

for the slaves and people of colour, the *Police des Noirs* encountered considerable provincial resistance, and petitions for freedom continued to be granted, albeit at the same low rate.

To the extent that the policies and court decisions of a relatively small fraction of the French administration can be attributed to the attitudes of a wider society, the term “political culture” is legitimate. My own view is that this public policy, especially after 1777, reflected both the growing power of the planter lobby and the growing paranoia of the police power in the face of increasing opposition to the state, especially at the street level. Blacks were one more identifiable threat, along with the poor, the grain rioters, the writers of *mauvais discours*, and the publishers of sensationalized legal briefs and banned books. Seymour Drescher is surely right to describe the wider French public as indifferent to the question of slavery. Perhaps the very lack of slaves and blacks in France explains this. Peabody has told us why there were so few.

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Harold Perkin — *The Third Revolution: Professional Elites in the Modern World*.
London and New York: Routledge, 1996. Pp. xviii, 253.

Harold Perkin has written a wonderfully stimulating and provocative account of the development of our modern world in the last 50 years. It is the last of an “unintended trilogy” (p. xi) analysing what he views as crucial turning-points in human history. *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780–1880*, published in 1969, and *The Rise of Professional Society*, which followed two decades later, dealt with the Industrial Revolution and its effects on English society, and with the subsequent revolution in human organization, again in its English context, characterized by the rise of the professional classes. In this third volume, Perkin extends his narrative to the present time and expands it to investigate the development of the professional elites in much of the post-industrial world: the United States, Britain, France, the two Germanies, Soviet Russia, and Japan.

A word of caution to those accustomed to more conventional notions about professionals: Perkin’s use of the term is in “its widest sense, to include not only the traditional professions, from lawyers and doctors to engineers and accountants, but also professional bureaucrats in government and professional managers in business corporations” (p. 1). For Perkin, professionals are any knowledge-based experts who provide special services. In the former Soviet Union, even the *nomenklatura*, the Communist party officials, elites, and intelligentsia, are termed professionals in that “their positions depended on their human capital, assisted by their political loyalty” (p. 23). Public and private sector bureaucrats and managers, in fact, form the “professional elites” with which Perkin is concerned, and more traditional professions are noticeably absent from these pages.

The scope is ambitious and the pace brisk, but Perkin manages to cram into 200-odd pages of text a huge amount of information embedded in a highly readable analysis of a world controlled by these professional elites. His aim is to examine “their success in establishing their dominance, and the temptations they are under to exploit their society to excess” (p. xv). The message is deeply felt and passionately put — “professional society is the most creative system the world has ever seen, bringing material, cultural, intellectual, and moral benefits on a scale not dreamed of by earlier generations,” he writes. “How can we enjoy the enormous benefits of professional society without allowing the professional elites to abuse their power and exploit their societies to the point of exhaustion and collapse?” (p. xvi).

While this theme lends great force to the argument, the text is fascinating in itself. An introductory chapter explains the significance of his subject and its characterization by ten main trends: high living standards for all, the rise of the service industries, the substitution of professional hierarchies for social class as the fundamental social structure, recruitment on merit, the entry of women, the growth of big government and of the welfare state, the spread of higher education, the rise of “giant” corporations, and the growth of a global economy dominated by “transnational corporations”. Perkin then takes us on a chapter-by-chapter tour of each country to examine in what ways these developments have been instrumental in shaping the recent historical past. Among the most interesting is the chapter on Japan, containing such nuggets as the *jinmyaku* (literally, “veins in the rock”) — the tight networks of telephone and presumably other contacts maintained by graduates of the elite schools when they move into professional and managerial positions of power and control — as well as a sophisticated analysis of that country’s economic and social system.

Perkin’s most condemnatory passages are reserved for the free-market economies of the United States and Britain, where the professional/managerial classes, he claims, have wallowed in greed, corruption, and unenlightened self-interest unimpeded by the mediating effects of the state (an argument that may strike chillingly home for Canadian readers of the business press and the latest revelations, for example, of Ontario Hydro’s mismanagement and its CEO’s disgrace). Germany and Japan, interestingly, emerge as the favoured models of professional society, though not without warnings of their imperfections, such as intolerance and neglect of various social groups. Finally, Perkin pulls the separate themes together in a comparative chapter, then traces the rise of the global economy, and with it the superordinate power of the managers of transnational corporations.

It would be relatively easy, given the scope and brevity of the book, to quibble with some of its points. The incorporation of women into the professional workplace, for example, is supposed to be one of the major trends of Perkin’s professional society, yet this subject receives little attention (in the chapter on the United States, none at all), and the implications for professional elites and the structure of their society are hardly touched upon. Such criticisms miss the point of this book, however. Perkin has given us a wide-ranging, ambitious argument, the product of a lifetime’s work on the subject, filled with wit, passion, and insight, and

calculated to provoke, raise questions, and ultimately make us ponder the future of our global society.

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Leonore Davidoff — *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Pp. x, 276.

Worlds Between is a collection of feminist scholar Leonore Davidoff's essays, the majority of them published over the past 20 years in a variety of journals and anthologies. These were essays that I had first encountered during the 1980s as an undergraduate student of history and women's studies, such as "Mastered for Life: Servant and Wife in Victorian and Edwardian England" and "Class and Gender in Victorian England: The Case of Hannah Cullwick and A. J. Munby". My first reaction, on rereading them, was one of mild shock when I realized how much time had passed since many of them were first published; they were generally not "new" when I encountered them, but their insights and arguments opened up fresh vantage points to my novice historian's eyes. A decade later, I now read these essays as essential elements of nineteenth-century feminist historiography, for the richness of Davidoff's scholarship, the complexities of her insights, and the care that has gone into her research.

Davidoff opens the collection by telling us that these are essays "from the margins", concerned with previously ignored or trivialized subjects such as domesticity, housekeeping, dirt and disorder, and the relationships of domestic servants, landladies and lodgers, farmers' wives and daughters, and siblings (p. 1). However, I would qualify this statement by adding that, while they were written in the context of a profession that generally treated such topics with disdain, such is no longer the case. Since these pieces were first published the margins have moved — I admit, in some cases, inched — much closer to the centre because of the work of Davidoff and her generation of feminist historians. In elaborating on these margins, Davidoff has shown us just how important they have been. These essays contain numerous insights, such as the importance of domesticity and the home in shaping and mediating class relations in nineteenth-century English society; the ways in which class carried specifically gendered meanings and, a related point, the central place of gender in English society's hierarchies; the importance of rituals and patterns of consumption; and the complexities and contradictions of these relations of subordination and power.

Davidoff's insistence that gender and class relations must be analysed in specific historical contexts runs throughout the book; her work demonstrates how both feminist theory and historical scholarship benefit from such an approach. First, historical research has generated important theoretical insights into gender. Secondly, our understanding of the past has acquired many new dimensions through the efforts of scholars such as Davidoff. As well, many of these essays suggest that