

Family Life and Sociability in Upper and Lower Canada makes an informative Canadian contribution to the accumulated international scholarship of the last 25 years on the history of the family and of domesticity in the nineteenth century, employing similar sources and methods. The book's strength lies in Noël's ability to harvest subtly nuanced insights out of often stony literary ground. Homespun diarists and correspondents were neither as direct, nor as garrulous, nor as literate as historians would like them to be. For that reason, one might reasonably question Noël's methodological strategy of arbitrarily restricting her source material to a limited class of diaries and letters. Time and again, they either fail to yield any meaningful insights into critical family and personal events — pregnancy, miscarriages, birth, festive occasions (anniversaries, birthdays, Christmas) — or fail to suggest topics that a study of domestic life ought to consider. The obvious example here is childless marriages. Families are simply assumed to consist of parents and children: more properly, two parents and their offspring. It may be that the "public" family and its individual members were more "private" and more circumspect in what they confided to their diaries or their correspondents than Noël admits. In any event, other sources might have filled in important gaps. For example, there is a substantial corpus of nineteenth-century immigration tracts, memoirs, reminiscences, and essays that can be mined for life-cycle experiences (see my "The Prose of Life": Literary Reflections of the Family, Individual Experience, and Social Structure in Nineteenth-Century Canada", *Journal of Social History*, vol. 9 [1976], pp. 367–381). Nowhere are the hallmarks of the cult of domesticity held up to closer scrutiny than in the lengthy obituaries that, for example, the *Christian Guardian* afforded Methodist wives and mothers in whose lives religion defined the substance of both earthly and spiritual love and duty. Nor are the National Archives of Canada and the Archives of Ontario the only repositories of nineteenth-century Canadian family correspondence, personal diaries, and other sources of family and domestic history.

These disagreements aside, *Family Life and Sociability in Upper and Lower Canada* is a challenging and informative reconsideration of the social organization of pre-industrial Upper and Lower Canada.

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SCHNAPP, Jeffrey T. — *Building Fascism, Communism, Liberal Democracy: Gaetano Ciocca – Architect, Inventor, Farmer, Writer, Engineer*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004. Pp. 291.

This brief, and forgiving, biography of the twentieth-century Italian inventor Gaetano Ciocca does the reader the service of bringing to light one of the forgotten avatars of modern rationalization, but neglects the opportunity to examine the subject critically. This is the first work in English dedicated uniquely to the life of Gaetano Ciocca (1882–1966), and it reads more like a documentation of his life than a critical interpretation of a man caught up in three political philosophies that competed

for control of Italy, and in fact the world, during his lifetime. The reader, while satisfied with this beginning, wishes for more analysis than is provided by the time the book ends.

The mission of Gaetano Ciocca is that of the modern engineer, writes Jeffrey Schnapp, elevated during the nineteenth century “from the status of mere technician, the passive implementer of the visions others, to that of socio-political visionary, at once creator and protagonist of modern times, a demiurge of the era of industry” (p. 3). Mussolini described engineers as the moral standard-bearers of fascism and considered them the critical link that would translate human endeavour into national production and imperial expansion. Ciocca’s path to engineering, and into the productive world of Mussolini’s fascist Italy, was one common to many of his generation. At first determined to enter the realm of theoretical mathematics, Ciocca transferred to applied sciences as a university student at Turin Polytechnic. However, as his projects will demonstrate, he never left the mindset of the idealist behind. Schnapp often compares Ciocca to Le Corbusier as a contemporary, and in this regard as a devotee of rationalism, functionalism, and above all clarity (his lifelong work would be called *La Chiara Scienza*, translated as “The Crystalline Science”), but he never investigates the exact nature and implications of the link between Ciocca’s idealism and practicality. Until the very end, he leaves it as a combination of Galilean devotion to explaining the world through math and a Catholic trust of the emancipatory possibilities of the totalizing project, which does not account entirely for the form of Ciocca’s works or thinking.

Ciocca’s projects are varied and numerous, some realized in part, few in total, none to the scale on which they were imagined. Here is the strongest aspect of Schnapp’s book, in which he brings a sympathetic eye to Ciocca’s projects, explaining them well in context and in terms of their impact on future technology. Ciocca’s first major project, and the one that would guide his fortunes for much of his career, was to design and oversee the construction of Fiat’s ball-bearing construction facility in Moscow: 5,000 machines, 15,000 workers, 350,000 square metres, a budget of 900 million lire, consuming enough energy to supply a town of 200,000 for one year, the biggest of its kind in the world. Ciocca’s plans were ambitious. His totalizing scheme of maximizing efficiency from dressing rooms to drainage systems ran him against the orthodoxy of the Soviets, and he lost his post at the head of the project. His unwillingness to accommodate his abstract scheme to local conditions and traditions was a harbinger of future failures and may even be counted as a hallmark of Ciocca’s work. Math may provide universal formulae, but design does not. That was a lesson Ciocca never quite learned, or never really wanted to learn.

His two years in the USSR might have been a disappointment to Ciocca on this basis, but instead he put his experience to other purposes. In the immediate aftermath of the Depression, the world was focused on two competing modes of production, communism and liberal democracy. In Ciocca’s Hegelian view of matters, these two competing systems represented the thesis and antithesis of the fascist synthesis, and he would write about both, visiting the United States at a later time. But it was his earlier publication, *Giudizio sul bolscevismo* (Judgment on Bolshevism), which won him wide approbation — including a preface from Il Duce himself — and launched him

properly into the avant-garde of the Italian intelligentsia. Between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S., Ciocca was carving out the so-called Third Way, the path of corporativist-fascist Italy: “Technological realism dictates a state that steers a middle course between liberal statelessness and communist statism, between hypertrophic individualism and hypertrophic collectivism, between the pursuit of material prosperity and that of spiritual grandeur” (p. 55). One of his other major ambitions, the guided roadway, was a similar attempt to marry the qualities of the railroad and the automobile, each representative of collectivism and individualism. To Ciocca and his fascist colleagues, the answer was in Italy’s brand of corporativism, as described by Third Way theorist Ugo Spirito: “It is a hierarchical communism that denies both the levelling state and an anarchic individual; that opposes bureaucratic management but bureaucratizes the nation; that resists private management and assigns a public value to the work performed by individuals. Wills unite to a single will; multiple goals coalesce to form a single goal. All social life is rationalized” (p. 42).

Here is the theme on which Ciocca (and Schnapp) proceed. Seemingly each of Ciocca’s projects carries this common theme of total rationalization. His proposed Theatre of the Masses for Milan would seat 20,000 (compared to La Scala’s capacity of 2,200), which meant lower costs per seat and therefore more spectators. Lest we should think Ciocca’s scheme philistine, Schnapp emphasizes the aesthetic and dramaturgical considerations of the project, which has a stage visible from all sides to allow for a three-dimensional set and realistic stagings. When his critics complained there was no repertoire for such a theatre, Ciocca responded by saying his building would inspire new types of plays for the masses.

The guided railway and the Theatre of the Masses will have to stand as shorthand for other projects, which included a pig palace hotel, a “fast house” for farm workers, and entire urban planning projects that continued to have as their theme the total rationalization and maximum efficiency of daily living. In a book entitled *Building Fascism, Communism, Liberal Democracy*, Schnapp waits until the very end to pronounce judgement on the political nature of Ciocca’s work. The mere fact that Ciocca has been influential in all three fields leads to the conclusion that “Politics was ultimately for him ... less a matter of rival goals than of rival methods to achieve a similar end” (p. 166). In exonerating Ciocca of his fascist connections, which seems fair, Schnapp’s political conclusions leave unanswered the larger philosophical questions about someone who wanted to bring total rationalization to the human sphere.

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WANG, Di — *Street Culture in Chengdu: Public Space, Urban Commoners, and Local Politics, 1870–1930*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003. Pp. 251.

This is a book about happiness and pain, freedom and restriction, protest and suppression of almost one million commoners in a Chinese inland city in the course of