

WEIGHTING THE RELATIVE WORTH OF REFEREED JOURNALS VERSUS CHAPTERS IN EDITED READERS

At a panel on the academic job market held at the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association in Winnipeg this year a series of speakers discussed key issues facing new scholars entering the academic job market. One particular point proved a surprise to those in attendance: the distinction between refereed articles published in scholarly journals and chapters in edited volumes of essays. For the benefit of our members soon to enter into the job market, below is a summary of Franca Iacovetta's comments on the issue. (Editorial note from Dominique Clément)

Generally in the university, refereed articles published in scholarly journals carry more weight with hiring (and tenure) committees than do articles published as "chapters" in edited volumes of essays, including edited volumes that are refereed. The rationale is that an article that is submitted to a peer-review (or refereed) scholarly journal is more carefully scrutinized. It is sent to several expert assessors in the field, who often produce detailed confidential assessments. When an article is submitted to an edited book of essays, there are usually fewer assessors, each of whom will be "more" expert on certain essays than on others, and "stronger" essays may compensate for a few "weaker" essays in the collection.

Over the years, Canadian historians have generally given less weight to this distinction than have scholars in some other disciplines. (Also, chapters in books that become influential in the field and used on many courses can provide the junior scholar with positive exposure.) But that tradition may or

may not impress hiring and tenure committees and university administrators. This issue will be of particular concern to historians being assessed for a job in multi-disciplinary programs (Canadian Studies, Labour Studies, Education), who will be evaluated by scholars in different disciplines. Economists and geographers, for example, tend to evaluate c.v.'s according to a clear hierarchy of publications, each journal carrying a rating. Even in the case of History hiring committees, the candidate will be assessed by a Dean's representative who is usually outside of History (but in a cognate discipline, such as political science) and the Dean, who may also be from a different discipline. All of this does not mean that graduate students or pre-tenure professors should never publish in anything other than a refereed scholarly journal! If you have met the standards described above, and especially if you have published a book (which historians place far more weight on than do many other disciplines), you certainly may have a range of publications. (Activist academics, for example, publish in both scholarly and non-scholarly contexts.) However, to prepare yourself for the academic job market, one does need to be aware of the standards and customary practices within the academy and within your discipline or disciplines. When in doubt, ask your supervisor, other faculty members, and senior colleagues who have sat on many hiring and tenure committees (including recent ones).

Franca Iacovetta, University of Toronto