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Business History and the Buried Treasures of the Theory of Value

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Business History and the Buried Treasures of the Theory of Value

Jacques Ferland

Michael Bliss, *Northern Enterprise: Five Centuries of Canadian Business* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1987).

Brian Young, *In Its Corporate Capacity: The Seminary of Montreal as a Business Institution, 1816-1876* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press 1986).

Christopher Armstrong and H.V. Nelles, *Monopoly's Moment: The Organization and Regulation of Canadian Utilities, 1830-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 1986).

BUSINESS HISTORY IS ALWAYS SOMEWHAT tributary to the economic theories historians have been impregnated with. However objective or polemical they are deemed by their contemporaries, historians of business cannot avoid the unescapable: facts are 'theory laden'. The way evidence is selected, processed, digested, concocted, and elaborated remains connected to its previous conceptualizations about human activity, justice, and progress. Considering that businesses are economic institutions, it is appropriate to begin this review essay with two entirely different points of reference in economics: the neoclassical and Marxist traditions.

Once under the spell of the neoclassical tradition (sometimes from early childhood), scholars contemplate diverse situations from the particular foci of conjunctural variations, concrete determinisms (such as geographic and technological factors), and, in the last instance, individual circumstances (behaviour, endowments, character, etc.). Ultimately, their conceptual point of entry into business history involves several assumptions about human nature with the corresponding visions of the decision-making process, the primary social role of businessmen, and the roots of value:

First, [neoclassical economic theory] assumes that humans choose rationally among alternatives confronting them (i.e., so as to maximize some objectives such as their individual satisfaction). Second,

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it assumes that human beings can and wish to transform their natural environment into useful things required directly or indirectly for their consumption. Finally, it presumes that human beings are naturally endowed with and/or have assembled the endowments necessary to produce those useful things.[1]

Considering that its essential nature lies beyond the scope of historical empiricism in the realm of a metaphysical "human nature" (such as the perennial quest for human satisfaction), this representation of business development usually finds its historical relevance in epiphenomenal manifestations (prices, incomes, business cycles, government policies, etc.). Beyond that, historical agency is attributed to individuals through innate or culturally-constructed characteristics such as the gift of entrepreneurship, the Protestant ethic, and ethno-religious stereotypes. Why inquire into the sources of 'primitive' capital formation when Social Darwinism is the natural corollary of exceptionally endowed individuals? Why bother with the inherent modalities and social implications of the capitalist system when it is based on the most rational decisions and, thus, offers the best promise of fulfilling human desires? And why focus on the most sordid aspects of business operations when individuals dedicated to progress perform such an essential duty in the metamorphosis of useless raw materials into valuable commodities? All of these are merely perceived as the politically-biased emanations of left-wing scholars.

While the neoclassical tradition is metaphysical and reductionist, the Marxist tradition rejects any prior assumptions about human nature and seeks to base its argumentation on a premise which will always remain verifiable empirically. This essential conceptual point of entry has been found in class relations. And contrary to the view that this is inevitably a deterministic approach, scholars more or less consciously inspired by this tradition have usually attempted to link class relations to other aspects of society and examine their interplay with other processes. Such relationships and processes are not guided by mere cycles or the more or less "visible hand;" they have historical relevance in as much as they change human beings, their endowments and aspirations, and, in turn, alter the most fundamental historical formula hardly ever reached though equilibrium models: the balance between continuity and change. Thus,

For neoclassical theory, human nature is the essence from which prices, incomes, and the rest of the economy derive: explanations amount to reductions of these phenomena to their underlying cause or essence. For Marxist theory, class is shaped as much by the other aspects of society as it participates in shaping them: the logic is one of complex dialectical interplay, not reduction.[2]

It necessarily follows that the way value is created, appropriated, and reproduced takes an entirely different meaning and offers completely different implications depending on your conceptual approach to business. The former view stresses the continuous or essentially a historical production of value and relates it

[1]Stephen A. Resnick and Richard D. Wolff, "The 1983 Nobel Prize in Economics: Neoclassical Economics and Marxism," *Monthly Review* (December 1984), 35.
[2]*Ibid.*, 41.

to any combination of circumstances between enterprise and opportunity. Value is like a buried treasure: it has been laying there for decades or centuries and awaits to be dug out and valorized by an imaginative and daring entrepreneur. Capital invested in a healthy business environment will always return far more money than if it had been placed in a safe or a bank. The reason is because value has been added, and value has been added because capital has been invested, freeing this buried treasure. The more ingenious, hard-working, and risk-taking is the businessman, the greater his likelihood to appropriate larger amounts of value, for this, after all, is the realm of the survival of the fittest.

Based on historical development, the Marxist tradition explores the creation and appropriation of value from its most basic forms — such as the value created by peasants or independent commodity producers — to some of its most elaborate ones — such as hundreds of meat-packing workers processing several hundred thousand domestic animals yearly with modern technology and innovative managerial techniques. During past centuries, few would contest that labour somehow played a vital role in generating value. Even Montreal Sulpicians acknowledged this in 1869! But with the increasing organic composition of capital, the incredible expansion and diversification of business corporations, and the rise of a dominant bourgeois economic establishment, the roots of value have been lost in a maze of surplus-channelling and valorizing networks. Ironically, the very complexity of this modern economy is an invitation for an increasing reliance on the same epiphenomenal manifestations of value that have been the trade-mark of the neoclassical tradition. Confronted with the difficulty of relating this more superficial evidence of the Marxist tradition of the theory of value, scholars concerned about the 'objectivity' of their work are dodging the issue and, blending the two traditions, are producing works that are inconsistent with their own conceptualization of social processes.

The following review essay explores how three recent publications in Canadian business history have grappled with the issue of value which, no doubt, remains at the core of the epistemological linkages between labour and business history. While the question of value was not specifically the focus of any of these works, none of the authors have managed, for better or worse, to remove its tones and shades from their canvas.

I see business history as the interplay of enterprise and opportunity. Businesses are organizations of people risking capital in the hope of profit. (Bliss, 8)

Michael Bliss is the archetypal representative of the neoclassical tradition. Given his conceptual point of entry in *Northern Enterprise*, he was indeed the ideal candidate to perform the colossal task of writing the history of Canadian business development during the past five centuries. Throughout this period, business, according to Bliss, has been guided by the neoclassical underlying principle: enterprise leads to greater opportunity and vice versa. Its transformation as a surplus-channelling institution and its connections with other social processes remain essentially marginal to this truism. Correspondingly, this work's primary achievement is to present a litany of business wizards and ventures driven 'forward' on the basis of contextual characteristics such as staple eras, colonial and political régimes, the economic conjuncture, national building, and C.D. Howe. These were chosen because they affected the range of opportunities and fostered or impeded entrepreneurial initiatives. Otherwise, most chapters remain inconclusive and are simply ended with another vignette from Canada's business development. Continuity is the rule here, change being provided by brief exposés in order to encapsulate the historical context.

Bliss's emphasis on the vital role of businessmen as risk takers reaches epic proportions in a hyperbolic style designed to glorify what remains, after all, a rather passive contribution to the creation of value. For instance, William Davies is said to have "slaughtered [singlehandedly?] about eighty thousand hogs a year," and, thanks to a subsequent dramatic rise in "Davies' killings," shareholders "received dividends of 110 per cent on their $250,000 capital in 1897, 100 per cent in 1898, 120 per cent in 1899, and 82 per cent on $400,000 in 1900." (309) To add the presence of workers to this fabulous equation would, no doubt, greatly 'obscure' how such value was created and appropriated! And in addition to taking this almost life-threatening risk of investing their well-deserved endowments, businessmen across Canada performed countless good deeds for their community and country. They gave employment, offered financial services, and some even pledged "all of their personal assets, including the furniture and table linen in their mansions" in order to witness the completion of that great Canadian achievement: the Canadian Pacific Railway. (218) These titans were not merely entrepreneurial wizards, but national builders, "prophets," educators, and philanthropists who combined their efforts to bring civilization to this "harsh land." They inculcated "habits of sobriety, hard work and thrift" and "gave generously to good causes, and got no payback in tax deductions." (347)

This is not, of course, a book about labour. But it is also a quite explicit statement about the role of labour in Bliss's 'theory' of value. This is most apparent in a chapter entitled "At War with Business," which includes, among many other topics, the only significant treatment of the working-class throughout this work. To no one's surprise, Bliss found enough evidence in the royal commission of 1887-8 to cast in a more positive tone what was so appalling to contemporary observers. Real wages "rose steadily" and work in factories "was easier and healthier[!] than work in the bush or at sea." (355) However, it is not these few fragments on labour but his perception of the populist anti-combine movement that remains truly noteworthy. Decades of protest against unethical business practices in North America are simply brushed aside in a typical "imperial" style. Not unlike American presidential attitudes since Vietnam, Bliss argues that "ordinary people" over-reacted because they "could not easily understand the mechanisms and motives of a complex economic order." (365) They were still led by the common but misleading assumption that labour created value and that wealth resulted from "some appropriation of a surplus that other people had created." Furthermore, they were encouraged to persist in such atavistic beliefs by "egalitarians" and "sentimental idealists," "churchmen, journalists, men of letters, and other intellectuals, a group *naturally* predisposed to elevate artistic and moral interests over the materialism of accumulators." (my emphasis; 366) Hence, western historians need not be concerned about Pat Burns's unbridled monopsonic exploitation of small cattle ranchers and their outcry for justice during the early 1900s. According to Bliss's line of reasoning, this episode must have been misconstrued by dozens of witnesses and "muckraking exposés," and merely reflects the impenetrable mechanisms of the new economic order.

Advocates of the neoclassical tradition mainly derive their understanding of value from the circulation of commodities, the transfer of assets, and from naturally or technologically endowed resources, none of which have to do *per se* with historical processes. Once located in the realms of exchange, inheritance, geography, and technology, there is absolutely no reason for business historians to incorporate labour in their study other than for ethical considerations. In *Northern Enterprise*, Michael Bliss has resolved such ethical issues by relying on the "tickle down" theory, whereby value (and knowledge of how it has been created) originates from the very business people who have dedicated their life to it and have the greatest expertise of the complexities involved in their microcosm. In order to succeed in business history, suggests Bliss, it is all too obvious that scholars ought to be mainly attentive to what these people have to say. What is probably most troubling about such a view is that there could be more truth to it than what one might wish.

II

To understand how the business institution central to this book functioned, contract, property condition, privilege, or class cannot be marginalized as incidental thorns on the road to material success or nationhood. (Young, xi)

AMONG THE MOST THOROUGH PIECES of research in Canadian historiography, *In Its Corporate Capacity* does not lead its readers on a mystifying treasure hunt. His conceptual point of entry, based on class relations, property, privilege, and contractual ties, allows Brian Young to explore in all of its length and breadth the transition from "a feudal mode of production at the beginning of the nineteenth century in which the Sulpicians wielded direct power as seigneurs," to a position, in the 1870s, "in which the seminary has ceded its centrality in property relations." (173) Conversely, it remains a brilliant strategy to shed a much-needed light on sources of capital formation and changing forms of value appropriation during the infant stage of industrial development in the Canadian metropolis.

The institution under study is the Séminaire de Montréal where the Sulpicians — perpetual rectors of the parish of Montreal and seigneurs of Montreal, Two

Mountains, and Saint-Sulpice — were no longer able and willing to conduct their business operations according to feudal conventions on the eve of the *patriote* rebellions. Between 1816 and 1876, this seminary underwent a significant process of reorganization. The very length of this process is indicative of the shortsightedness of those who rely solely on epiphenomenal explanations. Much of this institutional transition has to do with the transformation of land and labour into commodities and with the corresponding passage in land tenure from a seigneurial to a freehold condition. But given that the seminary's destiny was linked to the broader social, ethic, and political circumstances that surrounded and climaxed with the rebellions of 1837-8, no single individual or community, whatever its ethno-religious background, could have carried such a task to completion unilaterally. This process of transition from feudalism to capitalism was rooted in changing social relationships of production. It achieved its peculiar social proportions as a result of turbulent class relations exacerbated by British reactions, and, in this case as in many others, it culminated in a historic class conflict soon followed by a political covenant about seigneurialism, capitalism, and colonialism.

The seminary was being targeted by "industrial millers who petitioned to build steam-powered mills and by large Montreal property holders who demanded that the crown commutate their lands." (52) Its corporate titles were being challenged in court and its feudal privileges were further jeopardized by "growing resistance among *censitaires* of all classes to the payment of certain seigneurial levies, and stiffening opposition by professionals and the local clergy to any secret agreement between crown and seminary." (49) Facing the prospect of losing their primary source of incomes with little indemnification, the Sulpicians performed valuable services during the rebellions which, following the rebels' defeat, enabled the clergymen "to negotiate in confidence and privacy [with British authorities] and to regulate [their] corporate and seigneurial problem by executive ordinance and imperial statue." (57) Outstanding among these were their tactical support to the British military, their pervasive ideological influence among popular classes, and, especially, their well-orchestrated interventions within the Irish community of Montreal.

After more than two decades of social and political incubation, a legal resolution emerged which, in turn, had a significant impact on the ascending industrial order and corresponding social relationships. The seminary's seigneurial rights were given a new lease on life as long as the Sulpicians modified their business behaviour in order to recognize and even extend the realm of capitalist property relations in the Montreal region. "Assisted by the law, improving roads and mails, new professionals, and updated office and accounting systems, the seminary was able to monitor its seigneurial debtors and to force them before its notaries." Its only obligation was "to accept all legitimate demands to commute property into freehold tenure." (171) This was an expensive proposition to most rural *censitaires* who had just witnessed an abrupt end to the evasion of seigneurial dues, the enforcement of debt-recognition contracts, and the "rigorous collection, the application of interest, the vigorous use of state powers, and the alienation of debts to third parties." (71)

But now displaying a new "corporate capacity" sanctioned by the state, the Sulpicians could also draw their incomes from other sources: entering the mortgage market, assuming "the functions of a deposit bank," investing in "bonds, stocks, and municipal issues," and giving much more precedence to the "role of interest in [their] business operations." (172) Thus, while on the one hand the seminary stuck tenaciously to its seigneurial dues and derived from them a significant portion of its 'primitive' capital, on the other it aspired to such modern roles as financial investor, private banker, industrial and commercial promoter, and land developer. Rather than highlight this phenomenon as a manifestation of British wisdom or the impact of a new political regime, Young demonstrates how institutional persistence in the midst of a changing social order did indeed reflect a transition, but through the "dialectic between emerging industrial capitalism and the tenacity of a feudal institution." (39)

Like most other business historians, the author's institutional focus excludes any "systematic attention to the popular classes." (xvii) One crucial difference, however, is found in Young's careful identification of the sources of the seminary's incomes and means of appropriating value. Most of the seminary's assets were derived from reserves and conceded lands. These were only inherently valuable to the seigneurs as long as they were cleared, developed and harvested through labour, and part of the value thus created was "expropriated" by the Sulpicians. Value on these properties could only be appropriated through the seigneur's direct control over milling, fishing, docking, and water sites, and the maze of institutional, forest, pasture, and farm domains. It was 'unearthed' by tenants, farm employees, and *censitaires*, and surplus was exacted on the basis of seigneurial privileges such as the *banalité*, the *cens et rentes*, and the *lods et ventes*. The very subsistence of the Sulpicians, hence *their* value as a religious and business community in Montreal, was also based on the production of food, fuel, and building materials primarily by the seminary's tenant farmers, fishermen, millers, and others. And, not unlike technology, the seminary's land value was increased through years of improvement on its seigneurial reserves, "an investment it protected by obliging lessees to maintain its buildings, implements, and cultivated fields." (67) In short, no buried treasures here, only hard labour.

This origin of value is blurred constantly once land and labour become marketable commodities and can be sold, rented, and transferred at will. Unreceived value from *censitaires* was capitalized through debt-recognition contracts which, in turn, allowed the Sulpicians to thrive on old seigneurial dues, exact interest from what had been in several cases seigneurial levies of agricultural production, and even sell such "arrears" of "unreceived value" to third parties. Commutation into freehold tenure was also a form of capitalization that served as an indemnity to the Sulpicians for losing the privilege of perpetually appropriating value from their *censitaires*' labour and artisanal or industrial enterprises. Unable to pay this ultimate tribute, most rural *censitaires* only witnessed a more coercive form of indebtedness which "tied the peasant to the market system, the payment of interest, and the production of cash crops." (103) Ultimately, the seminary embarked upon more impersonal sources of capital formation in the financial market and the real estate business. It used "the surplus of its *censitaires* — with the state adding important muscle in its expropriation — to finance a major transportation system and industrial producer." (123) By "spreading a broader net that scooped up savings from friendly societies, rural parishes, the popular classes, and women from all classes, the seminary acted as intermediary and transfer agent." (130) And, finally, it also left its imprint on urban land value as its "land sales were beamed at specific social classes which were increasingly segregated in terms of housing space." (149)

Whereas the origin of value is often mystified by business historians, even in activities where it is so transparently a function of labour and class relations (such as the meat-packing operations of Pat Burns, William Davies, and Joseph W. Flavelle), *In Its Corporate Capacity* is a fabulous mine of information and inspiration to this effect for labour historians. Brian Young's agile treatment of dusty notarial records and his splendid reconstitution of class relations and institutional continuity/change in the midst of a transitory period is a lasting contribution to the Marxist tradition of theory of value.

III

Thus, while we are eager to expose the structural context of events, we also want to stress the importance of chance, choice, will, and frequently error and ignorance in the shaping of institutions. (Armstrong and Nelles, 5)

IS THERE A WAY for business historians to avoid both the neoclassical and Marxist traditions? Are there aspects or sectors of the economy which, except for a few structural trends, are so multifaceted and unpredictable that it would be reductionist or deterministic to fit them in a preconceived model or traditional school of thought? This is apparently the view held by Christopher Armstrong and H. Vivian Nelles in their survey of the organization and regulation of Canadian utilities between 1830 and 1930. *Monopoly's Moment* develops its conceptual framework very gradually on the basis of evidence garnered "from the city hall basement, from the company minute book, from private correspondence, and from archives and local newspapers." (5) Only concepts and trends allegedly born out by such facts and such inherent characteristics are filtered into this study of the utilities sector, all presented in the best empirical tradition. Thus, the authors' conceptual point of entry is tailored according to historical circumstances and, as is quite explicit in the above statement, intends to leave much room to such imponderables as good fortune, isolated decisions, and irrational behaviour. It is aimed essentially at presenting such unique features and specific trends rather than at broader theoretical considerations.

As business institutions supplying services through public law and public property, utilities were a "community property." Because of the nature of the services involved, such property could not be divided up and all of these service industries shared common organizational and regulatory problems. Monopolistic control over such community property was bound to lead to a social and political "disequilibrium," "essentially a contest between corporations and clients over legitimacy, which the corporations alone could not impart to themselves." Regulation is the conceptual nexus to this contest. It "was the means whereby powerful economic institutions participated in a legitimizing process and rendered themselves accountable to some judgement other than that of their owners." (322) Logically, monopolists should have realized that some measure of regulation was a necessary evil in order to protect their property from political and legal challenges. But rational decision — a basic assumption in the neoclassical tradition — was not always to be. While in "some jurisdictions this dialectical chemistry produced an explosion — public ownership," (325) other circumstances elsewhere, including less "tactless" moves by monopolists, caused hindrance to total public control and resulted in a variety of outcomes.

After having skillfully explored the political fabrication of monopolies and "the spectrum of regulation," the authors reach out to a higher plane of interpretation wherein they definitely close ranks with the neoclassical tradition. Upon completing their "pluralist, or at least dualist, approach to regulation in the utilities sector," (326) they make a quantum leap into the realm of human nature and Canadian psyche to particularize Canada's "mixed public-private organization." "Canadians are an unsystematic, unreflective people who eschew doctrinal clarity, perhaps owing to the dangers it entails in a culturally and regionally divided polity." (327) With this final instance, all imponderables, market forces, political wrangles, and class or non-class manifestations find a common denominator in a metaphysical profile of the Canadian *mentalité*, an assertion that remains unverifiable empirically and, apparently, should be taken for granted. Beyond class relations, natural endowment, technological determinisms, individual behaviour, and the vagaries of the market, is the timeless, spaceless, and classless Canadian persona.

The most outstanding implication in such a pluralistic approach based ultimately on collective mind and manners is that there is no obligation to relate class relations to non-class manifestation. Their unconditional use of classless historical agents throughout much of this survey is symptomatic of such a departure from the Marxist tradition. Monopolists were up against "city councils," "municipal insurgencies," "mobs," and "hostile cities;" they faced angry customers and were inherently opposed to the "larger public interest;" they confronted the "citizenry" and "this ferment of individual and collective grievances" out of which "came the nationwide political movement that we call civic populism." (141) It is not, of course, that the Marxist tradition and such non-class manifestations are mutually exclusive. "The Marxist tradition focuses on class relations in society and how they interact in a complex way with all the other, non-class aspects of society to generate change. The neoclassical tradition usually denies the very existence of class(...)."[3] By often neglecting to explore intra- and inter-class relations and alliances within these city councils and among these "ratepayers," "pressure groups," "civic populists," and the "community" or "citizenry," *Monopoly's Moment* confines class relations to a few punctual crises stemming from the working-class. These are mainly covered peripherally in a chapter and a few other passages on working-class struggle. The authors indicate that, while workers drew much sympathy during the unregulated years of public transportation as a result of the "revolt against discipline and disappointment," (54) this social bond was dissolved following regulation since "consumers would pay through higher charges to improve the lot of the workers." (214) Otherwise, the chapter entitled "Class Against Community" shows few theoretical linkages and methodological similarities with the main thrust of this survey, and does not compare as favourably in terms of stylistic achievement.

This punctual borrowing from the Marxist approach and cautious adaptation of the neoclassical tradition does reinforce the impression that the authors were only tributary to their sources. They have offered a particular interpretation of truth and knowledge that stands out, and has been acclaimed, as one of the most outstanding achievements in the best empirical tradition. Yet, the simple fact that they have not chosen class as a conceptual point of entry also implies that they have denied in *Monopoly's Moment* an increasingly complex process of monopolistic exploitation. Their key process is located outside the realm of class relations: in 'public' regulation and its legitimizing functions. Thus, they are offering a different truth and knowledge than would have been the case from a Marxist perspective with its emphasis on the production, appropriation, and distribution of surplus labour. and this theoretical choice is most apparent in their grasp of profitability and value mainly detectable in a chapter entitled "Making Money."

Money is the unescapable manifestation of value in a capitalist society where the measure of goods, services, or assets is primarily realized through a monetary constraint. Meanwhile the value of money cannot be defined in relation to anything else precisely because it serves the function of a general measure of equivalence. It becomes a commodity onto itself, a monetary system that achieves a certain degree of autonomy in relation to the overall conditions of production and exchange. Although money has clearly no value in a context where it cannot serve its primary purpose, neoclassical historians persist with the preconception that money is value and tends to vary according to the relative abundance or scarcity of this specialized commodity. Hence, there is only an easy step to cross in order to argue that money creates value, thus withdrawing in paralogisms that perpetuate the mystique of buried treasures and further the severance with class relations.

It is at this juncture that this otherwise thorough survey relies on rather shortsighted, if not metaphorical explanations concerning the creation of value. Street railways transferred wealth "from one group of citizens to another;" (36)

[3] *Ibid.*, 30.

"The purpose of making monopolies was making money;" (115) "Making a profit was relatively easy; making a profit large enough to valorize a mountain of common stock was another matter;" (128) "Like alchemic engines the utilities impelled that golden cycle of investment, returns, capital gains, and more investment upon which financial intermediaries depended." (116) These are all representative of the epiphenomenal limits of the neoclassical tradition: value is being transferred, and it is "made" by accumulating more money. Labour is only related to value in a negative sense: it is one among many other expenses and, like raw materials, rent, and fuel, to cut labour costs in order to salvage a two-digit dividend is perfectly "legitimate" business practice. Companies are not more profitable by squeezing more absolute and relative surplus-value out of street-railway workers and telephone operators, but by reducing wasteful labour costs and increasing productivity. Hence, this ultimate bow to the dominant economic establishment:

> the Canadian utilities entrepreneurs were soon among the richest men in the country. It required boldness and determination to make these monopolies in the first place, and ruthless management to get the most out of them: quite understandably such people expected and contrived to get more than bank interest for their efforts.

Armstrong and Nelles are aware that it would be ludicrous to justify such wealth on the basis of personal or individually assembled endowments when most of the capital, in some cases, was acquired in a speculative manner on financial markets. Bliss's conceptual point of entry (people risking their capital) is not at all obvious here. What remains, once again, are some intangible endowments of human nature such as "boldness" and "determination," with a spicy touch of ruthlessness. Even when values listed by Canadian utilities merely reflected "expectations of future earnings" (119) and promoters accentuated managerial pressures on labour in order to fulfill this "slightly unorthodox method of financing," (126) the authors still perceive no connection between the appropriation of surplus-labour and the creation of value. In the neoclassical tradition of business history, labour and value belong to separate chapters.

Money is a prime example of how there is no such thing as a pure empirical tradition. Facts about value do not speak for themselves because money is primarily a measure of equivalence, not a value. The four authors reviewed in this essay had no other alternative than to rely on this measure in their respective endeavours. But one crucial difference between them is that, following the Marxist tradition, Brian Young did not take this measure as the source of added value and profits. However polemical or objective they may appear to their peers, Michael Bliss, Christopher Armstrong, and H.V. Nelles have chosen to do so and have thus left their own contribution to the great mysteries of the theory of value.