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## Dawson: UNJUST ENRICHMENT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Edgar N. Durfee

*University of Michigan Law School*

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## RECENT BOOKS

This department undertakes to note or review briefly current books on law and materials closely related thereto. Periodicals, court reports, and other publications that appear at frequent intervals are not included. The information given in the notes is derived from inspection of the books, publishers' literature, and the ordinary library sources.

## BRIEF REVIEWS

UNJUST ENRICHMENT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS. By *John P. Dawson*. Boston: Little, Brown. 1951. Pp. viii, 201. \$4.50.—A series of lectures delivered under the auspices of the Julius Rosenthal Foundation at Northwestern University School of Law in April 1950.

To say these lectures are a distinguished contribution to legal scholarship is the safe, the indisputable comment. Indeed this statement is doubly true. The lectures bring new interpretations, new insights, to scholars working in the field of restitution. Ditto, to workmen in the vineyard of comparative law. In this appraisal of the lectures, I know I'm right.

Now I venture comment that is necessarily more speculative. I believe the lectures will be of great service to the practicing lawyer, meaning that they'll help him in his professional work. They won't give him citable authority, but they'll help him to find the fruitful analysis of his client's case. They'll suggest approaches which, followed in the usual way with combing of statutes and decisions, may snatch victory from defeat. They will even supply telling phrases that can be built into brief or oral argument. But I don't want to exaggerate. I take it a lawyer can't get help from Dawson's lectures unless he works hard on them, for they are not bedtime stories. They are written with grace. The sentences flow smoothly, almost musically. But the substance can't be grasped without effort, because there is so much substance packed into so few words. Dawson ranges over the whole field of restitution, his goal an understanding of the ideas and impulses at work beneath the decisions. This demands close attention even from the reader who is fairly acquainted with the decisions. Whether the author makes it harder or easier by his constant comparison of our law with English law and the law of continental Europe, is a point on which I'm not clear, but there is no room for doubt that these comparisons furnish precious insights. If they cost extra effort, they pay off.

Having thus expressed my doubts and fears, I now can say flatly that the practical lawyer will find this book valuable. I venture to add that it should at once be read hurriedly, then more carefully, and finally should be shelved with the stimulants to which one resorts in the hour of need.

*Edgar N. Durfee\**

\*Professor of Law, University of Michigan.—Ed.