



Reviews

MARTIN W. LEWIS and KAREN E. WIGEN, *The Myth of Continents: a Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1997. Pp. xv + 344. £15.95 paperback)

At a time when reductionism rules, it is hardly surprising that many historical geographers seem more at ease with highly contextualized knowledge than with broad-brush syntheses. Refreshingly, Lewis and Wigen's book reminds us of what might still be gained from the latter. It explores the "set of spatial structures through which people order their knowledge of the world" (p. ix), or what the authors provocatively describe as "metageography". The main thrust of the discussion seeks to explode four myths about how we structure the world: the myth of continents or the assumption that continents are meaningful units of world order; the myth that the world can be structured around an East–West dichotomy; the myth of nation states; and finally, the myth that the ordering of the world follows the principle of concordance, with manifold aspects of society and its environment all fitting comfortably into the same scheme.

Lewis and Wigen open their discussion with a review of how the continental structure of the world has been viewed from the Greeks onwards. They challenge core assumptions in two ways. First, they reveal the constructed nature of continents, drawing out how their definition has changed through time. Second, and more emphatically, they question the extent to which 'continents' have meaning as coherent territorial structures, preferring instead to stress their inner variety in both environmental and cultural terms and to question those who gloss over such differences. What they have to say is well-researched and insightful, offering a convincing rethink of a basic problem, one that does not mind treading on a few toes. Their reappraisal of continents prepares the ground for two chapters, one dealing with how the distinction between the Orient and Occident has been cartographically constructed and the other with their cultural construction. These are richly-worked chapters that add considerably to the debate over how the identity and location of even the largest geographical areas can shift dramatically through time, as hegemonies and their needs alter. Their suggestion that seeing the world from the European Atlantic seaboard "results in severe spatial distortion" is particularly striking, at least for this reviewer. Chapters 4 and 5 offer a more contemporary and, for that reason, an American-inspired reading of how concepts of world regions are being re-constructed. As with earlier chapters, particular themes are presented as a response to particular texts. The critique of Afrocentrism in Chapter 4, for instance, is largely prompted by what they see as the false claims of Martin Bernal, who they see as replacing an excessive Eurocentrism with an even more strident Afrocentrism. Chapter 5, on global geography, takes its opening cue from the work of a big-picture historian *par excellence*, Arnold Toynbee. Like this reviewer, Lewis and Wigen have qualified admiration for the sheer scale of Toynbee's metadiscourse. They use his ideas, especially his stress on civilizations as the defining basis of world order, as a prompt for developing their own ideas on world regions in a more direct way. Reduced to basics, they argue against any attempt to define world regions through their physical characteristics, preferring—like Toynbee—a definition based on broad

cultural groupings. However, they reject any simplistic conceptualization or mapping of culture, and any scheme that draws on environmental determinism, even mild forms as in Karl Wittfogel's work. Conscious of the cultural intermixing that has long occurred, they call for an open definition of cultures, one that acknowledges their porosity and allows for their ongoing interpenetration with its consequential formation of cultural disporas, archipelagoes, and matrices. Their own scheme of world regions links to the debate that has emerged in America since the 1950s and the role played by agencies like the Ethnographic Board in shaping the nature of area studies. Yet ultimately, the rather flat mapping of regions which they produce (for example Map 10) is only a provisional scheme. More important is the direction which they offer for future debate. At this stage, they accept that their concept of metageography is more easily captured in words rather than maps, through what they see as a "rudimentary grammar" (p. 194) or lexicon for future work on metageography.

This is undoubtedly a bold and successful book. It synthesizes a great deal of material with commendable skill and judgement. The authors are aware that in a postmodernist world in which metatheory or large-scale generalization is unfashionable, it has been written against the grain. Yet what their text demonstrates and does so emphatically is that if we wish to understand how cultures construct their world, then we must engage with so-called 'totalizing' concepts for they are of the very essence to world views.

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ROBERT A. DODGSHON

PETER BOWLER, *Life's Splendid Drama: Evolutionary Biology and the Construction of Life's Ancestry 1860–1940* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996. Pp. xiii + 525. £30.25 hardback); MIKE HAWKINS, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought 1860–1945: Nature as Model and Nature as Threat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. x + 344. £19.95 paperback)

For as long as the term Social Darwinism has been in use it has been beset by controversies. In a useful and stimulating analysis of key issues, Mike Hawkins considers problems of its definition and significance from the perspectives of a political theorist. The book is described as a configuration of interlinked propositions—and does not pretend to provide a comprehensive narrative history. Rather than marginalizing Social Darwinism as part of the rhetorical junk of racialism, Hawkins takes its intellectual constituents seriously. To this he adds an analysis of Social Darwinism as an element of a world view, and as having rhetorical functions. It therefore becomes a complex configuration, requiring both analysis and constituents and an understanding of context. This approach is to be welcomed. Whereas earlier commentators have sought to disengage Darwin from Social Darwinism, Hawkins's analysis is very much Darwin-centered. Hawkins recognizes that Darwin became increasingly open to evidence of the direct effect of the environment, and that Darwin was opposed to any idea of species essentialism. The latter point meant that an evolutionary philosophy challenged social scientists' assumptions of a universal human nature. Darwinism—it is stressed—was not a fixed but an evolving entity. Although Hawkins recognizes that Darwin did not construct a coherent world view, Darwin is still one of the authors of Social Darwinism. Moreover, there was a close connection between Darwin's ideas and the political economy and historical writing of his age. By the time Darwin wrote *The Descent of Man* several commentators had applied selection to human society.

Although Hawkins is incorrect that Lamarck coined the word "Biology" (the term derived from Roose in 1796), he did contribute to its attaining academic currency. Hawkins rightly recognizes the mistake of reducing Lamarckism to the action of

the environment, and suggests that it involved a coherent philosophical viewpoint, fundamentally different from Darwinism, especially as regards the notion of organic change and order. A review of precursors suggests that Social Darwinism did not emerge until after 1859, a point giving this set of theories substantive theoretical identity. After reviewing the responses of the 1860s (one wonders whether some like the materialist and atheist philosopher Ludwig Büchner might not predate 1859) in his biological materialism, Hawkins ventures a more general typology—that modern biological deviants had similarities to primitive prehistoric peoples. Yet at the same time ambiguities and tensions abounded, even for one of the most logical of the systematists—Herbert Spencer. Hawkins—I think rightly—argues that Spencer was indeed a Social Darwinist, and that evolutionary concepts were central to his thought. After all Spencer did coin the phrase “survival of the fittest”. Hawkins sides with readings ascribing Darwinian elements to Spencer’s social thought. In line with more recent commentators taking Spencer’s biology seriously, Hawkins sees it as consistent with, and indeed contributing to, Darwinism. Despite an unorthodox championing of the direct effects of the environment, Spencer was certainly an evolutionist. Yet he brought to his biology some distinctive elements, as with his epigenetic theory of the social organism as gradually unfolding, or his theory of organic integration—that the more an organism is differentiated, the more powerful must be its organs of integration. Spencer then typifies the problem confronted more broadly throughout the book: to what extent can Social Darwinism and social evolutionism be conflated? After all, a range of evolutionary patterns became the basis of a rich diversity of social theories. Hawkins argues that the German disciple of Darwin, Ernst Haeckel, was not proto-Nazi in his Social Darwinism: although he was racist and believed in exterminating criminals, the sick and the insane, many Anglo-American liberals shared such beliefs, for example Royer and Spencer. There is a similarly thought-provoking section on Nazism, Fascism and Social Darwinism. Hitler is seen as endorsing Social Darwinism—yet I would argue, against this view, that Hitler’s biology was crude and scientifically dated, particularly when judged against Mendelian genetics. Hawkins argues for a distinct Fascist variant. Yet not enough is known of biology and the ideological commitments of Italian biologists during the 1920s and 1930s to confirm the distinction. Overall, there is much to debate and investigate more thoroughly, but this is undeniably a thought-provoking and worthwhile study.

Peter Bowler by way of contrast stresses the need to move away from a Darwin-centered perspective in debates on evolution between 1860 and 1940. He wisely cautions about the use of the phrase “Darwinian revolution” by historians. Although the concept of natural selection has been the focus of the Darwin industry, Bowler considers that the broader picture of evolutionary biology using non-Darwinian mechanisms has been omitted. Initially curious about late nineteenth-century geologists’ Lamarckism, Bowler now suggests that historical approaches have been fixated on causal mechanisms. The book is thematic rather than chronological, as different strata of evolutionary ideas are explored. Bowler’s *Splendid Drama* has an international cast, although British and North American scientists predominate. Palaeontology and biogeography feature prominently. The chapter on geographical distribution considers the attempts of Darwin and Hooker to provide an evolutionary explanation. Bowler sees this as one of the areas of biology most influenced by Darwin, although here too the impact was somewhat delayed.

Bowler provides an important new synthesis. Its particular strength is providing a sense of how the battle for evolutionary biology advanced simultaneously on a number of fronts. It is a mixed blessing that, for example, embryology is located in the chapter on the tree of life. This has the advantage of stressing firmly the linkages of embryology to Darwin’s views—did he, for instance, accept that the development of an embryo recapitulates its evolutionary history? On the other hand, to understand post-Darwinian embryology one has also to grasp related issues like cell theory and histology—lying beyond the scope of Bowler’s study. Given that the cell provided the key building block

for the unity of life, such a synthesizing element was important in evolutionary debates. Indeed in the 1860s researchers considered an evolutionary hierarchy of different cell forms.

Bowler's impressive synthesis is a bridging work, drawing together a plethora of new work on the history of biology, and presenting the results so as to appeal to the historically interested biologist. Both books provide stimulating reading for anyone interested in the biological roots of spatial concepts. Hawkins provides a Darwinian view of Social Darwinism whereas Bowler stresses Lamarckism and the vitality of non-Darwinian patterns of evolution. Here the two books appear fundamentally at odds with one another. Yet both books suggest that the changing and complex constituents of biology are worth taking seriously by those wishing to understand crucial strands of nineteenth- and twentieth-century social thought. For too long the terms Darwinism and Social Darwinism have been refuges for those too idle or complacent to investigate their components. What is striking is that the biological is far less concerned with causal models of the physical sciences: biology is itself revealed as teeming with social and cultural concepts.

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PETER MANDLER, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997. Pp. viii + 523. £19.95 hardback)

This is the first proper history of the English country house—sometimes rated Britain's prime contribution to civilization. The dozens of other recent texts on the topic are essentially travel books, architectural guides, preservationists' laments, or polemical tracts. A social rather than an architectural study, Mandler's is a fascinating *tour de force*. Thousands of great houses, along with their arable acres, parks and gardens, and art treasures, uniquely ornament the English countryside. Mandler chronicles how these complexes have been seen and used over the past two centuries. His book traces diverse and shifting views about the appropriate functions of the stately home held by owners and heirs, governments and visitors, aesthetes and experts, and the public at large.

Mandler's central thesis is that, contrary to commonly-held stereotypes about the landed aristocracy's antiquity and continuity, the English country house tradition is of quite recent origin. Today's search for "the roots of a semi-sacred and socially deferential concept of the national past" (p. 132) in early-modern and late-Victorian times is a quest for a chimera; instead one finds "an ambivalence towards the aristocratic heritage and a reluctance to take positive steps to preserve it" (p. 415). How and why the affections of country-house owners and visitors have fluctuated is told here in engrossing detail. The Great House tours of eighteenth-century England were largely limited to a tiny elite. Things changed after Waterloo and the 1832 Reform Act: stately home visiting became populist, its numbers rising steadily through the 1870s. In contrast with eighteenth-century cosmopolite aloofness, aristocratic and popular interest in things English converged in early- and mid-Victorian decades. Broad-based public devotion to a fancifully cheery Gothicist Olden Time, awakened by the novels of Walter Scott and nourished by *Murray's Handbooks*, brought thousands of middle- and working-class day-trippers to scores of stately homes. Even if not "genuinely interested in reviving Old English Hospitality" (p. 66), aristocrat owners felt serving the masses thus, even unremunerated, was in their own best interests. And visitors remained gratefully deferential, never questioning the principle of private ownership. The agricultural depression of the late nineteenth century ended this tacit rapport. Owners strapped for cash who did not sell out moved back in year-round, increasingly unable or disinclined

to open their homes to more assertively egalitarian visitors. Moreover, interest in viewing Olden Time scenes was eroded by new fashions for the seaside, by Modernism, and by a philistine disregard of historical tradition. In this climate, the conservation aesthetics of Ruskin and Morris and of a narrowly regressive Arts and Crafts movement fell largely on deaf ears. By the 1930s three-quarters of the houses previously open were closed to visitors. The National Trust's 1936 Country-House Scheme failed because "the public was not yet ready to embrace such symbols of conspicuous 'taste' and social inequality, and . . . owners were not yet ready to embrace the public" (p. 266).

Only after 1945 did the country house again attract attention, first as an endangered species, then as a characteristic icon of English art. From the 1950s country house visiting regained popularity. More and more owners accepted open days in lieu of government benefits (relief from death duties, agricultural handouts, planning rebates), restructured estates as charitable trusts, or donated them to (while becoming tenants of) the National Trust. Growing acceptance of the landed elite as a cultural resource marked the 1970s and 1980s as stately homes became "triumphant symbols of aristocratic continuity" (p. 317). Evelyn Waugh's 1959 commentary on his 1944 *Brideshead Revisited*, that the wholly unforeseeable "cult of the English country house" had left both the aristocracy and *Brideshead* better maintained than ever, epitomizes the 'Fall' and the 'Rise' of Mandler's title.

Mandler's innovative strength comes from setting his chronicle within a broader context of private and public concern, or its absence, for what is now termed 'heritage'—those aspects of English history seen as desirable or even essential to a cohesive, self-congratulatory national identity. The country house was only one element of a larger set—arable acres and pleasure parks, paintings and sculpture, museums and galleries—of the tangible heritage. The balance among estate lands, houses, and their contents has continually shifted, one or another being sold off to shore up the rest; only lately have the great estates come to be valued by the public at large as integral wholes. As for its stewards, the "aristocracy does not need to have a tradition of preserving and cherishing the heritage; it need only adopt that position *now* to appeal to present-day concerns" (p. 416).

What distinguished nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English (or British) treatment of heritage from that in France, Germany, and Italy, in Mandler's view, was its entrenchment in private rather than public hands. Neither dispossessed by revolution nor unduly threatened by democracy, British elites warded off any public incursions on private property rights. While built and landed heritage on the Continent became self-consciously 'national' and state-controlled by the late nineteenth century, the Englishman's stately home remained unimpacted by such toothless controls as Parliament imposed in the 1882, 1913 and 1931 Ancient Monuments Acts. Even today, though Historic Houses Association members style themselves 'stewards' of the nation's heritage, they still view their estates, above all their houses, as essentially their own.

Mandler's sophisticated argument and conclusions are solidly grounded in exhaustive and impeccable research. He reviews archival and periodical materials for most of his period, and talked with many of the chief actors of recent years. His style is clear, incisive, and deft. Only on two points is Mandler less persuasive. One is the relative paucity of materials on public responses to stately home experiences and to the landed gentry. The bulk of Mandler's evidence, as he himself acknowledges, bears on the views of the owners and, for recent times, of political and institutional decision-shapers. My second doubt concerns Mandler's contrasts of England (or Britain) with European countries where he finds an earlier concern to nationalize heritage. While his English evidence is closely and critically scrutinized, he accepts without query a limited range of sources—mainly in English—on the efficacy of French, German and Italian heritage legislation and on private owners' views and behaviour. But the pieties of Continental legislators and grandees concerning *Schlösses* and *châteaux* can be taken as given no more than their English equivalents. British conservers eager to spur the State to

legislative action exaggerated the efficacy of Continental codes; save perhaps in history texts, national heritage a century ago was not more widely diffused in France or Italy than in Britain.

But in the main this is an outstanding contribution to our understanding of shifting tides in English uses of heritage, in English tastes for various aspects and epochs of the past, and above all for the trials and tribulations of the English country house, its owners and its appurtenances. Ninety-eight well-chosen photographs and tables illustrate the book's several themes. Virtually flawless proof-reading make this handsome (if heavy) book a further joy.

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DAVID LOWENTHAL

W. GEORGE LOVELL and CHRISTOPHER H. LUTZ, *Demography and Empire: a Guide to the Population History of Spanish Central America, 1500–1821* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995. Pp. xvi + 190. \$49.95 hardback)

This book is an annotated bibliography by two major authorities on the historical demography of Central America, a region which for their present purpose they equate with the colonial *Audiencia* of Guatemala. The *Audiencia* comprised present-day Belize, Guatemala and the neighbouring republics south to and including Costa Rica, as well as Chiapas which became part of Mexico in 1842. They annotate a total of 219 references and provide two brief introductory essays, a glossary and index. The book is rather more than a reference work, and should be very useful to those who want an introduction to this field of research.

The first essay is a review of the literature on the historical demography of Central America from pre-conquest times to Independence. George Lovell and Christopher Lutz engage in a numbers game: they evaluate the various estimates scholars have made of the population of the region. They start with the work of the German geographer Karl Sapper—who, in 1924, published his calculation of the region's contact population at between 5 and 6 million; a total some scholars accept today—and continue with subsequent contributions to the discussion until the early 1990s. Tables summarize the various estimates. Lovell and Lutz give particular attention to the debate on the extent of the slave trade in Nicaragua during the sixteenth century for which there are widely divergent calculations of the numbers of those enslaved and carried off to other parts of Spanish America. They also single out for special attention the record of the depopulation of Guatemala. The second essay is a statistical analysis of the 114 authors and of the topics they discussed. Not surprisingly, the tabulation of the authors by nationality and gender reveals that male Americans predominate (44.7 per cent of all authors) and that women are in a minority (26 per cent). The analysis does, however, reveal the large part played in this research by Costa Rican scholars (17.5 per cent) of whom just over half are women. The drama of the conquest with its aftermath of a steep decline in the indigenous population has over the decades attracted the most attention: there are three times as many references for the sixteenth century as for the seventeenth. Guatemala and Costa Rica have attracted more attention than the other parts of the *Audiencia*; rural areas more attention than towns. Lovell and Lutz conclude the analysis with a list of topics that need study: the seventeenth century, ethnic relations, "natality, nuptiality, mortality, and migration" (p. 26).

The bibliographical entries are arranged alphabetically by author. For each one, Lovell and Lutz provide the details of publication and a note on the contents. They try to set each entry in its historiographical context. Most of these notes are a few lines long; the briefest no more than a few words, the longest up to a couple of pages. They

are well-done, and constitute a good critical guide to the literature on this important aspect of the history and geography of Central America.

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J. H. GALLOWAY

JERRY BROTTON, *Trading Territories: Mapping the Early Modern World* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997. Pp. 208. £22.50 hardback)

In 1519, Magellan, a Portuguese pilot, set sail for the Spice Islands under the Castilian flag. This was not simply a Spanish voyage of imperialism, however. Backed by German money, using a German globe probably made by Martin Behaim, and including an Italian humanist, Pigafetta, as chronicler, Magellan's historic voyage demonstrates the complex interconnection of commercial, political, and intellectual concerns motivating early modern exploration and Geography. In this exciting and provocative book, Jerry Brotton claims that we need to explore that 'situated messiness' of early modern geography and cartography in order to understand the construction of 'east' and 'west' and the connection between geography and imperialism, objectivity, and the creation of the 'other'. Brotton argues that the development of the exotic other in the form of 'Orientalism' did not begin until the end of the sixteenth century. In the early days of European exploration, east and west represented a continuum, with the Ottoman Empire as a transitional player. It was only with the final division of the world between Portugal and Spain that the world came to be seen as composed of two opposite sectors. Brotton begins his story with the early voyages and geographical constructions of the Portuguese. Prince Henry should not be seen as a Renaissance man, searching for disinterested knowledge of the world, argues Brotton. Rather, the Portuguese were interested in voyaging for a complex mixture of reasons, including curiosity and imperial expansion, but most especially commercial concerns. Thus, they were willing to use any information they found and often expropriated the techniques, maps, and matters of fact from other travellers in the region. Their maps of the Indian Ocean, for example, made use of the knowledge of Arab traders, veterans of those waters for several hundred years. It was only with the publication of these maps that their Muslim sources were erased, leaving behind a tale of isolated European heroism.

Brotton sees the dispute over the Moluccas in the early sixteenth century as the crucial moment in the formation of a global envisaging of 'east' and 'west'. Although the Treaty of Tordesillas, with its 1494 division of the Atlantic world, is often seen as the most significant European imperial moment, Brotton argues that the consequent Treaty of Saragossa (1529) was actually more important. Once the line had been drawn in the Atlantic, the question of where it would end on the other side of the globe was bound to follow. Eventually, the issue revolved around whether the Spice Islands thrust eastward into the Spanish half of the world or whether they remained close enough to China to be considered part of the Portuguese domain. The debate lasted two decades, with both sides bringing geographers and cartographers to the table as expert witnesses. Magellan's voyage was part of this debate, since the Spanish needed to claim the territory in person, rather than simply in theory. Eventually the Portuguese won, although Brotton argues it was a pyrrhic victory, since the Portuguese paid handsomely for the privilege and the Spanish reserved the right to revisit the issue when new information became available. The basis of the treaty was a model map, about which the treaty said: "This chart shall also designate the spot in which the said vassals of the said Emperor and King of Castile shall situate and locate Molucca, *which during the time of this contract shall be regarded as situated in such a place*" (p. 137). This demonstrates the importance of the geographer's art in determining political and commercial outcomes, as well as the interested nature of such geographical information.

The result of the Treaty of Saragossa, then, was the division of the world into the Portuguese 'east' and the Spanish 'west', a division reified in the maps of Mercator and Ortelius. Brotton argues that Mercator's famous projection tells an ideological tale less about Eurocentrism and more about this east–west division. Mercator's world map of 1569 shows as its least distorted and most visible area the long east–west axis near the equator and thus privileges that region. In doing so, it shows the split between Portuguese and Spanish territory—and as the Portuguese lost power at the end of the sixteenth century, the east became increasingly 'other'. Brotton thus sees Mercator and Ortelius representing the end of early modern Geography and the beginning of sensibilities described under the rubric 'Orientalism'. *Mapping Territories* therefore also traces the changing status of both Geography and geographers in this period. In the fifteenth century, rude pilots became royal cosmographers, because of the importance and mystery of the knowledge they held. In the sixteenth century, geographers gained commercial success through political patronage. At the same time, Geography as a discipline developed from a commercial commodity to a political ideology. Maps were important commercial capital, but also contained ways of imagining the world important to early modern princes and elite. By the seventeenth century, with the development of what Brotton calls 'modern geography', with its rhetoric of objectivity and transparency of knowledge, the status of geographers was once again reduced. They no longer controlled mysterious and powerful secrets, but now were employees of joint stock companies, simply recording matters of fact. This new ideal of Geography still contained powerful political and commercial ideologies within it, but the rhetoric and status of that knowledge had now changed.

This is a very persuasive book, well-written, with lots of good maps and illustrations. Brotton has done an excellent job of showing the connection between Geography, politics, trade, and ideological conceptions of the globe. Perhaps because this is such an ambitious work, it occasionally seems episodic, lacking intermediary steps or the full fleshing out of circumstances and ideas. He could have expanded his discussion of the Moluccas dispute, for example. The chapter on Mercator and Ortelius, especially, is dealing with people and material at rather a distance from the other players in the book, and would have benefitted from more of the thick descriptions employed elsewhere. But these are minor issues. This book should be read profitably not just by historians of early modern geography and cartography, but by anyone interested in how the world became what it is, and especially by those thinking about the origins and implications of 'Orientalism'.

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LESLEY B. CORMACK

JOHN A. WOLTER and RONALD E. GRIM (Eds), *Images of the World: the Atlas Through History* (Washington DC: Library of Congress/McGraw Hill, 1997. Pp. xiv + 466. \$69.95 hardback)

This is a welcome, albeit long-delayed, volume. In 1984 the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress joined with the Center for the Book to sponsor the symposium and commission the papers published in this volume. Completed in 1990, they are by many of the leading scholars in the field, three of whom, alas, are dead: Brian Harley, Barbara Petchenik and Helen Wallis. Due to the nature of the sponsorship, the contributions were primarily concerned with the atlas as a book, and the contributors were asked to select from the geographical and topical areas of their individual expertise a subject that would fit into that theme. The resulting range ensures that it is more appropriate to review this book as a series of valuable essays, rather than as a coherent whole.

The first, by Helen Wallis on sixteenth-century maritime manuscript atlases for special presentation, reveals that the production of such works was a form of cultural celebration that focused on the achievements of overseas discovery. Pageantry, the writing of cosmographical poetry, and atlas making were all associated activities. Mei-Ling Hsu considers three Chinese atlases compiled before the seventeenth century. Of them, the *Guang Yu Tu* [Enlarged Terrestrial Atlas] is the most important. Produced in the mid-sixteenth century, this atlas, including both maps and text, was the major source of reference for a large number of the cartographic works that appeared in China. Covering China and neighbouring areas, the atlas relied on a square grid system and included much textual information. David Woodward turns to sixteenth-century Italian composite atlases, providing some useful clues to the relevant market forces. The effects included the common use of the vernacular and the choice of subject matter. The atlas trade is skilfully set in the context of the larger engraving, printing and publishing trades. Cornelis Koeman looks at the Low Countries in the early-modern period. The role of collecting is discussed and Koeman argues that there was no decline in Dutch cartography during the eighteenth century. However, there was a triumph of quantity: the Dutch school, famous for the carefully planned atlas editions published between 1570 and about 1700, ended with an uncontrolled production of an enormous mass of maps, rather haphazardly distributed over large folio volumes.

Mireille Pastoureau discusses French school atlases of the period. By 1800, France had satisfactory school atlases, which responded to the apparent requirements of teachers and students. Both the expulsion of the Jesuits and the Revolution led to a measure of standardization. Günter Schilder's study of Lucas Janszoon Waghenauer's nautical atlases and pilot books clarifies maritime mapping at the close of the sixteenth century, while Brian Harley offers an account that is characteristically both brilliant and tendentious in his "Power and Legitimation in the English Geographical Atlases of the Eighteenth Century". Although claims such as the following are no longer novel, the approach is arresting and valuable as well as contrived: "In the context of the commercial mapping of eighteenth-century England, the atlas patrons were the agents by which external social power, exchanged through the mapmaker and a standardized technology, entered the atlas to become an interiorized form of power/knowledge". Wolfgang Scharfe looks at German atlas development in the nineteenth century, providing a fruitful typology and a wealth of detailed information. Alliances between "resolute, private publishers" and highly qualified geographers are regarded as crucial. Johannes Dörflinger extends the range to Austria. A gradual improvement in the quality of school atlases is discerned. By the 1890s the standard of the best German atlases was reached, although there was the additional complication of the many languages of the Empire. In the Austrian half of the Empire about 250 atlases appeared in 1860–1914. Mostly published in Vienna, the major production was of school atlases. Vladimiro Valerio returns the reader's attention to Italy. Some 40 atlases, containing more than 1800 maps, were published in the last quarter of the eighteenth and the first decades of the nineteenth century. Production was greatest in Venice, but numerous titles were also published in Milan, Genoa, Florence, Rome and Naples, and, in total, over 70 authors and engravers were involved in atlas production.

Philadelphia is central to Walter Ristow's discussion of early American atlas publishing. During the engraving period, atlas readership was small, in part because of the high cost of publishing the volumes. However, the introduction of steel engraving and lithography played a major role in bringing down the cost and inducing greater sales. Michael Conzen looks at American county atlases, discerning different traditions and models in a skilful account of cartographic cultures. Mark Monmonier considers the rise of the national atlas, while Henry Castner offers a bleak view of the teaching role played by twentieth-century atlases published for use in North American lower-grade classrooms. He argues that there has been a failure to address the needs of young and inexperienced map users. Barbara Petchenick concludes with a provocative piece on

the impact of technology, first published in *Cartographica* (1985). In sum, a scholarly, interesting and well-produced volume.

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JEREMY BLACK

JAMES WALVIN, *Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste, 1660–1800* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997. Pp. xiii + 219. £15.99 paperback)

For those with an interest in teaching about the cultural, economic and social histories of Britain's international trading links—and their relevance to contemporary concepts of national identity in the UK—this book is an excellent resource. Walvin takes as his starting point the, by now, familiar point that many aspects of the quintessentially 'British' consumer culture can be traced, to paraphrase Stuart Hall, through numerous 'outside' histories which are 'inside' histories of the British. While Hall has talked briefly about the cup of tea, Walvin takes the reader of this book on a tour of historical literatures concerning the trade in tea, coffee, tobacco, chocolate, potatoes and sugar in the period between "the development of a powerful British imperial and global trading presence and the early days of modern industrialisation and urban growth" (p. ix). In doing so, he also summarizes more general histories within which these commodity relations have to be situated, such as Europeans' imaginative geographies of the East, the conquest of the Americas, the rise of the plantation system of production in the imperial periphery, and developments in consumer culture at the imperial centre. He argues that, as a result of these often very ugly histories, it is "impossible now to even imagine what much of the inhabited globe looked like five centuries ago" (p. x) and that, while countless people living in former European colonies now live with the legacies of this through, for instance, continuing to produce plantation crops for European consumption, "the former imperial masters (and mistresses) continue to take pleasure and comfort from the fruits of those long-lost empires" (p. 198). As a book to read for research purposes, however, both its strengths and its weaknesses stem from the fact that this is presented as a summary of secondary historical knowledges. On the plus side, talking about these different commodities and these general contexts allows connections to be seen and made between histories which are often treated separately. For example, Mintz's *Sweetness and Power* (1985), a classic study of sugar—which Walvin acknowledges as an essential precedent for this book—is a wonderfully in-depth analysis of a single commodity and the worlds connected through its trade. But where Mintz's work is deeply transatlantic Walvin's is more wide ranging. It is in a general sense—for example, he devotes one chapter to the development of the plantation system as a key means of controlling, as well as profiting from, colonized territories and their inhabitants from Ireland to Sri Lanka. It is also wide-ranging, more specifically, through discussions of relationships between the trading histories discussed—for example, of the consumption of plantation-produced tobacco by enslaved African people or the African consumption of Indian goods. So, this would be an excellent book to read in order to get ideas about where new historical geographical research could usefully be done.

On the minus side, however, there is the issue of the 'matter-of-factness' of Walvin's writing throughout this book. For me, this was a problem in three main ways. First, it means that *Fruits of Empire* comes across as a one-and-only book rather than as a distinctive contribution to a much wider literature. Key parts of this wider literature are missing from the discussion. Specific missing elements, for example, are arguments about how profits from the sugar trade, and experiments in the division of labour in plantation production, were essential inputs to Britain's industrial revolution; how transatlantic trading networks were the beginnings of contemporary globalization and

the modern world system; and how these networks were also means through which resistance was co-ordinated between working classes across the world. Mintz gets a mention, and that is all. Second, Walvin does not discuss, or even acknowledge, that there are debates between academics about the histories described in his book. For me, this was most noticeable in the discussion of how the people ‘discovered’ in the Americas by Europeans in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were wiped out. As Walvin explains it: “The most potent killers were not the arms and organisations of the white invaders—though they were potent enough—but the unknown germs which spread from Europeans (and Africans) to Indians, with an invisible and malignant power” (p. 52–3). The book makes no mention that there is any controversy or even debate over this ‘matter of fact’. But, what about the influential accounts of the devastating violence of sixteenth century Spanish ‘settlement’ by Bartolomé de las Casas? Or the more critical, nuanced violence *and* disease arguments put forward by Peter Hulme, Peter Mason, Patricia Seed or Tzvetan Todorov? Or the explosion of writing from the South which questioned what there was to ‘celebrate’ during the Columbus quincentenary? These were the most noticeable omissions for me because these are the parts of the book’s histories that I know the most about. What could be said of other parts, I could only imagine. Finally, given that Walvin places emphasis at the start and end of this book on the importance of linking these pasts and *our presents*, it is disappointing to find that he provides no discussion of why and how these links could be conceptualized, let alone made. Here, the well known work of Paul Gilroy, Catherine Hall, Vron Ware and Peter Fryer—who have thought through in some detail how and why it is necessary to construct what we could call ‘historical geographies *for* the present’—is noticeably absent from the discussion. This made me wonder whether an assumption had been made that the ‘facts’ would speak for themselves, once put together and published, or that they had been put together so that someone else could take them and think about what to do with them. But I also wondered whether this matter-of-factness might be a tactical ploy to make these painful aspects of ‘British’ histories and identities part of a ‘mainstream’ History. Given Walvin’s involvement in bringing these histories into the public arena through the Museum of Transatlantic Slavery in Liverpool and the Ignatius Sancho exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery I would like to know more about his approach to constructing these histories for the present. Black and multi-cultural ‘heritage’ is a small but growing business in the UK at the moment (the latest example being Bristol City Council’s launch of a ‘Slave Trail’ through the city on the back of a BBC TV drama set in the city’s heyday as an imperial port). But what matters is not just the fact that these histories are being constructed and are becoming more and more difficult to leave out of mainstream British History, but *how* they are constructed by their producers, how they are *understood* and *used* by their ‘consumers’, and what social *outcomes* the production and consumption of these histories should, can, and do engender. Like Peter Fryer’s *Staying Power: the History of Black People in Britain*, publications like Walvin’s *Fruits of Empire* would seem to be an essential part of this process and, for this reason, I’d recommend a reading.

University of Birmingham

IAN COOK

VIRGINIA STEELE WOOD and MARY R. BULLARD (Eds), *Journal of a Visit to the Georgia Islands* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996. Pp. xvii + 103. \$22.95 hardback)

In August 1753, Jonathan Bryan led two South Carolina planters and the cartographer William G. De Brahm on a month-long reconnaissance of the Georgia coast. Bryan himself was a wealthy South Carolina planter who had acquired land in Georgia during the mid-eighteenth century. He and his companions were part of the earliest wave of

South Carolina planters eager to expand slave-based rice production into the Georgia lowcountry during the 1750s. Earlier (1733–1750) the Georgia Trustees had hoped to create in Georgia a society of yeoman farmers by limiting land speculation and prohibiting slavery. Georgia settlers, however, looked with envy on their wealthy, slaveholding neighbours to the north. Complaining that the local climate was too hot and the work too rigorous for Euroamerican settlers to endure, they pressured the Trustees to allow slaveholding. Acquiescing in 1750, the Trustees lifted the ban on slavery and allowed fee-simple land conveyance, opening the way for the flood of South Carolina planters.

Bryan's report on the expedition is short—only ten printed pages—but Virginia Steele Wood and Mary Bullard provide both historical background and regional detail with their introduction and copious notes. The introduction provides the historical context for the journey, including a brief, but important, primer on the agricultural development of lowcountry Georgia. The body of the journal is augmented with period drawings, plans, and maps—including De Brahm's 1754 plans for improvements to Fort Frederica on St Simon's Island. The journal is painstakingly annotated; indeed the endnotes occupy three times as much space as the journal text itself. All names and places, no matter how fleetingly mentioned by Bryan, receive meticulous attention.

Together the Introduction, accompanying graphics, and endnote annotations provide details of the invasion of coastal Georgia by South Carolina planters and illuminate planter perceptions of the lowcountry environment. The importance of the latter cannot be overstated, for the planters' will, if not their labour, set in motion a dramatic restructuring of the environment of coastal Georgia, producing a landscape that in many ways endures today.

Much more than a "noteworthy addendum to [Bryan's] biography" (p. 1)—so well presented in Gallay's *The Formation of a Planter Elite* (Athens, 1989)—the *Journal* provides important insights into the planter understanding of nature. Bryan viewed the coastal environment with an eye for commodities; his vision focused through the lens of land speculation. And he found much to his liking: "fine Swamps for rice, and the High Lands very full of white oak for Staves" (p. 29) and cypress trees 6 feet in diameter "perhaps as fine for Building canoos as any in this part of the world" (p. 20). Mostly, though, he was interested in land speculation. Indeed in the decade following this trip Bryan acquired large tracts of coastal land between the Savannah and Altamaha Rivers. At the height of his plantation empire, Bryan owned more than 32 000 acres—as well as the slaves needed to work such large holdings.

Bryan's fortunes rose rapidly after the 1753 trip and he became one of the most wealthy and powerful men in colonial Georgia. So it is curious that Wood and Bullard portray the expedition party as a "brave little southward-bound contingent" (p. 68) enduring "primitive" conditions, "sweltering heat", and "swarms of noxious insects" (p. 5). Such descriptions conjure images of the Boy Scouts and hardly represent four powerful men long accustomed to life on the southern frontier. It was, after all, Bryan's fourth such trip along coastal Georgia. Furthermore, the boat's crew and the planter William Simmons' 16 slaves provided the labour needed to hunt deer, catch fish and, presumably, cook meals. The reader's sensibility alone will determine if the conditions seem primitive, or the men brave.

Somewhat more serious, however, are the oversights in the editors' interpretation of Bryan's journal. For example, Wood and Bullard pay scant attention to the role of African slaves in rice cultivation. While acknowledging that "transforming swamps into productive rice fields required a prodigious amount of labor" (p. 12), they forego an opportunity to discuss the influence of West African technology on hydraulic agriculture or slave expertise in constructing and maintaining such complex systems. Similarly, Indian land issues receive less consideration than they deserve, particularly given Bryan's father's abusive dealings with the Yemassee.

But these few shortcomings are of emphasis not substance. Although a slim volume,

Bryan's *Journal* provides an important account of a planter who scouted the southern frontier just as the slave economy was set to take off in colonial Georgia. Wood and Bullard have done us all a great service by bringing Bryan's *Journal* into wider circulation. Their effort provides an important entrée into the southern planter's geographical imagination.

Pennsylvania State University

SAMUEL F. DENNIS, JR

MATTHEW H. EDNEY, *Mapping an Empire: the Geographical Construction of British India, 1765–1843* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1977. Pp. xxi + 458 £27.95 hardback)

Mapping an Empire is a history of India in the most basic sense. It is a history of 'India' as a distinct geographical entity, stretching north to south from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, and east to west from Burma to Beluchistan. This conception of India—a product of late eighteenth-century British imperial expansion—was quite different from previous geographical representations of South Asia. These had tended either to map the domains of the Mughal emperors, or the more limited spheres of influence of the European trading companies, which had established themselves in South Asia from the early seventeenth century. The idea of an entity known as 'India', which encompassed the entire subcontinent, emerged in the 1760s and 1770s as the British East India Company began its transition from a trading company to a territorial power. The *de facto* annexation of Bengal in the 1760s left the Company in fiscal and military charge of vast territories of which it had little knowledge. The requirements of internal and external security, together with the need to gain accurate knowledge of the lands from which the Company would derive revenue, provided a spur to map-making on an unprecedented scale. These new maps represented the enlarged scope of British activity in South Asia. Although initially concerned with mapping newly-acquired territories such as Bengal, further territorial expansion led cartographers to depict the entire subcontinent as a single entity—an entity which was coextensive with British interests and ambitions.

The image of 'India' which came to dominate British imperial cartography in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries originated in the maps of the first Surveyor-General of Bengal, James Rennell. Rennell, often remembered as the "Father of Indian Geography" (pp. 22–3), produced the first map of India in 1782. It was essentially a compilation based on disparate surveys and had constantly to be updated as new information came to light (Rennell's own survey work was confined to Bengal). The most accurate of these surveys relied on methods devised during the eighteenth century of measuring longitude and latitude but, by the early nineteenth century, this method of surveying was beginning slowly to give way to that of triangulation, which was considered far more accurate. The desire to produce maps of India based on 'scientific' principles led, in 1818, to the foundation of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India, in which the principle of triangulation was enshrined. The importance of map-making in an imperial context requires little elaboration: soldiers and revenue collectors depended crucially on the information obtained by surveyors, notwithstanding the limitations and inaccuracies of early maps. However, *Mapping an Empire* also explores some of the more subtle connections between cartography and imperial power. The conviction that India could be rendered knowable, and that this information could be represented in a uniform and rational manner, was central to imperial ideology. The colonial regime was subsequently able to legitimate itself in terms of a mission to 'civilize' India and to incorporate it within the domain of science and rationality. The eternal certainties and controlled rational spaces produced by imperial cartographers

were also of comfort to soldiers and administrators who would otherwise have been faced with a landscape of bewildering complexity. The British had to believe they knew India, even if, in reality, they did not. There was, in fact, a marked disparity between the scientific rhetoric of British Indian cartographers—epitomized by the work of the Great Trigonometrical Survey—and the methods by which geographical information was actually obtained. Until well into the nineteenth century, surveys were often conducted in a haphazard manner and owed little to the method of triangulation. Many surveyors continued to rely simply on estimates of longitude and latitude, sometimes because they lacked the necessary expertise, but often because the practical difficulties and expenses were prohibitive. Nor were surveys conceived and directed in a systematic manner—most were simply *ad hoc* responses to local needs and were conducted by persons with little formal training.

While *Mapping an Empire* is concerned principally with the relationship between imperial power and cartographic knowledge, it is equally informative on other aspects of imperial geography. Cartography, we learn, provided a window of opportunity to men of ‘low birth’, whose expertise in mathematics and willingness to risk life and limb enabled them to reach positions of considerable standing within the British administration. Cartography was regarded as a science and it was thought that the genteel nature of scientific enquiry elevated its practitioners above the lower orders. But professional advancement depended as much upon patronage as technical ability, and the patronage system—unsystematic as it was—proved ultimately to be an impediment to surveying on a scientific basis. A number of interesting observations are also made on what has been termed ‘colonial science’. *Mapping an Empire* provides further evidence to support recent revisions of the idea that colonial science was derivative, utilitarian and second-rate. It is argued convincingly that cartography in British India was shaped primarily by the local needs of the East India Company and its employees, rather than by the agendas set by metropolitan scientists. Nor was imperial science strictly utilitarian: for example, the Company’s willingness to sponsor geodesy—which had little immediate practical benefit—shows that it was prepared to support scientific work that was not strictly ‘applied’. Such observations are typical of the book as a whole, which demonstrates an admirable sensitivity to the complexities of the imperial situation. While skilfully delineating the relationship between cartography and imperial power, Edney is at pains to point out the practical limitations of colonial knowledge. He is also sensitive to epistemological and ideological differences within the British administration and to the dependence of the British on ‘native informants’. The latter dimension of *Mapping an Empire* aligns it with a number of recent studies which have seen imperial knowledge less as an alien imposition and more as a ‘dialogue’—albeit an unequal one—between rulers and ruled. Edney’s ability to address these issues in an informed and sophisticated way will ensure that *Mapping an Empire* becomes required reading for anyone interested in the relationship between geography and imperialism.

Sheffield Hallam University

MARK HARRISON

KATIE TRUMPENER, *Bardic Nationalism: the Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997. Pp. xviii + 426. \$19.95 paperback)

Katie Trumpener’s study proposes an ambitious programme: “to redraw our picture of the origins of cultural nationalism, the lineages of the novel, and the early literary history of the English-speaking world” (p. xi). Writing as an American academic with long experience of Canadian culture Trumpener is acutely aware of the ways in

which imperial consciousness and the colonial situation have impacted on anglophone literature. Her analysis goes further than this, however, for she identifies a 'Bardic' element in English literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which allows the internal (Celtic periphery) and external (North America, India and Australia) colonial situations of the British empire to be brought together. By examining in some detail this rich and often relatively neglected literature Trumpener is able to demonstrate the ways in which the colonial situation impinged on the imaginations of writers as seemingly unconnected as Samuel Johnson, Jane Austen and Walter Scott.

The book uses an impressive range of varied sources, from fact-finding surveys such as Arthur Young's *Tour in Ireland* to the social observation of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, from discourses of the family in William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* to colonial harmony in Henry Savery's *Hermit of van Diemen's Land*, from analysis of sectarian brutality in William Godwin's *Mandeville* to varieties of feudal society in Ann Radcliffe's *Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*. Trumpener knits these and other texts together as nodes in a complex relay of ideas circulating around and through the British imperium, and in so doing she replaces the established picture of peripheral responses to a hegemonic centre with the more plausible model of mediated understandings of empire owned by different fractions within a diverse polity. More particularly, her account develops an analytic framework which links the rootedness of antiquarian arguments for the validity of the oral tradition with early literary experiments in producing 'national tales' and contrasts both of these in turn with the rootlessness engendered by a colonial realm which threatens alike the communities it displaces and the organic sense of belonging its own agents once enjoyed. For Trumpener the romantic novel is a place of disturbance and change; its narratives bear traces of that profound social and political disequilibrium which resulted from Britain's imperial agenda.

Given the ambition of this enterprise and the subtlety of her approach the main title of the book is, perhaps, unfortunate as it might suggest a single-minded concentration on the articulation of a cultural identity by antiquarians and others on the Celtic fringes of the United Kingdom rather than the wider project identified in the sub-title. Indeed while the first half of the book does stay close to the theme of Bardic nationalism the chapters that follow are only intermittently concerned with it as a central issue. They, instead, offer readings into the colonial situation beyond the UK as it was discussed and contested in the works Trumpener has selected. What unites the two halves of this study is, first, these works' own demonstration of the parallel topologies of internal/external colonialism and, second, Trumpener's insistence that 'Bardic nationalist' literary experimentation was exported as the vehicle for the first colonial fiction in the British empire. But to call such a topological recognition 'Bardic nationalism' is to reduce the very complexities Trumpener analyses so effectively to a more limited agenda. To claim further that colonial fictions were predicated on the strategies of 'Bardic nationalist' writings does not thereby align them absolutely with such texts. Colonial literature's interest is surely to be found in the hybridized nature of its productions, with administrators and settlers, visitors and subject peoples themselves fusing many disparate formal devices, literary traditions and ideological positions to produce a heterogeneous writing. 'Bardic nationalist' writing was one strand in a complex artistic and cultural skein and Trumpener herself analyses the colonial record free of the analytic strait-jacket the book's back cover might suggest.

In promoting a new reading of the lineage of the novel Trumpener has of course resurrected a large number of forgotten texts whose neglect has had the effect of isolating more canonical authors from the ideological texture of the debates to which they contributed. In restituting this forgotten context Trumpener is able to demonstrate how Austen, Scott and others can be positioned with reference to a literary tradition in which the imperial situation was a constant presence, a fact of social and political life. (In today's terms, Salman Rushdie, Michael Ondaatje, V.S. Naipaul and others perhaps articulate the postcolonial situation particularly clearly but its presence may

equally be detected in the aporias and incidental details of texts by Ian McEwan, Graham Swift or William Gaddis.) Some of her authors like John Galt, Charles Maturin, Maria Edgeworth and Robert Bage enjoyed literary success in their own lifetimes and have been republished in new editions in ours. This alone seems to justify the main thrust of her contextualizing approach which reunites these authors with Scott and Austen. It would have been useful, however, to have been offered contemporary commentary on how these books were received, the readerships they garnered and the extent to which the connections Trumpener postulates here were singled out at the time. This is particularly necessary for less familiar writers; for all Trumpener's diligence in recuperating the literary achievements of Mary Martha Sherwood or Christian Johnstone it is hard to estimate the impact of their work on readers and writers alike, especially when the rise in literacy and changes in the world of publishing saw a flood of new books and aspiring authors seeking to reach and/or create a new market. Given the length of the book this is perhaps asking too much but the case might have been answered has less material been included, but treated at greater length. As it is, Trumpener has produced a challenging and original synoptic survey which bids fair to stimulate further reevaluations of a rich and complex phenomenon.

University of Plymouth

SAM SMILES

MARK H. ROSE, *Cities of Light and Heat: Domesticating Gas and Electricity in Urban America* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995. Pp. xviii + 229. \$34.50 hardback)

Drawing on extensive archival records, Rose details the stories of utility promoters, producers and consumers in Kansas City and Denver from the late nineteenth century to the present. The book describes how gas and electricity promoters relied on notions of cleanliness, comfort and convenience to sell services and appliances, primarily to women as consumers and men as providers. Mindful of the gendered aspects of domestic technology, Rose explains how gas and electricity services were marketed as a man's responsibility to keep his family warm and comfortable, and a woman's means for convenience and cleanliness. The book shows convincingly that the success of utility companies in domesticating gas and electricity relied on several agents of diffusion, including highly-trained sales staff, educators, home builders and architects. Promoting the health and convenience advantages of gas and electric appliances in classrooms, women's magazines, and door-to-door agents of diffusion successfully brought utilities into the home. By the end of World War I, electricity and gas service was no longer the sole domain of the wealthy. In the following decades, Rose explains, utility services shifted from a "mysterious science" to accessible technology, promoted by the idea of comfort, cleanliness and convenience. Even after energy price increases in the 1970s, patterns established in the earlier part of the century continued, ensuring gas and electricity services in the home would remain "fixtures of American popular culture and domestic practice" (p. 188).

Rose situates his story in the context of cities, "including their dynamic politics, rapid population increases, and fast-growing suburban districts" (p. 4). Understanding the obstacles to utilities development requires knowledge of Kansas City's and Denver's urban geography. Gas and electricity services were, after all, laid out to serve customers in cities of different shapes, sizes, and patterns, governed in different ways. Urban context is important, but the book fails to develop it satisfactorily. Municipal authorities remain largely faceless, cardboard-cutout figures in the process of utility development. Rose devotes a chapter to technology and public policy, but tells much more about managers of the utility companies than personalities on the Kansas City and Denver

municipal councils. Nor do readers get any sense of the local administration's role in utility development. Technical experts in growing urban bureaucracies were active promoters and regulators of services in the increasingly networked cities of the late nineteenth century. We need to know more about the actors in city hall. Rose reiterates throughout the book the importance of understanding the "political geography" of Denver and Kansas City but he provides little sense of it. He gives only brief and passing remarks about segregation by wealth and race, though he acknowledges that utility managers had to consider social geography for infrastructure design and supply of services. Perhaps in these pages it is a tired request from geographers to historians, but a few maps, in this case of the gas and electricity networks and social and physical geography of the two cities, would help readers. The urban context Rose sets for his study is fundamental, since modern cities and utilities promote one another. But this book does not adequately integrate the particularities of place in Denver and Kansas City with the domestication of gas and electricity services.

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CHRISTOPHER G. BOONE

GRIGORY KAGANOV, *Images of Space: St Petersburg in the Visual and Verbal Arts*, translated by Sidney Monas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997. Pp. xx + 206, £30.00 hardback)

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the Russian philosopher and theologian Pavel Florenskii observed that "to understand space is to understand life". The real insight, however—and what one senses Florenskii really had in mind—may have been expressed rather more succinctly: "to understand space is to understand Russia". Over a millennium of constant movement and expansion, Russia has come to occupy the largest territorial expanse by far of any nation (its closest rival Canada is less than half the size). Their physical vastness is not merely a circumstance of which the Russians themselves are intensely aware and proud. Beyond this, it represents something of an existential and psychological condition which for over two centuries has permeated their consciousness, underpinned a distinctive sense of identity, and found multi-faceted expression in their culture. The work under review explores the latter point, through a study of what the author calls the "spatial understanding" of the city of St Petersburg, from its founding in the early eighteenth century down to our own times. For the most part, Kaganov focuses his attention on pictorial depictions of the urban landscape, and examines how they organized and signified urban space. He takes the unusual approach of viewing empty space as a material factor, effectively representing an artistic object in its own right. In the earliest engravings and prints, he demonstrates how emptiness in fact dominated the composition—not an entirely surprising state of affairs, as there still was very little built environment at the site to represent. The point, however, is a rather deeper one, namely that the "conquest" of space by culture which the presence of an urban structure *ipso facto* is supposed to herald remained distinctly incomplete and ambivalent in the case of St Petersburg. The natural elements constantly intruded and often enough appeared to dominate. The representation of space became more nuanced and manipulated in the nineteenth century. On the whole, emptiness *per se* receded, but it still could be regarded as a self-standing material element in the landscape. At this point, the author introduces material from other sources, i.e. interior design, portraiture, and even fashion in women's clothing (wide-hooped crinoline dresses), in order to illustrate his arguments about the "spatial imagination" of the period. By the end of the century, he is drawing from literature as well, and discusses Dostoevsky's evocation of the chaos and inhumanity in St Petersburg's cityscape. After a consideration of the utopian futurists of the 1920s, who with their technocentric cult of the airship

and flight in general, envisioned themselves to be detached wholesale from a terrestrial base—"suspended above the abyss"—much of the Soviet period is skipped, and the volume concludes with a series of brilliant and surreal dreamscapes by Leningrad artists in the 1980s.

In a postscript, the author emphasizes his concern to illustrate, on the one hand, the importance of images of urban space as expressions of a culture and, on the other, the profoundly variable quality of these images as they evolve and change from generation to generation. In both regards, *Images of Space* succeeds very well indeed. Kaganov has a magnificent sense of St Petersburg as a built and lived environment, and with a rich knowledge of the history of its graphic depiction he is able to bring out the psychological quality of the perceptions. At the same time, however, the book is disappointing in a number of ways. To begin with, in regard to the point made at the outset, the author never really demonstrates how the "spatial imagining" of a cityscape connects to other manifestations of the same preoccupation with space in Russian culture. To be sure, this was not the intention of the book in a strict sense, but it could have helped in explicating the very points it does want to make. The sense of helplessness in the face of overpowering urban space which comes up again and again in the depictions—the above-mentioned inability of culture to conquer it—derives from a characteristic and much broader Russian attitude toward the natural world, and significant parallels could be drawn for example with much of Russian landscape art. More disturbingly, Kaganov is not as rigorous as he might have been in delineating what exactly is exclusively Russian about the perceptions he analyses. Ostensibly, the entire book is about Russian culture, but a significant number of the pictures he examines were actually the work of foreigners in Russian service. How are we to judge these artifacts? Moreover, the fatalism of the late nineteenth century which had a very specific expression in the context of St Petersburg was part of a broader *fin-de-siècle* pessimism which covered all of Europe, as did the air-borne modernist exhilaration of a few decades later. It is really much less clear than it should be just where the line between that which is unique to Russia and that which is shared should be drawn. Despite these points, *Images of Space* is an imaginative and stimulating work. Beautifully translated and well-illustrated, it is to be highly recommended for all geographers interested in the psychology and perception of lived space.

University College London

MARK BASSIN

RICHARD and BEN CRAMPTON, *Atlas of Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1996. Pp. xv + 297. £16.99 paperback)

The publication of historical atlases of Eastern Europe seems to have become a cottage industry for Anglo-Saxon historians over the past few years. The bulk, such as the Cramptons' volume, are nothing if indecent. Geographers have been noticeably absent from this production and I think we should begin to wonder why those in other disciplines are doing what is, ostensibly, 'our' work for us (and poorly, at that). Two broad considerations should be raised here. First, the forms of cartographical representation adopted by these atlases embody a very particular vision of the world and thus of social and political relations; second, their production can tell us much about the reconstruction of the Eastern European past that has occurred post 1989; thus, the need—in the West as well as within Eastern Europe itself—to 'recuperate history' after 40 or so years of 'silence'. The question of the recreation of the Eastern European past by 'leading' Western social scientists (such as Richard Crampton, Professor of History at Oxford) is no small matter, however, for these volumes not only serve to frame the historical and geographical imaginary of the 'other Europe' in

the Anglo-Saxon world, but are scripting the Eastern European past 'at home' as well; the most popular of these works are, in fact, destined for translation into Eastern European languages. Norman Davies's history of Poland, for example, has been adopted as an official lyceum text in that country.

The Cramptons' volume is certainly an ambitious project in both its historical as well as territorial span. Beginning with a (very) broad overview of the Eastern European form (physical as well as political) prior to World War I, the text proceeds through a period-by-period consideration of the key political, economic and social events in the area as a whole as well as the particular situation in each of the constituent nation states from 1914 through to the present day. The areas considered part of 'Eastern Europe' and thus encompassed by the historical narrative vary with time; for example, the Baltic republics are included in discussions of events prior to their incorporation into the USSR in 1945, as well as in the final sections of the *Atlas* detailing the post-communist period following the break-up of the Soviet Union and thus the 'return' of these states to Europe. Deciding the boundaries of what properly constitutes 'Eastern Europe' has always been a contentious enterprise; the authors' choices of inclusion/exclusion in this territorial classification necessarily reflect a certain vision of the area, a vision which, I feel, should be made much more explicit.

The *Atlas* is written in a journalistic style—perhaps not surprisingly, as one of the authors is a professional journalist—and certainly with considerable poetic licence with more attention afforded to various colourful historical characters and events—ergo the detailed list of "Assassinations in Eastern Europe" (1903–42) (p. 43), with an accompanying map that locates the slayings—than is perhaps warranted. This, in itself, would certainly not be a fault. Yet when such lightness in style is coupled with historical inaccuracy as well as a clearly ideological (read: stridently anti-Communist) interpretation of events, I believe criticism is warranted. As an anecdotal example we can turn to the discussion of the profound reorganization of the Eastern European political map in the interwar period (to which Chapters 2 and 3, over 100 pages of the *Atlas*, are devoted). Despite the apparent breadth of coverage, the argument presented rests upon the broadest of assertions regarding such key issues as German interests in the East (these presented as but "a fanciful dream" of a "Mitteleuropa", much like "the British dream of an Africa red from the Cape to Cairo" (p. 23)), or the break-up of the multi-national empires and the subsequent efforts towards the creation of new nation-states. What is worse, perhaps, are the purportedly thorough considerations of each of the new states' interwar political, economic and "religious/ethnic" situations (in Chapter 3) consisting, overwhelmingly, of endless lists of statistical variables. The complexities of ethnic and religious interaction in the territories of the newly created (or recreated) states are thus reduced to a litany of percentages, telling the reader little if anything of the social relations of the time, while bar graphs and pie charts claim to model political behaviour. I will also note here that the final chapters detailing the Communist and post-Communist periods in each of the states are similarly limited to a cacophony of acronyms, charts and chronological lists.

Pages could be spent delineating the shoddy cartography (black and white line maps) and dubious historical claims that characterize the volume. The placement of international boundaries on the political maps seems entirely haphazard, with confines appearing to shift from one graphic to the next; not a small question considering that in several cases territories result on the 'wrong' side of the border line. The map of "Eastern Europe, Early 1994" (p. 150) is illustrative here: the Polish–German border is perilously skewed eastward of the Oder–Neisse line; Croatia lacks a significant portion of its territories (the coastal areas around Dubrovnik, which are assigned to Montenegro); the territory of Slovenia does not include its Istrian seaboard and there appears to be no confine between Croatia and Italy. This is not merely a question of crooked lines on paper: thousands of people have died to ensure the national incorporation of these parcels of land! But poor cartography and "factual" inaccuracies

are perhaps a minor point. What is perhaps most worrying is that the authors do not seem to be aware that the geographical representations of the historical past that they present in the pages of the *Atlas* embody distinct sets of meanings—and serve to legitimate distinct sets of power relations. As yet another example, we can turn to the maps detailing ethnic/national belonging in and around 1900 (p. 3, 8) which consist of variously shaded, homogenous, bounded ‘blocks’ of population. Such a mapping of identities and ethnicities in Cartesian terms is not only problematic from a methodological point of view (particularly considering the tremendously complex layering and interpenetration of these same in Eastern Europe through the ages—a factor briefly recognized in the Cramptons’ text) but it also carries very profound political implications. Similarly, when the authors inform us that “definitive and reliable ethnic statistics for interwar Albania do not exist . . . because many Albanians did not understand the modern concept of ethnicity” (p. 47) and thus, in an entirely unproblematic fashion, adopt a French military survey of the period, this is, again, hardly an innocent choice of geographical representation. Multiple other examples abound—such as the prevalent use of German place names to label historically Czech, Italian, Polish etc. localities in the narrative of the pre-World War II period, or the absence of references for the data sources of the maps/charts contained in the *Atlas* (a close look at the introduction reveals that one of the “invaluable” sources has been the *Atlas of Eastern Europe* published by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (p. xv)).

The *Atlas* is touted as “a companion for scholars, politicians, diplomats, journalists, business people, general readers and all students of the other Europe”, and this is perhaps what is most worrying. For, again, I believe it is not merely a question of shoddy cartography or insufficient depth of historical scholarship: this *Atlas* (and others like it) may prove a ‘practical’ tool for those in the non-academic community who are called upon to make strategic social and economic decisions in this part of the world. And then the question of historical—and geographical—representation becomes much more than the ‘proper’ placement of lines on paper.

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LUIZA BIALASIEWICZ

TIM JUDAH, *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (London: Yale University Press, 1997. Pp. xvii + 350. £19.95 hardback); MARCUS TANNER, *Croatia: a Nation Forged in War* (London: Yale University Press, 1997. Pp. xiii + 338. £19.95 hardback)

These books are strikingly similar. Both authors are British journalists who covered the Balkan wars of 1991–95. They acknowledge one another, draw on the same sources and, at times, recount identical stories. To take just two examples, both quote Churchill’s World War II discussions that resulted in Allied support for Tito’s Partisans, and Croatian President Tudjman’s publicly wishing Serbs leaving Knin “Bon Voyage” when the Croatian Army recaptured the Krajina in 1995. Tanner’s stated aim is to write a history of Croatia. Consequently the text is formulaic. Tanner tracks Croatia’s expansion and contraction from the Roman Empire, through the Byzantine, Ottoman and Habsburg dynasties to the ‘first’ Yugoslavia, created at Versailles in 1918, the period of Ustasha fascist rule during the 1940s, and the ‘second’ Yugoslavia, the socialist–communist state formed after World War II. The latter half of the book deals with the events that saw Yugoslavia disintegrate, ultimately into war in 1991. Tanner’s presentation raises a number of issues. Firstly, he concentrates on ‘Croatia’ rather than on ‘Croats’. When this is coupled with the chronological sweep of the study it implies that there has ‘always’ been a Croatian ‘nation’ and that periods of unification with other states and peoples, whether under Empire or ‘Yugoslavia’, were historical

aberrations. Tanner's teleology renders an independent Croatian nation-state, forged in bloody conflict with Serbia, historically unavoidable. Another weakness inherent in this traditional approach is that the History is one of princes and kings, emperors and priests, generals and peasant heroes. Tanner recalls one important Croat man after another, describing their exploits, military prowess and legendary courage in the face of adversity. The result is a woman-less Croatia (give or take the occasional empress or communist official). Tanner's Croatia is an ancient nation, fought for by the strong and manly men of whom Tadjman and the current military are the latest in a long tradition. Like Tanner, Judah also generates an air of teleological inevitability about the Serbs and war in the Balkans from pre-medieval to postcommunist times. Again, Judah's actors are nearly all men—politicians, soldiers, patriarchs, gangsters. However, interspersed with this History of the (male) Serbs are brief anecdotes from men and women who lived through the 1991–95 war. Judah's focus on 'The Serbs' and not 'Serbia', leads him to build into his text, more than Tanner, testimonies from the front lines. Judah is also more explicit than Tanner in showing how past events remained influential in the 1991–95 conflict. For example, Judah reproduces some of the nationalistic and vengefully anti-Islamic ballads and poetry that Serbs have produced since medieval times and shows how songs sung by Serb troops besieging Sarajevo in 1993 continue in this tradition. Judah also differs from Tanner in that he raises, albeit briefly, the prospect of critical analysis, introducing theorists like Fromm and Arendt into his assessment of the Serb leadership and nationalist propaganda.

Both books show the incredible power of national symbols, flags, anthems and history. Tanner discusses Tadjman's flirtation with Ustasha imagery and the revival of Croatia's red and white checkered coat of arms, while Judah, providing accompanying photographs, discusses the historical continuation of clothing styles worn by Serb militias rebelling against the Ottomans with those worn by paramilitaries carrying out 'ethnic cleansing'. In reading these books, a number of potential topics for geographical research emerge. For example, the role of national, collective and social memories is continuously referred to but left unresearched. Similarly, the continued attraction of national symbols is described but not fully investigated. There is much room for a feminist interpretation and of particular interest to geographers must be the topic of rewriting of the landscape and the wholesale movement of peoples that occurred during the war. Judah describes Serbs fleeing as Bosnian forces approached Kalesija in 1992: "They left in a convoy during the night . . . Twenty miles later they came to the majority Serbian village of Omasci, from where, within weeks, the local Muslims were expelled. The refugees then began to paint the name of their old village on the walls of their new, formerly Muslim-owned houses" (p. 293–294); the result being that this village moved 20 miles with its villagers. During the fighting, many settlements were razed to the ground, thus removing any possibility of refugees returning 'home', despite this being an explicit clause of the Dayton peace agreements. Judah remarks, "towns such as Kozarac or little Pudina Han were simply wiped from the map" (p. 234–235). The shelling of houses, cemeteries, churches and mosques erased the physical signs of ancestry and history. The destruction of settlements is highly symbolic in that by changing the built landscape, the past is eradicated. As there is no trace of inhabitation by one nationality, settlement by another can begin in an 'empty space'. How can one prove that one's family had occupied a place for centuries when there is no physical trace of this habitation, such as a house or gravestone? In one passage, Judah describes family photographs blowing around a 'village' that no longer exists. The redistribution of population and ethnic groups was the intention of ethnic cleansing and, ultimately, the outcome of the war. Judah suggests that the UN tacitly allowed the Bosnian Serbs to overrun Srebrenica and the Croats to re-conquer the Krajina in 1995, although not expecting the massacres that resulted in the former. However, the results were the same in both cases—thousands of people of the 'opposite' nationality leaving the area and thus 'simplifying' the peace process by creating ethnically homogenous territories that

all parties could agree to dividing up between themselves. The cynical opportunism of politicians, particularly Slobodan Milosevic, is remarked upon by both Tanner and Judah. Their accounts also give a sense of the chaos of this conflict, with troops repeatedly changing sides, enemies buying weapons from each other and people looting what they could from wherever they could. Both journalists comment upon the inability of the West to act decisively due to divisions within and between the United Nations, European Union and USA. These books overlap considerably. Neither is particularly analytical, but as informative introductions to the 1991–95 wars either is adequate; Judah's *The Serbs* being marginally preferable.

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EUAN HAGUE

SEAMUS DEANE, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing Since 1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. Pp. 269. £25.00 hardback); TERRY EAGLETON, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London: Verso, 1996. Pp. xii+355. £14.00 paperback)

In their readings of a selection of Irish writings since the eighteenth century, these two books share a concern—and perspective—on the apparently endless and ever vitriolic discussion of the renegotiation of the relationship between Ireland and Britain. Both are much exercised by the nature of the past in that relationship and specifically with the centrality allocated to the role of oppression as its defining principle. One of the most significant dimensions to this debate lies, of course, in the roles which those contested pasts play, both in the unresolved internal dilemmas of Northern Ireland and also in constructing the attitudes of the outside world to that conflict. The contestation of the past has something to say also about the inequalities and social disparities that lurk behind the contemporary mythology of the 'Celtic Tiger' and the astoundingly uncritical attitudes to all things Irish, which leads liberal thinkers elsewhere to ally themselves with a republicanism that is often overtly right-wing, nationalist and indiscriminately violent. As both these books are guilty of doing, it is all too easy to portray this debate as one of two sides. Revisionists, who seek to render narratives that depict a more pluralist Ireland comprised of diverse pasts and heterogeneous geographies, stand loudly accused of being no more than apologists for past—and present—British iniquities. On the other hand, we have those who insist on the centrality of the 'beneficent' legacy of oppression to the Irish experience, their arguments couched in a language heavily infused with the rhetoric of colonialism and postcolonialism, but also informed by deeply conservative constructs of nationalism. Such a binary distinction, however, grossly over-simplifies a very much more complex debate on the nature of contemporary Irish society.

In *Strange Country*, Seamus Deane, prize-winning author of *Reading in the Dark* (1996) (which can be credited with beginning the current rash of Irish memoirs populating the best-sellers' list), traces the emergence of a self-consciously national tradition in Irish writing from the French Revolution to Joyce and Yeats. He stops well short of the present day, however, when that tradition is viewed with less than enthusiasm in much contemporary Irish writing, particularly that with a northern or urban ethos. In an interesting if conceptually ill-founded discussion, Deane depicts the complex inheritance of Irish writing. Central to it is the contested nature of the national character—Protestant, British, Enlightenment civility and discipline versus Catholic, Irish, romantic barbarism and excess—and the question as to whether that character was degraded or deformed by the long history of oppression; was Ireland's underdevelopment a condition of the country or a consequence of colonialism? In exploring the evolution of the national tradition in Irish writing during the nineteenth century,

the function of which was “to provide a narrative predicated on the notion of recovery and redemption from ruin and oppression” (p. 146), Deane isolates the central tension that runs through much Irish literature, namely that “the modernization of Irish society after the Famine was . . . accompanied by the archaicizing of Irish society” (p. 51). Modern Ireland suffers significantly from this dilemma, that archaicizing of society being central to the vision of Ireland widely held by the external world and particularly by the descendants of the diaspora in the United States. His antipathy to revisionism apart, Deane shirks the meaning of all this to the present day contestation of Irish society (and the writers who explore it). Exceptionally well written and stimulating though it is, his argument rests in a conceptual vacuum. It employs the rhetoric of postcolonialism—the new nationalist position—oppression, brutality and Ascendancy but, ultimately, Deane never passes beyond that rhetoric—elegantly phrased common-sense—into a formal conceptualization of what is meant precisely by postcolonialism. Nor does the book culminate in any effective critique of contemporary Irish society or its relationships with Britain, but in Deane’s frankly nonsensical argument that all revisionist historians are simultaneously apologists for British misrule and oppression and fellow-travellers of T. W. Moody’s equally misguided belief in value-free history. Deane has published this attack several times before and it gains nothing in the retelling. What comes across is a figure unable to break thorough the conditioning of traditional Catholic nationalism, no matter how elegantly he expresses his arguments. Further, one is left wondering precisely how much revisionist history he has actually read.

Like Deane, Eagleton has little to say about contemporary Irish writing, he too covering the period from Swift to Joyce (who famously left). He is much exercised in denying a wonderfully egotistical imagery of himself as an Irish Catholic radical writer who will fanaticize about Ireland, romanticize its conflicts and take an equally affirmative line on nationalism. While this is precisely what he seems intent on doing, Eagleton at least erects a much more convincing intellectual argument than does Deane, albeit one that shares in the importance allocated to the centrality of oppression. That too is depicted in terms of English brutality alone, the ethnic stereotyping sounding odd in the work a writer of the Left who should be able, presumably, to visualize such relationships in the context of the wider political economy. Eagleton, too, shares in Deane’s deliberate—indeed wilful—misrepresentation of revisionism. He depicts historians as unwitting positivists, wary of the power of the negative. So too are they ethical relativists, excusing some piece of inhumanity on the grounds that one could expect nothing more of the age in which it occurred. What separates the two, however, is that Eagleton sets out a conceptual basis for his argument and tackles, far more convincingly than does Deane, the central issue that cannot be finessed, no matter how apologetic the historian. Why did Ireland starve in the mid-nineteenth century? Eagleton produces a simple answer to a very complex question, arguing that it starved because it was poor, not least because of the hegemonic powers of a social ‘block’ of nobility, gentry and bourgeoisie, unfortunately described as the “Ascendancy”. It is long since time that this well-worn phrase—with its quintessential connotations of Englishness—was consigned to oblivion. By the nineteenth century, that hegemonic class was very much more complex in its social and ethnic composition than Eagleton is prepared to admit. Again one is left with the impression of an author not fully cognisant of the more recent developments in the historical debate.

In addressing the dilemmas of modern Ireland, neither book has much to offer. Both fail to engage with revisionism, being content to depict that through stereotypical imagery and—particularly in Deane’s case—frankly misleading accusations of value-freedom. Neither writer is prepared to admit that revisionism itself is the most contested of enterprises, concerned ultimately with an attempt to produce multicultural readings of the Irish past and present that might help undermine the sectarian certainties of nationalism and unionism. Again, neither writer is prepared to interpret Ireland as but one dimension of an essentially European problem (how to cope with the unspeakable

pasts visited by Europeans upon each other—and much of the rest of the world) in the name of European ideologies. Oppression cannot be denied—indeed it is central to Ireland's history and that of many other societies. But we have to choose how to deal with it. In Ireland's case, it can be used to prolong Sinn Féin's sectarian republican nationalism, heir to an intensely conservative ideology that effectively defined Irishness as being synonymous with Catholicism. On the other hand, and this is far more difficult, past oppression—a shared tragic history—can be the cornerstone of present reconciliation, a position that demands the acknowledgement of past wrongs but sees the acceptance of that responsibility as being essential to the negotiation of a feasible future. Ultimately, Deane and Eagleton offer no more than traditional sectarianism, however fashionably expressed. In so doing, they demean past suffering and oppression by attacking those attempting (however implausibly in some cases) to create a variety of histories of a variety of Irelands so that Ireland might stop suffering—at least along that particular dimension of the relationship with Britain, one which subsumes the numerous other iniquities and inequalities that define modern Ireland.

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BRIAN GRAHAM

ALBERT SCHRAM, *Railways and the Formation of the Italian State in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. xvi + 180. £35.00 hardback)

In this work the theme of rail transport is connected specifically with the Italian state and the record is traced from the construction of the first railways in the 1840s until nationalization in 1905. The book aims at a middle course between the 'traditional' school of railway history, exploring great national achievements, and the 'econometric' school which developed out of Robert Fogel's book of 1964 on *Railroads and American Economic Growth: Essays in Econometric History* when a serious attempt was made for the first time to measure the influence of railways on economic growth. The massive benefits claimed by earlier writers were dramatically scaled down to the more modest level of four per cent of national income per year at the end of the nineteenth century. The book is well-produced and contains a wealth of illustration in the form of tables and figures. But maps are very sparse and while the jacket exhibits a network diagram for part of northern Italy, a map of the national network and its development phases is conspicuously absent.

The role of railways in the formation of the Italian state has always been considered very important. After all, railways absorbed 13 per cent of the total budget between 1861 and 1913 (three-quarters of the total amount spent on public works). Yet "around this false belief in the great importance of railways for the Italian state, a whole imagery and architecture was created, stressing elements like the speed, progress and 'Italianness' of the new transport system" (p. 3). Risorgimento historians saw railway building as an essential component of the wider heroic struggle to achieve national unity and economic growth. Yet there was no coherent railway policy. The state interfered continuously in railway development but without making clear the respective responsibilities of the state and the companies who faced uncertainty as a consequence. The railway question had a "pernicious and divisive influence" (p. i) on Italian political life which limited its influence on economic unification and the creation of a national market. Clumsy regulation impeded the development of traffic and, given the tradition of coastal shipping, it was only after unification that significant economic benefits accrued. Even so, a database covering the years before and after 1860 shows that regional differences were not overcome and backwardness of some parts of the country reduced the demand for railway services. The position of Alexander Gerschenkron (1966) on the lateness of Italian industrialization is certainly vindicated by the limited

domestic involvement in supplying materials for railway construction during the waves of construction that took place in the early 1860s and late 1880s (though growth rates after unification have been generally underestimated). It was only slowly that the military significance of railways was appreciated, although the humanitarian role in carrying the wounded to hospital was more immediately recognized. Yet the fact that the railways did not trigger an immediate industrial revolution does not deny the possibility that rail transport was a factor in national unification, worthy of some recognition, and also a precondition for the stimulation of agricultural and industrial production over the longer term. Thus in 1861 it was believed that “a sustained rhythm of railway construction was a necessary condition for the railways to act as agents of Italy’s economic unification” (p. 67). However, ‘necessary’ is not ‘sufficient’ and while railways may intensify competition between regions and the growth of specialization they cannot resolve local problems of adjustment to free trade in the south and instability expressed through the *brigantaggio* uprisings. And the author concedes that railways alone could not realize “the double integrating task” (p. 68).

Thus the book reveals the difficulty of making clear assessments about railways. Like any infrastructure, they merely satisfy preconditions for progress and so may be judged as both successes or failures in the same breath. Schram’s book shows that the potential of the railways was not immediately exploited and the author is justifiably critical of some aspects of planning and management. Yet there is danger of trying to have it both ways and the criticism based on high opportunity costs (assuming a conscious choice between investment in transport and improvements in welfare in the south) sits uneasily with the revelations about the slow development of the system, with fewer railways per thousand inhabitants than in all five other countries with which Italy is compared, while traffic levels were also below the average for the continent. Construction policies in the south after unification were a success, yet the implication that even more railways should have been built is plainly in conflict with the impression that more resources should have been diverted into social services and investment in job creation. After all, the problems of the Italian south were repeated in the British Isles where the late nineteenth century saw a massive demographic redistribution at the expense of Ireland and northern Scotland. Yet programmes of local development in these areas hinged in no small degree on the extension of rail networks to improve access to markets. So while it is certainly necessary to appreciate that the immediate benefits of railways were constrained in several ways, including the persistence of regional problems, it can hardly follow that long-term investment was misguided. It would therefore be unfortunate if the re-examination of the railway’s role should lead opinion away from the Risorgimento historians to the opposite extreme.

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DAVID TURNOCK

RICHARD WHITE, *The Organic Machine: the Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995. Pp. xi + 130. \$7.95 paperback)

Richard White argues that humans have mistreated the Columbia River by regarding it almost as a human-made machine. The river has been disassembled, and each part assigned to different groups with different purposes. Fishermen, irrigators, power plant managers, government organizations, and others sought to control their parts of the river, to reapportion the river’s space, to regulate its flow, and to increase its bounty. They found, instead, that they could not control the river because it is an *organic* machine; It belongs to larger cycles of nature beyond human control. Failure to grasp this has had ecological and cultural consequences. Wild salmon are near extinction

along the river, for example. So too are the ways of life and identity for the fishermen and residents who have long depended on fish.

According to White, earlier humans knew the Columbia River and its rhythms more intimately through their labour. The Indians, early Euro-American explorers and colonists, and later gillnetters who fished the river, and even the people who built the dams on the Columbia, understood its organic nature. They knew that the river was subject to occasional droughts, floods, and rock slides beyond their control. With technological advances, steamboats, fish wheels and canneries were heralded as a way to liberate human labour and put Nature to work. White draws on Ralph Waldo Emerson's writings to reflect regional feelings of romanticism and acceptance of this technology. Emerson advocated machinery as a positive force that evoked "the sleeping energies of land and water" (p. 35). This thinking continued into the twentieth century when hydroelectric dams built in the 1920s and 1930s were seen as a betterment to the region. They provided power without polluting the air and water. Machinery, however, enabled humans to lose intimacy with the river. People fought over dam power, and newcomers to the region saw the Columbia only in terms of regular kilowatt output. The new residents of Vanport, Oregon, for example, moved into hydroelectric homes on a floodplain kept dry by the dams. They lost everything in a 1948 flood. Earlier Indians were not so ignorant of the river's nature. They never waited "for salmon in faith" (p. 18) because they understood the Columbia through their work. But humans have continued to rely on the dams, White explains. The Columbia Basin project demanded regular irrigation to improve farming in the region. Aluminum plants demanded constant power, as did the people who came to work for these plants. When more power was needed, capital flowed to Canada to build more dams on tributaries to regulate flow. Later, nuclear plants were built. These developments wasted money, killed off salmon, and even threatened human lives. White despairs that even today humans have not learned to pay attention to the river itself. Computers simulate the river and its actions; thus decisions about the river's future are based on virtual reality. White's closing message is that we can build machinery to harvest nature's energy as long as we operate it according to nature's rhythms. That requires a deep understanding and relationship with nature—a relationship that we have not had with the Columbia for a long time.

I find White's argument sound and compelling, but his writing is a major shortcoming. Early on I tried to pinpoint his thesis, but found it mired in rhetoric. White writes of "energy" and of "relationships" in the first and second chapters. These concepts fail to provide new insight and they cloud his points. "Salmon harvest the far greater solar energy available in the Pacific's food chain, and, on their return trip, make part of the energy available in the [Columbia] river", writes White, for example (p. 15). He might have said that salmon mature in the Pacific and return to the Columbia meatier than before. Still, the concept of "energy" does not obscure the thesis as much as White's discussion of "relationships". The introduction explains that this book is "about the Columbia [River] . . . and its relation to human beings" (p. ix). The book, however, is about the ways in which humans have *used* the Columbia. As a consequence, land use is stressed. An analysis of relationships between humans and the Columbia should include much more than land use, such as people's emotional attachments to the river. In summation, "energy" and "relationships" are vague and imprecise terms that are not crucial to the thesis, which becomes clear only in the latter half of the book. It would have been better for White to state his points at the outset and then devote the rest of the book to explaining them. Perhaps White was purposely vague, trying to lead the reader to inquire further. Unfortunately, the technique proves more frustrating than enticing.

The book has other problems. Again, his argument is sound, but I don't think it is a surprising one; he fails to "force me to think in new ways" (p. 1). Nevertheless, his

discussion of Indian hunting, use, and beliefs regarding salmon is insightful. In addition, the 'human use of the environment' theme dominates throughout, a theme explored by increasing numbers of historical geographers today. How different peoples use a river, how their use has changed, and what effects that has had, are worthy concerns. Geographers should be pleased. But here again there is a flaw. The map at the beginning is too small a scale to show many of the places White mentions. Where is Kettle Falls (p. 16), for instance? And those places that are shown could certainly be enlarged and put onto subsequent maps that could then be integrated throughout the text.

The Organic Machine is only a hundred pages. It need not be longer, just better edited, better organized, and better illustrated. In spite of these problems, the story White tells is engaging, and it is read-worthy considering the scarcity of existing literature on this topic.

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BENJAMIN Y. DIXON

ANDREJ OLECHNOWICZ, *Working-Class Housing in England Between the Wars: the Becontree Estate* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1997. Pp. xi + 273. £45.00 hardback)

Travelling East on the District Line of the Underground is a bit like travelling through a history of working-class London. After leaving the City at Aldgate the line passes under the historic East End districts of Whitechapel, Stepney and Bow, before emerging above ground to cross the River Lea. It then passes through West Ham, East Ham and Barking, all areas of massive expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century. After Barking the landscape changes dramatically. Here the train crosses the southern part of the Becontree Estate, built for the London County Council between 1921 and 1934. By the time of its completion Becontree was the largest public housing development in the world, with a population of over 110 000 people. It was both an important element in the changing social geography of London, as people moved from the old inner city areas into the new suburban estate, and the most visible marker of the scale of state intervention in housing in mid twentieth-century Britain. One in ten of all the council homes built in Britain between the wars was on this one estate. As Andrej Olechnowicz's detailed study makes clear, from the start of its history Becontree became a symbolic landscape in political debates over the role of public estates in the housing of the working classes. The scale and homogeneity of the estate made Becontree a symbol for both Left and Right of the potential dangers of mass society. Although a few contemporary commentators praised the estate, for most it was dreary, forlorn and monotonous, a social desert marked by the absence of proper community life. Olechnowicz argues that Becontree was doomed to be seen as a failure, not because of its architecture or its environment, but through a mixture of poor funding, incoherent public policy, intense middle-class hostility, and a voluntary sector which tried to impose an inappropriate notion of community life on the working-class residents of the estate. Becontree's experience of financial stringency and endemic conflict between different scales of government was typical of most British public housing initiatives in the twentieth century. After World War II the New Towns were to suffer a similar fate. Olechnowicz's account of organized middle-class hostility to Becontree is another familiar feature of the history of interwar council housing. While Becontree never reached the fame or notoriety of the 'Little Moscow' estate at Watling in North London, local politics were marked by extreme antagonism on the part of surrounding owner occupiers and a kind of defensive radicalism in some of the tenants' associations. Olechnowicz spends a good deal of the book examining the motivations and ideology of the New Estates Community Committee (NECC), set up in 1928 by the National

Council of Social Service under the chairmanship of Ernest Barker. The NECC sought to create new communities on the new estates based around community centres and strong associational culture. Olechnowicz argues that while many on the NECC were well-meaning, their vision of the future of the new estates as urban equivalents of the imagined community of the traditional English village was flawed and dangerous. A combination of long-distance commuting and the rise of the home-centred nuclear families on the estates meant that there was little time or demand for the kind of active community life promoted by the NECC. When community centres failed on new estates like Becontree, the NECC read this as symptomatic of social failure, and in so doing played into the hands of those whose views of the working class were unequivocally hostile.

Olechnowicz's account is a highly detailed study of the politics of the planning and development of Becontree, and an impressive survey of the intellectual and cultural context of the first great wave of council house building in Britain. It is at the same time somewhat frustrating. Almost all of the secondary literature referred to dates from the mid-1980s or earlier, and there are no references at all from after 1992. This means that the book makes no consideration of important recent debates over the nature of community, or revisionist accounts of suburban history. Women's history has been particularly influential in both these developments, and it is striking that much of Olechnowicz's account of working-class life on Becontree centres on the experiences of men. The introduction links the difficulties of Becontree in the interwar period to the state of many public estates today, and the reader is led to expect a more general discussion of the 'failure' of public housing. Instead the conclusion remains resolutely restricted to the estate and to the interwar period. There is a tantalizing aside criticizing the rediscovery of communitarianism in the 1990s, but for the most part the book fails to do more than hint at the wider relevance of the story of Becontree.

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DAVID GILBERT

NEIL MACMASTER, *Colonial Migrants and Racism: Algerians in France, 1900–62* (London: Macmillan, 1997. Pp. vii + 307. £17.50 paperback)

Neil MacMaster has written a first-rate social history of Algerian migration in France. His study is excellently documented, thoughtfully structured and consistently well written, offering a lucid and accessible account of a century-old migratory space which has come to occupy a key position in contemporary French politics. Too often, immigration—particularly that originating in the Maghreb—is viewed as an essentially postwar phenomenon, injected into French society out of a clear blue sky. In reality, France has a longer history of mass inward migration than any other west European state. Although European migrants dominated these flows until the postwar period, there have been significant numbers of Algerians in France since the beginning of the century. In the first English-language study devoted to this earlier period, MacMaster convincingly argues that attitudes, memories and behavioural patterns inherited from the colonial period are of fundamental importance in understanding the problematic status of the Algerian minority in contemporary France.

Unlike European migrants, who generally moved rapidly into family settlement, for more than half a century Algerians remained locked within a 'rotation' system of migration, generally spending only a few years in France before returning to their country of origin, where their families remained. MacMaster shows that this sustained condition of transitoriness was rooted in the colonial system, which for diverse and sometimes contradictory reasons led colonial settlers, the majority ethnic population in France, and Algerian migrants themselves to collude in the marginalization of the

migrant population. Settlers wanted to retain control of the 'native' labour force, steering it away from permanent emigration. The authorities in France wanted to keep Algerian migrants away from the 'corrupting' influences of the French labour movement, whose egalitarian principles were incompatible with the dictates of the colonial regime. Deeply distrustful of a state which was systematically suppressing their right to self-determination, Algerians themselves sought refuge in the values of Islam, which served as a shield against their absorption into the dominant cultural system.

The book strikes a most informative balance between chapters focusing on the migrant experience itself and others dealing with the colonial origins of Algerian migration and anti-Arab racism within metropolitan France. On each of these strands, MacMaster offers valuable new insights informed by a keen awareness of theoretical debates and a sure-footed grasp of empirical data. In exploring the causes of migration, he brings a sophisticated explanatory framework to bear on the prominence of Kabyles among outflows of Algerian migrants. Describing their experiences in France, the book adopts a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach, concentrating on 'ordinary' economic migrants rather than on the small but well-documented elite among them who spearheaded the early stages of the nationalist struggle that was to culminate in independence in 1962. In his analysis of the racism encountered by migrants, the author forcefully argues that this was largely manufactured by French elites as part of their segregationist agenda. Although the book amply demonstrates that racist stereotyping was aggressively propagated by political, business and media elites, it is less certain that working-class racism can be wholly blamed on such forces. MacMaster concedes that there was "latent racism" (p. 125) among the French working class and notes that the archives of the French Communist Party "are a testimony to widespread racism within the ranks of the party and to the general failure to counter these influences among the rank and file" (p. 126). So although it may well be true that French elites carry responsibility for channelling grass-roots racism into specifically anti-Arab forms, an important gap still remains in the argument advanced by MacMaster, who acknowledges that "the origins of such working-class racism cannot be identified with any degree of certainty" (p. 127).

At the risk of appearing pedantic, a few small presentational blemishes should also be mentioned. When using French expressions, MacMaster tends to mix masculine and feminine and/or singular and plural forms in grammatically incorrect ways. For example, colonial Algeria was administered not by the *Gouvernement Générale* (passim), but by the *Gouvernement Général*. It ruled over *sujets français*, not *sujets françaises* (p. 14), using the *indigénat*, not *indigénate* (p. 154). Similarly, in France the *Hôpital Franco-Musulman* (not *Franco-Musulmans* [p. 131]) treated *Musulmans français* (not *Musulmanes française* [p. 150]). These and other trivial slips do not detract in any substantive way from the many strengths of MacMaster's book. It offers an illuminating guide to the Algerian migratory experience during the colonial period and deserves to find a wide and appreciative readership.

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ALEC HARGREAVES

JOHN WESTERN, *Outcast Cape Town* (London and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. Second Edition. Pp. xxxiv + 396. £13.95 Paperback)

In 1981 *Outcast Cape Town* was the only book length monograph analysing the impact of the Group Areas Act (GAA) in South Africa. This second edition remains the only monograph on the GAA. The GAA is the most glaring example of the role of the state in the social engineering of space in order to realize ideological and political ends. *Outcast Cape Town* is a classic example of the application of a humanistic geographical

analysis of the impact of the GAA. The second edition has a foreword by Robert Coles of Harvard, and a prologue and an epilogue. The book is divided into 11 chapters. In Chapter 1 the social/humanistic context for the book is presented. Western introduces the debate about whether space is shaped by social structures or vice-versa, a major theme in geographical debates in the 1980s. This is followed by a brief history of the Coloured people in Cape Town. Cape Town's urban ecology before the apartheid era is the theme of Chapter 2. Prior to 1948 Cape Town was one of South Africa's most integrated cities—"37 percent of the residential area of the city in 1936 was mixed" (p. 36). Since then various strategies had been used to promote residential segregation, the most well known being the classic sanitation syndrome (p. 45). However, Western points out that segregation measures in Cape Town were not enforced as rigidly as that introduced against Indians by the Durban City Council. The grand apartheid plan—micro, meso and macro segregation—is discussed in Chapter 3. The GAA served a strategic purpose: to regulate and control, by force if necessary, the lives of blacks in sterile townships on the periphery of white cities. It also had an economic motive: to curb the business and trading interests of Indians in Natal and the Transvaal. The application of the GAA in theory and practice is the theme of Chapter 4, and the implementation of the Act in Cape Town is discussed in Chapter 5. The Cape Town City Council did not co-operate with the Group Areas Board and the Government imposed its version of race-space zoning on the city which basically entrenched the interests of whites. Chapter 6, perhaps the most important in the book, focuses on the destruction of District Six, which had a "pervasive spatial meaning for the Coloured people of the Cape" (p. 149), and the relocation of Coloureds from Mowbray.

The sense of community and attachment to place in District Six and Mowbray is emphasized as well as the social dysfunctions that resulted from the forced removals. In Chapters 8 and 9 the social and economic consequences of uprooting and relocation are analysed, respectively. In addition to increased journey to work costs and distances, there was also concern about "increased fear for physical safety" (p. 235). Chapter 10 focuses on the development of informal settlements in Cape Town and demonstrates how the state differentiated between Coloured and African shantytowns: containment in the case of the former, and expunction in the case of the latter. The book concludes with some speculation about the future of the GAA and South African cities; the potential for evolutionary and revolutionary political change in the country; and the political prospects of the Coloured community.

Throughout the book Western refers to the issue of Coloured identity. In the epilogue he raises the issue of ethnicity and identity in the new South Africa. Western reflects on the impact of the democratic transition in South Africa, which culminated in the April 1994 elections, on the Coloured community. The election results emphasized the specificity of place for Coloureds in the Western Cape. As a minority group, some Coloureds felt marginalized in the new South Africa. Hence, they were keen to maintain their majority status in the Western Cape. Coloureds felt that affirmative action policies discriminated against them. Africans were suspicious of Coloureds as they supported the National Party in the Western Cape. These perceptions and events highlight the resurgence of ethnicity and race-class conflicts. There have been charges of Coloured racism which has a 'material basis': "in metropolitan Cape Town there is or soon will be competition over jobs, living space, housing, urban facilities, education, and more, between Coloureds long settled in the Western Cape and Black Africans perceived largely as newcomers from the distant Eastern Cape" (p. 339). Although the GAA was abolished in 1991, the scars and imprints of the Act are still strongly evident in the South African urban landscape. The new South Africa is at the beginning of a long process of reconciliation, reconstruction, development and planning. Western concludes by questioning whether South Africa which "rid itself of apartheid . . . without the race-war predicted by so many" can "continue to astonish and cheer the world" (p.

354). The book is well illustrated with maps and pictures, and would appeal to students and researchers in geography, history, sociology, politics and town planning.

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BRIJ MAHARAJ

EMILY W. B. RUSSELL, *People and the Land Through Time: Linking Ecology and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997. Pp. xx + 306. £25.00 hardback)

The effects of human activity on past, present and future environments is a subject of growing interest and concern among historians, geographers and ecologists. This book attempts to illustrate how these three disciplines might be combined in the study of the associated ecological changes. The need to integrate various lines of evidence to understand the diversity of human influences on the natural environment is emphasized in the introductory chapter by several well-illustrated examples, mainly from the USA and, to a lesser extent, north-west Europe. This reflects the geographical concentration of investigations, but examples from wider areas are also used to portray how the general concepts presented are, for the most part, broadly applicable. In Chapters 2 to 4, Russell briefly explores the use of historical, field and sedimentary evidence to reconstruct human environmental impacts. There is sufficient detail for the basic understanding of the relevant methodologies, their applications and limitations, whilst there are ample references to further sources of information. Whilst historical records may provide precise dates and explanations for past vegetation change, they are subject to certain biases and are rarely written from an ecological viewpoint. The need for the historical ecologist to analyse and interpret written information with caution, and to make an independent assessment of its reliability when investigating past ecological changes is duly emphasized. The problems associated with the interpretation of historical data may be reduced to some extent by also considering alternative data sources, and the subsequent chapter shows how traces of past human activity on the landscape might be elucidated by various types of field study. For example, aerial photography can reveal former land-use patterns on a relatively broad spatial scale whilst studies of the contemporary vegetation or archaeological remains might reflect more local effects. Chapter 4 considers the use of sedimentary evidence, with the emphasis on how pollen analysis can reveal past vegetation change. The chapter includes classic examples of human impacts on past vegetation such as Iversen's "landnam" clearance episodes, and the *Ambrosia* pollen rise in the USA with European colonisation, c. AD 1800. The use of diatoms in palaeolimnology is also reviewed. There is, however little mention of other valuable indicators of human activity such as charcoal or magnetic minerals, which might elucidate past fire or soil erosion regimes. The second section of the book attempts to explain how these discrete lines of evidence can be combined to link cause and effect in the interpretation of past ecological change. Chapters are devoted in turn to human-induced effects with respect to fire, changes in species range, forestry, agriculture and settlement. In each case, Russell outlines the ways in which the human actions interpreted from the sources of information already described have various consequences for the vegetation, and how these effects have generally accelerated over time. Again, a wide range of examples illustrate topics which range from the manipulation of ecosystems for their resource value, to their destruction by land clearance or the introduction of pests and disease. The impacts of management on natural landscapes by land division or the regulation of land-use are also considered. Somewhat surprisingly there is little mention of the potentially large ecological effects of industrial development.

The final section of the book contains three case studies which use an integrated approach to investigating human–environment relationships, with an emphasis on their value to contemporary environmental issues. Human effects on lake ecosystems, and

cultural eutrophication and lake acidification in particular are considered in Chapter 10. Chapter 11 contains a discussion of species diversity and how it might be reduced, enhanced or maintained by human activity, whilst Chapter 12 explores the broader issue of biospheric sustainability. In each chapter the reconstructed land-use and ecological histories are used to understand not only past ecological change, but also how the current situation has evolved, and how the pace and direction of future vegetation change might be predicted. This holistic approach to the problems and questions posed is also an important issue in current ecological and palaeoecological methodology and appears to be the direction in which these types of research are moving. Although it is difficult to cover the complex topics of Chapters 10 to 12 so briefly, or indeed to explain the range of human environmental impacts in general within a single volume, Russell does manage to provide a valuable and integrated first approach to studies of historical ecology and their wider applications. However the inclusion of such broad subject matter, in terms of both its spatial and temporal resolution, and the range of ecological effects, has led to the loss of comprehension throughout the text to a large extent.

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DEBORAH ROSEN

STEPHEN BOCKING, *Ecologists and Environmental Politics: a History of Contemporary Ecology* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1997. Pp. xiv + 271. £22.50 hardback)

How refreshing it is to find a text, in this field of scholarship, that is readily comprehensible and a pleasure to read. For this reason at least, this book is to be warmly commended to practitioners and students alike. The science of ecology and environmental politics are commonly seen as inseparable. Environmentalism draws some of its evidence from ecological knowledge. Environmental concerns motivate and provide funding for ecological research. Two strategies are open to the historian of the human relationship with the natural world. One is to examine the dominant values of society, and how far ecologists have made any relevant contribution to their attainment. Such an approach runs the risk of ignoring the importance of the ecologist's working environment. The other strategy, and the one adopted by Bocking, is to examine "the specific, diverse contexts" within which ecologists operate, and to appraise how they have chosen between the range of options open to them. In turning the spotlight on ecologists themselves, Bocking recalls how, in starting his project in the late 1980s, he quickly came to recognize the remarkable heterogeneity of ecology as a discipline. There was a wealth of methods and research subjects. The range of potential links with social values was just as broad. If that diversity, or rather specificity of experience, was to be captured there had to be not one story but several. Such narratives would have an intrinsic interest. Together, they might demonstrate the utility of such a comparative method in highlighting the contingency of scientific practice, while contributing to a more general understanding of science and its social role.

The studies accordingly begin with the UK's Nature Conservancy from its establishment in 1949 to incorporation in the Natural Environment Research Council in 1965. There follow two studies from the US, namely that of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory at Tennessee, and the Hubbard Brook Ecosystem Study in New Hampshire. The concluding Canadian study focuses on research in fisheries ecology, as conducted by the University of Toronto and the Ontario provincial government. Bocking notes several reasons for the choice of institutions, the most obvious being their significant national roles in the history of ecology. The Conservancy and Oak Ridge Laboratory combined research and environmental-management responsibilities within the same

institutions. However, they did so differently. Although the rationale is persuasive, the suspicion remains that the choice also closely reflects the opportunities afforded by Bocking's own research career in studying these, rather than other, bodies. Otherwise why, for example, did he not compare the experiences of fisheries research at Toronto with, say, those of the UK Freshwater Biological Association? If so much attention is to be given to the patronage of the Atomic Energy Commission at Oak Ridge, with the many assumptions that implied, or to the studies of "the manipulation of entire watersheds" at Hubbard Brook, why was the opportunity missed of making comparisons with contemporary research in those fields in the UK and Canada?

There must also be concern as to the limited data sources used for what the author clearly intends to be detailed narrative. Beyond the partiality and rhetoric of the publications of the respective institutions, Bocking seems to have found the same qualities in the few autobiographies and personal recollections he has acquired. How else can the failure to mention Bob Boote in his account of the Nature Conservancy be explained? At times, Bocking seems unduly swayed by Nicholson's assertion that the Conservancy was an all-encompassing environmental body. Both the Conservancy and relevant Government departments had often to remind the Director-General of his terms of reference and meagre resources. The reader is given no inkling of how the Conservancy was nearly abolished on more than one occasion. Much is made of its so-called independence. Closer study would have revealed the tight leash kept on the Conservancy by the Treasury and, more specifically, the universities in ensuring it met their several research and training needs. If there is need for a more systematic use of archival material, so too might the net of oral evidence have been cast more widely. In a separate chapter, Bocking seeks to reconstruct the circumstances of the Conservancy's woodland research under Derek Ovington. Despite the detail otherwise cited from scientific publication and annual reports, Ovington's moves from the Merlewood Research Station to headquarters to the Monks Wood Experimental Station, and then to Australia are briefly recorded without comment. There is nothing here of personal ambition, clashes of personality, or impatience with local and wider management. I joined Monks Wood a year or two later. I doubt whether my new-found colleagues would have used Bocking's word "collaboration" to describe the relationship that existed between Ovington and those who collected, sorted, weighed and otherwise assembled his research material. Such intensely personal perceptions of 'a man in a hurry' and of such assertiveness might well have been wide-of-the-mark or misrepresented, but I doubt if they should be entirely overlooked if the intention is to probe more deeply into how rapport is achieved, and assessment made of what is typical, as opposed to exceptional, in the behaviour of institutions.

In his brief concluding chapter, Bocking cites how environmentalism claims much of its strength from peoples' concern about specific places or problems. As in environmentalism, so in ecology there is no one big 'problem', but a near infinitude of smaller problems. Bocking frequently uses the word "mediator" to describe the part played by institutions in defining the social priorities and scientific goals that might be addressed. In emphasizing the importance of that function, and illustrating the historian's rudimentary knowledge and understanding of how it is achieved, the volume offers a challenging agenda for others (and I hope Bocking himself) to follow.

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JOHN SHEAIL

DAVID CLARKE (Ed.) *The Cinematic City* (London: Routledge, 1997. Pp. ix + 252. £14.99 paperback)

David Clarke brings together 12 essays by a diverse group of authors from geography, cultural, film and communication studies to examine the neglected connection between

urban and cinematic space. Cinema originated in the urban environment and cities have played starring roles ever since. Clarke's introduction examines how the *flâneur*, as an urban street walker, is the embodiment of the protocinematic experience. Clarke also argues that the shift in film studies away from Saussure's semiotic system to Pierce's socio-semiotics no longer positions cinema as merely a form of representation: the city and cinema are now intertwined to the point that we can no longer pry apart image and reality. Where Clarke offers theoretical background, Colin MacArthur's essay provides the descriptive introduction to the way the city is portrayed in films. MacArthur's argument, which is reverberated throughout the book, is that cityscapes are contrasted with country life which allows them to become utopias or dystopias.

The topics of Chapters 2 to 8 are arranged in a linear history which begins with the silent film era and ends with the postmodern city. Giuliana Bruno's description of the migratory ties between Naples and New York establishes film and immigration as mutual travelling stories and spatial practices. Italian silent movies connect the two cities economically and culturally, and function for the immigrant "as a collective memory while they were in the process of acquiring a new projected identity" (p. 54). Shifting to the interwar period in England, John Gold and Stephen Ward provide a glimpse of how documentary film makers depict the planning process and the planner's role in creating a better urban future. The dark and lurking character of the 1940s *noir* city and 1950s *exposé* film haunted the cinematic city. Frank Krutnik suggests that the *noir* city is filled with strangers and disassociated *flâneurs* which hint at the social anxieties and alienation caused by modernism. Through movies, novels and magazines, Will Straw's historical analysis of the *exposé* film links their inception to US Senate hearings on municipal venality and urban corruption. Three essays focus on the postmodern city: (1) Anthony Eastop's brief essay about the roots of postmodernism in cities during the 1960s; (2) Marcus Doel and David Clarke's interesting assertion that the depiction of the city in *Blade Runner* is not postmodern, but rather a thoroughly modernist conflict between an impulse to order and a symbolic exchange which disrupts that order; and (3) Elisabeth Mahoney's proposal that femininity is transposed onto urban space which perpetuates the suppression of women and allows femininity to become a metaphor for the pleasures and dangers of the city. The final three chapters engage the cinematic city in broader theoretical terms. Rob Laplesy's imaginative and observant use of Lacanian theory examines subjectivity and the city as real, symbolic, and imaginary. James Hay investigates "film as a social practice that begins by considering how social relations are spatially organized" (p. 216). His exceptional consideration of common places (or *topois*) of social/historical sites and film sites provides a complex spatial framework which truly annihilates the dualism between representation and reality. Iain Chambers uses the cinematic city as a point of departure to consider the aural maps of music and the metropolis. While loosely tied to the cinematic city, this essay is one of best that I've read on the relationship between music and geography.

The Cinematic City is the second book to fully address the relationship between geography and film (the first being Aitken and Zonn's volume *Place, Power, Situation and Spectacle* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1994)), and one of only a few to deal with geography and the visual media. As did its predecessors Clarke's introduction provides a state-of-the-art appraisal of the theoretical shifts which have occurred since Aitken and Zonn's book. While Clarke's introduction suggests that image and reality can no longer be dealt with in dualistic terms, half of the chapters (McArthur's, Krutnik's, Eastop's, Doel and Clarke's, and Mahoney's) maintain some sense of this duality. These chapters continue to perpetuate Saussure's semiotic system by dealing with cinema as signifier (image) and the city as signified (reality). On the other hand, the chapters by Giuliana Bruno and James Hay offer two examples of how a geography of cinema can move beyond the epistemological confines of Saussure in ways that offer the most hope for future geographic research on film. These essays were not mere

textual readings, but rather they link moving pictures and people, and unite the commonality of places and spaces across real and theoretical boundaries. This book nicely blends the theoretical and empirical, allowing it to be accessible and useful to students and professionals alike. I particularly enjoyed the supportive illustrations of films being discussed. Also, the index by author, subject and film, the ample notes and references, and the background on the contributors are extremely useful. On the other hand, I feel that a few theoretical terms need more clarification (i.e., hauntology, Ur-Narrative, *Dasein*) and that some chapters only tangentially focus on the relations between cinema and city (Straw's, Doel and Clarke's, and especially Chambers's). These criticisms, however, are minor in comparison to the overall quality and scholarship displayed in this book. For those interested in visual media, urban space, or geography and film this book is required reading. I would not hesitate to recommend this book, or as Siskel and Ebert might say, I'd give it "two thumbs up".

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CHRISTOPHER LUKINBEAL

G. MELVYN HOWE, *People, Environment, Disease and Death: a Medical Geography of Britain Throughout the Ages* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997. Pp. xv + 328. £50.00 hardback)

Where we live, how we live, and what we are surrounded by have long been recognized as important factors in determining the distribution of disease and death. As long ago as the 5th century BC, the Hippocratic school produced the remarkable study *On Airs, Waters, and Places*. This work reminded doctors in the Greek world of the importance of considering the quality of the physical and human environment when studying medicine. The correct choice of habitation and an appropriate mode of living were essential for a long life. Our understanding of the links between disease and environment have been transformed over the past few decades and there have been a number of important statistical and cartographic studies linking the distribution of disease and mortality with environmental risk factors. One of the major contributors to the field of medical geography has been Professor Melvyn Howe. He has published extensively on a wide range of topics and in 1963 produced *A National Atlas of Disease Mortality in Britain*. His original maps highlighted the wide variation in mortality from cancers and heart disease across Britain and led to a succession of further studies using more refined epidemiological methods and mapping techniques. It was, however, his first edition of *Man, Environment and Disease in Britain: a Medical Geography Through the Ages* (1972) which gave both specialists and non-specialists the opportunity to gain a popular overview of the history and geography of disease and death in Britain from the Stone Age to the Modern Age. This present book, with a new title, is essentially a second edition—revised and updated to include a number of recent references and a discussion of genetic factors or “the gene-versus-environment issue” (p. 250) in relation to disease. Most of the original structure of the text has been retained. The book is prefaced by chapters on the health hazards of the Physical, Biological and Human Environments. It then follows a chronological format with chapters on Pre-Norman and Norman, Medieval, Tudor, Stuart, Hanoverian, Early Victorian, Late Victorian, and two chapters on Modern Times. Substantially new information is included in the Introduction and in the final chapter, “Retrospect and Prospect”. As with the earlier edition, there is much to interest the general reader with accounts of fevers, filth and famines in past eras. The text is littered with original and illuminating quotations from historical sources and has a simple, albeit over-simplified, flow. There is a wealth of tables, graphs, illustrations and maps ranging widely in content and style. Maps from the original text, such as the distribution of “bracing and relaxing climates of Britain”

are included alongside new maps such as “emissions of sulphur dioxide in the UK in 1993”. Other new additions reflect changes in the pattern of infectious disease over the past two decades with maps illustrating the distribution of HIV-1 infected persons and AIDS cases at the end of December 1996.

While the book continues to be highly readable and should prove popular with audiences beyond academia, it misses the opportunity to draw on some recent scholarly research, especially in the fields of historical demography, epidemiology, social and medical history. The enormous volume of research on the history of disease and mortality from the Cambridge and Liverpool Population Groups is given scant reference while the reasons for the mortality declines of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Britain, which have stimulated wide debates amongst historians over the last 20 or so years, receive little critical attention. Melvyn Howe does, however, draw on the argument, first put forward by Thomas McKeown in the 1950s and 1960s, that “the decline in mortality from most infectious diseases was a consequence of raised standards of hygiene . . . and a general overall improvement, rather than of advances in medical technology” (p. 249). From this he concludes that “the NHS would appear generally to be of only marginal relevance to the nation’s health, and especially to the inequalities in the distribution of untimely deaths” (p. 249). There is little further discussion of the role of medical services or the geography of health services and the reader is left with the message that future improvements in the health of the nation depend primarily on prevention and protection. In Melvyn Howe’s view, efforts should be aimed at “improving the environment (the provision of adequate housing, sound nutritional diets etc.), and in moderating self-imposed risks (not least the abuse of such addictive substances as tobacco, alcohol, prescribed psychotropics and illegally acquired drugs)” (p. 249). In an era when the threat of new and emerging diseases has generated ‘an epidemic of books on epidemics’, Melvyn Howe’s revised edition of a medical geography of Britain throughout the ages will appear less original than it did a quarter of a century ago. There is, however, undoubtedly a market for books on disease and death and, grim as the topic might be, *People, Environment, Disease and Death* will provide easy reading for students and scholars in a range of disciplines.

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MARY DOBSON

ANDREW LIGHT and JONATHAN M. SMITH (Eds), *Philosophy and Geography I: Space, Place, and Environmental Ethics* (Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997. Pp. 248. \$22.95 paperback)

Members of the Ngaluma, Injibandi and Banjima peoples in Iremugadu (Roebourne), Western Australia, are currently working on ways to present various aspects of their cultures to non-indigenous people. Cultural knowledges and information about space—tribal boundaries—are critical in many contexts, including native title negotiations and the sharing of traditional spaces. For the past 18 months we have been contributing to this process, including the use of multimedia and Geographical Information Systems technologies. The greatest concerns about working within this environment are ethical. How do we contribute to the representation of indigenous knowledges in culturally appropriate ways, in particular, without imposing our own philosophical assumptions? To avoid falling into that trap it is necessary to interrogate our world views, most importantly those that determine the ways we represent relationships between space, place and peoples.

Philosophy and Geography is a new peer-reviewed annual series which should be of interest to geographers and environmental scientists who adopt a reflective stance,

philosophers, and interested academics and practitioners from many associated disciplines such as sociology, cultural studies, planning and anthropology. The stated intent is to create a space for critical discussion and debate within the overlap between the disciplines rather than a new discipline. In *Space, Place and Environmental Ethics*, the first volume in the series, issues concerning environmental ethics are foregrounded rather than the more generic philosophy of geography. As environment has become a key topic of public and scientific discussion throughout the developed world and, increasingly within emergent countries, it is not surprising that it is a major concern of both theoretical and applied geographers: hence this text. Increasingly too it is a topic which philosophers address as part of their effort to engage with current political and social issues. This is no superficial correlation of concerns and is a critical justification for this volume, the practice of environmental geography is after all impotent without the teasing out of embedded philosophical assumptions. In many ways the first chapter, "On the Ethical Determination of Geography: A Kantian Prolegomenon" by Robert Burch, acts as a frame from which to tease out these philosophical assumptions. Burch seeks both to overcome the indeterminacy of geography by providing it with a sound philosophical basis, safe from the hypercritical (and hypocritical) attacks of postmodernism and to foreground ways in which ethical positions can be used to guide geographic research. He begins by providing a definition of philosophy in terms of rational and empirical cognitions. His approach is via an attempt to resolve the apparent contradiction inherent in Kant's rejection of geography as a foundation science while lecturing in physical geography for most of his academic career. Burch discusses Kant's understanding of the relationships between Geography, History, physical/natural sciences, and Philosophy as a means of doing this. Geography is not a set of pre-existing foundation principles waiting to be discovered, it is realized through our activity, it reveals the world to us for our duty to act upon, and be situated within. Eliza Steelwater's chapter "Mead and Heidegger: Exploring the Ethics and Theory of Space, Place and the Environment" draws on the work of George Hubert Mead and Martin Heidegger, especially their work on the processual and experiential. Steelwater problematizes the relationship between human beings and their environment through an examination of the spatial ontologies of Mead and Heidegger. The argument presented focuses on the nature of spatiality, bringing together its various aspects and emphasizing its social nature. Other chapters expand upon and explore a number of related themes. "Muslim Contributions to Geography and Environmental Ethics: The Challenges of Comparison and Pluralism" by James L. Wescoat, Jr is one of several chapters which aim to address the dominance of traditional Western versions of Philosophy and Geography, at least in the English language literature. This paper arises from a concern that environmental ethics, as pursued in the United States and Europe, does not comprehend the contribution of other cultural groups and regions of the world, past or present. A deeper concern is that philosophical research in geography and environmental ethics does not speak to the condition of most of the world's peoples or places. Similarly in his chapter "Nature's Presence: Reflections on Healing and Domination" Eric Katz makes the point that understandings of philosophy and geography are not homogeneous. Katz describes the Jewish Cemetery of Warsaw and the remains of the Majdoriek Nazi death camp near the Polish-Ukrainian border. He notes how these places now have a (perhaps inappropriate) natural beauty despite the horrific events that took place there in the 1940s. Katz suggests that examinations of the Holocaust and the current environmental crisis can be linked via the concept of domination. It is his own lived experience that is critical in developing this argument and it is obviously a personal passion.

Other important issues addressed include management of natural (wilderness) areas and differences between 'conservationist' and 'preservationist' arguments for environmental protection. There is also a significant discussion of the role of the US government in protecting the environment—the protection of wetlands is a classic

example—and claims for compensation by some private land holders who believe that they are financially disadvantaged by these actions. In his chapter Trachtenberg makes the crucial point that such compensation is not only required by the US constitution but is also a matter of justice. While some chapters are perhaps a little less satisfying than others, we found the book as a whole to be very engaging, informative and stimulating, although at times demanding significant effort on the reader's part. It gave us many new insights into our own research. The book is a solid start to the series and is recommended.

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