

Gardel's *La Dansomanie, Folie Pantomime*. The succession of scenes in this immensely popular ballet, first performed in 1800, are presented with delight and amusement (155-158). Here as elsewhere, Chazin-Bennahum's approach is that of a dancer — during her professional career, she was principal soloist with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet Company — as well as that of an historian. Indeed, after reading about *Dansomanie*, it is virtually inconceivable that a reader would not wish to experience this ballet in the theatre. Its choreographer, Pierre Gardel, deserves special mention for still another talent, the art of survival. Gardel reigned as *maître de ballet* of the Opéra from 1787 until 1820. As a survivor, he might well join the ranks of Barère and Talleyrand.

The overlap between political, social and cultural history in this study of dance at the time of the French Revolution makes it a natural resource for those teaching courses on the period. Inevitably, one is led to think of other works which serve to complement the study under review. One book which springs to mind is Robert M. Isherwood's *Farce and Fantasy: Popular Entertainment in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). This fascinating study is not referred to by Chazin-Bennahum, perhaps because it appeared too close to the deadline for submission of her manuscript to the press. Yet Isherwood's book nicely complements her own, as in his discussion of Charles Favart's *La Chercheuse d'Esprit*, a comic opera created in 1741. It was later transformed by Maximilien Gardel into a ballet-pantomime in 1777, revived during the revolutionary era, and is one of the ballets discussed in *Dance in the Shadow of the Guillotine* (137-139).

Interestingly, only one ballet created during the revolutionary era remains in the international repertory, Dauberval's *La Fille Mal Gardée*, first performed in Bordeaux on 1 July 1789. And as Chazin-Bennahum reminds us, the original choreography is not known (4). The most evanescent of the arts has been well served in this stimulating analysis of a watershed period in the history of dance. It includes a choice bibliography and serviceable index. Highly recommended for university libraries.

John T. O'Connor
University of New Orleans

Lyle Dick — *Farmers "Making Good". The Development of Abernethy District, Saskatchewan, 1880-1920*. National Historic Parks and Sites, Canadian Parks Service, Environment Canada, 1989. Pp. 259.

Farmers "Making Good", the author informs us in the preface, was written in support of the interpretive and restoration program at the W.R. Motherwell Homestead National Historic Park near Abernethy, Saskatchewan. Lyle Dick's specific assignment was to provide a basis for understanding Motherwell as a representative of Anglo-Canadian settlement on the prairies and as an agrarian activist. Dick does this by studying the socio-economic structures of Abernethy district while also assessing "how people behave, interact and conduct their daily affairs" (10). In the process, he revises his employer's initial assessment of Motherwell as a "typical prairie settler" (200).

What Dick has produced, in fact, is a significant materialist, if somewhat reductionist, account of Abernethy district and Motherwell's place in it. Proceeding roughly from the material to the ideal, he surveys the settlement process, homesteading costs, economic development, work and daily life, social and economic structure, social relationships, social creed and, finally, agrarian unrest. He argues that the earliest Anglo-Saxon settlers achieved a dominant position in the community and defined the type of society that developed between 1880 and 1920. By arriving early, Ontarian settlers were able to get the best land; later arriving German settlers at nearby Neudorf, in contrast, were forced to accept marginal lands. A dynamic was then set in motion whereby the earlier settlers, by virtue of being on more productive land and by being able to easily expand their holdings, constructed a society in their own middle-class image.

The main strength of Dick's study is the range of literature he uses for conceptual guidance. He combines, among other things, Michael Katz's two-class model of mid-nineteenth-century eastern North American society, Weberian understandings of status, English and North American feminist interpretations of gender relations in middle-class households, and C.B. Macpherson's analysis of the *petit bourgeois* mentality of Albertan independent commodity producers. Dick argues that in the pre-1920 period, there were two classes in the rural prairies: a relatively stable farmer-proprietor class and a transient labouring class (the "hired girl" and the "hired man"). And within the former, there were gradations determined by farm unit size and the nature of land tenure (ownership or tenancy). On this economic foundation, status was a significant determinant of one's social position. Ethnicity and "human qualities" combined with economic and occupational position to confer the highest status in Abernethy on the earliest and wealthiest settler families such as the Motherwells. Furthermore, in the post-settlement period (after 1900), a man's status was elevated by his wife's dependent, decorative status. And, Dick concludes, the agrarian insurgency centred in the Abernethy/Indian Head area at the turn of the century was a moderate campaign that served the interests of more prosperous farmers, like Motherwell, while failing to benefit, and indeed harming, the less prosperous ones.

While Dick's heterogenous conceptual framework is one of the book's strengths, ironically, it is also a source of weakness. The theoretical breadth ensures that issues such as class, status and political agency are discussed, and discussed in an analytical rather than a descriptive way. But the various approaches are never integrated. In the chapter on social and economic structure, for example, Katz's model is introduced as an explanation of the pre-World War I prairies against Macpherson's (and Lipset's) portrait of the one-class society in the inter-war period. But in the chapter on agrarian unrest, Macpherson is invoked as Dick argues that prairie farmers exhibited the classic *petit bourgeois* symptoms of vascillation between radicalism (and an identification with the working class) and an *essential* conservatism (and an identification with capital). In the former case, the class relations that are significant are those between farmers and labourers within rural prairie society, while in the latter case, what matters is class relations between farmers in rural prairie society and capitalists and workers in the broader Canadian society. There is no necessary contradiction here, but the respective analyses are never brought together in a systematic way. If they were brought together, some sense would have to be made of the relative significance of these two sets of relationships.

Another problem is Dick's apparent reductionism. While it is refreshing to see class being used seriously and creatively in a work of prairie history, at times, the material determinants overwhelm consciousness. In convincingly reassessing the origins of the Manitoba Grain Act and the formation of the Territorial Grain Growers Association (TGGA) in terms of intra-class relations, Dick pushes the argument too far. It strains credibility, for example, to suggest that E.A. Partridge was more radical than the Abernethy TGGA leaders because "four of Partridge's five quarter-sections were partly broken up by coulee or creek beds..." (189). I doubt that Partridge's utopian socialism would have been modified very much by the addition of a quarter section or two of level clay loam land to his holdings. Surely, Dick, who has recently gravitated towards discourse theory, would agree that the connection between being and consciousness is not that direct.

These few criticisms aside, *Farmers "Making Good"* is a significant contribution to agricultural and prairie historiography. The fact that Dick produced the study within the normally empiricist inducing confines of the Canadian state makes the accomplishment especially noteworthy.

Jeffery M. Taylor
Athabasca University

Serge Gagnon — *Plaisir d'amour et crainte de Dieu : sexualité et confession au Bas-Canada*. Québec : Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1990, 202 p.

L'histoire de la sexualité des sociétés paysannes pose un défi à tout enquêteur qui veut aller au-delà des traces laissées par les comportements dans les pièces d'état civil et les archives criminelles. Quels liens établir entre ces profils statistiques de larges groupes (nuptialité, âge au mariage, naissance prémaritale, illégitimité) et les témoignages déposés à l'occasion d'une requête en reconnaissance de paternité, d'une plainte pour attentat sexuel envers une mineure, d'un procès pour avoir tenu une maison de débauche ? Suivant en cela un courant de recherche qui s'est intéressé davantage aux mécanismes et aux instances de régulation des conduites, l'historien Serge Gagnon a poursuivi une enquête sur la sexualité au Bas-Canada en scrutant attentivement les secrets de la confession.

L'ouvrage qu'il a produit sur le sujet, tout en s'inspirant des grandes études historiques et psychanalytiques sur la sexualité, de Freud à Michel Foucault, s'inscrit également dans un courant d'histoire religieuse représenté en particulier par les travaux de Jean Delumeau sur la confession. Cette combinaison originale concernant la problématique laisse penser qu'on pourrait avoir mis l'accent sur les normes, sinon sur les censeurs, risquant ainsi de laisser dans l'ombre du confessionnal les pratiques habituelles des pénitents. Cependant, dans l'objet retenu, soit la société bas-canadienne de 1790 à 1830, une règle du dispositif de contrôle des consciences obligeait les curés confesseurs à recourir à leur évêque pour absoudre certaines fautes dites « réservées », minutieusement répertoriées dans des textes manuscrits à l'usage des séminaristes. De façon plus générale, certains curés, mal à l'aise devant les écarts de conduites de quelques ouailles, en butte à des problèmes d'autorité ou à des