

one. Rather she writes about the way in which those two areas intersected.

As fascinating as I found this book both in terms of the author's research and the information she provides, I was somewhat uncomfortable with some of the discussion. It is clear that in 1950s Toronto *haute couture* was associated with good taste. Does this suggest that those who wore *haute couture* had good taste? In fact, what the Toronto socialite wore in the 1950s was "regulated and filtered by professionals - Paris *vendeuses*, store buyers and sales assistants - who exerted a considerable influence on what fashions were ultimately seen, purchased, and worn" (282). As I read the book I had to question what this said about the decisions made by women regarding what they would or would not wear. Then again, what does it say, and what was said, about those women who would not or could not "buy into" the *haute couture* culture of 1950s Toronto?

I realize that this is not a traditional account of women's history and was probably not intended to be viewed as such, but it is women's history; it was women who wore *haute couture*. Women were also the so-called "fashion police" who decided whether a certain fashion was right or wrong (92). It was women, by and large, who ran the retail outlets that catered to a certain female clientele and it was women who worked as sales clerks in those stores. What is somewhat problematic for me is what Palmer has left out as much as what she has included. Nothing is said about the women who actually made the dresses, the wages they earned or the conditions under which they worked. Certainly no one book can do everything. Palmer's book is an excellent contribution to the study of the *haute couture* industry in Canada and deserving of the awards it has received.

Margaret Kechnie  
Laurentian University

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***Driven Apart: Women's Employment Equality and Child Care in Canadian Public Policy.***

Annis May Timpson. Vancouver: UBC Press 2001; 318 pages; ISBN 0-7748-0820-9; \$85.00 (cloth).

The lack of available, quality child care has always interfered with women's right to achieve

equality in the workplace. The state has at various times manipulated available child care resources to serve their purpose, most notably during the years of the Second World War. Access to higher education, advances in domestic technology, improved wages, and the creation of jobs have all allowed women to play a greater role in paid employment since the 1950s. However, the tension between women's need for child care and their need to earn a living remains unaddressed. Most feminists, regardless of their ideological position, agree that the factors contributing to women's work inequality are not located only in the workplace but are also found in the domestic sphere. The home, and particularly women's role as caregiver, play a significant role in confining women to jobs with limited advancement opportunities, that are increasingly part time and low paid and in general underutilize women's skills as workers.

In her book Timpson traces the fortunes of child care policies through the Canadian federal governments of Prime Ministers Trudeau, Mulroney and Chretien. All three regimes paid lip service to what Trudeau had dubbed the just society. While they claimed to recognize women's right to equality in the workplace, neither the federal Liberals nor the Conservatives were willing to tackle the thorny issue that women face in the private sphere, specifically the question of who will care for the children. Timpson looks at their efforts to address women's inequality through two royal commissions. The Royal Commission on the Status of Women which began in 1967 and the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment of 1983 allowed Canadian women to discuss issues regarding workplace inequalities and to make recommendations to the state as to how such inequalities could be redressed. Canadian women did not shrink from the task of raising the issue of child care that was so much on their minds, both in the 1970s and during the 1980s when these commissions were active. In each case, however, the state refused to cross the boundary that divides the public from the private spheres even though both royal commissions had recommended that they do so. Timpson argues that while the recommendations of the commissions regarding child care policies went unrealized, royal commissions have proved to be a useful tool to empower women and to have their issues heard. She argues that royal commissions can act as a vehicle to

affirm the relationship between the state and its citizens. In doing that, however, the public's expectation of what will be accomplished is often raised unrealistically given the limited parameters in which governments are willing to function.

Timpson's study is wonderfully readable and well grounded in interviews and uses a range of both primary and secondary sources. It is well deserving of the awards it has received.

Margaret Kechnie  
Laurentian University

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***Women's Work is Never Done.*** Sylvia Bashevkin, ed. New York: Routledge, 2002; xi+199 pages; ISBN 0-415-93480 (cloth) ISBN 0-415-934818 (paper); \$128.00(cloth) \$35.95 (paper).

In December 2002, the Supreme Court of Canada brought down a 5 to 4 decision that was both a shock and a milestone in Canada's social history. No one, the Court said, was entitled to welfare as a Charter right. That decision marked the completion of the Conservative Mulroney-Harris project to rollback Canada's welfare state. As of January 2003, Workfare was *de facto* a right; welfare was not.

*Women's Work is Never Done* is a collection of essays on the welfare state and the shape it took in the mid-twentieth century. Edited by Sylvia Bashevkin, the book reflects her comparative method and her immersion in political science. The contributors are meticulous in their research, and, like Bashevkin, political scientists. They share an interest in modern societies where public opinion ranges from compassion for the poor and disadvantaged to enthusiasm for a market economy and tough love for those who fall between the cracks.

It is this dichotomized framework - sentiment or systems - that Selma Sevenhuijsen, a Dutch scholar, explores. What is a care-based society where the ethic of care pervades all of our activities and institution building? Can we construct a system of care which protects both diversity and independence? She traces the evolution of Dutch policy as it evolved from one stage to the next and toward a blueprint "where everybody regardless of sex or civil status, has the possibility of achieving an

independent existence, and in which women and men can realize equal rights" (16-17).

At the other extreme, Gwendolyn Mink provides a chilling description and analysis of one of the US programs, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. As each of the pieces fell into place, the whole became nothing less, she says, than a police state.

Other papers by Sylvia Bashevkin, Jane Jenson, Maureen Baker and Leah F. Vosko are comparative studies - Bashevkin continues her work on Canada, the UK and the US, Baker looks at Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK, while Jenson takes a wider sweep of European countries looking specifically at systems of payment for the care of "the frail elderly," and Vosko compares Ontario and the State of Wisconsin. What we mainly learn from these studies is (1) that there are alternative policies to consider; (2) that just about any policy has implications for gender and (3) that the political ethic of "choice" or mandated arrangements persists.

Many of the chapters discuss the family as our most vulnerable and, at the same time, most resilient institution. Bensonsmith retrieves the 1965 Moynihan Report on the Black family which was heavily criticized at the time because of its focus on the single parent. But for the Black community the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and *Brown v. the Board of Education* (1954) had a greater impact on its material wealth and human capital than Moynihan's critique of the single-parent family. Still, in terms of social planning, can we really factor the family out?

*Women's Work is Never Done* is for advanced students who have some background in political economy and are familiar with the debates on the welfare state. Others who have been over the discussions among feminists about whether women are "naturally" caring will greatly benefit. Finally there is a large caring public who are disturbed by the recent directions in Canadian public policy.

Thelma McCormack  
York University

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***Set Adrift: Fishing Families.*** Marian Binkley. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8020-8351-X; 219 pages; \$24.95 (paper).