

Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Joyce, Patrick. *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City.* London: Verso, 2003. Pp. 276. Illustrations, photographs, maps.

Legg, Stephen. *Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi's Urban Governmentalities.* Oxford: Blackwell, 2007. Pp. 254. Maps.

Otter, Chris. *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800–1910.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. Pp. 382. Illustrations, photographs.

Governmentality has certainly arrived as a key scholarly concept, but it has made sporadic, limited inroads among urban historians. Yet from its earliest formulations by Michel Foucault, in the context of his lectures to the Collège de France in 1978 and 1979, “the city” has been the most important location for governmentality, both as history and as a topic of study.¹ Foucault himself used the writing of early-modern and modern urban planners and political philosophers writing about city states to trace the genealogy of a new “rationality of government,” a “governmentality” in the Western world. The explosion in governmentality studies over the last twenty years has transported and refined Foucault’s initial concept in several distinct and unique ways.² One of the things, however, that cuts through all this heterogeneity is the city. As Foucault insisted from his first lecture on the topic, the city has functioned historically as more than a laboratory for governmentality; modern governmentality was produced and reproduced through the city.

Patrick Joyce, Stephen Legg, and Chris Otter have read deeply inside the governmentality literature and each opens up fresh ways for urban historians to think about the relatively old historiographical question of how cities are made and governed. They do so by asking a series of straightforward questions: How were cities governed? Who governed? What and who were governed? What technologies were deployed? And perhaps most importantly, What rationalities made these forms and practices of rule possible? The concern for each of these scholars is with the ordering of the city, of the putting into place of place. Their focus is on how political power is not merely inscribed upon the city’s residents and structures, but also on how such power is affected through the constant making and remaking of social and physical urban landscapes.

While the oldest of the three books, *Rule of Freedom*, still rewards reading, of the three it is the best introduction for how urban historians might not only “use” governmentality but also, more importantly, study it and contribute to its theorization. Joyce draws most heavily (but not entirely) on the local histories and archives associated with Manchester and London during the nineteenth century. He is especially interested in what he

calls a “sociocultural history of governmentality” (6) and thus he concerns himself with those things that affected the social life of the city: mobility, infrastructure, institutions, and the performative elements of social relations. Indeed, this last element is perhaps Joyce’s most impressive contribution. When detailing the different ways people came to know the city and govern it, or in providing examples of how people inhabited the city and conducted themselves in its public spaces, Joyce calls attention to the practices involved, the roles assumed, the performances affected. What remains novel in all this is that Joyce sees both human and non-human performances: What streetlights, sewers, and public transit did, he insists, exerted an influence over the (re)making of what he calls the “liberal city” just as did a burgeoning middle class of politicians, experts, and bureaucrats, not to mention all those people, from all walks of life, who filled the streets and its spaces.

What was this liberal city? Joyce and his former student Chris Otter emphasize that the liberal city in Victorian Britain was one in which freedom was taken very seriously. The freedom to move, from home, to work, to clubs, to church, to market, to parks, had to be not only provided for but also protected. The correctness of all this had to be taught, especially to those who were deemed ignorant of freedom’s benefits, including children, but also the poor, the immigrant, and, of course, the non-British peoples of the colonies. None of this, Joyce and Otter each explain, could be left to chance. While its benefits had to be learned, freedom also had to be engineered, planned, administered, inspected, and policed. Both Joyce and Otter argue that liberalism, which they see more as practice than as ideology, not only benefited from the apparatus of the modern state but also produced it.

While Otter covers the same period and places (London, especially) as Joyce, he pays unique attention to the technologies and sciences of visibility in the making of the Victorian liberal city. Otter explores why “ophthalmological science and the social concern for protecting vision developed at roughly the same time period as liberalism” (46). Otter demonstrates how the scientific and technical understandings of how the eye worked were fundamental to the ways in which the liberal city took form in this period. He points to things such as the development and expanded use of glass in building construction, the architectural and landscaping of sight lines, gas and later electric lighting, and the widening of streets. But technologies of light and vision were also fundamental to the ways in which the liberal city was safeguarded through inspection and surveillance. What enhanced the ability to see and be seen was given careful study by the Victorians and real financial investment by government. Still, Otter rejects outright any sense that the liberal city fulfilled

some Benthamite panoptical fantasy, in which people always know they are being watched even though they cannot see the watchers. In fact, Otter says, the freedom to see and be seen in the Victorian liberal city located governance among people who not only knew they were being seen but could also see others looking at them.

In contrast to Joyce and Otter, Stephen Legg deals with a slightly different period, the first decades of the twentieth century (1911–47), and a rather different geography, Old and New Delhi in India. While Joyce briefly talks about the exporting of a metropolitan governmentality to the colonies via urban development (including the example of Old and New Delhi), Legg examines what he calls the multiple colonial governmentalities that emerged when the capital of India was relocated from Calcutta in 1911 and a New Delhi was designed and built to be a distinct counterpart to the long-existing Old Delhi. Legg rejects the “two city” idea that still dominates scholarly thought about Delhi and insists that the two were always parts of a larger whole. He comes to this conclusion by focusing on three case studies: housing, policing, and urban planning. But for each “landscape of colonial ordering” (210), as he calls them, Legg draws on different elements of Foucault’s thought and the related literatures. Thus we have the “hierarchies of knowledge” in New Delhi for the first case study, “disciplinary power and policing” for the second, and “the biopolitics of urban improvement” in the third (3). As these descriptions would suggest, Legg’s book can be, at times, a little overwhelming for those less familiar with Foucault’s thought. Even as Legg carefully explains what elements of theory he is drawing upon and why, his narrative is understandably anxious to get to the history of Delhi. Here, though, readers of this journal will be most impressed by how Legg uses the historical fact and detail he excavates from the archives to speak to the theoretical literature. By having his book linger in place, in Delhi, Legg is able to add nuance to how different conditions in the cities called forth different tactics and practices of governance and thus produced multiple governmentalities.

Unlike the emphasis on freedom in the liberal cities that interest Joyce and Otter, Legg shows us that the emphasis in Delhi was on containment. Here the unmistakable difference, both historically and theoretically, is race. While Joyce is able to summon his rich experience in British working-class, labour, and social history and Otter draws so effectively on the history of science and technology, Legg draws upon post-colonial scholarship to problematize governance and the colonial city. We therefore read about things such as colonial mimicry, anti-nationalism, and competing epistemologies of time (and thus memory), which reveal Delhi less a place of heavily governed freedom but more so a heavily governed colonial contact zone. The class politics of the nineteenth-century British liberal city so important in Joyce and Otter seem almost simple in contrast to the cross-cultural race and class politics that inhabit Delhi and in fact inhabited the place before the British relocated the capital. By situating colonial governmentality in the specifics of Delhi, in taking place seriously, Legg illuminates the disciplining of

residents through the disciplining of urban space and convincingly explains how the interconnected politics of health and race were fundamental to how Delhi was designed, constructed, and policed.

One key theme that cuts across each of these books is the power-knowledge practices that defined governmentality in both the liberal city of freedom and the colonial city of containment. When reading these books, it is easy to imagine the filing cabinets in city halls swelling with each passing day: maps, sketches, blueprints, floor plans, statistical tables, inspector reports, medical files, transcripts of committee hearings, correspondence, all of which seemed to accumulate exponentially. At some point, decisions were made to move material out of these cabinets and into archives, itself a fundamental act of modern governance. This explosion in knowledge-making and knowledge-saving was essential to governing the city, whether it was London, England, or Delhi, India. For the historian of governmentality to enter the archive and to confront one of these made-and-saved pieces of knowledge is to encounter history itself. As these books would insist, as would Foucault, the file cabinet did not merely hold the facts; it legitimized and helped make such facts politically powerful.

For each of these books, the technicians of the modern city, especially engineers, surveyors, inspectors, clerks, and planners, thus play a very important role. A map of a proposed street widening, for example, is not merely an accomplishment of learned skill and technical expertise. It becomes, for Joyce, Otter, and Legg (all of whom use such documents) a means to think about how bodies were expected to inhabit and move through the city. The map itself might well be understood as a monument to a particular governmentality, but this is where these books go further. Inspired by the actor-network theory made so famous by scholars in the social studies of science such as Bruno Latour, John Law, and Michel Callon, these books insist that we know more about who made such a map, under what conditions, and how. They also want to know who consulted and used the map, how the map became a technology of governance. One benefit of such a research strategy is that it draws more and more different actors and elements into the story, and thus the connections between knowledge-making and the effects of power become more clearly identified and located. While it may surprise some, the study of governmentality must be deeply empirical, something the authors of these books understand well.

Governmentality studies thus offer urban historians some interesting ways to think anew about some well-worn historiographical terrain and to reflect about their own archival encounters. Perhaps most importantly, an urban history of governmentality places emphasis on the ordering of the city and telling stories about the people, practices, and technologies that pursue this goal. In this literature, the politics of place are widened and deepened to something more than elections and policy-formation, as important as those things are. Politics becomes located more clearly in the everyday, in spaces, in things, in memories, and in people that might surprise us. Learning more

about these not only makes for a better urban history, it may also contribute to better, more just cities today.

Notes

1. After much effort, the lectures have been reassembled and edited by Michel Senelleart. After initially appearing in French, they have been translated into English by noted Foucault specialist Graham Burchell. On “governmentality,” see Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* (2004; repr., London: Palgrave, 2007) and *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2004; repr., London: Palgrave, 2008).
2. Three key scholars in the field map this evolution in Nikolas Rose, Pat O'Malley, and Mariana Valverde, “Governmentality,” *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 2 (2006): 83–104.

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Kristofferson, Robert B. *Craft Capitalism: Craftworkers and Early Industrialization in Hamilton, Ontario, 1840–1872*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. 328 pp.

A provocative and exceptionally well-researched book, Robert Kristofferson's *Craft Capitalism* offers nothing less than a fundamental reinterpretation of Ontario's early industrialization in the mid-nineteenth century. Focusing on the embryonic urban environment of Hamilton from 1840 to 1872, Kristofferson argues persuasively that the effects of early industrial capitalism among craftworkers were largely positive, leading not to urban proletarianization, but to increased economic opportunity. Taking issue with the “dispossession theory” held by labour historians such as Gregory Kealey and Bryan Palmer, Kristofferson claims that “Hamilton craftworkers were eager participants in the unfolding of industrialization because their situation within it allowed them to understand themselves and to act as its beneficiaries.” (243) Emphasizing the triumph of craft continuity over the uneven pace of capitalistic change, Kristofferson stresses the commonality of interests and experiences held by artisanal masters and journeymen. *Craft Capitalism* presents a carefully nuanced vision of the “transmodal” phase of early urban industrialism, as craftworkers and artisans successfully straddled emerging industrial capitalist modes of production with an enduring craft culture.

The first three chapters situate the material composition of craft capitalism within the burgeoning industrial expansion of Hamilton itself. The resulting flexibility of this industrial growth was achieved without a fundamental altering of economic relationships, as “an expanded number of small handicraft enterprises stood in generally peaceful co-existence with a considerable number of enlarged manufactories.” (21) Utilizing meticulously gathered census schedules, city directories, urban newspapers and individual biographies, Kristofferson offers a convincing depiction of an industrial city built by its migrant craftworkers. The relative absence of class conflict is explained through these migratory labour patterns; with the vast majority of craftworkers emigrating from the British Isles, many came to Hamilton in search of economic advancement and prosperity, aspirations seemingly unattainable in the Old World.

And, by and large, they succeeded. With assiduous attention to detail, Kristofferson traces the origins of 233 proprietors of industrial establishments in Hamilton, and concludes that roughly 85 to 95% of these owners were former artisans who “rose through the ranks.” (72) Their visible presence within the industrial community provided a powerful symbol of craft mobility for journeymen and apprentices, and the mentoring process offered by craft culture would provide practical means of “masculine independence” for a large majority of journeymen artisans and craftworkers.

With the socio-economic context of craft capitalism firmly established, Kristofferson argues that both master and journeymen forged a particular craft culture, one that emphasized “mutualism” in social relations rather than adversarial capitalistic competition. This craft continuity reinforced the social construction of workplace masculinities, through shared workspace on the shop floor and seminal cultural celebrations such as picnics, excursions, testimonials and parades.

Kristofferson is particularly persuasive when he adheres to the inner workings of workplace craft mutualism, and the craft identity of masculine exclusiveness. However, the author does not explore as thoroughly the intricate negotiations of power inherent in these obligations and dependencies—contractual or otherwise—between masters, journeymen and apprentices, nor does he examine how these employment responsibilities might have been atypical in a capitalist shop. Less convincing is his discussion of craft mutualism when it moves outside the workplace context. The rhetoric of craft mutualism found in various testimonials merely resonates as a remnant of earlier paternalist discourse. Likewise, while Kristofferson claims that the larger dwellings of masters illustrate craft continuity and economic promise, it could easily be demonstrated that differentiated urban space could become an authoritative symbol of the power dynamics existing between masters and journeymen.

A comparable difficulty in recognizing occupational power relationships exists in Kristofferson's otherwise engaging look at the culture of the “self-made artisan” and the ideology of the “self-improving craftworker.” Correctly accentuating the reality that the “self-made man is a slippery concept and needs to be used with some caution,” (138) Kristofferson notes that craftworkers employed this image to foster a craft ideology of masculine independence, sobriety and industriousness, separate from the aristocratic pretensions of the commercial/professional classes. Similarly, recognizing that self-education was the key to craft continuity and advancement, craftworkers often took advantage of such institutions as the Hamilton Mechanics' Institute, mercantile libraries and literary societies.

While this perspective offers a welcome and effective corollary to the existing paradigm that craftworkers and artisans operated in opposition to the “producer ideology” of industrial capitalism, his argument appears to mirror an outmoded liberal historiography of the Victorian period as an age of improvement and progress. By taking the rhetoric of the self-made and