

les archives de la justice criminelle du roi comme des absolus mais plutôt comme des indications de certaines tendances sociales. C'est ainsi que l'étude de la délinquance devient alors utile pour connaître la nature et la forme des rapports sociaux. Elle nous permet de cerner la position sociale et l'attitude de l'élite, définisseur de la norme, face à certains groupes sociaux moins privilégiés. Ce que nous n'avons pu retrouver dans l'ouvrage de Julius R. Ruff. L'étude de la répression n'a pas été suffisamment approfondie pour que des conclusions puissent être dégagées, comme par exemple sur l'attitude de la société dominante face à tel ou tel type de crime et à certaines valeurs que cette société privilégie. Très peu d'éléments dans l'ouvrage nous permettent de connaître la façon avec laquelle les Libournaise et Bazadaise percevaient la justice criminelle du roi.

En somme, *Crime, Justice and Public Order in Old Regime France* est une bonne étude des institutions judiciaires de l'époque et de la criminalité des sénéchaussées de Libourne et Bazas mais l'auteur n'a pas su aller au-delà des faits pour appréhender à travers la criminalité les sociétés libournaise et bazadaise.

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Bonnie G. Smith — *Confessions of a Concierge: Madame Lucie's History of Twentieth-Century France*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985. Pp. xx, 156.

What could be more fascinating than the "true 'history of France'" (p. xiii) as told by an octogenarian Parisian concierge to an academically trained American historian? Madame Lucie Lemaire begins her first-person narrative in Normandy, where she was born and raised during La Belle Epoque, and ends it when she became a concierge in Paris during the second World War. Unlike any conventional, or as Smith oddly puts it in her introduction, "official" (p. xix) history, Madame Lucie's story opens dramatically: "Often, when nighttime fell, my parents had trouble finding me" (p. 3). This was in Caen, in 1900, when she was four years old. Other interesting details follow about her mother's millinery business, her father's mechanical skills and drunkenness, her grandmother's bad croissants but delicious "pears *bourdaloue*" (p. 7), her Aunt Suzanne's scandalous behaviour.

Lucie's very personal history includes watching torch-lit parades in Caen, fishing for eels in the Orne River with worms sewn into a huge ball, playing hopscotch and "diabolo", waiting all day for a glimpse of the black Queen Navalo of Madagascar during her seasonal visits to the seashore. There are interesting bits of social history, such as the fact that "in those days people didn't wash their hair all the time" (p. 19), Lucie herself not for several months; that there was indoor plumbing in Caen but not in nearby Lisieux, that in 1910 Lucie's mother did her laundry in the river in which a hotel dumped its sewage. Lucie also remembers being chatted up by soldiers while she was carrying out her household waste. "In those days it was natural to say a little *bonjour* to one's neighbor while holding a chamber pot, whose contents would soon be fertilizing Norman fields" (p. 32).

There are also glimpses of broader issues. Although her family "wasn't very religious" (p. 13), Lucie went to the sisters' school because her father needed the goodwill of the Church for his repair business. The curé "had told us that the devil was ruling France, probably because so many religious orders had been denied permission to teach.... This was what they called separation of Church and State" (p. 14). An only child, Lucie fell in love with a soldier and was engaged on 14 July 1914, but he was killed in October. "The death of Philippe", Lucie recalled, "made this war the most important and least significant event of my life" (p. 34). But two years later she determinedly stalked another soldier, whom she married in 1919.

Lucie soon thereafter moved to Miramas, near Marseille, where her husband had a job. There she bore her two sons, but later returned to Paris to take up residence with her husband's parents (who

were Communists) in Courbevoie, where they lived until the Second World War. When the house was set afire during an air raid in 1944, Madame Lucie found a job as a concierge in Paris near the Place de la Bastille, where she was living when Bonnie Smith met her in 1971.

Madame Lucie's story is enriched with many anecdotes and conversations, almost all having to do with the personal lives of her and her family. But there are also occasional references to the broader political world, as for example a visit to Caen by René Viviani in 1906 (which she remembered as around 1901) and summary judgments on all the presidents of France since Sadi Carnot. Her views on the Vichy period are particularly revealing: Marshal Pétain "saved us", General de Gaulle "was a deserter" (p. 129), and 1944 was memorable not for D-Day or the Liberation (which go unmentioned) but for the bombing of Caen: "the British were destroying France with their planes" (p. 69).

French history as seen through the memories of this ordinary woman is certainly different, but there is something very disturbing about the form of this work. Smith, the author of a respected work of social history, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoisies of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 1981), invokes oral history and *mentalités* in defending her project, but admits that it is experimental, iconoclastic, "eccentric", an "amalgamation of narrative forms" (pp. xviii, xix), and also describes it simply as a biography or autobiography. The section presented as Madame Lucie's *History* is only 68 pages long, less than half the slim volume, and although written in the first person, is in fact Smith's own composition, "which I have actually pieced together from the higgledy-piggledy order in which she told her story" (pp. xvii-xviii). This "history" includes many conversational dialogues, which Smith acknowledges to be a "fictional technique"; her explanation that "these dialogues did occur" (p. xviii) is inadequate, however, because she makes no reference to notes or tapes. Did she actually record these conversations verbatim from her own casual chats with Lucie over many years, or are we back to Thucydidean speeches invented to express poetic truth?

If Part I is questionable on several grounds, part II, entitled "Madame Lucie Observed", is insulting to any serious student of history. It is set in Paris during the period 1976 to 1981, when Madame Lucie was telling her story "in bits and pieces" (p. 152). At 76 pages more than half the book, this section is a third-person narrative about Madame Lucie and her various tenants and neighbours in the picturesque Passage des Chats. Here Smith has obviously put herself into the story in the third person as "the little American", a major character complete with the pseudonym of Madame Rogers. Although this section shows Madame Lucie in action as a remarkable concierge, much of the space is taken up by more undocumented conversations involving "Madame Rogers" and others. Only in a brief afterword do we discover that "most names in this account have been changed and so has the precise location of the Passage des Chats as well as its precise name"; here also we find acknowledgment of certain "misrememberings" by Madame Lucie and a belated "caveat lector" (p. 152).

Is there anything of value in all this? Both the title and subtitle of this book are misleading, for the work is not particularly confessional nor is it in any sense a history of France. It certainly contains some interesting bits of information, though mostly of an antiquarian or trivial nature, but this strange book, with its simulated autobiography and dubious dialogues, with its phony names of persons and even of the stellar street, its lack of documentation and bibliography, violates the canons not only of good history but even of good journalism. Part I could pass for ghost-writing, but Part II reads more like a dramatized account of Smith's Parisian habitat. Possible clues to some of the author's intentions are her several references to fictional techniques, and to one novel in particular, William Wharton's *Scumbler*. Published only the year before this book, it is a first-person, autobiographical narrative by a California artist resident in Paris, set mostly in the same *quartier* where Lucie was a concierge and where one of her tenants was an artist from California, characterized as "Harton" by Smith. There are some strikingly similar details in both books, and Smith has Harton "rave" about Madame Lucie as "'my greatest subject'" (p. 89). The novelist undoubtedly — as Smith laments in her introduction — has certain advantages over the historian in telling "good stories"

(p. xi), but Smith seems to be offering this work not as fiction but as history. History it is not, unless all standards are to be abandoned. Perhaps we could adopt Alex Haley's term and call it "faction", or perhaps "fictory" would do. But perhaps it's all a joke. That Yale has agreed to publish this work as history is disturbing indeed, for it is of no value as a contribution to knowledge, nor should it be foisted upon any trusting student as an example of the historian's craft.

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Joe William Trotter, Jr — *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-1945*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985. Pp. xvii, 302.

During the last decade what has come to be called the "race-class debate" has played a central role in the discourse on the past, present, and future of Black America. The fundamental question involved is not difficult to summarize. At issue is the relative weight of race (oppression based on color) and class (exploitation based on extraction of surplus value, or poverty based on chronic unemployment) as determinants of the socio-historical position of contemporary Afro-Americans. The debate has largely taken on historical meanings, because of the effort of William Julius Wilson and following him, a number of others, to trace the causes and consequences of the decline in racial prejudice since World War II and to understand the systemic, structural forces that serve to perpetuate black subordination, even as prejudice lessens.

Both related to this effort at reconceptualization, which has largely been undertaken by sociologists and public policy specialists, and also, within historiography, to the rapidly spreading influence of Herbert Gutman, David Montgomery, and Edward P. Thompson and the generalized variants of contemporary Marxism, there has been another trend in the scholarly literature on black America. This has been the increasing emphasis on understanding the formation of the black industrial working class in northern cities between the Great Migrations from the southern states during the World War I years, through the Depression and the rise of the CIO and war production, to the end of World War II, by which time blacks had achieved for the first time a secure place in American industry. This work is notable not only for breaking new ground, but for its explicit criticisms of the principal paradigm of black urban history, the "ghetto synthesis". This paradigm has adopted the premise, conditioned by early twentieth-century urban sociology and the voluminous social science literature of race and culture contacts, that the central story of black urbanization is the physical rise and spread of the ghetto-slum and the creation of the discriminatory mechanisms that sustain it and the ways of life, stunted or vital and creative — depending on the individual author's perspective, that took root within it. Critics of the "ghetto-synthesis" have rightly pointed out that, in its single-minded emphasis on race, it is not large enough to explain all the structural elements of the black situation, especially the economic integration of urban blacks in industry. They urge that this paradigm must be not so much replaced by, as joined to, a class perspective. Just how race and class, ghettoization and working-class formation, are to be joined conceptually has, of course, taxed many minds for years.

This search for a new paradigm for black urban history has been found most prominently in a number of doctoral dissertations on northern industrial cities. With the publications of Trotter's *Black Milwaukee*, however, the new literature has now begun to appear in extended form in print, where its claims to analytical novelty and comparatively greater explanatory power may be conveniently evaluated. It is quite correct, I believe, to evaluate Trotter's study by such a standard, because his aims, as spelled out in both his "Introduction" and an appendix, "Afro-American Urban History: A Critique of the Literature" are expressly revisionist. Trotter's revisionism is indeed full of possibilities for shifting our perspectives and much of his analysis is admirable. As a theoretical