

past." Unfortunately, that is not quite true. As her own footnotes indicate, every male supporter of feminism whom she treats has been the subject of historical study. In quarrying these secondary accounts, Strauss does provide a handy compendium of the existing literature on nineteenth-century male feminists; an original approach to the issue remains to be plotted.

Angus McLaren
University of Victoria.

Travailleuses et féministes: Les femmes dans la société québécoise. Marie Lavigne and Yolande Pinard, et al., *Montréal: Boréal Express, 1983*. Pp. 430.

Maîtresses de maison, maîtresses d'école: Femmes, famille et éducation dans l'histoire du Québec. Nadia Fahmy-Eid and Micheline Dumont, et al., *Montréal: Boréal Express, 1983*. Pp. 413.

There are many reasons for women's historians of English Canada to envy those of Quebec. Now that these two readers comprising 32 articles in 843 pages join the 513 page general survey, *L'Histoire des femmes au Québec depuis quatre siècles* published in 1982, Quebec students and teachers have classroom materials unmatched for breadth and depth in any part of Canada. The Quebec literature in women's history shows a discerning eclecticism in methodology and a knowledgeable receptivity to a wide international literature—a maturity which has not yet been so apparent in the parallel literature outside Quebec. It is striking in these volumes, not only the degree to which Quebec feminists are attentive to the wider North Atlantic literature in both French and English, but also the thoroughness of their command of the English Canadian literature, a traffic in insight which appears from examination of the notes of most other Canadian writing in women's history, to be too often inefficiently one way. Finally, there is in this literature, notably in the

work of Micheline Dumont and Marie Lavigne, a refreshing jocular irreverence toward academic pretension and an insistence upon the self-conscious imbrication of politics in scholarly investigation at a level beyond polemic, which is a notably healthy sign in a group attempting to remake historical categories.

The first of these volumes, on working women and feminists, is substantially a reprint of earlier work. Half of the sixteen essays appeared in *Les femmes dans la société québécoise—aspects historiques*, which this collection supercedes. Also included are Susan Trofimenkoff's "Muffled Voices", which was published first in this journal, Marta Danylewycz's "Nuns and Feminists in Montreal" from *Histoire sociale Social History* and Jennifer Stoddart's study of the Dorion Commission from the first volume of Osgoode Society publications. Most valuable for teaching purposes among the new contributions is the editors' "Work and the women's movement: a visible history", which summarizes and scrutinizes the literature on women's paid and unpaid work, and female activists' place in political and religious movements within a broad temporal, spatial and theoretical context. The discussion of female waged and non-waged work during the process of industrialization is particularly deft in its collection from all possible quarters to craft as comprehensive a summary of research and reasonable inference on this topic as we yet possess for Canada or Quebec. Johanne Daigle's history of organisation among Montreal nurses 1946-66 suggests the ways in which work action was amply constrained by the long associations of nursing with mothering, religious vocation and more recently but as compellingly, with the facade of separation from shop floor politics of professional status. If nurses since 1966, when nursing aids appeared as a new level in the hospital female job hierarchy, have been at pains to distinguish the status from the gender aspects of their occupation, it is clear from the work of Mona-Josée Gagnon on women in the Quebec labour movement, particularly from her new

contribution here on union committees on the status of women, that bargaining items of crucial importance to female workers have remained low priority among most union officials and that female activists within the labour movement have continued to be hobbled by their dual loyalties. The two other contributions which are new or substantially new in this collection are Ghislaine Desjardins' "Les cercles fermieres et l'action feminine en milieu rural, 1915-1944" and Micheline Dumont's updated longitudinal study of the religious vocation and the feminine condition, both of which suggest the ways in which continuing female institutions, no matter how shadowed by the penumbra of patriarchal authority, have responded through changing social circumstances to new gender identifications.

The second of these volumes is divided into two parts, the first seven essays dealing with girls and women as students and teachers, the second seven discussing women's lives in the context of family. Most of these papers appear here for the first time, the exceptions being Dumont's study of day nurseries from *RHAF*, her evocative and finely crafted "Découvrir la mémoire des femmes" from *Cahiers de recherche éthique*, Bettina Bradbury's 1979 study of Montreal family economy and a comparison of the family context of French and Quebec educational systems 1850-1960, also from *RHAF*.

Dumont's "Découvrir", a mixture of personal and collective reminiscence and theoretical challenge ends the collection with gusto, and compensates in part for an historiographical introduction to the volume which categorizes the literature without furthering the interpretive discussion. The educational papers are diverse in their approaches. Two institutional case studies, those by Malouin on l'academie Marie-Rose and by Jean on le college Marie-Anne illuminate the origins and interdependence of the public and private schools run by religious communities and the dexterity with which the founders of classical colleges for women were

required to balance the contradictory aims of the finishing school and the academy in order to keep peace with church hierarchy. Nadia Fahmy-Eid's attempts to compare the constituency and curriculum of Ursuline day, residential and mission schools in New France is challenging by cannot quite clinch the point because evidence on the three groups is of such varying quality. Similarly, in an innovative study of the role of gender and class within a profession, Marta Danylewycz's arguments about the influence of the working class backgrounds of women teachers upon male/female inequalities in the educational system of nineteenth-century Montreal are weakened by the absence of information upon the social origins of comparable men.

The family section includes a study by Francine Barry of the varieties of domestic service and the various origins of domestic servants based upon notarial contracts. Denise Lemieux's paper on the socialization of daughters, which focuses on the nineteenth century, offers examples of changing patterns in dress, work and play, and interesting suggestions about the responsiveness of child-rearing practices to social and economic change. The highlight of the volume is Marie Lavigne's "Réflexions féministes autour de la fertilité des Québécoises", a sceptical and cogent refutation of demographers' conclusions, drawn from highly aggregated data, about the reproductive behaviour of Quebec women. Her arguments about the need to particularize women's experience in such analyses, to be attentive to the full range of diverse specialized adaptations which occurred among women in the face of the commercialization of agriculture and urbanization should serve as an important caution to other Canadian demographers as well.

Joy Parr
Queen's University at Kingston