

ladies, with the exception of Croly, emerge finally as a pallid, timid, imitative and rather uninteresting supporting cast for the real suffrage, temperance and sexual purity stars. Had Blair extended her manuscript to examine the details of club membership more fully, to discuss too how the assertion of new rights affected the functioning of the middle-class family and to treat more systematically the economic and cultural restraints which forced most women in clubs as elsewhere to acquiesce, at least publicly, in the subordination of their sex, she would have served her subjects better. *The Club Woman as Feminist* takes only the first step in rescuing clubwomen from the oblivion to which they have commonly been assigned. The major work of recovering the extent of their feminism remains.

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#### NOTES

1. "Family Limitation, Sexual Control, and Domestic Feminism in Victorian America" in *Clio's Consciousness Raised*, Mary Hartman and Lois W. Banner, eds. (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1974), pp.119-36

**Living Together: Unmarried Couples in Canada.** Lynn Fels. *Toronto: Personal Library, 1981. Pp. 208.*

According to the author, the intent of this book is to "explore both the personal experiences of cohabiting couples and societal response in the hope of appraising the character of non-marital cohabitation and its status in society." (p. 25) It is based on the author's master's thesis at Carleton University, Ottawa, *Legal Recognition of Non-Marital Cohabitation in Canada*. The book consists of three parts: 1) Introduction: A Social Statement; 2) Part One: The Experience of Living Together; and 3) Part Two: Living

Together and the Law. Also included are *A Survivor's Guide to Living Together*; two appendices (Sample Budget Form and Sample Cohabitation Agreement), and a bibliography.

Early in the book, the author recognizes two important problems. The first is the difficulty of defining "living together." Although she suggests that social science offers "no clue" to a definition, she reports several definitions used in social science research or in legal contexts, and states:

While any definition of living together is arbitrary, the following is proposed: Non-marital cohabitation is the intimate relationship between two individuals of the opposite sex living together in a common residence outside of marriage. In general, sexual activity is presumed, although it may in fact be a minor part of the individual relationship in question. (p. 21)

The author makes no mention of a time period (as some definitions do), asking, but appearing not to answer, "Is there an essential difference between a couple who has cohabited for three years and one who has cohabited for two months?" (p 21) This reviewer believes that this question should be considered as more than just a rhetorical question; to answer it would likely contribute to a greater understanding of the nature of non-marital cohabitation.

The second problem is a more serious one. Although this book is subtitled "Unmarried Couples in Canada," the author states that the Canadian covivant (her term for non-marital cohabitants) is an unknown statistic. While relevant data were to be collected in the 1981 census, demographic and statistical information on this life-style was not available at the time this book was written. Nevertheless, the author goes on to say "Non-marital cohabitators are located in all socio-economic levels of society. They are not exclusively rich or poor, illiterate or college-

educated, young or old. They can be found in any occupation: doctors, construction workers, lawyers, high school students, secretaries, accountants, teachers, and old-age pensioners.” (p. 29) How does the author know who these people are, if they are an “unknown statistic?” Where do these categories come from, if appropriate demographic data has not yet been collected? One begins to wonder about the credibility of statements which might be made about unmarried couples in Canada when, as yet, we have no evidence of who they are (as opposed to who the author thinks they might be). In the Author’s Note, it is reported that interviews were conducted with lawyers, government and church officials, marriage counselors, cohabiting couples and members of the public, but no mention is made of how these people were chosen, how many there were, and what efforts were made to ensure that they might be representative.

Assertions without supporting evidence characterize the remainder of this book also. For example, “Many couples cohabit without anticipation of future marriage” and “A number of covivants are vague about the future and focus their efforts on immediate concerns” (both quotations on p. 32). How many is “many” or “a number of?” Do they differ by age group, by occupational group, by geographic area, etc? How do we know they don’t anticipate marriage or that they focus on immediate concerns? Without some kind of supporting evidence, such assertions remain statements of the personal experiences of some covivants without contributing much to an understanding of non-marital cohabitation in Canada. Although reference is sometimes made to studies of living together (i.e., “Studies have shown...”), no explanations are given about who was studied or how they were studied nor are citations given, so that the interested reader might pursue these studies independently.

Much of the “evidence” of the book consists of quotations from individuals regarding their personal experiences. The following quotation is

given in support of trial marriage:

Even though he said that he was liberated and would gladly split the housework, I had my doubts. To his credit, his promise to scrub the bathroom spotless, whispered to me over a candlelight dinner, was honored weekly. I was also worried about his attitude toward money, but after five months of living together I suddenly realized that he is even more of a Scrooge than I am! (p. 31)

There is no indication in the book that this quotation is representative of the experiences of those engaged in trial marriages, but without such indication, it contributes little to an understanding of “the character of non-marital cohabitation.” The excessive use of personal quotations, in the absence of other evidence, tends to trivialize what might otherwise be important points.

There appear to be some inconsistencies in the book. In her “Introduction: A Social Statement,” the author notes that “Living together presents a challenge to conventional society: it dares people to be more accepting and flexible in their conceptions of relationships between men and women. It is a symbolic gesture of rebellion against social conformity and rigidity of thought” (p. 19), but in her “Conclusion” (p. 176), she claims that “In an atmosphere of changing attitudes, living together has achieved greater social acceptance than in past decades. Released from social censure, covivants are now a visible minority.” It may simply be that the time dimension is obscured in these statements, but it is not clear whether covivants should be seen as a group flouting social convention or as one which is in the minority but increasingly socially acceptable.

A more interesting inconsistency occurs in discussions concerning the legal aspects of living together. The author claims that living

together "satisfies individual needs while avoiding the legal.....liabilities often perceived in marriage" (p. 29). And yet Part Two of the book focuses specifically on Living Together and the Law. "Failure to take into account the legal repercussions of living together can have far-reaching consequences for the individual covivant" (p. 116). At least some of those far-reaching consequences might be considered by some to be legal liabilities!

In spite of the inconsistency, however, Part II of *Living Together* does provide some useful information concerning legal aspects of non-marital cohabitation. Four elements of family law related to this life-style are summarized for each province: the legality of cohabitation agreements; the right of the covivant to apply for covivant maintenance; the legal status of the children; and the parental rights of the non-marital cohabitor. The information provided is a useful overview, which might have been strengthened by specific references to appropriate statutes or cases.

The usefulness of this section does not compensate for the weakness in the remainder of the book, however. To understand the character of non-marital cohabitation and its status in society (the purpose of this book) requires systematic study and analysis, something which this book lacks.

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**Abortion: Readings and Research.** Paul Sachdev (ed.) *Toronto: Butterworths, 1981. Pp. 237.*

In his preface, Professor Sachdev comments, "No other public issue in modern times has generated such fierce controversy and polarization as abortion" (p. ix). Accordingly, this attempt to go beyond the controversy and pres-

ent a collection which deals with contemporary legal, psychological and sociological research on abortion is to be commended.

The book is divided into four subsections: "Abortion: An Overview," "Emotional and Psychological Aspects of Abortion," "Women Seeking Abortion," and "Options for the Future." The 17 papers deal with such issues as the shortcomings and operation of the Canadian abortion law; the effects on women who seek and are "granted" or "denied" abortions; the consequences for the children of the latter group; the relationships between abortion, contraception and sterilization; and worldwide abortion trends. Sachdev's intent was to deal with the issue in an explicitly Canadian context and the book's main strength lies in the articles which offer reports of Canadian research. Of particular interest are Osborn's discussion of sterilization of abortees based on the study of the Badgley Commission (1977); Chapman-Sheehan and Devlin's unfortunately brief article on access and availability issues in contraceptive failure from their work in the Reproduction Regulation Clinic of the McMaster Medical Centre; Pearce's presentation of psychological factors in unwanted pregnancy (Calgary data) and Berger *et al's* discussion of the characteristics of repeat abortees based on their work at the Montreal General Hospital.

While the value of primary Canadian data should not be underestimated, *Abortion: Readings and Research* has a number of problems that keep it from working. In the first place, the material seems to have been organized in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. For example, the rationale for placing articles in "Emotional and Psychological Aspects of Abortion" as opposed to "Women Seeking Abortion" is unclear. In the first section, the discussion of the Canadian abortion law presumes familiarity with the legislation and, although the text of the relevant section of the Criminal Code (sec. 25) is appended to Dickens' article on "Legal Aspects of Abor-