Greenlee, James G. *Sir Robert Falconer: A Biography.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988. Pp. xxiv, 407. $37.50, cloth.

President of the University of Toronto from 1907 to 1932, Robert Falconer implemented the single most important reorganization of the university up to that time, the creation in 1906-7 of a Board of Governors to act as buffer between the provincial government and the University and to link organically the constituent colleges under a strong President. He was a player in the making and execution of English Canada's domestic policies in World War I, persuaded Chester Massey to construct Hart House (an enormous and beautiful student centre at the University), and successfully parlayed the university into a major centre for research and development in the 1920s. Falconer saw the university as much more than an institution for moulding undergraduate character. His vision of the place was in some respects definitive.

Part of Greenlee's difficulty in writing about Falconer—and I sympathize—was the sheer variety of Falconer's activity. The evidence is necessarily disparate, and it is voluminous. A further problem is the absence of a collection of personal and private papers. There is virtually no record of Robert Falconer's family life; we know more of his relations with his parents than of his life as husband and father. Greenlee's solution to these difficulties is a kind of superficiality, not of documentation, but rather of analysis. With important exceptions, his discussion of Falconer's context, mind, and personality do not satisfy, even where his survey of Falconer's public life is factually thorough.

Robert Falconer, born in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, in 1867, was educated at Edinburgh University and taught at Halifax's Presbyterian College from 1892 until his appointment to Toronto. Greenlee nicely shows how Falconer acquired early prominence, not just from extensive publications, connections with the theological community, frequent travels, or reputed success in saving institutions with declining enrolment and/or in budget crisis, but also from his membership in a kind of Nova Scotian higher education "mafia," most of whom had been at Edinburgh. D.M. Gordon was later principal at Queen's (1903 on); Walter Murray became president at the University of Saskatchewan (1908 on); and A.S. Morton was professor of western Canadian history at Saskatchewan for several productive and influential decades (Morton grew up with Falconer in Trinidad).

But Falconer belonged to several other collectivities. He was Caucasian, male, of Scottish descent, a survivor of a conservative academic schooling, a happy family man, a practising Christian in a society that thought itself Christian, a moderate Imperialist in a country whose love of the Old Country persisted, and a politically safe quantity (he rejected after 1900 the Social Gospel for its reliance on possibly socialist reasoning, its implied materialism, and

its implied invitation to upset the social order). Greenlee offers us a little on some, but by no means all, of these aspects of Falconer's life.

We learn, for instance, that Robert was Eurocentric and Imperialist but well able to "recognize the merits" of other races. We hear little or nothing, however, about the racial composition of the Halifax area, of Toronto, of Canada, of Falconer's experience of "otherness," or of his attitudes on the immigration question. On the other hand, Falconer's views on the settlement of the West come through very well. He saw the new provinces as the essential wellsprings of a national revival of social and economic well-being.

Falconer's gender is not discussed. Yet gender would provide a forceful, if partial, explanation of Falconer's actions and impact. Recent historical studies offer reliable techniques of research and good starting questions for argument on both race and gender. The limitations of manuscript and print evidence do not justify Greenlee's decision to ignore these two contexts. He might claim that paucity of evidence meant he could not offer strong inferences. The answer to this is that weak inferences are often intensely interesting and quite justifiable. The history of gender and class is highly dependent on weak inference, yet few would now argue that such history ought not to be written. *A fortiori* Greenlee on Falconer.

The want of adequate contextual explanation becomes especially noticeable in Greenlee's treatment of Falconer's presidency at Toronto. Falconer's powers grew quickly after 1907. At first, this was due to his use of his extensive authority in hiring and firing, and to his considerable financial acumen. Three controversies show just how strong Falconer finally became, deriving his strength from a combination of wily and single-minded political action and reliance on links to the several groupings of which he was a member or representative. In 1908 (pp. 126ff.) and in 1918-19 (pp. 266ff.), Falconer moved forcefully to bring medical education under university (not hospital) control, with appointments of professors in medicine and surgery. Between 1909 and 1914, he successfully resisted pressure to fire certain professors merely because they were connected to Germany, or interested in secular studies of religion (pp. 204-11, 128-30). And between 1914 and 1916, Falconer combated public doubt of the university's depth of commitment to the war effort. Falconer's effectiveness must have come from his participation in multiple communities, groups, classes, collectivities, bodies of attitude/ opinion, and so on.

Leaving the matter of context, I wonder why Greenlee decided to write so little about Falconer's mind—that is, his knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and so on. Falconer believed fervently that what was good for Toronto was by definition good for the rest of the country. He imagined the University of Toronto as being the University of Canada: training professors for the rest of the country, educating its governing elites in Ottawa and elsewhere, orchestrating public education at all levels throughout Ontario and, by

implication, Canada (see pp. 156-97). But Falconer at the same time maintained close connections with England and Scotland, returning most summers to "prowl" for possible appointees at Toronto. His visits to the United States were frequent and increasingly popular, finally resulting in a book on *The United States as a Neighbour* (1926). Falconer's strong support for a university in China, to be constructed by a United Universities Foundation of universities from both the Old World and the New, took him across the American border and across the Atlantic several times after 1910 (pp. 192-96). The philosophical roots of Falconer's internationalism lay in his version of Idealism; the political roots lay in his notion of the supranational attractiveness—and the moral force—of the British-Canadian "way of life." Falconer brought many of these same ideas and attitudes to his campaigns for civics education in Canada.

Nowhere have we a unified and persuasive picture of Falconer the thinker, writer, and arguer. Even in the sections on Falconer's Biblical scholarship, we never find out just *how* and *how well* this Renaissance person did the nitty-gritty of scholarly work: precisely how did he do external and internal criticism of New Testament texts? Exactly how did he analyze the logical content and limits of crucial theological notions?

Greenlee's treatment of Falconer's educational and curricular theory suffers from this sort of analysis. The chapter on "the organic university" considers then-dominant theories of higher education (Cardinal Newman and Canon Pusey in Britain, Veblen in the United States), and Falconer's view of them. Interested in encouraging but not inculcating an ideal of service, Falconer aimed for a curriculum allowing for spiritual growth, yet placing frank emphasis on intellectual power. His professed horror of materialism led him to reject empiricism (and therefore many features of the American university system), but to allow in Toronto's Arts and Science curricula for empirical method in the "service of the ideal."

In search of Falconer's intellect, I found myself asking why this knowledgeable man took no account of John Dewey's powerful and influential notions of education, society, inquiry, and democratic politics. Falconer was not keen to open his university to all comers, and saw in his admissions policy an essential difference between Canadian and American educational policies. But surely Falconer saw deeper than this into American society. He must have had seriously to cope with the pragmatist and egalitarian streams of American educational thought at various points in his long career. Even as an idealist, he would have been compelled to evaluate the Roycean, Deweyan, and Jamesian accounts of Kantianism and Hegelianism, and thus the intellectual roots of the buoyant American university system of the day. Greenlee does not raise such issues.

This is a occasionally enlightening but often superficial book on a good subject. It is nonetheless among the best dozen or so books on the history of Canadian higher education. It is a cut above Robin Harris's history

of Canadian higher education, but not as interesting in argument as Reid's work on Mount Allison, Johnston's on McMaster, or Axelrod's on Ontario. It provides a clear and well-ordered narrative not just of a man's life, but also of an institution that embodied the ambitions and the fears of bourgeois Canada at a crucial moment.

The writing leaves much to be desired. Greenlee's patronizing (or sarcastic?) remarks about Newman ("the good Cardinal" [p. 137]), Pusey ("the good Canon" [p. 139]), the Reverend Cecil ("the reverend gentleman" [p. 194]) do nothing but draw attention to his weak grasp of Victorian educational and religious theory. Triteness abounds (a strongly argued belief is, for Greenlee, "loudly trumpeted" [p. 189]). But since the book treats of so many important and underdiscussed features of early twentieth-century Canadian history, it's best to forgive. Any serious student of the period, and certainly any student of Canadian university history, should own a copy of the work.

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Fiona Paterson. *Out of Place: Public Policy and the Emergence of Truancy.* Barcombe Lewes: Falmer, 1989. Pp. viii, 209.

Dans ce livre, lucide et concis, Fiona Paterson examine l'absentéisme scolaire comme produit de l'organisation politique de certaines personnes et d'endroits particuliers. Elle se refuse à imposer notre conception d'assiduité scolaire à une période où cette dernière n'existait pas, et à décrire l'absentéisme scolaire en dehors de l'émergence du système de scolarisation obligatoire. Au contraire, Paterson veut révéler les conditions qui ont mené au développement d'un phénomène maintenant devenu un acquis. Les gens qui font l'école buissonière dérogent à un ordre spatial et temporel. Pour comprendre ce phénomène, il faut investiger non pas les comportements individuels, mais un ordre historique et politique qui situe différentes catégories de gens dans des temps et des espaces définis. A cet ordre, Paterson applique le concept de topographie morale, et son livre tente de reconstruire ses contours au moyen de ce qu'elle appelle «la cartographie sociale». La topographie morale aurait été dessinée, à l'origine, par des serviteurs de l'État et aurait ensuite été normalisée au moyen d'efforts administratifs.

Paterson élabore son modèle théorique à partir de la sociologie du savoir, de l'analyse du pouvoir de Michel Foucault, et de la sociologie de l'éducation de Philip Corrigan. Ses sources historiques ont été tirées de documents parlementaires, et traitent de l'Écosse au 19e siècle. Selon Paterson, les structures fondamentales de l'absentéisme scolaire reposeraient sur la séparation du foyer du lieu de travail, provoquée par le développement du capitalisme industriel, sur la lutte contre l'emploi des enfants, et sur l'analyse des conséquences de ces développements faite par une fraction stratégiquement