

cratic system of proportional representation, repeating without evidence that this was a major source of weak governments. (What about, say, runaway inflation or the Great Depression?) Could a stronger government have changed the world economic crisis, let alone the devotion of the right to the use of violence to enforce its will? Weitz seems to make the common mistake of confusing being in office with being in power. Even a Social Democratic-led majority government did not change the fact that when the old ruling families, like the Krupps, felt the moment was right, the old order stuck back with violence, using Hitler as their instrument. This was possible as they had remained the ones truly in power.

It could be that, on some level, the author felt his story needed a hero. Once he ruled out this role as impossible for the Nazis, and politically incorrect for the Communists to fill, all he was left with was the SPD and those (few) bourgeois parties loyal to the republic. To steal a formulation from Bertolt Brecht, pity the author who needs heroes. Nonetheless, these are relatively minor flaws in an otherwise brilliant survey of Weimar Germany. Weitz is sensitive to the nuances of Weimar culture and politics all too rare in many treatments of this period. It is a tribute to the author that readers can feel they are actually walking through Berlin, not merely reading about it three-quarters of a century later. The strengths of this work far outweigh the imperfections and thus it is to be highly recommended.

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Glenn Burgess and Matthew Festenstein (Editors), *English Radicalism, 1550-1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

“Class analysis of radicalism has not, so far, proved productive” (64). Thus writes Glenn Burgess in the recent collection of essays on English radicalism he co-edited with Matthew Festenstein. Burgess aimed this barb directly at the British historians Christopher Hill and E.P. Thompson; it lands wide of the mark. Hill and Thompson’s work placed class and radicalism at the centre of British and many other historiographies for much of the last century, and continues to shape scholarship today despite the lingering and effete post-modernism heralded by Burgess and other contributors to this volume. With notable exceptions, Burgess’ misguided observation sounds an emblematic note for the tone and quality of the scholarship in the collection.

Inspired by the rise of the ‘linguistic turn’ in English political studies, Burgess and Festenstein take an agnostic approach to radicalism’s existence and a cold-eyed look at the concept’s historiographic record. First, compelled by the scholarship of contributors J.C.D. Clark and Conal Condren, the editors question the legitimacy of writing about ‘radicalism’, an allegedly modern concept, in the early modern period. Secondly, they question

whether those called “radical” by scholars “have anything in common with one another” (2). Lastly, confronting Hill and Thompson directly, they ask if English political culture contains a “radical tradition” of “radical ideas” transmitted across time (2).

To varying degrees and with minimal success, the contributors reflect upon and respond to these questions and often reach conflicting conclusions. The disagreements turn most visibly on the question of whether radicalism truly existed in the early modern period. Richard Greaves’ essay on Restoration-era sectarian politics and J.C. Davis’ theoretical epilogue on radicalism in traditional societies both accept that radicalism, defined in functional terms by both authors, made significant contributions to seventeenth century English politics. Ultimately, however, Luc Borot’s article responds best to this question by providing a historical case study on an understudied but nonetheless indispensable figure of the English Revolution, the Leveller Richard Overton. Borot describes how Overton tried to bolster the revolution’s popular appeal by advocating merriness, mirth, and jollity alongside religious toleration and republican political principles. This strategy signaled Overton’s disgust with the Revolution’s ascension of self-professed ‘saints,’ who used their new found power to exclude from the nation’s political life those who did not pass their godly litmus test. Thus, as Borot shows, radicalism proved real and protean enough in the seventeenth century to absorb traditional popular culture within a larger revolutionary project founded upon religious liberty and democratic popular sovereignty. This kind of nuanced work, recognizing that early modern radicals tried to transcend the status quo through a political revolution that could also cultivate beloved tropes of traditional culture stands in stark contrast to J.C.D. Clark’s myopic essay. Clark, haunted by the spectre of anachronism, embarks upon an ill-conceived crusade to exorcise early modern scholarship of its alleged radical demons. According to Clark, radicalism assumes validity only when it achieves the monumental status of ‘noun’ in the political lexicon of modern men living the leisured life of the mind. For Clark, legitimate histories of radicalism must therefore begin in 1820 with Jeremy Bentham’s proscriptions for atheism, political democracy, and Ricardian economics. The appalling rigidity of such a view pales only in comparison to the empirical deficiencies of Clarks’ linguistic determinism. Early modern English revolutionaries explicitly used the term ‘radical’ to describe their programs for systemic constitutional and social change, notably the New Model Army mutineers of 1649, some of whom paid for their lives for what we can logically, and without anachronism, call their ‘radicalism’. Clark, as well as Burgess and Condren might have made more persuasive cases for their own views had they responded to Jonathan Scott’s most recent books and articles on the radicalism of the English Revolution. Rather than engaging with Scott’s deeply theoretical body of work, the authors instead position their own arguments against a Marxian tradition that Scott himself has rejected in favor of taking radical scholarship into the fold of the linguistic turn.

Ultimately, all the contributors explicitly or implicitly agree that the place of class in the analysis of radical politics obscures more than it reveals. These conclusions might be taken more seriously had their authors actually engaged with the concept of class instead of dismissing it out of hand. For instance, Condren asks us to explore class and radicalism within “Russellian terms”, alluding to the methodology of revisionist historian Conrad Russell, who argued in several influential books that the English Revolution erupted accidentally in a consensus-based, deferential society with no ideological divisions or class-tensions (312). Following this short-cut allows Condren to reject both radicalism and class a priori. When Condren does bother to discuss class, he out-vulgars so-called vulgar Marxists, presenting an impossible to achieve class-consciousness; i.e., that all the members of what are called the working-classes need to espouse the same socially-determined political positions for ‘class’ to assume historical reality. While ham-handedly attempting to pound Hill and Thompson’s ideas into submission, Condren also neglects the award-winning scholarship of James Holstun, whose positions his richly researched and profoundly theoretical work on class and the English Revolution against the linguistic turn. Also missing are any discussions of Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker’s field-altering analysis that argues the English Revolution left an Atlantic-wide legacy of understudied, class-based, radical politics that shaped both the American Revolution and the abolition movement. Again, those who launch the fiercest polemics against radicalism and its class components refuse to engage with their most formidable critics. For this book to be deemed a success, confronting living, radical historians practicing either linguistic or marxian analysis should take center stage; instead, understudies such as Condren shove the main historiographic stars into unwarranted obscurity.

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Kathy Davis, *The Making of Our Bodies Ourselves: How Feminism Travels Across Borders* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

The opening line aptly summarizes Kathy Davis’ latest publication: “This is a book about a book: the feminist classic on women’s health, *Our Bodies Ourselves* (OBS), and how it ‘travelled’” from 1969 to the present (1). “The Book and Its Travels” is the focus of Part I. The reference to “travels” is literal as well as figurative, and the story of the book’s travels is a fascinating and valuable one. It involves individuals and collectives, and crosses historical, geopolitical, cultural, and ideological borders. In Part II, “Feminist Politics of Knowledge,” Davis focuses on what she terms “the myth of the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective,” (85), the lines between colonialism and critical epistemology, and the creation of “feminist subjects” (142). Part III, “Transnational Body/Politics,”