

answer those questions, it offers a great deal to teachers. Soon after I started teaching, I began to suspect that most students' learning difficulties were tied to complex psychological processes involving self-esteem and self-concept, strategies for learning and communicating, and attitudes toward knowledge. I thought that if only we could start from the student's psychological starting point (and one rarely gets to do this), many more students would learn something lasting and valuable from us. This book gave me a glimpse of what it would be like to understand this problem through systematic inquiry and to begin to solve it.

Women's Ways of Knowing touched me deeply. The stories the women told in the interviews took me back to high-school struggles for intellectual independence; to the excitement of the first year of university; to discovering people who thought more like me than anyone I had ever known; to the process of entering into a series of world-views, each of which seemed beautiful and complete, and then experiencing the conflict among them; to the painful choice between science and philosophy; to my epistemological bewilderment in graduate school, when philosophy seemed reduced nearly out of existence by Wittgenstein's disciples; to later (and continuing) struggles to integrate psychological insights with ethical and social theory. At every step of this retrospective it reminded me that I was not alone. I felt when I finished the book that I understood my family, friends, students and myself more clearly and with more compassion, and that the door had been opened to a vital new area of inquiry into women's lives.

Susan Wendell
Simon Fraser University

Daughters of the Reconquest. Women in Castilian Town Society, 1100-1300. Heath Dillard. *New York: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1984, Pp. xii/272.*

In the words of the author, "This book is about the pioneering women who migrated to brand-new settlements and their daughters who inhabited the flourishing town of Leon and Castile during the last two centuries of the medieval Reconquest, roughly between the capture of Toledo in 1085 and the last quarter of the thirteenth century" (p. 1). Actually, the book is about how secular women were represented in local and regional law codes of Castile. These codes, known as *fueros*, embodied the liberties, immunities, and customary law of the municipalities of the area, an area which underwent expansion and

shrinking as a result not only of the Muslim presence, but also as a result of the political ambitions of the kings of Castile in relation to their indigenous neighbours.

After a brief introductory discussion of the *fueros* and a chapter on the medieval settlement of Castile, the author takes up the subject of women, centering most of the chapters around types: those preparing to marry, wives, widows, mistresses, abducted wives, and a group called "women without honour," such as prostitutes and sorceresses. One chapter paints a charming picture of what might be called the female "spaces" within the day-to-day life of the townspeople, and records interesting commercial occupations engaged in by townswomen. This is followed by a lengthy chapter on legal protection afforded women by municipal laws.

Running through the mass of detail presented by this book is a thesis about the important role women played as anchors and centres of stability in settlements from which the warring male population would have been absent for much of the time. If the castle was an instrument of physical protection for the re-occupied towns, the female inhabitants were the human agents of solidity and continuity; as the author points out, "the customs of most important towns...defined a man's residence...as the dwelling in the town or village where his wife lived" (p. 21). A measure of the extent to which the laws were manipulated in order to attract women to new settlements is the account of the provisions of immunity granted in many of the *fueros* to those guilty of obtaining wives illegally and bringing them to newly established municipalities; a practice, apparently, which continued long after the pressures of the Reconquest. In this connection the author shows a fine sensitivity to the ambiguity of the medieval idea of *raptus*, a Latin word which cannot invariably be translated into English by "rape." Historically, *raptus* primarily connoted abduction, a crime against the parents more than against the one abducted, who may even have given her consent. Forced sexual advances were not a necessary component of the notion. Only gradually did the component of forced sexual advances come to the fore, and in this regard, Dillard provides a harrowing account of the difficulties faced by a woman desiring to lay a successful charge of rape in our sense of the term (pp. 180-185). The author does not mention the possible influence of the *Bible* (Deuteronomy 22:23-27) on the requirements made on the woman to cry out when attacked, and the distinction between the deed done in a populated area and in the countryside.

The book is a mine of interesting information about such matters as engagement arrangements, dowries, mis-

tresses (*barraganas*) and their children, and the rights of women to give testimony in legal proceedings. It is an important pioneering study of a particular type of medieval local legislation. The author has chosen to "synthesize related but dissimilar and widely dispersed materials to present a broader picture of medieval townswomen than can be gleaned from any single locality" (p. 11). This is fine; however, it would have been helpful to have provided an example or two of the contents of single *fueros* as they relate to women. What is included? What is omitted? Why? Given the methodology, it is difficult to get a sense of any one settlement and a sense of the overall treatment of women in any particular law code.

One of the intractable problems of a work of this sort is how to deal with the question of the extent to which the sources reflect actual practice. The inclusion of scenes depicting women in various life circumstances taken from illuminated manuscripts contributes somewhat to answering the question.

I have just one cavil with the book. The *fueros* arose in geographical and cultural contexts in which Visigothic law had been influential for centuries, and where Roman and ecclesiastical law were beginning to assert themselves. Greater attention to the interaction among these various sources of law might have highlighted the distinctive character of the *fueros* and charted their fate during the two centuries covered by the author. Perhaps this is material for another study.

All in all, Dillard succeeds in presenting a fine piece of medieval scholarship in a manner which makes it accessible to anyone seriously interested in the history of women. It is flawlessly printed and provided with a good index. While the Bibliographical Index to the *fueros* is useful, a full bibliography of primary and secondary sources should have been included. It is hoped that the work will reach a wider audience than specialists in medieval Spanish history.

Pierre J. Payer
Mount Saint Vincent University

Myths of Coeducation, Selected Essays 1964-1983. Florence Howe. *Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.*

Florence Howe, a pioneer of Women's Studies in the United States, presents in *Myths of Coeducation* nineteen of her essays which were written over a two decade period, beginning in 1964 and ending in 1983. Most have been

published elsewhere in such journals as the *Harvard Educational Review*, and *The Radical Teacher*, and in such edited books as *Learning Our Way*.

Since the mid-1960s, Howe has been passionately involved with the politics of education and, more particularly, of teaching. As a volunteer teacher in a Mississippi freedom school, she began to learn about teaching for liberation: to listen to the voices of the oppressed, to encourage them to speak about what they know, to help them recover their history and sense of self-esteem, and to relate their knowledge to social action. When she returned to her teaching post at Goucher, a college for women, she began "tentatively" and "timidly" to teach her students what is now called "consciousness raising." She retained the syllabi of her literature courses that included mainly male writers such as James Joyce and D.H. Lawrence. She began to ask herself and her students new questions about novels; in particular what they meant to women and their experiences. Though a product of a woman's high school and two women's colleges, she herself had rarely read anything about women writers. In her hard-working, working-class family, she witnessed the strength of women firsthand, but her educational experiences had led her to devalue the labour of women.

Howe became increasingly interested in the education of women and by 1968 was presenting public lectures on the subject. She found enormous encouragement and intellectual guidance in such liberal feminists as Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill. Both identified the twin obstacles of discrimination and socialization to explain women's subordination and viewed education as crucial to the liberation of women. Howe differed from her feminist forebears, however, in turning her attention away from blatant discrimination to the content and quality of education.

Despite the claims of college and public school officials that they are providing coeducation, Howe argues that males and females do not receive the same education. They may hear the same lectures, read the same books, and do the same assignments, but because women are either absent in the curriculum or are treated in a denigrating way, the notion of coeducation is a myth. Neither coeducation colleges nor women's colleges provide education that has equal meaning for women and men.

For Howe, the way to make a meaningful education available to women is to develop women's studies. The ultimate test of the success of women's studies on campuses, she argues, will not be the proliferation of courses or programs. Instead, it will be their effect on the rest of the