

Reviewed by Martin Stack, Rockhurst University.

In 1900, brewing ranked among the largest industries in the United States; while its relative importance has faded somewhat, it remains a compelling topic and significant market. Yet, over the years, it has not generated a literature commensurate with its multifarious role in society. Thus, the appearance of two books on the history of beer and the brewing industry gives hope that this relative neglect may be fading. While sharing somewhat similar titles, Maureen Ogle’s *Ambitious Brew: The Story of American Beer* and Amy Mittelman’s *Brewing Battles: A History of American Beer*, provide distinct, though occasionally overlapping, historical accounts of beer and brewing in the US.

Despite some similarities in terms of topics and time frame, there are fundamental differences between these two works, differences that stem from their training: Ogle is a journalist and Mittelman is a trained historian. As a result, Ogle’s work is intended for a more general readership, while Mittelmann’s book will have greater appeal to scholars. Perhaps not surprisingly, Ogle’s work is well written but is very frustrating for scholars who may wish to review her many assertions, as she does not provide supporting citations. A minor example of this comes early in the book: “For years, beer historians have credited John Wagner of Philadelphia with introducing lager to the United States, but the title of first lager probably belongs to émigrés Alexander Stausz and John Klein, who founded a tiny outfit in Alexandria, Virginia, in 1838” (p. 14). Since she draws primarily on secondary sources, it would be helpful to know the source of this assertion. Mittelman’s book could not be more different: it provides detailed footnotes throughout the book, and she introduces a number of new primary sources, to which scholars following up on her work will need to pay careful attention.

While entertaining and informative in places, Ogle’s work, as is typical of books of this kind, draws largely on well-known secondary sources. At her best, she adeptly connects developments in the beer market to broader social and economic changes. However, she does a much better job making these linkages in the years following WWII than in the tumultuous period leading up to Prohibition. Her discussions of changes in beer styles and in the market for beer in the pre-Prohibition period seem positively Panglossian: brewers simply react to exogenous changes in consumer tastes, and “quality” brewers such as Anheuser Busch and Pabst are rewarded by the market for their skillful responses to newly emerging consumer preferences. Increasing market concentration during these years simply reflects good efficient breweries driving out less good, less efficient breweries. The situation was far more complex than her discussion suggests.

She then gives short shrift to Prohibition, asserting that “The majority of Americans honored the Eighteenth Amendment and obeyed the law, and alcohol consumption
plummeted during Prohibition.” Readers of the Last Call, a superb book (published after the two works being reviewed here) on the rise and workings of Prohibition, will find this perspective puzzling, detailing as it does the enterprising ways – legal, illegal, and somewhere in between – in which Americans procured their copious amounts of alcohol during this period. Yet, while Ogle does not pay proper attention to alcohol consumption during Prohibition, she does a nice job in discussing the rise in soft drink consumption and the impact this had on post-Prohibition consumer beverage preferences.

The last third of the book focuses on developments in the beer industry from the repeal of Prohibition to the early 2000s. While there are some good passages here, especially concerning the rise of the microbrewery movement and how it related to changing consumer preferences regarding food and drink, there is a significant tension that fails to be addressed. She characterizes post-repeal beer as “corporate beer” and asserts that by the 1940s and 1950s, “a new generation asked for – and received – an even less demanding version of American lager: a sexy, vibrant beer that went down as easily as instant mashed potatoes or pudding and never asked much of its recipient” (p. 229). She goes on to claim that “For nearly a century, American brewers had been accommodating the demands of the public’s palate… The importance of American beer at mid-century is that it was a response to demand” (p. 229). Yet, two pages later, she details the steps taken by the largest breweries to advertise their increasingly bland beers. A different reading here is that the largest breweries – along with firms in a host of related food and drink markets – actively worked to shape product characteristics along the lines by which they could most effectively compete. Rather than passive responders to market demand, they played an important role in the creation of a preference for a blander style of beer.

Perhaps the strongest part of the book comes towards the end with her discussion of the rise of craft beers. She does a very nice job of linking these developments to broader changes in consumer preferences regarding a range of food products including fresh whole wheat bread and full-bodied coffees. The discussion of the ups and downs of the early craft breweries is well told, and she details that many failed because they provided poor or inconsistent beers.

Mittelman’s approach is quite different. She provides a more complete chronological overview, beginning decades before Ogle does. While she doesn’t spend as much time as does Ogle in connecting changes in the beer and the brewing industry to broader cultural and social developments, she is excellent on two key topics that Ogle downplays: regulation and worker-brewery relations. Mittelman examines thoroughly the history of the complex regulatory environment connecting beer, breweries, and the state and federal government, highlighting how and why this set of interconnections has changed over time. While some of this has been told before (e.g., the interplay between brewing tax revenue and the introduction of the Federal Income Tax), Mittelman makes a significant contribution in her detailed discussions of how breweries and the federal government set about to develop a post-repeal regulatory system. She integrates congressional records, trade journals, and newspaper accounts in her analysis of the proposed Code of Fair Competition for the Brewing Industry that emerged from the National Industrial Recovery Act. Yet, after this important discussion, she does not examine as fully as she could the creation and implementation of the three-tier system, which separated brewers from retailers by a third tier, wholesalers. This system has significantly impacted the industry since its introduction in the late 1930s.

Another topic Mittelman handles very well concerns worker-brewery relations.
This discussion draws from some of her earlier work, and she provides some excellent analysis here. Of particular import is her discussion of brewery workers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: she notes that brewery workers, as did workers in many industries, focused too much on their own internal struggles. For brewing, this proved particularly short-sighted, as workers and owners did not “form a self-conscious alliance… to combat prohibition forces… until… 1913” (p. 61).

Mittelman, like Ogle, finishes her book with a discussion of the rise of craft brewing. She asserts that “In the nineteenth century ten percent of Pabst’s customers wanted pure malt beer; craft beer drinkers of the twenty first century are their descendants” (p. 190) This is a very interesting comment, but unfortunately she does not follow up on it: what would be useful here, and elsewhere, is some discussion linking changes in beer styles and brewing to the broader cultural milieu in which they occur.

Together, the Ogle and Mittelman books bring much needed attention to an understudied topic. Individual readers may prefer one book to the other, a preference that likely will reflect the degree of familiarity with the topics being discussed. As a student of this industry, I greatly prefer Mittelman’s book.


Ian Coutts is an experienced author and journalist with an obvious love of his subject. This lively account of the rise, fall and partial resurgence of Canada’s brewing sector reveals an excellent command of the details of the industry’s development. The author describes beer as “a life-giving, healthsome beverage, the drinking of which can strengthen social bonds, generate mirth and enhance the workings of our minds” (p. 2). Brew North also has a useful didactic component, explaining the components of various types of beer, and various brewing processes over the decades. Its thesis is that beer somehow “made” Canada and is closely linked to its national identity. Beer possibly “embodies some ideal essence of Canadianness (usually conceived of as some sort of down-home earnestness)” (p. 158). The book’s many photographs and other illustrations are one of its most attractive features. These include not only images of beer drinkers, breweries, bottles, labels and other paraphernalia, but also many print media advertisements.

Brew North begins by discussing brewing in New France as well as the early years of the Molson family in Quebec after the British Conquest. For most of the nineteenth century brewing was local and Canadians, reflecting the British connection, preferred stronger-tasting ales. By the late nineteenth century, new tastes, aided by improved technology, encouraged increased consumption of lager, a lighter product popular in the United States. The author, drawing on a small but growing body of scholarly work, traces the evolution of drinking practices and places, notably the colonial-era tavern and the late nineteenth-century saloon. He has harsh words for the classic, drab Canadian beer parlour of the period 1930 to 1970, which he cleverly describes as an “anti-saloon” (p. 69). Coutts agrees with most academic sources when he argues that many aspects of how Canadians actually consumed alcohol are obscure. He also claims that this is partly because the history of drinking in Canada has been written by “the losers” (those sympathetic with prohibition) (p. 67).

Despite his “pro-beer” sympathies, the author is no apologist for Canada’s large
breweries, which despite their nationalistic posturing were all absorbed by multinationals by the early twenty-first century. Coutts describes the Canadian brewing sector from the 1940s to the 1980s as “a story of consolidation and homogenization, of the rise of marketing and the shift of brewing from craft to large-scale industrial process, to the point where the people flogging it no longer referred to ale or lager, but simply to ‘liquid’”(p. 80). Part of the move to homogenization by the “Big Three” corporations who monopolized the national market by the late 1950s (Molson, Labatt and Canadian Breweries) was the classic “stubby” bottle, introduced in 1961. Brew North also discusses the issue of American beer, long derided by nationalistic drinkers for being bland and homogeneous, and more or less excluded from the Canadian market by liquor commissions and/or consumer demand. In time, American imports (bottled in Canada) became some of the top selling brands. Throughout the 1980s and 90s, the Big Three, facing a flat market, attempted various gimmicks such as light, “dry” and “ice” beer. Coutts describes them as “high concept, low flavour” beverages (p. 123). The book ends with an interesting, and optimistic, discussion of the new generation of micro breweries.

One problem with this entertaining book is its characterization of the temperance and prohibition movements and mid twentieth century Canadian alcohol control. The author is either relying on outdated views of the prohibition movement, or ignoring the broader academic literature. For example, the enjoyment of beer in the late nineteenth century is described as being “menaced by a dark Calvinist cloud” (p. 47). The province supposedly with the least restrictive alcohol control regulations was “sane, sensible Quebec” (p. 60). Following national restrictions during World War I, provinces such as Ontario “strangely” chose “even more prohibition” (p. 60). Prohibition is described as “a farce” (p. 62), ignoring the fact that it exerted a real impact on alcohol consumption levels and almost a century later continues to influence government regulation of alcohol. Moving into the post-prohibition era, the author describes the architects of liquor control, who implemented restrictions such as “ladies and escorts” sections in taverns, as “fussy puritans” (p. 72).

For an author to impose personal views of the issue of alcohol control is perfectly acceptable, but not at the risk of being ahistorical. True, the references to prohibition are limited, but they suggest that it was forced on an unwilling or unsuspecting public by an irrational minority. There is no recognition of the fact that by the late 1800s, most Canadian women and many Canadian men were abstainers, or that large areas of central and eastern Canada contained no licensed premises that sold liquor. The narrative also glosses over the fact that in many local option votes, provincial referenda and provincial elections, a majority of those who voted opted to “ban the bar,” close down liquor stores or ban importation of alcohol from other jurisdictions. The author may disapprove of the one hundred years of temperance agitation and the two decades of prohibition that shaped Canada’s modern alcohol control policy, but to judge the reform movements and politicians of those times by modern standards is to perpetuate historical stereotypes.

Brew North claims that “Beer deserves our respect, even our love” (p.159). A focus on the positive contributions of beer to Canadian history and society ignores many studies on alcohol-induced harm, long recognized by provincial health departments, medical societies and addictions commissions and by organizations such as the World Health Organization. A global study of 2004 data published in The Lancet (Rehm 2009) indicated that 6.3% of male deaths were attributable to alcohol. Although beer has been losing ground in recent years to spirits and wine, it is still the product through
which most Canadians, especially young Canadians, ingest alcohol.

**REFERENCES**


Reviewed by James Sumner, University of Manchester.

Popular histories of beer are seldom worth looking forward to. Half a century ago, Peter Mathias complained of “the unanalytical, antiquarian character of most literature” (p. 13n2) and little has changed. A procession of journalists and enthusiasts proffers warmed-over helpings of long-established material, sometimes adding a sprinkling of new research, but never addressing the desperately poor evidence for many standard claims. Heroic legends of lone geniuses who “invented” radical new beers (Ralph Harwood’s London porter, George Hodgson’s India Pale Ale) swirl round again and again; fanciful retellings of the Tottenham Court Road Beer Flood of 1814 recur in ever more breathless tones, in the ever fainter hope of a reader encountering them for the first time.

A welcome exception to this tendency was Martyn Cornell’s *Beer: The Story of the Pint* (2003). Cornell, a journalist and business analyst with a longstanding side-interest in beer writing, injected desperately needed doses of primary research and source criticism, overturning several cherished legends. *Beer* was a loosely chronological overview of malt-based drinks in general; the same author’s *Amber, Gold and Black* is a collection of essays, tracing the histories of sixteen varieties of beer individually.

The subjects chosen are wide-ranging. There are iconic categories which have endured for a century or more (bitter, Burton ale, porter), long-neglected approaches newly revived by specialist microbrewers (wheat beers and herb ales), and wholly new styles (golden ale and wood-ageing). Though the source base is largely British, coverage extends to the international history of styles and practices with some British or Irish heritage. With its focus on production characteristics, the book will appeal to the vigorous community of craft brewers and drinkers in North America and elsewhere. Its descriptive approach will annoy – deliberately – the vocal minority of enthusiasts who peddle a rigidly prescriptive, ahistorical concept of “truth to style,” as though “IPA” were a cosmic categorical constant rather than a label.

Some of the headings, indeed, don’t correspond to coherent production stories: the chapter on “mild” records the history of a word with a variety of distinct meanings, while those on low-gravity and very high-gravity beers are very disparate. Elsewhere, as for IPA and porter, Cornell usefully reveals how particular production cultures kept their identities while changing, by degrees, out of recognition. There are some well-judged framing devices here, such as the description of porter (p. 53) as the “first truly global beer.”

Assessing the book’s value to academic historians means judging it by standards it does not set itself. It’s worth doing, however, because good “popular” literature often provides a better introduction for the newly arrived researcher than the turgid tomes we tend to tax each other with. Cornell’s earlier *Beer* is more immediately useful here: its scope is more international, and its chronological structure gives a clearer sense of the periodisation of developments. *Amber, Gold and Black* is, however, concise and thor-
oughly readable, and will save the non-specialist from errors such as the widespread confusion between IPA, iconically associated with the town of Burton, and Burton ale, an older and entirely different style.

The final chapter is particularly valuable. This deals with the cluster of practices (bottom-fermentation, low-temperature maturation and dispense, Pilsen-style paleness) which emerged from central Europe in the 1840s and rapidly redefined beer production across the world, excluding Britain and Ireland. Some authors address this episode as a case study in technological backwardness, with British beer barons as snug monopolists shunning scientific process control and ignoring drinkers’ demands (for instance, Platt 2005). In Cornell’s narrative, British brewers are keen to offer the public lager but, finding it rejected, assimilate its technical advantages within the existing ale production culture. Decades later, a cocktail of factors including globalising markets, cheap foreign travel and four successive hot summers finally secures the British lager phenomenon.

Elsewhere, the book is more focused on beer-making. There is occasional brief discussion of drinking culture, but none of temperance or trade defence. Indeed, the account largely avoids social history, including that of the brewhouse itself. The “great gravity drop” of the First World War is the only other clearly characterised case of external events affecting what was brewed. There is also, despite the author’s background, little quantitative analysis of the kind an economic historian might get to grips with.

Cornell relies almost entirely on published sources, although these include Ron Pattinson’s very detailed digests of brewing records, which allow changes in ingredients to be charted. Newspapers are used effectively, pinpointing, for instance, the month in which publicity for IPA exploded (p. 110). The secondary source base is broad, though some key authors on early production (Judith Bennett, Richard Unger) are missing. As in Beer, Cornell is appropriately cautious around primary and early secondary sources, although the occasional dubious testimony is admitted – a problem none of us can avoid entirely, given the slippery plausibility of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century hackwork.

There is no referencing, which is a pity. Trade publishing wisdom dictates that footnote markers deter casual buyers, but this book’s audience of enthusiasts will surely want to follow up the sources, many of which are now freely available online. It’s sometimes possible to match up source authors mentioned in the text with bibliography entries, but the bibliography is for some reason largely restricted to books: articles which have evidently been consulted are missing. This aside, however, the book is technically exemplary: professional copy-editing, usable index, and smart graphic design, down to the cheekily plausible pint-glass ring on the cover.

In summary, this book succeeds in charting clearly what kinds of beer have been made, where, and when, within the British and Irish tradition and chiefly over the past two hundred years. This is usually as far as it goes – which is often a strength. It would certainly be nice to see more authors restrained enough to trot through the 1814 Beer Flood in no more than eight lines.

REFERENCES


Peter Mathias. *The Brewing Industry in England, 1700-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni-
With the creation of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) ending provincial prohibition in 1927, Ontario joined a number of other Canadian provinces and states around the world in taking control over the distribution of alcohol to the population. According to Scott Thompson and Gary Genosko, it also tumbled into the dangerous world of surveillance and control. In Punched Drunk, they outline their case in detail, deploying Foucauldian analyses of a surveillance state to argue that the LCBO insidiously and persistently infringed on the rights and privacy of the province’s residents.

First, full disclosure. This reviewer currently has a book in press examining the LCBO’s regulation of drinking in public spaces from 1927-1944. I am intimately familiar with some of the material Thompson and Genosko reviewed. So the strengths and weaknesses I will discuss come with considerable familiarity with the topic.

Its strengths are notable. The authors detail the diverse forms of sorting, classification and analysis the LCBO used to track potential problem drinkers, and to manage the operations of the many liquor stores across the vast territory of the province. Their minute descriptions of the paperwork inspectors, liquor store management and everyday people had to confront is quite illuminating of the development of complex bureaucracy.

For those interested in the application of Foucault’s theories into state apparatus, this book is also strong. Some chapters read as an exercise in applying Foucault’s concepts, jargon and perspective onto a case study of state regulation. This is a study of the panoptic surveillance apparatus, governmentality and the deployment of techne. Chapter Two, on “Self Control and Panoptic Power” is especially useful in this respect.

However, these strengths lead us to two major problems – and several more subtle ones – worth keeping in mind when reading this book.

The two major weaknesses are the heavy reliance on theory and the almost complete neglect of chronology and context. At times the argument is clearly theory-driven, to the point where, when “the facts don’t fit the theory” they are left out or qualified in some way; or, most egregiously, recognized and distorted. An illustrative example of that latter case appears when, near the end of the discussion on the restriction of native drinking, the authors write that “Although the link between accepted discourses and alcohol abuse requires further investigation and substantiation, it nonetheless provides support for our theoretical understanding of classification and convergence” (p. 187) In other words, “the link is unsubstantiated, but it is included because it fits into our tidy narrative.”

The neglect of chronology is another issue worth noting, because it almost completely uproots the LCBO’s activities from the changes in society, administration and provincial politics. The book covers the period 1927-1975, during which time a Great Depression began, prohibition ended in the United States, the Second World War came
and went, a baby boom changed the demographics of the province, a cultural revolution in the 1960s developed a counter-culture challenge to the status quo and rising social fear about the consumption of seemingly more dangerous substances, significant legislation changed the legal status and rights of aboriginal Canadians, and the “Women’s Lib” movement challenged entrenched ideas about woman’s place. Yet there is little effort to place information in context. A quotation from the LCBO’s second annual report in 1928 (a rich document outlining the philosophy of the board, and the principles on which it operated, ripe for serious deconstruction) might be found beside a quotation from the 1950s, with no attempt to contextualize or differentiate the different social and cultural context of the two periods. This is notable because the creation of the LCBO was a reaction to the failures of prohibition, at the end of which the temperance movement remained a strong political voice. Neither of these issues would likely have been salient in the 1950s; and if they were, the authors should have explained this continuity, rather than ignoring it. I understand that Foucault’s work has similarly been challenged for the problems in chronology and context, so perhaps it is consistent with the methodological foundations upon which the book is built.

Only in the chapter that discusses the technology of social sorting, and how it was used differently over the half century under scrutiny, is chronology an issue. This is because the technology changed. Yet, even here the importance of these changes are not adequately respected. The sub-headings of this chapter include the date ranges – 1927-36; 1929-65; 1930-75; 1965-75; and 1927-75 – overlapping dates that refer to different policy decisions and technological processes. However, these are not the only changes that need to be heeded. Surely in a text about surveillance in the twentieth century, links between broader developments, “hot” and “cold” wars, political change, economic and cultural shifts, all important issues in a book arguing about the intricate management of everyday life by a sweeping provincial bureaucracy, could provide context and clarification.

While these two issues may strike the general reader as problematic, the more subtle problems may not interfere with the enjoyment of the book, but are no less troublesome. Indeed, the fact that they are less obvious and largely overlooked by the authors indicates the lack of concern for the intricacies that history can unravel. For example, the authors go to great pains to discuss how the early punch card technology of sorting was also used by the railway system, and that the first Chief Commissioner D. B. Hanna had been a railway executive. This is interesting, but what they don’t note is the fact that Hanna left his position after a year, and was replaced by a series of politicians and administrators with little relationship to the railway and little experience using this technology. While it may not matter, the implication of Hanna having some iron grip on drinkers of Ontario persists in the discussion of surveillance technology. The story might seem different if the changes at the top suggest that the Board may have had less consistent and coherent management than the authors suggest.

Similarly, other personnel and government shifts are neglected. The authors gloss over substantial legislative changes governing the operations of the LCBO itself: in 1934 the Liquor Control Act was modified significantly; major legislative changes in 1944 split the operations of the LCBO into two bodies; and subsequent legislation broadened the scope of the LCBO and its operations. Incorporating these issues into their work would not have been a challenge. Thompson and Genosko could have made use of the most complete study of the LCBO to date: Sharon Jaeger’s PhD dissertation From Control to Customer Service (2000), a fine administrative and political history of the LCBO over the same period this book covers.
Finally, and most problematic in my opinion, is the reiteration of the arguments about the disinterested, aloof bureaucracy that mechanically and unreflectively messes with people’s lives, combined with the feral hatred some Ontario residents have for the LCBO. The authors uncritically reiterate the familiar assumption that the LCBO was just reinforcing the temperance view of drinking as bad, and imply that this is the system in which Ontarians now live. They seem disinterested in the very real political context in which the board operated, and the balancing act the board had to make between the temperance forces and the people who wanted to drink. Often the activities of the board, or the decisions on individual cases, were entirely subjective, and flew in the face of the temperance vision of liquor control. So the moral control and strict regulation of behavior, that are suggested in a theory-driven reading of the circulars, might not necessarily have played out. But it does make an appealing narrative. These systems implied an ideal, but it is how they were used, not how they were conceptualized, that we need to understand. It is worrying to read a work of history that seems to place theory above the attempt to reconstruct the historical record.

Despite my methodological and philosophical concerns, I should note that the book is worth reading, albeit with the above caveats in mind. The chapter on the regulation of aboriginal Canadians is useful for showing how stereotypes were deployed and corrupted in a distant regulatory regime. The chapter on the technology of control was particularly interesting, because it illustrates the potential for organizing and counting specific behaviours inherent in technology and expansive bureaucracy. I find the operations of bureaucracies, and the attempts to impose order to be especially fascinating, so this could be my own odd fetish. Just remember that it is a reflection of a moment in time and an ideal that could not be achieved.

The operation of liquor control agencies in the twentieth century provides a valuable look at how the ideal and the actual often conflicted, and were negotiated. Thompson and Genosko have excavated, in detail, their interpretation of the ideal; selectively deploy evidence to illustrate their vision of Foucaultian surveillance, and fit it all nicely into what appears to be a clear reiteration of the growing spectre of state surveillance. Spectres, of course, are illusory, and it is up to the readers to determine whether they want to accept this vision.

REFERENCES

Reviewed by Mark C. Smith, University of Helsinki.

The last couple of years have seen a resurgence of material on Prohibition especially the equally superb Dry Manhattan: Prohibition in New York City (2007) by Michael Lerner and Daniel Okrent’s Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition (2010). In addition, next year one of America’s most acclaimed documentary filmmakers Ken Burns will present his film “Prohibition” on PBS. To achieve such synthetic works, it
has been necessary to produce local and institutional histories. While recently these works have tended to be local and state studies, Paul Vanderwood has written a regional study that transcends national boundaries.

The playground that Vanderwood refers to in general is Tijuana and specifically the elegant gambling center and resort Aqua Caliente from 1928 to 1935. Developed by three shady American gamblers and political operatives christened by the author as the Border Barons in alliance with the Governor of Baja California, it became a beacon for movie stars, horse race aficionados, and sensation-craving members of the middle class from Southern California. Vanderwood throughout demonstrates the permeability of political, regional, and cultural boundaries.

For readers of this journal, the most important part of the study is its location on a cultural and ideological border, a border that extended beyond Tijuana and San Diego to Los Angeles and even Mexico City. Like many American cities of the 1920s, San Diego praised its strict morality while smuggling and bootlegging was endemic and politics and the police force were notably corrupt. A large number of Los Angeles’ citizens, especially those in the film industry, regarded such proclamations of morality as foolishly naïve and continued to drink and gamble. In Southern California liquor smugglers were generally employees of water taxis and other harbor craft. Bootleggers were small groups of East Coast hoodlums capitalizing on the relative vacuum of power. Fancy gambling houses existed in plain sight and under sporadic police protection, but horse and dog racing had disappeared with Santa Anita only opening in 1934.

Tijuana, on the other hand, had developed into a gambling center when morality-oriented Progressives had successfully closed California gambling operations in the early part of the twentieth century. At the time Tijuana was a dusty outpost with a population of several hundred with the singular attractions of being seventeen miles from San Diego and fifteen hundred from Mexico City. The individual who set the pattern for the Barons, Carlie Withington, received permission to run many of the gambling houses, saloons, and bordellos in town through monthly bribes to the local Governor. By the 1920s, the Barons replaced Withington through closer contacts with the national and federal governments, increased taxes, philanthropic support of schools, and well-paying jobs for Mexican nationals.

Aqua Caliente was a stylish compound of hotel, casino, bar and restaurant and a world-class racetrack where some of the leading horses of the day including Seabiscuit and Phar Lap ran. Designed in stereotypical Mission style, it represented a golden pre-Prohibition past situated in a romantic Mexico that likewise never existed.

Alcohol, interestingly, does not enter the story that much. Prohibition did convince middle-class Southern Californians that moralistic laws went against common sense and ordinary pleasure. Unlike the Hollywood celebrities, their weekend or even night out at Aqua Caliente usually consisted of a half dozen drinks at the casino and a2 bottle or two past customs. The bootleggers and organized crime lay outside Aqua Caliente envying its connections and profits. Vanderwood emphasizes two gangland attacks against the establishment, a botched robbery and double murder and a failed kidnapping of a midlevel casino executive and his wife. While the murder in particular is used as a framing device, the crime figures are clearly small-time incompetents who most likely were set up by the Barons themselves.

What the Barons did fear was the power of the Mexican national government. In 1935 the progressive President Lazaro Cardenas demanded an end to casino gambling as part of his national anti-poverty and morality programs and desire to eliminate American influence along the border. Faced with the loss of gambling profits, the Bar-
Vanderwood’s distinguished career as a professor emeritus of Mexican History at San Diego State University and his vocation as a local historian of the San Diego area serves him well in this project. He does an excellent job of situating the resort within its geographical and historic context. Unfortunately, he does a far inferior job at writing. One of his worst tendencies is to provide lengthy laundry lists of alleged celebrities who visited Aqua Caliente. Some of these clearly come directly out of the society listings of the San Diego papers. His descriptions often become, as he stated himself, “Ballyhoo blanketed the complex. Hyperbole thrived” (p. 44). For example, his description of the racetrack: “If one looked at the pulsating stands through a gauze-covered lens, one could see the outlines of the illustrious Sheepshead Track off New York’s Coney Island or mingle with the French peerage at the famed La Piste des Aigles (The Race Course of the Eagles) at charming Chantilly” (p. 95).

A final problem is that Vanderwood knows his region better than he knows the rest of the United States. He points out that “Big Hugh Johnson… Franklin Roosevelt’s soil conservation chief” (p. 229) visited in 1934. Brigadier General Hugh Johnson was in charge of American military training in World War I, headed several corporations in the 1920s, and in 1933 was appointed head of the National Recovery Administration in charge of industrial recovery. Johnson was probably second only to Roosevelt himself in terms of political and economic power in 1933. Ans was chosen by Time Magazine as Man of the Year in 1933. One of the few things he wasn’t in charge of was soil conservation.


Reviewed by Virginia Berridge, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Toby Seddon argues in this book that our modern ways of looking at drugs, and concerns about them, originate in the emergence in the late eighteenth century of liberal capitalism, with its distinctive emphasis on freedom. Following Foucault, Seddon sees freedom as a “technique of government”; the relationship between liberty and government is an intrinsic part of what we have come to know as freedom. He identifies three phases of liberalism: classic liberalism from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth century; welfare liberalism from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1970s; and neo liberalism from the 1980s to the present.

In order to understand these stages and the changes in relationships between concepts, Seddon drills down into episodes over the past two hundred years which illuminate his core thesis. There are chapters on: the 1868 Pharmacy Act; the Dangerous Drugs Act and tensions in policy in the 1920s; and the Drugs Act of 2005. He then draws out some implications from these case studies, in particular drawing on the nodal governance approach and ideas about regulation and governance. A final chapter draws these ideas together and examines the implications of this analysis. The aim is not to advocate a particular style or form of drug policy change or reform, but rather to question the bases of current thinking in order to begin to see different directions for action in the future.

As an historian whose work is approvingly cited (and which in fact forms the empirical basis for the chapters on the 1860s and the 1920s), I found the attitude to the work of historians displayed here irritating to say the least. We are seen as the com-
posers of comprehensive “accounts” (p. 3); we are archival not analytical (p. 37). The implication is that we are the burrowers in the archives and provide the raw material for those from other disciplines who can think big thoughts on the back of our fact gathering. The fact is that historians are analytical and archival. It would be good if other disciplines were prepared to engage on that basis. Seddon’s conclusions from my evidence in chapters 3 and 4 do not in the end differ significantly from my own–apart from his comment that the 1920s marked the beginning of prohibition in Britain. How can a system of medical prescribing and gate-keeping be called prohibition?

One difference is the overarching liberalism and freedom argument; and here historians would be very wary of ascribing such big labels in such an uncompromising way, unmediated by reference to empirical justification. I was reminded of James Nicholls’ recently published The Politics of Alcohol (2009). He makes the interesting point that nineteenth century temperance prohibitionists argued on the basis of freedom, not restriction – those drinking to excess were in bondage and needed to be liberated. It is fresh archival and primary research which enables such insights to be produced. The danger of reusing other’s historical research is that, in the end, it may lead to the same conclusions. There is a connection between doing new historical research and developing fresh analysis.

I found the latter chapters of the book, where Seddon branches out on his own, did offer interesting insights. Seddon surveys the recent history of concepts – the rise of problem use and dependence and the rise of the concept of risk and its application to drugs from the 1960s. He sees the 2005 Drugs Act as a key event which extended the risk based approach in its enactment of coercive criminal justice measures and in the creation of new offences such as aggravated drug dealing for those selling drugs near schools.

He criticises David Courtwright’s analysis of why the substances may be moving closer together in the twenty first century – and cites James Mills’ comment that privileging scientific explanation does not get us very far (Courtwright 2005; Mills 2005). In the end Seddon’s explanation is in the transition to his third phase of neo liberalism. He favours the gradual transformation of the complex governance of drugs – which ranges from the global to the local, through incremental stages. Nicholas Dorn’s book on the administrative regulation of drugs in Europe, published some years ago – is cited approvingly, as is that author’s insight about the relationships between the rise of consumer capitalism and the prevalence of recreational drug use among young people. He rightly points out (another point made by historians and others) that positing public health and criminal justice approaches as opposites fails to recognise that they are entangled and not polar opposites.

Seddon’s aim is to get people thinking about what might stimulate change. His comments in chapter 6 about regulation and governance deserve attention. He argues here that we need to look beyond the state; and beyond the law; and we need to understand governance as networked and polycentric, operating in multiple sites and at different levels (p. 120). Such ideas are more sophisticated than standard legalisation or decriminalisation labels and deserve to be integrated into current debate on drugs.

REFERENCES


Reviewed by James H. Mills, University of Strathclyde.

While it is not up there with the great Bushisms, this book does allow the reader the pleasure of the former president’s 1999 response to a question about state medical marijuana laws; “I believe each state can choose that decision as they choose” (p. 192) was his position. Whatever this means, it is significantly more satisfying than the rest of the book. This is a curious volume which is a poor advertisement for the benefits to be accrued from abandoning objectivity in academic research.

The basic premise of the book is that two academics with personal connections to the California-based Wo/Men’s Alliance for Medical Marijuana (WAMM) will “discuss the uses (and prohibitions on the use) of cannabis as medicine and to give life to these issues by describing a contemporary, and in many ways exemplary, medical marijuana organization” (p. 9). The first of the authors, Wendy Chapkis, is a Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies at the University of Southern Maine and is best known for her previous work on the politics of female appearance and of female participation in the sex industry. Her relationship with WAMM stemmed from her personal acquaintance with its founders and her partner’s position in the organisation as a human resources co-ordinator. The second author, Richard Webb, is Lecturer in Communication Studies at San Jose University and he decided to study WAMM as a research project, only to find himself acting as a caregiver in the organisation, an experience which he found “personally transformational” (p. 7).

They readily admit to their biases and sympathies, so that the US Government, the Drugs Enforcement Agency and pharmaceutical companies are usually in the wrong while WAMM and its activists are regarded as heroes who have regular access to the moral high ground. The authors recognise that these prejudices colour their account but are sure that “a sympathetic but not uncritical account of the medical use of marijuana – and federal opposition to it – will help clarify what is at stake in the medical marijuana debates for policy makers, the American public, and, most especially, for the patients that have entrusted me with their stories” (p. 4). The story that emerges is indeed one-sided but no less interesting for all that. A group of Californians who became convinced that smoking organic cannabis relieved the symptoms of ailments that included AIDS and terminal cancer chose to cultivate their own crops of the plant to be distributed free of charge to those who applied to use it for medicinal purposes. This attracted the ire of the Federal Government which seized crops and engaged in legal action in order to challenge WAMM’s activities, despite the vote in the State of California in 1996 to legalize medical uses of cannabis. Despite the opposition of the Federal Government and its various enforcement agencies, WAMM endured in its core mission of producing and distributing cannabis for medicinal use and also took on a campaigning role in challenging the Federal Government’s policies and tactics.

The book is at its most useful in reproducing intriguing interviews with various actors in the drama. George Hanamoto came to act as the garden coordinator at WAMM after seeking treatment for glaucoma. A man in his sixties, he was keen to draw parallels between the raid of the DEA on the property in 2002 and his ex-
perience of being interred in the US for three years in 1942 as someone of Japanese descent. “Betty,” a caregiver, had nursed her mother through cancer and was also a nurses’ aide. She admitted in her interview that “I enjoy the meetings and other activities… it’s really important for those of us who are caregivers to have that community too” (p. 85). Mardi Wormhoudt, the former Mayor of the City of Santa Cruz which was the home of WAMM, reported that “we need to have the courage to articulate and define an alternative to the War on Drugs” but also stated that “in Santa Cruz there is a major problem with heroin… amphetamines, crank, crack. My understanding is that the city of Santa Cruz has asked the DEA for help with dealing with those problems and didn’t get whatever they needed” (p. 61). Quietly revealing and suggestive though these interviews are, the fact that they sit in between chapters rather than form the basis of discussion within them reveals the central failure of the book; rather than attempt to analyze and understand WAMM and its place in contemporary positions on cannabis, the book is content to report from just one of these positions in order to justify and glorify it. Yet this material is crying out for analysis and contextualisation. For example, some of the main actors in WAMM, and indeed one of the authors, make much of their “aging hippy” status and yet quite what this means in this particular context is never explored. The idea of the “aging hippy” may have some content in California but the non-Californian reader is left to wonder what this is, particularly when many of the images in the book suggest a community with modes of appearance and behaviour that are quite distinctive. Similarly, the figure of one of the founders of WAMM is an intriguing one, particularly when “members surround Val, wanting a moment with her. Valerie gives and receives many hugs and kisses; such displays are the norm in this organization” (p. 91). In a part of the US with a recent history of “cults” centred on charismatic leaders such a description raises interesting possibilities when thinking about WAMM and the participation of its members. Yet the book fails to show any interest in considering the meaning of what it is reporting. As such I am not convinced that this book can be considered “academic” to any great extent. If a sociologist fails to explore and explain the ways in which a group is constituted and the manner in which it interacts with other groups, then the book is not sociological. If an expert in Communication Studies shows little interest in understanding how a group maintains itself through acts of communication and how it constitutes itself through external articulation then the book is not a study in communication. Whatever the claims of the book to “participant observation” (p. 2) and to “the politics of location” (p. 4), there is so little attention paid to analysing the evidence produced in the book that the conclusion is unavoidable that this is no more than a piece of advocacy designed to demonstrate that WAMM is indeed “exemplary.” Which, ultimately, this reviewer feels was a failure of the authors to those members of the organization that they so valorize. In their rush to capture and celebrate the voices of WAMM, Chapkis and Webb have missed the chance to use the academic tools of context, comparison and theoretical analysis to render these voices intelligible and important to those that would routinely ignore them.

Reviewed by Pamela E. Pennock, University of Michigan-Dearborn

Penny Dade’s enjoyable book displays and describes print advertising of alcoholic
beverages in Britain over the twentieth century, including both adverts for British-manufactured alcohol and alcohol made in other countries but advertised in Britain. An art librarian at Middlesex University, Dade’s clear and informative text accompanies the delightful advertisements beautifully reproduced in this attractive book. It does not contain footnotes or an index but features a glossary that lists all the manufacturers and a bibliography that includes scholarly sources.

The chapters are arranged chronologically. The first treats the period 1900-30 and the remaining seven proceed decade by decade through to the 1990s. Each chapter examines the main trends and motifs in beer, spirits, champagne, and wine advertising (including specific brands such as Guinness), and how these campaigns changed over time. Not only does the author chart the transformations in the advertising industry and its techniques, but she also considers the changes in social, political, and economic contexts that influenced British attitudes toward alcohol consumption and advertisements. The book thus admirably intertwines the analysis of individual adverts (displayed on the same or adjoining page for easy reference) with broader societal content.

Beer and spirits ads in the early twentieth century often blatantly touted the beverages’ healthful qualities, and Dade includes several examples of this trend, such as Whitbread Pale Ale’s 1933 “Here’s Health” campaign that depicted attractive young male and female socialites swimming together and enjoying their “wholesome” ale on the pool deck (p. 32). Other major themes, particularly for spirits advertising, were the presentation of products as luxury goods aimed at the upper class and association with holidays, especially Christmas and national events such as King George V’s Silver Jubilee. One ad for Black & White Scotch Whisky in 1960 shows Santa drinking whisky and smoking a cigarette.

The book provides several examples of advertising campaigns that linked their products to Britain’s engagement in the two World Wars, along with advertisements that commented on the government’s rationing policies that limited the supply of alcoholic beverages during and after war time. Particularly fascinating are ads for Haig Whisky in 1919 and 1921 that protested the government’s restrictionist policies, with one ad declaring, “Some of us thought that we were going to get free of Government controls but, in spite of the need for it, it appears that we are NOT YET going to get our way” and appealing to the new Chancellor to “lower the duty” and “remove control” in order to please the public (pp. 22-23). Several advertisements after World War II reminded customers that supplies were still limited due to government controls.

Aside from politics and war, Dade also shows us how alcohol ads reflected economic conditions in Britain. She argues that the Brewers’ Society’s “Beer is Best” campaign in the 1930s was a reaction to the decline in the market for beer because of high taxes and economic hardship as well as the decline in working-class male pub culture that had occurred in the 1920s. Beer drinking did subsequently increase, she states, in part due to the advertising campaigns of both the brewing industry and individual brands in the 1930s. Themes in alcohol marketing subsequently reflected the return to prosperity in the 1950s, and several ads from this period reflect the growing trend towards tourism and world travel.

In terms of social and cultural developments in British society, more campaigns in the post-World War II era targeted women as consumers. For example, a Mackeson’s Stout ad in 1950 showed a middle-class woman drinking her beer “after the long day’s housework is over” (p. 67). One intriguing Guinness ad of this period showed a couple eating dinner in front of their television. The copy advises us “How to Enjoy Your T.V. More,” with two lessons: eat your meals in front of it, and drink Guinness while
watching (p. 66). Dade also writes about the campaign for Babycham, a drink made out of pears that was similar to champagne and came in small bottles. Babycham was marketed to young women and was most popular in the 1960s. The book includes two liquor ads from the 1960s that used imagery from the Counterculture. One of them, for Booth’s Gin, is designed to look like a protest poster and announces, “Protest Against the Rising Tide of Conformity; Serve Booth’s House of Lords, the Non-conformist Gin from England” (p. 101).

Many examples of Guinness advertisements over the years are featured, such as the “Guinness is Good for You” and “Guinness for Strength” campaigns of the 1930s. The brand was still emphasizing its healthful qualities as late as 1969 in the ad “A Guinness a Day Keeps the Doctor Away” (p. 90). Guinness dominated beer advertising until the 1950s when other brands began putting out prominent campaigns. Dade is careful to remind us of changing trends in British alcohol consumption, such as the unpopularity of wine and lager until the 1970s.

Starting in the chapter on the 1960s, the book includes a few of the government’s anti-alcohol ads, principally against drinking and driving. Some of them are witty while others are powerful and shocking. Although she provides an evenhanded description of these public awareness campaigns, overall Dade seems skeptical of government controls on alcohol marketing.

One challenge of this project is that even within one decade and one brand, the advertising themes vary so widely: Guinness, for instance, produced the stark and strong “Guinness for Strength” posters at the same time as the humorous toucan campaign. Consequently, it is often difficult to identify and describe patterns. In the same period, and often for the same type of beverage, advertisers used a variety of visual techniques such as realistic artwork, cartoons, and photography. Some ads were traditional and staid, some were gay and witty, and others were colorful and silly. It is thus difficult to impose “order” on this jumble of styles and strategies. Nevertheless, Drink Talking is commendable for portraying a wide range of alcohol advertising campaigns over time and for elucidating them with a text that reveals how the ads interacted with changes in British society.

Reviewed by Andy Ruddock, Monash University, Australia.

Wenner and Jackson’s Sport, Beer and Gender is an edited collection that shows how drinking helps sport reinforce hegemonic gender hierarchies, even as those hierarchies move with changing times. As such, it is an interesting example of “new media influence research”: work which maintains that there are empirical reasons for hanging on to “strong” visions of media power, even as we engage with the complexities of history and the various forms of authority at play in global media cultures. The book is best read as a call to arms. It challenges scholars to use drinking as a foundation for sophisticated versions of the argument that centrally managed media operations still “do” things to the public, even if some publics and audiences are willing accomplices. Read in this way, Sport, Beer and Gender’s methodological spaces and geographic concentrations play an interestingly elliptical function.

The book is divided into three sections. The first looks at the history and organization of national and international sport-based beer promotions. Next, several chapters
consider how drinking is represented in advertising. Finally, matters of reception are considered: what does alcohol marketing and advertising do among audiences, and what do audiences do with the various cultural meanings we attach to drinking? In all of this, it is made clear that the meaning of alcohol is intimately connected to harmful articulations between gender and sport. The logic of this organization is to illustrate Wenner & Jackson’s opening assertion that we can now speak of a “sport-media-beer commercial complex” (p. 11) which ultimately sustains because of the synergies between the desires of the alcohol industry, transnational media companies and men with vested interests in maintaining the gendered apartheid characterizing the consumption of sport.

In the first section, Walker, Hathcock & Bellamey describe how post-war American beer advertising was conscripted in the broader commercial battle to “reconvert” American men and women back into the familiar gender roles of the post-war suburban order. Turning to England, Horne and Whannel explain how the sacred trinity between men, beer and football has been sustained as an uneasy alliance, where the relationship between drinking fans, breweries and television companies is more marriage of convenience than match made in heaven. Jette and colleagues provide a fascinating glimpse into how another “trinity” – the combination of aggressive marketing, regulatory impotence and a growing youth market who are attracted to sponsored sporting events – has made Latin America hugely attractive to the premium beer industry. In a more grounded case study, Amis, Mower and Silk analyse the specific strategy that Guinness has used to break African markets by creating the character “Michael Power” in association with football advertising spaces.

We then move to “texts and representations.” Wenner argues that beer advertising “works” because it portrays a male “dreamworld” – where women are either sexually objectified or absent – that even “loser” men (those who are only too aware of the power they lack) can enjoy. Following Mean’s dissection of Miller Lite’s explicitly gendered “Man-Laws” campaign, antipodean men get a fairly fierce dressing down. Both Jackson et al. & Rowe and Gilmour criticize the racism of beer advertising in New Zealand and Australia respectively. There, beer advertising not only naturalises gender inequality by appealing to powerful national myths of how things are and should be, but in doing so excludes indigenous peoples from those myths. McKay, Emmison & Mikosza also reference exnominated white male power, but concentrate their attention on the shift toward “new lad” ideologies in Victoria Bitter commercials, embodied in the figure of Australian cricket great Shane Warne.

Finally, the question of what audiences make of the commercial frenzy surrounding sport and beer is considered. It has to be said that the only chapter that truly “does what it says on the tin” here is Catherine Palmer’s ethnography of Australian Rules Football fans. Palmer describes how prodigious drinking is central to the performance of masculinity and commitment for North Adelaide football club’s fans. Duncan and Aycock identify Bud Light as a brand with a bitterly fractious gendered appeal, enabled by the unique commercial opportunities offered by the Superbowl. Atkin and Gantz explore the complex co-dependencies of beer, television, advertising, social responsibility and sport-based, gendered leisure rituals as they play out in US collegiate sport. Finally, Gary Crawford considers what beer says about the relationship between spectacular consumption of football events and the identities that male fans live in ordinary moments.

There is no doubt that this collection achieves its goal of persuading the reader that anyone with an interest in media influence should want to know about sport and
beer. The importance of cultural history in an informed discussion on the power of alcohol marketing is equally well established. And it’s all very readable. Sport Beer and Gender introduces some delicious ironies; we discover, for example, that the progenitors of the quintessentially English “lager lout” were World War II American airmen who lacked the stomach for real ale.

The book is all the more thought provoking for its telling preferences, which indicate how much there is to be done in researching this area. Despite its ambition to cover political economy, texts and audiences, the discussion of textual meaning is by far the prevailing strategy throughout the collection. This carries an inevitable price; this reader would honestly make something else of the Superbowl ads which Duncan and Aycock present as malevolently male in perspective. And, naturally, the theme of what white English, American and Australian men make of the sport-beer-media complex leaves one contemplating how invented drinking traditions may be experienced by new consumer groups like the Latin American women Jette et al. mention – or even wonder how some women may operate as “anti-fans” within the media rituals identified. But Sport Beer and Gender only raises these questions because, as an account of media influence that embraces cultural history, it refreshes parts of the advertising debate that other analyses of promotional cultures can’t reach.

Reviewed by Alasdair J. M. Forsyth, Glasgow Caledonian University

(Dis)Orderly Spaces sets out to be the first book dedicated to looking at alcohol issues through a geographical lens. This aim is particularly refreshing for this reader, who for the past quarter century has felt like the only geographer working in the substance use field in Scotland – and yet from the outset was struck that Amsterdam University’s drug research team was based in their department of Sociale Geografie (perhaps, unlike the English-speaking world, the Dutch have a more tolerant attitude towards geographers?).

In their Introduction, Jayne, Valentine & Holloway describe geographers as “newcomers” to alcohol research’s top-table, but point out that geography has always been present throughout alcohol discourses by other academics and theorists (Gin Lane and the Night-time Economy are spatial concepts). However they note that at present, geographical aspects of drinking are under-theorized and in need of dedicated empirical research investigation.

Thus the book is very timely, being written at a point when even adherents of the medical model of “alcoholism” are becoming aware that drinking contexts (be these micro-settings or globalizing drinking cultures) are as crucial to alcohol outcomes as are fixed genetics or ethanol consumption levels by body-mass-index calculations. Amidst this emergent inter-disciplinary spirit, “newcomers” can be seen as having much new to offer, and it was most welcome that throughout this book these authors stress that geographers are not so immersed (as say other social scientists) in the dominant “problem paradigm” (moral model) which automatically pathologizes drinking (and other drug use), limiting research agendas to the ghettos of health and deviance (and where dissenting voices are routinely scrutinised for potential links to the “drinks industry”). Geographers, it is suggested (p. 122), can bridge the “ontological and epistemological impasse” between academia and real world drinkers.
This theme is apparent from the outset in the substantive chapters, where alcohol use is examined in terms such as conviviality, pleasure and social (without the prefix anti!). The drinking behaviours/patterns examined in the first three chapters, whether found in the city, the countryside or the home, respectively, are those which comprise the majority of occasions (or individuals), as opposed to a focus only on the problem-atic minority. This represents an advance from most theorising, about for example the urban Night-time Economy (Chapter 1), and chimes with recent writings concerning illicit drugs in that same nightlife arena (e.g. that of Geoffrey Hunt, who wrote this book’s back-cover endorsement).

As well as avoiding the automatic problematization of alcohol, Chapters 2 and 3 deal with neglected drinking settings, specifically rural environments and home consumption, respectively. In doing so they challenge the notion of “binge drinking” which has come to be associated with the urban Night-time Economy, regardless of the (often greater) level of consumption in these other settings. Similarly, Chapters 4 to 6 analyse drinking amongst demographic groups who have not often been the focus of recent alcohol research, in terms of gender, ethnicity and age cohort respectively. Nevertheless, the current interest groups, arguably over-represented in much recent alcohol discourse (e.g. young troublesome white females), are not ignored either, with the book relating the creation of a youthful feminised Night-time Economy to the drinks industry purposively marketing towards these consumers, often by the manipulation of youth culture (e.g. by shaping or manufacturing “cool places”).

The final substantive chapter (Chapter 7) breaks new ground by looking at alcohol in psychosocial/emotional spaces (and in the role of drinking in the creation of spatial identities). This is done by exploring “intoxicated geographies,” such as the desire to experience certain emotions/feelings (e.g. relaxation or dis-inhibition) in specific contexts (e.g. drinking to mark a special event or alcohol use as a rite-of-passage).

All the above is achieved largely through the use of findings from the authors’ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) funded research comparing two contrasting localities in England, namely Stoke and Eden. In some respects this is the main limitation of the book, in that as well as being confined to just one country, these two locations might be said to represent stereotypical extremes. Stoke is a socio-economically disadvantaged ethnically diverse conurbation, while Eden is a traditional ethnically homogenous, but socio-economically mixed, rural area (the most sparsely populated in England). Perhaps a chapter dedicated to “social class”/socio-economic status would have helped here, and augmented the others examining demographics.

These limitations however raise the reader’s interest in the gaps not covered (perhaps this is the book’s intention). For example alcohol in an area of (sub)urban affluence (e.g. the Surrey commuter-belt) is not investigated, although the text does refer to such “middle class” areas as having the highest drinking level in England, albeit situated “behind the sitting room curtains” (p. 45). It may be that in such (“genteel”) environments very few alternative activities are provided for young people to engage in locally, even when compared to Eden. Alternatively, another divergent locality might be one characterised by de-industrialised rural poverty (e.g. County Durham’s ex-coal mining villages), one where residents experience the deprivation double-whammy of socio-economic disadvantage plus remoteness (though such communities are likely to be more normative of village life in Wales or Scotland, as opposed to the Anglo-centric “rural idyll”). In such physically and culturally isolated communities, fears about youth violence and unsafe drinking contexts may be at least as concerning as in Stoke (highlighted in another recent JRF funded alcohol project’s report, by Eadie &
colleagues, which included areas of rural poverty and urban affluence).

Of course these gaps actually represent research opportunities for geographers, as do other issues mentioned, but not covered in detail, by this book. These might include the interactions between drinking and (youth) sub-cultural clustering, the spatial patterning of alcohol trading, or licensed music geographies (which arguably segment the Night-time Economy more than alcohol itself). *(Dis)Orderly Spaces* seeks to encourage more geographical research into alcohol issues, and it points-towards future avenues for “intoxication geographers” to explore. This reviewer looks forward very much to reading more about what they find in due course.


John Varriano has written a wonderfully-illustrated and insightful cultural history of wine, a unique drink that “has supported and justified a variety of religious and secular expressions, consistently sustaining the hopes and fears, aspirations and decisions of those who throughout history have adapted its unique potential to the needs of their own.” (p. 10) It is therefore unfortunate that Varriano begins his book with the claim that in “nearly every period and every part of the world, [wine] has captured the imagination of the religious and the philosophical, the artistic and poetic, and even those in the healing profession” (p. 7). As Varriano himself subsequently acknowledges, that claim has not been true for much of the world, although it is certainly true for the Classical Mediterranean world, and for Christian Europe and its cultural offshoots. Indeed, it is for this reason that Varriano focuses his attention on “Western Civilization,” which is a conception of human history that is essentially synonymous with the history of wine-drinking cultures. That is an important connection to make because Western Civilization is strongest as an idea when it acknowledges its highly selective nature and does not pretend to be an even-handed history of human progress, which it is not.

So, we do not learn why it is that wine is inextricably linked to the cultures that are said to comprise the history of Western Civilization, but we do get a very old-fashioned history of Western Civilization from a very new-fangled perspective, and the result is mostly a pleasure to read and, in this case, to view. Not surprisingly, Varriano follows the familiar Western Civilization narrative by beginning with the Bronze Age cultures of the Fertile Crescent. It was there, in the geographic crossroads of Eurasia and Africa, where wine from *Vitis vinifera* grapes seems first to have been made sometime between 8500 BC and 4000 BC. From Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Kingdom of Israel, Varriano continues along the well-trodden ground to Greece, Rome, the Germanic kingdoms of Early Christian Europe, the Renaissance and Reformation, the Baroque and Enlightenment eras, and finally, to contemporary Europe and its cultural offshoots in the Americas and Britain’s Antipodes. Despite this well-known historical trajectory, wine’s meanings and uses were complex. Therefore, within each of the cultures examined, Varriano limits his focus to wine’s meaning and use in religion, philosophy, art, literature, and medicine.

As an art historian, Varriano is particularly strong in deciphering the meaning of wine in visual images and sculpture. For instance, he carefully tracks the changing physical form and meaning of Dionysis, who in Roman guise became Bacchus. Dionysis/Bacchus was not a drunken deity in the Classical World; instead he signified many things, mirth, conviviality, and perhaps most of all, spiritual transformation. But
destructive drunkenness was the realm of Silenus. It was only in the Renaissance that Bacchus became bacchic, and according to Varriano it was the formidable Michelangelo who was the first to create or reflect this new meaning of the ancient god. (p. 118)

Although the book’s structure is formulaic, as each theme (religion, philosophy, art, literature, and medicine) gets examined in sequence within each culture, this pattern allows Varriano to cover all the periods in like manner. That said, Varriano is particularly illuminating when discussing the period he knows best: the Renaissance and Baroque eras, especially in Italy. Varriano’s discussion of the humoral theory of illness, and the importance of wine in maintaining or achieving health, is also adept. Furthermore, he concludes his discussion of wine and medicine in the modern Western world by showing that modern science, while clearly rejecting humoral theory, has proven that the Ancients were on to something; wine in moderation can be not only pleasurable, but also salubrious.

There is, therefore, much to like in Varriano’s book, but there are also some things to quibble with. “Wine Geeks” as they are known, will smugly recoil at the spelling “Callioure” (p. 7) instead of “Collioure,” a town and tiny French wine-growing region pressed between the Mediterranean and the Spanish border. But this is not entirely trivial, as wine geeks are no doubt part of Varriano’s intended audience. Likewise, when Varriano speaks of the pleasures of a “rare American varietal” (p. 7) without giving its name, this wine-drinker and wine-historian is confounded. The United States makes many excellent wines, but almost all of them are made with European varietals that were brought to America, and few of them are rare. The wines made from indigenous American Vitis vitifera grapes – think muscadine and concord (the latter being the basis for Manischewitz) – have a loyal following, but the indigenous American varietals that are rarely made into wine might well deserve their fate.

From the historian’s perspective, there are other infelicities. For example, Varriano asserts second-handedly, that it “has been estimated that the daily average [of wine consumption] was between a half and two litres per person in the fifteenth century, with production steadily rising through the 1600s” (p. 101). But without going to the original source, we have no idea of the place he is talking about: Europe, yes, but Europe’s a big place, and the Scandinavians were not drinking the same amount as the inhabitants of the Italian peninsula or the Holy Roman Empire, and these places themselves were quite diverse. Moving to factual mistakes, the Pontac family purchased the estate that would become Château Haut Brion in 1525, not 1550, and the first mention of the wine by the name Haut Brion did not come until 1660, when it was found in the cellar book of King Charles II of England, Ireland, and Scotland. On the same topic, Samuel Pepys’s tasting note of Haut Brion (or “Ho Bryan” as he spelled it) dates from 1663, not 1665, and Château Lafite is spelled with one “t” not two (p. 185). Similarly, the technique of cooking wines to concentrate their sugar content was certainly improved, if not invented in Spain, but the result, for the Spanish at least, was not “Vini Cocti,” the Italian name, but Vinos Cocidos (p. 144).

Lastly, Varriano asserts that the materialism of the Dutch middle classes in the seventeenth century was reviled by the Calvinists (p. 175), despite the fact that most members of the Dutch middle classes in the seventeenth century were Calvinist. What Varriano inadvertently points out, therefore, was that middle-class Dutch Calvinists who drank wine were often conflicted about their own behavior, especially when they got drunk. In that sense, however, the Dutch were no different than the Isrealites, the Greeks, the Romans, the French, the English, or any other culture for whom wine has been important. In fact, exploring and explaining the ambivalent attitudes of Western
cultures toward wine is one of the book’s great strengths. In a concluding chapter, Varriano even shows that Islam has had its own set of ambivalent attitudes toward wine, although the ambivalence has weighed more against than in favor.

So, like a bottle of good wine, this is book is not perfect; but all in all, it is an enjoyable experience. In particular, the many visual images it contains, and Varriano’s deft interpretations of them, make the book unique within the historiography of wine. And there is nothing more that wine lovers enjoy than a unique wine experience.


It is often said that the French love good wines because France produces the best wines in the world. Marion Demossier explores these two myths in her new book on wine drinking culture in France. This interesting and engaging book attempts to unpack another French paradox: how the decline of per capita rates of alcohol consumption in France since the 1970s has been coupled with the rise of wine culture as a new global cultural object. Demossier, a French woman living Britain, is the granddaughter of a Burgundian wine merchant and trained as social anthropologist in Paris. After a brisk survey of the literature on the anthropology of drinking, she employs a multi-sited ethnography to analyze how people in modern France consume wine and what this consumption means in a globalized world. The core of the book is formed around an analysis of contemporary discourses and representations of wine in the media, fieldwork interviews and participant observation at wine festivals, fairs and clubs in the major wine producing regions of France (she assures the reader that she “adopted a culture of moderation and controlled drinking during fieldwork,” p. 10). This research has led her to the conclusion that “a new wine culture is now emerging which reveals many of the contradictions contained within contemporary French society” (p. 13).

It may be shocking to learn that from the 1990s, more mineral water was sold in France than wine. Indeed, during the last quarter of the twentieth century, the number of French people who consumed wine everyday fell from 50.7% in 1980 to just 20.7% in 2005 (p. 2). However, this period also saw the parallel development of a new wine drinking culture with a proliferation of clubs, activities and discourses devoted to this passion. Such a situation has given rise to a dichotomy: fewer people drink wine, and those who do consume less than they did in the past. But at the same time, wine is a dominant, pervasive object in French cultural life. Demossier analyzes the sharp rise in television programming devoted to wine production and consumption in the 1980s and 1990s and argues that the programs focused on two main themes: the regional aspects of French wine and the conjectural episodes affecting the wine industry. Besides the proliferation of wine books, wine clubs, wine schools, wine tourism and wine forums on the Internet, the new wine drinking culture has also seen the rise of the sommelier as a professional, testifying to “the independent status of wine in the restaurant” (p. 62). Direct contact with the producers, in the form of visits to and sales at wine caves and co-operatives are also important in this new culture and seen as “authentic” social experiences.

But this new wine drinking culture is highly individualized and self-reflexive as well. Demossier claims that wine consumption is far more complicated than simply drinking fermented grape juice; it is part of how (certain) people create an identity
in the modern world. When people make statements such as “I love Bordeaux” or “I prefer vins de pays” (p. 73), they are saying something about themselves and are constructing an identity. This could be interpreted as snobbery, but it also reveals a certain level of knowledge and even a type of lifestyle. Demossier has identified two kinds of consumers in the new wine culture: First “the wine lover” who devotes a great deal of time and money in the quest of their passion. They are usually white men from the upper and middle classes. The second type of consumer, whom Demossier has called “the wandering drinker,” is the typical modern wine drinker in that they are not particularly concerned with where their wine comes from and may be put off by complicated classifications/labeling. This second type of drinker has forced certain regions in France to completely rethink (and to some extent abandon) the old AOC system and the concept of terroir and replace them with new marketing brands, which are based on grape varieties and geographical regions. The Languedoc-Rousillion region and its rebranding as a global viticultural area under the name of “sud de France” is indicative of this trend.

At the heart of this new wine culture is the fact that wine has become much more of a cultural artefact, rather than a beverage. In some cases, it has acquired the status of an art object—think of the cases of Margaux which sell for thousands of dollars. Using the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of Distinction, Demossier argues that wine has become a marker of social, cultural and economic distinction. Like gastronomy, wine is “a new field for identity marked by social differentiation, fragmentation and the quest for new forms of power and social relations” (p. 61). But this new wine culture is also deeply tied to French National identity and is representative, in part, of a nostalgic view of rural France, which emphasizes the “timelessness” of agrarian values and idealizes the peasant wine grower in the face of the rapid modernization and urbanization of French society since the 1970s. Demossier claims that wine can be interpreted as both cultural artefact and commodity “through which French people engage with their past and construct their image of the present” (p. 219). This is an impressive argument and Demossier employs much skill and awareness in making it. However, there could have been much more analysis and teasing out of the gender and ethnic implications of a wine culture dominated by affluent white men. Although she recognizes that women, ethnic minorities and the poor have been to a greater or lesser extent absent from this new wine culture, there is no exploration of why this has been the case or how this is, perhaps, symbolic of the some of the more problematic aspects of modern French culture.


Reviewed by Harold Tarrant, University of Newcastle, Australia.

Given the “diverse array of materials” quite justifiably claimed by Rinella’s cover blurb, no single reviewer is quite adequate. I had no clear sense of what to expect, other than an enjoyable task. Few Platonists venture far into this area, but the book offers opportunities to explore a range of potentially important Platonic issues. I had expected flaws in the treatment of ancient texts and material remains, but had from the beginning a pleasant surprise. There is serious scholarship across a range of disciplines, which demands that this be considered a contribution both to history and to studies of society. There is of course a political agenda, an agenda supported with reference to such figures as Derrida and Foucault, but it is muted and mostly kept well in the background.
Certain features of Athenian society make this contribution especially welcome. The Greek symposium is currently receiving considerable attention, an institution where wine, itself rich in other intoxicating impurities, was employed to the point of loss of control. The wine that flowed at such events, like much else that was dangerous, was the province of a deity, Dionysus, giving it a certain mystique and a license for abuse on certain ritual occasions. Other religions too incorporated elements of \textit{ecstasis}: for feeling that one steps outside the bounds of one’s normal self, often by having a divinity enter into one and take over; some in this magical world employed physical intoxicants for this purpose. Athenians were always “getting high on” something, and by Plato’s time this included not just physical substances but also words: the words of tragic playwrights, some enhanced by music as well as visual display; political rhetoric that similarly encouraged individuals to lose identity within the group response; artificial displays of crowd-pleasing language by sophists and others; and perhaps too the stinging arguments of Socrates that stimulated groups of younger men to follow him. Just as the Greek for a drug, \textit{pharmakon}, suggested both killer and cure, so too Plato’s often use drug-metaphors and related terminology to apply to words causing a sharp change either for worse or for better in the hearer, with effects ranging from near-addiction to a sudden awakening from earlier “sickness.” Plato’s “Socrates” spoke of cures that demanded both a medicinal leaf and an “incantation” (\textit{Charmides}, 155e), an incantation involving fine words that produce \textit{sôphrosynê} – sometimes translated as “temperance,” but perhaps seen as a disposition towards sensible behaviour (157a). Thus part of the cure is a drug, while the other part is something likely to discourage excess!

Rinella starts by introducing the topics of the \textit{pharmakon} (drug), ecstasy (loss of self), and identity, then moves to the ancient symposium, the use and composition of wine, and other ways of losing the self within the group. The second chapter discusses the symposium and the issue of \textit{stasis} (civil discord), which is rather ambitiously linked with the inner experience of \textit{ecstasis}. I doubt that an Athenian would have felt much connection between words from the rather weak linguistic root \textit{sta}– (involving stance), for one might equally demand a connection between “apostate” and “prostitute.” However, the symposium was an important occasion for the development of political groups by encouraging a group identity linked to the social class of participants. We move in the third chapter to Plato’s shifting the rules for the conduct of symposia, by displaying (like Xenophon and no doubt other Socratics) a Socrates who attended symposia with an emphasis on verbal rather than physical excesses.

Part two begins with the secondary use of \textit{pharmakon} for the ritual scapegoat. I was puzzled by some intended Greek, not in my lexicon, in “struck (\textit{pharma}) with squill” (p. 73), and by the fanciful glossing of the mythical name Iasion: “man of the drug.” Etymology sometimes helps us to make links, but should be used with great caution, as Plato was well aware (\textit{Cratylus}). The etymology used for Dionysus (p. 79) was likewise insecure, but did not undermine the argument, through a string of largely unproven possibilities, that Dionysus \textit{may} originally have been god of hallucinogenic mushrooms (pp. 79-83). Yet such origins are not that relevant unless the connection had endured in some relevant sub-culture. The exploration of possibilities again enters into the treatment of the \textit{kykeon} (p. 86), drunk at the Eleusinian Mysteries, Athens’ esteemed secret ritual. It may have been an intoxicant, but proof is elusive, and I doubt that it was associated with mild ergot poisoning – this would have required stricter controls than I should have thought possible if scandals were to be avoided. The result of these explorations is that any reference to medicine, madness, or mysteries in Plato...
is hastily seized upon as a sign of something of relevance to the broader study.

The fifth chapter leads one into a problematic area: the underlying reasons for the accusations against Socrates. Here Socrates, it is speculated, was an assumed profaner of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Certainly several of Socrates’ friends, including three who spoke in the Symposium, were implicated in the religious scandals of 415BC, and there is comic “evidence” of a Socrates who is a religious quack, but Birds 1553-64, bravely enlisted at page 115, is more of an attack on Peisander’s cowardice and on Socrates’ ghostly and unpopular companion Chaerephon. Chapter six then commences investigation of Plato’s Phaedrus, “a dialogue saturated with religion, the ecstatic, and drugs.” It certainly alludes to such matters regularly, particularly the ecstatic, and there is more than just loose metaphor here, but once you are committed to investigating Plato from a given angle, it is hard to avoid an impression of exaggerating one’s case. The Phaedrus is seen as introducing a philosophic ecstasy that can replace the ergot-induced variety in the Eleusinian Mysteries.

The third part (chapters 6-10) deals with “Plato through the prism of the pharmakon.” Occasionally recent trends in Plato-scholarship are ignored, so that Rinella is too ready to discuss what Plato “believed” (p. 190), to describe characters as his “mouthpiece” (p. 193), and to accept that “myth substitutes for argumentation” (p. 191). Yet he remains interesting, even when one does not quite believe him. He helps us to look at Plato in a fresh new way, even though such perspectives can only capture part of the picture. Few will think that the pleas for a more relaxed attitude to recreational drug use depend on the clarity of his case on every point along his journey. And here too some will feel more relaxed about his conclusions than others. But as with Plato, the text is supposed to be a catalyst to debate, not the final word.