

engage in political and culture warfare, who will read so judicious and moderate a work besides me and thee, Professor Axelrod?

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**Varda Burstyn. *The Rites of Men: Manhood, Politics and the Culture of Sport*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999. Pp. 528.**

In her varied roles as political scientist, social critic, policy adviser, and feminist activist, Varda Burstyn's name is familiar both within and outside Canadian academic circles for her incisive analyses of such issues as the relations of gender, family, work, and state, censorship, health policy and reproductive technologies. Her latest book will not disappoint readers who have become accustomed to her forceful critiques of the state of things. In plain language, Burstyn probes the evolution of the sport nexus, which she defines as that web of associated and interlocking organizations that include sports, media, industry, government, public education, and recreation (p. 3).

By means of a semi-historical narrative, Burstyn capably demonstrates how, since the nineteenth century, sport has been a remarkably resilient, highly adaptive, and increasingly potent transnational systemic prop for capitalism, imperialism, racism, and male dominance. The interactions of sport and other cultural forms (especially advertising and mass media) gave rise to an ideology that she classifies as hypermasculinity, or an exaggerated ideal of manhood linked mythically and practically to the role of warrior. By the 1920s, abetted by the new communications technologies and the ever-growing influence of advertising, the muscular Christianity of the nineteenth-century sport fields had metamorphosed into a new American masculine ideal, a commercialized, overtly sexualized and racialized "underworld primitivism" hinging on male violence, sexual promiscuity without responsibility, and physical aggression (p. 90). Burstyn pays close attention to the class elements at play in such constructions, as well as in sport participation, but it is the concept of "gender classes" – that class membership is defined as much by gender as by economic status – that she emphasizes. Thus, although she sees her

subject as nothing if not a capitalist success story, she intends her analysis to operate first and foremost as “an extended consideration of the engendering process of boys and men, and to trace the economic, physical and mythical disparities of the gender order and how these become constituted in the political order” (p. 11). Burstyn concludes that success in sport is the most powerful social configuration of masculinity that any male can attain in our culture (p. 254). Although much of her examination focuses on events and issues during the past thirty years, such an encompassing objective clearly demands a historical grounding. Revealing an impressive mastery of recent historical literature on sport, popular culture, politics, industrialization, imperialism, militarism, family, and gender in Great Britain, the United States, and Canada during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Burstyn provides a valuable synthesis that highlights their often-obscured interrelations.

By her own admission, her emphasis is on the American and British developments, where most of the extant historiography is concentrated. Few would take issue with her contention that, caught historically and geoculturally between England and the United States, Canada has experienced similar dynamics in the growth and evolution of its own sport history (p. 9). The outcome, of course, is the too-familiar corporate control, commercialization, and Americanization of Canadian sport. Yet, while true enough, historians of Canada can't help but long for some consideration of the effects of such social, cultural, and economic differences as those embodied in French-English distinctions; or, for that matter, such national variances as the nature of our industrialization, the particular tenor and course of our nation-building and state formation processes, our sparser settlement, and geography itself, as factors in that trajectory towards a borderless, coherent North American system. Even in terms of contemporary history, for example, in her eye-opening discussion of the relationship of sport culture and masculinity to organized violence (especially against women), to war, and to the rise of neo-conservatism, the focus is on American issues and developments. Pursuing Canadian distinctions in this area in terms of attitudes and practices to whatever degree they existed or continue to exist would give sustenance to her arguments in a manner more specific to time and place. Historians interested in the ways in which the late-nineteenth-century expansion of public schooling and the incorporation of physical education into the curriculum played into

the modern sport ideology, will also find her discussion of these important aspects disappointing.

Nonetheless, Burstyn provides an effective cross-section of an enormously complex subject. Her attention to the connections between war, the hypergendered sexuality portrayed in popular culture, especially with the expanding twentieth-century influence of the mass media, the increasing admiration for the champion who would endure pain and engage in a measured violence in the interests of victory, and their relationship to the sport nexus, make this a richly textured and engaging study. And many will be heartened by her concluding recommendations – in the interests of balancing masculine and feminine elements in our culture and encouraging respect for our fellows, our bodies, and our biosphere – by “reclaim[ing] physical culture from corporate culture” (p. 276).

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**Robert A. Campbell.** *Sit Down and Drink Your Beer: Regulating Vancouver's Beer Parlours, 1925-1954.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001. Pp. 185.

We should all raise a glass to Robert Campbell. His careful, insightful scholarship has opened up the important, but long neglected, history of alcohol consumption in Canada after the end of prohibition in the 1920s. He has followed up his earlier path-breaking book on British Columbia's regulatory regime for booze with this fascinating examination of public drinking in Vancouver in the first thirty years of “government control.” This was the period in which, outside Quebec, Canada's only licensed drinking establishments were known as “beer parlours” or “beverage rooms,” operated as adjuncts of hotels, and sold nothing but beer. Their customers were preponderantly working-class men. Campbell reminds us that governments did not simply repeal prohibition, but instituted a new system of liquor *control* intended to restrain consumption. Liquor-board regulations severely restricted drinkers' behaviour in beer parlours to make them as unattractive as possible and to prevent them from evolving into old-time saloons. Patrons could drink only while seated and could not