

recueil et l'éducation de ces enfants, mais aussi l'amplitude de cette pratique jusqu'à une période récente: "jusqu'à 10% des nouveaux-nés sont abandonnés à Naples en 1836, à Paris et à Lyon en 1846, 30% à Milan en 1842" (p. 162). À cette lecture, les sensibilités s'éveillent et se hérissent: l'enfance d'autrefois était-elle un martyr? peut-on généraliser d'après les documents disponibles? est-il possible d'écrire une histoire de l'enfance? Compère nous met en garde: "des témoignages personnels aboutissent à une histoire d'enfants fragmentaire, en reflet du document choisi, plutôt qu'à une histoire de l'enfance" (p. 181). Cette enfance mène d'ailleurs à une jeunesse souvent turbulente pour ce qui est des mâles: "les groupes, soudés par des solidarités naturelles, 'nations' d'étudiants, clerks de la bazoche, compagnons du même métier, villageois du même village, sont prompts à se déchaîner dans des bagarres les uns contre les autres" (p. 191). Ici l'enquête historique relève évidemment de bien d'autres domaines que celui de l'éducation: au fil des siècles, une interprétation de plus en plus sociologique et psychologique a mené à l'étude de phénomènes contemporains tels que les Blousons noirs ou les Skinheads, aboutissements modernes d'une ancienne exaltation de la virilité et des insécurités qui l'accompagnent.

Nous venons de passer en revue quelques exemples seulement de la richesse d'un livre qui ne souffre d'aucune faille sérieuse. Tout au plus peut-on déplorer un certain nombre de coquilles (tel "réalisation," p. 61, ou bien les nombreux mots espagnols dotés d'un accent grave). Ce ne sont là que détails. L'écriture de l'ouvrage est constamment claire, la rigueur de l'historienne est partout évidente, et le contenu offre une source importante d'information et de références multilingues pour quiconque désire se livrer à des réflexions épistémologiques sur l'histoire de l'éducation.

Patrick C. Douaud
University of Regina

Mary C. Sullivan. *Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995. Pp. x, 420. US\$32.95, cloth.

The scholar researching and writing the history of women religious faces many challenges. One of the most significant is that of access to sources. The archives of religious communities are private repositories. The researcher is faced by the same challenges as s/he would encounter while working in the archives of private corporations. Frequently, the archivists they encounter are

religious who wish to preserve the community's collective memory and at the same time protect the privacy of individuals—alive and deceased.

Religious communities have handled these tensions in a number of ways. Some have declared their archives closed to researchers. Others leave almost complete power in the hands of the archivist, who, in the absence of comprehensive finding aids, serves as the gatekeeper. S/he can bring out to the researcher, one piece at a time, materials which s/he deems of use for the topic.

It is not only lay researchers who face these challenges. Some members of religious communities, constructing their own histories, operate under similar restraints. For communities which have established provinces abroad (and subsequently far-flung provincial archives), constructing history is similar to piecing together a jigsaw puzzle, but with the additional challenge that the pieces are scattered across the globe.

Such were the challenges faced by Mary C. Sullivan, who set out to study Catherine McAuley (1778–1841), the founder of the Religious Sisters of Mercy (RSM) (the Mercies). Sullivan is a member of the American branch of the Mercies. She is an academic by training—a scholar of English, who has also pursued theological studies. Her previous publications include biography and literary criticism. In this, her most recent work, Sullivan sets out to accomplish three tasks: to chronicle McAuley's life; to present edited editions of contemporary texts relevant to that life, and to provide an analysis of these works. The resulting work is an important addition to the fields of social history, religious history, and women's history.

It was not Catherine McAuley's initial goal to establish a religious community. She perceived a need in her native Dublin and set out to meet it by gathering around her a group of lay women dedicated to educating poor girls, visiting the sick, and housing abused women. Yet, just four years after McAuley opened her self-financed, purpose-built house in Dublin to meet these aims, she found herself, as did so many of her predecessors and followers, under pressure by local ordinary to replace her vision of a lay association, and to make it a religious order instead. In quick succession, she saw that order branch out beyond Dublin and Ireland. Today, over 15,000 Mercy religious are found on six continents. Sullivan's book documents McAuley's life and the origins of her work.

Collaborating with archivists in Ireland, the United States, Australia, England, and Italy, Sullivan has assembled an invaluable collection of primary materials that could fuel much new research. She presents first-hand biographical sketches from women—and a few men—who worked with McAuley. At the core of Sullivan's collection are the writings of seven of McAuley's female contemporaries, who through their letters and the annals of their religious houses, present an intriguing picture of a complex and humane woman.

Sullivan introduces each of the seven chapters with a biographical essay on its author, including further primary material drawn from a variety of sources. She then presents the author's original work on McAuley, fully documenting the references contained within. Sullivan employs detailed endnotes to direct the reader to additional materials and to explain fully canonical, historical, and personal references. Besides the picture of McAuley that arises from the pages, one gets a strong impression of the personalities of the seven women religious who participated in and observed McAuley's life and death.

To complement the image of McAuley the person Sullivan presents insights into McAuley as religious administrator in two very fine chapters tracing the evolution of the Constitution of the Religious Sisters of Mercy. With painstaking care, Sullivan examines the development of the Mercy Rule, from its origins in the Rule of the Presentation Sisters (a community established in Ireland in 1775 by Nano Nagel) through the versions produced by McAuley, and the men with whom she consulted. Sullivan documents changes in the Mercy Constitution, tracing the tensions between the spiritual orientations of McAuley and those of some of her ecclesiastical superiors both in Ireland and at the Vatican. Sullivan concludes this segment by reprinting, in full, McAuley's complete manuscript of the Rule and Constitution of the Religious Sisters of Mercy.

Sullivan's work is neither a biography of McAuley nor a history of the Mercy order. Instead, Sullivan has produced a volume which can serve as a starting point for further research on McAuley, the institute which she established, and the international significance of both the woman and her work. Sullivan provides historians with access to primary sources housed in Mercy Archives around the world. Her commentary both poses and suggests questions about religious leadership, the nature of charism, and historical interpretation of actions.

Sullivan's book represents the work of a new generation of religious who are researching their community history. Armed with the tools of textual analysis, feminist theology, and a firm grounding in scholarly discipline and discourse, Sullivan and her work demonstrate to the wider academic community the fine research in which women (and men) religious are currently engaged. Further, Sullivan's collection has a significance even beyond those interested in McAuley and her works. It presents sources on persons and themes in exemplary fashion. In her analysis of the way she prepared the historical manuscripts for publication, Sullivan clearly articulates the dilemmas faced by researchers and poses her solutions to them. I found Sullivan's perspective on the sources to be fascinating. As a woman religious with training in literary analysis, Sullivan's commentary on the language and imagery in McAuley's writings and actions was strongly engaging.

Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy is a fine and a useful book. Sullivan's presentation of sources and her commentary on them should serve as an inspiration to many, most especially to other communities of religious and to authors interested in scholarly biography.

Elizabeth Smyth

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

Elisabeth Leedham-Green. *A Concise History of the University of Cambridge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Pp. 274. US\$54.95, cloth; US\$17.95, paper.

Universities have always been self-important institutions. Although they do not hold a monopoly on pomposity, they can usually be counted on to provide a fine example. Rarely do they resist an opportunity to broadcast their contribution to intellectual life and "Civilization." The objective of these and other exercises in public relations is, of course, to protect and to extend privilege, and to ensure a measure of veneration. The first objective has as its secondary aim to keep the mundane world at bay, and the second provides the cash to continue.

Leedham-Green's monograph fits into this genre, being a history of Cambridge University published by Cambridge University. The author coyly declares a need for a new "portable" history of "one of the world's greatest academic institutions." Why one quite needs to carry a standard introduction to the place in one's pocket is not vouchsafed. Perhaps it is to provide ammunition for its members in the perennial game of one-upmanship played with Oxford. It is something the author clearly enjoys, telling readers gleefully, "As so often Cambridge had started [origin] after Oxford and finished first [recognition]" (pg. 4).

In broad terms, the author's primary objective is to show how, over 800 years, the University reacted to, or, most of the time, rebuffed external pressures to change. Day-to-day experiences of students, teachers, and administrators, potted descriptions of the University Press and University Library, and information on a number of celebrated (a word used often) individuals at the "the World's best University" provide lively asides. Leedham-Green refers more difficult enquiries about the University's scholarship to the multi-volume history also now being published by the home press. Alternatively, one is invited to consult Christopher Brooke's *Oxford and Cambridge* (1988), or other books on an extensive list.