

Katherine Arnup. *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994. Pp. 251. \$18.95 Can. paper, \$50.00 Can. cloth.

Picture a family gathering at which women across a number of generations are admiring a newborn and giving advice to the new mother. In all likelihood, you would hear contrary opinions voiced about such things as feeding techniques, toilet training, medical treatment, and discipline. You might also hear some heartwarming and/or horrendous stories about pregnancy and birthing experiences as these women pass on their stories about motherhood.

Katherine Arnup's *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada* adds to our understanding of how images of motherhood and the conditions of mothering changed or failed to change in this country throughout much of the twentieth century. The book examines the relationship between the ideology of motherhood over this period and the growing power of medical science and the health care system. It explains how people's opinions and stories about motherhood are related to the time periods and locations in which such motherhood occurred.

Although Arnup acknowledges that "the material reality of mothers'

lives differed widely according to class, racial, and ethnic status, as well as by region and historical period," we learn little about this in the book. The author's focus is on the dominant view of "good mothering" which developed despite such diversity in women's experiences. Tracing the central themes found in prescriptive literature about motherhood available to women in Canada between 1900 and 1960, Arnup describes dramatic shifts in child-care advice over this period. She also demonstrates how "the professionalization of medicine and health care" was related to that advice literature.

While many may argue that there is nothing so natural as the relationship between mother and child, Arnup's analysis provides explanations of how and why the processes of conception, pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing became increasingly controlled in Canada over these years. She also connects these growing controls with changes in technology, ideology, and political will in the country during the same period. Thus, both the documentation and analysis presented in this book encourage the reader to take a critical look at the entire process whereby mothers come to think and behave as they do.

It is in accomplishing the goal of describing the development of a dominant ideology of motherhood in Canada in the first six decades of this century that the book is most satisfying. Indeed, four of the five chapters

are devoted to this task. In reaching its second goal, that of "assessing the impact" of this ideology on women's lives, the book is less successful.

Arnup explains in her introduction that she has deliberately used the term "mother" throughout the book rather than the more gender-neutral word "parent." She does so partly because she believes that indeed most of the work of child care is carried out by mothers but also because the advice literature she draws upon for the period was in fact directed to women and not to both parents.

Arnup begins by explaining the causes of the Canadian "war on infant mortality" in the early decades of the twentieth century. This war was spurred on by the enormous changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution with its accompanying rapid urban population growth and inadequate municipal services that resulted in babies dying at alarming rates from contaminated milk supplies or as victims of epidemics of contagious diseases such as smallpox and diphtheria. Arnup identifies Dr. Helen MacMurchy as a key participant in this "war" and outlines her part in conducting surveys which were to result in influential government reports that were to support the need for "an educational campaign" aimed at mothers in Canada.

In the second chapter, the author documents the various elements of that campaign. She describes how a variety of government agencies produced pamphlets. She also refers to the many articles in scientific journals and in popular magazines, such as *Chate-laine*, and to the commercially produced child-care manuals and

handbooks of the era. These sources of advice literature along with the actions of those in organizations, such as Welfare Councils and Junior Health Leagues, contributed to the birth of a "maternal ideal." Arnup details how that ideal was legitimized and supported by those in the medical profession, such as the Victorian Order of Nurses and those at the Institute for Child Studies at the University of Toronto.

Indeed, in the third chapter of the book we learn how statistics on infant mortality and maternal mortality contributed to the medicalization of motherhood. Pre-natal care, birthing, and post-natal care increasingly came under the control of doctors and nurses rather than a neighbour woman or midwife. Thus, by 1953, in a government-sponsored pamphlet, officials could claim that most babies were born in hospitals.

Chapter 4 is by far the most humorous. It deals with the conflicting advice experts over these years gave new mothers about how to feed and care for their child. Here, as in some earlier parts of the book, we see complete reversals in that advice. For example, Arnup describes how "habit training," stressed in the early part of the century, was much in line with Frederick Taylor's ideas about scientific management in organizations. By 1946, however, Dr. Benjamin Spock advocated flexible nap times and "demand-feeding," both of which were more in line with theories in the field of child study about maturational development. In the midst of all this changing advice, Arnup points out that the power of the doctor remained un-

challenged in the literature and mothers were consistently reminded that their doctors and not they were ultimately to make decisions about what was best for their child.

In the final chapter, Arnup attempts to document the impact that this advice literature and the new practices had upon women's daily lives. She draws upon her own interviews with twelve mothers, evidence in letters, and five studies that were conducted by experts in child development. Using this oral and written evidence, Arnup concludes that "mothers did their best to measure up to the new standards of modern motherhood." Such a conclusion is perhaps accurate, but sadly unfulfilling for those of us who regret the missed opportunity to read about how forms of power, noted so clearly in the previous sections of the book, operated to limit the behaviours and attitudes of women in a variety of material conditions over this period.

Indeed, while the final chapter does not deliver a satisfying discussion of these issues, it does indicate that this is fruitful territory for further work by the author or by other researchers. It might have been better, given the weaknesses of this final chapter, if Arnup had omitted it and moved directly to a longer and more theoretically enriched section regarding her conclusions. Here she could have linked her work with other studies that have looked at such related themes as "motherwork," the "medicalization of women," and "child-centred pedagogy," to name only a few. Missed too are chances to talk about how images of the "good mother," the "good nurse," and the "perfect child" related

to this advice literature and resulted in a number of typologies for mothers and children which had numerous repercussions in a variety of institutional settings, such as hospitals and schools.

Despite this disappointment in the book, Arnup succeeds in her main purpose, which was to document the development and propagation of the new ideological construct of "good mothering" as described in the advice literature she so thoroughly examines.

Cecilia Reynolds
Brock University

Rebecca Sisler. *Art for Enlightenment: A History of Art in Toronto Schools.* Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1993. Pp. 280. \$70.00 Can. cloth.

Art for Enlightenment: A History of Art in Toronto Schools, a joint educational project of the Learnx Foundation and the Toronto Board of Education, underscores that "art education is integral to the learning process" (p. vii). Written by Rebecca Sisler, a sculptor and writer of Canadian art history, the book focuses on the little-known collection of art amassed by the Toronto Board of Education (TBE). The works in the collection, many of which were presented to the TBE as commemorative gifts by classes, parents, administrators, or artists, include stained glass, furniture, medals, trophies, paintings, sculpture, and architectural drawings. Comprising the bulk of the historical part of the collection (before 1950) are paintings from such well-known Canadian art-