

opment of this literature, certain areas have been left relatively unexplored. The editors of *Maid in the Market* are to be commended for tackling one of these blind spots by bringing together research on varied aspects of women's paid domestic labour. While almost all of this research has been published elsewhere, the excerpts here are concise, focused and engrossing. The thematic organization is well maintained and the only discordant note is the inclusion of a piece on retail workers which seems somewhat out of step with the other more traditionally domestic tasks such as house/room cleaning and child care. This minor objection aside, the overall result is a thought-provoking and challenging collection which is a "must read" for anyone interested in understanding the full complexities of women's labour force attachment.

By drawing attention to paid domestic work, the editors have targeted a particularly pivotal component of women's role in the paid labour force. Through the provision of child care services, cleaning, fast-food preparation and so on, paid domestic workers may seem to liberate women from many of their unpaid labours in the home. However, the women workers themselves—whether as office cleaners or fast-food workers—are routinely oppressed in their labour force activity. Work that is done for "love" in the home is predictably poorly paid and unprestigious when performed for pay. Clearly, the contradictions inherent in paid domestic labour go to the heart of class, racial, ethnic, age (and dis/ability) differences amongst women since it is well-to-do white women who are most likely to be freed from their domestic chores by the commodification of household services. Other groups of women, notably working-class women from racial and ethnic minorities, are more likely to find themselves slotted into the resulting poorly paid, insecure and oppressive jobs as nannies, cleaners or chambermaids. Paid domestic labour is clearly key to analyzing the

conflicting interests between women.

The contradictions are not, however, simply external. As pointed out in Chapter One—Audrey Macklin's examination of Canada's foreign domestic workers—feminists may also struggle with the contradictions of purchasing their "liberation" at the expense of other women. Having detailed the grim record of Canadian governmental policy surrounding the employment of foreign domestic workers and the workers' oppressive employment conditions, Macklin considers the "feminist implications" of achieving equality in "middle-class" Canadian families by exploiting cheap foreign labour and recreating a pre-industrial system of servants.

These personal contradictions are also felt by the paid domestic workers themselves. As discussed in Jane Bertrand's chapter on child care workers, these workers often find themselves performing de-valued work caring for the children of others, while "their own child care and other personal needs may be neglected due to low salaries, and lack of benefits and job protection." Such internalized contradictions are also rife amongst fast-food workers for, as Ester Reiter points out, they are not only expected to prepare and present the food (while being completely constrained by the dictated labour process), they are required to "adopt suitable attitudes" and smile. The worker's inner world is called upon both to sell the product and to negate the realities of working conditions.

The selections in *Maid in the Market* are, however, far from pessimistic. There is considerable evidence here of both individual worker resistance and organized workers' struggles. As Mary Romero explains, Chicanas house-cleaners in the US devise personal strategies for resisting exploitation and maintaining some control over the content and pace of their work. Similarly, the Canadian retail workers interviewed by Pat McDermott are quick to challenge notions that their work is unskilled or easy. Organized resistance also abounds. Varied groups of workers,

including office cleaners in Toronto and Portuguese chambermaids in London, have organized collectively to challenge their employment conditions.

In their introduction, the editors make a persuasive case that paid and unpaid domestic labour is an enduring and central problematic. Certainly the role of contemporary live-in nannies and home cleaners harkens back to the pre-industrial mistress-servant relationship while the commodified familism of the fast-food industry appears to portend the increasing commercialization of private life. The challenge posed by this collection is to trace these historical connections, analyze the gender, racial/ethnic and class dimensions and develop socio-political strategies more consistent with the liberation of all women.

LES OUVRIÈRES DE DOMINION CORSET À QUÉBEC, 1886-1988

Sous la direction de Jean Du Berger et Jacques Mathieu. Sainte Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1993.

by Bettina Bradbury

Brassières, corsets and lingerie. Words and products that are potent symbols of past constructions of femininity that constricted and remade women's bodies to fit the changing dictates of female fashion! The Dominion Corset Factory, the subject of this book, was one of the largest manufacturers of female underwear in the world for the century between its founding in Quebec City in 1886 and its closure in 1988. *Les ouvrières* is based largely on interviews with twenty former employees, with some reference to promotional literature and material saved "grâce à l'intervention du Laboratoire

d'ethnologie urbaine," the group responsible for this publication.

These sources are drawn upon to write chapters dealing successively with the founding and running of the business; working conditions and the divisions of labour; and solidarities and sociabilities among the workers. The authors conclude the work with a rather lyrical exploration of the different kinds of memories of the company evoked by the physical structures and architectural remains, the written archives and the personal testimonies.

This is a subject meriting the deft analysis of feminist historians trained in reading symbols and interpreting the workings of gender in women's lives. Readers will have to make their own analyses and interpretations along these lines. They will not find them in the text. This is much more a company history than a serious work in women's history. The authors are attentive to questions regarding the role of the company in the town, the organization of work

and authority relations in the plant. They present some interesting material on women's leisure. Overall, however, their urban ethnological approach does not appear to sensitize them to issues concerning gender, representation, or even more basic questions such as just who the workers were, what their backgrounds were in terms of age, marital status and class position.

The bulk of the text is based on interviews with twelve women and eight men. Readers and lecturers will find many of the excerpts from these interviews eloquent testimonies to life and leisure among these working men and women. Yet, the way they are used is disappointing. The authors do not appear to consider the interview process as problematic in any way. Readers are not informed about the interview process. Were all the interviewees men? This could well have made a difference to the kinds of information received. Nor do they explicitly indicate whether the person cited is a man or a woman. Un-

like Meg Luxton's *More Than a Labour of Love*, there is no grouping of the interviewees by generation or period, although usually the quotations are integrated into a loosely chronological text.

Les ouvrières is a watered down eulogy to the workers and the company, more a journalistic than an academic endeavour. Yet it reveals some aspects of women's work in this underwear factory that are fascinating and that I wish had been pursued further. These fragments and images make the book worth reading. Take, for example, women's involvement in wearing and modelling the product they were producing.

The workers at Dominion not only made the bras and corsets for which the company was so famous, they also test-wore them, reporting back on styles that were uncomfortable or impracticable. Some women appear to have felt pride in their involvement in decisions made about style and to have enjoyed the possibility of trying a vast range of products. Some were also called upon to model different styles and sizes in front of male designers and purchasers. This clearly bothered some workers. At least one refused. "Moi, je ne vais pas à la salle d'échantillon, c'est définitif," one woman reported stating when offered clothes to test-wear. The authors make no comments at all on the ambiguity of a situation where as part of their work women were encouraged to appear in front of other women and men clad only in the skimpiest of underclothes. The currents of sexuality this involved are never mentioned, though the same woman's adamant "pas avec le monsieur avec la petite baguette là" seems clear enough. One informant (male or female?) explained that when he (?) wanted to "faire plaisir à quelqu'un, c'était de faire porter des vêtements noirs aux modèles. . . tout les sous vêtements noir, c'était très beau. . . Ça ne devait pas être désagréable pour les voyageurs d'assister à ces présentations-là." Not disagreeable for the salesmen perhaps, but it seems important to know more about how the women responded to



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such demands and how they resisted.

Les ouvrières is an example of writing about the history of women that is not written as women's history. The authors do not draw on any of the growing historiography about women and their work. Indeed, in many ways this is not a history book either, for they draw on no secondary literature at all. Nor, unlike, for example, Jacques Rouillard's *Ab les États*, is it a collection of interviews that readers could use to draw their own conclusions or to get a sense of specific individuals' experiences. Overall, I was left with fascinating images of the women and their work and some understanding of their life after work, but very much wanting either more sustained critical analysis or more about each women's life rather than the anonymous fragments that are scattered through the text. Either of these choices could still have been written in a way that was accessible to a broader public and to the workers themselves.

MARIAGE ET FAMILLE AU TEMPS DE PAPINEAU

Serge Gagnon. Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1993

par Anne-Marie Ambert

Le mariage québécois au XIXe siècle est l'objet de l'étude de Serge Gagnon. Pour résumer brièvement cette recherche socio-historique, l'auteur examine d'abord la question de l'inceste ou des interdits de parenté qui ont une incidence sur le choix du conjoint ou de la conjointe. Il se penche ensuite sur les considérations sociales qui dictent la marge de liberté dont les individus pouvaient bénéficier à ce sujet. Ainsi se penche-t-il successivement sur le rôle des parents et la question de la majorité mais il explore aussi les interdits provenant de disparités culturelles, raciales, religieuses et de classes

sociales. Dans un chapitre suivant, l'auteur examine la formation du couple et termine avec un chapitre sur les problèmes conjugaux.

Cette étude du mariage est fort habilement située par l'auteur dans le contexte socio-historique du XIXe siècle, celui-ci étant largement centré sur le rôle de la religion telle qu'alors pratiquée ainsi que sur le rôle du clergé dans tous les aspects de la formation, de la survie, et de la problématique des couples. On s'étonne parfois, en lisant ce livre, du pouvoir que le curé et l'évêque avaient sur les personnes qui se tournaient vers eux pour régler leurs problèmes personnels et familiaux. À cette époque, les membres du clergé étaient à la fois avocats, juges, psychiatres et même "policiers". Le contenu de ce livre est donc non seulement l'histoire du mariage mais indirectement celle de l'Église.

On ne peut que louer les sources variées et les recherches minutieuses de l'auteur. Sa méthode la plus intéressante consiste à reproduire une correspondance animée et humaine entre divers curés et évêques. Cette correspondance met en évidence, non seulement le contrôle du clergé sur les citoyens mais aussi leurs honnêtes recherches de solutions pour les situations personnelles difficiles que vivaient leurs paroissiens. Serge Gagnon nous laisse entrevoir un clergé humain qui va à l'encontre de plusieurs travaux polémiques traitant du même sujet.

Par contre, l'auteur, de par la nature de ses instruments de recherche, n'est pas en mesure de parler de la famille aussi bien que du mariage; trop d'éléments n'ont pas été abordés, entre autres les relations entre frères et soeurs, élément important dans une période où les familles avaient tant d'enfants. Il ne parle pas beaucoup non plus de la question des beaux-parents et de leurs relations avec les enfants. On doit cependant admettre que tel n'était pas le but de l'auteur. Le titre "Mariage au temps de Papineau" aurait cependant été plus descriptif du contenu du livre.

Un autre élément qui est, par

contre, fort bien illuminé par ce livre, bien qu'il n'en constitue pas le noyau principal, est la vie des femmes de cette période. La contrainte conjugale, telle qu'illustrée par Renée Dandurand, est particulièrement en évidence: les femmes avaient très peu de possibilités de se sortir d'un mariage abusif. Il existait une très forte surnatalité accompagnée d'une haute mortalité infantile. Enfin, la place dévaluée que les femmes occupaient alors légalement leur enlevait tout contrôle sur leur vie. Il est particulièrement intéressant de constater que les femmes de ce siècle avaient beaucoup plus recours au clergé que leurs époux surtout lorsqu'il s'agissait de conseils sur leur vie quotidienne. Ironiquement, cette situation se répète aujourd'hui. En effet, les études démontrent que les femmes d'aujourd'hui ont plus souvent recours aux thérapeutes et autres professionnels (les nouveaux "prêtres" postmodernistes) que leurs époux. Les femmes de la fin du 20e siècle rejoignent celles du temps de Papineau; comme le dirait Habermas, leur vie quotidienne peut en effet être colonisée, sinon contrôlée, par des structures patriarcales.

THE CANADIAN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT 1960-1990: A GUIDE TO ARCHIVAL RESOURCES

Margaret Fulford. Toronto: ECW Press, 1993.

by Andrea Trudel

The initiative of the Canadian Women's Movement Archives/Archives canadiennes du mouvement des femmes (CWMA/ACMF) has resulted in the recent publication of an archival guide to resources on the second wave of the women's movement spanning the period 1960 to 1990. This guide is designed to help locate archival