

how successful/unsuccessful were Aboriginal organizations in convincing their numbers that opposing free-trade was in the interests of all Aboriginals? Similarly, how did women's groups sustain interest among women in anti-free trade mobilization?

Despite these minor shortcomings, *Beyond Conventional Wisdom* is a welcome addition to the fields of both political economy and social movement theory. In particular, Ayres demonstrates the need to connect the "macro" concerns of political economists with the "micro" concerns of social movement theorists. Although the activists' efforts failed in the long run to halt the free-trade deal, Ayres makes a compelling case for viewing these mobilization efforts as part of a much broader process of increased citizen engagement occasioned by the Canadian public's growing disenchantment with the status quo. As he notes, "at the very least the precedent has been set for extraparliamentary actors to take the initiative away from elites on issues of crucial concern to the public" (144).

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¹ See Lorna Weir, "The Limitations of New Social Movement Analysis," *Studies in Political Economy*, 40, (Spring 1993). One attempt to apply the political-process approach to the study of new social movements can be found in Hanspeter Kriesi, Ruud Koopmans, Jan Willem Duyvendak, and Marco G. Giugni, *New Social Movements in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (Minneapolis 1995).

Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998).

After an Introduction which explains the assemblage to follow, seven essays are gathered in three sections: under "Sounds of Silence" are "Gothic Ornament and Sartorial Peasants," "English America: Worth Dying For?" and "Bede's Blush: Postcards from Bali, Bombay, Palo Alto"; "Works of Mourning" includes "The Devil's Anal Eye: Inquisitorial Optics and Ethnographic Authority" and "Genders, Bodies, Borders: Technologies of the Visible"; and "Virtual Loops" comprises "Humanist History and the Haunting of Virtual Technologies: Problems of Memory and Rememoration" and "Stranded Histories: Allegories of Artificial Life."

By those titles the field of study of the collection can be recognized, and it is not history, but rather a very contemporary brand of cultural poetics. At the date of publication Kathleen Biddick was Associate Professor of History and Director of the Gender Studies Program at the University of Notre Dame. Her previous monograph was *The Other Economy: Pastoral Husbandry on a Medieval Estate* (1989) based on her PhD dissertation (Toronto, 1982). That title

does not appear in the bibliography of the present book: Biddick dropped her previous line of work early in the '90's when she realized that her explorations of the category "medieval English peasant" merely reenacted imperialist propaganda (58-61). Between the associate and the full professorship usually lies a second published book, and to create this one Biddick mounted three previously published essays (the last three listed above) with four new ones in a conceptual tableau, the "Shock" of her title, to make a monograph, in the course of which she shows what a clever, engaged and successful teacher she is (80-82) and how much more worthy of academic resources she is (in the persona of a Chicana feminist theorist) than are professors of dead languages, paleography and theology (96-101).

Kathleen Biddick is an alert, wide-ranging cultural observer, quick at understanding and expert at revealing the relations and analogies which she has discovered. I thoroughly enjoyed each of her streams of association, both meandering and braided, and she has alerted me to the strings of bygone political agendas which wind through secondary historical literature. She must be a splendid teacher, and she surely deserves the full professorship which in fact she has received.

The Shock, the trauma which Biddick bids medieval studies to work through in honest mourning rather than in melancholic elegy (I hope I got that right) was the birth of the discipline in the second half of the 19th century as a "scientific" claimant to the documentary, literary, architectural and other period matter previously treated by emotional amateurs whom the new arrogant "fathers" designated "medievalists" and exiled from the academy. Biddick names few of the "fathers," only Gaston Paris, Bishop Stubbs, Viollet-le-Duc and J.-P. Migne (her alienation from whom she dramatizes by giving his name an unwarranted grave accent). She gives one example of trauma in the discipline's parturition, and here it is: in 1866 Bishop Stubbs was appointed Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford to replace Sidney Smith, who had resigned that chair on account of the controversy in which he had advocated the prosecution of Edward John Eyre, the brutal governor of Jamaica. And so Stubbs is for Biddick the embodiment of racist imperialism, and his refusal to teach beyond the early 17th century was a politic silence for which he was well paid in ecclesiastical promotions. I must admit that this is an original sin which I as a medieval historian have never felt the need of purging.

There is a running squabble in medieval cultural history between those who favor the careful acquisition of data by sophisticated archaeology and textual study and the partisans of sophisticated theory. The sanest professionals of both tendencies recognize that history needs both reliable data (including text) and theoretical structure (including a progressive ethics). Biddick is confident that her theoretical constructions are robust enough to issue in cultural truth using the most diverse, unexpected and untested data. Picking up the 15th-century *Malleus Maleficarum* she offers this passage: "They [witches] could bring it [the

world] to utter confusion”; then she uses the phrase “utter confusion” as a drumbeat (108-127) damning the mentality of the inquisitors as if in their own words. But the idea of “confusion” is missing from the Latin text: “quia sic perimere possent totum mundum.” This means “That in this way they can destroy the whole world.” The translation is that of Montague Summers (1928), a fragile base for any cultural argument. I wonder that Biddick reproduces dead-language text at all, since she values it so cheap and must rely on such a blind guide for its meaning.

Any alert reader of *Left History* may suppose that this reviewer refuses the lessons of *The Shock of Medievalism* because I am an old-fashioned male academic, trained in an old fashion of medieval studies and recoiling defensively from the self-confident claim of the intellectual cathedra by a more recent comer, a woman who conjures with different names. It is true that my Toronto PhD is almost a decade senior to Biddick’s, and I have never suffered the sort of traumatic professional conversion that compelled me to repudiate my first research. But the contemptuous stereotype of a privileged, smug, reactionary academic sinner doesn’t apply. When Bonnie G. Smith in *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (1998; reviewed in *Left History* 7.1) lectures me even more severely on professional ethics, even using a critical vocabulary which she has to teach me as she goes along, I understand the argument, take the medicine and expect to be a more alert and more useful historian for it. The great difference is that Smith does not, and Biddick does, commit the fundamental category fault of locating “trauma,” “mourning,” “re-enactment” and other psychological facts and acts in an ethereal, timeless noosphere. Such categories make sense in the analysis of human individuals and, to a degree, in real human cultural groups. Translated to an abstract sphere of the poeticist’s creation they may persuade other poeticist critics, but “historians are mostly absent as contributors to critical literature on the state of medieval studies” (4) and the reason is plain: historians labour with the articulation of causes in a temporally mapped world of human beings, and they can’t perceive the causal push in the world of abstract poetics.

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Dana Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998).

Dana Nelson’s *National Manhood* traces ideals of citizenship in the United States chronologically through the early national and the antebellum periods (1780s-1850s). Nelson, a Professor of English at the University of Kentucky, is also known for the often-cited *The Word in Black and White: Reading Race in American Literature, 1638-1867* (Oxford University Press, 1992).