

Book Notes / Références Bibliographiques

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[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

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BOOK NOTES/REFERENCES BIBLIOGRAPHIQUES

Andrea Hinding, ed. *Women's History Sources: A Guide to Archives and Manuscript Collections in the United States*. 2 vols. (New York: Bowker 1979).

BEGUN IN 1975, this project contains an immense amount of valuable material for scholars interested in women's studies and particularly, women's history in the U.S. Over 18,000 collections of unpublished primary materials have been tracked down in nearly 1600 repositories. The entries are arranged alphabetically by state, city, institution, repository and collection and thoroughly indexed in Volume 2 which provides name, subject and geographic access to the collections in Volume 1. The collections range from private papers of individuals or families, to organizational records, institutional records, oral histories, and photographic materials.

The guide is particularly helpful in giving researchers "access to large bodies of public records housed in the National Archives and in small county and municipal agencies . . ." as well as the records of universities, corporations and professional societies. The entries vary in detail, a factor determined by the partial reliance of the collectors on the individual repositories to report their holdings. Despite occasional unevenness, *Women's History Sources* is an impressive compilation of primary materials which documents women's lives since colonial times.

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Lawrence H. Schwartz, *Marxism and Culture: The CPUSA and Aesthetics in the 1930s*, (Port Washington, N.Y. Kennikat Press 1980).

THIS SHORT BOOK DEALS with two related topics: the theoretical problem of a Marxist esthetics, and the analysis of a specific instance of Marxist esthetic practice. By "Marxist aesthetics" the author means "Marxist-Leninist aesthetics;" (4) that is, that there can be no Marxist esthetics outside "the political activity of a Communist Party in a specific historical setting." (3) The general question of a Marxist esthetics is dealt with in the book's very brief second section in which the author outlines the "inherent weaknesses" of, "the three most basic tendencies in Marxist aesthetic theory," (10) and then goes on to describe as "arm-chair theorizing" the work and theories of some of the major figures of Marxist esthetics.

In the book's main section the author presents an analysis of a concrete Marxist esthetic practice — that of the cultural policies and practices of the CPUSA in the 1930s. But if, at this point, the reader was expecting an explanation or demonstration of what a Marxist esthetics is or should be, he/she will be disappointed. Mr. Schwartz's analysis is the record of a failure: from his perspective the CPUSA's adoption of the politics of the "united front" led to an abandonment of revolutionary politics which, in turn, produced a flawed and inadequate cultural policy.

I cannot take very seriously a work on "Marxism and Culture" which dismisses so easily the major tendencies in Marxist esthetic theory without even mentioning or citing a single "acceptable" Marxist critic. As for his analysis of the CPUSA's cultural policies in the 1930s, I had the impression while reading this book that Mr. Schwartz's study was not written to make me understand something about esthetics, but to demonstrate once again the error of the CPUSA's political line: "The evidence on the Party provided in

this second section of my study reveals that it adopted in the late 1930s... a basic outlook indistinguishable from the liberal wing of the U.S. ruling elite." (10) This is a sectarian tract disguised as a work on Marxist esthetics.

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Edith Fowke and Carole Henderson Carpenter, comps., *A Bibliography of Canadian Folklore in English* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1981).

THIS BIBLIOGRAPHY, A PRELIMINARY version of which has been available to folklorists in a photo-offset limited edition since 1976, is a compilation of English-language materials related to traditional culture in Canada. Now updated to the end of 1979, it contains 3877 items and includes records and films as well as books, articles and theses. Arrangement is by genre: folktale; folk music and dance; folk speech and naming; minor genres (proverb, riddle, etc.); superstition and popular belief; folklife and custom; folk art and material culture. These sections are further subdivided by ethnic group: anglophone and Celtic; francophone; Indian and Inuit; and other cultural groups. Separate sections are devoted to

the listing of reference materials; periodicals; general collections and overviews; and information on collectors and their informants. An interesting feature of this bibliography is a rating system which allows the compilers to indicate the usefulness of each item to the serious scholar. Because folklore is a field closely related in the public mind to creative writing and entertainment, this method of evaluation should prove particularly helpful to those whose lack of academic training in the discipline makes it difficult to distinguish between authentic traditional material derived from field collections or firsthand experience, and adapted material designed for popular consumption. The coding system also indicates the relative importance of each item to Canadian folklore scholarship in general, and designates separately those items which are particularly suitable for young readers. These features should prove of benefit to educators at all academic levels, whether involved in preparing classroom materials of regional, ethnic, or occupational interest, or approaching traditional culture at a more advanced stage through related disciplines such as cultural geography, oral history, or anthropology. The brief introduction to this volume presents a succinct critical history of Canadian folklore scholarship.

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Continued from page 215

Cletus E. Daniel, *Bitter Harvest — a History of Californian Farmworkers, 1870-1941*
by Stuart Jamieson / 308

Barbara J. Harris, *Beyond Her Sphere. Women and the Professions in American History*; Winifrid Wandersee, *Women's Work and Family Values 1920-1940*; and Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage. Women in the New Deal*
by Veronica Strong-Boag / 309

Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund, *The Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930-1960*; and William Alexander, *Film on the Left: American Documentary Film from 1931 to 1942*
by Stuart Pierson / 313

Raphael Samuel, ed., *People's History and Socialist Theory*; Raphael Samuel, ed., *East End Underworld: Chapters in the Life of Arthur Harding*; and Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block, 1887-1920*
by Bryan D. Palmer / 318

John Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances in England 1700-1870*
by Peter Linebaugh / 321

E.H. Hunt, *British Labour History 1815-1914*
by Robert W. Malcolmson / 326

Brian Harrison and Patricia Hollis, eds., *Robert Lowery: Radical and Chartist*
by F.K. Donnelly / 327

Charles More, *Skill and the English Working Class, 1870-1914*
by David McGinnis / 329

William H. Sewell, Jr., *Work & Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848*
by Arthur Borghese / 331

Ted W. Margadant, *French Peasants in Revolt. The Insurrection of 1851*
by Pierre Simoni / 334

James F. McMillan, *Housewife or Harlot: The Place of Women in French Society*
by Bonnie G. Smith / 335

Frank Farrell, *International Socialism and Australian Labour: The Left in Australia 1919-1930*
by Eric Fry / 336

Michelle Barrett, *Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis*
by M. Patricia Connelly / 338

Sarah Fenstermaker Berk, ed., *Women and Household Labor*; Karen Wolk Feinstein, ed., *Working Women and Families*; and Ruth Sidel, *Urban Survival: The World of Working Class Women*
by Meg Luxton / 340

Fiona McNally, *Women for Hire: A Study of the Female Office Worker*
by Graham Lowe / 344