The book is somewhat frustrating in what it does not do. Ethnicity is mentioned briefly only by Lévesque (109), and the experience of Native women is but a footnote in the MacLaren study (fn. 17, 141) and is absent elsewhere. Otherwise, we learn about white middle-class and working-class women. Most of the women are in urban centres, with the exception of Cecilia Benoit's community. Nothing is said of the small hospital movement in the prairies, the experience of women on farms, or childbirth in the North. On the issue of midwifery, despite the heavy emphasis on its history, there is no discussion of the modern movement to re-legitimize it. Unlike Valerie Fildes' collection *Women As Mothers in Pre-Industrial England* (also Routledge 1990), there is, regrettably, no thematic bibliography.

Delivering Motherhood takes a narrow view of the term motherhood. While focusing on childbirth, there is little interest in concepts such as life cycle, fertility, and birth interval; even the word pregnancy is uncommon here. The cultural importance of the ceremony of birth and the passage into motherhood is not pursued. There is almost no discussion of the impact of the Pill or demography on maternal ideologies. Infanticide, child abandonment, foster parenting, child care, adoption, and divorce are not discussed, nor, with the exception of the Cecilia Benoit and Graham/Andrews chapters, are the roles played by other members of the family such as husbands, mothers-in-law or grandmothers.

The collection is also slightly unwieldy due to the editors' failure to choose between a collection of first generation work and new second-wave research. The chapters which have moved directly into the study of women's experiences and the interaction of various groups of women are for this reviewer the best and, in general, they are also the more recent ones. These reservations aside, *Delivering Motherhood* brings together the complex, often controversial web of social relations concerning the control and shaping of the reproductive experience and the social ascription of motherhood in Canadian society.

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Paul Axelrod — *Making a Middle Class: Student Life in English Canada during the Thirties.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990. Pp. xi, 269.

Using newspapers, university records, anecdotes and the limited statistics available, Paul Axelrod has drawn a depressing picture of student life in English Canada's universities during the thirties.

Universities largely accepted their utilitarian role of career training, using the humanities merely, as they had once used religion, to enforce convention. Professors were stodgy and aging, though not quite so stodgy as the students. Noting people like Frank Scott and Eugene Forsey, for example, Axelrod suggests that some five percent of professors may have been involved in reform activities. But what a crashing lot the students were!

Ridden with insecurity, self-centred, politically ignorant and parochial, they passed through university little touched by the academic part of the experience. In

what seems, under the circumstances, an almost gentle judgment, Axelrod says: "...student life was hierarchically organized, replete with mystical rites of passage, racially and ethnically exclusive, not deeply intellectual, and male dominated" (163). In short, it was much like the professional world to which many students aspired. Generally, too, students and their universities were much like the broader society that surrounded them.

Axelrod's definition of middle class, one which considers economic position, collective class consciousness and perceived social status, may provoke some debate; but it seems as plausible as any. More questionable are the cultural qualities he attributes to middle class status.

It seems reasonable enough to suggest that the Canadian middle class of the thirties was conventional, politically apathetic and ridden with insecurity. But only a patrician or a marxist romantic would argue that these qualities were the exclusive property of the middle class in that or any other decade. Agreed, universities and their students in the thirties were middle class, but their only cultural distinctiveness may have been in their moralism, their weak grasp of either the self-righteousness of the upper class or the cynicism of the working class, and their perception of career opportunities. (But even that statement reflects the bad habit of taking pains to define class membership and then offering unfounded definitions of class culture.)

Perhaps it says something of university education that this book could discuss the life of the univerity student with little mention of the classroom. Professors, it notes, were perceived as aging and stodgy. Yes, no doubt they were. But what, exactly, did they teach? Why did they teach it? How did they teach? Why did they teach that way? Is there any evidence that the what and the why and the how had any effect on anyone? If none, and Axelrod strongly implies that there was none, this is surely worth noting in a study of student life.

There is a chapter on professional culture, as in law and medicine, with telling criticisms of the narrow interests and sometimes deadening influence of imposed professional standards. Well, university teachers controlled admission to their ranks and controlled professional recognition much as lawyers and doctors and engineers did. Did that have the effect on academics it did on other professionals? To discuss professional culture without discussing academics as a part of it seems a curious omission.

Axelrod suggests that students in francophone universities may have differend from anglophones on certain issues, but not on general values. If so, why were francophone universities not included in this study? In an academic world that has made a cottage industry of the differences between English and French, a study of similarities would have been refreshing.

That said, this remains an important study — arid a profoundly disturbing one for its implications. If it is remarkable that only five percent of academics were active in reform activities in the thirties, how much more remarkable is it that there is so little change in the nineties? One suspects it would take a generous definition of reform activities to come up with a figure as high as five percent in most Canadian universities today. So much for the academic as social critic.

In fact, almost all that Axelrod says of universities in the thirties is still valid. Aging and stodgy professors were replaced by young and stodgy professors who are

now, in their turn, aging and being replaced by a fresh generation of the stodgy. Universities are still dominated by utilitarians with those in the humanities desperately hawking their wares in a market in which they have few buyers. Most students still pass through the university experience touched less by the classroom than by encounters outside it.

For all the dreariness of the theme it surveys, this is a stimulating book. Axelrod has taken a much harder look at universities than is usually the case, and has done a real service in focusing on the student experience. Perceptive readers will feel more than a touch of *déjà vu* in reading this — and with a *déjà* that can be painfully *maintenant*.

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Roger Chartier — *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987. Pp. xi, 354.

Chartier introduces his collection of essays about printed texts with an assault on the traditional interpretations of popular culture. He attacks the supposition that a "coherent" populace enjoyed an "exclusive relationship" to a "pure, homogeneous" culture (3). Instead, he envisions a cultural analysis that is more subtly attuned to the overlap of written and unwritten media, of elite and popular culture. He would prefer, indeed, to replace these categories with a more nuanced understanding of how culture shapes society. If he is attacking a straw man that bears little resemblance to the sophisticated cultural studies that we currently enjoy, the sin is pardonable. The real question is: Does he contribute to this sophistication?

Half of his essays are about texts, mostly about texts within a single genre. A great deal of time is spent tracing the transformations of style and substance in various "normative" texts: how to die, how to be civil, how to be (and identify) a rogue. The analysis is subtle but claustrophobic, rarely making contact with any context, whether the audience or the society. In each case, these texts are claimed to represent general attitudes, though how they achieve this status and whether by shaping attitudes or by reflecting attitudes is not very clear. The only real evidence comes from their style, and the number of editions and print runs. This leads, by implication, to knowing their accessibility, their diffusion and popularity. But the links in that chain are tenuous. As Chartier notes in the introduction, we should be particularly cautious about assuming that texts "that were aimed at shaping the thought and conduct of the common people" (7) were successful merely because they were accessible.

The most succesful of these essays transcends the limits of a genre to consider a "publishing formula": the *bibliothèque bleue*. Tracing the evolution of these texts from their origins as elite editions, subsequently edited and reformatted for easier comprehension, and bowdlerized to avoid offending the Church, Chartier is able to demonstrtate both the complexities of any dichotomy between elite and popular reading matter and the way that publishers consciously popularized their products. Yet