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Popinigis, Fabiane. *Proletários de casaca: Trabalhadores do comércio carioca (1850–1911)*. Campinas: Editora da UNICAMP, 2007. 248 pp.

For years scholars have studied Europe's influence on elite thought in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Brazil. During the *Belle Époque*, wealthy Brazilians often drew inspiration from Europe as they crafted what they hoped would be unique but acceptably "civilized" cities, styles, pastimes, and ideas. In *Proletários de casaca: trabalhadores do comércio carioca (1850–1911)*, Fabiane Popinigis broadens our understanding of the links between Brazil and Europe by shifting focus away from elites. She writes instead about shop assistants, apprentices, and other middling laborers who fall outside familiar "blue" and "white" collar classifications and who often looked to Europe as they fought to improve their work conditions. They identified and were identified in myriad ways, including *trabalhadores do comércio*, *caixeiros*, and *empregados do comércio*. Some fancied themselves *proletários de casaca*, a label which reflects a desire to both appropriate and gain distance from Rio de Janeiro's burgeoning worker's movement. *Proletários de casaca* understood the political benefits to be gained from aligning with other workers, but also considered themselves to be a step above most of them. Long coats (*casacas*) were among the symbols they used to distinguish themselves. Their dual identity stemmed in part from the nature of apprenticeship relationships, which carried the (frequently unrealized) promise of social ascension. The most loyal and fortunate assistants inherited shops or saved enough to strike out on their own, but the majority remained firmly entrenched in subservience.

The book's first two chapters focus on collective organizing and mobilizations, which culminated in 1911, when Rio's Municipal Council limited work in most fields to twelve hours per day. While the regulations signaled a blow to exploitative labor relations, they hardly dismantled the larger system; countless employees remained at the mercy of their bosses and patrons. Nonetheless, the rhetoric that labor activists employed was significant and subversive. It embraced European-inspired republican ideals and turned elite interpretations of those ideals on their head by insisting that fair labor conditions were crucial to a civilized, modern nation. That rhetoric, Popinigis's dissertation adviser Sidney Chalhoub writes in the book's preface, represented a "satanic inversion" of elite ideology (21). In the third and final chapter, Popinigis uses criminal records to explore worker's daily lives and to show that despite political victories and ideological inversions, many *caixeiros*, *empregados*, and *trabalhadores* remained mired in poverty.

While the criminal records provide depth, the transition between collective mobilizations and individual court cases is somewhat jarring, as is some of the ongoing dialogue of events in Brazil and France, which witnessed similar, roughly concurrent labor mobilizations. At times, the connections between Brazil and France are argued convincingly, especially in the case of two "smok-

ing guns” presented in chapter two. In the first, a newspaper columnist optimistically links the declaration of the Brazilian Republic to Bastille Day (137). In the second, a writer refers to French labor regulations to suggest the need for similar reforms in Brazil (151). In both examples, the direct appropriation of French laws and idea is clear, and Popinigis’s larger argument about the inversion of elite ideology is, in general, on the mark and convincing. But at times her insistence on a specific link to France feels forced. A comparison between an unemployed worker in Rio and Victor Hugo’s Jean Valjean (193) makes the reader wonder whether France was the main point of reference for the book’s subjects or its author. In chapter three, when her gaze turns to daily life in Rio, Europe often falls from view, and there is no discussion of whether that is because of the limitations of the criminal documents, an indication that European ideals mattered less in daily life than during political mobilizations, or for another reason entirely. Nonetheless, Popinigis’s main argument—that middling workers appropriated and inverted republican ideals—is an important one, and she defends it well. Her book will be of great interest to students of labor history, the Atlantic World, and Brazilianists who in our own work encounter *caixeiros*, *empregados*, and other workers who defy standard categorizations and who leave us unsure about exactly how or where to place them.

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Owen, Hilary. *Mother Africa, Father Marx: Women’s Writing of Mozambique, 1948–2002*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2007. 274 pp.

In a less compartmentalized academic environment, one in which book audiences would not be so closely bound to their fields of specialization, Hilary Owen’s superb study of Mozambican women’s writing might reach as wide and diverse a readership as it deserves. Indeed, if the impact of her book remains confined to the usual Lusophone circles, it will be to the detriment of post-colonial studies. For this book makes a crucial and timely contribution to the reappraisal of African literature and culture from a gender studies perspective. It is the first English-language analysis of the fraught yet abiding involvement of women writers in the fashioning of nationalist discourses in Mozambique, and spans the emergence of cultural nationalism in the late 1940s and the rise of the post-Marxist neo-liberal democratic state in the early 1990s. Although the country’s political elites once called forcefully for the engagement of women in the national liberation project, the official narration of Mozambique has been, like that of most African countries, chiefly the undertaking of male intellectuals, politicians, and revolutionaries. While this process has assumed variable and contradictory forms over the last half-century, it has also been consistently