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Reviews of books

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Francis Sheppard, *London: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. xvii + 442pp. 58 plates. 29 figures. 2 appendices. Bibliography. £25.00.

At £25, Francis Sheppard's history of London must be the bargain of the millennium. Handsomely produced and copiously illustrated, it covers the entire known period of London's history from the Londinium of Roman times to the Greater South-East of today. Francis Sheppard was, for almost thirty years, the General Editor of the *Survey of London* and author of *London 1808–1870: The Infernal Wen* (1971). His latest book cannot be based on original research but is dependent on the 'labours of innumerable scholars'. The work is arranged chronologically into six major parts, five of which are organized around themes of physical and economic growth, politics, administration, education and leisure. The final part of the book dealing with the 'uncertain metropolis' of the twentieth century, is divided into three sections – pre-1939, 1939–45 and 1945–97. A major concern throughout the book is to trace the bonds linking metropolis and provinces.

Such a systematic attempt to tell the 'joined-up' history of so massive and diverse a city as London is brave indeed. Sheppard has given us a continuous, craftsmanlike account, knitting together vast quantities of information. His London presents itself in the image of one of its terraced streets, where individual units are melded into a unified, living whole. The deft technique of applying intellectual stucco maintains a smooth pace, drawing the reader along to know how the story will unfold. At certain points, however, this method conceals more than it reveals. Our knowledge of London history remains uneven, yet in his desire to make connections, Sheppard slides over gaps in the literature, expressing certainties where none exist. There is, for example, a general paucity of recent publications on London between 1725 and 1800, and a particular dearth of literature on economic fluctuations affecting London in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Even the single most important issue throughout Sheppard's book – the 'virtuous circle' of London's relationship with the provinces – has been largely ignored by recent scholars, especially for the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. London history is, at present, rather more like a row of detached or semi-detached villas than a continuous row. Sheppard might have paid some attention to the uneven spaces between the buildings, identifying what is not known and raising some of the unanswered questions of London's history.

The intended readership for this book is difficult to determine. Advance publicity suggested a rousing read of exploitation, violence, gambling, drink and bawdy houses. Such plums there certainly are in Sheppard's rich and detailed

account. Yet its tone overall does not provide an easy read. There are few if any of the witty anecdotes and astonishing revelations of Roy Porter's recent *London: A Social History* (1994). With the exception of a vivid account of wartime London, the sensuous or psychological dimensions of London life are not to be found in this nevertheless remarkably detailed and extensive profile. Neither Winter's *Teeming Streets* (1993) nor Joachim Schlor's *Nights in the Big City* (1998), for example, appear in the bibliography. Sheppard's book will repay the efforts of serious readers, looking for an authoritative, though selective, history of London. Some of the terminology will be a challenge, however. Words such as 'maw', 'transmogrified', 'congeries' and *menu peuple* are scarcely in everyday use, while the term 'coloured' describing London's black residents is simply offensive.

For academics, this is a useful, though partial, synthesis. It is thought-provoking, but any particular aspect needs to be set against more analytical history, and in particular historiography. There is a tendency to ignore work outside what the author assumes is 'mainstream'. Linda Clarke's book on the London building industry, for example, is passed over, as is much recent work on the position of women, notably that by Martha Vicinus and Jane Lewis. Similarly, his treatment of London's sanitary condition in the nineteenth century hardly reflects wider demographic and environmental issues, nor the question of hospital provision which have been the concern of Frank Prochaska, Geoffrey Rivett, Bill Luckin and Anne Hardy. For the section on modern London, a period with very few explicitly historical works, the author ignores extensive literature in other disciplines, notably social and political science. Anyone wishing to begin research on London history might well read Sheppard's account in conjunction with the *London Journal*'s review of research trends in *Capital Histories: A Bibliographical Study of London* (1998).

While not a 'perpetual and astonishing spectacle' like Gibbon's *London*, nor a revisionist history, this book achieves an extensive, systematic engagement with London, 'the mainspring' of national life (p. vii). It offers an impressive, if old-fashioned, sweep of London history. Adroitly presented, the book is excellent value, if approached with care.

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> **Clive Burgess (ed.)**, *The Church Records of St Andrew Hubbard Eastcheap c. 1450–c. 1570*. London Record Society 34 (1999). xxxvii + 321pp. £12.00 to members; £20.00 to non-members.

This volume comprises the churchwardens' accounts and wills for a small parish in east London. In an informative and stimulating introduction, Burgess points to one significant characteristic of some of the accounts. Building on his earlier work, he suggests that, like a number of others which survive from pre-Reformation England, the churchwardens' accounts may have been preserved as a memorial to those who served the parish in the past through the donation of their time and administrative skills. Crucially, such accounts appear to be edited versions of the originals, and therefore not a complete record of the activities of pre-Reformation churchwardens (or the parish more generally).

Burgess has also transcribed almost 100 wills relating to the parish. It is unfortunate that due to lack of space the introduction contains very little

information about these documents, since Burgess is not only a sensitive reader of churchwardens' accounts, but has also published extensively on the pitfalls of testamentary evidence. It is some compensation that the editorial method adopted makes the wills, like the accounts themselves, easy to read. The index is more problematic due to the varied spelling of names, as Burgess acknowledges, but there are also one or two errors here which complicate matters further.

The dates covered by the volume include much of the Reformation, and the accounts themselves are interesting in this regard. Entries suggest a dutiful compliance with each stage of the Reformation, although there is little indication of the preferences of the wardens or the parishioners themselves. So what else is there in these records for the historian? It is difficult to say what, if anything, is particularly 'urban' about the form of the accounts or the financial regime they describe, but the parish's urban location is unquestionable: references abound to a multiplicity of occupations, the burial of strangers, and immigrants from within and beyond England. In addition, the wills give plenty of examples of the 'London custom' of dividing up property. Language scholars may well be interested in the use of words in these records, including the word 'nobill' in a context which suggests a completely different meaning to those usually provided in dictionaries (a coin or an aristocrat).

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Chris Galley, *The Demography of Early Modern Towns: York in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998. xiv + 220pp. 44 figures. 50 tables. Bibliography. £32.00 hbk; £14.95 pbk.

Galley's study, the sixth volume to appear in a series published by Liverpool University's Institute for European Population Studies, fully justifies its main title as well as its subtitle, because he is concerned to use a detailed case study to explore wider issues. Although his focus is the city of York and its early modern demography (chapters 2–5), the three introductory and concluding chapters fit the study admirably into a broader national, and even international, canvas.

The author rightly draws heavily on the work of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure: he is, for instance, able to use their unpublished subset of Yorkshire parish registers to put the city into its regional context. However, the 404 English parishes used by E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield for their national reconstruction included only 18 which could be 'considered urban in the seventeenth century' (p. 14), for the understandable reasons that the techniques of aggregative analysis and family reconstitution are much more difficult to deploy on urban than on rural parish registers. Galley is, however, able to demonstrate – with a considerable measure of success – that both can be usefully employed even for a multi-parish town with deficiencies of registration and a high level of population mobility.

He argues that, although 'the urban mortality penalty' – the higher level of mortality in town than in countryside – 'was certainly universal' (p. 173), the widespread view of early modern towns as 'urban graveyards' is partial and distorted. Much of his book provides a valuable commentary on the debate

between A. Sharlin and Roger Finlay on natural decrease in early modern cities, though he disarmingly points out that more case studies are needed before it can be resolved. Galley does, in fact, concede too much by stating that 'fertility was largely unrestricted' in the early modern period (p. xiii): his own findings demonstrate the importance of variations in fertility as well as in mortality and migration, and Table 5.4 confirms increasing birth intervals in York as elsewhere, a phenomenon he rightly links to breast-feeding, and which might have been consciously employed as a brake on fertility.

The results are presented clearly and convincingly, though Table 3.1 should list the final column as percentages. The York case study is based on thorough research in the archives, many of them unpublished. Inevitably, questions are provoked here and there. The 1377 poll tax total is based on J.C. Russell's multiplier, which is much too low; a more plausible multiplier of 1.9 would have confirmed the startling fact that, even after the Black Death, York's population was probably higher than it was again until the late eighteenth century. And the discussion of mortality crises misunderstands the nature and scale of the 1557–58 mortality, which was in York – as in England as a whole – probably the most severe mortality crisis in England since 1350. Nevertheless, these quibbles do not affect the value of Galley's fine study, which makes important reading for all students of the early modern town.

D.M. Palliser
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Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England, Attending to the O-Factor*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999. xiv + 386pp. 32 figures. Bibliography. £16.95 pbk.

The *Acoustic World of Early Modern England* is a massive endeavour in which Bruce Smith pays attention to a multiplicity of sounds in various contexts. These sounds were generated and detected in complex ways. By examining them, Smith develops insights into the operation of the sense of hearing.

In the first of three sections, entitled 'Around', Smith journeys through three types of soundscape – city, country and court – describing the sounds which formed their aural backdrop. London's bells, trades and traffic feature in a reconstruction of urban sounds, in which Smith examines how the acoustic properties of both the built and the natural environment shaped the aural experience of town-dwellers. After presenting contemporary opinions about the characteristics of particularly noisy venues, such as the Royal Exchange and Tower Wharf, Smith conducts an absorbing study of Aldersgate by juxtaposing the sounds heard by the protagonist of William Baldwin's *Beware the Cat* with the potential for sounds indicated by the sixteenth-century 'Agas' map.

In 'Within', the second section of the book, Smith explores the ways that words, sounds and music were used to disseminate ideas and share experiences. An extended discussion of the May festivities at Wells in 1607 neatly introduces the sounds of celebration and community relations – of Morris dancing, rough music and song. Smith reveals fascinating material about the design of London's theatres and the experience of theatre-going. He concludes the section by considering a variety of contexts for speech and conversation.

In the first two sections Smith introduces the notion that each culture has a distinctive way of understanding the world through sound; its 'acoustemology'. In the final section – 'Beyond' – Smith compares the 'acoustemology' of early modern England with the 'acoustemologies' of communities on its borders (Wales, Ireland, Virginia and New England). An imaginative use of Shakespearean texts, especially *The Tempest* and *Othello*, allows Smith to conjecture about the reactions engendered when these cultures clashed. However, as Smith's conception of 'early modern' is confined largely to Shakespeare's lifespan he fails to capture shifts *within* the broader period.

As soundscapes are complete auditory environments which are peopled, interactive and shifting, attempts to construct them must be partial. Smith is preoccupied with the banal – 'If fruit happened to be the shopkeeper's stock in trade, loud chomps might be added to the ambient noise' – and with the extraordinary, such as lavish royal entries and mayoral installations. Historians seeking to evoke soundscapes often resort to purple prose and here we are presented with a romantic view of a part filled with the sound 'of plaster, lath, and thatch, of quill pens, ink, and paper, of lead type'. Catching snatches of what folk might have heard does little to further our understanding of what they listened for or how they reacted to what they heard. Despite a useful distinction made in his introduction between 'hearing' and 'listening', one an instinctive and the other a socially and culturally determined response, overall Smith neglects the ramifications of this difference.

The elusive 'O-Factor' is a concept designed to bind the work. Seemingly within the ambit of the 'O-Factor' are the letter 'O' (both written and spoken), the sound of breathing, gasping and talking, and the circular shape of the Globe theatre. An impenetrable single-page chapter presents fourteen bullet points intended to reveal the 'O-Factor', but these musings obfuscate rather than enlighten. Nonetheless, this book adds an important dimension to our understanding of the past and the excitement which pervades it is infectious. It will certainly provoke much thought.

Emily Cockayne
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Mona Duggan, *Ormskirk: The Making of a Modern Town*. Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1998. xx + 236pp. 53 illustrations. 47 tables. Bibliography. £12.99.

The subject of this book is the economy and society of an inland market town and legal centre in south-west Lancashire between 1660 and 1800, with an epilogue. Ormskirk's population was about 950 in the mid-seventeenth century, rising to 2,554 in 1801, thus increasing more slowly than some of the county's seaports and industrial towns.

There are eight chapters, each dealing with a specific theme. Economic change is studied with particular reference to the market and fair. The stalls in the market owned by the Lords Derby and regulated by the court leet sold perishable goods such as meat, bread, fruit, vegetables, dairy produce, hempseed, poultry and fish, and special products of the district in leather, flax and soap. The twice-yearly fair dealt in horned cattle, horses, sheep, pottery and textiles, as well as

providing amusements. After listing the 160 occupations appearing over the whole period, Duggan considers them in categories, comprising the professions (a particularly numerous group), the food and drink trade, distributive trades, builders, textile workers, leather workers and metal workers, and then compares them with the occupational profile in other towns. In discussing the townscape she describes the paving and cleaning of the roads, water supply and fire protection, and the replacement of timber by brick building, especially during the early eighteenth century. The chapter on the established church has interesting material on church restoration in the 1660s including the gift of a font, relations of the Anglican clergy with Nonconformist ministers under Charles II, church extension and rebuilding during the eighteenth century to cope with population growth, and the regulation of church seating according to social status. Duggan emphasizes the large Presbyterian population in the early eighteenth century, the persecution of Quakers and the numerous Roman Catholics earlier, and the tendency of craftsmen to predominate among Roman Catholics and merchants and tradesmen among Presbyterians. Ormskirk had a grammar school, and a charity school from the early eighteenth century. Literacy, in terms of the ability to sign one's name, was relatively high, particularly among women in the eighteenth century. Cultural life is discussed through book, picture and virginal ownership, with some splendid evidence about dramatic entertainment. Local leisure pursuits such as racing, bowling, bear and bull baiting and cockfighting, the subject of betting by all ranks in society, are also discussed. The author emphasizes the tendency for social cleavage to grow in the eighteenth century, as entertainments for the wealthy and poorer majority became different or the watchers stood or sat in different places.

All these subjects are fully described and supported with fascinating detail. Duggan uses particularly wills and probate inventories and the records of the court leet. She might have drawn further on the probate evidence and contemporary title deeds to discuss the real and personal estate of the more prosperous residents. It is unfortunate that the parish registers are of limited use as they relate not only to the township but also the bigger population of the neighbouring countryside. On account of the absence of poor law records she is unable to discuss the paupers, made up especially of the elderly and infirm and orphans. The book remains a major contribution to English local history. Particularly valuable are the repeated comparisons made with other towns and the background of general English history.

C.W. Chalklin

Elizabeth McKellar, *The Birth of Modern London: The Development and Design of the City 1660–1720*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999. xviii + 245pp. 59 plates. Bibliography. £45.00.

John Schofield, *The Building of London: From the Conquest to the Great Fire*. Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999. ix + 192pp. 152 illustrations. Bibliography. £14.95.

If Summerson's *Georgian London* (1945) remains the seminal work, it was too wide in scope to fully examine 'the birth' so McKellar's book is by no means premature. However, in arguing that the brick-built London terrace house pre-

dates the conflagration of 1666, she undercuts the importance of her theme. Certainly there were precursors but it was the Great Fire that gave impetus to an idea. It established an urgent demand for redevelopment and a consequent relaxation of the restrictive practices of the craft guilds. The fire created the demand and was to provide the example for the creation of terraced houses in planned developments throughout Britain and her colonies in North America.

The financial arrangements between bankers, lawyers and scriveners, the landowners and builders, are all outlined here, as is the remarkable and unscrupulous career of Nicholas Barbon. His contemporary, Roger North, is quoted as stating that the great speculator devised the system of leasing land which was then divided into individual building plots and sold on sub-leases for development, the details of which were enforced by covenant. It is, though, more probable that this ingenious system is of Continental origin. As early as 1604 the French king used a very similar device for the development of the Place Royale (now the Place des Vosges) in Paris.

Unlike Summerson, and even Isaac Ware (1756, p. 347), McKellar argues that there is little evidence for these tradesmen bartering their skills – but surely this is the essence of barter, even its *raison d'être*. The assertion that tradesmen were often skilled in more than one craft is doubtful. Certainly an individual might be a member of a guild which represented a craft other than his own – the woodcarver Grinling Gibbons was a draper by patrimony, not by avocation. Furthermore, some trades were traditionally linked, painter/plumber/glazier, or shared agricultural origins – brickfields, forests or quarries. It is also true that many tradesmen had a sideline dealing in the materials of their trade, such as a carpenter selling timber. All these were natural extensions of an existing skill which, in a number of trades, also involved an understanding of applied mathematics. Indeed the progression from apprentice to journeyman to master to measurer to developer and architect was a familiar one.

John Wood's assertion that he began his large-scale development at South Parade, Bath, in 1743 'without any previous design', was probably even more characteristic of earlier decades, and we are shown that this apparent lack of premeditation was common in London half a century before. Of course, lease-hold agreements and financial arrangements meant that the 'footprint' of an individual house in a terrace was established, but in many instances little else was known in advance. In practice full-size drawings of details were generally delegated to the relevant craftsmen – a freedom which gave great vitality to their work. Furthermore, pattern books and trade manuals in English, of a kind that would be relevant to the astylar demands of the terraced house, were rare or unknown until well into the eighteenth century. Consequently the importance of exemplars, combined with travel and a visual memory, together with oral communication, were important in transmitting these ideas. In addition, the standardizing influence of workshop-produced multiples of components, like sash windows, did much to produce a consistency in such details, and provided the basis on which the overall proportions of an elevation were set out.

McKellar cited a number of individual tradesmen, such as the carpenter John Foltrop, who contracted to undertake work representing a variety of trades. In effect these building craftsmen were the precursors of the 'general contractors' of the nineteenth century, with whom Hermione Hobhouse (*Thomas Cubbit*, 1971) has made us familiar. As early as the seventeenth century the interior treatment

of these dwellings was often the responsibility of the individual householder – a practice which became widespread in the late eighteenth century as the customized element within a standardized terrace.

Town planning and the rise of the urban square is discussed in new and stimulating ways. For example, Southampton House, which presided over Bloomsbury Square, is generally shown in eighteenth-century prints with the square in the foreground. However, urban compositions of this kind may have been conceived quite the other way about, with the square intended to be viewed from, and thus subordinate to, the principal residence – akin to a country house and its service wings. This book provides a long-needed insight into the genesis, in late Stuart London, of the Hanovarian terraced house.

John Schofield's revised third edition of *The Building of London* remains a useful overview of the city before the Great Fire. In particular, he reminds us that too much architectural history is written on the basis of surviving buildings. It is the archaeological and archival approach that Schofield has put to such good use here and in his superb *Medieval London Houses* (1995).

James Ayres
John Judkyn Memorial

James Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1998. vii + 280pp. 345 figures. £45.00.

In recent decades the study of Georgian architecture, and in particular of the urban landscape, has been undergoing a quiet revolution. The emphasis upon the cerebral world of the architect and town planner has shifted subtly to that of the workaday, hands-on world of the builder and craftsman. The change reflects, in part, shifting contemporary perceptions: a popular disillusionment with the architectural profession since the Second World War, and grandiose 'utopian' schemes for city redevelopment, together with a surge in enthusiasm for heritage and conservation. The new approach has been pioneered by works such as Dan Cruickshank's co-authored volumes on *London: The Art of Georgian Building* (1975, with Peter Wyld), and *Life in the Georgian City* (1990, with Neil Burton). In Bath, England's premier historic Georgian town, the change in perspective has been marked by a shift from projecting the eighteenth-century fabric as an exemplar of town planning to one in which it is perceived as a repository of craftsmanship: from the macro- to the micro-vision. This was reflected in the opening in 1992 of the Building of Bath Museum, whose founding chairman is the author of the book presently under review.

In his introduction to this assiduously researched and beautifully presented volume Ayres lays out clearly the rationale for the study: 'This book aspires to be a celebration of the building craftsman of the post-medieval pre-industrial past, men for whom making and designing were simultaneous activities' (p. 1). After a brief discussion of the relative roles of 'architects and builders' – in which the on-site authority and creativity of the craftsman remain important factors for the majority of the period despite the rise of the architectural profession and the growing importance of architectural manuals and drawings – the author progresses to the nitty-gritty of his subject. As befits its pragmatic agenda, the book

is organized 'in roughly the sequence in which a particular skill was required on the building site' (p. 199), chapters following on 'the site and its preparation', building supplies, the stone trades, brickwork, the timber trades, hardware, plumbers and glaziers, and plasterers and painters, and the package is completed by a series of appendices, and a glossary to guide the untutored reader round the linguistic mysteries of the building trades. The text is a cornucopia of detail on matters such as workmen's tools, the composition of plasters and paints, the making and laying of bricks, the operation of the saw-pit, and the production of the different types of window glass, reflecting a prodigious volume of research (much of it among archival material) and all of it meticulously referenced. This is accompanied by a feast of stunning illustrations, over three hundred in number and many in colour, carefully captioned and dovetailed into the text to provide essential visual support to elucidate the trades being described. Much of the account is based on London, and the Bath/Bristol region, but the author has made a serious attempt to cast his net across the British Isles as a whole. In sum, we have here a wonderfully detailed and clear account of how the Georgian town house (at least that occupied by the better off) was put together.

Whether we also have a comprehensive analysis of 'building the Georgian city' is another matter. If by 'building' we include the economic, social, political, and cultural processes that underpinned the physical acts of construction, then there is clearly much more to be said. There are scattered references to rates of pay and prices, but no systematic analysis of the financial structure of the urban building industry and its relationship to the wider economy. The impacts of commercialization, industrialization, mechanization and mass production are frequently touched upon, but at no one point are the issues tackled in depth; moreover, discussion of these processes is framed in largely negative terms, such as how 'the commercialization of toolmaking has, disastrously, separated the performer from the instrument-maker' (p. 118), rather than in terms of the benefits modernization may have bestowed on the town. The practices, tools and (incidentally) clothes of the craftsmen are extensively chronicled, but (hints about the labour hierarchy and gender apart) how this translated into their identity as working people is generally left unexplored. There are allusions to the role of the middling orders in stimulating demand for housing (pp. 4–5, 12), and a plethora of examples of the prestigious character of particular built forms, but no substantial examination of the social function of architecture. However, it is unlikely that the author ever intended to offer more than food for thought on these issues. What he set out to do was to provide, in a very literal sense, a description of how the town was built, and in these terms this delightful book is something of a revelation, a *tour de force* which every student of the Georgian urban landscape will need and want to consult.

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Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers: The English Poor Laws and the People, 1700–1948*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. xi + 373pp. £45.00; $64.95.

In some ways, this is a frustrating book. It is well written and very readable but lacks the comprehensive bibliography that ought to have been there. It provides a balanced long period survey of historical welfare patterns and institutions of the sort much needed in a textbook but is packaged as a monograph. It provides a good theoretical review of the cultural underpinnings of the poor laws and the relationship between ratepayers and welfare recipients (epitomized by a very good discussion of the meaning of terms such as 'entitlement', 'citizenship', 'social rights' and 'the welfare transaction', which students will find very useful) but in reviewing welfare patterns and institutions prior to 1860 uses little in the way of primary material. Moreover, while the book provides a useful synthesis of much of the welfare historiography, it does not really explore the detailed nooks and crannies of the debate as it might have done. Thus, on page 30 the book usefully sets out a three-stage process by which people became paupers (they had to demonstrate need, their entitlement had to be established and they had to be willing to accept relief), but there is little detail on how this process worked in parishes of different size or socio-economic type and no discussion at all of the very different regional nuances in the process of becoming a pauper. As Peter King has shown, in poor law terms Essex looked very different from Shropshire and London looked very different from Manchester. In similar vein, page 11 claims that 'the force of law and habit bound both sides in the welfare transaction together into a Morris Dance of interlocking obligation'. This is rather better than I could have put it, but what is missing is the discussion of the many regional exceptions to this rule. For much of the eighteenth century up to one quarter of all Cumberland parishes were refusing to raise poor rates, and this does not suggest a notion of interlocking obligation.

These points notwithstanding, urban historians will enjoy this book. It is organized into three parts each of which encompasses a major phase of legislative activity and, argues Hollen Lees, underlying poor laws sentiment. Part I, 'Residualism taken for granted 1700–1834', deals with communal welfare as a process and as a practical system under the auspices of the Old Poor Law. In three separate chapters Hollen Lees deals respectively with the process of becoming pauperized, the nature of communal relief under the Old Poor Law (encompassing a very interesting discussion of 'rights' to relief) and the slow change in the underlying sentiment of the poor laws from a consensual system to one in which 'the destitute . . . lost much of the legitimacy that they had earlier enjoyed in communal eyes'. The analysis perhaps overstates the uniformity of the English welfare system, particularly in respect of urban England, but the historiographical discussion is a good one.

The second section of the book, 'Residualism refined and restricted, 1834–1860', deals with the period during which the New Poor Law came to legislative maturity. The first chapter of this section deals with underlying attitudes towards the poor and traces a new 'disciplinary style of welfare'. Again, the chapter overstates the uniformity of sentiments across space and might have benefited from more discussion of the work of recent New Poor Law scholars. This said, the really significant thing about this chapter is the idea that a major

task of the New Poor Law was 'to reconstruct public knowledge about the destitute'. This is eloquently put and gels with the older discussion of Karel Williams on the yardsticks by which it is appropriate to judge the 1834 legislation. The second chapter of this section traces the attitudes of the poor to their poverty and to the welfare system, while the third deals with the nuts and bolts of communal relief as it was played out on the ground under the New Poor Law. There is perhaps not enough focus on rural England here, or of the continuing regionality of the English welfare system by the 1850s, but the discussion of 'Women and welfare' provides a thoughtful analysis of a topic which still begs a systematic regional analysis.

The third section, 'Residualism re-evaluated and rejected, 1860–1948', ignores some of the conventional chronological boundaries of welfare history and in doing so spreads itself too thinly. An important discussion of communal awareness of poverty and welfare in the first chapter of this section is succeeded by two chapters dealing with the marginalization and rejection of the poor law. Neither chapter offers a real advance in our knowledge of the English welfare system, and it is surprising to see no mention of the fact that the northern areas which had fought so hard to resist unionization were, by the last decade of the nineteenth century, doing all that they could to retain it. The period 1906–48 is the focus of the last chapter in this section, and while it is competently executed the material here could easily have been expanded to form a second chapter, perhaps running from 1929 to 1948.

I had purchased this book before I was asked to review it, and in this sense I feel it to be an important text. It synthesizes much of the recent historiographical literature over a long time-frame, and it incorporates some really excellent theoretical discussion. In places too – for instance in the arena of women and the New Poor Law – the book takes the debate forward. This said, an extra layer of empirical discussion would have located much more in the way of chronological and spatial nuances to experiences of poverty and the operation of the welfare system than the book at present allows. What is most disappointing, however, is that the people who would most benefit from this book – undergraduate students – will be least able to afford it.

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Ian Inkster, *Scientific Culture and Urbanisation in Industrialising Britain*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997. xiv + 320pp. Index. £49.50.

This collection of eleven papers and chapters, reprinted here in their original formats together with a brief introduction, spans nearly two decades of research into the nature of scientific culture in Britain during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For those who are not familiar with Inkster's work, this collection is most welcome since several of the papers dating from the 1970s are difficult to track down. For those who know the field, this is a chance to re-read the papers as a whole, thereby providing an opportunity to explore the coherence that underpins the detailed research.

Inkster's broad thesis is that scientific culture flourished in Britain primarily because of the openness of its society and that as a result great technological

leaps were made that underpinned the industrial revolution. According to this account, the creativity and flexibility that characterized British society was, above all, a function of the open character of urban communities since it was in these places that distinctions of social status, religious beliefs and political allegiances became confused. Under such a blurring of distinctions, scientific culture flourished. In other words, the process of industrialization had both social and urban origins.

It was not sufficient for scientific knowledge merely to exist: the movement of ideas and people as a result of publication and mobility meant that such knowledge was available throughout much of Europe. Rather, what was important was for that knowledge to become widely diffused throughout society and for that to happen there had to be both reason and means for the spread of science. In terms of reasons, the general argument is that science provided those on the social and political margins of the establishment a source of social mobility. Just as science itself was considered a marginal activity by the established landed elite, so those who pursued it were also 'marginal men'. Many of the movers and shakers in the scientific world, such as the Sheffield surgeon, William Frith, or Thomas Warwick – businessman, minister and lecturer – held nonconformist beliefs and supported radical political causes. For this group, science provided a means of bridging the gap between them and their social superiors. In terms of means, scientific culture was spread via a network of itinerant lecturers and societies that sprang up throughout Britain, but notably in provincial cities such as Sheffield and Rochdale. Until such time as science became too specialized for the lay person, or it no longer served its purpose as a conveyor belt for social advancement, both of which, it is argued, began to occur from mid-century, interest in scientific culture was widespread in terms of geographical as well as social coverage.

This account of the spread of scientific education emphasizes the paramount importance of the local social context in disseminating knowledge. In particular it recognizes the significant role of urban associations, and thereby places cities – and particularly provincial cities – at the centre of the industrialization process. The openness of emerging urban society in cities such as Sheffield, Rochdale or Derby meant that these places, rather than the metropolis, provided the seedbed for a flourishing scientific culture in Britain.

In Inkster's account, cities are machines for the creation and dissemination of knowledge; fluidity of social structure is paralleled by fluidity in ideas; and rigidity, be it in terms of the institutionalization and professionalization of knowledge, or the hardening of class divisions, is the route towards ossification of ideas. Many broad lessons about the relationships between science, urbanization and industrialization can be learned from this scholarly collection. What is equally true, however, is that just as the nature of urban society is crucial in fostering intellectual creativity, so urban historians themselves have an important role to play in explaining the development of the knowledge society.

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John Marriott and Masaie Matsumura (eds), *The Metropolitan Poor: Semi-Factual Accounts, 1795–1910*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 1999. 6 volumes. £495.00.

'An accurate knowledge of the manners, habits, and feelings of a brave and free people is not to be acquired in the closet, nor is it to be derived from the formal routine of precepts of tutors. It is only by means of free and unrestrained intercourse with society that an intimate acquaintance is to be obtained with Englishmen: for this purpose it is necessary to view their pastimes, to hear their remarks, and, from such sources, to be enabled to study their character' (Egan, 1821, p. vi). So cautioned Pierce Egan, the comic traveller through the early nineteenth-century metropolis, in his *Life in London* published in 1821. Egan was one of many writers who journeyed through both the physical and metaphysical soul of the metropolis in the nineteenth century. Indeed this long-overdue collection edited by John Marriott and Masaie Matsumura brings together an impressive pantheon of those social voyagers, from Patrick Colquhoun writing at the turn of the nineteenth century through to the writings of George Sims at the start of the twentieth. This collection allows the reader to trace issues around poverty, the policing of sexual immorality, the spatiality of London's slum, rookeries and criminal networks, and the state of the labouring and manufacturing districts of the metropolis. The pieces are arranged across seven themes; The age of inquiry, Wandering tribes, People of the abyss, The soul of London, The million peopled city, Heathenism at home, In darkest England.

With this thematic arrangement the editors capture something of the nature of the discourse on the nineteenth-century metropolitan poor, which says as much about the fear of the residium, and comparative notions of empire, as it does about literary representation and urban evangelicalism. As Stedman-Jones has shown us, the threat of 'outcast London' aggravated elite tendencies towards social discipline and regulation of the working classes in later Victorian London (*Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society*, 1971). Much social investigation of the residium, particularly the work of Mayhew and Booth, provided a rationale and agenda for the social and political repression of the poor. As Marriott points out in his introduction, such publications as Andrew Mearns, *Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (1883) were 'a stumbling attempt to rediscover the poor – to comprehend their persistence at a time of political insecurity brought about by fears of revolutionary retribution'.

Moreover, the conflict between welfare and control was reflected in the systems of categorization inherent in nineteenth-century penal discourses, in the construction of new institutions for the poor, criminal and insane, and, perhaps most significantly in the context of this collection, in the typologies employed by contemporary social investigators. The master classifier was of course Mayhew, whose fascination with the language and idiom of the metropolitan poor was matched by his need to bring the spirit of scientific enquiry to his investigations. Thus Mayhew employed a vast typology, for example here, in an extract from *London Labour and the London Poor*, he refers to 'the several varieties of street-folk . . . Among them are to be found the Irish fruit-sellars, the Jew clothesmen; the Italian organ boys, French singing women, broom girls, the Highland bagpipe players, and the Indian crossing-sweepers' (vol. 2, p. 14). The presence of multiculturalism in Mayhew's survey perhaps points to that other trope of later

nineteenth-century commentary on the poorer districts of urban England. As Marriott points out, such commentaries 'have to be seen also as vehicles used to articulate a wide range of concerns over the threat the poor posed to the fabric of British imperial nationhood' (vol. 1, p. xxxviii). Moreover, in the slums and rookeries of London the indigenous underclass and that of the overseas empire seemed inexorably to draw together. For example, in 1869 Joseph Mullens drew upon his missionary experience in India to compare London and Calcutta, commenting on the 'utter irreligion, heathenism, vice, and indescribable wickedness' of the inhabitants of the East End. Another missionary Joseph Salter worked with Lascars, Asian seamen who sought refuge in mean hovels and low-lodging houses of the dock-sides of Wapping and Shadwell, resulting in *The Asiatic in England: Sketches of Sixteen Years Work Amongst Orientals* (1873). The credulity of writers exposed to the poverty of the empire, when faced with the poverty at the heart of empire, tells us much about the changing agendas of social commentary over the course of the nineteenth century. By the later century social journalism and investigation rests less on the forms of curious anthropology of the London 'underworld' and more on the notion of civilization and imperialism. Increasingly the metropolis is put under a microscope, its defenders fearful of the darker side of the jewel in the imperial crown. Joseph Salter summed up the preoccupations of many of the social evangelists of the later nineteenth century, 'Little was known, however, about these recesses, which lay in the very heart of London: they were as unexplored by the general citizen as were the depths of Central Africa; only the feet of inhabitants and of the missionary ever openly trod them' (*The East in the West, or, Work among the Asiatics and Africans in London*, 1896).

The collection includes both extracts and some complete documents in facsimile form, providing an admirable balance between the work of more well-known writers and the more obscure. For example, alongside Charles Dickens (from *Household Words*), William Booth (from *The Darkest London*) and Jack London (from *The People of the Abyss*), we find the writings of Thomas Fowell Buxton commenting on the state of the declining textile industry in East London (*Distress in Spitalfields*, 1816), extracts from the many works of the prolific urban explorer and journalist, James Greenwood, and the whole of Pall Mall Gazette editor, W.H. Stead's controversial, *The Maiden Tribute of Babylon* (1885). The collection is complemented by a strong introductory essay by Marriott, in which he deals with the broader context of the period, as well as problematizing the significance and agendas of the urban explorers represented in these volumes. Each piece is accompanied by a short descriptive and biographical abstract, and the collection is fully indexed. A mild criticism is the editors' lack of an explanatory note on the process of selection of extracts, though this is a minor point. Overall this collection provides a formidable resource for students and teachers of nineteenth-century crime, policing, poverty and social policy.

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A.J. Pollard (ed.), *Middlesbrough: Town and Community 1830–1950*. Stroud: Alan Sutton in association with Middlesbrough Borough Council and the University of Teesside, 1996. xiv + 202pp. 2 maps. 65 plates. Bibliography. £18.99 hbk.

Jeffrey Hill, *Nelson: Politics, Economy, Community*. Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1997. x + 172pp. 44 plates. 4 figures. 5 tables. £14.95 pbk.

Donald M. MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration: The Irish in Victorian Cumbria*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998. xxiv + 237pp. 2 figures. 21 tables. Bibliography. £12.95 pbk.

Roy Lewis, *Stafford Past: An Illustrated History*. Chichester: Phillimore, 1997. xiii + 130pp. 1 appendix. 149 plates. £14.99 hbk.

'We are proud of our smoke.' For late Victorian Middlesbrough smoke meant prosperity as was candidly acknowledged by its mayor at the opening of the new town hall in 1887. The phenomenal growth of Middlesbrough in the nineteenth century made a vivid impression on contemporaries, perhaps most famously in Gladstone's description of it as 'an infant Hercules'. Yet Middlesbrough was not the only such child of industrialization. The Lancashire cotton town of Nelson, which is comprehensively treated in the work by Hill, was also a creation of the later nineteenth century, as was Barrow-in-Furness, discussed in MacRaild's study of the Irish in Cumbria. By contrast, the final work under review here tells the story of an old market town (Stafford), yet one which also witnessed rapid nineteenth-century growth.

The collection of essays on Middlesbrough edited by Pollard was published to mark the formation of the new unitary authority in 1996. It opens with Asa Briggs' seminal essay on the Victorian town, which remains a highly perceptive survey, despite being now over 35 years old. The other studies act both as a commentary on Briggs and continue the story into the twentieth century. Tony Nicholson's intriguing essay on Middlesbrough's golden jubilee celebrations in 1881 looks at myth and reality, with particular reference to John Vaughan and the story of the discovery of ironstone in the Cleveland Hills. Nicholson contrasts the popular version of the myth, which allowed a place for luck, with the official Smilesian version emphasizing patient endeavour and determination. The bankruptcy of Vaughan's son Thomas also affected myth-making for as Nicholson says, 'The real taboo subject which afflicted middle-class Victorian society was . . . the awful spectre of business failure. Thomas Vaughan's bankruptcy was literally unspeakable' (p. 40). Yet John Vaughan remained a popular hero and Middlesbrough needed its heroes and its myths.

The remaining essays are more conventional. David Taylor surveys Middlesbrough's economic and social development from 1840 to 1939, revealing a greater diversity of economic activity than has sometimes been suggested. The importance of retailing is emphasized, and Taylor notes how the steel industry never quite enjoyed the same prosperity as iron had done in its heyday. Jim Turner's paper on friendly societies and similar organizations reveals the importance of mutual support among the town's workers, particularly necessary in a place with no aristocrats and an industrial elite which increasingly withdrew from civic affairs. Richard Lewis's study of the town's political life from 1850 to 1950 shows that few of the ironmasters took part in municipal affairs in the latter part of the

nineteenth century. The enduring influence of the Liberal party in the town is also stressed. Leisure and sport are treated by M.J. Huggins who contrasts respectable middle-class leisure with the dominant less respectable working-class forms and emphasizes the early importance of commercial leisure in the town. Linda Polley looks at the provision of housing from 1830 to 1914 and in particular the problems caused by the rapid expansion of the town; while J.W. Leonard's contribution on post-war Middlesbrough takes the 1946 Max Lock plan for sweeping regeneration as its starting point.

The individual essays are all useful and informative, although, and perhaps inevitably, the twentieth century is less fully covered than the heroic Victorian years. Some summing up of the main themes would have been useful, as might an assessment of just how untypical (or otherwise) Middlesbrough was. Nor are some of the issues currently being raised by urban historians, for example about social relationships at neighbourhood level or about the enduring role of religion, particularly addressed. This is, however, a valuable collection.

Jeffrey Hill's book on Nelson in the *Town and City Histories* series is a comprehensive, clear and very readable account of the fortunes of the Lancashire cotton town from its origins in the late nineteenth century until the present day. Hill specifically sets out both to treat Nelson as a case study against which to test certain themes, and to examine the uniqueness of Nelson. The book succeeds in doing both these. As Hill emphasizes, Nelson has never been a large town – reaching a maximum population of around 40,000 in 1921 – but has always had a strong sense of itself as a distinctive community.

Nelson grew rapidly in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century and by 1900 was an established centre of cotton weaving, with a particular focus on quality goods. The way in which the industry was organized, with mill owners renting space to loom owners who then employed labour to work the looms, provided relatively open entry into cotton production and encouraged a variety of entrepreneurs. Nelson became a classic single industry town; by 1914 some 75 per cent of its workforce depended on weaving for their livelihood, with men and women employed in almost equal proportions. Moreover, most employed women worked on more or less equal terms with men. As Hill comments, 'the cultural life of the town – and, to a large extent its politics – acquired a particular distinctiveness as a result of the prominence of women in local industry' (p. 28). This is in striking contrast to the male-dominated Middlesbrough.

Nelson differed from Middlesbrough in a number of other ways. Trade unions were strong and many weavers had a fiercely militant outlook in the years before the First World War. Nelson's local government in the late Victorian period was essentially in the hands of small businessmen who in the 1860s began the tradition of public welfare initiatives which culminated in the municipal socialism of the inter-war years. There were no heroes or founding fathers to become the subject of later mythology. Nelson also escaped the worst environmental and public health problems associated with industrial towns. It had a generally good standard of housing, good health and low infant mortality. It was regarded as easy to police, and perhaps because most inhabitants were to some degree immigrants there was none of the occasional violence that existed in other places where a significant group of immigrants was confronted by a large native population. Also in contrast to Middlesbrough, Liberalism rapidly gave way to Labour in the town's politics in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Nelson naturally shared in the Lancashire cotton industry's post-First World War problems. But its concentration on higher quality weaving enabled it to escape relatively lightly. Nevertheless the inter-war years saw considerable underemployment, and disproportionate unemployment among women. It was also a time of labour militancy and of the apogee of municipal socialism. In considering contemporary claims that Nelson was a 'Little Moscow', Hill demonstrates the very limited influence of communists in local politics, as opposed to the long-standing tradition of socialism based on moral values of fairness, equality and justice. Nelson was 'A place which took a stand on ''causes'' ' (p. 105). It was also a place with a strong sense of shared community and culture, the latter often non-commercial until the Second World War. Sport, particularly football and cricket, was important, and to the extent that the town had a folk hero it was the Trinidadian cricketer Learie Constantine.

Hill's final chapter looks at the decline in traditional industries, particularly from the 1960s onwards and the subsequent attempts to diversify its economy in the context of an ageing population (other than New Commonwealth immigrants) and an outdated housing stock. Its future, even at a time when our industrial heritage is being seen as a tourist asset, remains in doubt for, as Hill says, 'Nelson possesses few charms' (p. 147). The book, however, is a model of a single town history which conveys a real sense of place while keeping an eye on wider issues.

The role of Irish immigrants in Victorian towns has attracted much recent attention. MacRaild's study of Cumbria is a valuable addition to the literature. The main towns considered are Barrow-in-Furness, Workington, Whitehaven and Cleator Moor. The latter was Cumbria's little Ireland with an Irish-born population of 20–35 per cent in the thirty years to 1851; Barrow had 10 per cent Irish-born in 1881. Particular features of Irish immigration to Cumbria were its timing (predominantly in the 1860s and after); the Ulster origin of many of the immigrants; and the importance of Protestant immigrants. MacRaild looks in some detail at the occupations of Irish immigrants and concludes that while they did not generally penetrate middle-class occupations, neither were they to be found subsisting in a marginalized street economy. Semi-skilled occupations predominated in Cleator Moor and by the end of the century the Irish-born were broadly represented across Barrow's skilled as well as unskilled occupations. In the second half of the book MacRaild looks at competing Irish identities, religious and cultural antipathy and communal violence. The limited political impact of Irish nationalism in the area is demonstrated, and contrasted with the strength of Orangeism, especially centred on Barrow and attracting significant English support. Conflict existed both within the Irish community and as an expression of anti-Irish feeling. MacRaild argues for a continuing culture of Irishness in these Cumbrian towns, and for the importance of conflict and violence as a defining feature of Irish experience in Cumbria.

Stafford also hosted a small Irish community in the mid-nineteenth century, though readers of Lewis's book would not necessarily be aware of this. This liberally illustrated book traces Stafford's history from its Anglo-Saxon origins to the present day. The chapter headings – communications, industry, public services, religion, schools – indicate the approach and there is reasonable coverage of the town's nineteenth-century growth based on the shoe industry, railways and heavy engineering. The book serves its purpose as a brief history of

Stafford, though without conveying a particularly distinctive sense of community or providing a context against which to assess the significance of what is described.

Ian Mitchell
Matlock

Stephen V. Ward, *Selling Places. The Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities 1850–2000*. London: E. & F.N. Spon, 1998. ix + 269pp. Plates. Bibliography. £22.95.

The author's aim in this highly readable and excellently produced book is to examine the development of place marketing and promotion over the last 150 years, drawing on evidence in particular from towns and cities in Britain, America and Canada, and, to a lesser extent, in other countries such as France, Belgium and Germany. This broad geographical sweep enables the author to employ a wide variety of sources – both written and visual – in support of his analysis. Indeed, the many visual images reproduced so clearly in the text from, for example, travel posters, railway and resort advertisements, developers' promotional literature, and city publicity offices are crucial in helping the reader to appreciate in full the ways in which various towns and cities have approached the question of place selling – conceptualized by the author as '. . . a broad entrepreneurial ethos or ideology which, at specific times, has permeated the common affairs of particular places' (p. 3). Answers to this interesting question have been influenced by many factors, one of the most important of which historically has been public policy, which, as the author points out, has generally been less supportive of place selling in Britain than elsewhere. A more recent influence has been the structural shifts in many local economies as manufacturing has declined, with the result that certain post-industrial cities such as New York, Glasgow and Manchester have looked to tourism, culture, leisure, special events and sporting competitions to help market themselves and attract visitors and investment. Such place selling, however, has not only been undertaken by towns and cities themselves, but also by other agencies with an interest in boosting the appeal of certain towns and regions. The aspirations of railway companies in particular have left their mark on this whole process. Indeed, the first main example of place selling assessed in this book, covering the American frontier and frontier towns and cities, draws the conclusion that '. . . the railroads were the most powerful (and best documented) agencies promoting new towns' on the frontier (p. 21).

Having established the tone of the book in the chapter on 'Selling the frontier', the author sets out a clear framework of analysis within which he scrutinizes four further substantive examples of types of towns, cities, or areas where marketing and promotion have played crucial roles in their development. These are resort towns; the suburbs; the industrial town; and the post-industrial city. By devoting two chapters to the study of each of these four areas, a similar approach is adopted by which the first chapter of each section deals with the reasons for and the means and methods of place selling (the resorts and the suburbs), industrial promotion (the industrial town) and urban regeneration (the post-industrial city). The second chapter of each section details the ways in which

promotional material, language and images have been developed and used, not only by towns and cities themselves but also by such important actors in the strategy of place selling as railway companies, builders, developers and estate agents. For example, the North Eastern Railway extolled the virtues of 'Bright, Breezy, Bracing Bridlington' in a pre-First World War poster, whilst in the 1920s American holiday-makers were exhorted to travel by train to Atlantic city – 'the Playground of the World'. Similarly, railway companies often in conjunction with developers or estate agents played an important part in advertising and selling the suburbs both in Britain and America. *Metro-Land*, for example, was published annually by the Metropolitan Railway between 1915 and 1932, promoting the attractions of life in a suburban home, whilst the Southern Railway launched a poster campaign in 1926 with slogans such as 'Live in Surrey, free from Worry'. More recently, as Ward shows in his final section, many older cities themselves have had to embark on fresh campaigns of place selling in order to reinvent themselves in the face of post-industrial decline. Tourism, sporting events and cultural activities have been some of the means adopted to bring about this reinvention, and, as the recent history of cities such as Glasgow or Atlanta indicate, place marketing and promotion are now crucial aspects of urban growth and development.

Overall, this book has much to recommend it and my only quibble is that the section covering inter-war suburban development in America is rather brief given that the 1920s in particular witnessed very rapid suburban growth. It will be of interest not only to urban and planning historians, but to historians of popular culture as well. The arguments are clearly developed, the text is fully illustrated and there is an extensive bibliography.

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Terence Emmons, *Alleged Sex and Threatened Violence: Doctor Russel, Bishop Vladimir, and the Russians in San Francisco, 1887–1892*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997. xiv + 251pp. Illustrations. No price stated.

Terence Emmons, a professor of history at Stanford University, has for some years explored the life of a Russian immigrant to the United States, some of whose activities form the subject of this book. Nikolai Konstantinovitch Sudzilovsky was born in western Russia in 1850; his medical studies in Kiev were interrupted by his radical political activities and enforced exile. After sojourns in a number of Western European countries he finally graduated from the University of Bucharest, where he officially changed his name to Russel. Clearly attracted to conspiratorial plots and practices he lived a somewhat random life that featured a number of trips to the United States. He frequently claimed to be American born, was economical with fact in his pursuit of passports, and finally emigrated in 1887. By October that year he was practising medicine in San Francisco, where he became involved in, and helped to stimulate, a number of scandals afflicting the bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church for the Aleutians and Alaska.

Bishop Vladimir's headquarters were in San Francisco, and his episcopate was characterized neither by piety nor sound administration. He was also surrounded by what Russel called his 'pretty boys'. Successive lawsuits ranged, in Emmons' words, 'from arson, theft, perjury, conspiracy and bribery to attempted assassination (three), bigamy, adultery, sodomy and child abuse' (p. 4). In this the fate of the boys was most serious. Other major characters in these sordid affairs include successive Russian consuls-general in San Francisco and the procurator-general of the Holy Synod in St Petersburg, Konstantin Pobedonostsev.

Emmons pieces together these gothic tales from archives in St Petersburg, Moscow, Washington DC and the Library of Congress, together with published sources in both languages. His detailed narrative allows little credit to either protagonist. He does not provide specific references but has an excellent set of notes to sources. He is sometimes a little over-indulgent with extensive direct quotations from sources but, at the same time, these contribute to the flavour of the volume as a whole.

Bishop Vladimir's indulgences took place on what had become known as the Barbary Coast, a place of both economic and social opportunity, conflict and corruption. The absence of community standards breeds litigation, as De Tocqueville had noted earlier in the century, and the field of battle between Russel and Vladimir was the law courts and the newspapers. Throughout both these can be traced an anti-Semitic theme.

Russel later sought success in journalism and business, from California to Hawaii, to Japan and China, and was always a radical. He was possibly admirable. His adversary in San Francisco returned to Russia in 1891 – it is tempting to say in disgrace, but he was later appointed bishop of Orenburg and then Ekaterinburg; was ultimately made archbishop but died in poverty in Moscow in 1931.

This rather curious book is of interest to students both of American and Russian history, particularly those in urban and church history: the latter can sometimes raise the drawbridge of seclusion within society. The seamier side of life was very real for many on that distant frontier in the 1890s. The longer I have lived with this book the more I believe that it transcends muckraking indulged in for its own sake.

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Sean O'Connell, *The Car in British Society. Class, Gender and Motoring, 1896–1939*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998. xi + 240pp. 9 illustrations. Bibliography. £14.99.

This is a fascinating book. Partly the fascination stems from the plethora of detail about early motoring habits, attitudes and practices. More importantly it derives from the particular approach taken by the author to motoring. There have been many books on the motor industry from the manufacturing and technological viewpoint, whether of individual makes or the industry as a whole. Also some business histories have appeared, again mostly concentrating on the supply side: the technical changes, problems of raising capital, competition with other manufacturers, labour relations policies, and suchlike. O'Connell eschews this

'traditional' approach to look at the demand side of the industry. He is interested in who bought and used cars and why it was these groups who were 'motorized'. What role did gender play? Why were motor cars seen as male oriented (boys' toys?) given that they were appearing at the same time as women were pressing for the vote and could have been a liberating force? What role did status and taste play in model development and what was the symbolism of the motor car? Why were the working classes not seen as a viable segment of the market given the mass consumption in the USA and the availability of hire purchase in the UK to spread payments over a long period? These are all worthwhile questions to which O'Connell gives at least plausible, and often convincing, answers. His work is novel because he is the first in this country to address these issues systematically, though there has been much pioneering work on these lines in the USA.

O'Connell's chapter on road safety is particularly interesting and relevant to this journal. He shows how despite a large increase in the numbers killed and injured on Britain's roads and the vast majority of victims being non-motorists (mainly pedestrians and cyclists) the car was largely exonerated. Instead certain classes were scapegoated, especially pedestrians, chauffeurs and foreigners. He demonstrates that the National Safety First Association, thought to be a neutral body and so consulted by successive governments, was in fact captured by the pro-motorist lobby, being financed by motor dealers, the Automobile Association and the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, and having among its officers a plethora of motoring worthies. He also explains the conflict between local authorities and the motorists' lobby, which the latter largely won. Attempts by the urban authorities to bring in lower speed limits, or to force motorists to pull up when approaching a tram with alighting passengers, and resistance to de-restricted urban arterial roads, were all nullified by opposition from the pro-motoring organizations who blamed the 'irresponsible' pedestrian and stressed the need for national conformity rather than local legislation. As a result, grants for subways, guard rails and overhead bridges were introduced in the late 1930s to train and direct pedestrians. So the car began altering the urban landscape and the movements of other transport users.

The role of the car in changing leisure habits and the subtle class distinctions introduced in motoring holidays, the imagery of freedom and speed often at odds with the actuality of congestion and jams, are well covered, as is the dichotomy of the car's impact upon the rural areas. It is an excellent read and relatively jargon free, but there are minor complaints. The index is seriously inadequate. There are some items mentioned in the text which appear neither in endnotes nor the bibliography. There are one or two relevant items which have not been consulted. It would have been interesting to have had some discussion of the rationale of a *laissez-faire* approach to the motorist in the twentieth century when at the macro-governmental level this philosophy had been severely undermined, especially during the war and the 1930s. Overall, however, this is a most valuable addition to the history of motoring and opens up a range of fresh debates and topics for research.

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Nancy Stieber, *Housing Design and Society in Amsterdam: Reconfiguring Urban Order and Identity, 1900–1920*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998. 464pp. $45.00; £35.95.

The Housing Act of 1901 ended an era of liberal *laissez-faire* in the Netherlands. Its main aim was to improve public health. The Act empowered municipalities to condemn slums and submitted developers to a building code forcing them to install minimum standards of sanitation and hygiene. Next to these minimal requirements, Amsterdam took the lead in advocating more room, better equipment, air and light for working-class housing, despite the high costs for these provisions. Its leading role in improving housing standards was largely the result of its political development. After 1918, the Social Democrat Labour Party gained ascendancy. Its devotion to the cause of public housing was unparalleled elsewhere in the country. Amsterdam made abundant use of the 'town planning section' of the Housing Act. It stipulated that growing cities had to develop an extension plan. Once such a plan was approved, the city could apply for compulsory purchase for the planning area and Amsterdam was eager to use this tool. In 1900 it commissioned Hendrik Berlage to design the southern extension town plan. The costs of expropriation were high but the benefits were considerable as, once the land was expropriated, it gave the city total control over its development. It could impose the town plan, and strict zoning as well. Municipal land ownership stipulated high leases for upper class villas, thus compensating the low leases for public housing.

What elicited more debate was that the city also exercised total control over urban design. It installed a Board of Aesthetics for its southern extension, which effectively excluded all design proposals that did not obey the canon of the Amsterdam School. The Amsterdam School stood for a radically new conception of urban architecture. It broke away from the neo-styles that had dominated the nineteenth century. Its protagonist, the talented young Michel de Klerk, '. . . put his considerable graphic imagination to work on the street facade, turning it into an expressive organism in which doors, window frames, roof lines, and stairwells became sculptural events on the street wall' (p. 197).

But Stieber's comment that the Amsterdam School '. . . seemed to provide an answer to the seventeenth-century core of the city, a response that found in the large-scale housing projects features that might be transformed into contemporary symbols of urban identity' (p. 197) makes the reader suspicious of where the author's interpretations will lead to. If anything, Amsterdam's famous canal belt testifies to the complete freedom of its bourgeois residents to design their premises exactly as they wished, without any public interference. Its result was admired by many for its picturesque qualities – not one house resembled the neighbouring premises in building style and ornament. The contrast with Amsterdam's southern extension could not be more dramatic. Building blocks were designed in a uniform style. Supervisors judged them on their contribution to the area as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Why did local government break so radically with the long-established building practice in Amsterdam? And why did they select the Amsterdam School as the exclusive style paradigm in a time and country where many more design schools were active, amongst which Modernism was not the least amongst the competitors? Stieber interprets the enforcement of a uniform style

as a quest for a new collective urban identity. Although there are no quotes from contemporary politicians which support that vision, she suggests that such collective identity was lost in the previous period of unlimited *laissez-faire* capitalism: 'The faceless, utilitarian, and commercialized urbanism of industrial capitalism constituted a modern space in which traditional bonds of community were fragmented and traditional spatial markers rendered meaningless' (p. 202).

It is not easy to find evidence for this picture even in the grimmest of all speculative quarters, De Pijp. Were 'spatial markers' absent here? The area counted several churches and a synagogue. Were their spires 'meaningless'? Perhaps to the few (less than 20 per cent) non-believers, but not to the vast majority of residents, who actually enjoyed their small but beautifully landscaped local park and the scenic beauty of the Amstel river that bordered this 'faceless, utilitarian' urban area. De Pijp was painted in dark colours by many contemporary housing reformers, as Stieber demonstrates. The area did present a free-market townscape, while housing quality was generally poor (although substantially better than in many of the older, inner-city areas).

But by condemning this area, architects followed their own hidden agenda. Around the 1890s it became clear that government intervention in low-cost housing was only a matter of time. This was promising for architects, who hitherto were hardly employed by private speculators – with De Pijp as an appalling result, as they kept hammering in. They were not disappointed. In the southern extension area they were invited to design popular housing blocks. They were obliged, however, to present their design to the Board of Aesthetics. This, of course, immediately raised questions of 'objective' aesthetic criteria. Stieber makes clear that within Amsterdam's design arena no single architect or 'school' could initially claim universal aesthetic value.

What makes the Amsterdam School's ascendancy even more problematic is its link with socialist city government and, finally, with Stieber's interpretation that they gave the city its new, much desired 'urban identity'. Many left-wing architects criticized the Amsterdam School for its exuberant, costly facades, to which the dwelling plan was subordinate. They saw Modernism, with its emphasis on functional design and the use of modern building materials as the single most appropriate vernacular for socialism. What is more, it is hard to interpret the Amsterdam's School's stylistic monopoly as the expression of urban identity, which, as Stieber likes us to believe, was acceptable for a broad political spectrum. That must have been no small achievement if, as Stieber suggests, the highlights of the Amsterdam School '. . . demonstrated the capacity for architecture to express community politicized by class consciousness' (p. 255). How, one wonders, did they express class solidarity? By the expressive use of bricks? By supervising the design of the smallest details, such as door bells, letterboxes and house numbers and thus creating the building blocks as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*? Elsewhere in the new quarters, Stieber continues, a modest version of the Amsterdam School prevailed. Here, 'The result was not revolutionary, politically or architecturally. . . . Rather, through the creation of place, they merely resisted the laissez-faire system of housing construction and urban development' (p. 255).

My problem with these 'interpretations' is that they are often presented as real intentions. If they were, they should have been supported by evidence – and they are not. If one omits these 'interpretations', however, the author offers a rich

panorama of one of the most exciting periods of urban design and architecture in Amsterdam.

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Rosalie Schwartz, *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. xxiii + 239pp. 11 plates. 2 figures. Bibliography. £42.75.

Schwartz identifies three distinct phases in the history of Cuba's tourist industry. The first began when the First World War diverted wealthy North American travellers from European resorts to Florida and destinations further south. During the 1920s US Prohibition strengthened Cuba's drawing power, and tourist-based development, concentrated in Havana, proceeded vigorously until the onset of the Great Depression. The second phase of expansion came after 1950, again serving an overwhelmingly North American clientele, but now involving much larger numbers of short-stay middle-income visitors, a price-sensitive market. But Cuba, handicapped by a powerful trade union movement and relatively high wage levels, had difficulty meeting competition from other Caribbean islands and from Mexico. So Fulgencio Batista, once installed as president through a coup, promoted gambling to offset the cost disadvantage. Control of the casinos was entrusted to US-organized crime interests, driven out of Florida by an anti-racketeering campaign. Narcotics trafficking and a large, highly diversified sex industry flourished alongside the core gaming business. All this contributed to the Batista regime's general aura of venality and demoralization which helped Castro gain power in 1959. Tourism, effectively destroyed by the 1959 revolution, was then resurrected once again in the 1980s, as a response to economic crisis and severe foreign exchange shortages. Europe now provided most of the visitors, finance and management expertise.

While Schwartz offers a lucid, entertaining narrative, it focuses mainly on putting Cuba's tourist trade in the broader context of US history and hemisphere relations. Consequences for the island receive rather sketchy treatment. Thus it is never suggested what share of the Cuban working population have been employed in hotel service, entertainment, prostitution, and so forth, or how large a contribution these activities have made to local incomes. The chapters covering the early twentieth century provide some material on real estate speculation and the growth of Havana, related both to tourism and to the native sugar elite's attempts at remodelling the city along Parisian lines. New streets, suburbs and golf courses were laid out. Luxury villas accommodated overwintering US millionaires. Illustrated promotional literature featured the picturesque colonial-period central districts. In the 1930s a reformist government briefly considered developing museums, parks and nature reserves, as supplementary visitor attractions. However, there is little coverage of physical aspects since the Second World War, apart from incidental references to new hotel building. This may be in part because the 1950s' and post-1980 tourist cycles were quite well served by the already established infrastructure. In addition, it seems that as the author's research energies flagged towards the end of her project, topics secondary to its

main theme fell from view. On the whole, therefore, *Pleasure Island* will be of only moderate interest to urban historians.

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Mark Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns: Social Change and Urban Dispersal in Postwar Britain*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998. 238pp. 8 tables. Bibliography. £45.00.

Typically histories evaluating British twentieth-century social housing take an institutional perspective: focusing on the high politics and economics of state intervention, or offering 'on the ground' exemplary studies of individual local authority enterprise. Endemic too within the literature is the idea of post-war failure: measured quantitatively (too few houses built or too many slums remaining); or qualitatively, where, for example, political fear or commercial opportunism corrupted the policy-making machinery to impose unwanted ideas and technologies on a long-suffering public. Implicitly, of course, all such critics *presume* to speak for the consumer. Against this trend, Clapson's accessible book on working-class perceptions of post-war suburban 'sprawl' provision puts forward a refreshing and, at times, stimulating reconstruction. The study takes as its starting point 'the extraordinarily pervasive anti-suburban myth in English culture' – which Clapson locates pejoratively throughout literary and popular cultural production – and a rejection of a sentimentalized and polemically located misconstruction of lost traditional working-class inner-city community, where a former lively street culture is subsequently 'dispersed to death' in the sterile 'cultural deserts' of outlying estates and new towns. Instead we are offered the more positive experiences of the tenants themselves.

Following a basic pre-1939 outline locating the influence of the planning and 'garden city' movements in creating the first 'superior' mass working-class municipal cottage suburbs (issues like cheap land and repetitive design being ignored) the oft-repeated core argument falls into place. Against the negativity of contemporary embourgeoisement theory, other sociological studies and oral testimony also revealed the 'joy' with which working-class people greeted their 'it was just like a palace' new homes. In Clapson's well-supported reconstruction, a homogeneous and collectivist working class, positively linked by kinship and street networks, takes second place to one widely discontented with existing provision and attracted by the benefits of suburban life: namely, improved standards of housing offering modern domestic convenience; a residential environment which included a garden and better educational opportunities for their children; and greater, much prized, privacy and the opportunity to segregate oneself from incoming rougher elements and immigrant newcomers. Thus a clear majority wanted to move (even when this was forced through slum clearance); moreover, the difficulties associated with moving and settling down in the new town or dormitory estate were generally no stronger than when moving elsewhere, and for most tenants were quickly dissipated.

Clapson takes a similar tack in seeking to minimize the linkages between poor estate planning and provision (transport, shops, recreation) and social isolation (commonly labelled 'suburban neurosis' and 'new town blues'). Clearly, as the

author acknowledges, 'there was little point in pretending everything was running smoothly when it was not'; women particularly, contrary to earlier denials, were 'missing mum' and the traditional support of extended family. Yet centrally he seeks to divert attention elsewhere: did not the authorities later respond to such need; was it not a largely temporary condition, or, conversely, part of a wider post-war process in which fixed gender roles, domestically, made life more difficult for women, or perhaps primarily a problem only amongst the poor? Counter studies are criticized for sampling from the 'settling in' period of estate life, when social dislocation was more likely (although elsewhere the author suggests service omissions on new estates actually drew people together as they fought to improve amenities). However this particular cake is cut, the day-to-day realities of estate life still sit uneasily with the positive overview provided.

The thoughtful analysis of 'suburban solidarities' provides a cogent finale. It offers a chronologically fluid yet vital understanding of working-class community: from the estate-wide sociability of the 1940s and early 1950s neighbourhood, into a mobile era of growing affluence where working-class sociability found expression across spatial divides in shared leisure interests but still within common status perceptions (maintaining the rough/respectable and working/middle-class divides of earlier urban society). If the centrality of the community association declined, then the importance of voluntary association and club remained, 'supplying alternatives to neighbourliness as a mechanism for bringing people together in post-war working-class housing developments' late into the twentieth century.

It is perhaps unreasonable in a book offering a case study approach to expect a uniformity of coverage. Nevertheless, there is a decided concentration on the late 1950s and beyond (rather than on the post-war decade), and on new towns throughout (irritatingly so, even exempting chapter 6, in the case of Milton Keynes) rather than on the more ubiquitous city peripheral estate. In its general approach and subject matter, however, *Invincible Green Suburbs* offers an invigorating re-examination of urban life in the post-war period from a perspective previously largely ignored by social historians.

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Roger Buckley, *Hong Kong: The Road to 1997*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. viii + 232pp. 3 figures. 1 table. 1 map. Bibliography. £12.95pbk; £35hbk.

This book, which places the events of 1997 in their historical context, would be useful for undergraduate courses in international and contemporary history as it plugs a gap in the market. The book is primarily a diplomatic and political history. It is a 'top-down' account of Anglo-Chinese-Hong Kong relations and domestic politics in Hong Kong. The author looks at economic and social change from the perspective of government policy-making. The chapters are structured around important political dates – the end of the Pacific War, the governorships of Alexander Grantham, Murray MacLehose (1971–82) and Chris Patten (1992–95), Sino-British negotiations (1982–92) and the 1997 hand-over; one chapter also

examines economic growth in the 1960s. The book contains seven appendices (pp. 184–227), which include a copy of the Basic Law and the Joint Declaration.

The first and weakest half (pp. 1–104) briefly surveys some main events to 1982: debates about constitutional reform, the trade embargo on China, immigration policy, housing developments and the 1967 riots. The account is rather piecemeal and would have been strengthened by chapters introducing the political system and the salient features of economic and social change. The second and better half (pp. 104–226) focuses on Sino-British discussions from 1982, and developments during the Patten years; it also makes predictions about Hong Kong's future.

The book presents some interesting ideas, particularly where historical forces are linked with Hong Kong's future development. According to Buckley, personalities mattered in Hong Kong. Grantham, the benevolent despot, MacLehose, the reformer, and Patten, the politician, all shaped Hong Kong history because power rested with the appointee of the metropole. Consequently good men could get policy right (especially MacLehose) while bad men/women could get policy wrong. Buckley argues that Margaret Thatcher (along with the Foreign Office) handled negotiations with China badly, while Patten was too confrontational and deliberately broke negotiated agreements. These individual failings have left Hong Kong with an uncertain political future because its present constitution is out of touch with longer-term social changes – the result of economic development and educational advances and not just a consequence of Tiananmen. Buckley believes a society now concerned about political and human rights may well clash with Chinese communist leaders determined to rule as the British once did and given the leeway to do so because of the ambiguously drafted Basic Law and Joint Declaration.

Buckley acknowledges that Patten faced an impossible remit in 1992: to respond to societal change; to stay within the rules of the negotiated game; and to keep Beijing on board. Consequently the finger is pointed at an often cited historical suspect: post-war British colonial policy. He argues that post-war British governments shelved the issue of democratic reform until it was too late. As the Hong Kong people had no say in the 1980s negotiations, they can now legitimately question the settlement. But Buckley rightly cautions against trying to fit Hong Kong into models of post-war decolonization: Hong Kong was an immigrant society where demands for political reform were delayed while communist China did not force decolonization because it gained economically from Hong Kong.

Buckley points to a number of contemporary stabilizing forces which might mean a peaceful transition to Chinese rule. First, Hong Kong's growing importance to the Chinese economy may persuade the Chinese state to adopt a non-interventionist strategy, giving real meaning to 'One Country, Two Systems' rhetoric. Second, the financial foothold in Hong Kong established by Chinese government corporations (particularly the Bank of China) and the close ties between Hong Kong business elites and the Chinese government may produce a new conservative power bloc, akin to that under the British. Third, the strong family orientation of Hong Kong society might stop the full formation of civic society in the territory.

These arguments are supported by anecdotal evidence from published speeches and documentary sources (not referenced). This approach does succeed in conveying the tone of government decision-making and fits in well with

personality-centred approach. However, it is much less effective in plotting economic and social changes: more statistics were needed here.

Overall the book provides a useful introduction to post-war Hong Kong history, leaving the undergraduates to debate what the actual legacy of historical forces on Hong Kong will be. It is stronger on diplomatic relations and weaker on economic and social trends.

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Francis Violich (cartography and drawings in collaboration with **Nicholas Ancel**), *The Bridge to Dalmatia: A Search for the Meaning of Place*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998. xvii + 351pp. £38.50.

This book is a labour of love and hope. The central metaphor of its title, the bridge, is called upon to bear multiple signification. In Violich's own past, it recalls the drive and dynamism of his own family forebears, who left one west coast for another, Dalmatia for California, without severing the link behind them, so that this book's author could return in the 1930s, and again in the 1960s, to visit relatives. In his vision for the future, this transatlantic experience of different localisms combines with the insights of a long professional career in urban planning, to inspire a passionate defence of local initiative and activism as key sites of human endurance.

In structure, the book is divided into an introduction and seven chapters. In the introduction, the author weaves together life-histories from his family, and the Dalmation community in California, with an account of his own life-course, and involvement with a region that he first visited in 1937, in his twenties, but which is nonetheless in some sense home to him. Chapter one returns to theoretical ground, laying out the links of identity and place at different scales of agency, and introducing the author's phenomenological approach to mapping and understanding urban form and function. Chapter two offers a structural history of coastal Dalmatia, juxtaposing the natural and human forces that have shaped the built environment. Chapters three, four, five and six are all urban readings, ranging over major cities, island towns, and seaside and mountain villages. In each case Violich documents the contemporary social use of space, as well as giving cross-sections of the physical environment which point to the historical development of human communities. Chapter seven presents a synthesis of his observations and claims, comprising ten properties of identity with place, and then addresses the effects of the war and possible visions for the future.

Violich's own deep personal and professional commitment to the importance of local-scale, community-based activism is obvious throughout. His own life-experiences, as scholar of and dweller in urban environments and as Dalmatian/Croatian/American permeate the test. Yugoslavia finds itself oddly located, both in his personal history and this book. He appears especially critical of short-termism in planning, and seems almost as pained by the ravages wrought by 1980s developments aimed at mass tourism in Dalmatia as by the destruction wrought by modern weapons in the 1990s. Yugoslavia thus emerges as an

intrusive outsider to Dalmatian history. In this respect, the book will appeal to those for whom former Yugoslavia stands as an artificial creation, in which the former middle class were disenfranchised, and unqualified, undereducated peasants made decisions. Violich's book can be read as suggesting a coalition between bourgeois values and natural processes, in a vein which mirrors deeply held 'Western' beliefs about individualism and political organization.

Such an impoverished reading, though, would not do justice to the richness of Violich's vision, which acknowledges that the identity with place that he describes is the product of wilful human agency, crafted over generations. Written in rolling cadences, and unafraid of intuitive parallels or grand metaphors, the book itself is the product of a career which has spanned over half a century. It defies easy categorization, drawing on cultural geography and philosophy, exploring ground familiar to historians and anthropologists, and at times styled after travel literature. Sketches, photographs and line drawings add immediacy to a lyrical and evocative work which may eschew obvious politics, yet is a work of profound commitment and vision.

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David M. Henkin, *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998. xv + 242pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, $45.00. Paper, $16.50.

In *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York*, the cultural historian David Henkin reminds us that we live in cities covered with words. With little thought, we daily make our way through a lot of verbal clutter: signs on streets, signs on walls, signs telling us where to go and where not to go. Cities were not always such wordy places, and Henkin takes us back to the early nineteenth century when New York, at least, began to be covered in print. Signs, posters, newspapers, handbills, banners and paper money all contributed, he argues, to a kind of impersonal authority well suited to a city of strangers. The verbal landscape of New York was a place of anonymous instruction, unsigned direction and impersonal advice. Or as Henkin describes it, 'a palimpsest of shared information upon which claims to personal authority blurred into one another and receded into a larger verbal collage' (p. 3).

Henkin brings his city of words to life by asking readers to think again about the very act of reading. We imagine the streets of nineteenth-century cities as noisy and crowded, the last place in the world to look for readers who, we assume, belong alone, indoors, in large chairs, in quiet corners. Readers of novels, perhaps, were most comfortable in solitude, but, according to Henkin, a tendency to search only for solitary readers has led us to overlook more common instances of public reading. Public readers were promiscuous readers, taking in unsigned signs, anonymous posters and blaring headlines. If novel reading helped men and women of the middle class map an inner landscape of feeling, 'city reading' helped them negotiate streets full of strangers.

According to Henkin, it was reading in public, not in private, that helped usher in our common culture, our mass democracy in which politics, commerce

and entertainment all share a common stage and employ common modes of appeal. He begins his two stories – the story of a city covered with printed signs and the story of readers decoding their city of signs – by exploring the significance of the permanent signs New Yorkers displayed on streets and buildings and in parks. He then turns to the ephemeral trade cards and handbills they passed among themselves and to the posters they pasted on blank walls and the parade banners they carried along the streets.

To these obviously public texts, Henkin adds newspapers and paper money. Between 1830 and 1840 the number of newspapers in the nation more than doubled, and New York led the way. Publishers flooded the city with penny dailies, papers full of sensational city news and small enough to fit in a reader's pocket. Some New Yorkers likely took their papers home to read in well-furnished parlours, but according to Henkin, newspapers were first and foremost public texts. Newsboys hawking papers on the streets inserted headlines into the play of urban texts. Even money circulated as a text in this city of words. There was no uniform paper currency in the antebellum United States, and economic historians have estimated that counterfeiters produced nearly 40 per cent of circulating banknotes. To survive in this peculiar market-place. New Yorkers had to become discerning readers of money. But even careful money readers had no sure means of establishing that the banknotes they held were genuine. The words on a bill were no more reliable than those on posters plastered along city walls. Herman Melville captured this shifty world in his novel *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade*. In cities full of strangers, who was to be trusted?

Although Henkin deals with the proliferation of print in the early nineteenth century, his real subject is something much more elusive. He has written a contribution to the history of authority – not an easy task. That he succeeds as well as he does is a tribute to his ingenuity as a cultural historian, but he sometimes argues at a level of abstraction not fully justified by his evidence. How do we know that what he says is so? Did the chaos of urban texts indeed help disperse a kind of empty authority among the people, thereby undermining the shared public interest necessary to a healthy democracy and helping to usher in a mass consumer culture? This is not a question an empiricist would find it easy to answer. And so although Henkin gathers his evidence from the streets of early nineteenth-century New York, it is philosophers and literary theorists who help him sort it out. Henkin is a fine reader of texts, but in the end he tells us very little about those who lived and worked in early nineteenth-century New York. How interesting it would have been to learn something of the sign painters and printers who profited as texts proliferated. Henkin has left their stories for others to tell. When they do, I hope they return to Henkin's fascinating speculations.

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Douglas Monroy, *Rebirth: Mexican Los Angeles from the Great Migration to the Great Depression*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. ix + 332pp. 24 plates. 1 map. $45.00 hbk, $17.95 pbk, and £35.00, £14.95 pbk.

Douglas Monroy's superb study is the latest in a series of books on the history of Mexicans in that city. Monroy follows in the footsteps of Albert Camarillo,

George Sanchez, Lizabeth Haas, Ricardo Romo, Antonio José Ríos-Bustemonte, and Pedro Castillo in covering the history of the city with the largest Mexican population outside of Mexico City. Monroy offers a snapshot of Mexican immigrants prior to their Americanization. He chooses to focus on '*Mexico de afuera*', which roughly translates to 'Mexico outside Mexico'. In doing so his study differs from that of George Sanchez and others who have looked at the pressures on the immigrant population undergoing the Americanization process. By contrast, Monroy shows how Mexicans maintained and re-created their cultural heritage in Los Angeles in opposition to the Anglo conquest and assimilation pressures. In his conclusion he notes that those who most successfully resisted eschewed radical politics. They embraced a conservative ethnic mindset, maintaining their deference to religious and local community leaders. He argues that those most critical of the American lifestyle following the conquest of 1848 were more likely to become involved in unions and other labour organizations. These institutions quickly moulded the activists into Americans concerned with progress, change and social equality. Monroy offers no grand conclusion about the process of Mexican history in the United States, but instead offers two trajectories. On the one hand, there was assimilation through political activism leading to social and economic progress, especially during the Second World War with the rise of the GI generation. On the other hand, the forced deportations of the 1930s suggest another trajectory: a return to Mexico, to traditions, to the past. 'We can conclude only that some things were lost when the commodification of life replaced the affective bonds of non-industrial culture, and that some things were gained when notions of individual autonomy, particularly for women and children, challenged, often in a commercialized manner, the confinements of traditional culture' (p. 268). That Monroy is able to convey the motivations behind both impulses without casting blame or criticizing either direction taken is a testament to his skills as a scholar.

Monroy covers the Anglo creation of the myth of the Mexican illegal immigrant from the early 1900s. This was intimately involved in the so-called 'Spanish' myth, the idea that Los Angeles and southern California's history and culture was connected to Spain and the Spanish explorers and settlers and not to Mexico. Monroy thus starts with a description of one of the ubiquitous 'fiestas' celebrating faux Spanish culture put on by business interests in Los Angeles, promoting the area for tourism and settlement. The presence of Mexicans as low wage labourers made the 'Fiesta Days' possible. The isolation and marginalization of the agricultural and low wage urban workers produced *barrios*, or communities that evidence more concern for Mexico than for the economic and political processes that impoverished the Mexicans. Monroy covers the cultural manifestations that made daily lives of poor people more enjoyable: the ethnic food, dance, music, celebrations and religion. His descriptions of Mexican theatre, boxing and the continuing Mexican love for baseball are especially rich. Cultural chauvinism was expressed in pride in Mexico and the rejection of things American as a sign of rebellion against mistreatment. The actress Delores del Rio was quoted as saying 'Never will I become an American citizen. Never!' (p. 39).

Monroy covers the creation of agri-business, through irrigation and railroad construction, the search for workers and the push factors of poverty, starvation and violence that forced Mexicans to take jobs in the United States. Whites ascribed racial features to Mexicans that made them 'suitable' for low wage

agriculture work. 'As workers, the Mexicans are stronger physically than the Japanese, more tractable and more easily managed', said one study of immigrant workers (p. 103). Experts and others used IQ tests to confirm the supposed inferiority of Mexicans and to confirm their station as menial workers. These prejudices led white middle-class reformers to launch Americanization campaigns and in the 1930s repatriation drives. Meanwhile, screen stars like Lupe Velez and Dolores del Rio brought images of independent women into Mexican homes and encouraged daughters to reject traditional patriarchal authority and seek independent lifestyles, creating generational frictions and confirming the desire of parents to return to Mexico. Yet, at the same time, the technological conveniences of stoves, washing machines, and electricity and plumbing encouraged them to stay.

Monroy's in-depth analysis of Mexican political activism, both influenced by the Mexican Revolution and the American labour movement, adds much needed diversity to typical treatments of such organizations as the Industrial Workers of the World and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Monroy's study is thus of value to immigration, labour and social historians.

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Marc Linder and Lawrence S. Zacharias, *Of Cabbages and Kings County: Agriculture and the Formation of Modern Brooklyn*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999. x + 478pp. 24 figures. 38 tables. Notes. Bibliography. $32.95.

Marc Linder and Lawrence S. Zacharias attempt to show that 'urban agriculture' is not oxymoronic. Using Brooklyn, New York, as a case study, they argue that American urban development took a wrong turn a century ago. Because the entrenched pattern of free-enterprise development favoured the conversion of farm land into building lots over the protection of an agricultural way of life, suburbanization destroyed a thriving vegetable-farming industry, fostering a wasteful pattern of residential spawl. This result, the authors contend, was neither inevitable nor desirable.

Correcting a misconception that pervades the urban historical literature, they demonstrate that rural Brooklyn was more than 'a city-waiting-to-happen' (p. 2). Kings County had long been a major grain and livestock producer. By the mid-nineteenth century, after the Erie Canal had opened the West for wheat cultivation and after the population growth of New York and Brooklyn had created a demand for fresh foodstuffs, its farmers shifted from extensive grain to intensive vegetable farming. Although the land continued to be owned by the original Dutch farm families, the switch to intensive agriculture resulted in the fragmentation of large holdings into small market gardens. Many owners quit farming and leased their property to Irish and German tenants. By weakening the Dutch elite's ties to the soil and making land a commodity, the rise of tenant farming hastened urban development. In a significant finding, the authors report that many of western Long Island's farm labourers were descended from its former slaves.

As late as 1880, Kings County was the nation's second largest vegetable

producer. Farmers sold their crops at public markets in New York and Brooklyn. (Before the consolidation of Greater New York in 1898, New York and Brooklyn were separate cities.) Another example of urban-rural exchange is that farmers purchased human and animal waste from the two cities for use as fertilizer. The authors note that the proximity of urban and rural land uses led to social conflict. Truck farmers complained that city markets were badly organized and inconveniently located, while urban residents objected that farm wagons woke them at night and slowed rush-hour traffic. Nevertheless, this system of close-in urban agriculture supplied urbanites with fresh, inexpensive vegetables at a time when long-distance food distribution was rudimentary.

For urban historians, *Of Cabbages and Kings County* is most significant for its critique of the standard model of American urban growth, articulated most clearly by Sam Bass Warner Jr's classic *Streetcar Suburbs* (1962). Four decades after its publication, *Streetcar Suburbs* not only remains the dominant interpretation of this process but has gone virtually unchallenged. Surely the time has come to re-examine this vital subject. Although the authors do not engage Warner's argument directly and their bibliography omits *Streetcar Suburbs*, they implicitly revise his interpretation. Linder and Zacharias de-emphasize the transport improvements that Warner saw as causal factors, and they think that urban development was less automatic and seamless than he did. Above all, they restore agency to rural decision-makers whom urban historians have ignored. Farm leaders fought urbanization by opposing the extension of city services and by undertaking political campaigns (defeating, for example, an 1873 proposal to annex rural Kings County to the City of Brooklyn). Yet the farmers operated within a political culture that revered free enterprise and that could not generate the public policies needed to protect agriculture. When land prices rose, farm sell-offs increased. Although many people wanted to continue farming, the sell-offs soon reached such a critical mass that agriculture's commercial infrastructure – seed stores, fertilizer suppliers, transport facilities – disintegrated.

The book is marred by its hostility to urbanism. The authors insist that a superior urban spatial form featuring compact cities surrounded by agricultural green belts could have emerged in the late nineteenth century. Even allowing for such counterfactual fancifulness, Linder and Zacharias do not consider the consequences of their alternative schema for poor workers who benefited from suburbanization. The authors' contention that sprawl threatens US agriculture is also far-fetched: it ignores America's plentiful supply of arable land and the remarkable productivity of its farm sector. In addition, their self-identification as scholars of agricultural history perpetuates the very split with urban history that they find so problematical. Their one-sidedness prevents a comprehensive analysis of urbanization that could have incorporated both subdisciplines' insights. The authors might have been better served by adopting the perspective of environmental history, since its emphasis on the interaction between humans and the environment goes beyond the limiting categories of 'urban' and 'rural'.

Still, *Of Cabbages and Kings County* raises important questions. It performs a valuable service by examining urbanization from a fresh perspective and encouraging us to rethink the development process.

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