

to contribute to the program, and that the even the Wartime Information Board was concerned about how employees felt about this practice (p. 88). This point offers another perfect glimpse into the limits of consensus, but Perrun does not elaborate on the topic in his conclusion to the chapter, instead concluding that the high rate of sales demonstrated acceptance of the program. Examples such as these ones provide excellent opportunities for him to question what consensus looked like, but Perrun does not sufficiently elaborate on their significance as a whole or integrate them well into his conclusions.

The Patriotic Consensus provides a well-researched, dynamic and detailed study of the impact of war on one urban centre, and on broad cross-sections of the Canadian population. This book will certainly be of interest to historians of Winnipeg, and Canadian experiences on the home front during the Second World War. While its conclusions could have been pushed further, it nonetheless provides a refreshing look at how Western Canada participated in the war effort. Given that Western Canada is often overlooked in histories of during the Second World War, in favour of industrial Ontario or dissenting Quebec, it is a valuable addition to the national story of how Canadians experienced the war at home.

Allison Marie Ward
Queen's University

PHILLIPS, Mark Salber – *On Historical Distance*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013. Pp. 293.

There is often an underlying prescriptiveness in histories of historical thought that Mark Salber Phillips seeks to avoid in his beautifully written book *On Historical Distance*. “Distance” may seem an odd concept to focus on in this regard, as it is typically invoked to explain the historian’s privileged position of detachment as a product of the passage of time, a rather narrow and normative view that is difficult to separate from modern historical practice. What Phillips has in mind, however, is a more comprehensive understanding of distance as a form of mediation that helps us think about the various “ways in which we are placed in relation to the past [...]. In broader terms, this means that historical distance belongs to a family of feelings, judgments, and actions that are bound up with our need to navigate the world around us” (12).

This much broader view of historical distance suits Phillips’ understanding of the development of history, which is not best understood as a linear path that leads inevitably to some sort of true historical consciousness, but rather “as circles of overlapping and competing genres that collectively make up the full family of historical representation” (141). Hence historical writing is just one among a variety of forms that are analysed throughout the book, which include historical painting, literary history, popular forms of historical representation such as museums, as well as counterfactual fiction.

This is not to say that there is no discussion of what we might call the canon of Western historiographical thinking. It is just that the analysis of such diverse figures as Machiavelli, David Hume, and E. P. Thompson is situated within a larger conceptual apparatus that focuses on how distance relates to form, affect, ideology, and understanding. The result is a more nuanced picture of the historical thinking of such canonical figures. Machiavelli, for instance, is often viewed as the culmination of the linear development of Florentine historiography, but Phillips argues that Machiavelli actually brought about a “synthesis that combines a dramatic particularity derived from the vernacular chronicles with an elevated rhetoricism he inherits from his humanist and classical models” (15). Phillips also places Machiavelli’s *Discourses* within the context of a rivalry of genres that offered competing forms of distantiation, the particularized narrative of Guicciardini against the speculative freedom of Machiavelli.

David Hume is subject to a similar process of reinvention. As the symbol of Enlightenment historiography, Hume is often presented as sceptical and detached, as an advocate for the prescriptive view of distance that Phillips finds so narrow. But by taking a wider view of Hume’s work Phillips locates a sentimental and often ironic tone that encourages “a new, and more openly affective connection to the past.” Phillips is careful not simply to recast Hume as a Romantic, as he argues that unlike the modes of historical representation of the early nineteenth century, Hume’s “affective identification with the past remains quite separate from the conceptual framework that gives history its intelligibility.” (16) For the Romantics, it was not just the reader but the historian as well who was expected to participate in the affective processes of imagining the past.

Phillips does a remarkable job showing how this Romantic view was reflected in less well-studied (at least from a historiographical framework) historical genres of the nineteenth century such as historical surveys, historical painting, literary history, and a genre that he has called “contrast narratives.” Apparently just as the narrative mode of historical writing was beginning to dominate in the nineteenth century with its continuous and linear plot structures, the Romantic forms of “contrastiveness” that existed on the margins articulated a very different story, one that portrayed the present as a radical departure from the past. Carlyle’s *Past and Present* (1843) is perhaps the most obvious example but historical painting also began to trade in just this form of contrastiveness as is no better shown than in the cover image for the book. Paul Delaroche’s *Cromwell Opening the Coffin of Charles I* (1831) is marvellously interpreted by Phillips as creating “an idea of epochal change around a figure caught in a moment of silent reflection” (134).

In the final section of the book, Phillips examines “a strongly affective engagement with the past” that begins in earnest by the late 1960s as a reaction to the then dominant scientific and grand scale trends of the historical discipline. Microhistory is most obviously a product of this reaction, as it was a genre that was founded to reduce dramatically the *longue durée* promoted by the *Annales* School by imaginatively reconstructing the experiences of past ordinary lives. Less obvious in this context, however, is Thompsonian social history, which Phillips argues promoted a very similar sentimentalism when it came to rescuing the long-

ignored lower orders from the enormous condescension of posterity. Such was done, argues Phillips, to produce an affect, namely to make present a sentimental view of the past in order to help bring about an ideological engagement with the current struggles of humanity.

It's clear that Phillips finds this sentimentalism dominant within the current "family of historical representation" as even academic and popular forms of history seem to be converging precisely on the grounds of producing a sentimental feeling in the reader. More could have been said about the recent return to the large scale, and how the modes of distantiation promoted by genres like deep history and big history may (or may not) differ from the sentimental school. Phillips seems to assume that these new grand narratives would "choose to turn away from the current fascination with affect to embrace programs that seem to offer historians grander prospects or more rigorous designs" (206), but they rely on a rhetoric of creating a sense of deep feeling in the reader towards the *longue durée* even while such rhetoric is embedded within a supposedly objective and scientific mode of knowledge that was only made possible by the passage of time that has led to ourselves.

It is in this way that *On Historical Distance* provides a useful conceptual apparatus for analysing historical thinking and representation that is by no means limited to Phillips' particular subjects of interest. But is this broader view of distance any less prescriptive than the much narrower one that it seeks to replace? I'm not so sure. It certainly allows us to cast a much wider net while thinking more generally about the way representations of history are often complex mediations between past and present. And yet Phillips' conceptual scheme necessarily stresses the artistic and affective side of history not unlike the way the narrow view of distance stresses scientific detachment. We are no longer naïve enough to be blinded by the prescriptions of the latter, but we might just sympathise enough with the former to fail to notice the prescriptive elements in what is presented as a mere heuristic.

Ian Hesketh

The University of Queensland

ROBERTSON, Leslie A. and the Kwagu'ł Gixsam clan – *Standing up with Ga'axsta'las: Jane Constance Cook and the Politics of Memory, Church, and Custom*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012. Pp. 569.

Before the publication of this book, Ga'axsta'las or Jane Constance Cook (1870-1951) was recorded as a leading proponent of the colonial ban on the potlatch, this despite her wide ranging involvement in early-twentieth-century Aboriginal political activism, and her seemingly non-stop involvement in all aspects of community life at 'Yalis (Alert Bay). For Cook, and especially for her descendant who grew up after the lifting of the potlatch ban, this image of Cook as a "colonial