

violence of law. Deepening these insights, Gilmore then turns to *Shot in the Heart* (1994), in which Mikal Gilmore creates a narrative that grapples with how to tell "his" story when that story is intimately caught up with the story of Gary Gilmore (Mikal's brother), who was executed in Utah in the summer of 1977 for murdering two young men. Her narrative is further caught up with larger familial and cultural stories of secrets, lies and violence. Of all of the chapters in this text, I found this one to be the most provocative and insightful. Not previously familiar with *Shot in the Heart*, I found Gilmore's reading to be persuasive and exciting, so much so that I am eager to read the original text.

The following chapter engages Kincaid's *Annie John* (1986) and *Lucy* (1990) to deliberate on a complex and nuanced form of self-representation that not only offers autobiography as a "repeated" (rather than one-time) text, but one that can also be told from a child's perspective. Gilmore concludes her substantive analyses with a reading of Winterson's *Written on the Body* (1992), a text of love, illness, loss, and grief, in which the "I" who writes is marked neither by gender, sexuality nor name - in this sense, a text at far distance from the conventions of autobiography.

Gilmore's arguments in each of these chapters are compelling and often insightful; as she draws from other conceptual work, she is splendid in her cogent and concise explanations and in her use of those conceptualizations to deepen her readings of the self-representational texts. Across the essays, Gilmore makes a strong and important argument for studying representations of trauma: for how they challenge conventional representational practices, but more than that - for what they might teach us about the need to look again at those conventions and to take seriously the violence of their limits in the constitution of the self living in relation to histories of suffering and injury.

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Beyond Coping: Widows Reinventing Their Lives. An Anthology of Stories Collected by Molly Hurd and Margie Macdonald. Lockeport, Nova Scotia: Community Books, 2001; photos; 143 pages; ISBN 1-896496-25-3; \$18.95 (paper).

Beyond Coping is a collection of the stories of twenty Canadian widows. Hurd and Macdonald lost their husbands in 1996 in a water accident off the coast of Nova Scotia; they were/are young widows and the creation of this book is part of the process by which they re-invented their lives after unexpected widowhood.

Each woman tells her own story in her own way; yet each tells of both (inevitable) pain and personal development. No story is boring to the reader. Together, these narratives are inspirational; they portray "ordinary" women who, after bereavement, go on to do things that they likely would not have undertaken when they were wives (or still were wives), and who, perhaps more significantly, gain new understandings of self. The women are realistic role models; their diverse accomplishments as widows are neither proverbial nor unattainable.

The intended audience for *Beyond Coping* seems mostly to be (other) widows. The Appendix contains "guidelines and inspirations" for widows to write their own story (written by Gwen Davies, with input from Hurd and Macdonald). Yet I think all women will find this book interesting and useful since it speaks to more general issues in women's lives and illustrates women's resilience and strength. It is difficult to do a usual (academic) analysis and evaluation of this book, and perhaps is not fair to try. However, I have a few points to make along these lines. The twenty women are not a random sample. They were "found" through widow support/bereavement groups across Canada, notices placed in major newspapers, local medial coverage in Nova Scotia, and through personal contacts. We are not told how many widows were approached but declined to write their story. As a result, the women are not necessarily representative of Canadian widows. They are all English-speaking and fairly well-educated. Many were widowed at much younger ages than is usually the case (although this is a good reminder that statistical probability is only

probability and that one may become widowed tomorrow, even if young. It is also a reminder that single mothers may be widows.) Most of the interviewees have more resources, both economic and familial, than many widows. Because each woman wrote her own story, there is uneven "hard data." I was not able to ascertain the province of residence in all cases; neither was I able, in all cases, to figure out current age, age at widowhood, and length of time as widow.

But I feel like I am nit-picking; *Beyond Coping* is not meant to provide a social scientific analysis of widowhood. Rather, it gives widows a venue to tell their own stories in their own voices, and it gives the reader an inspirational glimpse at the ways that widows of all ages deal with this difficult life course transition.

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Obligation and Opportunity: Single Maritime Women in Boston, 1870-1930. Betsy Beattie. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen University Press, 2000; illustrations; xii + 176 pages; ISBN 0-7735-2019-8; \$22.95US (paper).

Beattie's study of young single women who joined - and at some points led - the out-migration of half a million Maritimers in the years between the 1860s and the 1920s is a welcome addition to the still-sparse historical literature on Maritime women. The story of this major exodus has been a central theme in regional historiography, but as Beattie points out, "an inadequate male-centred explanation"(4) has focussed very narrowly on economic decline. The book is structured in two parts, one focussing on the period from 1870 to 1900, the second on the years from 1900 to 1930, when tighter US immigration restrictions made the move to Boston much more difficult. Each part of the book includes a discussion of the economic conditions in the Maritimes as well as employment and living conditions in the Boston area.

Beattie's argument that there were important differences in the two periods is the

central element of her contribution to historiography. Following Scott and Tilley,¹ she argues that the first generation of young, single women went to find waged work in Boston to contribute to the household economies of their families of origin back in the Maritimes. They chose Boston because it was easy to get to and because it was easy to find jobs in domestic service that paid enough to permit them to send money back home; Beattie characterizes this cohort as "dutiful daughters." The experience of the second generation was more multi-faceted. Some "dutiful daughters" still went to Boston to earn wages in domestic work to send back to struggling Maritime farm families, however the fact the second generation tended on average to be older and better educated than the first suggests that the decision was more likely to be a personal choice, shaped not only by economic need but also a pursuit of new experience. This argument is supported by the fact that by 1900 the Maritime economy offered considerably more opportunities for waged work for women than had been the case in the 1870 to 1900 period. Another consideration that Beattie raises is the wide range of jobs and training Maritime women pursued in Boston.

The major problem Beattie faced in this study was to understand the personal motivations that underlay the statistical phenomenon of out-migration, and the lack of evidence of the personal experiences of rural working class women heightened her difficulty. In Part One of the book Beattie largely resorts to economic explanations of the women's behaviour, which results in a plausible explanation but not a rivetting story. Part Two, however, is enlivened by the large number of letters and interviews which provide personal insights into the motivations of the migrants. Beattie's description of the culture of lodging houses, restaurants and "cheap amusements" in early twentieth century Boston helps us to understand the appeal of big city life for rural Maritime women.

ENDNOTE

1. Joan W. Scott and Louise A. Tilly, "Women's Work and the Family in Nineteenth-Century Europe," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17 (1975): 36-64.

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