Despite its impeccable scholarship, new insights, and wealth of illustrations, this book is still primarily about architectural history in the traditional sense. There is only passing mention of the actual social changes which lay behind the new developments or of their impact on social life. How was life different because of the apartment blocks or department stores? How did the railway stations change people's habits? What happened to the people who were ousted from their traditional dwellings as Haussman cut his broad boulevards through the old city? How was everyday life influenced by new sidewalks, sewers, and the coming of fresh water, the *conquête de l'eau* as one historian calls it? Thus social historians will be largely disappointed by this otherwise impressive book.

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Ginette Kurgan-van Hentenryk et Serge Jaumain, dir. — *Aux frontières des classes moyennes. La petite bourgeoisie belge avant 1914*, Bruxelles, Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1992, 147 p.

Once upon a time, it was thought the *petite bourgeoisie* was slated for extinction, caught in a suffocating squeeze between capital and labour. The departure of shopkeepers and artisans from the historical stage might be accompanied by explosions of resentment and political extremism, but such rear-guard actions could only prolong an inevitable decline. There were currents in Marxism and in political economy, more so in the late nineteenth century than in our own times, which believed in this scenario. The present volume of essays, ably edited by Ginette Kurgan and Serge Jaumain, lays the thesis of inevitable decline to rest, replacing it with a picture of *petit-bourgeois* life at once more nuanced and open-ended. *Fin-de-siècle* Belgium is the chosen terrain of discussion, and it yields interesting results in three respects.

There is first the question of *petit-bourgeois* identity. Workers may identify themselves as workers, bourgeois as bourgeois, but what about the various strata in between? Pharmacists, as Diana Vazquez Martinez's article in this volume demonstrates, liked to think of themselves as members of the liberal professions. They held university degrees, wore white coats at work, and sometimes had quasi-laboratories on their shop premises. The *cabaretiers* studied by Rudy Ankaert, on the other hand, were more inclined to align themselves with the labouring classes, among whom they often lived and worked.

Yet however fluid class frontiers might have been, there were markers distinguishing *petits bourgeois* from their social neighbours. They were possessors of a small capital, whether material or intellectual in nature; they had the resources to start an enterprise; and they had a smattering of education. Politics helped to bring class boundaries into yet sharper focus. The socialist *Parti ouvrier belge* (POB) was founded in 1885. Alongside the POB and with its encouragement burgeoned a powerful co-operative movement which threatened the livelihoods of many shop-

keepers. The dominant party of the era, the Catholics, manoeuvred to profit from growing anti-socialist and anti-co-operative sentiment among small businessmen, organizing a series of international congresses at the turn of the century to debate the problems of the *petite bourgeoisie*. About the same time, a special state *bureau des classes moyennes* was created, housed in the ministry of industry and labour. Not long thereafter, the government launched a nationwide investigation into the entire question. The POB menaced the *petite bourgeoisie*; the Catholic-run state patronized it. Such pressures gave form to an emergent *petit-bourgeois* identity, but of yet greater importance, as every essay in this volume attests, were the shaping efforts of *petits bourgeois* themselves.

The late nineteenth century witnessed an explosion of professional activity. Associations, mutual-aid societies, and purchasing co-operatives proliferated alongside a professional press that defined common interests and commitments. A perusal of these sources makes two points clear. *Petits bourgeois* worried about competition. They felt under intense pressure from co-operatives, chain stores, franchise businesses, and street vendors. They also worried about appearances. Guy Moreau's essay on white-collar workers and Jaumain's on *petit-bourgeois* perceptions of working-class life make clear just how much they fretted about cleanliness and good manners. They believed themselves a cut above working folk because they rode in the second-class railway carriage, wore waistcoats, and were well-spoken. Material circumstances and politics, but above all culture, fixed the *petit bourgeois*' place in the social hierarchy.

Aux frontières des classes moyennes illuminates a second issue as well: the *petite bourgeoisie*'s particular contribution to the look and feel of late nineteenth-century urban life. Belgian cities expanded in the *fin de siècle* and with them grew a ramifying tertiary sector of shops and offices, which provided urban dwellers a whole range of services. The shopkeeping and white-collar classes, far from shrinking, multiplied in numbers, and they left a mark on the urban scene. Their storefronts and shingles imparted a particular savour to street life. Their cabarets and cafés established themselves as focal points of sociability and political agitation. The development of *petit-bourgeois* villas, the black-coated clerk out for a good time: these were staple features of *fin-de-siècle* city life.

The city would not have been the same without the *petite bourgeoisie*, nor — and this is the volume's third major point — would politics. The overhaul of the franchise in 1893 introduced a system of universal manhood suffrage tempered by plural voting. But how were the masses of new voters to be integrated into public life? The working-class vote fed into the POB, but newly enfranchised *petits bourgeois* had a more difficult time finding a political home. The Catholics bid hard for their loyalties, but the more social-minded Catholics were not always sufficiently hostile to the co-operative movement. The Liberals were anti-clerical, and that was attractive to certain strata of the *petite bourgeoisie*. Yet the Liberals, true to their *laissez-faire* beliefs, were not prepared to make much effort to help out small businessmen who felt outgunned in the economic competition for life. It was always possible to abstain at election time, but was standing on the sidelines any way to counter the socialist threat? The Catholics, the Liberal party, abstentionism — no

one option exercised overwhelming appeal, and *petit-bourgeois* constituencies tacked back and forth between all three, injecting a new element of uncertainty into *fin-de-siècle* electoral politics.

This last observation raises an interesting comparative question. Elsewhere on the continent, in France and Germany for example, the obstacles encountered by desperate *petits bourgeois* in search of an entrée into the political system generated powerful, if short-lived, eruptions: tax protests, street actions, nativist riots. None of this seems to have happened in Belgium, but why? The present volume does not tackle the issue directly, but it contains the materials from which the beginning of an answer might be constructed. For whatever reason, the department store in Belgium never became a major target of *petit-bourgeois* anger. In France and Germany, by contrast, lower-middle-class agitation against the big stores was so furious that on occasion it spilled over into demonstrations of a demagogic, "populist", or even ultra-nationalist cast. The Catholic ascendancy in Belgium also has some connection to the dampening of *petit-bourgeois* protest there. It is not altogether clear why, but the Catholic parties of continental Europe showed more imagination and skill than their competitors in addressing the problems of the *petite bourgeoisie*. Still, in Third Republic France, the Catholic *Action libérale populaire* never played more than a marginal part in parliamentary politics. The Catholic *Zentrum* in Wilhelmine Germany did carry sufficient weight to have its interests taken into consideration, but it was in no position to set the national agenda. In Belgium, however, the Catholics enjoyed the upper hand. They made a fuss over the *petite bourgeoisie*, which may help to explain why local *petit-bourgeois* protest remained so temperate.

Belgium in the late nineteenth century played a pioneering role in shaping the international debate on the *petite bourgeoisie*. *Aux frontières des classes moyennes* suggests reasons why this might have been so. It charts social terrain, hitherto more talked about than studied, and brings into focus a social universe, destined not to an early death, as once supposed, but to a long if sometimes troubled life.

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Christopher W. Marsh — *The Family of Love in English Society, 1550–1630*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Pp. xvii, 305.

Christopher W. Marsh's study of the Family of Love in England sheds considerable light on one of the most puzzling religious groups of early modern England. It does so largely as a result of Marsh's intensive archival research and application of a microhistory approach. Added to this fresh information on Familism is Marsh's willingness to explore new questions and suggest creative interpretations. The result is an innovative portrait of the English Familists that challenges long-cherished notions about the place of this sect within English society. Moreover, by examining sources not related to the propagandistic court and pamphlet battles, Marsh reveals