Peter Burke — *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. Reprint edition. Hants, England: Wildwood House, 1988. Pp. xiii, 365.

Susan Easton, Alun Howkins, Stuart Laing, Linda Merricks and Helen Walker — *Disorder and Discipline: Popular Culture from 1550 to the Present*. Hants, England: Temple Smith, 1988. Pp. viii, 215.

Stuart Woolf — *The Poor in Western Europe in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. London: Methuen, 1986. Pp. ix, 240.

These three very different books at first glance have little or nothing in common. Peter Burke's now classic book, first printed in 1978 and reissued in 1988, carefully and with great detail, analyzes popular culture in early modern Europe, from 1500 to 1800. This work encompasses all of Europe, from England to Russia, from Scandinavia to Italy, including France and the German states. The slim volume of Easton, Howkins, Laing, Merricks and Walker also seeks to elucidate popular culture, but the authors confine their descriptions to England, concentrate on the post-1700 epoch, and carry the survey to the present day. The book of Stuart Woolf, on the other hand, does not deal with popular culture per se, but is a social history in which he attempts to examine widely held norms of the poor in Italy, specifically Tuscany, during the French occupation, from 1800-1815. The ties that bind these books together consist of their attempts to make the lives of the poor, their culture and their *mentalité* visible to the modern reader. Taken together, these works illustrate the connections between social history and cultural history that have occurred during the past decade.

The pathbreaking work of Peter Burke explores the content, development and significance of popular culture in Europe, employing a synthesis of the varying approaches of anthropologists, art historians, folklorists, more traditional social historians and philosophers such as Lévi-Strauss. Beautifully written, illustrated, and with an extensive bibliography, but unfortunately one that has not been updated since the first publication in 1978, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* furnishes a base for social historians who wish to explore the culture of the peasants. One weakness of the book is lack of sufficient attention to women and to gender issues. It is unfortunate that this book was not revised before reissuance to take into account the recent research on gender issues and to update the excellent bibliography with relevant works that have appeared since 1978. Nevertheless, those of us who failed to read this book ten years ago, should take notice of it now.

After first defining culture as "a system of shared meanings, attitudes and values and the symbolic forms...in which they are expressed or embodied" (Prologue), Burke then defines popular culture as those attitudes and values of the poor, the illiterate, as expressed through festivals, feasts, fairs, folksongs, folktales, images, carnivals, games and a host of other rituals, and transmitted by vagabond entertainers, street performers, story tellers, preachers, narrative songs, mock trials and mock sermons. Popular culture comes to the historian's attention because such rituals and tales were recorded, not without problems of accuracy as Burke shows, when the literate upper classes took an interest in them. Chapters 1 and 2 investigate reasons for the great interest in popular culture during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the problems with the documents which can only function as mediators between the sources and the historian. An analysis of the interaction between elite and popular culture, and their mutual permeability, is woven throughout this book.

With tremendous erudition, Burke points out common themes and variations throughout Europe. Ballads, plays and folktales appear in a multiplicity of patterns, combinations and variants of the same tale. Furthermore, similar hero-types are found in different parts of Europe. For example, the outlaw as a hero is seen in Robin Hood, in England, and in Stenka Razin, in Russia. Burke admits, however, that it would be too grandiose to speak of universal laws governing a combination of motifs in these tales, but universal events or patterns were played out with unique local variants. Women, who appear as heroines, are passively heroic in their suffering; villainous women are deceitful or apparent as witches (164). Burke, or other historians, need to explore further and analyze the theme of women as heroines.

"The World of the Carnival" and "The Triumph of Lent" (chapters 7 and 8) supply fascinating reading. Burke describes the universal carnival themes of food, sex and violence manifested in the three universal parts of a carnival (procession, competition and performance) in an engaging analysis. In describing the topsy-turvy ritual of institutionalized disorder that the carnival represented, Burke attempts to portray what carnivals and rituals meant to the participants. Given the limitation of sources, he is successful. What is striking, however, is how often anti-Semitism seems part of popular culture. For example, Burke notes that "cocks, dogs, cats and Jews...were pelted with mud and stones..." (187). Further analysis of popular rituals directed against Jews is warranted.

Attempts at social control are perceived throughout. Rituals, for example, the charivari, served as social control mechanisms among the populace. The elites also tried to influence popular and religious rituals in attempts at social control of the poor. They were aware that broadsides and chap books, the mass media prior to the eighteenth century, were a means of control. Some of the educated engaged in a more systematic attempt to change the values and attitudes of the rest of the population. They objected to elements of popular culture on Christian and moral grounds and sought to impose their ethics of diligence, orderliness, prudence, reason and sobriety on the rituals, songs, games and carnivals of the poor. To their dismay, they found that popular culture was initially resilient. The elite-educated reformers achieved less than they had wanted, and this engendered a greater split between the culture of the elite and popular culture. Between 1650 and 1800, however, the "resilience of popular culture began to break down" (235) and popular culture changed in important ways. In his final chapter, Burke analyzes the impact of social and economic changes on popular culture. He concludes that the "commercial revolution led to a golden age of traditional popular culture (material culture at least) before the combined commercial and industrial revolutions destroyed it" (246).

The authors of *Disorder and Discipline* do not bear witness to the destruction of popular culture, but describe its transformations up to the present day. They define popular culture as the culture of the "working class". Despite the implication of an analysis based on Foucault that is apparent from the title, this casual survey of British popular culture incorporates none of the larger theoretical or analytical themes of Foucault.

The Introduction to this volume consists of an informative historiographic essay on the development of cultural studies and of popular culture, as intellectual and academic disciplines. The authors show the centrality of the approaches of Marxism, structuralism and feminist ideology to their discipline. They note the concern of popular culture with "the experience (rather than just the behaviour) of ordinary social

actors, of 'common people' and an explicit recognition that such people do 'count'" (10).

Chapter 1 covers much the same ground as does Burke, but without the engaging writing style and extensive primary research he demonstrated. Similar to Burke, the authors of *Disorder and Discipline* conclude that cultural stratification evolved from 1500 to 1700, when the "dominant 'middling sort', who are often seen as the vanguard of the extreme Protestantism, identified both moral degeneracy and 'Romish superstition' with the popular cultural practices of the poor" (31), thus, labelling popular culture as immoral and superstitious. In their discussions of the witch craze and of the carnivals, they echo Burke, but show more sensitivity to issues of sex and gender than he does. Unlike Burke, the authors of this volume dwell on drinking as a form of popular culture and find the separation of the elite from the poor apparent in the growth of the alehouse as a working-class cultural form, when the elite removed the church as a main site of popular entertainment.

During the two hundred years between 1700 and 1914, covered only in chapter 2 (30 pages), the authors claim that the separation of elite from popular culture became widely marked, and a distinct organized national culture of the poor began to materialize in the form of working-class football, and the pub as major forms and centers of popular culture. Aside from an awareness of gender issues, such as the exclusion of women from the culture of the pubs and football, the discussion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, one of enormous change, is too brief and cursory. There is little attention to chronology, and the arguments need more evidence to be convincing. Chapter 3 examines twentieth-century mass-market consumerism as an aspect of working-class culture. With a cataloguing of the growth of leisure time activities such as drinking, racing, shopping, spectator sports and "keeping fit", the authors seek to show the "incorporation of leisure into popular consciousness and the emergence of an increasingly common culture" (99-100).

The theme of social control appears in this volume as it does in that of Burke, first in the Protestant elite's attempt to try to enforce moral discipline on a "rude and disorderly people" in the seventeenth century, then, in attempts at censorship of films and the licensing of alehouses in the twentieth century. The cinema, radio and press emerged as part of the mass media of popular culture during the interwar period, and the elite sought to control the working classes through all of these. However, "because of its intensity, football support is not easily 'managed' by social control agencies" (182). The authors of *Disorder and Discipline* state that the notion of agency is important and want to show popular culture as a lived experience. They do not quite realize their goal because the response of popular culture to attempts at censorship and control is lacking from this study.

The last chapter, focusing on the football subculture for men and the role of romance in young women's lives, raises questions about the way in which leisure and popular culture is constructed through ideologies of masculinity and feminity. The authors assert that "Gender is...a significant determinant of leisure experience which needs to be considered in its own right, distinct from class" (174), and they examine female culture. Nevertheless, the authors conclude that class inequalities and the labor market assume paramount importance in understanding leisure activities and popular culture. It is too bad that this general romp through centuries of leisure time activity does not permit careful proof of the authors' interesting assertions, nor a clear definition of the working class.

There are several ways in which historians can study the poor, and a variety of useful methodologies to employ. Borrowing from anthropology, literary criticism and sociology can illuminate popular culture. Some social historians employ demographic or quantitative analyses, others approach the poor through a study of institutions, and yet, others follow an economic approach. Some, like Stuart Woolf, combine several methodologies and approaches in their attempts to study the lives of the poor. Throughout, however, Woolf envisions the poor through poverty and charity and, thus, portrays quite a different picture of their lives than is seen in the other books under review.

In *The Poor in Western Europe in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Woolf distinguishes the laboring poor as a separate social category from the working class. The failure to separate them was a flaw in *Disorder and Discipline*. The rituals and behaviour of those in poverty, as depicted by Woolf, differ from the popular culture, as analyzed in the other books. Woolf stresses, however, that it is "difficult and even deceptive to identify an autonomous culture of the poor, in the sense of their acceptance of the values of the dominant society" (39). The local *bureaux de bienfaisance* and *monts de piété* were more a part of the culture of poverty (if one can use that term) than alehouses and football. Woolf does not really write about the culture of the poor. In fact, he refuses to argue "for an autonomous culture of poverty, but rather for the appropriation by the poor of values deemed by the elites to be central to the orderly functioning of society....To be poor was to identify oneself as separate from all other members of society, most publicly by dependence on charity.... It is the deferential mentality" of the poor on relief that Woolf uses to "distinguish the poor as a social category" (63). Poverty is not only a stark fact of life, but it is also a social construct. Woolf attributes agency to the poor and points out the defense mechanisms they developed.

In a lucid and impressive first chapter, Woolf summarizes and discusses recent research and methodologies on poverty and charity throughout western Europe from about 1500 to the present. The title is misleading, and the remainder of this book is only a case study of fifteen years in Tuscany. This work has some relevance to Europe in a very general sense only because the effects of economic transformation on the peasants and on the poor are generally applicable to other places. Using an economic approach in chapter 2, Woolf shows the effects of proto-industrialization in deepening structural and conjunctural poverty in Florence and Tuscany, giving rise to a transitional system of charity and welfare. The reader may find these developments emblematic of changes elsewhere in Europe.

In chapter 3, Woolf discusses the elite's attitudes toward, and their treatment of, the poor. The elites held two distinct normative values for the poor: 1) young people are expected to refrain from conceiving children until they can support them, and 2) adults are expected to work unless they are disabled or supported by their family. Those poor who could not work, through no fault of their own, such as infants, the infirm, or the aged, were the deserving poor. Although Woolf synthesizes little, one might conclude that in differentiating between the deserving and the undeserving poor, and in advocating direct contact between the donors and recipients of charity, the culture of the elite tried to exert some social control over the culture of the poor. Chapters 4 and 5, of interest mainly to the specialist, discuss the reliability of the available statistics and the problems associated with studying the history of the poor in Italy during that fifteen-year span, specifically the structural causes of pauperism and the institutional responses of *bienfaisance*.

The historian of popular culture would find much of interest in chapter 6. Woolf attempts to examine the popular culture of the poor, and considers the eighteenth century as a deep divide between propertied and laboring classes, one which effectively separated culture into "civilized" culture and that of the people. The question of language is of paramount importance, a question that does not concern the authors of the other books under review. The big problem was the language of communication between the legal terminology of the administrators of *bienfaisance* and the argot of the poor. Woolf examines the simple terms that the poor used to describe themselves in their applications for assistance to a major charitable institution of Florence as evidence of how the poor saw themselves. Their language revealed that they defined themselves in terms of their work. Shifting from the methodology of textual analysis to a quantitative approach, in two excellent subsequent chapters, Woolf examines family and household structure from a large sample of charity recipients (male and female) and endeavors to show how the poor, dependent on charity, differed from the working classes in general.

Carnivals, fairs, rituals, drinking establishments and games are absent from this story of the poor. Their absence here and their prominence in the other books reviewed illustrate how elusive the culture of the poor really is, and how important it is both to define the group studied and the methodology. Different approaches yield different conclusions. These three books, varying in scope, methodology and subject, when taken together contribute several pieces to the picture puzzle of the lives of the poor.

Rachel G. Fuchs
Arizona State University

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Pierre Chevallier — *Les Régicides : Clément, Ravaillac, Damiens.* Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1989. Pp. 419.

This study examines the assassinations of Henry III and Henry IV and the successful attack on Louis XV in 1757. By a close examination of the circumstances and personnel surrounding each occasion, Chevallier seeks to find explanations for the attacks and place them in a wider context to illuminate a central feature of early modern France, the intimate alliance between church and state. He argues that the behaviour of each of these kings challenged the fundamental laws of France in such a way as to rupture the unity of church and state. These breaks inspired the widespread opposition to the crown which the assaults of the assassins represented.

Henry III's acceptance, for example, of the Protestant Henry of Navarre as his heir caused acute friction between the fundamental laws of the realm. Following salic law, he was the rightful heir, although only very distantly related to the Valois, but other principles dictated that the king of France must be Catholic. This irreconcilable dilemma split the nation. Clément is portrayed as the tool of the Catholic party. At the instigation of the duchesse de Montpensier and her brother the duc de Mayenne, he was dispatched to assassinate his ruler, both to revenge the earlier murders of the De Guise brothers who had offered the main alternatives to Navarre and to further the future political plans of the Catholic League. The possibility of such action was in little doubt at a time when the legitimacy of tyranicide was widely discussed in intellectual circles.