they are unending processes rather than stable and discrete labels (which Makdisi, to be fair, does recognise), then this is a story that cannot have any neat conclusions. Indeed, the manner in which tropes of a feral underclass and feckless and work-shy "Chavs" have (re-)emerged in England in recent years shows the long-term historical significance of Makdisi's analysis. The English working class still remains a "race" apart.

doi:10.1017/S0165115316000206 Aidan Beatty, *Concordia University*

Manuel Pérez-García. *Vicarious Consumers: Trans-National Meetings between the West and East in the Mediterranean World (1730–1808)*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013. 408 pp. ISBN: 9781409456858. $149.95.

The consumer revolution of the early modern period continues to fascinate. Historians have long traced the origins of this revolution to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when shifting cultural preferences seemed to correlate with the massive economic changes of the time. In *Vicarious Consumers: Trans-National Meetings between the West and East in the Mediterranean World (1730–1808)*, Manuel Pérez-García breathes new life into the history of early modern consumption and consumer behaviour. He does so, ironically, by mining quite conventional archival sources—legal wills, dowry lists and other official published documents—for proof of a cultural shift in thinking about the relationship between one's purchase power and one's status. Pérez-García's study examines the emergence of a consumer culture in Spain, in the Kingdom of Murcia, where close proximity to major Mediterranean port hubs brought Murcia and the region of Castille into commercial contact with the wider world. Looking at both urban and rural patterns of consumption, Pérez-García shows how traveling merchants who introduced foreign goods into Murcia caused demand for consumer products previously unavailable to mass audiences. Theses merchants were "vicarious consumers", choosing goods—clothing, food and "exotic" Asian commodities—that suggested they had the discretionary economic power to match the wealth and status of those in stations above them. Merchant consumerist behaviour flooded foreign products into Spain, which Pérez-García argues helped change spending habits and cultural trends at all social class levels.

Pérez-García's significant methodological contribution is his reading of probate inventories, which show how the Spanish family became part of a common global market by way of consumer goods. Commodities helped individuals understand their relationship to the new global economy vis-à-vis national consumption trends. French merchants made up the bulk of foreign travellers bringing goods into Spain from America and Asia, thereby stimulating consumption patterns through their extended family networks. Probate valuation of goods suggests something about the social value of the good, noting where to find that good in the house and how the good was used. Pérez-García argues that as household expenditures in Murcia increased, so did growth of middle class, bourgeois values symbolized by the kinds of goods purchased. He rightly identifies the family household as the place where consumer decisions were made. Merchant-class women seemed to stimulate much of this growth by shaping fashion and introducing new cultural practices. The exchange networks of Afro-Eurasia and the Americas brought countless new items related to personal pleasure and leisure into the household. Pérez-García also uses complementary dowry letters and tax

censuses, where the monetary value is clearer, and argues that changes in food, clothing, and even use of language were the result of a trans-national experience in which new values transferred along with goods.

Pérez-García places his work within larger questions of globalization, the development of capitalist economies in the West and proto-industrial changes to local Spanish economies in the early modern period. Merchants consumed vicariously and caused a "trickle-down" interest in globally-traded goods (here Pérez-García borrows from Neil McKendrick's theory of "trickle-down cultural emulation), helped by elites whose responses further diffused consumption of goods relative to wealth. Spain, a transitional capitalist state still working under mercantilist models, encouraged its population to reject these foreign goods and instead embrace traditional culture and values. Seeking to control consumption, Spanish authorities played on cultural stereotypes to instil national priorities in individuals by banning goods, encouraging local industry, and nationalizing commodities—textiles and foods—as import substitutions. All with varying degrees of success. This state-sponsored social backlash, which viewed luxury as superfluous and excessive, had some impact on Spanish cultural life. Pérez-García demonstrates how the Spanish state framed foreign consumption as an attack on Catholic social teaching and the national economy. Foreign goods were deemed effeminate (as an example, the annoyingly vain *petimetre* figure in literature) and corruptive by the Spanish crown. Spanish rulers instead encouraged the stereotypical Spanish *majo* man, whose exaggerated dress and manners reflected a masculine virility in deep contrast to French stereotypes. This state intervention against "superficial" commodities also contained an anti-Enlightenment strain. The state, according to Pérez-García, railed against individualism and self-expression through these gendered stereotypes. Ultimately conceding the effect foreign goods had on changing cultural values, the state hoped to challenge the new global marketplace as an arbiter of good taste and Christian morals. Interestingly, artisanal workers and tradespersons joined the state in reinforcing the idea that foreign goods were inferior in every way.

One might question the inequality of this consumption experience. Pérez-García seems correct when he argues that vicarious consumption led to the steady increasing purchase power of all social classes but what were the effects of cultural changes among groups whose ability to vicariously consume was limited? Pérez-García posits a few ideas in his concluding chapters. For one, he argues that artisans and peasant farmers consumed too but, mostly, because they had no choice. By the early nineteenth century, the Spanish economy, at least in the eastern borders connected to Mediterranean trade, had been globalized. That determined the availability of goods and Pérez-García argues that only the emergent foreign market goods could fulfil need. Taking his cue from Jan de Vries and his "industrious revolution" thesis—the idea that in proto-industrial society households worked harder and used increased purchase power to reallocate resources toward consumption—Pérez-García explains how new foreign goods made their way down the class hierarchy. This happened in urban and rural Murcia, but the industriousness of local artisans and peasants did not, in turn, spur local production. Agricultural production also did not intensify, although the production of very localized handicraft industries—wool and other raw material goods—increased to pay to purchase second-hand foreign luxuries.

The consumer revolution of the eighteenth century is usually described as a British phenomenon with some reverberation in major western European cities. Pérez-García flips the story by exploring similar historical processes in Spain where industry was slow to take off and where lower classes were just as important sources of demand as middle and upper classes. This

democratization of consumption may also have spurred the democratization of Spain, although Pérez-García only hints at the national changes to come. Traditionally, economic historians have argued that advanced countries grew their economies through consumption while less developed countries grew by producer goods. Here Pérez-García challenges that assumption by showing how merchant classes in Spain became new cultural elites. As consumption mediators, these merchants created demand among lower classes who responded by consuming up, further intensifying luxury industries but also encouraging individual forms of self-expression. Perhaps Pérez-García could have done more to explore the role of the state as mediator. The state sought to counter the consumerist behaviour of Spanish society because it saw the changes those goods made on the everyday lives and beliefs of its citizens. The book is a significant achievement, nonetheless. By paying attention to the social and economic transfers of goods, Pérez-García brings us back to a materialist understanding of the relationship between goods, work, family and identity.

doi:10.1017/S0165115316000218 Daniel Clasby, *King's College*

Patricia Purtschert and Herald Fischer-Tiné, eds. *Colonial Switzerland: Rethinking Colonialism from the Margins*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. 323 pp. ISBN: 9781137442734. $90.00.

The title *Colonial Switzerland* is awkwardly intriguing given a lack of Swiss colonies overall. Yet editor Patricia Purtschert and Herald Fischer-Tiné challenge such understandings right away by describing the experiences of African-American novelist James Baldwin in Switzerland. Baldwin wrote in his essay *Stranger in the Village* that, "from all available evidence no black man had ever set foot in this tiny Swiss village before I came". According to the editors, this observation is limiting given numerous colonial encounters through trade, humanitarian dynamics or fears of "superalienation" (4); they also rightfully point to Swiss support of Apartheid South Africa. In this sense, the editors highlight the "concept of 'colonial naiveté', that is, claiming to stand outside the colonial project while making full use of white supremacy" (2)—a finding substantiated by the scholarship presented in this book. In other words, *Colonial Switzerland* looks at Switzerland "as a country shaped by colonialism in a variety of ways" (5) and thereby explores overlooked avenues of inquiry tied to the "'colonialism at the margins' or 'colonialism without colonies'" (8).

The editors organized this volume around four "thematic foci that have emerged as crucial in research on the colonial entanglements of Switzerland and the Swiss" (10), beginning with a discussion of "Colonialism and Science". Here, historian Bernhard C. Schär takes us on a "stroll through the history of Alpine Studies" (44) as he explores the production of knowledge and the role of naturalists in "comparing contemporary 'tropical' landscapes and peoples to European prehistory" (29). Fellow historian Pascal Germann explores similar dynamics in his analysis of race science and eugenics, and the role of Swiss anthropologists, like Otto Schlaginhaufen, more specifically. In fact, Schlaginhaufen "took the measurements of 35,511 young men undergoing Swiss Army conscription examinations" (50) as a way to gain knowledge about racial dynamics. The first part concludes with a chapter about the Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifique in post-WW II Cote d'Ivoire, using biographical sketches to comment on encounters between Switzerland and Africa.