
Grygiel has produced an interesting study of modern “barbarians” and how to deal with them. He defines barbarians as “small, highly mobile groups that often were not settled in a fixed place” (1), explaining their re-appearance by the dissolution of the trends that once favored modern states (1). The new conditions include the availability of “lethal technology, inaccessible spaces that make state governance more arduous, and the appeal of non-material objects” (1). Thus, for Grygiel, barbarism has little to do with culture or level of technology but with mobility and violence. By modern barbarians, he means violent actors; though not specifically naming them, Grygiel is clearly referring to Islamist groups such as the Taliban, ISIS, and their ilk. He argues that an examination of the methods used by the Roman Empire against barbarians merit consideration in the modern era.

After an introductory chapter that properly lays out the goals of the book, the rest of the book consists of seven chapters (the last being the conclusion): The first chapter examines the “premodern strategic environment”; the second identifies “barbarians” and their character; the third considers whether pre-modern conditions, in terms of states and power, have returned; the fourth chapter covers decentralization; and the fifth chapter studies how three saints (Augustine of Hippo, Sidonius Apollinaris of Gaul, and Severinus of Noricum) dealt with barbarians in a decreasingly decentralized Roman Empire; the sixth reviews settlements, local forces, fortifications, and the alteration of the environment.

Although Grygiel jumps back and forth between the modern and pre-modern eras throughout the book, his argument and analysis remain coherent. He also expands his case studies to include the Comanches on the frontier of the United States and the Spanish Empire, but curiously omits Mexico in the nineteenth century. His final example, which is discussed only in the most general terms, is China’s handling of the steppe groups that largely originated in Mongolia. He seems usually to refer to the Ming but makes the mistake of lumping the policies of various dynasties together without recognizing their differences in vision, power, and intention.

Grygiel makes an honest effort but ultimately falls short. His failure to subject his new barbarians to a thorough examination results in his failure to see the weakness of his model. Groups such as ISIS and the Taliban are indigenous to their regions. The Taliban remain predominantly Pashtun and ISIS (at the time of the review) largely Arab-based in Iraq and Syria. To be sure, both groups have received reinforcement from other ethnicities and other countries. Al-Qaeda, being a decentralized entity, is not indigenous to a specific territory, but remains predominantly Arab. None of the groups can be classified in the same manner as the pre-modern...
barbarians that Grygiel discusses. The pre-modern barbarians were often
displaced from their home territories, often by invaders or environmental
conditions. Furthermore, Grygiel’s pre-modern barbarians lacked a coher-
ent ideology on a par with that of the modern “barbarians.” Frontier raids
against the Roman Empire may have been omnipresent, but the real threat
was the immigration of barbarians into the interior.
Grygiel’s hypothesis works only with the premise that the United
States shares an identity with Rome and that the other groupings that he
views as barbarians always and everywhere correspond to the category of
non-states. But this notion overlooks the complex developments (in-
cluding U.S. involvement) in states like Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan that
carried them to become unstable and to displace people. Grygiel also ig-
nores the fact that the Taliban arose in response to disorder and for a
brief time even ruled the state (de facto if not de jure, given its control
of 90 to 95 percent of Afghanistan) until the events of 9/11. In short,
Grygiel’s idea is interesting, but his execution is flawed.

Timothy May
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_The Populist Temptation: Economic Grievance and Political Reaction in the
Modern Era._ By Barry Eichengreen (New York, Oxford University Press,
2018) 260 pp. $27.95

Populism is, among other things, a rejection of technocratic expertise. In
that sense, the populist revolts of the last several years proved their own
point: Experts did not predict them, and experts have been unable to solve
them. Eichengreen claims in this book, however, that at least experts can
diagnose them. Through brief overviews of several populist episodes over
the last century in many different countries, Eichengreen arrives with a
reassuring calmness to say that the answers are not that difficult. His tour
surveys the Great Depression in America, the Fabians, Otto von Bismarck,
and the waning of populism in the mid-twentieth century before reaching
the unraveling that resulted in President Donald Trump, Brexit, and the
rise of nativism in Europe. In Eichengreen’s view, populism is basically
about economic difficulties; although racism and nativism are integral to
it, populism does not occur in good economic times.

Even more encouraging is that even if we may not be able to
implement the solutions, we do know what can allay populism: “In a
variety of times and places, from Bismarckian Germany and Edwardian
Britain to the United States in the 1930s, a populist reaction against eco-
nomic change has been contained by public programs that compensate
the displaced and comfort others who fear the same fate” (150). What
Eichengreen calls the “plain-vanilla recipe for fostering faster growth”
includes spending on education; some deregulation but some regulation;
“sound and stable economic policies,” such as stimulus spending, but
only when needed; and, particularly, policies to lessen inequality, including stock-option plans, regulating corporate boards, and restraining the growth of finance (148–149). The big lesson of this round of populism is that those who benefit from globalization and automation should defray the costs for those who do not: “High-wage workers . . . may be funding transfers to others, but in return they are getting a social consensus favoring economic openness and technical change” (151). The difficulties with this plan, are all in the details (precisely which regulations will be beneficial and which less so?) and one question left unaddressed by Eichengreen is why it took such us to compensate those who lose out from globalization and automation.

But overall, Eichengreen’s diagnosis and recipe are convincing. Eichengreen is surely right to emphasize that globalization and automation create losers whose anger can jeopardize further globalization and automation, and therefore that greater social spending is necessary even if one does not approve of redistribution in general—erase if one only wishes to preserve further globalization and automation. Indeed, it is easy to read the rise of European populism in this framework, as resulting from austerity and probably fixable with greater social spending.

On the American side, the problem seems stranger, however, because the measures that Eichengreen posits to fix the problems are exactly the ones that the populists repudiate—social spending to defray the costs of globalization and automation. Eichengreen’s argument that the failure to implement such policies “is either a failure of courage, to the extent [that politicians] are intimidated by hardcore ideological opponents of government action, or a simple failure of logic,” is completely unsatisfactory (152). Why should intimidation or failure of logic happen in some times and places but not in others? In fact, this failure is not an indication of intimidation or a lapse in logic but of a successful electoral strategy. The reasons for this strategy’s success are the main question.

As this point suggests, the major problem with this book is that Eichengreen does not distinguish between populists of the left and of the right. Huey Long fought against business interests, but he was not a nativist. As Eichengreen acknowledges, he was the exact opposite of Donald Trump (124). But the book’s structure works only if they are in some way manifestations of the same phenomenon. Moreover, the broad application of the populist label hides that Eichengreen’s sympathies lie with the populists of the left. A moderate version of what they want is his recipe for what should be done. Eichengreen’s sober advice in the face of the populist challenge is welcome, but any categorization that places Huey Long, Donald Trump, and Barry Eichengreen in the same category cannot be the last word on a social phenomenon.

Monica Prasad
Northwestern University

Many have written about the virus poliomyelitis from different perspectives. Medical historians have documented the research involved in identifying the virus, its transmission, and the development of vaccines that reduced confirmed cases of polio worldwide. Social historians have discussed the polio outbreaks in the United States—particularly in the 1920s, after indoor plumbing reduced exposure to the poliovirus—in which school-age children with no immunity were stricken with paralysis. Subsequently, many post-polio victims have published accounts of their experiences. After Franklin Delano Roosevelt contracted polio in 1921, the National Foundation of Infantile Paralysis facilitated the development and trials of the Salk vaccine, with which many children were vaccinated after its approval in 1955. Public-health professionals and global-health philanthropists have also written about their experiences with the implementation of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), and medical anthropologists have detailed the reception and impact of the GPEI in several parts of the world.

In Polio: The Odyssey of Eradication, Abraham incorporates several of these perspectives into his analysis of the history of polio and the most recent efforts to eradicate it, ending its transmission across the globe. As he observes, the admirable—some might say overly-ambitious—goal of eradicating polio has been more difficult than was originally anticipated by many, but not all, public health and medical professionals associated with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Abraham uses a range of research techniques and sources to present an extensive history of polio and the GPEI.

The book consists of three parts. Part I presents materials about scientific and medical advances in the identification of the poliovirus, the impact of President Roosevelt’s contraction of polio, and the development of the Salk inactivated polio vaccine and the Sabin attenuated oral polio vaccine. In Part II, Abraham discusses the beginning of the GPEI, providing perspectives of both advocates and skeptics, as well as the subsequent favorable vote by the World Health Assembly in 1988. In Part III, Abraham explains the emergence of the circulating vaccine-derived polioviruses (cVDPV) that came from the GPEI’s use of the oral-attenuated Sabin polio vaccine, and discusses cases of cVDPV paralysis circulating in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, and Syria. He then focuses on efforts in India, where polio transmission ended in 2011, and in Pakistan, where politics and local health needs have impeded GPEI efforts and where the wild poliovirus continues to be transmitted.

Abraham consults a wide range of sources. In his examination of the most recent developments of the polio eradication campaign, he draws from documents published on the GPEI website, which include
semi-annual national committee reports, GPEI Independent Monitoring Board reports, and weekly updates of data on confirmed cases of wild poliovirus (WPV) and cVDPV in countries where the poliovirus continues to circulate, as well as from online newspaper articles. He also includes material from interviews that he conducted with key national and international figures in the polio-eradication initiative, as well as from his personal observations of house-to-house polio vaccine-distribution issues in Pakistan, India, and Nigeria.

For his discussion of the establishment of the GPEI, he utilized WHO and UNICEF archival materials—some of them online and others directly from WHO headquarters in Geneva, along with CDC documents pertaining to staff participation in the GPEI (part of the Global Health Chronicles, available on the CDC website). He also incorporates material from the many public-health journal articles discussing the GPEI, from Rotary International materials publicizing the campaign, and from books and reports by officials documenting GPEI implementation in their countries. For his description of the poliovirus itself, Abraham relies upon the extensive secondary literature about poliomyelitis, which includes several excellent histories that detail the history of this disease and the development of vaccines to combat it.

In the short epilogue that concludes this volume, Abraham suggests that although the number of confirmed cases of WPV and cVDPV had dramatically declined as of early 2018, it is uncertain whether the GPEI will ultimately succeed. Indeed, by December 2018, after this book’s publication, WPV cases in Pakistan had doubled and cVDPV cases in Nigeria had re-emerged, making the polio figures for the beginning of 2018 a thing of the past.

Elisha P. Renne
University of Michigan


The suppression of the Society of Jesus is a well-researched historical topic; “reform Catholicism,” however, is an original concept. As Van Kley frames it, “[T]he adjective ‘Gallican’ best describes Reform Catholicism’s call for the loosening of the Catholic Church’s hierarchical structure and the subordination of its temporal aspects to the authority of the state; and ‘Augustinian’ is the best candidate for designating its theological, moral, and spiritual orientation” (16). Intending this concept as a replacement for the idea of “Catholic Enlightenment,” Van Kley advances both an original and a familiar thesis: The critique against the Jesuits based on the theology of St. Augustine, the drive to enhance the national churches and the episcopacy, the safeguarding of national rulers against papal authority, and the struggle between Jansenists and Jesuits all originated in France but came to characterize developments in Spain,
Portugal, and Italy, ultimately leading to the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. This long sequence of historical developments resulted in the emergence of a reform Catholicism in France that endowed first the parlements and later the General Estates with an increased opposition to monarchy, aristocracy, and reactionary episcopal hierarchy in the opening phase of the French Revolution. What begins with the story of the Jesuits and the rise of anti-Jesuitism ends with an argument about the French Revolution and the Restoration that Van Kley first proposed in *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution, 1560–1791* (New Haven, 1999).

This detailed, well-researched, and densely written work is divided into three parts and six chapters. In Part I, which relies on a large body of scholarship as well as original research, Van Kley argues that the concept of *reform Catholicism* is preferable to that of *Catholic Enlightenment* because it can cover a longer time span (sixteenth to eighteenth century) and has theological coherence. France is much the center of his detailed account of the genesis and trajectory of anti-Jesuitism, but he also draws examples from Spain, Mexico, and the Jesuit Missions in South America, India, and China.

Part II comprises the bulk of the book and most of the original research. Van Kley provides an exhaustive account of the polemical, political, diplomatic, and theological developments that led to the expulsion of Jesuits from Portugal and from the Bourbon lands of France, Spain, and Naples. The story does not end with the dissolution of the Society in 1773 but continues with the unfolding of reform Catholicism in the Habsburg lands. Van Kley also describes the reforms of Emperor Joseph II in Austrian territory and the popular uprising in the Austrian Netherlands against these measures of centralization and religious reform.

In Part III, Van Kley makes the case that the suppression of the Jesuits polarized Catholic Europe, when some erstwhile critics of the Society recoiled at the anti-papal, statist, and quasi-Protestant forces that the anti-Jesuit campaign had unleashed. In this regard, France represented both the norm and the exception, paving the way for Van Kley to reprise his argument about the religious origins of the French Revolution in this impressive work of scholarship.

R. Po-chia Hsia  
Pennsylvania State University

*Jewish Materialism: The Intellectual Revolution of the 1870s.* By Eliyahu Stern (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2018) 320 pp. $45.00

Stern’s *Jewish Materialism* is a brilliant and deeply learned book that calls into question widely held historiographical views regarding the modernization of European Jewry. At first glance, the rabbinic subject of Stern’s first book, *The Genius: Elijah of Vilna and the Making of Modern Judaism* (New Haven, 2013), and the materialist thinkers of this one, his second,
would appear to have little in common. Yet, in different ways, they represent alternatives to the common equation of Jewish modernization with secularization and the influence of the Haskalah or Jewish Enlightenment. Whereas in *The Genius*, Stern sought to demonstrate what was modern about Elijah ben Solomon Zalman, the Vilna Gaon (1720–1797), one of the founding figures of what would eventually become Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) Judaism, in *Jewish Materialism*, Stern argues that a cohort of Russian Jewish intellectuals embraced different forms of materialism in the 1870s without rejecting Judaism. On the contrary, Stern illuminates how these thinkers discovered affinities between contemporary materialist conceptions of the world, such as Marxism and Darwinism, and traditional Jewish sources, including the biblical prophets, the Talmud, and, even the reconditely mystical Kabbalah. Thus, for example, Stern notes, “The Jewish materialists viewed [Karl] Marx in conjunction with, not in opposition to, the Hebrew Bible and the Kabbalah” (81).

In another historiographical revision, Stern complicates the view that the modernization of Judaism inevitably reflected a movement toward Protestantism, a model that has also been applied to other religious traditions, sometimes in a teleological fashion. While Protestantism did, in fact, serve as the chief model for Reform Judaism’s modernizing project in Western Europe, Stern reveals how some Russian Jewish materialists turned instead to Catholicism, with its emphasis on “tradition” that paralleled the Jewish “Oral Law,” as a source of inspiration and a means by which Judaism might be translated for contemporary non-Jewish audiences. Indeed, Stern demonstrates that the Jewish materialism of the 1870s had important resonances not only with developments among geographically proximate Polish Catholic intellectuals but also with the parallel efforts of the Young Turks to articulate an “Islamic materialism,” as well as those of Hindu thinkers on both the “civilizational” and “spiritual” ends of the spectrum (for example, V.D. Savarkar and Swami Vivekananda).

Even within this varied religious landscape, however, the turn to materialism had special significance for Jews and Judaism. For centuries, Stern notes, Christian accusations of Jewish materialism were second only to the charge that Jews had killed Jesus in stoking antisemitism. Against this backdrop, the Jewish materialism of the 1870s turned this critique on its head. Rather than being a sign of Jewish inferiority or backwardness, the “Jews’ relationship to the physical world,” as evinced in “the non-theological and this-worldly orientation of Talmudic Judaism,” was now understood positively as an intellectual advantage that would enable Jews to modernize without having to give up Judaism (81).

In *Jewish Materialism*, Stern not only makes major contributions to theories of Jewish modernization that, in turn, shed light on parallel developments around the globe; he also treats the emergence of Jewish materialism from the ground up, identifying the particular place, socioeconomic conditions, and cultural and religious milieu that gave rise to
the phenomenon. Rather than Western Europe, the starting point for many historical narratives of Jewish modernization, the intellectually fertile soil in which Jewish materialism took root was the northwest corner of the Russian Empire known to Jews in Yiddish as Lita, a term that literally means Lithuania, but which, from a Jewish cultural perspective, also included territory in present-day Belarus, Poland, Latvia, and Ukraine. Rather than secularized university students, most of the young Jews who embraced materialism in the 1870s came from traditional Jewish homes, received conservative religious educations, and were inspired, in part, by the declining economic conditions that characterized Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement following the 1860s—conditions that did not exist for the Jews of Germany or France. Indeed, as part of their materialist turn, these thinkers began to employ empirical methods in some of the earliest socioeconomic studies of Russian Jewry.

Stern employs a kind of archaeological method to excavate this stratum of the Russian Jewish experience, one that had long been occluded by the much-studied era of Jewish involvement in radical politics—including the Jewish Labor Bund, various forms of Zionism, the Socialist Revolutionary Party, and Communism—that succeeded it. Indeed, as Stern points out, part of the challenge in reconstructing this history, and one of the reasons that it has taken until now to identify its significance, is that when some of the Jewish materialists of the 1870s later joined these radical movements, they attempted to erase or obscure their earlier positions that did not fully jibe with whatever political orthodoxy they were now embracing. Yet, as Stern passionately argues, the “legacy of the Jewish materialism of the 1870s” continued to impact Jewish intellectual and political developments throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.

Nathaniel Deutsch
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Gambling on War: Confidence, Fear, and the Tragedy of the First World War?
By Roger L. Ransom (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2018)
346 pp. $84.99 cloth $27.99 paper

Ransom draws from theories of decision making in social psychology and behavioral economics to explain why political leaders started “a war that nobody wanted, nobody understood, and nobody can forget” (272), and why they did not stop the war earlier once illusions of a quick victory had dissipated. Ransom argues that political and military leaders, faced with uncertainty and driven by fear and overconfidence, gambled on risky strategies that failed and prolonged the suffering without advancing any state interests.
The first chapter lays out the analytical themes underlying the historical narrative. Noting Keynes’ argument that human decisions are often driven by “animal spirits” rather than by a rational calculation of costs and benefits, Ransom emphasizes the role of confidence, fear, and the propensity to gamble in human decision making. He analyzes the propensity to gamble through the lens of “prospect theory” from social psychology (19–24). The theory posits that people overvalue losses relative to comparable gains. They are risk-averse when faced with choices expected to lead to positive outcomes and risk-acceptant in choices resulting in negative outcomes—especially when the current status quo is perceived negatively because of “sunk costs” from recent losses. Under these conditions, people sometimes take bold gambles in the hope of eliminating their losses but in the process incur even greater losses. Ransom uses this logic to explain a number of key decisions embedded in his historical narrative, in which leaders chose to gamble on continuing the war rather than to accept a negotiated settlement that would leave them nothing to show for the destruction, pain, and suffering. German decision makers, for example, chose to resume unrestricted submarine warfare despite the high risk of American intervention because the status quo was unacceptable and because, as a German admiral argued, “we have no other option” (160). As Ransom concludes in the epilogue, “Politicians and generals took risky gambles to attain ... victory, which only magnified the cost of the war if the gambles failed” (271).

Gambling on War is a highly readable narrative of the diplomatic background, origins, conduct, and termination of World War I. Ransom gives more attention to the conduct of the war than to its origins, providing particularly good accounts of states’ economic capacities to continue fighting. In this context, however, he might well have offered a more thorough discussion of the presence or absence of advance economic planning for war, and the implications thereof for various interpretations of the causes of the war.

The analytical themes of fear, overconfidence, and gambling—from the calculations of Otto von Bismarck to the Schlieffen plan and the Ludendorff offensive—distinguish this book from others in a crowded field. Previous historians have emphasized these themes, but Ransom’s idea of building upon social-science research allows for a much more rigorous examination of the psychological sources of risk taking and a new way of thinking about decision making leading to the outbreak, escalation, and continuation of the war. Ransom’s summary of the prospect-theoretical analysis of risk taking will not satisfy social psychologists or behavioral economists (Ransom draws less from research about fear and

overconfidence), but it is good enough to guide the historical narrative that follows.

The problem lies in the implementation. The historical narrative is only weakly guided by the theoretical framework outlined earlier. In explaining many of the high-risk gambles that continued the war without producing gains, Ransom repeatedly resorts to the overly general concept of “animal spirits” rather than to the more specific and analytically discriminating concepts of loss aversion, sunk costs, and risk-acceptant decision making, which are not prominently mentioned after the first chapter. An analysis guided by these concepts would not be an easy task, given the many difficulties of applying them outside of a controlled experimental setting, but their potential for improving our understanding of key decisions warrants such an effort.  

Despite these limitations, Gambling on War is a highly readable narrative that offers an important new perspective on a widely studied and historically transformative set of events and that suggests a potentially fruitful path for future research.

Jack S. Levy
Rutgers University


The history of medicine and empire is a robust subject that has drawn the attention of several first-rate scholars over the past three decades, with fresh approaches in ever-more abundance. Although the medical entanglements of many imperial regimes—as well as local resistances and “alternatives”—are now much in evidence, the British Empire continues to dominate the English-language literature, most especially in its “Atlantic” form, much of which is about the Caribbean. To that branch of the literature Seth brings an approach cultivated in the history of science, arguing that the responses of medical authors to the problem of disease and its treatment in the British West Indies gave rise to conceptual distinctions that enabled empire, including what he terms “race-medicine.” From a close reading of the several books written by eighteenth-century English physicians who had experience practicing on the sugar islands, he produces a “postcolonial history of colonial medicine” that is at the same time a self-conscious “history of arguments” about “medical theories” based upon “close reading.” Seth therefore spends two chapters examining how the development of a concern for the “seasoning” of newcomers was not classical Hippocratism, two chapters about how “conceptions of

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“empire” affected ideas such as “putrid air” as a cause of disease, and two chapters about the emergence of race-medicine.

Despite many clear and sensible accounts of the texts at hand, a deeper appreciation of the history of medical ideas would have aided Seth in making distinctions. For instance, the powerful views of Thomas Sydenham, the “English Hippocrates,” who advanced coherent notions of specific (species-like) diseases, and the “mechanistic” teachings of Herman Boerhaave of Leiden, who instructed so many Scottish and English physicians, are reference points for the authors that Seth quotes but not always fully grasps. Their views on the material commonalities of human bodies, and on medical specifics (remedies that acted in all cases against disease species) would have clarified some arguments. Seth also evinces a few mis-directions, as when he argues that Hans Sloane—one of Sydenham’s protégés—wished to depict the environment of Jamaica as being like England’s but instead quotes Sloane about the botanical similarities of Jamaica and “Guinea” (the West African coast) (27).

Given our own current moment, Seth’s last two chapters, about the formulation of race medicine, will undoubtedly draw the most attention. As in the rest of the book, Seth’s own voice is clear but only occasionally in conversation with other scholars who have studied racialized medicine within imperial regimes. He is intent on arguing that his category of race-medicine is distinct from the much-studied “race-science” of the European Enlightenment—the “boundary-making” of which had its foundation in anatomical classification whereas race-medicine arose, he says, from thinking that kinds of people responded differently to the same diseases. For instance, Seth’s description of eighteenth-century ideas of polygenism sets the stage for support of the view that Immanuel Kant’s essays about racial difference simply expressed an interest in defending monogenism under the umbrella of “classification.” 1 “Common lay beliefs” may now assume that racial science was meant as “a justification for slavery and a rapacious colonialism,” but they would be mistaken (247), even though Kant wrote that black bodies “stank.” Instead, race-medicine did the work.

Seth holds that following the judicial Somerset judgement of 1772—which held that chattel slavery was illegal in England and Wales—and the growing abolitionist sentiment in the metropole, planters were placed on the back foot; thereafter, physicians in their employ began to advance new ideas about race. Their arguments had three aspects: Proper medical practice could keep the enslaved healthy; the unhealthy bodily responses of enslaved people were often socio-cultural in origin; but apparent differences in bodily responses to the same diseases and conditions of life also gave evidence of physiological difference. In other words, physicians combined arguments for amelioration, moral inferiority, and bodily difference into a defense of the system of racialized slavery.

1 See John M. Mikkelsen (ed. and trans.), Kant and the Concept of Race: Late Eighteenth-Century Writings (Albany, 2013).
Medicine was “essential to the making of difference,” and the views of race that it produced “shaped the course of colonialism and abolition” (282, 276).

Seth’s description of the race-medicine of the West Indies after 1780 is clear and distinct, and his attention to other kinds of intellectual boundary drawing is also a helpful guide to many of the medical issues there. But we hardly hear other sides to the arguments, say, earlier or distant expressions of racialized medicine, such as those investigated by Schiebinger or Chakrabarti. Nor does Seth give any attention to what was happening in other imperial regimes. He gestures toward larger historical forces but thinks that argumentative distinctions were largely responsible for the racialized empire of the British Atlantic, with enormous effects on the bodies and minds of countless persons. Can we attribute so much to the words of a few physicians?

Harold J. Cook
Brown University

Black French Women and the Struggle for Equality, 1848–2016. Edited by Félix Germain and Silyane Larcher (Lincoln, Nebraska University Press, 2018) 294 pp. $40.00

In 2012, Christiane Taubira, Guiana’s representative in the French National Assembly, offered this meditation on the French Republic: “It was built on a delightful and wonderful fiction: egalitarianism.” In Black French Women and the Struggle for Equality, Larcher and Germain query this fiction, assembling fifteen authors whose interdisciplinary research addresses African and diasporic African women’s lived experiences and their activism in post-abolition France and French Empire. This volume investigates the foundations, evolutions, and contemporary instances of gender- and race-based inequities in a France that is both “former empire and a postcolonial democracy deeply entangled with Africa and the Americas” (xiii). The editors bridge disciplinary boundaries by emphasizing continuities and connections among diverse black French women who challenged their societies and governments to recognize their humanity. This volume contributes to debates concerning public life, French feminism, black internationalism, and the very meaning of Frenchness.

Chapters concerning female politicians, activists, and women’s organizations illuminate how race, gender, and geography determined


black women’s participation in public life in the post-emancipation French Atlantic world. Denied voting rights until 1946, black French women thrived in civic associations and intellectual circles, where they agitated for gender-specific and localized justice. Broadly, their struggles illustrated that “French rule tended to reinforce the patriarchal systems that bolstered male political power” (Hilary Jones, 14). The principles of French universalism impeded political activism articulated through minority identities. Therefore, women in overseas departments and colonies agitated for political belonging and equity through “a set of practices that emphasize(d) the humanity . . . of marginalized groups” (Annette K. Joseph-Gabriel, 90). Gerty Archimède, Fatou Diome, Christiane Taubira, the Nardal sisters, the Union of Cameroonian Women, and the originaire women of colonial Senegal challenged France to uphold its heralded, Enlightenment-inspired republican mandates.

*Black French Women* explores the possibilities and limitations of French feminism and French education. Germain’s chapter illustrates that feminism in 1950s Martinique was conservative and relied on the continued exploitation of an ethnoclass of black agricultural laborers. Chapters based in West Africa and the Caribbean depict how literacy and education provided Rose Ndengue and Jacqueline Couti with a common language to create community and challenge the French state. Formal education could also widen class divisions among African, diasporic African, and white French women. Larcher’s chapter about the Mwasi Collective highlights the limitations of “a feminism blind to the material effects of racism on the oppression of women and, more broadly, the limits of the French republican color-blind ideology” (73).

The concept of black internationalism provides coherence for fragmentary and episodic political activity enacted by black French women across time and space. The women represented in this volume were not explicitly in conversation with each other through the intellectual movements of Pan-Africanism or negritude, but their struggles for equality link to broader trans-Atlantic models of liberation. Black internationalism connects interwar Martinican women fighting to bring André Aliker’s murderer to justice (Monique Milia-Marie-Luce) with Jean McNair’s activism (Tyler Stovall) and the literary work of Roberte Horth (Claire Oberon Garcia).

“Frenchness” is both an object of scholarly critique and a facet of identity that connects the black women included in this volume. Robin Mitchell’s chapter on Sarah Baartman argues that the very foundations of modern French identity were constructed in opposition to an African other. “The black female body entered French society via images from the French colonial gaze” (Sarah Fila-Bakabadio, 180). Coloniality, exoticism, and barbarity were key features of the early production and circulation of images of black women, which continue to influence representations of black female bodies in contemporary French media.

*Black French Women* draws attention to the under-representation of black women in academia and as subjects of research in French-language
scholastic production. This volume insists that white French women’s experiences are/were not universal, but it falls short of complicating the category of “women.” Queer and trans-women are notably absent. Otherwise, this corpus of work importantly showcases the research of minority scholars and advances the literature concerning gender and race in francophone, colonial, and postcolonial studies. Black French Women investigates struggles for equality and provides a model for centering those struggles in academic work.

Sarah Zimmerman
Western Washington University

Nobility and Patrimony in Modern France. By Elizabeth C. Macknight (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2018) 291 pp. $120.00

Macknight’s first book about nobles in modern France, Aristocratic Families in Republican France, 1870–1940 (Manchester, 2012), confined itself to the Third Republic, but this one takes the analysis back to the traumas suffered by nobles in the French Revolution and forward to the challenges faced by surviving noble families in the later twentieth century. It does not seek to trace the vicissitudes of the nobility and its status over these two centuries but to analyze how nobles’ persistent sense of identity was molded by a diverse range of possessions and traditions that no hostile legislation could expunge.

Avoiding the statistical reductionism that animates much social history, Macknight approaches the topic from two directions. One comes from the theoretical insights of twentieth-century French sociologists, such as Halbwachs and Bourdieu, about social hierarchies, from which she draws at regular intervals throughout the text. The other derives from reliance on the qualitative evidence to be found in the private papers of noble families, especially their correspondence. Macknight makes vivid use of quotations from letters or personal documents, such as wills, at every opportunity. In addition to holdings in the National Archives, Macknight has scoured no fewer than fifty-two departmental archives for batches of private papers deposited by noble families. These records vary enormously in content and volume, but they can be mined collectively to present a picture of an elite determined against all odds to preserve its distinctive character or “patrimony.”

The revolutionaries set out to destroy nobility as a separate social category, thus to deplete much of its wealth and forever freeze its recruitment. But the attempted destruction failed, and surviving noble families soon developed a range of strategies to preserve their separate

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1 See, for example, Maurice Halbwachs (ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser), On Collective Memory (Chicago, 1992; orig. pub. in French, 1925); Pierre Bourdieu (trans. Richard Nice), Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (Abington, 1984; orig. pub. in French, 1979).
identity. Not only did they find ways to recover ancestral lands; they also networked among themselves, intermarried, boosted their numbers with larger than average families (sometimes by adopting outsiders), and inculcated family pride and legend into each new generation. Macknight contends that all of these moves belong to the field of patrimony as much as material possessions do. None of them, however, have been able to prevent a steady secular decline in numbers. From Michel Nassiet’s base number of around 140,000 nobles in 1789 (20,000 to 30,000 more than Macknight proposes), the accredited self-defining nobility had shrunk by the late twentieth century to slightly more than 4,000 families, a loss of 1,000 over the preceding seventy-five years. This process is bound to continue, since authenticity is deemed to have ended with ancestors alive in 1790. But thanks to the behaviors analyzed in this book, it is proceeding extremely slowly; aristocratic values, or at least cachets, continue to command widespread public recognition or respect.

Usurpation of aristocratic credentials by outsiders, always a problem for nobilities, continues to be as persistent as ever. In 1967, the Association d’entraide de la noblesse française (Association for the Mutual Aid of the French Nobility), founded in 1933, was even officially accredited as useful to the public. Hence, Macknight concludes that the time has come for the post-revolutionary history of the nobility to be fully rescued in French social history from its disdainful ostracism at the hands of historians steeped in the egalitarian traditions of republicanism. France may be a republic, but the republic is not France’s exclusive embodiment.

Macknight’s use of well-chosen quotations ensures a lively read. But she is so steeped in French that gallicisms abound: For instance, in English, archives can be deposited but not deposed; a donjon is a keep, not a dungeon; and a procureur is a procurator, not a procurer! Sometimes, too, quotations seem to be offered for the sheer pleasure of having found them rather than to make useful points, and periodically Macknight indulges in background padding of questionable relevance. The overall argument, however, is clearly laid out. Owing not least to Macknight’s efforts, the enduring post-revolutionary social significance of the French nobility should now be firmly back in the historiographical mainstream.

William Doyle
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Giuliano de’ Medici, Machiavelli’s Prince in Life and Art. By Josephine Jungić (Montreal, McGill–Queen’s University Press, 2018), 298 pp. $44.95

Giuliano de’ Medici (1479–1516), the third son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, was a major figure in Renaissance Italy, not least for his role as principal ruler of Florence on behalf of the Medici family from September 1512, when the family returned from eighteen years of exile, until May
1513. Nonetheless, Giuliano had never attracted a monograph, until Jungić (1942–2013) undertook the task. As an art historian, she might have been expected to focus on Giuliano’s close association with Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Raphael. But instead she chose to write a “political biography” (195), not only as a result of Giuliano’s intimate friendship with Machiavelli but also because he was the first dedicatee of The Prince.

In the course of her research, Jungić made some remarkable discoveries. One of Machiavelli’s poems, the capitolo pastorale, “Poscia che a l’ombra, sotto questo alloro,” has long been a puzzle. Scholars have disputed whether it was written before November 9, 1494, for Giuliano, forming part of Machiavelli’s “Medicean prehistory.” Alternatively, it also could have been composed—or so it has been speculated—between 1514 and 1518 for Lorenzo, Giuliano’s eldest brother’s son (1492–1519), when he took the reins of Florentine government from Giuliano and ultimately accepted the duchy of Urbino from his other uncle, Pope Leo X (1475–1521), the second son of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Jungić has now definitively proven that Machiavelli wrote the poem for Giuliano at the time of their meeting at Cesare Borgia’s court in Imola during 1502: The allusion to “Cesar, duca alli altri duci,” hitherto taken to mean Julius Caesar, can refer, as Jungić points out, only to Borgia, duke of Valentinois, since Julius Caesar was not a duke and was consistently vilified by Machiavelli. At the end of the poem, Machiavelli declared that he would keep secret his affection for the recipient, an action germane only to Giuliano while a rebel in exile from Florence between 1494 and 1512.

Equally puzzling has been the so-called Ricordo ai Palleschi, written by Machiavelli between November 1 and 7, 1512, immediately before he was dismissed from his chancery posts by the restored Medici regime. This text, actually entitled Notate bene questo scripto, was found among documents belonging to the secretariat of Leo X. Hence, it might have been directed to Cardinal Giovanni (as he was titled before his elevation to the papacy) personally (like another memorandum written by Machiavelli to Cardinal Giovanni after September 29, 1512). For her part, Jungić speculates that it was sent to Cardinal Giovanni’s brother, Giuliano.

What is more important is the context of Ai Palleschi, once thought to have been Machiavelli’s warning to the Medici about the machinations of the aristocrats who were considered to be responsible for his dismissal from the chancery. The previous regime, headed by the gonfalonier Piero Soderini, with whom Machiavelli had been closely identified, had marginalized these aristocrats. The main theme of Ai Palleschi is that Soderini’s vehement detractors were not working for the benefit of the Medici but were entirely self-serving. Jungić points out, however, that the prominent aristocrats were not arch enemies of Soderini; Jacopo Salviati, their leader, actually received a visit from Soderini on his arrival in Rome, May 1513. The real intractable foes of Soderini were the
young radicals who had physically ousted him from power on August 31, 1512. Jungić argues convincingly that this group, not the older Salviati faction, were Machiavelli’s targets in Ai palleschi.

Jungiće shows that Giuliano, unlike his more extreme brother Giovanni and even yet more militant nephew Lorenzo, was a moderate. Giuliano favored a constitutional republic for Florence, to be dominated by an aristocratic senate. His allies and supporters were the Salviati party. His older brother gradually undermined his position as leader of the Medici regime in Florence, eventually replacing him with the younger Lorenzo in May 1513. Pope Leo X’s new aim was to carve out a permanent principality for Giuliano in the Romagna, on the model of what the Borgia pope, Alexander VI (d. 1503), tried to do for his son Cesare. Machiavelli’s intention in The Prince was not to school the restored Medici in how to be princes of republican Florence but rather to emulate the ruthless example of Cesare Borgia in the Romagna. Jungić gives a new perspective on Machiavelli’s infamous advice—that it is intended to teach his friend Giuliano to put the conventional moderate political order, as upheld by the aristocracy, as well as the traditional moral and political virtues, to one side in order to survive and thrive as a new prince.

Not all this book’s revisionist positions are indisputable—for example, the contention that Pietro Boscoli and Agostino Cappolini’s conspiracy of February 1513 was a hoax orchestrated by Cardinal Giovanni. Nevertheless, Jungić’s remarkable book needs to be taken seriously by Machiavelli scholars and Italian Renaissance historians alike.

Robert Black
University of Leeds

Born to Be Criminal: The Discourse on Criminality and the Practice of Punishment in Late Imperial Russia and Early Soviet Union: Interdisciplinary Approaches. Edited by Riccardo Nicolosi and Anne Hartmann (Bielefeld, Transcript-Verlag, 2018) 249 pp. $40.00

The authors in this collection draw from conceptualizations of criminality in a variety of fields, including sociology, law, criminology, penology, medicine, criminal anthropology, psychology, psychiatry, journalism, literature, and literary studies. They also benefit from an investigation of criminal-justice and crime-fighting policies, above all in Russia, both before and after the Revolution of 1917, and diachronically in comparison with European countries. Their approaches to history range from social history to discourse analysis and from the history of science and to new imperial history.

Part I focuses on late imperial Russia. Marina Mogilner argues that intellectuals, professionals, and activists devised a panoply of modernizing discourses of normativity and deviance as they sought to categorize and
master the Russian Empire’s extraordinary ethnic, religious, and developmental diversity. Although most of them eschewed Cesare Lombroso’s criminal-anthropological concept of the born criminal, its essence was often expressed in such categories as atavism, survival, irrationality, and primitivism, and articulated in notions of ethnically construed “savages within.” One such interpretation, articulated by the criminal anthropologist P. I. Kovalevskii, the focus of Louise McReynolds’s chapter, blamed environmental factors for criminality but also suggested that environmentally caused degeneracy was a heritable condition. Surprisingly, however, he completely avoided the tendency toward eugenics, which was prominent among European and American criminologists. Riccardo Nicolosi analyzes the theories of degeneration prevailing in late imperial Russia as a “master narrative” that combined the Lombrosian idea of inborn criminality with social determinism and that found their way directly and indirectly into major and minor works of Russian belles lettres.

Part II highlights the transition from optimistic policies aimed at rehabilitating criminals in the 1920s to a project of exterminating recidivists as “socially harmful elements” in the 1930s. David Shearer details the process that began in 1930, when ordinary criminality was categorized as separate from crimes against the state, and in the years to follow, when classically understood social deviation, such as hooliganism and prostitution, came to be viewed as anti-Soviet. Comparisons of the USSR with National Socialist Germany suggest that the two states influenced each other’s “final solution” of the recidivist criminal and Jewish “problems,” respectively. According to Marc Junge, the evidence at hand indicates that biological–social criminological discourses may have gained influence in the 1920s, although the relevant documentation is jealously guarded in the FSB archives. Finally, Anne Hartmann analyzes the ubiquitous concept of perekovka, or reforging, of social deviants through labor and discipline. This quasi-religious ideal, which involved expectations of conversion and rebirth, gradually fell by the wayside as recidivists were increasingly viewed as incorrigibly hostile to Soviet power.

Part III scrutinizes eyewitness accounts of the Gulag written by political prisoners. Such accounts, according to Renate Lachmann, are brimming with revulsion at the behavior of the regular criminal hierarchy that controlled and often humiliated intellectual inmates. Leona Toker singles out Varlam Shalamov’s Sketches of the Criminal World (Moscow, 1959), however, as relatively dispassionate.

The overall thrust of the contributions suggests a gradual and tragic narrowing of interpretive criminological possibilities from late imperial into Stalinist Russia—from deviance as a phenomenon worth studying to one only deserving obliteration. The original Slavic texts of translated quotations (mostly from Russian but also from Croatian) appear in footnotes at the bottom of relevant pages, which is especially helpful because the translations are not always well rendered. Although all of the chapters provide valuable scholarly contributions, they are unevenly edited. The introduction usefully summarizes the eight chapters and places
them within the broader historiography, but a conclusion and an index would have added significant value. Despite these criticisms, the volume advances our knowledge of Russian and Soviet criminological thinking and practice.

Jonathan Daly
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_Empire of the People: Settler Colonialism and the Foundations of Modern Democratic Thought_. By Adam Dahl (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2018) 260 pp. $45.00 cloth $24.95 paper

Over the past decade, scholars have increasingly turned to settler colonialism as a central concept to explain the history of the United States and its relationship to Indigenous people. In _Empire of the People_, Dahl makes an important contribution to settler-colonial studies by providing an incisive, deeply informative, and thoroughly convincing “ideological history” of the settler-colonial foundations of American democratic thought (13). Dahl focuses most of his attention on non-Native writers, but unlike previous work that analyzes American political thought and practice in relationship to settler colonialism, he makes the crucial move of engaging with Indigenous political theory and practice.

In Part I, “Federalism and Empire,” Dahl takes as a point of departure Arendt’s contention that the United States rejected colonialism and imperialism.1 Instead, Dahl shows that the principle of federalism codified in the 1787 Northwest Ordinance provided the “ideological architecture of settler colonialism” by reconciling imperial expansion with popular sovereignty (65). Not only did the Ordinance allow for the incorporation of new states on an equal basis, it required the taking of Indigenous lands, the elimination of Native people, and the disavowal of conquest by construing western lands as empty wilderness. Dahl’s focus on the Northwest Ordinance is embedded in thick but unfailingly clear descriptions of the political thought that formed the context for the founding of the United States. He combines cogent discussions of well-known figures like John Locke, Thomas Paine, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson with illuminating analyses of lesser-known settler-constitutionalist texts, including the Vermont Constitution of 1777 and the Cumberland Compact (formed by settlers in present-day Tennessee who declared their independence from North Carolina in 1780).

The second part of the book, “Settler Colonialism and Democratic Culture,” focuses on democratic thought in the “settler social state” during the antebellum period (78). As part of a methodology of going beyond a formal constitutional and legal analysis, Dahl begins with an

illuminating discussion of Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* (New York, 1899; orig. pub. in French 1835), showing how Tocqueville’s initial portrait of the North American landscape as an “immense wilderness” occupied by a “few small tribes” naturalized the replacement of sovereign Indigenous people by an American democracy that required widespread property holding to limit social inequality and instability (80). Throughout this section, Dahl continues to provide innovative readings of well-known thinkers (Ralph Waldo Emerson, Abraham Lincoln, and Walt Whitman), as well as lesser-known figures such as John O’Sullivan, who coined the term *manifest destiny*, and Galusha A. Grow, sponsor of the 1862 Homestead Act. Although Dahl’s readings reveal consistent settler-colonial logics, they avoid the reductionism sometimes found in settler-colonial studies by exploring distinctive elements such as Emerson’s Jeffersonian argument that the transformation of nature produces a virtuous citizenry and Whitman’s celebration of the extension of democratic energy into “vast trackless spaces” (147).  

Part III, “Unsettling Democracy,” explores the neglected but crucial area of Indigenous political thought through an examination of the writings of William Apess, a Pequot minister and activist in the 1830s. Although Apess’ deployment of constitutional discourse might suggest that he envisioned expanding the promise of American democracy to include Indians, Dahl convincingly argues that Apess’ development of “Indian nullification” (an idea that referenced South Carolina’s contemporaneous nullification of federal tariff law) entailed a refusal to accept the terms of settler colonialism. Instead, Apess used Indian nullification to “create an antagonistic space of contestation in which indigenous claims for political and cultural autonomy might be articulated” (165).

In his conclusion, Dahl builds on his discussion of Apess to argue for the necessity of going beyond Rana’s call for transcending settler colonialism’s exclusions by “universaliz[ing] settler freedom” (187). Instead, Dahl compellingly argues that “the project of decolonizing democracy” requires an engagement with Indigenous political thought (187). The first aspect of this engagement leads to a “nonsovereign conception of democracy” in which land is the source of power, and humans are dependent on living environments. (187). The second aspect involves appreciating the historical contribution of Indigenous (particularly Iroquois) political ideas to modern democratic thought. Although the latter retains a logic of greater inclusion that Dahl otherwise criticizes and that therefore appears to have less potential for unsettling democracy


than the former, both of these lines of engagement are worth pursuing as we try to find our way forward in a time of democratic crisis.

Jeffrey Ostler
University of Oregon

Jefferson and the Virginians: Democracy, Constitutions, and Empire. By Peter S. Onuf (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2018) 192 pp. $38.00

Onuf opens this latest addition to his expanding Jeffersonian oeuvre with a commonplace remark: “Thomas Jefferson loved his ‘country,’ Virginia.” Scholars routinely link that observation to the underlying provincialism of eighteenth-century American life and, in Jefferson’s case, to his healthy attachment to states’-rights thinking and the belief that the Tenth Amendment stated a principle of federalism more robust than the mere “truisms” of modern jurisprudence. Onuf problematizes this notion of state as country from the outset of this book (originally the William Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History at Louisiana State University). Far from being a contribution to southern (or even Virginia) history, Onuf’s book offers a sustained account of Jefferson’s conception of American citizenship, elucidated through a set of comparisons and conversations between Jefferson and his three most celebrated Virginia contemporaries—Patrick Henry, James Madison, and George Washington.

Jefferson and the Virginians is another entry in the vast corpus of Jefferson biography. Onuf took this path reluctantly. “I never intended to be a biographer,” he notes (16). His career would have taken a different course had he not become the Thomas Jefferson Foundation Professor of History at Mr. Jefferson’s own university. Yet his approach to Jefferson reflects many of the concerns that shaped Onuf’s earlier career as a student of the history and logic of American federalism. For want of a better term, Onuf can be characterized as a conceptual biographer, who is happiest tracing the nuances and dynamism of Jefferson’s ideas. His Jefferson does not really come alive as a political actor or decision maker. He appears instead as a deeply engaged, intellectually powerful architect of the American polity, displaying the same ingenuity in fashioning the republic that inspired his endless home-improvement projects at Monticello.

The starting point for this analysis lies in Jefferson’s conviction, pronounced in his first inaugural address, that Americans possessed “the strongest Government on earth.” That strength inhered in the readiness with which each citizen “at the call of the law, would fly to the standard of the law, and would meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern.” The dual problems of identifying the sources of this
republican loyalty and plotting its further perfection were the questions that animated the dynamic quality of Jefferson’s thinking.

Onuf states this problem in formulaic ways. One recurring motif is his invocation of “the Spirit of 1776,” meaning the mobilization of popular sentiment to support both independence and the establishment of new constitutions. This was where Patrick Henry’s rhetorical genius, which Jefferson so admired, proved so instrumental. Yet Jefferson thought that the actual process of constitution making in Virginia was deeply flawed. “And without a true constitution,” Onuf writes, “it followed (in circular fashion), Virginians did not truly constitute a people” (12). 

Mutatis mutandis, Onuf applies this formula in other contexts: “If republicans made the republic, the republic made republicans”; “The character of the people was a work in progress”; republicanism was, too (20, 25, 56). Onuf then traces the progressive character of Jefferson’s thinking in the latent or sometimes explicit dialogues that he conducted with Henry (over democracy), Madison (over the play of faction versus the idea of creating an informed public opinion), and Washington (over the relative priority of military service versus political engagement in the formation of republican citizens).

These are all stimulating conversations. In this book, as in his others, Onuf paints the political map with a broad brush and some sweeping generalizations. Only the four named Virginians have any physical presence, and again, as a conceptual biographer, Onuf presents them more as propositions than persons—except for Henry, whose legendary oratory does convey a brilliant impression. A more monographic treatment would say more about Washington’s inclination to make the Continental Army a truly national entity. Onuf’s treatment of Madison is also slightly underdeveloped. Strangely, Onuf never discusses Jefferson’s proposal to resolve constitutional disputes through popularly elected conventions, even though Madison went out of his way to subject that proposal to a devastating critique in Federalist 49–50. Discussing Madison’s animus against the state governments in 1787, Onuf suggests that Madison “did not express a judgment on human nature,” ignoring how a proto-Toquevillean Madison explained why republican citizens and legislators alike would individually lack confidence in their political judgments. If that is not a discussion of human nature, what is?

Yet setting these minor qualms aside, Onuf’s latest book reminds us yet again of the depth of Jefferson’s democratic radicalism and, even more important, of his admirably progressive views about the making of an American people. Whatever one thinks about the famous Jefferson problem of making sense of an egalitarian slaveholder, Onuf explains why we still actively wrestle with Jefferson’s moral legacy.

Jack Rakove
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The Problem of Democracy: The Presidents Adams Confront the Cult of Personality. By Andrew Burstein and Nancy Isenberg (New York, Viking, 2019) 576 pp. $35.00 cloth $37.00 paper

What? Another biography of pale white men in positions of power? What compels historians and political scientists to write repeatedly about men like John and John Quincy Adams? Nagel chronicled the Adams family not so long ago; Ferling wrote a splendid single-volume biography of the father; and McCullough’s entry in the list won the Pulitzer Prize.¹ In the past few years, we’ve had new biographies of John Quincy Adams by Cooper, Edel, Traub, and Unger.² Surely there is nothing more to say, and in our days of hand-writing guilt about the sins of the founding fathers, who would want to read more about them anyhow?

To be sure, Burstein and Isenberg are a formidable writing team with more than a dozen fine volumes to their individual and collective credit. They have invariably stimulated and impressed. In this book, they tackle a father and son who loved to write about themselves in the Puritan tradition of diary and letter book. Theirs is a literary biography, with copious references to classics, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels, and philosophical works. But can they find something new to report? The answer is a decisive and important “yes.” This book is more than biography; it is, as both Adamses would have recognized, an admonition. They foresaw that a cult of personality had come to pass in electoral politics, and Burstein and Isenberg follow the Adamses’ lead in warning of its dangers.

In their own time and in retrospect, both men represented the most admirable and the most problematical facets of our political history. They were anti-aristocratic but elitist, wary of democracy in the formative age of democracy, elected by partisan pluralities but dismissive of political party activities, and New Englanders when that region was becoming increasingly cultural insular and defensive. Honest, earnest, and pious, they rejected popularity because they understood its seductive nature and the unseemly passions that fueled it. In short, they ill-fit the evolving democratic politics and the political culture of their country, although they rose to the greatest heights in it.

The Adamses’ anomalous political stature is not just what interests Burstein and Isenberg, however. While all the founders shared a commitment to public service—what the doctrine of civic virtue called


distinterestedness—only the Adamses saw the dark underside of office. They never believed that image equated to good governance, or that popularity reflected merit. This book is a story of achievement marred by undeserved public calumny. In marvelous and sometimes deeply moving detail and with a keen eye for the telling political episode, the authors follow the two men and their families, using their lives, much as did Plutarch (although they do not cite his *Parallel Lives* as an example) to teach us about power. For both Adamses, the excesses of political passion that they believed cost them re-election were recast into grave warnings about the “tribalism” of the two-party system (xi). The biography becomes an opportunity for the authors to don the mantles of the two presidents and “provide a germane, even urgent” warning that pleasant myths about American democracy will not save that democracy (xii).

To accomplish their task, the authors address readers directly. They regard the Adamses’ lives not as examplars of two generations but as an extended story. They bring to this story insights about the role of family in what would otherwise be dry political history, and they reject common chronological divisions, such as the Era of Good Feelings. Some of their insights—like John’s “needy ego” (83), the early affection between Abigail and Thomas Jefferson (later soured and then rekindled), illness and debt hovering over their lives (imagine how John Quincy’s hemorrhoids changed the course of history), the genuine fondness and respect that the two men had for one another, and the ameliorating role of older sister Nabby—are examples of the riches of a traditional biographical approach.

Peter Charles Hoffer
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*American Indians in Early New Orleans: From Calumet to Raquette.* By Daniel H. Usner (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2018) 176 pp. $36.00

The myth of American Indian disappearance has long served the interests of North America’s European and American settlers. From images enshrined on official seals to pageantry that invokes a “primitive past,” narratives about the continent’s Native peoples argue for their gradual fading from the landscape to make way for the creation of modern society. Scholarship in recent years has challenged these formulations, showing that American Indians have persisted and adapted to changing circumstances. Indeed, in a refutation to the popular imagination, most Native Americans now live in the cities and towns of North America, maintaining a presence that goes back to their founding.

Usner makes a considerable contribution to this growing interdisciplinary literature by demonstrating that the city of New Orleans is “an ideal place for studying how American Indians utilized urban space in
dynamic ways over the centuries” (xii), specifically the 200 years following the arrival of the French in the early eighteenth century. Native peoples from the Lower Mississippi Valley used the site that would become the city to gather plants and to hunt and fish but considered it too unstable because of weather and terrain for permanent settlement. Once French colonizers established New Orleans as a trading center, however, American Indians incorporated it into their sphere of economic and diplomatic relations. With elaborate ceremony and ritual, delegations of local tribes made regular visits to meet with French officials and negotiate the terms of their alliances. Especially in these early years, the growing city also depended on the vast range of goods and services that Native peoples provided, including the labor that built it, food for local consumption, and commodities for global trade.

Although the political power of sovereign American Indian tribes throughout the region declined after U.S. acquisition in 1803, New Orleans “continued to be a laboratory of Indian adaptation” through the nineteenth century (42). Native Americans occupied the streets, markets, and outlying settlements, where they made a living gathering medicinal and culinary herbs, producing handcrafts, and performing traditional games such as stickball (ishtoboli in Choctaw, or racquette in French) for a popular audience. At the French Market, for instance, which was becoming the city’s best-known attraction, Native peoples sold baskets woven from rivercane, as well as filé made from sassafras for the region’s iconic gumbo, to tourists and residents. Guidebooks and popular literature, however, both romanticized and disparaged American Indians, framing them as the charming yet degraded remnants of a “vanishing race.” Such tropes were bolstered by the spectacle of Creek and Seminole prisoners of war moving through the city, the formation of municipal political organizations that adopted “Indian” rituals, and the development of the tradition of African-American revelers dressing and performing as “tribes” during annual Mardi Gras celebrations. Usner contends that we have been too quick or unwilling “to see through this imperialist gaze and find the real people who persisted in being American Indians in and around New Orleans” (129). Such persistence has included more recent migrations to the city by Native peoples from across the region and the country that have continued into the twenty-first century.

American Indians in Early New Orleans adds to a substantial body of work by the author on early America that skillfully employs interdisciplinary methods to chart the complex interactions between diverse peoples often left out of our dominant narratives. Grounded in ethnohistory, a field that merges history and anthropology to privilege indigenous and subaltern perspectives, Usner makes wide use of historical documents, archaeological evidence, and images, carefully reading them to tease out the history and meaning of Native peoples in the city. For example, numerous drawings, paintings, newspaper articles, and traveler accounts “depict this everyday presence of American Indians in New Orleans”
and provide “actual evidence of Indian resilience and resourcefulness,” even though they were often created to perpetuate the myth of the Vanishing Indian (53, 94). American Indians in Early New Orleans helps us to see that such tensions and contradictions lie at the heart of not only the way we have told the history of the city but also that of North America.

Nicolas G. Rosenthal
Loyola Marymount University

*Beyond Hawai‘i: Native Labor in the Pacific World.* By Gregory Rosenthal (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2018) 320 pp. $85.00 cloth $32.95 paper and e-book

At first glance, Rosenthal’s *Beyond Hawai‘i* is a work of considerable promise. Using a mix of English and Hawaiian-language sources, Rosenthal provides a desperately needed examination of Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) laborers in the nineteenth century. The text weaves together the histories of Kanaka laborers, the industries in which they worked, the natural environment that these industries exploited, and the broader transition of Kānaka into capitalist labor. Each chapter uses a single individual as a lens into a specific industry, beginning with the Hawaiian sandalwood trade in the 1820s and then moving into the Pacific worlds of whaling, shipping, gold, and guano before returning to Hawai‘i to examine sugar in the 1870s. The text relies, as much as possible, on first hand accounts by Kanaka laborers. Rosenthal deserves praise for amplifying their voices in his work.

Unfortunately, *Beyond Hawai‘i* falls short as both Hawaiian and Pacific history, in part because Rosenthal seems to have little investment in either. As an outsider, Rosenthal argues that they have the *kuleana* (right and responsibility) “to bring outside concerns, methodologies, and research questions to bear upon local and indigenous stories, to offer new ways of seeing and to give voice to concerns that may or may not resonate with current stakeholders in the archipelago” (12). In some ways, this claim seems to be putting an indigenous gloss on a long-standing colonial vision of the Pacific as a space for outsiders to do as they wish with little concern for the interests of “stakeholders.”

This lack of investment may be why Rosenthal abandons some of the basic kuleana not just of Hawaiian and Pacific historians but of historians in general. Rosenthal seems little inclined, for instance, to account for historical and historiographical context. Hence, the chapter about Boki and the sandalwood trade fails to account for Boki’s political rival Ka‘ahumanu and the role of the sandalwood trade and debt in their political maneuvering. The failure to address this context leads to a classic imperial conclusion, that Natives just like shiny Western things. Rosenthal argues that this inclination has something to do with mana,
spiritual power or status, but the text includes no examination of what mana meant in 1820s Hawai‘i.

On occasion, Rosenthal also neglects to support historical claims or arguments properly. Rosenthal eschews any historically grounded analysis of the Master’s and Servant’s Act of 1850, a key moment in the labor history of Hawai‘i, instead relying on broad declarations based on a crude application of Karl Marx. Rosenthal writes that after the Mahele—the land redistribution under King Kamehameha III—the kingdom “realized” that it needed to alienate the “landless” masses from their labor, passing the act to force a newly made Native proletariat into contract-driven servility. The only support for this statement can be found in a footnote citing relevant parts of Capital (45). Although a culturally and historically aware Marxian analysis is clearly relevant, Rosenthal’s use of Marx does justice to neither history nor theory.

Elsewhere Rosenthal claims that though well-known in 1840s Yerba Buena, Kānaka were not particularly “well liked.” The evidence comes solely from an occupying American soldier during the Mexican-American war who, in professing his racially charged disgust of all of Yerba Buena’s residents, reserved his strongest dislike for Kānaka (142–143). Although the claim was a single tangential aside, such poorly supported statements call into question the overall quality of the work. In a more problematical example, Rosenthal concludes by arguing that the failure of Kānaka to maintain, or even desire, an ethnic monopoly on field labor on the sugar plantations led to the “dissolution of the Hawaiian working class” in the 1870s. Although this contention provides a convenient end date for the monograph, Rosenthal’s conclusion is historically suspect and unsupported beyond the bottom rungs of plantation labor. Even a cursory examination of the following century would demonstrate continued Kanaka strength in nonagricultural labor and in future labor movements.

Rosenthal should be credited for examining largely ignored Kanaka laborers, but Beyond Hawai‘i repeatedly fails to take historical context into account and displays a disturbing lack of care in its analysis. Although clearly a useful intervention into Pacific and Hawaiian history, the subject and the discipline both deserve greater fidelity to the basic kuleana of the historian.

Kealani Cook
University of Hawai‘i, West O‘ahu

Performing Disunion: The Coming of the Civil War in Charleston, South Carolina.

McDonnell’s history is the most original, even eccentric, account of the coming of the Civil War ever written. His physical focus, Charleston, is
narrow, but the breadth and detail of his social observation is unparalleled. All is handled with literary cleverness and stylistic verve. His argument is that the appeal of the Civil War in Charleston was as much to create unity in the tension-filled city and among its insecure men as it was to create a nation safe for slavery. Divided Charlestonians yearned for a “melodrama” when men could triumphantly represent both the “respectability” and “honor” codes that divided them. The Civil War grew from a citywide male desire for a “performance” of united masculinity rushing to heroic self-definition.

McDonnell gracefully uses some Charleston landmark buildings, and the city’s three points of entry—by sea, railroad, and road—to establish its polyglot nature, involving commerce, manufacturing, and retail as much as slave owning, in which most of its whites, many foreign- or Northern-born, did physical or clerical labor. McDonnell’s prologue and introduction reveal his unique perspective. His focus is on the “Vigilant Rifles,” which formed a disunion military cadre in 1860. Members came from the Vigilant Fire Company, one of several city units in which middling men had gained both “honor” and “respectability” in the fire-torn city. Had these men and Charleston not acted quickly, McDonnell contends, the Civil War would not have unfolded as it did.

McDonnell’s second theme evolves from an 1860 advertisement purchased by Walter Steele, a successful seller of hats in Charleston at a $4.00 no-credit rate. Its headline was “Politics! Chess! Hats!!!” Its stated goal was to sell hats, pay the printer, and “end in harmony.” It begins by discussing mathematics to arrive “at a just conclusion” about buying hats. The chess and politics involve a “four-handed game, with Lincoln whites, Breckinridge blacks, Bell of ‘indescribable hue’ and Douglas of ‘mixed color.’” The “real players” in this “very complicated game” are “the ‘wire-pullers.’” At Steele’s shop, the better play was “Hat or No Hat,” always heads in a heads-or-tails game where $4.00 won you a hat—without wire pulling.

It is easy to see why McDonnell responds to this gambit: He and Steele pursue clear serious ends with amusingly mystifying indirection. McDonnell proceeds to devote fifty fact-filled and clever pages to hats, and forty-four to chess. He pays no serious attention to the politicians, although he mentions Abraham Lincoln’s election passing six times and once refers to the president’s derogatory nickname of “the Illinois Ape in the White House.”

McDonnell emphasizes the deep tension brought to Charleston by the conflict between “honor” and “respectability” as codes of action. Honor is associated with slave mastery, and respectability with Victorian “market-driven” moralism. Respectable people were judged by “piety, thrift, diligence, candor, propriety, temperance and like virtues.” For men of honor such things were “not to be considered” because “too close inquiry could be positively dangerous.” The man of honor was sure that he—and others very like him—were born to superiority and
could no more change that elevation than “he could change the nose on his face.” It was a matter of “blood and semen” through wealthy heritage.

Respectability partly depended on others’ approval, which, like one’s own, was influenced by one’s money. McDonnell sees honor as comparatively free of such capitalist realities. Earlier honor had meant “privilege, leisure, and license, too,” but after 1820, slave masters were driven to include elements of respectability as the guarantors of religion, decency, and social stability, without much sacrifice of their older easy pleasures. McDonnell evokes “duty” as honor’s trait, but the essential duty seems to have been to uphold individual enrollment in an unquestionable superiority. Money and display were at least as important to slave-holding honor as to mercantilist respectability.

In the book’s most extensively considered incident, McDonnell strongly criticizes both William Tabor, Sr., and Jr. The father was a respectable “Northern bean counter,” a bank teller who raised a large family in Charleston, “a little man” just successful enough to have Jr. join the honorables at South Carolina College, home of “lazy elitism, vulgarity and simple chaos.” Some who thought that honor included respectability condemned Will Jr. at times, but his spirited brawling and many sexual conquests, black and white, led to marriage into the Rhett clan, a law career, and editorship on Charleston’s most radical proslavery paper. In late 1853, Tabor made a speech attacking education for the poor as a ruinous step toward democracy. Tabor’s position suited those who controlled policy, but it was so strongly worded that it breathed life into those who thought some respect for, and aid to, workers and the poor desirable. Benjamin Perry took notes on the speech, damned its callous hatred for “lesser beings” and democracy—and refused a duel. Working men in Columbia hanged Tabor in effigy and a riotous mob in Charleston drove him from town. A fellow editor saved the paper by condemning Tabor’s views.

Tabor returned to his paper, where an 1856 attack on a moderate candidate as “intellectually bankrupt” led to a duel. McDonnell demeans Tabor at every point including suggesting cowardice for pleading “respectability”—“just as the despised Sumner had done” when felled by the “bold strokes Brooks dealt abolitionism.” Tabor was largely remembered as an honorable hero, but both honor and the duel came under attack after the sorry affair.

McDonnell treats capitalism as honor’s foe but his evidence, including his Tabor account, suggests that democracy was the real threat. Danger, he insists, was felt not from slaves nor abolitionists but from the city’s “bone and sinew” working men, as well as the rural white poor. Leaders like John C. Calhoun, James Hammond, and James DeBow wanted industrialization, confident that slavery would protect the South’s capitalism from worker activism and popular control that in the North was leading toward democratic mob rule and socialism.
Performing Disunion is chock-full of fascinating data and literary vitality. Its contrast between honor and respectability seems overdrawn, as do its half playful claims of the contributions of chess, hats, and the Vigilant Rifles (before they were armed) to Civil War. Yet it is a pleasure to read, and it touches unexpected chords of Charleston life that help to suggest why many young men rushed to perform war for a society that marginalized them.

David A. Grimsted
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Heavy Laden: Union Veterans, Psychological Illness, and Suicide. By Larry M. Logue and Peter Blanck (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2018) 257 pp. $110.00

Logue and Blanck ask, Did Union veterans suffer lasting psychological consequences from the Civil War, or were they largely able to reinte- grate into society? In answer, they present an intricate tapestry of postwar trauma, citing multiple origins from wounds, disease, racial and economic inequalities, and wartime incarceration. They observe varying manifestations of mental strain over time, among black and white veterans alike. Their work has broad appeal for the social sciences, humanities, and a popular audience.

The authors address a controversy originally framed in the field of Civil War history, which pits historians who argue for widespread evidence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among Civil War soldiers against those who find the application of a post–Vietnam War diagnosis to be anachronistic. Seeking resolution, the authors adopt an interdisci- plinary approach, employing statistical analyses of the Early Indicators Union Army data set (based on the compiled military service records, pensions, carded medical records, surgeon certificates, and the census for 39,000 white soldiers and 15,000 black soldiers) and the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (based on U.S. census data). The Early Indicators project, begun by Robert W. Fogel in the 1990s and currently directed by Dora L. Costa, has been underused by those seeking to understand Civil War veteran life cycles. Its inclusion enables new in- sights into race, the experiences of prisoners of war, and veterans in old age. In addition, the authors draw from personal accounts, soldier’s home records, Freedman’s Bureau records, hospital files and registers, government reports, and newspapers.

This robust mix of sources allows the authors to portray complexity, illuminating multifarious contours of veteran mental health. Using a data set from Massachusetts, they demonstrate that individual veterans sometimes proved resilient and sometimes suffered acutely from diseases and wounds, homelessness, or joblessness. While admitting that the meanings and causes of suicide can be difficult to discern, Logue and
Blanck discover an “elevated risk of suicide among veterans pensioned for wartime disabilities,” and a higher rate of overall veteran suicide compared to civilians (151). The experiences of white and black veterans also varied considerably. White veterans were poorer than white civilians, but, as the authors suggest, the same men might have been poorer before the war; black veterans acquired more wealth than their civilian counterparts by 1870. Though the historical record appears to reflect that black veterans suffered fewer psychological disabilities than did white veterans, the authors explain how social factors—such as black men’s avoidance of soldiers’ homes and their later access to pensions—makes tracking their mental illnesses difficult. Soldiers who survived incarceration at Andersonville prison were more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with mental illnesses than were their peers. In short, the authors convincingly conclude that Civil War veterans “were laden with a distinctive [psychological] burden” (215).

Logue and Blanck hope to put to rest the “PTSD–not PTSD dichotomy,” by arguing that soldiers suffered from “an equivalent to PTSD” (206–207). There is, however, no need to resolve what is a healthy methodological debate within the historical discipline. Indeed, the authors end in agreement with scholars who seek evidence of PTSD in the past, even though they might not fully understand the complaint of those who do not. Clarke best exemplifies the nature of the dispute in her explanation of the Civil War–era diagnosis of nostalgia, or potentially fatal homesickness: That Americans “could settle on nostalgia as a primary source of wartime distress among Civil War soldiers points not to a timeless psychological response to battle but towards the shifting emotional experiences that wars generate.”

Thus, Clarke holds that each society, in its own context and according to its own vocabulary, understands and produces different symptoms, illnesses, diagnoses, and treatments. Regardless of Logue and Blanck’s conclusions about PTSD, however, their expansive source base, illuminating demographic comparisons, and nuanced portrait of the distinctive burden that Civil War soldiers had to bear are impressive.

Kathryn Shively Meier
Virginia Commonwealth University


Oberlin is renowned for two periods in its history, both firmly associated with the ideologies of the left. From the 1830s until the end of the Civil

War, it was the most racially progressive place—both college and town (interchangeably used herein unless noted otherwise)—in the United States. In the 1960s, Oberlin College was at the leading edge of the so-called counterculture, which has almost uniquely survived there, and even intensified, to this day. Many readers, if pressed, will recall something about Oberlin’s anti-slavery history. Almost everyone will recognize it as the alma mater of HBO personality Lena Dunham, and the place where students protested the inauthenticity of Asian dishes in the dining hall as instances of “cultural appropriation.”

If Oberlin’s reputation for contemporary political correctness is exaggerated, its involvement in the abolitionist movement is beyond question. Beginning in 1835, the Oberlin Institute (as the college was then known) was committed to the admission of students “without regard to color,” making it one of the first two integrated colleges in the United States. For the next thirty years, Oberlin faculty, students, and townspeople were at the forefront of the struggle against slavery, welcoming fugitives, resisting slave catchers, and eventually taking up arms. Two Oberlin African Americans fought and died with John Brown in Virginia.

The stories of Oberlin’s heroic past are repeated and celebrated today, as though school and town have always been models of progressivism (even if nowadays in a caricatured incarnation), but that portrait is not actually true. As Kornblith and Lasser relentlessly document, Oberlin became increasingly segregated—sometimes de facto and sometimes intentionally—from the end of Reconstruction until the advent of the Civil Rights Movement in the mid-twentieth century.

Kornblith and Lasser write affectionately about Oberlin (they are emeriti professors there) while unflinchingly exposing the extent of its biased past. None of the many episodes would be particularly surprising in another locale—say, Cambridge, Evanston, or Palo Alto—but it is truly upsetting to read about them in Oberlin. For example, the Oberlin Kindergarten Training School graduated 711 teachers from 1894 to 1923, of whom only 6 were African American, and none of whom was ever hired by the Oberlin public schools (221). In 1913, Henry Churchill King, president of the college, endorsed residential segregation and encouraged an early form of redlining by a local real estate firm (236). Even the dormitories and student activities were sometimes segregated, often at the insistence of white students (248).

Kornblith and Lasser pile incident on incident, leaving no doubt that Oberlin strayed badly from its egalitarian mission, beginning in about 1880. The Oberlin public schools had no black teacher until 1939, and the college did not appoint an African-American professor until 1948 (244). The accounts of prejudice are so many and so convincing that they almost become numbing. The authors might have done

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1 In the interest of full disclosure, my son took a class from Professor Lasser in the early 2000s.
better by omitting some of the details; we do not need to know the names of every person who endorsed each petition or attended each meeting.

*Elusive Utopia* is less convincing when it comes to explaining Oberlin’s transition to segregation. It seems undeniable, as the authors point out, that some of the change was related to the nature of Oberlin’s dwindling black population, as many of the most successful African Americans relocated after the Civil War, when economic opportunities became more widely available elsewhere. Yet, it is harder to credit their claim that the town leaders’ increased involvement in the temperance movement led to a diminished commitment to racial justice. The fact that the two phenomena were clearly concurrent does not imply causation. Nonetheless, it is bracing and important to read the full story of Oberlin’s history in Kornblith and Lasser’s impressively researched and closely argued book.

Allen and Temperance Jones, freed slaves who fled North Carolina with their children, arrived in Oberlin in 1843. Observing the comfortable relations between whites and blacks, Allen exclaimed that he had “found Paradise” and was “going to stay” (43). The Joneses prospered in Oberlin; four of their sons graduated from the college. But, as Kornblith and Lasser powerfully show, the utopia turned out to be far more elusive than they could have imagined.

Steven Lubet
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**Sentinel: The Unlikely Origins of the Statue of Liberty.** By Francesca Lidia Viano (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2018) 577 pp. $35.00

Given the Statue of Liberty’s powerful, if changing, symbolism and its ubiquity in American popular culture, the iconic monument is the subject of a surprisingly small number of scholarly works. Viano’s erudite book is doubtless the most detailed, expansive such work to date. Originally published in Italian, it seeks to uncover what Viano believes to be the myriad iconographic, literary, and historical sources that inspired the two Frenchmen most crucial to the statue’s creation, the sculptor Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi and the writer and political figure Edouard de Laboulaye.¹

As Viano writes, a careful look at those sources reveals a Statue of Liberty at odds with the one that we think we know. Liberty is “a sort of monster, shining like the Luciferian morning star against a tar-black night” (5). She is an “ambivalent icon of colonial domination” with a “vengeful face . . . directed at the British” and “meant to threaten

Americans themselves” (5, 9). The statue’s “poetic meaning” is “that of an Orpheus shedding light on man’s painful condition, of a Demetra walking in the underworld of death and misery” (445–446).

What are we to make of descriptions such as these? They are based on a wealth of serious research: in-depth analysis of ancient mythology and its manifestations in early modern and modern European art and literature; religious scholarship available to the educated elite of the nineteenth century; the forays of Britain and France into Egypt in an effort to extend their cultural influence and economic prowess; and French politics in the second third of the nineteenth century. France found itself eclipsed by Germany, in competition with Britain, and eyeing an enhanced relationship with the United States, in part to offset setbacks in Europe. The problem is that, given the limited historical documentation of Bartholdi and Laboulaye’s views, Viano is constrained in her ability to demonstrate that the two men knew about, and were influenced by, the fascinating forms of knowledge, works of art, and political situations that she has so brilliantly uncovered.

For that reason, much of her analysis is speculative. For example, we know from the notes of Bartholdi’s mother Charlotte that she took her children to London in 1851 and that they visited the galleries of Hampton Court. But Charlotte apparently failed to record either her own or the young Bartholdi’s reactions to what they observed. Viano can say only that “Auguste may well have recognized (italics added) the severe shape and pale colors of [his mentor Ary] Scheffer’s Christ the Remunerator in Raphael’s Christ’s Charge to Peter” and that “he must have been (italics added) equally struck by the dissimilarity of the British style with that of his master” (134). Scheffer “might have encouraged Bartholdi to practice his color . . . and he might have directed him to the British Museum” (135).

Such formulations appear on virtually every page—“might have,” “must have,” and “one can only speculate about how Bartholdi reacted.” Many of Viano’s speculations may well be true. Most of them are intriguing. Yet so much of the book hinges on possibilities, rather than documented realities, that the reader is often left hungering for more direct evidence—or even more nuanced claims. Viano has good evidence, for example, that Bartholdi felt deeply wounded by the loss of his home province Alsace to the Germans in 1871. But she is on shakier ground when she claims that he sought revenge against Germany through his artistic work. She stretches her evidence even further when she maintains that he embedded that quest for revenge in the Statue of Liberty’s form. Maybe he did, but as the book proceeds, possibilities often become realities, and this transformation can, in places, weaken her case.

It is a shame that she takes such liberties, because the book contains much new and exciting material—for example, the idea, based on ancient mythology and various artistic sources, that Bartholdi hammered
apocalyptic imagery into the Statue of Liberty’s design. Even before New Yorkers unveiled the colossal sculpture in 1886, the cartoonist Thomas Nast depicted Liberty with a skull instead of a face and captioned his drawing with a line from Dante: “Abandon all hope, you who enter here.” More recently, countless films have dramatized the destruction of Lady Liberty, and with it, the world—notably, Planet of the Apes (1968), The Day After Tomorrow (2004), and Oblivion (2013). Nonetheless, these apocalyptic connections may be the result of interpretations and associations imposed on the statue—a “hollow icon,” according to the art historian Boime—rather than inherent to it. Nast and his successors were likely moved by their own preoccupations at least as much as, or instead of, those of Bartholdi or Laboulaye.

This stylishly written and well-translated book makes an eye-opening, highly suggestive read, its interdisciplinary scholarship a genuine intellectual feast. But empirical historians may become frustrated at times with the speculative liberties that it takes.

Edward Berenson
New York University

Magic Bean: The Rise of Soy in America. By Matthew Roth (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2018) 368 pp. $24.95 paper $45.00 cloth

Roth’s Magic Bean is about soybeans and so much more. The story of the soybean in the United States is one of multiple attempts to make a plant profitable through the application of science and persuasion by scientists, government bureaucrats, the USDA, producer groups, corporations, and other interested parties. Roth’s organizing question—Was the soybean destined to flourish in the United States, or was its success a result of lucky breaks?—will simultaneously please and frustrate those who view the past through a lens of social-construction historiography. Few historians would claim that anything is destined for success or failure. Instead, most agree that human intervention and advocacy, creativity and innovation, not to mention profit and loss, all figure into an outcome. The “lucky breaks” of Roth’s narrative are the stuff that animate any narrative.

That said, Roth tells a fascinating story of the waxing and waning of the soybean’s fortunes in the United States over the course of the twentieth century. Roth begins with the U.S. government scientists tasked with locating soy cultivars in Asia who learned about the merits of soy’s application as a forage crop as well as a food staple. Scientists recognized the local importance of tofu, known as “bean cheese,” but few believed that tofu would be an important food in America, although it had

already taken hold in immigrant communities on the West Coast and among vegetarians. American vegetarians, most notably Adventists, argued for the value of soy food, but the smart investment was in soy as a forage crop. Scientists and agricultural experts believed that soy could lessen cotton dependency in the South by restoring soil health and providing forage for increased livestock production.

Multiple obstacles blocked the spread of soy raised for seed, including the need to appropriate harvest technology, the lack of the milling capacity, and the problems of taste and dietary expectations. Even so, promoters continued to work on behalf of soy food and such by-products as plastic and oil; wartime conditions provided an added boost. In both world wars, government researchers and bureaucrats hoped that soy could replace other foods that were deemed valuable for fighting men. Cut off from the supply of food-grade oil from Asia, the United States turned to soy for use in food as well as industrial applications. During World War II, New York Governor Thomas Dewey hosted a widely publicized soy meal for his family and the media to showcase its viability and tastiness. His fear, which others shared, that meat protein would be lost not just during wartime but also during the postwar years made soy a necessary replacement food. The return of peace, however, saw soy proponents frustrated for a variety of reasons, including the surprising availability of meat protein and the problem of soy’s flavor due to its processing techniques. Scientists managed to improve the taste just as the work of dietary reformers and changing demographics provided an opening for soy food. Meanwhile, soy protein for livestock feed surged; acreage dedicated to soy was a remarkable late twentieth-century change in agriculture.

Magic Bean is a valuable contribution to multiple historiographies and a model commodity study. Roth shows the complex relationships between corporations, government agencies and scientists, farmers and farm organizations, ethnic communities, and utopian reformers with great clarity. Only a couple of items detract. A chapter about the development of the trade in soy futures feels disassociated from the narrative. Furthermore, the title of this book, though provocative, is underdeveloped. No reader would assert that the soybean possessed magical qualities along the lines of a fairy tale, despite the many people who were entranced by the plant. The many billions of dollars invested in production and many billions more generated through soy agriculture, food, and industrial applications is staggering. The fact that the bean has achieved an elevated position in American agriculture is even more astounding because of how rapidly that rise occurred. Roth’s hyperbole is easy to forgive given the success of soy despite the many setbacks that promoters endured in demonstrating the utility of this remarkable, if not magical, bean.

J. L. Anderson
Mount Royal University
The United States has lost its war on poverty. Many a scholar has sought to understand why, given the tremendous resources that the nation has at its disposal. Indeed, as McAndrews tells us, poverty has declined far more slowly since President Lyndon B. Johnson declared that “we shall not rest until this [war on poverty] is won” than it did in the years before. At the beginning of his exploration of American poverty, McAndrews acknowledges the books, from rhetorical to sociological studies, that offer valuable analyses of how federal policy has contributed to poverty’s persistence. What distinguishes his text is a president-by-president exploration of the role of the executive office in antipoverty policy, from Lyndon Baines Johnson to Barack Obama.

McAndrews defines antipoverty policy broadly, accounting for presidential approaches to welfare, hunger, “urban development,” homelessness, health care, and more. Each element receives individual attention, but the analysis makes careful links across administrations and political parties. “Enterprise zones,” for example, originated in the Republican Reagan administration as an idea to revitalize urban areas by encouraging private investment and job creation through tax relief. Democratic president Barack Obama unveiled his version, “promise zones,” in 2013. Administration after administration tried to make adjustments to federal cash-assistance programs until President Bill Clinton “signed into law the most radical welfare reform since the New Deal” (161). McAndrews traces this lineage in detail, employing archival materials, media coverage, and interviews with people directly involved in crafting and negotiating these policies to reveal the complexities involved in antipoverty policymaking.

In addition to accounting for the intricacies of the process, McAndrews offers analyses of each president’s approach. He bases his assessments not on the administrations’ reputations but on a series of more concrete metrics. What policies successfully passed? Did employment increase? Did the poverty rate decrease? For example, even though President Ronald Reagan received heavy criticism for his approach to homelessness, McAndrews concludes that poor Americans were better off at the end of the Reagan administration even if “he could have done so much more” (134). McAndrews also looks to factors like presidential rhetoric and media coverage of poverty during a given administration. Did the president compromise too much? Did he talk about poverty too little? President George H. W. Bush made poverty a national talking point, whereas President Obama rarely mentioned it.

The Presidents and the Poor concludes with a list of barriers that McAndrews believes to have prevented presidents from achieving victory in the war on poverty—political partisanship, economic shifts, structural racism, an apathetic electorate, and more. The book would have been more effective if it had started with this analysis, using these elements to
frame the decades-long antipoverty narrative. Doing so would have created space for more in-depth treatments of key factors like race, which generally receives only fleeting mention until the book’s conclusion. Readers looking for a critical/cultural studies approach to antipoverty policy will want to look elsewhere. McAndrews clearly cares about power, but this text takes a more traditional approach to political history.

The book excels in its comprehensive review of the details of antipoverty policymaking in the White House. It is a valuable resource for scholars writing about poverty and/or presidential rhetoric, regardless of their discipline, because of its meticulous treatment of a wide array of policy negotiations.

Whitney Gent
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Building Resistance: Children, Tuberculosis, and the Toronto Sanatorium. By Stacie Burke (Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 2018) 554 pp. $120.00 cloth $39.95 paper

The history of tuberculosis has been a popular area of historical investigation since the 1980s. Given that national case studies have been the choice of most authors, Building Resistance proves to be unusual. Burke uses the exceptional archive of the Toronto Sanatorium for children, which opened in 1904, to ground her case study. The main focus is on those who write about children; the children themselves are usually silent in the sources. Overall, this book is a welcome addition to an existing body of literature about the history of tuberculosis in that it extends the well-known sanatorium narrative to pediatrics. The unprecedented richness of the material has much to say about the families of these children and their interactions and negotiations with medical personnel. The various chapters clearly link to the wider history of the disease, but through the lens of this particular institution.

Although the topic is a staple in the history of medicine, Burke wants the book to be read as an anthropological study. In a revealing paragraph, she forswears any intention to test hypotheses but instead to provide a thick description in a qualitative case study (8). This (short) declaration is complemented by a select reading of the available historiography of the sanatorium. Burke identifies some scholars as critical of the sanatorium and praises others for seeing the sanatorium in a more nuanced way. Yet the specific factors that determined the debate within the historiography remain surprisingly nebulous.

Burke professes to maintain a “balanced perspective” (8), which makes sense in light of her appeal to thick description rather than a clear analytical framework. The question is what exactly are the elements to be balanced? Positive and negative accounts of the sanatorium? Medical perspectives and patients’ views? A more detailed reading of the existing
literature could have created clearer answers; the method of thick description might not have been the best approach. The book’s skeletal chronology is apt, if largely standard, starting with the Western sanatorium experience and ending with the arrival of streptomycin.

The title gives away the key analytical term for this book, *resistance*—the relationship between the body and the disease. All the chapters present vital information about the experiences of children, families, and physicians, demonstrating the methodology of thick description in a series of mini-case studies that confer considerable space to direct quotations from the sources. Throughout, Burke provides interesting commentary about the material, though she does not tend to analyze it deeply. Rather than engage with the secondary literature or with historical contextualization (although she does so to some extent in the introduction), Burke often reverts to the term of *resistance* as her lodestone. The problem is that what it means to her exactly is unclear. What was the contemporary view of it? How did it change, and to what extent is resistance a historical category at all? How does a modern reading of resistance contribute to historical understanding? In short, we want to know whether resistance served as a category of explication throughout the time of the Toronto Sanatorium. Burke’s use of resistance as an analytical category is not entirely convincing.

The source material for the book is nothing short of spectacular; no comparable collection exists elsewhere. The level of detail is impressive, painting a totally unambiguous picture of how children, parents, and professionals experienced life centered on the sanatorium. This book is a must-read for all those who are interested in the fundamental aspects of medical work in the realm of deadly diseases. Historians, however, may regret Burke’s reliance on case studies to order the narrative rather than on the historiography. Burke’s structure works well enough to organize the various treatment regimes in the source stories, but it cannot convey the ways in which the Toronto sanatorium was unique. How did its historical trajectory differ from that of other institutions? How much does Burke’s study contribute to the existing literature? Even if its contribution is slight, Burke might have achieved more with a focus on, say, what surgery entailed when performed on children. Did surgeons use the same needles? Did they have child-specific equipment? How did they handle complications? The Toronto Sanitorium for children existed during a period of rapid change in pediatric medicine. How did developments in such contemporary institutions as the Montreal Children’s Hospital and the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children affect how medicine was practiced in the Toronto Sanatorium?

Like other works bridging medical advances, the book loses some of its momentum as it enters the antibiotic era. Perhaps it gives away some of its underlying challenges by calling the sulpha drugs and the early streptomycin discovery by Selman Waksman and Albert Schatz “monumental discoveries.” Notwithstanding the watershed that the antibiotic era represented in tuberculosis medicine, a number of scholars have begun to question the revolutionary nature of antibiotics.
The decision to frame this study with the concept of resistance presents a distinctive perspective on the history of the tuberculous body and alleviates problematical aspects of modern-day terminology in historical inquiry. But a stricter narrative, a clearer emphasis on historical analysis, and a little less reliance on direct quotations from the printed sources would have provided for an even more innovative study. But as an elaborate guide to the source material and as an informative case study of a children’s sanatorium, this book deserves lavish praise.

Flurin Condrau
University of Zurich

Constructing Power and Place in Mesoamerica: Pre-Hispanic Paintings from Three Regions. Edited by Merideth Paxton and Leticia Staines Cicero (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2017) 264 pp. $85.00

With chapters devoted to three regions of ancient Mesoamerica—Central Mexico, Oaxaca, and the Maya area—this volume reflects both the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of Mesoamerican studies as well as its international scope. The twelve contributions, by Mexican, American, and European scholars, are loosely tied together by the medium of painting—including murals, ceramics, manuscripts, and body decoration. As the title suggests, the essays incorporate explorations of status, power, community identity, history, and the natural and built environment.

In the first chapter, Paxton and Staines Cicero, both art historians, provide a useful explication of the concept of Mesoamerica and a brief discussion of the early years of Mesoamerican art history, before introducing each of the chapters that follow. This chapter is marred, however, by a puzzling and lengthy digression, including six pages of tables, expanding on the chapter by Mexican ornithologist María de Lourdes Navarijo Ornelas about images of animals and birds painted on Maya ceramics. That short chapter also includes two long editors’ notes. If the editors were not satisfied with the chapter as submitted, they should have worked with Navarijo Ornelas to revise or expand it or dropped it entirely.

Among the chapters about mural painting that stand out is that of archaeologist Davide Domenici, who challenges the notion that Teotihuacan mural painting should always be read as mimetic imagery. Instead, he argues that some images should be read as emblematic or full-figure glyphs that might refer to political or religious offices. Ana García Barrios concludes that the spectacular murals painted on the exterior of the Chiik Nahb’ pyramid at the Classic Maya site of Calakmul, uncovered a decade ago, do not represent a mere market, as previously
believed, but rather a banquet with the active involvement of women preparing and serving the food and drink. Art historian Susan Milbrath and her Mexican co-authors, archaeologists Carlos Peraza Lope and Miguel Delgado Ku, provide a convincing chronology for the murals of Late Postclassic Mayapán based on careful stylistic and iconographic analysis, hypothesizing that later paintings with solar imagery may reflect direct Aztec influence.

A new field of inquiry aims to identify the composition and use of perfumes and cosmetics by ancient Mesoamericans. María Luisa Vázquez de Agredos Pascual and Cristina Vidal Lorenzo, both art historians, have undertaken archaeometric studies of substances recovered from containers found in elite Maya burials, often in minute quantities. These analyses, in tandem with iconographic and ethnohistorical sources, demonstrate that like most other ancient cultures, the Maya prepared both organic and inorganic materials to adorn and perfume themselves, and took body paint and fragrances with them into the afterlife.

Codices and post-Conquest books are the subject of several chapters, including one by Manuel Álvaro Hermann Lejarazu, whose work focuses on translating toponyms in the Mixtec codices and relating them to identifiable natural and man-made places in the Mixtec landscape. Art historian Lori Diel discovers that early colonial Aztec pictorial histories present an ordered sequence of events until contact with the Spanish, after which the historical record becomes chaotic, documenting hardship and loss rather than past triumphs. Angela Marie Herren’s careful examination of the late sixteenth-century Codex Aubin demonstrates how the tlacuilo (artist-scribe) skillfully combined indigenous imagery and alphabetic Nahuatl text in a Western book format, even binding it with recycled European endpapers.

Readers expecting a lavishly illustrated volume will be unimpressed by the quality of the images. For a book about painting, the lack of color plates is particularly glaring. It is disappointing, for example, to see Alfonso Arellano Hernández’s hitherto-unpublished color renderings of Monte Albán tomb murals reproduced in black and white, and at a scale too small to be useful. In fact, many other images throughout the book suffer from their small size, and some of the maps and drawings are pixelated.

Despite its flaws, this eclectic collection is an ambitious multidisciplinary undertaking, its contributors drawing on art history, archaeology, epigraphy, astronomy, ethnohistory, ethnozoology, and even book-binding practices. Constructing Power and Place in Mesoamerica provides a good overview of current scholarship on Mesoamerican painting of all kinds, in both the Pre-Columbian and early colonial periods.

Virginia E. Miller
University of Illinois, Chicago
Long known as the Baratillo market, originally located in Mexico’s Plaza Mayor, but since the Revolution, synonymous with its location in Tepito, this Mexican black market—selling second-hand, stolen, artisan, contraband, and pirated goods—has been a steadfast part of Mexico City’s economic, political, and social landscape since the early colonial period. In this easy-to-read and well-researched study, Konove draws from thousands of pages of government correspondence, vendor petitions, market censuses, travelers’ accounts, newspaper articles, notarial and judicial records, and available quantitative data to trace the history of the Baratillo market from the mid-seventeenth century through its relocation to Tepito at the beginning of the twentieth century. This fascinating historical account explores how this institution of urban life survived and flourished for hundreds of years despite periodic threats and official efforts by colonial and independence-era officials to eliminate what they saw as a magnet of crime and immorality, as well as a threat to social order and progress.

Organized chronologically and thematically, the first three of the book’s six chapters focus on the late colonial period. Chapter 1 examines the efforts of the last Habsburg viceroys to eliminate the Baratillo in the 1680s and 1690s, especially in response to a riot that destroyed the Plaza Mayor in 1692. It lays out the assumptions and views of the colonial authorities with respect to the market, and why their efforts ultimately failed. The second chapter looks at the role of the Baratillo during the enlightened reforms of the new Bourbon rulers, particularly the politics of urban reform that pitted local against royal authorities. The final chapter about the colonial period examines the nature of the shadow economy and its integration into the late colonial urban economy and the multiple strategies and tactics used by the Baratilleros and their supporters to counter threats to the market’s existence.

In the work’s pivotal contrast, the final three chapters and the epilogue focus on the national period, beginning with an analysis of the urban-renewal campaign of Santa Anna and his unsuccessful efforts to remove the market. Chapter 5 focuses on a critical 1872 court case that divided vendors in the Baratillo and placed them in conflict with the local Ayuntamiento, or municipal authorities. Once again, the analysis highlights how the vendors succeeded in adapting their narrative to the national ideas of liberalism and rule of law by deploying a range of political tactics. The final chapter about the national period centers on the Porfirato and the events that eventually led to the relocation of the market to the neighborhood of Tepito. The epilogue briefly examines the intertwined histories of the Baratillo and the Tepito community in the twentieth century.
"Black Market" largely accomplishes Konove’s objectives, in the process providing contributions that reach beyond the discipline of history. A number of important themes should be highlighted. First, the work shows how the lines separating legality and illegality, not just in the economic realm but also in politics and society, are blurred. At the economic level, the Baratillo black market was integrated into the broader network of commerce with artisans and importers who often used or relied on the market to sell their wares. Such linkages meant that when threatened by colonial or national elite, the Baratilleros enjoyed support beyond the popular sectors that were engaged in the market. Even members of the elite and the middle classes relied on the market to sell products or purchase second-hand or contraband goods.

Second, the book underscores the consistency of the political battles surrounding the shadow economy over the course of centuries. Despite the distinct institutional arrangements, and even fundamental changes in political philosophy supporting the different regimes, the elite tended to characterize the Baratillo as the antithesis of civilization, progress, or modernity; the rhetoric of those defending the Bartatillo emphasized the needs of the poor, the functionality of the market in providing needed goods to the people, and, during the more liberal nineteenth century, even the individual rights of the vendors. With such divisions, the Baratillos were able to mobilize resistance to the many efforts to destroy or move the market by manipulating divisions between the local Ayuntamiento and central authorities. During the colonial period, this dynamic paralleled elite divisions between the American-born and the peninsulares. By the nineteenth century, the Baratilleros effectively used the press and even the courts to press their demands or negotiate the terms of their relocation.

A third theme revealed by tracing the politics and economics of Mexico City’s black market across the centuries, and stressed by Konove, is the unstable nature of the market’s existence. At one level, the market’s survival for centuries would seem to run counter to that argument. At another level, however, as Konove rightly points out, the market’s existence has long relied on informal agreements, the use of both formal and informal institutions, linkages to the formal economy, a range of political tactics, and corruption—as the author puts it, “quiet deals and blind eyes” cast within a framework characterized by official denunciations and rhetorical promises to end the practice (179). This combination of informal institutions, corruption, etc., coupled with a rhetoric and legitimizing ideology, is a common feature throughout the region’s history.

"Black Market Capital" offers a number of contributions to our understanding of urban life in Mexico. It highlights the central role of the black market in the broader economy over the years, its integration into trade networks, and how the market tied different sectors and people together, reaching beyond ethnic identities and class. The book also shows the multifaceted nature of the Mexican state and how local authorities often supported the Baratilleros in resistance to the colonial
or central-government authorities. Furthermore, the study enhances our understanding of urban politics in Mexico City between the less-explored late colonial era and the nineteenth century.

Indeed, the book challenges some commonly held historical interpretations of Mexican and Latin American history. Historians have long seen the public streets and plazas in Latin American society as sites where modernizing elites clashed with the poor who resisted through protest and even violence. Yet, the study shows how the political battles engaged more than just the poor or just the vendors in the market. Instead, the vendors had allies within the wealthier elite and pursued strategies beyond protesting. In fact, the record points to a number of nonviolent resolutions of conflict and the continued survival of the black market. In this sense, as Konove notes, “the shadow economy has been a venue for negotiating competing views of the city—ideas that did not always hew to ethnic or class-based identities” (178). In a similar vein, Black Market Capital departs from the notion that the Porfiriato elites systematically marginalized the urban poor by illustrating how prominent citizens held diverse views of the Bartatillo and how to address urban poverty, some even proposing public services to meet the needs of the poor.

Though an important contribution to the study of Mexican history, Black Market Capital should also find an audience of non-historians as well. Scholars interested in black markets, corruption, the linkages between the formal and informal institutions, or the gap separating rhetorical from pragmatic reality in Mexico and beyond stand to gain from this well-crafted account.

Stephen D. Morris
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An Economic and Demographic History of São Paulo, 1850–1950. By Francisco Vidal Luna and Herbert Klein (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2018) 480 pp. $75.00

Despite the interdisciplinary title of Luna and Klein’s book about the economic and demographic history of the state of São Paulo, Brazil, this study does not exhibit an explicitly interdisciplinary focus or methodology. The book is an extension of Luna and Klein’s Slavery and the Economy of São Paulo, 1750–1850 (Stanford, 2003). It has relatively little to say in depth about the evolution of São Paulo’s demography during the period until the last of the book’s nine chapters.

Luna and Klein look into classic issues of economic history, focusing on how a backward region in Brazil became the country’s richest and most important state within a century (1850–1950). The authors analyze the birth of São Paulo’s modern agricultural economy (Chapter 1), how the state became the world’s leading exporter of coffee (Chapter 4), the consequences of this transformation in public governance and finance
(Chapters 2 and 3), foreign trade and investment (Chapter 6), economic diversification (Chapter 7), infrastructure and provision of public services (Chapter 8), and population growth and structure (Chapter 9).

The book requires no formal training in economics, employing simple and clear language and using only descriptive statistics. Luna and Klein’s copious data about the evolution of São Paulo’s economy, public finance, infrastructure, foreign trade, and population will surely make this study a reference for those interested in a basic quantitative profile of São Paulo during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, the book’s strength is also its weakness; the authors could have gone beyond descriptive analysis. The vast number of tables (more than 100) and almost fifty figures make for a dry and often repetitive presentation of the ideas explored. Moreover, the authors might have provided better context for some of the data. For instance, the statement that teachers in the province of São Paulo earned between 2.4 and 4.8 contos de réis in the late nineteenth century is not entirely meaningful unless the authors also say something about the local cost of living (69). Similarly, pointing out that São Paulo produced 1.3 metric tons of corn, 270,000 metric tons of rice, and 115,000 metric tons of beans in 1940 is not in itself revealing without further information about how many metric tons of these staples were consumed in São Paulo, in Brazil, and, on average, in paulista and Brazilian families (123–124).

Luna and Klein’s book draws much of its evidence from secondary sources, except for their quantitative data, which largely comes from published primary sources, such as official reports and bulletins and private and official census records. The authors effectively summarize the conclusions of recent studies about São Paulo’s economy, society, and politics from 1850 to 1950, especially unpublished Ph.D. dissertations written in Portuguese. Yet, they also neglect key studies in the topics explored: Michael Hall, “The Origins of Mass Migration in Brazil, 1871–1914,” unpub. Ph.D. diss. (Columbia Univ., 1969); Winston Fritsch, External Constraints on Economic Policy in Brazil, 1889–1930 (Pittsburgh, 1988); Fausto’s studies about labor conditions and politics in the state of São; and Colistete’s analyses of paulista agriculture and education in the early twentieth century.1

Even though those interested in historical case studies that advance interdisciplinarity may be disappointed, nonspecialized readers interested in the economic history of the state of São Paulo will certainly find a fair introduction to the topic in Luna and Klein’s latest book.

Felipe Loureiro
University of São Paulo

1 See, for example, Boris Fausto, PauloTrabalho Urbano e Conflito Social (São Paulo, 2016); Renato Colistete, “Regiões e especialização na agricultura cafeeira,” Brazilian Economic Review (Revista Brasileira de Economia), LXIX (2015), available at http://dx.doi.org/10.5935/0034-7140.20150015.
The 1931 Yangzi River Flood was one of the most extensive and damaging of the many floods in China during the twentieth century. It extended into eight provinces in central China and beyond to the north, west, and south. As many as 50 million people may have been affected, losing homes and crops. An unknown number of people died, as many as 2 million (3–5). Occurring when the Nationalist government was establishing itself at Nanjing but also when Communist insurgent forces were threatening, the flood received a great deal of international attention and assistance. Yet, as Courtney notes, it has never been the subject of an academic monograph.

Courtney employs a multidimensional perspective that benefits from new trends in environmental history, as well as the more conventional institutional and political approaches of historians. To this end, he presents six histories of the 1931 flood. In the first, “The Long River,” he develops the idea that floods were not disastrous until humans started to inhabit flood plains, practice agriculture, and attempt to control the rivers by dams, dikes, or dredging. “As people intervened in river flow, floods were no longer determined solely by climate and hydrology but also by economics and politics. Human agency became a key variable in the disaster regime” (28). As the population grew, vulnerability to flooding increased; by the late nineteenth century, a “modern disaster regime, which left people chronically vulnerable to hazards,” had been formed (37).

In the second chapter, “The Flood Pulse,” Courtney offers “a more holistic history of the 1931 flood.” Ecological disturbances resulted in the spread of diseases such as malaria, typhoid fever, and dysentery, which were a greater cause of death than the loss of food crops and hunger. Although loosely connected, many sub-topics in this chapter offer unusual insights. For example, the frequently observed practice of eating earth (white clay called Goddess of Mercy Earth) had some medicinal value (80–81).

The fascinating, richly detailed, third chapter, “The Dragon King,” explores the origins and significance of dragons in Chinese mythology and the role of the Dragon King in local religion and “ethnometeorology.” It starts with the demolition of the Dragon King Temple in Wuhan in 1930, which was part of the Republican government’s campaign against popular religion and myths. Local people believed that it had provoked the anger of the Dragon King, who retaliated by unleashing the floods of 1931.

The fourth chapter, “A Sense of Disaster,” relates the felt experience of flood victims in Wuhan, the city at the center of the flood zone. Because it was one of China’s most important treaty ports, Wuhan had many foreign, as well as Chinese, residents who recorded their direct
sensory experiences—sights, sounds, and smells. The least analytical of the chapters, this one makes the greatest and most memorable impression.

The Nationalist government considered its 1931 flood-relief campaign a great success, helping to legitimize its own authority, albeit while using Western assistance and aid. Chapter 5, “Disaster Experts,” is critical of the government’s management of relief and reconstruction, including food relief, labor relief, public health, and sanitation. It juxtaposes modern technical expertise against “vernacular expertise,” which Courtney considers to have been more effective in famine survival. This argument, however, has problems; for one, the food and labor-relief techniques and theories described were, in fact, traditionally Chinese. The chapter’s criticism of the U. S. government’s loan of 450,000 tons of wheat and flour as self-serving U. S. farm assistance that anticipated similar farm-subsidy programs after World War II is a long but unnecessary digression.

The sixth chapter, “Floating Population,” further criticizes the government’s relief programs and praises “vernacular expertise.” It asserts that government–resettlement camps only hastened the spread of disease and that traditional coping methods—such as internal migration, prostitution, child sales, begging, etc.—were criminalized by the state. It argues, but not convincingly, that “the experience of Wuhan in 1931 demonstrates the critical influence that political dynamics can have on a disaster regime. Violence, and the distrust that it inspires, acts as an amplifier for humanitarian catastrophes (229).”

Each of these six cleverly researched and well-written histories of the 1931 flood presents insights of great interest but at the expense of a single focus/purpose that might make a more lasting impression. By expanding Chapters 4 to 6, and analyzing the human, political, social, and economic dimensions of the flood, Courtney could have written a more conventional book. By foregrounding environmental and ecological perspectives, however, he has perhaps made another kind of historical contribution.

Lillian M. Li
Swarthmore College


It is well known that a vibrant sub-culture of so-called “secret societies” existed in China during at least the last several centuries. Notwithstanding some excellent research on the subject, however, academic writing about these organizations is still in short supply due to the dearth of reliable sources. In this fascinating study, which is part history, part sociology, and part ethnography, Wang builds on his own earlier works about local society in the Chengdu area in southwestern China to offer a
glimpse of the inner workings of the Paoge (The Gowned Brothers). Technically an illegal—and hence “secret”—organization with its own distinct operational codes and ethics, the Paoge was extraordinarily influential in the everyday life of the inhabitants of the Chengdu region and beyond. Indeed, as the power of the government receded in the post-1911 period following the demise of the Qing dynasty, the Paoge operated to some extent in the open, in many cases indistinguishable from local governments. Although it did not refrain from using violence to enforce its interests, it was also instrumental in maintaining a modicum of stability in the region—hence, the “violence and order” in the title of the book.

As Wang readily acknowledges, his book took inspiration from earlier microhistorical works by Davis, Darnton, and Ginsburg.1 Interestingly, much of the foundation for Wang’s attempt at microhistory came from an undergraduate thesis in sociology, completed by twenty-year-old Shen Baoyuan in 1946 at Beijing’s Yenching University, that one of Wang’s friends happened to encounter. The thesis, which focuses on the family of Lei Mingyuan, a Paoge leader, who resided in Hope Township (fictional name) just outside Chengdu, allows a rare peek into the life of a real Paoge member that goes far beyond the usual popular stories and myths associated with the brotherhood.

Drawing from Shen’s thesis, Wang begins dramatically, directing attention to Lei’s murder of his elder daughter in 1939—aft her attempt to elope with a young man—which he committed to save “face” and gain honor among his peers. Wang then turns to investigate the hierarchy, belief system, language, values, rituals, and codes of conduct of the organization. To Wang’s credit, he meticulously combed through disparate sources to create this picture of the Paoge. Aficionados of Chinese novels, dramas, and movies, in which tales of such “secret brotherhoods” are a popular genre, will find that many of the details in Wang’s account have a familiar ring to them.

Not until Wang delves more deeply into Shen’s findings on the Lei’s family does his book truly come alive. At this point, the Paoge is no longer simply represented by rituals or codes; it is embodied by the person and family of Lei. Although Wang aims to make his a story about the brotherhood, women consistently come to the forefront in the narrative. The fact that Shen learned about the life of Lei mostly through his family members might explain why she portrayed Lei at times as something of a cardboard character (161)—a violent man with permed hair to his shoulders who always wore sunglasses, even on a cloudy day, and kept his jacket unbuttoned (112). Shen forged a close relationship with Lei’s second wife and helped his youngest daughter to achieve some of

her educational goals, despite her father’s lack of enthusiasm about the idea. The women in Lei’s life—from his daughters to his two wives and even a runaway female servant—all of whom seemingly existed on the margins of the brotherhood, repeatedly animate this interesting and ultimately sad story.

A sub-thread in Wang’s microhistory involves the relationship between the author Shen, an idealistic twenty-one-year-old female student from a privileged background, and Lei’s second wife, a woman with minimal education who lived a “shameful life” before meeting Lei (116), as well as with Lei’s youngest daughter. It is as informative about the social changes, tensions, and ethos of a turbulent China in the 1940s as it is about the Paoge. Within his focus on the Paoge, Wang manages to interject several pages about the predicament of women at the time, but he might have taken this thread further. Despite the centrality of Shen’s work in his telling of the Paoge story, Wang is also surprisingly harsh about her, calling her “a naïve analyst” and “more emotionally reactive than politically astute” (176, 172), and describing her general report as “somewhat superficial” (164). Regardless of whether Wang might have expected a little too much from the budding sociologist, we certainly all owe Shen a debt for pioneering research that laid the groundwork for Wang’s intriguing tale of the Paoge.

Michael Tsin
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As one of the world’s most important commodities, rubber has helped to shape the world in which we live today. It has also, as Aso shows, played a key role in making modern Vietnam. Ambitious in scope and extensively researched, Aso’s book is based on French, English, and Vietnamese-language archival and published sources, as well as oral histories conducted with former rubber plantation managers and workers.

The book is organized in two parts, one tracing the birth and early development of the rubber industry in the colonial period, and the other examining the struggles that occurred after 1945 as competing states fought to gain control over the revenue, people, and spaces of South Vietnam’s plantations. The first part of the book is organized thematically, exploring how the colonial-era rubber industry shaped, and was shaped by, plant biology, tropical medicine, and tropical ecology. The second part of the book adopts a chronological framework in which issues of science and ecology become the backdrop for processes of nation-building and war making in Vietnam’s south.
Aso’s evidence and methodology are interdisciplinary throughout. He borrows insights and evidence from scientific research, history of science, social history, political history, and the landscape itself. He weaves oral testimonies seamlessly into the larger account. The effect is to trace the complex interplay of science, medicine, industry, and nature that produced Vietnam’s modern rubber industry without losing sight of the immense human costs involved.

Aso provides a remarkably complete account of the complex ecology that formed around the rubber tree in Vietnam. At times, this narrative can be frustrating, as opportunities to develop ideas or arguments become lost in a forest of data. Readers should also note that Aso understands ecology in its broadest sense; the “ecology” in the book’s title might just have easily been replaced by “interdisciplinary.” Many readers of this journal will appreciate this approach. Others looking for a more explicitly environmental history of Vietnam should consider Bigg’s work on the Mekong Delta or McElwee’s work on forests.¹

One of the clearest points to emerge from the book is the immense power and resiliency of rubber to bounce back, as it were, from seeming ruptures—colonial to post-colonial and socialist to post-socialist—and continue to mold ecologies to its own ends. In one sense, rubber itself was the agency at work, but in another sense, global capitalism was responsible. Thus, it is surprising that economic history does not play a larger role in the story of a plant with the power to shape ecologies because of its economic value. Occasional references to rubber booms or busts hint that money was a crucial driver of developments, but readers are left to wonder at the profits that Michelin derived from its Indochinese plantations or at the amount of tax revenue that the various colonial and postcolonial regimes collected. Readers interested in a global account of rubber that places it firmly in the context of capitalist development would do well to consult Tully’s The Devil’s Milk.² Attention to economics would have helped to make the unstoppable progress of rubber more explicable and would have added even more breadth to an already wide-ranging work.

These comments aside, this exhaustively researched, empathetically written, and important book is relevant to historians of science, medicine, the environment, and Southeast Asia. As this broad range of disciplines implies, it is exemplary of the potential of interdisciplinary history to produce a better understanding of the world of the past as well as the future.

Gerard Sasges
National University of Singapore


Whereas most of the literature dealing with the subject of colonialism generally explores only the themes of indigenous, immigrant, urban and rural underdevelopment, this book throws light on the general functioning of British colonial-economic administration in Malaya. It advances the proposition that excessive colonial bureaucracy impeded capital investment in the agricultural and mining sectors of the Federated Malay States (FMS) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Its contribution consists of detailed cases showing conflicts extending from the top hierarchical position to the local and parochial levels of British administration. More broadly, this book also offers a re-evaluation of Cain and Hopkins’ theory of “gentlemanly capitalism,” a new theory of imperialism proposing that British imperialism was driven by the business interests of the city of London.

Raja’s methodology includes qualitative historical analysis and a case-study approach. Through extensive archival research, Raja has ransacked individual states’ Sessional Papers, Parliamentary Papers, Colonial Office records—particularly the Straits Settlements: Register Correspondence (CO 426) and Original Correspondence (CO 273)—State Secretariat files, FMS Government gazettes, proceedings of the Residents Conference (1907–1911), and Federal Conference and numerous miscellaneous colonial records. The Secretariat papers are particularly rewarding, allowing Raja to trace the idiosyncratic attitude of state officials toward individual investors, as well as policy conflicts between state residencies and the Colonial Office. The case studies afford Raja the opportunity to explore multifaceted, complex hierarchical problems in their actual settings. His microscopic examination of colonial case

1 This issue was originally studied by Keith Sinclair—“Hobson and Lenin in Johore: Colonial Office Policy towards British Concessionaires and Investors 1878–1907,” Modern Asian Studies, I (1967), 335–352—but he examines only the role of Colonial Office staff and the Governor of the Straits Settlements in the export of capital to Johore, an unfederated Malay state. Sundara Raja’s work is also the first well-elaborated response to a historical gap identified by Peter J. Drake, “The Economic Development of British Malaya to 1914: An Essay in Historiography with Some Questions for Historians,” Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, X (1979), 262–290, that little was known about the relationship between foreign developers and landowners, and the colonial and metropolitan governments.

records discovers that the bureaucratic problems from 1896 to 1909 were twofold—conflicts between FMS administrators and investors and between the administrators themselves.

Raja’s forensic analysis of the various cases concludes that the actual picture of the early politico-business history of the FMS does not support the theory of gentlemanly capitalism. Cain and Hopkins’, as well as Webster’s, implication that relations between London-based capitalists and British colonial officials were harmonious is highly unlikely in Raja’s view, given the complexity of the bureaucratic situation. He advances two arguments in support. The first concerns the “impractical degree of metropolitan control over the expansion of capital” (7), as exemplified in the policy conflict between the Colonial Office and the High Commissioner in Malaya (136–137). The second maintains that London business interests did not always drive British imperialism; “local administrators [sometimes] expressed disinterest towards investors who had connection with the ‘metropole’” (7). Witness the case of bureaucratic red tape imposed on John Turner, the managing director of the London-based Straits Sugar Company Limited (47–50).

The geographical spread comprises the four FMS protectorates from 1896 to 1909. The arrangement of the chapters follows “the order in which the states were annexed” by the British (10). Administrative conflict was indeed commonplace in the protectorates during the period. Although the Colonial Office was supportive of capitalistic ventures, the decision-making process regarding capital investment was mired in ambiguity. In the absence of a proper “distribution of responsibilities,” “dissenting opinions amongst officials at various levels” were rife (2–3). Cases in point were the troubles that the colonial bureaucracy caused for the commercial pursuits of Charles Alma Baker and the hierarchical confusion that confounded the Straits and General Development Company. Another problem involved Britain’s attempt to impede American investment in Malaya’s tin-smelting industry. The study concludes in 1909 with the “growing awareness of the problems,” eventually leading to the establishment of the Federal Council (2).

Overall, the book caters to those working on business-government relations in the British Empire and those seeking to test the suitability of the theory of gentlemanly capitalism in the context of Malaya.

Raymond Shivalinggam
University of Malaya


4 The west coast Malay states of Perak, Selangor, and Negeri Sembilan, and the east coast state of Pahang, were all brought into the ambit of colonial protection in successive stages between 1874 and 1888. Perak was annexed in 1874, Selangor in 1874, Negeri Sembilan in 1895, and Pahang in 1888. See Emily Sadka, The Protected Malay States, 1874–1895 (Kuala Lumpur, 1968), 37–118.

Indian Migration and Empire: A Colonial Genealogy of the Modern State. By Radhika Mongia (Durham, Duke University Press, 2018) 230 pp. $94.95 $24.95

Mongia’s stimulating account of Indian migration announces its larger argument on the first page: “This study traces a shift from a world dominated by empire-states into a world dominated by nation-states” (1). Like Anderson in his pathbreaking work on nationalism, Mongia insists that this transformation cannot be explained by metropolitan developments alone but that it took place initially within Europe’s colonies. She develops her argument through a close study of three controversies surrounding Indian overseas migration from the 1830s to the 1910s—indentured labor recruitment, Indian marriage practices in South Africa, and Canadian efforts to deny Indians entry—and she places her analysis in a larger context of theories of law and the state.

The earliest instances of extensive Indian overseas migration involved indentured recruitment to replace slave labor on colonial plantations. At the heart of this recruitment was state regulation based on free assent to a contract. The presence of such a contract, as Mongia argues, not merely signified but “brought into being that which it supposedly embodied, not only consent, but freedom itself” on the part of the intending migrant (48). Through indenture, the state, paradoxically, “regulated ‘free’ migration precisely in order to ensure that it was ‘free’” (16). Gone were the days when state regulation was challenged as an infringement of the subject’s liberty.

At the same time, Mongia insists, a “contract whose validity began and ended with consent” dispensed with fairness and with equality in exchange (55). Thus was initiated, not within the metropolitan heartland but within the colonial periphery, an enduring reformulation of liberal notions of consent and contract. Almost inevitably a “massive bureaucracy,” embodying an intrusive “disciplinary power,” emerged to manage this migratory enterprise (58). Unlike most previous scholars who tended to take this development for granted, Mongia details the establishment and functioning of an “unrelenting system of registration, surveillance, documentation, and record keeping” that endured for seventy years across the face of the empire (80). This regulatory regime, “a thoroughly modern formation,” exemplifies “the colonial genealogy of the modern state” (84).

Mongia then turns to non-indentured free Indians in South Africa. She shows how considerations of gender and race shaped migration policies that produced a sense of the nation-state, and of nationalism, apart from the British Empire. As imperial Britain, committed to a unified empire of free movement, prohibited outright racial discrimination, the newly formed post-1910 South African government endeavored to circumvent this prohibition by refusing legal recognition to polygamous marriages. By including within this ban not just individuals but all marriages conducted under any religion that recognized polygamy, the
prohibition in effect invalidated all non-Christian Indian marriages. The resulting outburst of protest, led by Mohandas Gandhi, raised the cry of "an insult to our religions," and, as Mongia argues, turned a piece of racist legislation into "a gendered discourse of national honour" (106). Indians, far from being mere subjects of the empire, now began to see themselves as participants in a "new logic of nationality" (111).

In Canada’s restrictive legislation, Mongia sees the final "unmaking of the empire-state" (126). Initially, Canada sought to evade British, and Indian, hostility to avowedly racial legislation by using apparently banal entry requirements, such as a continuous direct journey from India to Canada, to obscure racial discrimination. In the end, this "tension between maintaining empire and nation simultaneously" could not be sustained. In its place emerged "an appeal to the 'national,'" as embodied in the passport (127, 136). The passport, as a defining marker of the nation, thus contains within it, Mongia contends, "a history of twentieth century racism" (139).

Legal theorists will find this work suggestive for its engagement with several key liberal concepts, most notably consent, contract, and freedom. Historians will find much to debate in the assertion that the origins of the modern state should be tied to a diffuse "colonial genealogy." Surely, for instance, the origins of the passport drew from more general concerns of national security, especially in wartime. By stimulating discussion of these critical issues, Indian Migration and Empire is a fresh and important contribution to our understanding of the modern world.

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