

One of the merits of this book is that its authors attempt to uncover the impact that these economic and political shifts have had on the politics and relations of class, gender, and race. Luxton and Corman argue that heightened economic insecurities have undermined our earlier understanding of class politics, and have intensified existing tensions based on gender and race. What adds to the analysis of gender and race, moreover, is their effort to explore the significance of *whiteness*. While the vast majority of Stelco workers and their families were of Anglo-Celtic descent, Luxton and Corman see no excuse for dismissing or quickly abandoning a discussion of race. Though not the focus of their study, they take the *whiteness* of these Hamilton working people as problematic. While working people face particular experiences as wage earners, we also are reminded that they are by no means a homogeneous group.

The other major contribution of this book is its human dimension. Luxton and Corman offer a careful and informed account of the various ways in which one segment of Canadian society has been touched by structural trends. They comment sensitively on the efforts of people to get by, as individuals and as family members, as workers in the home and in the plant, as citizens and trade unionists. Luxton and Corman are both skilled at bringing to the page the rich data drawn from their interviews. The result is that *Getting By in Hard Times*, allows us to share the experiences of Hamilton working people and gain some important understanding of their attempts to sort through the inequalities that touch their lives.

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***Reading Birth and Death: A History of Obstetric Thinking.*** Jo Murphy-Lawless. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998; 343 pages; ISBN 0-253-21258-8; \$19.95 US .

***Common Science? Women, Science, and Knowledge.*** Jean Barr and Lynda Birke. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University

Press, 1998; 166 pages; ISBN 0-253-21181-6; \$14.95 US.

How are women involved in the construction of scientific knowledge? How do women understand, appreciate, and perceive science? How do women use science and scientific knowledge? For anyone who is interested in the relationship between women and science, both *Reading Birth and Death* and *Common Science?* will be thought provoking.

In *Reading Birth and Death*, feminist sociologist Murphy-Lawless investigates how obstetrics became theory-bound science and how perceptions of birth changed during that transformation. Based on painstaking reading of historical birth documents, primarily from Ireland, Murphy-Lawless shows us many layers of the transformation of obstetrics between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries: power struggles between female and male midwifery whose approaches were antagonistic; the gradual building of the perception of pregnant women as weak entities who should surrender to professional help and control; and the introduction of the scientific concepts of "normal" and "risk" to obstetric thinking. The book is not an easy read - it presumes basic obstetric knowledge and general understanding of feminist critiques of science - but it provides a rich basis from which analysis of obstetric thinking outside of Ireland can also be of benefit and the inquiry into the relationship between women and science in general explored.

In this sophisticated academic analysis of obstetric thinking, one might wonder, however, where are the thoughts and feelings of women? Granted the author's frustration at the lack of such historical documents, the silence of women's perspectives is still considerable. How did women's perceptions of birth change as those of obstetricians did? Interestingly, albeit with a very different focus, methodology, and scope, *Common Science?* is a good accompanying read in this regard.

In *Common Science?* feminist science educators Barr and Birke examine what is involved in the production of scientific knowledge through investigating how non-academic women perceive natural science. In efforts to promote women's access to science, the authors argue, the

construction of science itself has rarely been questioned; the problem is always women, not science. But is it really? The authors based their analysis on interviews with forty adult British women. As the number indicates, the interviews were not intended to be quantitative nor generalizable. The strength of their research is in their careful reading of the collected words and attentively made bridges between them and other empirical studies and theories. Maintaining easy accessibility, the book successfully invokes questions on such broad issues as adult education, women and science education, and feminist epistemology.

Both books examine the relationship between women and science by revealing the problems of science (and not women). In the attempts to be inclusive to women, ironically I felt excluded. I could not locate myself in either of the arguments as a woman who enjoys science and appreciates womanhood. Although both books ask good questions about women's relationship to science, a better question to begin might be whether there is a relationship between women and science. Too much emphasis on women's collective experience could paradoxically exclude some women. Relationships between women and science may be more diverse, dynamic, and intertwined than these books indicate.

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***The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality.*** Mary Louise Adams. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997; viii + 224 pages; ISBN 080208057X; \$19.95.

***No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-97.*** M. Little, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998; xxv + 293 pages; ill.; index; ISBN 0195411501; \$24.95.

While their subject matter and approaches are different, both Adams and Little contribute much to our understanding of the

histories of gender, age, and sexual relations. They demonstrate the interwoven nature of these relations, and show how they are mediated by, and through, public expectations frequently manifested in regulatory state programmes premised on a "norm" that is more ideal than real. The state, as both authors reveal, has interpreted its expanding mandate for intervention largely in terms of educating its citizens toward a certain standard/type of behaviour - applied to both Adams' young Canadians and Little's single mothers - times resorting to surveillance and punishment to ensure that the message is not taken lightly. In both instances as well, the norm delivered to the target audience is unequivocally derived from white, middle-class, heterosexual, Anglo-Celtic, Protestant Canadian values.

Among the first of a new wave of histories that are making the society, culture and politics of post-World War II Canada their focus, Mary Louise Adams' *The Trouble with Normal* is ground-breaking. Her analysis sheds much light on an under-explored period about which several nostalgic views persist: that the renewed "cult of domesticity" based on the male-breadwinner family was the universal experience, for example. Adams observes that during the two decades following the war "dominant claims of heterosexual behavior and identity were rarely challenged." But the fact that influential Canadians in government, social work, educational, psychological and medical fields worried aloud that they might be crucial to her story. There were evident anxieties about the extent to which the private practices of Canadians actually reflected "the norm."

Adams makes her most important contribution to the scant historiography on the subjects of gender and sexual relations, youth, courtship and marriage by pointing out that "the trouble with normal is its taken-for-grantedness and its power as a regulatory sexual category." She relies on Foucault's notion of surveillance to explain how public discourses, captured in educational literature and film and government reports, transmitted the idea of heterosexuality - premised on "traditional" understandings of masculinity, femininity and "normal" sexuality - through parenting, schooling, and social institutions. Understanding this process allows us