

standing of significant themes in United States history and thus be able to offer a more inclusive representation of the nation's history. Anthologies such as this one demonstrate the feasibility of studies that recognize women as more than merely adornments and anomalies in the larger historical narrative of American religious history.

American River College, Sacramento, CA

Jennifer Aerts Terry

A Farewell to Alms: A Brief Economic History of the World, by Gregory Clark. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007. 432 pages. \$29.95, cloth.

In the first line of the preface of this book, the author unequivocally describes it to be "a bold approach to history" (p. ix). There are three sections: The Malthusian Trap: Economic Life to 1800, The Industrial Revolution, and The Great Divergence. The author claims the book to be a forthright literary piece, purposefully composed with the intention of dissecting economic history and economic and societal evolution by embarking on an intriguing journey across time, geography, and cultures so as to resolve queries that have long been at the core of historical research. At more than 400 pages, *A Farewell to Alms* is anything but brief, as its title may imply. The prose is dense and there are a lot of statistics with a corpus of material that grapples with a number of universal themes in economic history: living standards, fertility, life expectancy, technology, institutions, wealth, human attitudes, employment, and industrialisation. Whilst each of these topics are a substantial academic province in their own right, the ambitious Clark nonetheless squeezes them together so as to ascertain why the industrial revolution appeared for the first time where it did in late-1700s England, why the wealth it spawned has not benefited everyone, and why some regions of the world are prosperous and others less so. Significantly, while the ambition of the author to coherently synthesize a range of sizeable issues is commendable, what sets *A Farewell to Alms* apart from countless prior works on the history of economic progress is the creative perspective that Clark puts forward. Challenging, and at times litigious, *A Farewell to Alms* counters numerous commonly held views as to how global society has evolved.

In embracing a developmental standpoint that involves global transitions across a long chronological span, Clark declares that "The conventional picture of the Industrial Revolution as a sudden fissure in economic life is not sustainable" (p. 9). This statement appears in the opening sixteen-page section which is a synopsis of the entire book. Where appropriate, the author employs a comparative perspectives. For example, to supplement his argument on labor quality and work habits (p. 359), Clark presents a thesis founded upon the belief that only countries with long-established and stable social conditions possess the ability to harness cultural traits imperative to the production of an efficient workforce, which subsequently allows for economic expansion. As disputable as this notion may be, Clark's case is nevertheless compelling. His view on the pre-industrial age is that of an era typified by the unchanging living conditions in which Europeans and North Americans circa 1800 allegedly lived little better than Palaeolithic people (p. 167). This discussion is dominated by details of Malthusian stresses, but he asserts that these conditions progressively stimulated social and cultural instruments favorable for subsequent vigorous economic shifts. In this milieu, Clark is able to explain why Europe, and not North America, China, India or Japan, was the seat of the Industrial Revolution, and

the site that ultimately led to a transformation of possibilities for all humanity, as he calls it (p. 230). To energize his argument, Clark leans upon Pomeranz's "Great Divergence" concept, yet unwisely he steps upon thorny ground by inferring that some societies are less culturally 'evolved' than others, and that this causes their later industrial growth. He thus confirms the philosophy of development economics that asserts the need for an ethos of democracy, law, and education for its own development, but that nevertheless does little to uplift those trapped by poverty in the undeveloped world.

To reiterate, much of *A Farewell to Alms* confronts existing academic thought, and many of the points it makes may be labelled as arguable and, in some instances, contentious. For instance, Clark's use of Social Darwinism to explain economic development in Asia is rather unsophisticated and ineffective. Yet *A Farewell to Alms* is nevertheless worth scrutinizing. The book offers a distinct line of thought on evolutionary affairs. It is also valuable in historiographical terms as it recalls historical explanation forsaken due to shifting scholarly fashions. Notwithstanding its flaws, *A Farewell to Alms* is worthy perusing. At the very least, it is a pertinent literary piece in our so-called modern time, an age of markets, governance, and ever-increasing empiricism. Little evidence of the diffusion of wealth is apparent in many regions of the world. Sadly Clark, like others before him, is found wanting in the face of this monumental conundrum.

Chinese University of Hong Kong

Ian Morley

Frederick Douglass and the Fourth of July, by James A. Colaiaco. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 256 pages. \$16.95, paper.

The thought of Frederick Douglass is vividly brought to life by James A. Colaiaco in his new work, *Frederick Douglass and the Fourth of July*. Beginning with Douglass' famous Fourth of July Oration on July 5, 1852, Colaiaco combines Douglass' life and ideas with a narrative of the turbulent debates leading up to the Civil War. Colaiaco uses the themes of this speech as a springboard for further analysis in the first four chapters. He weaves the story of Douglass' life, moving from slavery to freedom, into a discussion of the fierce debates the country endured over the slavery issue. One question that recurs throughout the book is Douglass' perspective on the Constitution. Many abolitionists, such as William Lloyd Garrison, were violently opposed to the Constitution because of its compromises with slavery, and had little patience with the political process. Douglass, however, began his career as a Garrisonian, but by the early 1850s, his thinking had changed, a shift that Colaiaco attributes in part to an ongoing correspondence with his friend Gerrit Smith. From the middle of chapter four through the end of the book, Colaiaco depicts the new Douglass, who had come to believe the Constitution was anti-slavery and began to use constitutional mechanisms to undermine slavery's power.

In chapter five, there is a brief discussion of the events that led up to the *Dred Scott* decision, including the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act, for the purpose of showing how Douglass reflected on those events in the context of his new views. *Dred Scott* and its aftermath are the center of chapter six, including Douglass' refutation of Chief Justice Taney's arguments in that infamous case. Chapter seven focuses on Douglass' speech in Glasgow, Scotland on March 26, 1860, in which he laid out his new arguments as to why the Constitution should properly be viewed as an anti-slavery document. The book concludes with an epilogue that discusses Douglass, his relationship with Abraham Lincoln, and the Civil War years.

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