

place, and supported a womanly militance that was vulnerable to attack from opponents in both the industrial and domestic setting. As we travel through the life course with many of the female workers at Penman's, we are constantly reminded of their struggles and their difficulties in negotiating their lives through their experience as industrial workers, as members of a community, and as members of families and households.

The application of the same approach to the men of Hanover is equally fruitful, and it is perhaps one of the ironies of the book that the men of Hanover have been brought back to the fullest life and vigour, not the women of Paris. It would appear that there are a number of reasons for this. Novelty is obviously a factor. Gender analysis has still not been applied to male experience to the extent that it has been to women's. So, too, is the fact that Hanover conforms to patriarchal "normalcy." This social and historical fit empowered the men of Hanover and encouraged them to find the voice to express their concerns. Their story is in many ways a happier one than that of the women of Paris. Historians do not engage in "what ifs," but Parr's examination of life in Paris allows her to explore a question many of us ask. What if women's work was recognized as skilled and valuable to employers? The answer is not very heartening. The pervasiveness of the surrounding patriarchal values sharply limited the benefits that the skilled female knitters enjoyed as a result of their skill and their employer's need. That message is reinforced by the comparisons of life and work in the two towns.

The Gender of Breadwinners is not an easy read. The careful attention to detail of local experience is both a strength of the book and an obstacle for the reader. Parr's style is dense and sometimes cryptic. It would have been helpful if she had offered her readers some guidance, perhaps with more extensive introductions and conclusions to each chapter. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the book is structured as two parallel narratives. The difference between the two towns is substantial and significant; the treatment of each is lengthy and detailed; the arguments, complex. Parr, herself, addresses this problem in the conclusion of

the book, but more comparisons and fuller explanations of the differences in the main body of the text would have been helpful.

There is another feature of the book which begged for more attention. Parr mentions only in passing that Agnes McPhail, Canada's first member of Parliament, sat for a riding that included the town of Hanover. That Agnes McPhail, a woman and eventually a member of the CCF, represented this "men's" town raises some interesting questions about the complexity of relationships between class and gender. Although provincial and national politics are outside the scope of the book, it does address community attitudes, and McPhail's relationship to the broader problems piques a number of questions.

Joy Parr's *The Gender of Breadwinners* makes a significant contribution to the history of Canada. It expands our knowledge about the historical experience of Canadian women and men, and it raises important questions about gender, class, and power. Parr's exploration of those questions has changed the agenda and the terms of debate in Canadian history. Canadian historians will not be able to ignore the questions which she raises, and gender will no longer acceptably be ignored in debates about Canada's industrialization. Parr's contribution to feminist scholarship is equally important, and this fact is underscored by the relevance of her research and conclusions to the struggle of Canadian women for pay equity today. *The Gender of Breadwinners* represents the culmination of two decades of feminist history in Canada and charts some important new directions for the future.

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Past Due: A Story of Disability, Pregnancy and Birth. Anne Finger. Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 1990, Pp. 203 paperback.

Anne Finger's book *Past Due: A Story of Disability, Pregnancy and Birth* puts a personal face on the issues of disability rights and reproductive

rights. It is a profoundly personal tale of what have become very political issues. *Past Due* is about motherlove and self-love. It is about being forced to put one's life-long beliefs into action. It is about confronting one's own fears as they are mirrored in one's child.

The book is implicitly divided into two parts: Before Max and After Max. The Before Max section concentrates on theoretical issues of disability rights. Anne Finger is "post Polio"; she had polio as a child and, as an adult, she must now contend with limited physical movement and bouts of extreme pain. Her most obvious sign of disability is her cane. She is active in the disability rights network, speaking frequently about reproductive rights for disabled people.

Finger's high profile on reproductive rights brings her into contact with other activists in the field, including Ruth Hubbard, Barbara Katz Rothman and Rayna Rapp. One particularly jolting sequence of events is the conversation that occurs at a conference on reproductive technologies. In conversation over coffee, Finger finds herself on the opposite side of these prominent three. The discussion focuses on the ethics of therapeutic abortion and the ethics of treating sick babies with an overload of technology. Finger agrees that the treatment of preemies can be inhuman and she offers a tale of her own rough treatment in hospitals as a child in the 1950s. Rothman turns to her and says, "If you had been my child, I would have killed you before I let that happen." Finger is horrified by this response.

My heart stops. She is telling me I should not be alive. It is my old fear come true: That if you talk about the pain, people will say, see, it isn't worth it. You would be better off dead.

Finger's struggle is to reconcile her belief that disabled babies must be protected and cared for with her own fears of the soaring use of technology to prolong the lives of children who are certain to die in a few weeks or months. She must confront her own discomfort with Rayna Rapp, who chose to abort a fetus that was detected prenatally as having

Down's Syndrome, with her active, unwavering belief in a woman's right to an abortion.

In the second part of the book, *After Max*, Finger's confrontations with her own inconsistencies take on a new urgency when her planned home birth ends in an emergency C-section. Her son is born suffering from meconium aspiration and severe asphyxia, and there is the very real possibility of mild to severe brain damage. Now she must deal head on with the theoretical issues that she debated so ferociously when she was certain that her child would be healthy. As the hospital struggles to keep baby Max alive, she debates whether she wants him to live or to die. She is searing in her honest search within herself to find what it will mean to her to raise a disabled child.

I still believed in all the things I have always believed in: the rights of disabled infants, the value of disabled lives. Yes, I still believe in those. I just didn't know what I could cope with: twenty seizures a day? Inability to make eye contact? Changing diapers for twelve years?

She also expresses our collective love/hate relationship with technology. "I do know that if he dies, I will think that technology is monstrous, inhuman, a mad scientist's creation; and if he lives, I will think it is miraculous."

We can see this same sentiment in relation to reproductive technologies. Women who conceive via in vitro fertilization are thrilled with the technological intrusion into their lives; but for the 95 out of 100 women who never bring home a baby, technology leaves a bitter legacy of physical and emotional pain and suffering. Some feminist groups suggest that there be a moratorium on IVF programmes in Canada while we examine the implications and repercussions more closely; however, women who hope to conceive do not want these programmes shut down for any time. Do we advocate that these IVF programmes be stopped because the majority of women never conceive or do we allow them to continue for the five women out of one hundred who will emerge, triumphant, with their own live baby?

Other issues are equally divisive. Do we advocate the cessation of therapeutic abortion of Down babies and then hope to God or whoever that we never have such a child? How can we hope to prevent abortion of disabled babies when we must advocate abortion for any woman who wants it? Is the woman who cannot cope with the needs of a disabled child any different from the woman who cannot cope with any child? Should she have less reproductive freedom? Is there a difference between not wanting a child and not wanting a particular child?

To have prenatal diagnosis and therapeutic abortion to give women and their partners a false sense of security, lulling themselves into believing that they can legislate biology, that they can assert their "right" to a healthy child... Finger's own personal experience shows that this is very much a false hope. Her child did not have a defect that could be determined prenatally; his was an accident, a chance happening in the birthing process. Other people are disabled due to accidents, to toxins in our environment, to illness and disease. We cannot enshrine the right to be born healthy and to stay healthy.

Finger's book raises the sometimes contradictory issues of reproductive technology in a way that reaffirms that the personal is indeed political, and reminds those of us who theorize that the political is, in the final analysis, extremely personal. The dilemmas she faces cut to the core of our own feelings about our children.

Finger is a wonderful writer and she instills in her reader a feeling of empathy not only for the author but for all women who must make the kind of choices that remain purely theoretical for most of us. The issues about which she writes involve us on a deeply emotional level, and that is how it should be. She forces us to look at our own politics and our own personal beliefs. She invites us to reflect upon our own sense of being women and mothers in today's world.

While we are far from consensus and equally distant from reconciliation, Anne Finger retains hope that, as women, we can maintain a sense of unity even when we sit on opposite sides of an issue. She continues to hope for a shared intimacy, "true intimacy, born of commonality and difference, born of our shared commitment to women, born of our willingness to sit with each other's truth."

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The Arena of Masculinity: Homosexuality, Sport and the Meaning of Sex. Brian Pronger. *Toronto: Summerhill, 1990, Pp. 305 hardcover.*

The Arena of Masculinity works with two different themes. On one level, it is a sustained analysis of homosexuality in sports, and the impact that the gay community and gay liberation have had on sporting life. Part of this argument is an examination of heterosexual masculinity in sports, and whether homosexuality undercuts that traditional emphasis. For example, gay men are said to be generally less competitive, aggressive, and violent than heterosexual men.

On a much wider level, the book is an analysis of homoeroticism. The analysis is sex-positive, and the stories that the men tell are often in their own voice. Pronger makes the difference between homoeroticism and heteroeroticism central to understanding the character of masculinity in sports. Gay male desire is said to be about the cultivation of erotic interest among equals, not the glorification of traditional male hegemonic power.

The broad-based revolutionary politics that invigorated gay liberation and sought affiliation with other oppressed groups is not the movement's overall defining characteristic now, if it ever was universal. The author feels that the new gay view of the world is more personal, more focused on individual pride. He makes it seem as if all gay men