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on circumstances and even on personal affinities. Among the body trades, including surgery, a web of alliances served better than could single lineages alone.

Transmuting social patterns into a perspective on personal experience and identity, the book concludes on the cultural theme of masculinities. Despite a puzzling chapter title, “The Weak Father,” Cavallo effectively makes the case that, in contrast to Protestant northern Europe, for these Italian artisans mature manhood did not correlate tidily with age, licensed mastership, professional office, or status as a husband, father, or household head. As social relations were complex and permeable, so were varieties of masculinity. If scholars look closely, they may well find analogs elsewhere. All told, this book delivers an engaging and nourishing scholarly read.

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CHRISTIE, Nancy (ed.) — *Transatlantic Subjects: Ideas, Institutions, and Social Experience in Post-Revolutionary British North America*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008. Pp. 477.

The era of pure national history may be coming to an end. Historians have traditionally been content to examine state formation, institutional and social developments, and the emergence of political cultures within the confines of imagined political borders that serve to define the outer limits of historical inquiry. When defined as “Colonial” American or “pre-Confederation” Canadian, however, research begins with assumed protagonists and antagonists. Over the past few decades historians have begun to realize that these rigidly defined and artificially imposed boundaries are stifling rather than revealing. After all, nations and cultures do not exist in a vacuum. A transnational approach to history, on the other hand, emphasizes the centrality of political, social, and cultural contexts that very seldom respect the political boundaries drawn on a map or the categorical and historiographical limits imposed by historians. It is a relatively new approach, which holds much promise for future scholarship, as indicated by *Transatlantic Subjects: Ideas, Institutions, and Social Experience in Post-Revolutionary British North America*.

Arising from a conference held at McMaster University in October 2004, *Transatlantic Subjects*, edited by Nancy Christie, responds to J. G. A. Pocock’s call for a “new British history” that would synthesize the study of the peripheral places of empire with the history of the metropole. For Pocock, British history is the history of Greater Britain and *vice versa* — a point, it should be noted, made by Seeley in 1883. The term British should thus be construed broadly, as the events of British national history have had as much significance for colonists and colonized peoples on the periphery as they did for those in London. Pocock, who provides a forward for *Transatlantic Subjects*, drives home this point, writing, “the essays in this volume convey a dominant impression that the religious and political problems disturbing the colonies of Upper Canada were derived from those

disturbing the British state . . . it is British history that *Transatlantic Subjects* both obliges and encourages the reader to study” (p. ix). Pocock is correct in his evaluation of this book’s contribution to Canadian historiography.

Christie, a diverse and accomplished scholar of the family, the welfare state, and Protestant churches in Canada, has assembled eleven essays in this eclectic collection. The introduction, which at times totters toward the verbose and dense, nevertheless effectively reunites long-estranged historiographies and sets the stage for a book that aims to analyse the transference of various British cultures and social and political institutions to the New World (p. 18). Through examinations of socio-political institutions, religion, and intellectual discourse, it emerges that Britishness as a value or identity was contested and shaped by the colonial experience, not merely transposed by British loyalists and emigrants. British identity is therefore a product of the interplay between centre and periphery, a unique product of shared transnational contexts.

To make this overarching argument, the book is divided into three sections. “Agrarian Patriots” examines popular or unofficial responses to the imposition and recreation of British institutions, ideas, and power relationships in British North America. Essays by Donald Fyson, Nancy Christie, and Brian Young examine French Canadian acceptance of the civil courts in Lower Canada, the role of Upper Canadian domestic servants in subverting traditional class relations, and the centrality of social institutions to the consolidation of elite power in Lower Canada. The second section, “Provincial Britons,” examines how British institutional ideas were reinvented in the British North American colonies. Todd Webb, Michael Gauvreau, and Bruce Curtis focus on the influence of religious and educational institutions and ethnic identity in the formation of British identity. Webb effectively argues that Methodists constructed an inclusive definition of Britishness to counter the notion that they were subversive dissidents, while Gauvreau posits that ethnic and religious diversity in British North America prevented the formation of an integrative British, Protestant identity (p. 235). Bruce Curtis rounds out the section with an examination of the ways in which the Bell-Lancasterian controversy over monitorial schooling was reshaped by the specific political and religious context of Lower Canada (p. 274). The third section features essays by Michael Eamon, Jeffrey L. McNairn, Michelle Vosburgh, Bryan Palmer, and Darren Ferry that examine the tension between “modern notions of the liberal market society” and the “older Enlightenment ideas of civic virtue, social deference, or Tory rule” in the 1830s and 1840s (p. 27). Their essays include a re-examination of the impact of the Scottish enlightenment in British North America, Malthusian ideas of economic liberalism as evidenced in travel discourse, the politics of land ownership and the tension between centrally defined policies and actual practices on the ground, the rituals and rhetoric of 1830s radicalism in Upper Canada, and the transplantation of voluntary associations from Britain to Canada.

What is most striking about these essays is the overall quality of the scholarship and the possibilities left open for future study. A number of papers — notably those by Fyson, Young, Webb, and Palmer — return with a fresh approach to

well-worn historical fields that have lately been left to pasture. The other papers generally break new ground or offer reinterpretations of existing historiography with Gauvreau, Curtis, McNairn, and Vosburgh presenting particularly revealing studies. It is also worthwhile to note that Brian Young's paper offers a significant re-evaluation of his own previous work on the consolidation of elite power in Quebec. Most importantly, the book truly does open a refreshing window for future scholarship and begs a companion volume that would take the approach beyond the artificial boundary of 1867.

Overall, the book succeeds admirably in making the point that post-revolutionary British North America was society in transition and in flux. Political institutions, religious authority, social dynamics, and intellectual discourse were all mutable, the evolving products of an ongoing interaction and exchange between the Imperial centre and periphery. The book's only real shortcoming is in what is not covered. Indigenous peoples, for example, are absent from the text, while the topic of the slave trade in British North America might also benefit from a transnational perspective.

On the whole *Transatlantic Subjects* is a good book. Although a collection of essays, it effectively drives a coherent argument home and leaves the reader firmly convinced that, to understand Canadian history, one must understand the broader British context. This book is therefore essential and recommended reading for Canadian historians and graduate students alike.

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FAHRNI, Magda, and RUTHERDALE, Robert (eds.) — *Creating Postwar Canada: Community, Diversity, and Dissent, 1945–1975*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008. Pp. 347.

*Creating Postwar Canada: Community, Diversity, and Dissent, 1945–1975* brings together 13 studies that explore the “trente glorieuses” — the 30 years in Canadian history defined by its “extended moment of unprecedented prosperity, developed welfare states, high modernity, and advanced capitalism” (p. 2). In the introductory chapter, Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherford effectively make the case for the historical coherence of this period before introducing the volume, noting that they have broken it into two parts. The first deals with “imagined” postwar communities and the second with diversity and dissent.

The first half of the book is split between efforts with a geographic focus and those of a thematic nature. Joel Belliveau provides a useful survey of New Brunswick Acadian history — from autonomy to integration and partially back again — between 1950 and 1975. The process towards a liberal society began in the 1950s, accelerated in the first half of the 1960s, was called into question at the end of the 1960s, and was followed by a neo-nationalist movement that began in the later 1960s but had largely petered out by 1975. Through a