

les fillettes n'apprendraient pas encore, en regardant leur mère, à mal préparer leur autonomie financière de femme adulte ? « La petite collective » n'établit pas ce lien, qui, pourtant me semble fondamental. Dans la lutte pour une plus grande autonomie financière des femmes, le travail de prévention et d'éducation est primordial. Prévention est d'ailleurs un des mots d'ordre de la plupart des répondantes.

Cette recherche-action structure les idées floues et clarifie les certitudes et les inquiétudes. Elle montre aussi que, pour les groupes de femmes, la réflexion féministe émerge dans l'action. Les femmes engagées ont peu le temps de théoriser, pressées par les exigences de leur quotidien et par les gestes à accomplir au sein du groupe. Néanmoins, la réflexion féministe se manifeste à tous les niveaux et il suffit souvent d'un temps d'arrêt, afin de répondre à un questionnaire par exemple, pour que les femmes cernent mieux, pour elles-mêmes, leur propre cheminement d'action et de réflexion féministes. Ce livre permet au lectorat de comparer, de réfléchir, de redéfinir les enjeux du féminisme à l'aube de l'an 2000, de continuer malgré le constat que les acquis sont fragiles, que former une relève, poursuivre la sensibilisation et créer une meilleure solidarité sont encore à l'ordre du jour.

Par ailleurs, le spirituel, la création, les changements technologiques, le lesbianisme et l'interculturalisme sont autant de thèmes dont « La petite collective » note l'absence. La vocation spécifique des répondantes explique en partie ce silence, mais également la non-participation des groupes concernés par ces questions. Il faudrait s'interroger plus à fond sur ce dernier aspect, car parfois un malaise réel empêche un groupe de participer. Le conflit autour de la célébration du 50^e anniversaire du droit de vote des femmes du Québec en témoigne. L'événement a permis de célébrer une certaine sororité, mais il en a laissé aussi voir la fragilité. Des femmes se sont retirées de la fête, d'autres se sont senties exclues ; les femmes minoritaires, les immigrantes surtout, n'ont pas eu le cœur à la fête. Le débat sur l'inclusion/l'exclusion a fait mal, mais il a permis, je crois, à plusieurs de prendre conscience de l'importance de la présence des femmes minoritaires lorsqu'on parle des FEMMES.

De travail et d'espoir est un livre utile qui raconte un féminisme dynamique. Cette mise en lumière permet aussi de mesurer l'impact réel des groupes de femmes dont l'objectif commun, même des groupes absents, est de mettre fin à la « femme-escargot, emprisonnée dans le cercle vicieux du temps, avançant à petit pas, écrasée par son propre poids, celui de la maison et des choses à changer ». Ce féminisme raconté est une histoire sans fin à continuer, à compléter et à relancer...

WOMEN'S ARCHIVES GUIDE: MANUSCRIPT SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF WOMEN

GUIDE DES ARCHIVES SUR LES FEMMES : SOURCES MANUSCRITES SUR L'HISTOIRE DES FEMMES

Joanna Dean and David Fraser. Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 1991.

By Ruth Panofsky

As one of our institutional and cultural treasures, the National Archives of Canada (NAC) receives too little of the praise it rightly deserves. With increasing regularity it publishes important and informative guides to its numerous archival holdings, making accessible to researchers material that would otherwise languish in the countless files and boxes stored in its Ottawa and off-site locations. The appearance of *Women's Archives Guide/Guide des archives sur les femmes* marks another such publication that brings together in one volume a representative record of the NAC's collections pertaining to women in fields such as the arts, journalism, the labour movement, medicine, and women's ethnic and sports organizations.

The format and organization of the volume will be familiar to those who have consulted other NAC guides. This is a bilingual publication: English and French texts appear on inverted pages at opposite ends of the book. Neither text obtrudes on the other, making this a user friendly means of accommodating the two na-

tional languages. Entries appear alphabetically under the collection title; the call number and vital dates are provided for each collection.

In their brief Introduction, Dean and Fraser do not give an overview of the book's contents, a task which they and their readers understand to be futile. Since this is not a guide to a single collection, but to many and diverse collections, it is impossible to discover a thread common to them all—with the exception, of course, that each takes women as one of its subjects. Instead, part one of the Introduction describes the NAC's Women's Archives project, initiated in the early 1970s, which "is directly responsible for acquiring over 100 manuscript collections, both the records of organizations and the papers of individuals, which occupy over 300 metres of shelf space." Many of these collections are described in the *Guide*.

Part two of the Introduction is entitled "How to Use the *Guide*" and includes four brief sections: (i) Scope; (ii) The Entries; (iii) Index; and (iv) Consulting the Collections. As the authors state, the scope of the project is not definitive. The *Guide* describes neither official records of the federal government nor non-manuscript media. Its listing of pre-Confederation collections is not comprehensive and the post-Confederation collections cited are a "select and largely representative sampling." Since the rationale for these editorial decisions is not made explicit, a reader's confidence in the *Guide* is undermined. One wonders about the basis for selection and what prohibited the production of a comprehensive work. Was it a simple matter of lack of funding, time and staff?

Each entry includes an annotation that consists of the following: biographical or historical information on the creator of the papers; a description of the collection itself (originals, photocopies, microfilm, etc.); outside dates; extent; a finding aid number, where one is available; and a note on the contents of the collection. The Index lists personal names, organizations, places and subjects and includes cross-references. The researcher is thereby ensured full access to the broad range of materials scattered throughout the NAC's rich holdings.

Readers are advised on how to consult the collections in the *Guide*. The authors

have indicated that some collections may be restricted while others may contain material that is yet to be processed, since additions to collections are acquired regularly through individuals and donor organizations. The suggestion to write prior to visiting Ottawa is good counsel and will save researchers time and effort upon arrival at the NAC. Material available on microfiche or microfilm may be borrowed through the Interlibrary Department of university libraries.

A Bibliography included at the end of the *Guide* is particularly helpful to scholars who are pursuing work on women in Canada and who may be unaware of the breadth of the NAC's holdings. I would like to single out for special mention Jeanne L'Espérance's *The Widening Sphere: Women in Canada, 1870-1940*, a catalogue of an exhibit mounted in 1982 by the NAC. The catalogue charts the lives of Canadian women during this period in our national history and its materials are drawn from the NAC's collections. Such publications ensure that further work in the largely unexplored field of Canadian women's studies will continue to be undertaken by researchers and scholars at all levels. The NAC is to be commended on its publication of *Women's Archives Guide* and for its ongoing commitment to advancing the study of women in this country.

AMERICAN APHRODITE: BECOMING FEMALE IN GREEK AMERICA

Constance Callinicos. New York: Pella Publishing Company, 1990.

By Evangelia Tastsoglou

American Aphrodite: Becoming Female in Greek America is an important, candid book of Greek American women's voices as they struggle with Greek patriarchal legacies and the contemporary realities of their lives. The "Greek experience in America" has been one mostly written by men and about men's experiences. It is time therefore that we tune in to the Greek-American woman's voice, as she tries to

make sense of her own experience growing up as a female, caught between two cultures. It is especially time that we hear that voice coupled with an explicitly feminist analysis.

American Aphrodite is a book of oral histories, interspersed with the writer's autobiographical memories and experience. As well as feminist analysis, there are popular poetry and songs from different regions of Greece illustrating folk beliefs about women, and beautiful old wedding and family photographs.

In "Search for Beginnings" Callinicos traces the origins of a problematic in childhood memories of her grandmother and mother. Through their stories as well as those of others, four types of female reaction to the "Greek village mentality" of immigrants clearly emerge. First, there is the frustrated, bitter matriarch, very demanding of her children and at the same time terrified of being abandoned. Then, there is the woman who unquestioningly accepts her 'fate' and passes on the 'Greek heritage' to her daughters. These daughters end up living an almost schizophrenic existence, with several personalities, depending upon the sex, age and ethnic identity of the people they happen to be with at a given time. Finally, there is a defiant, angry and proud woman, who rejects the stereotypical role she is assigned by her culture and strives to create a place for herself in the world. One wonders here whether the last two 'types' are more frequently to be found among younger generation, American-born women.

In "Mama Transplanted: Our Role Model for Learned Helplessness," Callinicos describes the voyage to America and the social world of the Greek immigrant woman. Being given in marriage by her father to a stranger who crossed the Atlantic to fetch a Greek wife, she goes through the traumas of separation from her family and her tightly-knit village community, and of isolation in strange, new surroundings. The boundaries of her social world in America are defined by her family and church. She possesses a great deal of power within the domestic sphere, "lobbying in the bedroom." However, she is not allowed to make contacts and friendships with outsiders lest her morals be endangered. Her behaviour is closely monitored by the Greek commu-

nity, effectively curtailed and controlled through gossip.

In "The Teenage Years: Becoming Female in Greek America," women recount their memories of growing up: the obligatory, parallel education in the Greek language and culture, embarrassment at the rude behaviour of parents toward their 'foreigner' classmates, training in serving the males of the family, prohibitions against dating, restrictions on free movement lest the young woman lose the appearance of purity and become less marriageable. With menstruation, she is set permanently apart in the ghetto of the "filthy," the "weak," and the evil power-possessing (because of an ancient fear of the powerful Vagina, symbol of Death). She is trained to feel contempt towards what is most 'womanly' about her; she becomes acceptable only by adopting a 'virginal' demeanor.

There is of course a double standard in the upbringing of boys and girls. While the woman should not even come into contact with American women, the man is given unlimited freedom to date as many as possible, in order to prove his 'manhood.' Education, one of the most respected values in the Greek culture, is reserved for sons. It is unthinkable for young women to leave home to pursue higher education. Parents and family start making sure very early that their girls will never develop serious intellectual interests.

"An Arranged Wedding Day: Greece 1977" relates the stories of young women shipped to Greece to meet their prospective husbands, chosen by their fathers in advance. There is tragedy in the simplicity, impersonality, and repetition of the basic plot. Women stoically accept their 'fate.' When life turns sour, they have already internalized so much blame and guilt that they see suicide as the only way out. The shame of the 'used' woman after divorce is a control mechanism sufficient to keep some of the most compromising marriages intact.

A growth-limiting relationship for the Greek-American girl, according to Callinicos, is that with her mother. This tends to be a relationship of cultivated dependency, a culturally conditioned inability to live without Mama and outside of the family. The daughter is not encouraged to grow, but simply to move from