

While the major appliances used in the kitchen and laundry are analysed, many are not. I raise this question of omission only because the book's title and introduction announce a study of Canadian material culture or domestic goods. Similarly, little is said about how advertisements targeted different cultural communities or how members of these groups adapted western appliances and furniture to meet their needs.

An equally critical omission is the author's rather cursory treatment of men. For example, when discussing rural homes, Parr maintains that "labour-saving equipment for the farm took priority, partly because men made these decisions on their own" (p. 236). She is surprised that, whereas on prosperous farms only 10 per cent of the investment in equipment was in domestic technology, in poorer families, the proportion of the farm family's resources in household appliances doubled. I would argue that this is normal since big, successful farms would need more expensive equipment (such as tractors and combines) outside the home than in it. The proportionately larger investment in household technology in poorer families suggests that the decision to acquire it was probably not made by men alone.

Finally, a study of visual representations found in domestic goods, as well as a comparison of them with those used for men, might be beyond the scope of this monograph, but it would be instructive in helping to reveal more about the "social ideologies" mentioned in the introduction. For example, advertisements promising to save time while depicting smiling mothers and daughters in matching aprons and long dresses and high heels, standing or playing around washing machines (pp. 225 and 228), merit additional comments. I wonder, for example, whether these ads represent values internalized by some women, masculine projections, or both. Not only might such ads ease male guilt about working conditions in the home; they also suggest a vision of the way homemakers should behave and dress. Moreover, because manipulative ads for farm machinery stereotyped men, is it not safe to assume that they, too, were called upon to be active interpreters of consumer messages? If this is true, then should they not also be included in the marketing and mediation of domestic goods? Finally, it is obvious that ads for home appliances are clearly more sexist than those for machinery. Scholars need only study ads about domestic technology in engineering journals to see examples of sexist attitudes.

Despite these reservations, this study breaks new ground. Parr's analysis of domestic goods provides insights into the material, the economic, and the psychological in the postwar years and stimulates us to discover more about the artifacts, assumptions, and attitudes involved in household production and consumption.

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Valérie Piette — *Domestiques et servantes : des vies sous condition*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Académie Royale de Belgique, 2000, 521 p.

In the nineteenth century, domestic servants were workers between two worlds, set apart from the industrial working class and from the rapidly growing bourgeoisie in

whose homes they laboured. Situated within the private sphere and closely tied to family life, servants paradoxically were denied a private life or family of their own. These indispensable yet often invisible workers, isolated within private households, have left few records of their own creation. Historians wishing to understand their lives must turn to sources generated by elites. In her comprehensive, thoroughly researched study of urban domestic service in Belgium from 1789 to 1914, Valérie Piette makes judicious use of available sources ranging from census statistics, legislation, and police and court records to domestic economy manuals, newspapers, postcards, and novels of the period. She divides her analysis into three parts: the first deals with the legal and social structures defining domestic service; the second presents issues relating to the daily lives of servants; the third concentrates on the perceived crisis in domestic service at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Examining the modern era from the end of the French Revolution to the beginning of the First World War, Piette traces the evolution of domestic service over more than a century. She finds that the feminization of the occupation in Belgium, and especially in Brussels, occurred because of the combined impact of the decline of male servants and the increased number of female servants. She notes the pronounced sexual division of labour in urban domestic service, with women increasingly dominating household work and personal care, whereas the driving and care of animals remained reserved for men. In Brussels in 1910 one lone woman was employed as a "cochère", although a photograph from 1900 intriguingly portrays a female "cocher" under the heading "Les Femmes de l'Avenir" (p. 63). Continuities are considered as important as change in understanding the patterns of domestic service. Contrary to expectations, Piette discovers that daily workers and the maids-of-all-work were both numerous in Brussels from the mid-nineteenth century or earlier. Above all, throughout the period of study, domestic servants exhibited very high mobility. The faithful servant who devoted her life to one family did exist but was definitely the rare exception. Piette argues that the growing scarcity of servants before 1914 resulted more from increased demand, linked to the expansion of the employing classes, than from any change in the attitude of young women entering domestic service. The domestic service crisis at the turn of the century was a symptom of a society in crisis.

Piette limits her study to urban domestic service and focuses mainly on Brussels. She justifies the exclusion of domestic service in rural areas by the difference in the economic status of the work. Agricultural domestic service formed part of a productive work process, whereas domestic service in city households was considered non-productive. When assessing the crisis issue in the third section of the book, Piette briefly mentions that nineteenth-century artisans and small merchants who did not separate household from business hired servants to help with both simultaneously. Otherwise, she accepts the non-productive nature of urban household work and does not ask to what extent servants, and especially maids-of-all-work, more generally were employed in city homes because of the need for their labour or the contribution their labour might make to the household economy. Instead she emphasizes the social status derived from the employment of servants, who were a vital class symbol for the aspiring middle classes. A prime example of the social necessity for ser-

vants is captured on a Brussels postcard depicting a mother walking beside a pram pushed by a maid (p. 175). As Piette remarks, for a member of the bourgeoisie to push the carriage herself would be socially demeaning.

Using a wide range of sources, Piette perceptively interprets the conditions of domestic service. In all three sections of the book, she assesses how the moral concerns of the elites, together with concepts regarding the sanctity of the private sphere, governed the lives of domestic servants. She explains how census statistics do not provide neutral evidence. The *mentalité* of each era shaped the categories included within domestic work, making precise comparison across decades impossible but providing interesting insights into the construction of domestic service. Designed to promote stability and ensure social control, legislation in effect until 1883 forced servants to obtain a *livret* (denounced by critics as a little slave book), in which they registered with city hall each time they entered or left a place of service. In addition, servants were progressively separated from other workers by their exclusion from new protective legislation concerning work contracts, work accidents, and the weekly day of rest.

When examining daily life, Piette not only develops the physical and social isolation of servants working and living in the home of another, but also explores the dominant representations of servants in scientific, legal, and popular discourse. She introduces the section as “une vie quotidienne sous le regard des moralistes” (p. 139) because all the sources she used dealing with the behaviour and situation of servants are mediated by the values of employers. On the one hand, as illustrated in domestic manuals, domestic service was expected to be a means of acculturation; masters and mistresses should guide their servants to respect and acquire bourgeois values such as honesty, thrift, efficiency, chastity, and cleanliness, even though the servants must always remain at a social distance. Piette argues that servants’ ways of life and thinking were indeed influenced by daily contact with a superior class, as shown by the surprisingly high number of savings accounts held by servants. On the other hand, employers feared servants as members of a dangerous class residing within the private sphere of the home. The sobriety, honesty, and sexuality of the female servant were particularly suspect. Piette turns to criminal records to investigate the stereotypes of moral deviance attached to domestic servants, but finds these records reveal much more about society’s interest in the behaviour of servants than about the individuals charged with the crimes. The linking of domestic service with female criminality was legitimized by the writing of Belgian legal theorist Raymond De Ryckère, whose specialization in the topic culminated in the widely acclaimed 1908 book, *La servante criminelle. Étude de criminologie professionnelle*.

The third section of the book deals with the perceived crisis in domestic service as a moral crisis. As Piette observes, like the single woman in the city, a female servant was seen as both “*in danger and a danger*” (p. 276). While analysing the various initiatives, including Protestant, Catholic, and international women’s efforts, Piette appropriately notes that the assistance offered was external to the home and did not intrude into the private sphere of the family. Ironically, as has been remarked in other studies, the rehabilitation of prostitutes or other women believed to have transgressed social standards consisted of sending them into service.

Because of the nature of her sources, Piette interprets the attitudes and actions of the elites in structuring domestic service more than she assesses the response of servants to the conditions of their lives. Her decision to concentrate solely on urban domestic service is understandable, especially considering the complexity of the research involved. Unfortunately, the exclusion of the rural economy from the study also has eliminated any consideration of the background of most urban servants. Piette notes that, although some servants were supplied by urban orphanages, the majority of servants in Brussels came from the countryside outside the capital. As demand increasingly exceeded supply, servants were recruited from rural areas further removed from the city. The differences between city and country, mistress and maid, thus became even more pronounced. To understand the values, expectations, and actions of the servants who made the transition to the city, we must know much more about the rural Belgian society from which they came and the family or community networks to which they belonged. There is a definite need for a study of rural society and migration to complement Piette's valuable study of urban domesticity.

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Geoffrey Plank — *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. Pp. 239.

An Unsettled Conquest is a fascinating analysis of the complexities of life in seventeenth-century Nova Scotia. Geoffrey Plank offers a fresh insight into the intricate relationships between the peoples of Acadia, and he skilfully demonstrates how the British conquest of Acadia was best understood as an evolutionary process rather than a rupture in history. The author illustrates, in a very objective and insightful manner, "the complex ramifications of the conquest for different groups of English-speakers as well as for the Mi'kmaq and Acadians" (p. 5). The author examined an abundance of sources with a fine comb to present a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the geopolitics of British Nova Scotia.

Throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the peoples of Acadia had regularly been caught in the midst of imperial struggles. Yet their lives had returned to normal after each disruption. Underneath the surface, however, a "complex web of relations, marked by both animosity and interdependence, had long linked the people of Acadia with each other and with New England and New France" (p. 12). Plank explores this web of relations using various government documents, manuscripts, colonial archives, and family papers. Plank also makes valuable use of two compelling narratives to give his study a human dimension. The first tells the story of an Acadian merchant named Jacques Maurice Vigneau, while the second narrative recounts the trials and tribulations of a Mi'kmaq leader, Jean-Baptiste Cope. The combination of narrative and research allowed Plank to shed light on the ambivalence and opportunism that characterized the Anglo-Mi'kmaq-French relationship of this period.