

mistranslations (p. 94, the *Kathedersozialisten* of 1870s Germany were lectern socialists, not cathedral socialists).

The wealth of detail in Wagner's analysis may not add up to a compelling narrative or a convincing theoretical model. However, the book will remain in my personal library as an extremely useful reference and starting point for more detailed examinations of topics such as the manufacturing of national images, secular and religious aid to migrants, and emigration discourses.

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WOOD, B. Anne — *Evangelical Balance Sheet: Character, Family, and Business in Mid-Victorian Nova Scotia*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006. Pp.197.

From 1862 until his death in 1886 at age 51, Norman Rudolf, a Pictou businessman, head of a growing family and active in the life of his local Anglican church, the Sons of Temperance, and the YMCA, recorded his perceptions of daily life in five volumes of a journal. Made available for microfilming to the Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management in the 1970s and 1980s, the journal was the only document left by Rudolf and thus represented a formidable interpretive challenge. Building on her extensive publications on various aspects of nineteenth-century Pictou life, Anne Wood has succeeded admirably in placing it within a meaningful cultural context. With the exception of the final chapter, she focuses on the Pictou years, 1862 to 1870, at which point — for economic reasons — the Rudolfs moved to Scotland, eventually settling near Liverpool.

Commenced when Rudolf was 27 and prompted by a passage from that well-worn seventeenth-century call to “religious seriousness” in George Herbert's *Country Parson*, the journal apparently makes little explicit mention of Rudolf's own spirituality or his evangelical search for meaning in everyday life. Instead, it is daily and weekly rituals of prayer, Bible reading, Sunday School work, and church attendance that give evidence of his evangelical commitment. The latter becomes part of the book's primary theme: Rudolf's expression of an ideal of character that “involved a type of balance sheet of his evangelical service to his God, his family, his business, and his community” (p. xxiv). Drawing for theory on Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* and on recent literature on Victorian gender and middle-class formation, Wood proceeds to offer a detailed account of the varied ways Rudolf explored in his diary the concept of character to which he aspired.

Evangelicals took themselves and their faith most seriously, and Wood's analysis is no less thorough and earnest. Extensive citations from the journal and from the secondary literature illustrate that Rudolf's views were representative of a

wider pattern in both private and public life. In this way, *Evangelical Balance Sheet* becomes a useful case study of earlier research on gender and middle-class formation by, for example, Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff, John Tosh, and Steven Mintz. Surprisingly, no mention is made, however, of two obvious comparable Canadian studies of the mid-nineteenth century, *John Wesley's Nova Scotia Businessmen* by Allen B. Robertson and J. I. Little's *The Child Letters*.

Besides providing detail and texture to more general research, case studies point to the peculiar and the distinctive in Victorian private and public life. Thought-provoking vignettes are given, for example, of Rudolf's caring relationship with his widowed mother, his children, and his wife Cassie Dawson (cousin of the eminent educator, J. William Dawson) and of the faithful courage with which, in his final weeks, he faced cancer and his impending death. A danger, of course, in using a diary as the primary source to explicate character is its limited perspective, especially given the propensity of evangelicals to self-censorship and moral righteousness. More might have been done, therefore, through creative and against-the-grain reading, to uncover the hidden, and possibly contradictory, voices of wife and children.

Despite some repetition of information, the thematic approach taken works well, with separate chapters devoted to the home, business life, and militia culture and to church and moral associations, all areas where Rudolf is seen to test and mature his ideal and practice of Christian character. By 1862, when he began the journal, he had been in Pictou nine years, first as an employee in the shipping and banking firm of James Primrose, and then — with the “retirement” in 1864 of the elder Primrose in favour of his two sons — as a one-quarter shareholder in the newly formed firm of Primrose and Rudolf. Here, as in his role as Anglican church warden, Rudolf displayed astute and loyal leadership during years when the Pictou area experienced the transition from a mercantile to an industrial economy and from fractious denominationalism to a more irenic and activist evangelicalism. Although notice is given to some of the tensions and contradictions inherent in his role, the focus on character formation through means of “an evangelical balance sheet” inevitably does understate their impact. Not until near the end of the book, for example, does the reader realize that Rudolf's private and public leadership in Pictou was forged within a context of business risks and reversals that ultimately led him to take the monumental step of uprooting his family to Scotland, leaving behind an aging mother and an established reputation.

Attributed to his concern to provide a more promising future for his children (and the success of his wife's brother in establishing a successful manufacturing/retail business in Glasgow), the move eventually led to a better standard of living. Details on this are sparse; the family photograph on the book's cover is telling. In the absence of surviving photographs, it is not of the Rudolf family of the 1860s, but of the oldest son, Robert Dawson Rudolf. Trained in medicine at the University of Edinburgh, studiously posed as reading a book and flanked

by his wife and two children, Robert shows no evidence of the strains that shaped his father's character ideal. It is thanks to Wood's careful excavation of Norman Rudolf's journal that we are now able to look beyond the apparent ease and tranquillity of this Edwardian professional family and become more aware of the struggle for balance and security that made evangelical religion such a good fit with business life a generation earlier in Pictou, Nova Scotia.

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