

influencé la pensée de l'Aquinate. L'auteur a raison de souligner combien il est indispensable pour comprendre Thomas d'Aquin en général, et ses réflexions sur la femme en particulier, de prendre en considération le milieu culturel où sa réflexion se développa, et spécialement l'histoire intellectuelle et l'esprit religieux de l'Europe aux 12^e et 13^e siècles.

Cela dit, Mme. Cappelle justifie un peu facilement l'aspect négatif de la pensée de l'Aquinate sur la nature et le rôle de la femme dans le monde. Selon l'auteur, "l'exclusion de la femme du sacerdoce, comme de l'enseignement doctrinal public (chez saint Thomas), n'est fondée sur rien autre que sur la sujétion de la femme à l'homme, réalité sociale du XIII^e siècle" (p. 152); la dépendance de la femme affirmée par l'Aquinate n'est que sociologique ou contingente, et est reléguée de la loi civile d'une époque ou d'un lieu.

Avec Mme. Cappelle, je reconnais volontiers que la pensée de saint Thomas appartient à une époque bien déterminée, qu'il a su dépasser sur plusieurs points. Cependant, à l'encontre de l'auteur, je demeure sceptique devant l'affirmation que le Docteur Angélique aurait transcendé, pour l'essentiel, la misogynie de son temps. L'Aquinate affirme trop clairement l'inégalité de la femme tant dans sa création avant la chute que dans sa soumission à l'homme après la chute (Somme théol., Ia, pp. 92-93).

Bien entendu, les lecteurs et les lectrices de cet ouvrage jugeront par eux-mêmes de la valeur de cette étude. Mais ils ne manqueront certainement pas d'apprécier le grand mérite qu'il a de révéler la complexité du problème herméneutique, en particulier lorsqu'il s'agit d'interpréter la pensée d'auteurs à travers des textes anciens sur des problèmes qu'ils ne posaient même pas.

Une dernière remarque reste à faire. La bibliographie aurait été beaucoup plus utile si Mme. Cappelle avait inclus tout les titres des ouvrages qu'elle a cités le long de son étude. Le dédain

traditionnel des Gaulois pour la forme bibliographique est, aujourd'hui, regrettable.

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Perspectives on Women in the 1980s. Joan Turner and Lois Emery. *Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1983. Pp 187.*

The image of the female social worker varies from the "lady bountiful" to the founder of a settlement house, to the prime movers who establish shelters and homes for abused women, to the individual counselor. The social worker deals with women's issues through "social feminism." If the "political is personal" then social workers have been involved in feminist perspectives for many years. It is unfortunate that myths and stereotypes about the field of social work sometimes fail to take into account the experiences and perceptions of women who are both the producers and the consumers of this social service. The editors of *Perspectives on Women in the 1980's* attempt to dispel some of these myths. It is fitting that the organizers of the Fifth Distinguished Visitor's Conference of the School of Social Work, University of Manitoba, and the editors of this book have found a way to include the readers in this conference. Joan Turner explains: "We want this book to be alive, to carry with it the magic and the energy of the conference."

Frequently this collection that includes contributions from thirteen women succeeds in giving the reader the feeling of being part of this sharing, of being able to join in the tribute to Maysie Roger, a "committed social work educator and scholar" to whom this book is dedicated. *Perspectives on Women* gives recognition to an individual, as well as to all the women in the profession, and the consumers of this professional service. In producing this volume the editors and the participants have acted on the under-

standing that the political is personal. They have confronted the position of some women within the profession and acknowledged areas of power and powerlessness. Women have been connected with healing, for good or supposed evil, throughout the centuries. Women as caregivers, as supports for each other, contributed to the growth of the social work profession.

The contributors represent current feminist writings and outlooks. Various themes emerge as the issues for the 1980's. The chapters of this book reflect the topics of the conference, since they are the written proceedings of this event. Gloria Steinem, the keynote speaker, highlighted the areas of family, work, sexuality, culture and reproductive freedom as being on the agenda for the 1980's. She feels that these are the concerns for the "second wave" of feminism. The first part of this stage, Steinem says, was devoted to consciousness raising. In this the second stage, it will be necessary to create structural changes, institutional changes and attitudinal changes. The themes raised in Steinem's paper are echoed in the subsequent presentations. There is one unifying theme, and that is sisterhood. Women are urged to share their own perspectives and experiences with each other, to give support, to create understanding and change.

Each of the participants share common problems related to a variety of issues: problems of language, perspectives on poverty, on native women's rights, on work related issues, of government policy, of counselling for and with women, and reproduction and romance. It is clear from the comments of these authors that change is slow and difficult to achieve. The economy, politics, laws and attitudes all impinge on women's lives.

Many of these authors have expressed themselves in other written works, but the emphasis in *Perspectives on Women in the 1980's* is on the personal. Each participant writes in the first per-

son, each person's experience and perspectives presented here are very powerful, as women share experiences that don't often make the front page news. Dorothy O'Connell writes about poverty, a female condition. She helps us understand the realities of mothers and children who live on welfare. "Welfare is a salary...for the work we do," she says. In Canada in 1980 60% of elderly women lived in poverty. Dorothy O'Connell feels, however, that on the one hand poor women are "generally not feminists" and on the other hand that "feminists and poor women are often on completely different tracks." She pleads for change and cooperation, and is optimistic when she adds that she has a sign in her office which reads, in part: "I swear on my common women's head...the common women is as common as a common loaf of bread...and will rise."

On April 17, 1985 Canada's Charter of Rights came into law. Marlene Pierre-Aggamaway speaks for native women whose status will be discussed in courts of law as well as in Native Councils. She pleads for women to fight laws and rules which discriminate against native women, and which undermine their culture and their status. She reminds readers that it is "women who pass on the ways in which we are to arrange ourselves as families...in communities. Passing on the ways was always our responsibility." Native women must organize and become involved in taking control of their lives and creating change in attitudes. The author feels that as native women the central need is to be able to have the power to make decisions for themselves, and "the ultimate solution is in the exercising of our people's sovereignty according to our culture and traditions." This need for power and control over their own lives is shared by women of all cultures.

Several of the selections in this book are joint efforts, in keeping with the themes of women exploring options and sharing experiences together. Helen Levine, Dorothy O'Connell and

Marlene Pierre-Aggamaway address issues close to the hearts of the readers and social work participants when they discuss women as consumers and providers of services. As the women personalized their views based on their own experiences, Helen Levine summarized by noting that it is a myth to think that social work is only concerned with working with individuals. She adds, "For me, the definition of a social worker necessitates taking social and political action against service delivery systems and societal structures that oppress women..." It may be unfair that the sections that deal with social work do not include different approaches to the issues of individual or political action. While it is clear that societal structures must be changed to deal with issues such as poverty, repression, discrimination, and powerlessness, it would have been appropriate to also share those aspects where social work has addressed these areas, and has worked with victims of emotional, physical and sexual abuse; with women reentering the workforce, with family situations and numerous other change situations.

The contributors to this book move from defining the issues in women's lives to suggesting ways to create. Margrit Eichler clearly addresses social policy issues which affect the lives of women in families. She looks at provisions for child care, for women in the workforce, and calls for changes in government policies. In looking at programs oriented towards children, marital status, income maintenance programs, indirect subsidies and tax provisions, Eichler concludes that "...in the 1980's we must develop a much closer match between our taxation system and the social benefits provided through government policies."

Perspectives on Women in the 1980's should be a welcome addition to private, educational and institutional libraries. It succeeds in many ways. It enables the reader to be a part of the actual conference and proceedings held at the University of Manitoba, School of Social Work.

Social workers, students and all women can gain insight into the issues raised by the participants, and can realize that there is truth in the saying that the personal is political. The authors call for change, based on this understanding.

As a collection of thoughts of many of the women who are in the forefront of feminist thinking and writing in the 1980's in Canada this book is an excellent resource for students. It provides a sampling, an introduction to these writers and their current work. The final section of this book includes selected readings and resources which are a most welcome addition. This list includes publications by the conference speakers, enabling the reader to explore their writings in greater detail. Of particular interest is the section devoted to Canadian references. A list of magazines, journals, newsletters, as well as resources for art and music complete this useful Canadian reference section.

As one reads conference proceedings, there is the impression of listening, rather than reading. Some of the presentations translated into the written form with greater ease than others. The joint presentations were not as successful in the written form as the individual papers since interchanges have a spark, and spontaneity in the original spoken form. The format of the book includes words, in prose and poetry. The fact that women were able to share their experiences beyond the confines of the conference, the fact that the social workers were able to address issues of particular interest to women, and the fact that the reader has access to this rich variety of feminist thought is important. This is a Canadian book, reflecting the lives of Canadian women who join together to work for change.

Joan Turner ends this book with a chapter on Change, Hope and Celebration. "With hope, there is a celebration, joy, a song in our hearts,

dance in our footsteps, warmth and tenderness, love and strength.”

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Women's Film and Female Experience, 1940-1950. Andrea S. Walsh. *New York: Praeger, (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Canada), 1984. Pp.257.*

The assumption which guides Andrea S. Walsh's useful analysis of American "women's films" of the decade between 1940 and 1950 is straightforward. She believes that mass culture, while not *by* the people, is *for* the people and, most importantly, *of* the people. Popular culture, even that often ersatz version channelled through the mass media by corporate controllers, can't be wholly dictated from the top. By examining the content of popular films of the forties we can gain an insight into what women were experiencing and thinking.

While I don't find her analysis convincing, anyone interested in the film or sociology of that decade will find a great deal of useful information in this book.

The content of films can't be dictated from the top for two reasons, says Walsh. One of these is called the box office. During the forties women became more important consumers of movies than ever before and, perhaps, ever since. Many men were at war, more women were working and box office take became increasingly dependent on women. Advertising, fan clubs, movie magazines can't generate the mass audiences needed unless the film in question services, touches and resonates to some experience vital to an audience. To a modern feminist the "consciousness" reached may be a false one. Nevertheless, we can begin to understand that consciousness by studying film—or so Walsh believes.

Perhaps, perhaps not. But there can be no disagreement that women flocked to the movies. Many attended weekly and remember this was the era of the double bill. It was common to see a double bill during the week and another on the weekend: four movies a week, talk about role modelling. And with husbands and boyfriends far away, a pattern of shared female viewing became common. "Going to the movies itself was perceived as an autonomous act by many women" (p.31).

A second reason exists why the content of films cannot be wholly dictated from the top, argues Walsh. Studio bosses may have financed films, but they couldn't make them. That's the job of directors, scriptwriters, performers, set designers and a host of others. These artists will have interests and artistic aspirations not wholly subservient to career advancement. Some of these artists were women. And so, says Walsh, even though the films in question were directed by men, they have distinctly "feminine" (sic) quality and with good reason. Some were adaptations of novels by women (e.g., *Little Women*), or scripted by a woman (e.g., *Tomorrow Is Forever*), and, of course, starred women.

This meant that the battle of the sexes often portrayed in film's like *Adam's Rib* was fought off-screen as well as on. Walsh thinks that a different reading must be given to the actual film than one obtains from the script. The script, Walsh claims, depicts career woman as bitch; that's not the way Katherine Hepburn plays the part nor is it the way George Stevens directs. The screen credits for *A Letter to Three Wives* had to be arbitrated by the Screenwriters' Guild of America to determine whether Vera Caspary should be listed as one screenwriter. (She lost; unfairly in many people's minds.)

Walsh argues that women's films of the forties can be grouped into five types. Three of these she regards as major categories. One is the maternal drama (e.g., *I Remember Mama*), a genre featur-