

tout d'Ottawa, non de Washington. La loi sur la clarté, par exemple, a pu faire l'affaire des Américains, mais on n'a pas démontré que ce sont eux qui l'ont conçue.

Quant au second volet de l'ouvrage, il est l'objet des réflexions les plus profondes et les plus inspirantes de l'auteure. On ne peut que souhaiter avec elle que l'humanisme en vienne à tenir le coup devant l'économisme ambiant, que le Québec participe activement à cette lutte et maintienne une certaine distanciation par rapport à l'hégémonie culturelle américaine.

Il ne faudrait pas pour autant en venir à oublier deux impératifs fondamentaux de la politique québécoise. D'abord, le Québec ne gagnerait rien à négliger ses orientations nord-américaines. Même si la politique ne doit pas être toute soumise aux intérêts économiques, elle se doit tout de même de s'y adapter. Par exemple, si nous souffrons du fait que les grands traités de libre-échange du continent américain sont peu respectueux des intérêts et aspirations de la société civile, faudrait-il pour cela se résigner à ce qu'il en soit toujours ainsi? Faudrait-il abandonner l'espoir, si lointain soit-il, d'une véritable citoyenneté nord-américaine? Le Québec devrait-il laisser tomber des institutions comme les Accords américano-québécois pour la jeunesse? Anne Légaré témoigne elle-même de l'importance de maintenir une présence active aux États-Unis, ne serait-ce que pour contrer l'énorme diplomatie canadienne qui transmet trop souvent une image déformée du Québec.

Quant à l'américanité du Québec, ne demeure-t-elle pas une marque essentielle de la contribution québécoise à la Francophonie? S'il se trouve des Français pour déplorer que les Québécois soient trop américains, il s'en trouve aussi pour souhaiter que nous demeurions une « passerelle » (p. 244) entre l'Europe et les États-Unis.

On me permettra de relever en terminant une petite erreur. L'auteure mentionne, à deux reprises, la « Flechter School of Diplomacy de Harvard » (p. 61, 168). Il aurait fallu écrire *Fletcher School* de l'Université Tufts.

Cet ouvrage, écrit dans une langue limpide et élégante, est incontournable pour quiconque s'intéresse un tant soit peu aux relations internationales du Québec.

Louis Balthazar
Université Laval

LEWIS, Judith S. — *Sacred to Female Patriotism: Gender, Class, and Politics in Late Georgian Britain*. New York and London: Routledge, 2003. Pp. 262.

The casual student of eighteenth-century history retains one indelible image of the role of aristocratic women in politics. It is that of Georgina, Duchess of Devonshire, kissing a butcher to secure a vote for Charles James Fox in the Westminster election of 1784. Supposedly her intervention represented a brazen departure from the traditional quiescence of upper-class women in public life. There are two problems with the story, however: first, it did not actually happen; and secondly, as Judith Lewis shows in her splendid book, it misrepresents the true picture of the role of aristocratic women in late Georgian politics.

That role was a considerable one, albeit often undertaken discretely, and it pro-

ceeded mainly from the fact that, despite the laws of coverture, aristocratic women could become considerable property holders in their own right. As such they had the capacity to influence the electoral process as effectively as their male relations; in the unreformed political system, what ultimately counted was class, not gender. In the counties they could, and often did, command the political affiliation of those tenants who also exercised the right to vote as freeholders. Their influence was even greater in Scotland, where those who held land “in superiority” (essentially a state of vassalage to the crown) could grant the franchise to others, “thus creating their own electoral fiefdoms” (p. 19). Through such means, Elizabeth, Countess of Sutherland — a person of startlingly reactionary views — controlled two-thirds of the votes in the county of Sutherland. Like their male counterparts, aristocratic women could also function as borough patrons, their influence reverberating through the rich variety of borough franchises. Even where women could not exercise patronage as property owners, they enjoyed influence through the thinly veiled deployment of bribery in “venal boroughs”. Involvement in the worst excesses of “Old Corruption”, apparently, was far from being an exclusively male prerogative. Aristocrats generally sought to avoid the expense and hurly-burly of electoral contests, but, when the need arose, aristocratic women were prepared to engage in them (with varying degrees of enthusiasm), “canvassing” voters and providing them with the hospitality and entertainment that they had come to expect as their due. Such activity challenges the notion, as Lewis makes clear, that in the family-based, elite politics of the late eighteenth century, there was any meaningful distinction between a public sphere reserved for men and a private one reserved for women; the two were continually converging.

Not all aristocratic women engaged in politics, of course, but then again neither did all aristocratic men. Frequently women felt obliged to assume a forward role in maintaining the political interests of their families when their menfolk proved indifferent, incompetent, or inexperienced. As a result, even women with no property in their own right, such as the Duchess of Devonshire, wielded considerable influence. Lewis’s book is packed with vignettes of women with an unflagging determination to uphold not only the family honour, but also the political principles with which it was often connected. One of the more engaging accounts concerns that of the redoubtable Mary Sandys Hill, Marchioness of Downshire, a member of the largest landowning family in County Down, Ireland. A bitter opponent of the *Act of Union* of 1801, the widowed Lady Downshire became the unflinching adversary of Lord Castlereagh for dominance in the county. So effective was her opposition that the government sought to win her over (unsuccessfully) by making her a peer in her own right, thus demonstrating that “elevation to the peerage was more often the consequence, than the cause, of political power” (p. 17).

What caused the influence of aristocratic women to recede and the historical recollection of their contributions to political life to be consigned almost to oblivion? Lewis points to a number of factors. By the beginning of the nineteenth century aristocratic families were already retreating from the expense and social annoyances of political engagement. Legislation, such as *Curwen’s Act* of 1809, which forbade the buying and selling of Parliamentary seats, thus put a formal seal on an existing trend. Political clubs, staunchly male in composition, emerged to displace the functions of

aristocratic political patrons. Cultural changes reinforced political ones. As aristocratic hegemony came under closer scrutiny, the presence of women in politics came to typify the old régime's decadence and effeminacy. Many aristocratic women themselves were embracing aspects of "a sentimental revolution" which lauded the domestic virtues and condemned direct political involvement for women as unseemly and "artificial". Hence the activities of the Duchess of Devonshire in support of her Whig friends, and the public reaction to those activities, should be seen as the end of an era for women in politics, not the beginning of a new one. By 1828 Lord Palmerston could pronounce, without fear of contradiction, that upper-class women had been reduced to mere "ornaments of society". Separate spheres were thus becoming a reality for upper-class women, and what now increasingly mattered in politics was gender, not class. Meanwhile, political reformers, dating back to John Wilkes in the 1760s and 1770s, were parlaying a distinctly masculine style of politics that would find ultimate expression in the *Reform Act* of 1832, the legislative culmination "of the process of naturalizing the political subject as male" (p. 262).

Lewis's book is a considerable achievement. It is based on monumental research, and her findings are presented with wit and style. It should also prove to be seminal: anyone who reads it will be obliged to accept a considerably altered view of Georgian politics and gender relations.

John Sainsbury
Brock University

MANDRESSI, Rafaël — *Le regard de l'anatomiste. Dissection et invention du corps en Occident*, Paris, Seuil, 2003.

Rafaël Mandressi remet ici en question l'historiographie sur la dissection en critiquant notamment l'approche déterministe des historiens et surtout des médecins qui l'ont construite. Son hypothèse tend à démontrer que l'anatomie est une construction culturelle déterminée par de multiples facteurs. Sa méthode consiste à examiner le regard de l'anatomiste en soi et dans son contexte. Le premier chapitre aborde la problématique de la relation entre l'Église, le christianisme et le corps. Une remise en cause attendue de l'influence de la bulle de Boniface VIII sur la « décarnisation » sert de point de départ à une réflexion épistémologique et anthropologique du rapport humain envers les corps morts et son évolution au cours de l'Antiquité tardive et du Moyen Âge. Les écrits patristiques, cléricaux et universitaires servent de base à cette discussion dont les thèmes incluent la résurrection et la prétendue répugnance de l'Église face au sang. Cette horreur du sang aurait-elle affecté l'exercice de la chirurgie et entravé un avènement de l'ouverture des corps? Encore une fois, ces lieux communs de l'historiographie sont examinés et nuancés par les études plus récentes et une perspective plus large qui considère un ensemble de résistances culturelles qui auraient joué un rôle dans l'absence de dissections entre la période alexandrine et le XIII^e siècle européen. Mais, d'après l'auteur, aucune hypothèse ne rend intelligible cette problématique puisque, d'emblée, la question est mal posée. Plutôt que de s'interroger sur ce qui aurait freiné l'avènement de la dissection des corps comme s'il