ideology of Cuban nationalism.

After Cuba became dependent on sugar cane by the 1840s, Finch discusses how the plantocracy used African ethnicity to select slaves. Unknown to the slave owners, however, some ethnic groups from the Kongo-Angolan and the Niger-Cross River Delta areas arrived with a military culture that facilitated the projects of resistance between 1843 and 1844. Finch discovered that some of the leaders of the revolts in Cuba had served militarily in Africa and had even obtained prestigious military ranks and titles. In Cuba, those on the plantation recognized their privileged military rank and supported their leadership. Appointed by the slaves, bozal military leaders organized and led the movement that opposed the “carceral” plantation regime’s routine acts of brutality, horror, and terror.

In spite of the oppressive and repressive nature of African slavery, rural slaves and freed blacks constructed their own worlds. The geographical mobility of privileged and artisanal slaves and free men and women—including coachmen, domestics, muleteers, and even some field slaves—allowed them to establish hidden networks to spread their ideology. They were permitted to move throughout Matanzas, particularly on Sundays and after sunset, gathering to propitiate and venerate their ancestral deities with song and dance. Finch maintains that these sites also became venues of conspiracy.

Finch’s incorporation of gender, especially the role and voice of African females, helps us to “rethink slave rebellion in Cuba.” Finch claims that the revolts of 1843 and 1844 occurred not only because of the poor material conditions in Matanzas but also because of female slaves’ refusal to allow their capture, their internment on the African coast, and their “hellish journey across the Atlantic” to be forgotten (146). African women, particularly those who practiced brujería or witchcraft on the plantations and in the towns as leaders of the cabildos de naciones de afro-cubanos, provided the subversives with the spiritual ideology of invincibility. Finch argues that the uprisings of 1843 saw 500 slaves burn the symbols and structures of their oppression and kill the individuals responsible for their subjugation and exploitation. These smaller revolts of 1843 paved the way for the Escalera conspiracy and

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rebellion in 1844, as well as the intense paranoia among whites, which caused them to exaggerate the number of blacks involved in the uprisings and to punish and terrorize the black communities of Matanzas and Havana indiscriminately in 1844.

Finch corrects the assumptions of previous historians who argued that foreign agents, either Haitian or British abolitionists and urban free blacks, were responsible for the revolts of 1843 and 1844, thus supporting Barcia’s study. However, instead of juxtaposing her study against Paquette’s work, Finch’s analysis and methodology would have been more effective if placed against Reid-Vazquez’s more recent _The Year of the Lash_.

Reid-Vasquez reproduced a report written by Captain General Leopoldo O’Donnell to the Spanish Minister of Overseas Affair, stating “that the vast conspiracy that tried to raise a black rebellion was led by a considerable number of [urban] free blacks and mulatto men of color.” Notwithstanding this lapse, _Rethinking Slave Rebellion in Cuba_ should find a strong readership in scholars of black resistance and ideology in the Americas.

Philip A. Howard
University of Houston

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As she explains in an honest and informative introduction, Penvenne wrote her most recent book to critique earlier labor histories of Mozambique, including her own. Drawing on archival sources and concentrating on leading industries, these prior works were histories of men. Reflecting on her writings and on her experiences in Mozambique, Penvenne decided to remedy the gender imbalance. The challenges of defining the topic and refining a methodology to unearth it remained. In this book, Penvenne met those challenges by taking women’s stories seriously. As a result, she has delivered a warm and generous narrative.

Penvenne is convincingly critical about the blind spots and inaccuracies in state-produced archival sources. Oral testimonies are more difficult to analyze than archival or documentary sources and more difficult to understand, but the lessons are more valuable. Her methodology to uncover the details about female workers was to listen to them as “narrators,” not merely “informants.” This strategy involved filtering their positions about decolonization and their experiences of the postcolonial moment to develop a deeper understanding of their earlier lives. The

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stories told by individual women are diverse, revealing experiences both happy and tragic, a range of different values, and changes from one generation to the next. Women remembered gossip and nicknames, as well as their own lives. Their recollections revolved around their struggles and achievements. In addition to interviews, Penvenne analyzes four “touchstone” songs, because women might sing what they will not always say. The songs are laments about hard circumstances and provide shared commentary and meanings. Through this method, women, their work, and their values take their rightful place with the androcentric and state-centric narratives that have thus far been normative. Penvenne is not alone in this effort, but her introduction and conclusion explicated her methodology particularly well.

The topic of the book is more innovative than the title or the cover photograph of factory workers suggests. The story of women’s labor certainly includes politics of the shop floor, but women workers’ explanations of their paid labor are rooted in their experiences on farms and in families. In a fresh move, Penvenne includes movement within household, gift, and informal economies as a form of labor migration. Affirming that these realms were as political as wage labor and relations with the state makes women’s stories legible within the customary frameworks. Abusive husbands, dead parents, and helpful siblings were crucial to decisions to migrate. Especially powerful was the imperative to care for children, discussed in the chapter “Children Are Not Like Chickens.” Penvenne deploys the poignant stories about mothers’ faithfulness to explain participation in the formal and informal economies.

When women migrated to the city, “to take up a new kind of hoe,” they formed new alliances there, but mothers were sometimes desperately alone. Fortunate families combined work in the informal economy—selling food, wood, and alcohol—with labor in the cashew-processing industry. Managers, especially the South Asian merchant Jiva Jamal Tharani, could be paternal and sympathetic. “Tarana” became the name for a good employer and for the entire economic sector. The women experienced increasing intervention by the state, which did not see the value in their social capital. That failure of recognition permeated the archival record and academic analyses, until now.

But attention to management and the state recedes throughout the course of the book. Rather, this history concerns the aspirations and strategies of women in often-hard times. “Poverty, death, and irresponsibility undercut aspirations for respect, discipline, and harmony in people’s lives. Some things one could not change or escape, but since ‘somebody had to take care of those children,’ many women carried on in pursuit of the most dignified harmonious accommodation they could manage. It was never easy” (208).

Nancy J. Jacobs
Brown University
Missions as institutions, their people as actors, and their archives as sources have long been important in Africa’s historiography. Studying “the missionary factor,” historians have examined and argued about missions’ political economy and hegemonic ideologies, challenging rigid structural interpretations by pointing to the diversity of meanings that missions and Christianity assumed in local contexts. Urban-Mead’s examination of the marginal Brethren in Christ mission nevertheless offers something new in its thoughtful biographies of six Ndebele Christians, each illuminating nuances of faith, social change, and personal identity.

This biographical approach examines practices, not theology or regulations, and adds subjective experiences of piety, and complicated variables of gender and lifecycle, to our understanding of colonial change. In Urban-Mead’s approach, male and female believers felt the call and sang songs of faith even as the men practiced polygyny, and the women had babies outside marriage. The piety at the center of the Brethren’s experience occurred in a world with strict expectations regarding lifecycle and gender roles and intensely exploitive racial laws regarding land and opportunities. Life in the mission thus required elaborate negotiation and compromise; adherence to key church rules varied by individual and by gender.

Reconstructing these lives, Urban-Mead combines conventional archival work in official records with repeated interviews of key individuals and their families. By seeking not simply the official record, but the unofficial knowledge held in Christian networks, she expresses, and sometimes disputes, hagiographic traditions within the Brethren in Christ community, offering not life history but critical social history. For example, Maria Tshuma’s rich evangelical work and her two children born out of wedlock challenge assumptions about sexual expectations and ideas of sin and redemption in the mission. Naka Seyemephi’s story reveals the church’s failure to comprehend her community’s expectations and needs by documenting how she grew from an obedient third wife into community leadership as a pastor when male church leaders did not accompany people removed to Northern Matabeleland under Land Apportionment rulings. Stephen Ndlovu’s marriage and care for family points toward “kinship-based masculinity,” in the context of the intense political situation of the 1970s and 1980s.

Urban-Mead describes these lives with care and precision, looking closely at individual choices, agency and, especially, memory. Difficulties remain in reconstructing the history, possibly rooted in the complexities of what people like to remember: For example, individuals’ emphasis on

1 See, for example, Roland Oliver, The Missionary Factor in East Africa (London, 1952).
community building and peaceful inclinations raises questions about the violent and political war for independence of the 1970s and the Gukurahundi (the ill-treatment and massacre, even ethnic cleansing, of those who supported Joshua Nkomo) of the 1980s, and beyond.

Through her vivid biographies and her emphasis on the intersections of gender, life cycle, cohort, and piety, Urban-Mead offers a model study of what it meant for believers to pursue Christian lives within the context of colonial Zimbabwe.

Carol Summers
University of Richmond


This book joins other recent works that challenge negative depictions of late nineteenth-century Qing reforms. Taking his inspiration from Tilly’s “military-fiscal state” model and drawing on the British case as developed by Brewer and O’Brien, Halsey focuses on the mid-nineteenth century fiscal, military, technological, and ideological changes in China that were part of a century-long state-building process.

Halsey begins with a question: How did China, unlike India and many other empires, retain its independence during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when European imperialism was at its peak? Culling information from earlier publications, Halsey deftly turns the arguments of their authors upside down to argue that the threat of European imperialism caused the period from 1850 onward to be “the most innovative period of state-making” since the dynasty’s inception.

War was the principal engine driving the emergence of a military-fiscal state. Like Britain, China expanded and strengthened its military forces. Although China did not use public borrowing before 1900, it significantly increased taxes on commerce, allowing revenues to keep pace with defense spending. The regional armies created in the 1850s to suppress major domestic rebellions became part of a “self-strengthening” movement aimed at heightening China’s national defense by producing modern guns and ships, and training troops in European drill and military tactics.

An equally strong impetus was the mercantilist understanding of European imperialism motivating key Qing decision makers. Halsey shows that those in charge of the ancillary enterprises created under Li

Hongzhang’s aegis—a Chinese steamship company and the Imperial Telegraph Administration—explicitly designed them to resist assaults on China’s sovereignty (the concept *sovereignty* introduced in a textbook of 1863 about international law). Throughout the period from 1850 to 1900, official and elite Chinese understandings of the term *sovereignty* focused on absolute/total control over “resources, people, or territory” (240). State-sponsored enterprises were proposed “as a means of conducting commercial warfare against the West” (241).

China was forced to open ports for trade under the Treaty of Nanjing (1842), but European merchants’ attempts to penetrate the Chinese economy were forestalled by Chinese mercantile networks that effectively “regulated the production, transport, and sale of commodities and also tempered the disruptive economic effects of European products like opium” (65). Merchants and government officials exhibited a strong resistance to foreign control of Chinese resources that predated the nationalist movements of the 1890s by several decades.

In Halsey’s account, late Qing provincial leaders and intellectuals emerge as quick responders to the Western threat, and their efforts were sufficient to make China one of only six non-Western countries to retain its independence in the twentieth century. Even though China in 1912 had not completed its metamorphosis, these late Qing reforms built the foundations of the great-power status that it would attain after 1949.

Evelyn S. Rawski
University of Pittsburgh

*The Capitalist Unconscious: From Korean Unification to Transnational Korea.*
By Hyun Ok Park (New York, Columbia University Press, 2015) 400 pp. $36.00

The continued division of the Korean peninsula has raised long-standing debates about the likelihood and possible timing of reunification. In *The Capitalist Unconscious*, Park argues instead that the shift from the Cold War politics of the 1990s has in fact already unified the Korean peninsula in a way that is “not shaped by the long-awaited form of territorial integration and family union but rather is driven by the exchange of capital, labor, and ideas across the borders of Korean communities, including the Korean diaspora” (3). She analyzes the meanings and underlying logic of these exchanges—what Park sees as manifestations of the “capitalist unconscious” of the title—in South Korea, China, and North Korea. In the process, she utilizes archival sources and ethnography, including oral interviews with migrants, government officials, and others. Individual chapters explore migrant and marginalized laborers’ experiences, government

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policies and social tensions, as well as the changing and often con
dictory mobilizations of history in each of these three locations, with
particular attention to how “capital occupies the transnational space of
Korean interactions through the affective politics of the ethnic nation” (7).

Park’s central claim in this work—that since the 1990s, the Korean
peninsula can best understood as a transnational entity where un
conscious capitalist assumptions are masked by overlapping yet irrecon
cilable narratives of identity—is intriguing. Interrogating the logic of
capitalism allows Park to parse phenomena that otherwise seem contra
dictory, such as how the labor movement in South Korea provided
iconic momentum for democratization, only to result later in laws and
policies deployed to protect the property rights of private corporations
to the significant detriment of workers. The final chapters, which focus
on South Korean engagement with the North, internal North Korean
governmental policies balancing socialism and market economy, and
changing narratives surrounding North Korean out-migration, respect
ively, are particularly effective.

Not all of the book’s elements coalesce equally well, however. At
times, Park’s examples and case studies feel randomly selected, such as in
the chapter on Korean Chinese migrant workers, which depends almost
exclusively on a handful of disparate interviews conducted within a two
week period in January 2002. Her subsequent chapter on the past expe
riences of Koreans in China is also thinly sourced, poorly integrated into
the rest of the book, and baffling in how it frames the impact of the
Cultural Revolution on the Korean Chinese community. A problem
that runs throughout the book is its failure to contextualize the selected
case studies sufficiently, limiting its usefulness for scholars without an
in-depth understanding of Korean history.

Another issue is that Park relies on abstract concepts and dense, theo
retical language to a fault in the introductory framing chapters, ultimately
creating an argument that exceeds the scope of what her often rich source
material can support. Even though Park deftly traces individual instances
of capitalist logic and effectively illuminates ruptures in differentially
mobilized narratives of ethnic nationalism, the question remains—to what
degree can the uneven flows and exchanges that Park identifies be mean
ingfully interpreted as unifying?

Deborah B. Solomon
Otterbein University

Flowers that Kill: Communicative Opacity in Political Spaces. By Emiko
$70.00 cloth $22.95 paper

Ohnuki-Tierney offers a compelling, central proposition: Japan’s cultur
ally dominant nationalist ethos during World War II was enabled by
“communicative opacity.” She defines this term as “an absence of communication or mutual understanding due to individuals in a given social/historical context drawing different meanings from the same symbol, or, more often, due to an absence of articulation in their minds of the meaning they are drawing” (2). Communicative opacity operates through polysemy, totalization, ellipsis, and aesthetics to convert “innocent cultural nationalism” into “dangerous political nationalism” (17). It is discernible not only in the discourses surrounding specific acts of fervent nationalism (such as the suicide flights of the tokkōtai, or kamikaze pilots) but also in the broader discursive framework within which the accountability—or lack thereof—of Emperor Hirohito was located.

Part I argues that various well-worn cultural symbols of Japanese nationalism (cherry blossoms, monkeys, and rice) became imbued with the various “meanings” attendant upon nationalist fanaticism. Ohnuki-Tierney shows persuasively how these symbols were deployed to affirm a nationalistic aesthetic, configuring the collective modern Japanese selfhood as self-sacrificing (and ready to die), obedient, and pure. Notably, she discusses how images of the rose were deployed in Germany during World War II as a means of bestowing Adolf Hitler with a fatherly image. She compares this strategy with the way in which cherry blossoms came to represent the expectation that the tokkōtai would die for the emperor.

Part II discusses the mechanisms of German and Japanese wartime propaganda, describing and comparing these countries’ overarching methods for indoctrinating its people during World War II. Part III looks specifically at the role of the emperor in Japanese politics subsequent to the Meiji Restoration, leading up to World War II. In stark contrast to Hitler’s visibility and audibility, the emperor’s invisibility and inaudibility lent him (or rather his position) discursive power.

Ohnuki-Tierney’s book is wide-ranging in its scope, marshaling substantial evidence to demonstrate the adaptation of culturally familiar symbols to achieve the propagandist ends of the German and Japanese states. Nonetheless, her argument suffers from an imprecision about where the responsibility for such cultural appropriations actually lay.

“The major thesis of this book has been the unawareness of communicative opacity on the part of social actors who live under its impact” (203). Communicative opacity would seem to forestall resistance by its very opacity. However, rather than hold that it functions preemptively to thwart resistance, Ohnuki-Tierney instead contends that people at the time were merely suggestible, through long exposure to more congenial understandings of, say, the cherry blossom and the rose as symbols of “life” and “love.” This tack absolves the general populace of any complicity in the construction and dissemination of these nationalist formations while ironically also underplaying any contemporary resistance to the very communicative opacity that she seeks to critique.

Hannah Tamura
School of Oriental and African Studies, London
Gillian Maclaine (1798–1840), who was born into the family of a struggling Highland aristocratic family, was forced to seek a commercial career first in London with the East India Merchant house of Patrick McLachlan from 1816 to 1820. Later, in Java, after a brief adventure in growing coffee, he formed the firm of Gillian Maclaine and Co., which worked in partnership with McLachlan’s and their corresponding firm in Calcutta. Difficult relations with the London office led to Maclaine breaking with them in the late 1820s to form a new partnership—Maclaine, Watson, and Co. Such was the core of Gillian’s business activities until his death in a shipwreck in 1840.

This book combines a compelling account of Maclaine’s personal life, and his efforts to recover his lost social status and the “independency” of a gentleman, with an insightful analysis of the development of his business interests, especially the network of firms and trade that he established across Southeast Asia—a network that long outlived him and the British and Dutch empires in the region that formed the political backdrop of his life.

Many themes emerge: the role of individual agency in the development of business networks, the strategies adopted by businesses with interests straddling the competing British and Dutch empires, the role of religious and ethnic affiliations in constructing a trust-based commercial network, and, most importantly, the role of Maclaine’s networks in a predominantly Southeast Asian context, as opposed to bilateral commercial links between imperial metropole and periphery.

This is an enjoyable book, skillfully written and structured. It is especially valuable for two reasons. Firstly, the book offers a major contribution to the ongoing debate about the roots of the “Asian economic miracle,” led by the Japanese economic historian Kaoru Sugihara. Sugihara’s contention is that the growth of trade within Asia, as opposed to trade between Asia and the wider world, was crucial in the accelerating momentum of Asian economic growth, culminating in the spectacular achievements of the Asian economies toward the end of the twentieth century. As Knight points out, most studies of British mercantile firms in Asia tend to stress the centrality of their commercial connections with Britain and British commercial organizations, to which the Asian based firms were generally subordinate. Knight shows that Maclaine’s network of firms did not conform to this pattern. It not only asserted a rugged independence from those British firms with which it dealt; it also built its fortunes within Asia trading a wide array of commodities, including cotton goods, opium, and sugar. As such, his network was part of the intra-Asian commerce central to the longer-term development of the region. Knight’s work opens the way for further research into other, similar European commercial networks the commercial oeuvre of which was focused within the region.
The second contribution of the book is even greater. Those tasked with introducing economic or business history to people not versed in the key concepts—whose experience of the subject has been confined to the political and cultural—are well aware of how difficult it is to overcome deep-seated prejudices, preconceptions, and fears. The business and economic-history literature is largely unhelpful, assuming readers’ familiarity with the terminology, and even the rigors of cliometric statistical analysis. The strength of Knight’s book is that it shows Maclaine’s commercial motivation and behavior as the product of common human foibles. Instead of an abstract “economic man,” Knight offers an entrepreneur with real flesh and blood, whose fortunes were shaped as much by deep social and psychological motivations, religious and ethnic affiliations, personal relationships, and even marriage, as they were by dry, rational calculation. Knight makes business history accessible and enjoyable for audiences frequently daunted by the subject. This feature is the book’s highest achievement.

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