some of its importance in the lives and work of procureurs, in large part because of a lack of willingness to come to terms with new ways of working, including close cooperation with clerks and solicitors. The unity of the community had always been a fiction that took a backseat to the defense of the common interest of individual procureurs and this remained true late in the eighteenth century “even if it became increasingly difficult... to say just what these common interests were.” (p. 290)

Much of the contribution of Délibérer à Toulouse is methodological, and Dolan provides us with an exemplary model of how to approach the deliberations of eighteenth-century guilds, communities and corps. A healthy dose of scepticism and humility is required, and the author demonstrates these qualities in her refusal to push the analysis further than the evidence allows. One surprise is how little space is devoted to the fiscal demands of the Crown, which was a main raison d’être for corps in the Ancien Régime. But this is not a complete history of the procureurs, and Dolan discussed the theme in detail in her previous book. The cultural, social and political challenges posed by the Enlightenment are present in the background, and by the late eighteenth century much had changed in the relationship between procureurs and their community. But rather than emphasizing a story of the gradual weakening of communal bonds, Délibérer à Toulouse tells the story of men who “attempted to solve, as best they could, the problems and the conflicts that everyday life presented them with, while leaving to others the luxury of reflecting on the system that controlled their actions.” (p. 298)

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Although state-authorized eugenic practices took many forms over the years, none have attracted more attention overall than the sterilization of men and women designed to prevent for good the inheritance of allegedly undesirable characteristics. Touted as an efficient and cost-saving measure allowing those who would otherwise need institutionalizing to live independently, sterilization was the preferred policy in a number of countries, perhaps most notably in the U.S. and Germany as well as in the Scandinavian world. In Facing Eugenics: Reproduction. Sterilization and the Politics of Choice, Erika Dyck tells the story of the lesser-known but energetic and far-reaching sterilization programme employed in the westerly province of Alberta, the first of the Canadian provinces to experiment with this option, beginning in 1928 with the passage of the Sexual Sterilization Act.

Dyck’s moving work reveals the long reach of the law even after repeal in 1972, the shifting grounds that assured the persistence of sterilization after the Nuremberg trials of the late 1940s, and the particular local contexts which shaped
Alberta’s experience with eugenics. This is a careful and impressive study of an important element of Alberta’s history barely acknowledged before the celebrated Leilani Muir court case of 1996, the only successful case brought against the provincial government for wrongful sexual sterilization.

Muir’s experience rightly occupies a complete chapter of Dyck’s work as does the less celebrated case of Doreen Befus. Befus was not only sterilized but housed in institutions from the age of seven and until she was 49 when she made the transition to independent living, becoming an articulate and passionate patient-advocate. The narrative of her life and activism is, without doubt, a gripping and important tale but I’m not convinced it belongs in this book, or at least not as presented here. It would work superbly as a stand-alone article, but it changes the pace and the thrust of the book which until this chapter takes a broader approach using individual lives only as pointers to larger questions. This chapter fails to connect fully with the promise of the title and the introduction. The story itself and Dyck’s analysis are exemplary; it simply seems to me that it would be more effective as a solo piece focused in particular on patient-advocacy.

The substantive chapters which precede this one all begin with a case study, as does the final chapter, but prior to the Befus chapter the individual life story briefly engaged as introductory material quickly gives way (as noted above) to far broader discussions of the issues raised—masculinity, ‘proper’ families, reproductive control and so on. But when we get to Befus and subsequently Muir, the focus is much more centrally and biographically on the two women and their life stories. I suspect this reflects an archival imbalance: these are better-documented and better-known cases where Dyck has been able to follow trajectory and outcome much more easily. In other chapters she tells us that the trail has gone cold and that no more is known of what happened to the men and women whose lives were decided by the deliberations of Alberta’s Eugenics Board. I’m not sure, however, that the decision to begin so many chapters with what are essentially partial case studies which then mostly disappear in the body of the chapters, and to follow these with two such full case studies as Befus and Muir, does justice to Dyck’s splendid analysis. She does a really terrific job of teasing out the contexts which shaped Alberta’s policies: she shows how its agrarian conservatism, female activism, and response to immigration all profoundly influenced eugenic policy in the province. Her reading of the local effects of the Depression on eugenic policy adds a highly original note to more typical understandings. Her welcome emphasis on male experiences of sterilisation is a truly significant contribution, as is her point that metrics of intelligence underpinned the Alberta system to an unusual degree. But the different approach that shapes the two more biographically-oriented chapters, as well as the quickly-forgotten case studies that front the remainder of the chapters, throw the book structurally out of balance.

There is much to admire here and Dyck’s grip on the topic is firm and assured, but the often loose association between the initial brief case studies and the body of most of the chapters certainly disappoints a little. Nonetheless, we learn a great deal from Dyck’s book which confirms much of what we already know about eugenics policies in the Anglo-American sphere but at the same time offering a
fine-grained read of a highly localized practice in which almost 3,000 individuals lost any control whatsoever over their reproductive rights.

Perhaps the most controversial of the arguments that Dyck advances is her contestation of the claims that First Nations peoples were disproportionately targeted for sexual sterilization throughout the years that Alberta’s eugenic policy was in force. A careful reading of who was sterilized when, alongside her insights on the impact of eugenic thought and practice on the broader topic of reproductive rights (including birth control and abortion), lead Dyck to conclude that the sterilization of Aboriginals became a priority only when dying race theory (which was presumed to effect the same result) proved unsustainable in the 1960s. She does not argue that marginalized First Nations communities were unaffected by eugenic thinking, rather that formalized sterilization procedures among them increased rapidly and significantly in the later years of the sterilization programme. The destruction of the bulk of the Eugenic Board’s records make certainty in this matter impossible, but hers is a suggestive and important position which should not be dismissed out of hand.

Overall, then, Erika Dyck gives us a nuanced, sensitive and intelligent reading of this little-known chapter of Canadian history, the earliest and most aggressive state-sponsored eugenic programme the country undertook. This is a terrific book which deserves a wide audience well beyond Canada.

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Depuis l’élection du premier gouvernement de Stephen Harper en 2006, on note un intérêt accru pour le conservatisme canadien, longtemps négligé par la recherche académique. De fort pertinents ouvrages sont ainsi apparus ces dernières années, qu’il s’agisse de synthèses (The Right Balance : Canada’s Conservative Tradition, de Hugh Segal, ou Le conservatisme au Québec. Retour sur une tradition oubliée, de Frédéric Boily), de monographies historiques (Keeping Canada British : The Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Saskatchewan, de James Pitsula), ou de travaux sur la droite canadienne contemporaine. C’est à cette dernière catégorie qu’appartient Conservatism in Canada, ouvrage collectif dirigé par deux politologues ayant eux-mêmes auparavant contribué à ce nouvel essor : David Rayside (Faith, Politics, and Sexual Diversity in Canada and the United States) et James Farney (Social Conservatives and Party Politics in Canada and the United States). Quoique compréhensible, le choix de diviser l’ouvrage en deux sections, l’une sur le Parti Conservateur du Canada (PCC) et l’autre sur les conservatismes provinciaux, n’est pas sans causer certaines redondances, tout en rendant plutôt lacunaire la seconde section, qui aurait aisément pu faire l’objet d’un ouvrage séparé, notamment en raison du cas fort particulier du Québec.