

working on a writer who was difficult, and whom it would have been hard to be a loyal and patient friend to, whether in the 1790s or now.

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Families, Labour and Love: Family Diversity in a Changing World. Maureen Baker. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001; xii + 316 pages; ISBN 0-7748-0849-7; \$24.95 (paper).

Maureen Baker is the respected author of many Canadian family sociology textbooks. In *Families, Labour and Love*, she offers substantive comparisons of different aspects of Canadian family life with Australia and New Zealand. This choice is based on similarities in the three countries' family policies, demographics, and the presence of similar socioeconomic groups and populations of indigenous peoples.

The comparisons are done with reliance "mainly on a political economy and feminist perspective" (243). The feminist perspective is particularly evident throughout the book, through attention to gender divisions and inequalities in all areas of family life, including the division of paid and unpaid work (such as child care) as well as the negative consequences (dependence, poverty, violence) of these inequalities on women and children. Additionally, chapter four gives a useful overview of the main theoretical perspectives. The two new areas of theorizing, namely the emerging emphasis on fatherhood and the rethinking of emotions and intimacy in families, should be of particular interest to researchers in the area of family sociology.

While addressing similarities and differences among the three countries, the book's main theme of diversity is found in two early chapters which contrast the family lives of colonizers, the colonized peoples, and recent immigrants. There are also extensive discussions of different family forms (two-parent, one-parent, married, cohabiting, divorced, remarried). Considering recent legislative changes regarding same-sex marriages and rights (at least in Canada), this would be something to add to future editions of this book.

As with other of Maureen Baker's family textbooks, this one is well written and easy to follow, making it an ideal university text. The three-country comparisons, by and large, are crisp and cogent. Chapters seven, eight, and nine give solid comparative data and discussions on families and gender division of paid and unpaid work; separation, divorce and remarriage; and state regulation of family life. Chapter nine is particularly informative, focusing on the similarities in the three countries' welfare state regimes and the ill effects of welfare state restructuring on family life, including the increased

emphasis on traditional "family values."

Nevertheless, there is some unevenness in the quantity and presentation of information in some areas. For example, chapter three on settler families and segments on relationship violence in chapter five rely nearly completely on Canadian data. Overall, there is an abundance of materials from Canada and New Zealand, but less so from Australia. This is most evident in chapter six on childhood, reproduction, and child care where a comparison of Canada and New Zealand dominates. Other sets of comparative information from American and European family research are also occasionally used to enhance the three-country comparison.

Families, Labour and Love is a valuable addition to the textbooks in this area. It offers a good overview of the main theories and issues in family sociology while bringing welcome attention to global diversities and similarities in an era that requires us to look both within and beyond the borders of nation-states. Students and instructors will also benefit from the glossary of main terms, and the lists of thought-provoking discussion questions attached to each chapter.

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Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England. Joy Dixon. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001; illustrations; xix + 293 pages; ISBN 0-8018-6499-2; \$46.00US (cloth).

Feminist studies of women and religion may be seen to fall into a number of general categories. One is confessional. Whether conventionally religious (e.g., Christian) or "alternative" (e.g., New Age, Wiccan), these studies are intended for adherents, to help them understand and explore their own tradition. Another category is critical/analytical, in which the religious tradition being engaged is subject to feminist assessment regarding the degree to which the tradition is empowering or damaging to women (generally the latter.) Both of these are normative, insofar as they presume a certain central truth (in the tradition, in the first instance, and in feminism in the second) by which religious traditions and their adherents may be judged. While each has its place, there is still other important work to be done, specifically with regard to women's historical and material engagement in, and articulation of, religious and quasi-religious organizations and ideas. Neither advocacy nor denunciation, this kind of scholarly work is lamentably rarer than it ought to be. Joy Dixon's meticulous and brilliant study of the relationship between the feminist movement and esoteric (alternative) spirituality in England stands as a model for how such work ought to be undertaken in the future.

Dixon's point of engagement is the rich renegotiation of gender identities, cultural roles, racial divisions and social structures in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain. Tracking the origins, development, and eventual decline of the Theosophical Society, Dixon challenges a prevailing tendency to treat women's spirituality and women's politics during this period as separate, unrelated activities. In contrast, Dixon claims, "[a] feminist spirituality was a crucial component of much feminist politics, and it was one of the sites at which feminist politics - for better or worse - was constituted and transformed" (3). Her complex and subtle treatment of her historical subject demonstrates convincingly that "we need to complicate our understanding of the historical contexts that shape both political and spiritual allegiances, the formation of political subjectivities, and the relationship between secular and sacred in modern political cultures" (12). Whether or not we, as individuals, have particular beliefs, it is both ahistorical and unscholarly to dismiss the fact that such beliefs have had powerful social effects. Dixon deftly explores these through the dynamics of prestige, authority and privilege manifest in discourses of science, spirituality, and society. Her treatment of the "Divine Feminine" and its racial and utopian inflections is especially powerful, opening out to the uninitiated reader a wealth of new interpretive possibilities.

It is impossible to do justice to this truly superior study in such a brief review. Perhaps a brief listing of some of Dixon's key topics ("manliness and scientific spirituality"; "gendering spiritual experience"; "sex, magic and occult authority"; "occult body politics") will whet readers' appetites to engage this compelling exploration of the politics of gender and spirituality, a topic whose relevance endures to the present day.

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