

Si le mythe de l'homme enceint met aussi en évidence d'autres oppositions, ville/campagne, noble/villain, artisan/paysan - c'est la fonction sociale du mythe (p. 188) - aucune n'est autant réitérée que l'antagonisme homme/femme. C'est le grand mérite de ce livre que de nous expliquer, à partir du fonctionnement de la société traditionnelle européenne, certaines des assises culturelles du rapport de subordination des femmes; et du coup de mieux nous faire comprendre les attitudes à leur égard ainsi que leurs comportements issus de cette socialisation. Les questions soulevées par ce livre montrent bien l'intérêt de poursuivre l'analyse des représentations, des systèmes symboliques - révélateurs des formes de domination - pour l'histoire des femmes.

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So Much to Do, So Little Time. The Writings of Hilda Neatby. Michael Hayden, ed. *Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. Pp. vii & 350.*

In this welcome and valuable volume Michael Hayden of the Department of History at Saskatoon has made available selections from the published and unpublished writings of his former colleague and department head, Hilda Neatby. Forty-two years old when after a series of temporary replacement positions she was finally hired on a permanent basis by the University of Saskatchewan, Neatby went on to achieve a secure spot in the Canadian historical profession and no small measure of public notoriety as a critic of education. Her emergence from obscurity came when Vincent Massey, for reasons still not entirely clear, chose her in 1949 to serve as one of five Royal Commissioners on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences. Two recommendations from the resulting Report, on the creation of the Canada Council and federal funding for universities, have had transforming effects on Canadian artistic and intellect-

ual life. It is not the least of Michael Hayden's contributions that in piecing together some fragments of the story surrounding the Commission, he uncovers Neatby's substantial and possibly critical role in the Report's final composition. If Francophones have a legitimate complaint in the way in which the accepted title of that document, the Massey Report, slights Père George Henri Levèsque's hand in the proceedings, feminists will likewise want to insist on Neatby's now receiving some belated recognition, for it is clear that Levèsque and Massey both relied on her cogent thinking, clear writing style and doughty defense of principles all three held dear.

No less remarkable is the story of Neatby's speech-writing career during the decade (1952-1962) that Vincent Massey served as Governor-General. Upon his retirement Massey published 44 of his vice-regal speeches under the title *Speaking of Canada*; over three-quarters of them had been written by Neatby, but as Hayden observes in a telling if discreet footnote, "Massey did not acknowledge her role either in the preface or in the inscription he wrote on the fly leaf" (p. 327, n. 101). Yet it was Massey who first encouraged, and then bankrolled Hilda Neatby when she undertook the volume that established her in the mid-1950's as Canada's most controversial critic of education. *So Little For the Mind* (1953) sold over 7,000 copies the first year, nearly 18,000 by 1975, and made her a sought-after speaker and radio broadcaster across the country. Some of the selections in the Hayden volume are Neatby's talks to a wide variety of audiences, usually concerning the maintenance of traditions and standards, the formation of character, or the training of the mind.

Within her own profession Neatby achieved something of a breakthrough when in 1958 she was chosen to head the History Department at Saskatchewan that had so tardily hired her, a position she held throughout the expansionary '60's. Further recognition came in 1962 when she

became the first woman to preside over the Canadian Historical Association (three others have since followed). Her stern Presbyterianism severely conditioned her feminist leanings, however, as is evident in her address to the Canadian Federation of University Women in August 1952. There she professed to find the battle for equality largely won, leaving only "a mopping up operation"; moreover, although "women in the modern age of their emancipation are intellectually and emotionally competent, as they have always been," they did not fully realize (Neatby thought) the extent either of their capabilities or of their responsibilities.

Neatby's particular field of historical research and publication was the old province of Quebec, not an immediately obvious choice for someone raised on a Saskatchewan homestead. The explanation lies at least in part in the peculiarities, not to say uniqueness, of that redoubtable Neatby homestead, where the father immersed himself in his three-thousand-volume library and the mother drove her large brood of children to achievement and eminence through her ambition and mental toughness. (A brother, Leslie H. Neatby, has sketched this remarkable childhood background in *Chronicle of a Pioneer Prairie Family*, 1979). It would appear from her comments on local historical societies (pp. 102-106) that her lifelong devotion to the preservation of historical documents rather than any consuming attachment to regional concerns led Hilda Neatby to take on the first editorship of *Saskatchewan History*, a post in which she was soon succeeded by L.H. Thomas. Nevertheless, through her devotion to her students and her uncompromising expectations of herself and others she succeeded in controverting her own gloomy comments about the low esteem in which the study of history was held by students and by the general public, so that even though she wrote only one article with a regional focus (on doctors in the Northwest Territories), she established sound scholarly foundations for others to build on.

All told, Hilda Neatby emerges from the pages of this collection a multi-faceted, determined and somewhat daunting figure. Hayden comments, with no unkind intent, that "She was sure of herself and where she stood. She knew that she was right in religion as well as in education, in grammar, style, in salary negotiations—in life" (p. 61). Hayden's balanced yet sympathetic biographical sketch of Neatby is one of the book's bonuses, and his bibliography of all Neatby's writings another, but he is right when he claims with becoming modesty that *So Much To Do, So Little Time* is most important for pulling together the ideas and admonitions of an influential Canadian intellectual. This is indeed a book that "needed to be" (p. 332).

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The Wilson Sisters: A Biographical Study of Upper Middle-Class Victorian Life. Martha Westwater. *Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1984 Pp. 250.*

Half way through this book the author describes "the aching bewilderment our Victorian sisters suffered in trying to understand their femininity." By the end, the reader is more apt to share the bewilderment than any enlightenment. What appears to be a fascinating study in upper middle-class womanhood has become a frustrating disappointment. Why?

The answer is threefold and lies in the particular women under scrutiny, the nature of the available evidence, and in the questions asked.

The subjects of enquiry are the six daughters of James Wilson, founder of *The Economist*, politician and Indian civil servant. These Victorian ladies were given only a flimsy formal education but a highly satisfactory informal one. Socially, in England and abroad, they met energetic, intellectual and diverse people who piqued