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and social continuity on the ground is never fully delivered in chapter 5 on French North America. Both the introduction and the first page of chapter 5 create the expectation of a substantial primary source research contribution regarding the continuity of French mobility and "existing social realities" (p. 131). However, while Calloway's argument appears sound, most of the chapter on French North America is derived largely from secondary sources. The primary sources used provide a steady diet of official colonial documentation and correspondence, which ultimately does little to portray an accurate picture of events on the ground. Although notarial documents regarding powers of attorney, land transfers, business agreements, and family estates are less conducive to flowing narratives, they would appear to provide a much more accurate portrait of the historiographically neglected peoples so central to this book. Ultimately, the result is an occasional disjunction between concept and substance. This is partially to be expected given the breadth and complexity of this study, and it certainly leaves avenues of investigation wide open for future researchers.

Conceptually, this book may well redefine the way people approach North American colonial history. Calloway's emphasis on "people and events in motion" (p. 15) changes the very lens through which history is viewed. Rather than focusing on sedentary agriculture, Calloway argues that the mobility of peoples and the geographical spread of events had a marked effect on North America in 1763. This assertion pulls the interior of North America (the American back country) back in line with English and French Atlantic historiographies. The conclusion provides a seemingly sensible look forward to 1783, binding the two treaties together by arguing that the second Treaty of Paris tied up many of the loose ends created in 1763. While informative and insightful, this conclusion seems a somewhat strange departure for a book that successfully attempts to focus on 1763 in its own right, and not simply as a precursor to the American Revolution. An easy read and an informative piece of scholarship, *The Scratch of a Pen* will undoubtedly be required reading for students of colonial North American history.

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GATTRELL, Vic — *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-century London*. New York: Walker and Company, 2006. Pp. 696.

If Jeremy Clarkson, the famously politically incorrect host of BBC's leading lads' television show, *Top Gear*, were ever to write a book about late Georgian graphic satire, this would be it. As Vic Gattrell asserts in his introduction, this is a book based on the evidence "not of sermons, advice books, or female sensibilities, but of men's attitudes and practices — and not very earnest men either" (p. 15). It is, in effect, an examination of the "lads' view" of life in London in late Georgian England, as revealed in a monumental survey of thousands of

surviving satirical prints, drawn largely from the British Library's collection. Created by men, largely for men, the humour is unsurprisingly homosocial: bawdy, rude, and frequently scatological; the women frisky, voluptuous, and desiring; the tone ironically knowing, cynically sceptical — and decidedly *im*polite.

The interested non-specialist, or the students and scholars of Georgian England who want to learn more about the histories of manners, print culture, or the city of London itself, will find this book a fascinating compendium. Gattrell has done a prodigious amount of research and, in writing a history of laughter in Georgian London, he has taken on a daunting task (nothing is so likely to lead to patronizing pedantry as the need to explain a joke) and done a service to the city, as well as to history. His London is that of the man-about-town: piquant, zestful, frequently tawdry, but seldom boring. The humour that he savours is at times salacious, sly, and sniggering; at others, blatantly obvious or carefully coded. Anyone interested in exploring the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and manners in a century that elevated politeness and sensibility to ways of life need only dip in to this tome to find their obverse. Gattrell revels in the robust earthiness of what he terms "the golden age of graphic satire" (roughly the 1770s to 1820s) (p. 9), and he clearly regrets its decline as London and Londoners changed. Satire's "deepening obsolescence," according to Gattrell, "is framed by a better-washed, better-combed and better mannered cityscape and by mounting shopkeeper prosperity" (p. 594). The pandemic of respectability that infected Londoners in the early nineteenth century coincided with larger social, economic, and political changes, and with generational change. Of the city's leading satirists, James Gillray's vicious pen had been tamed by a government pension as early as 1797; by 1815 he was dead. So too was Isaac Cruikshank, who died, appropriately enough, of drink. Tellingly, in 1823 at the respectable age of 31, Cruikshank's brilliant son George forswore satire to concentrate instead on comic-book illustration (p. 598). The louche, knowing, cheerfully — or bitingly — vulgar humour of the Georgians all but vanished.

Gattrell's achievement goes far beyond the explication of humour in late Georgian prints, however. A sweeping history of *mentalités*, *City of Laughter* engages confidently and provocatively with urban history and with the histories of gender, art, print culture, society, and politics. It is in this sweep that both the book's brilliance and its shortcomings lie. No one, even Gattrell with his outstanding command of source material for the period, would be able to cover every aspect of this subject in enough detail to please all the subject specialists in each area. Some fault-finding is thus inevitable. By accepting the conventional groupings of graphic satires into social and political categories and by concentrating primarily on the less-studied comic and social satires, for instance, Gattrell makes his project feasible; however, as Cindy McCreery has argued in her pioneering study, *The Satirical Gaze: Prints of Women in Late Eighteenth-century England* (Oxford University Press, 2004), this sort of categorization can be misleading, particularly when considering the images of women, because "the social was frequently political" (p. 9). She makes a strong case for viewing graphic satires of women in their "broader historical, artistic, and commercial context" (p. 10), thus revealing a

multilayered diversity that reflected the wide variety of contemporary attitudes to women. It would have been interesting to see Gattrell engage more wholeheartedly with gender, particularly this sort of ambiguity, as he is too quick to universalize from extreme examples, be it about femininity or masculinity. Even cheerful, homosocial libertinism and the attractions of the club, brothel, or bagnio for Georgian men can be exaggerated.

Gattrell attributes the decline of satire to "a deep tide turning in the 1820s" (p. 541), and there is little doubt that the 1820s did serve as a watershed, but it would have been useful to have had both the continuities and the changes explored in more depth. The masculinity practised by Boswell and Byron had long co-existed with that of other notably respectable, domestic men. Not everyone "had a bit on the side," for instance (p. 118). Gattrell's favourite exemplar of male respectability, Francis Place, did not spring fully formed from the London streets in the 1790s; he had a long lineage, one that could be extended across decades and classes to include George III himself.

Still, it must be stressed that these are just quibbles. This book is remarkably ambitious, and Gattrell should be congratulated. It immerses the reader in late Georgian London, with its jostling crowds, carnivalesque inversions, and its predatory and convivial inhabitants. Be it at flagellation, farts, or fashion, Londoners — especially the male Londoners who created and purchased most of these prints — laughed. While the resolutely polite, male or female, or their late Georgian incarnation, the respectable (groups for which Gattrell has little patience), were expected to be moderate and restrained even in laughter, those other Georgians indulged freely in sniggers, guffaws, and generous ribaldry. Moreover, as the cult status of *Top Gear* demonstrates today, there is a vicarious relish, an indulgent dirty pleasure, in impolite laughter.

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HEWITT, Steve — *Riding to the Rescue: The Transformation of the RCMP in Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1914–1939*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006. Pp. 205.

The change from the old Royal North West Mounted Police to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1919 and its evolution over the next two decades into a national police force is one of the critical episodes in the growth of the modern Canadian state. A book-length study of the subject is well worth doing. This one, regrettably, adds little to the existing literature. Apart from the lengthy study of the RCMP Security Service written for the McDonald Royal Commission in the 1970s by Carle Betke and S. W. Horrall, the historiography on the subject falls almost entirely into two categories: a body of uncritical memoirs and histories by former Mounties and studies of the security activities of the RCMP by academic historians on the political left. Hewitt's book is