it as a "tremendous perversity?" (Frederick Smock, *The Courier-Journal*, 15 May 2005.) Even the ultra-liberal *Village Voice* described *Lolita* as "three hundred pages of sex in the head," declaring in the end that it was simply "too many, and too much." (Jerry Tallmer, *Village Voice*, 3 September 1958.)

Despite all this, Devlin's work is quite fascinating and very readable. She has a keen eye for popular culture and she has done an excellent job explaining how psychoanalysis seeped into many areas of American culture after World War II, be it in legal discourse, advertising, the stage, or the world of letters. Unfortunately, I cannot help but think that the father-daughter psychoanalytic paradigm, while certainly a unique and colourful feature of postwar American culture, was not as pervasive as Devlin would have us believe.

Jason Reid—York University

Helen Harden Chenut, *The Fabric of Gender: Working Class Culture in Third Republic France* (University Park: Penn State Press, 2005).

Helen Chenut's *The Fabric of Gender* is both a chronological and thematic history of the knitters of Troyes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While the title might make one envision a piece almost entirely focused on the dynamics of gender, it is, in fact, a full history of the life of the knitters in the proper spirit of both gender and class history. Gender is just one thread of this book, which is a balanced and thorough look at the social, political, and consumer lives of these industry-specific French workers in the Third Republic.

The book is actually slow to get to gender, spending time setting up the context of workers' lives in the Aube, explaining the growth of the knitting and cotton hosiery industry (*bonneterie*), the history of family work on a local level, and the transition from merchant to industrial capitalism, particularly as practiced by the mill-owners of Troyes.

Looking at the knitting industry most intensely from 1900 through the Popular Front, Chenut touches on a number of themes, including: the political leanings and engagement of the knitters, employers' and workers' concerns, the feminization of the industry, and prevailing ideas of skill, technology, and consumer practices. She returns to each of these topics a number of times throughout eight chapters, and while the format is highly organized (as noted, conveying both a chronological tale and thematic telling) Chenut's format does, on occasion, mean the repetition (or re-setting up) of ideas addressed in previous chapters.

Beginning with the strike of 1900—generally perceived as a failure as workers' wage and hour demands were not met—Chenut explains the interwoven nature of working-class politics, class consciousness, and the local politics of Troyes and the Aube. It is not that gender or women were marginal to the

story (indeed Chenut shows how essential women and female labour were to the knitting industry), but that in the pre-female suffrage world of Third Republic France, women's political power fell far short of their indisputable labour power—particularly in the knitting industry that they would come to dominate. Although women made up one half the adult labour force in Troyes, they had very little power in the industry or during the strikes of 1900 and even of 1921.

Chenut conveys great detail about the organization of labour in the knitting industry and the technological innovations that account for the long-term gendering of skill and machine work within it. Chenut notes that men had always operated the knitting frame and that both the machine and the skill had been gendered as male by the late nineteenth century and would continue to be so sexed into the late Third Republic (71, 100, 166, 171). If the knitting frame and the skill to use it were considered male, women were most often connected to more painstaking jobs such as finishing work and seaming. The gendering of machines and skill, and tasks and tools, had their origins in the family economy and workshop of earlier times. Yet that hierarchy remained well into the twentieth century, even as women became the majority employed in the knitting industry. The gendering of tools and tasks is also what 'accounts for' the inequitable pay of men and women (men being higher paid), as well as the general lack of competition between male and female employment in the knitting industry. Because women's work was only partially mechanized, "women's work was less affected by technical innovation" and so was less threatened by technological developments (101).

Chenut is also very detailed and informative in conveying the complicated relationship between mill-owners and workers, as well as the interactions between workers, their unions, and formal political parties in the Third Republic. Socialism and revolutionary syndicalism—Guesdists, the *Parti ouvrier français*, and the Socialist Party (SFIO)—became important forces in the development of an urban working class in Troyes (112-130). As the "precariousness of work and extreme variability of wages" (101) continued to be knitters' prime labour concerns, the political parties of the Left helped the workers give voice to those anxieties. In theory, these political groups and their leaders affirmed the equality of the sexes; however, that theory was not put into practice (131). Women's status as "double proletarians" (at home and at work) was a challenge for socialist and syndicalist parties—a challenge that was not met (134).

I was most taken with Chenut's discussion of consumer practices: workers' proclamations that they had a right to consume, the formation and operations of the *Labourieuse* workers' coop, as well as the meaning and evolution of the *Fête de la Bonneterie*. The *Fête* was the local ritual that celebrated the knitting trade. Although it had existed in some form for centuries Chenut looks at it from

1909 to 1938 and discusses some important alterations that illustrate the changes in the industry. The new *Fête* of 1909 was organized by mill-owners, not workers, and cast women workers in central symbolic roles. These changes conveyed both the feminization of the knitting trade as well as the power of the mill-owners and their interest in creating an industrial trademark for the town.

There is less on the image of workers in national popular culture. The book has a short section on film that only addresses one example, and the discussion of books and theatre is similarly limited. Chenut does capture the different consumer roles of men and women, particularly the divergent ways that male and female workers chose to proclaim (or not) their membership in the working class. Men seemed to be more political in their fashion choices—wearing the cap (*casquette*) as a symbol of their class and masculinity—whereas the women's fashions of the interwar years afforded working-class women the opportunity to dress more like the bourgeois consumers of the knitted goods they produced (298-303).

The interwar years, particularly the 1930s, would test the workers of Troyes. As owners cut wages and created part-time work the knitters of Troyes suffered unemployment and wage decline within the larger context of declining union membership and power. While Chenut sees the victory of the Popular Front and the strikes of 1936 as a triumph of worker mobilizations as well as a victory against fascism on both the local and national level, she emphasizes that these successes were ephemeral.

Chenut clearly cares deeply about the place and people she has researched and that interest in their political, consumer, and work lives is infectious. She has written a book that can be read as a local history as well as a larger story of the social, political, and cultural transformations of the French working class.

Daniella Sarnoff—Fordham University

Raymond Jonas, *The Tragic Tale of Claire Ferchaud and the Great War* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2005).

At the core of Raymond Jonas's succinct and engrossing book is the story of a young peasant woman from the Vendée who, from the age of three, claimed to have visions of Jesus in which he spoke to her, showing her his wounded heart. In late 1916, at the age of 21, Claire decided she would try to convince the President of the Third Republic to consecrate France to the Sacred Heart, thereby ensuring the nation's spiritual regeneration and its victory over Germany. Claire's mission would end in failure, meeting with rejection from the republican authorities and disapproval from the Vatican. As Jonas demonstrates, however, it provides an excellent vantage point from which to explore the evolution of French Catholicism and the political culture of France during the First World