

blurring results from ambiguous feelings about events and very real difficulties in fitting language, behaviour, personal relationships, and physical conditions to a coherent pattern. Examples of this predicament are to be found in the writings of some women who earned an education for themselves. Their upward mobility made them more open to the counselled mode of writing with stylistic embellishment. Johanna Kildahl, who supported herself towards a Ph.D. in biology, hides what the plain unvarnished facts in her narratives indicate to have been anger and suffering under the cloak of joking satire, while another expert in indirection, Fanny Quain, who through hard work became the first women doctor in the territory, embellished her narratives with figurative language and visionary scenes masking her own and her mother's anger. In different modes from short story to newspaper chronicle, Quain rewrote the story of her mother's westward trek and her own birth - the first child born in a frame house - three different times. As Hampsten shows, the more direct the narrative, the more factual, the greater the rage and sorrow. High style and indirect narration become vehicles for masking emotion. A poetry of fact thus sings out from the least pretentious of writings, to be valued despite the lack of connectives or sentence divisions.

As I have tried to indicate, Hampsten's book is interesting reading for the very wealth of detail it offers on the individual women's lives and for the subtlety of Hampsten's analysis of their writing styles. It is also thoroughly researched against a broad canvas that includes all the private writings of men in the territory and popular manuals on writing for those in need of self help. Thus her analysis is properly a differential one of male/female writing styles which adds greater weight to her assertions of the specificity of female writing, its focus on an inner terrain. It is this conclusion which makes Hampsten's book of relevance to those interested in women's diaries in any geographical location. This fact, as well as the frequent crossing of Canadian boun-

daries by the figures she discusses - Fanny Quain's mother came from New Brunswick to North Dakota as a bride, while Maud Lampman and family moved north to the Klondike to seek gold - should make *Read This Only to Yourself* of vital importance to the growing body of people interested in Canadian women's private writings.

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Daughters of Time: Women in the Western Tradition. Mary Kinnear. *Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1982. Pp. 228.*

In *Daughters of Time*, Mary Kinnear, of the University of Manitoba, has sought to explain what it was to be a woman in the successive historical societies which have formed the Western Tradition and what the experience of women in those earlier societies means to Western women today. She has attempted to examine traditional concepts and periods in history "from the point of view of women who lived then." She has "[described, analysed, and assessed] the roles of women at various times in Western history, in those European and North American societies which inherit traditions forged in Greece, Rome and Palestine." And she has done this "to discover the social, economic, cultural, and political foundations for the status of women in modern times."

Limitations have had to be accepted and distortions must inevitably occur. Developments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are stressed. The "encyclopedic approach" is sacrificed to "the need to produce a coherent account with an orderly argument providing some clues to women's position in the West today." Thus, in approaching past societies, the author has

sought to "organize the information in a way which illustrates what we in the present think useful and important to know." "Work," we are told, matters as do "politics and personal interactions at work, at home, in clubs." "Religion may matter." And the family finds its place in this descriptive analysis. Finally, the object of the book is to demonstrate the presence of women in history, for "in Western civilization [women] have played a crucial role, producing, processing and reproducing the cultural and economic resources of each generation."

The book is made possible by "a new wave of feminist scholarship" which has flourished in the past fifteen years. It also draws on women's history produced by earlier generations of historians in lesser or greater degree affected by "the basic assumptions of a sexist society." Reference is made to the new social history, especially that of the French. Other debts are recognized as well.

The principal argument of this survey concerns women's work. Most women in most times and places have been confined to reproductive work: the management of the household, the bearing and raising of children, food preparation and other forms of housework. Such work has normally but not always taken place at home and been unpaid. When it has been performed outside the home it has normally been undervalued and it has certainly been underpaid in relation to the kinds of work done by men. Only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have the development of factories, the theories of socialism and the exigencies of the two world wars made it possible for significant numbers and percentages of women to be involved in productive work: that form of work which normally takes place outside the home and results in the creation of goods and services valued by men and for which existing society grants high status and high pay. Nineteenth-century women began to prevail over the man-made impediments which had prevented women from being involved in public life and restricted them to the domestic

sphere. In the twentieth century, women are participating in the eradication of distinctions between private and public, reproductive and productive work. This is occurring now, albeit very slowly. And we may expect it to go on happening, for it is the goal of feminists "to restructure life, domestic and public, altogether." The feminists' object is complete equality between the sexes, with the sharing of all responsibilities.

The author develops this argument through increasingly detailed histories of women in early civilizations, classical Greece, Hellenistic civilization, classical Rome, early Christian society, medieval Occitania, Renaissance Italy, Reformation Germany and England, Enlightenment France and central Europe, Revolutionary France, Britain of the Industrial Revolution and beyond, nineteenth- and twentieth-century United States, Revolutionary Russia, twentieth-century Canada and other societies in the Western Tradition. Themes include the place of women in some heresies, some forms of religious life, witchcraft, the Protestant Reformation, salons, nineteenth-century education, philanthropy, factories, Utopian communities and the public life of nineteenth- and twentieth-century states. Descriptive and prescriptive images of women in such sources as the *Malleus Maleficarum*, the theology of Luther, the philosophy of Rousseau, the political writings of nineteenth- and twentieth-century socialists and advocates of single standard sexuality and birth control, and twentieth-century government white papers are discussed. Several dozen women, some previously only known through obscure monographs, are introduced. The style of the book is always direct and honest. An evenness of tone is maintained throughout and stridency is always avoided, perhaps sometimes at the expense of clarity. Notes on further reading, as well as specific references, are provided. It seems very likely that this book will find its place as a text for introductory courses in the history of women.

Yet this is an unsatisfying book. It is, when all is said and done, not history as an independent discipline but history in the service of a cause. Kinnear has presented women in the Western Tradition in much the same way as men were once presented in the Western Civilization courses developed in the United States. 'Western Civ' was designed to instill in students a commitment to the liberal ideology of American bourgeois democracy and a belief in the idea of progress which was crudely understood as the eventual transformation of all Americans, including even non-Western European immigrants, into white Anglo-Saxon Protestants well served by and devoted to the status quo. The Western Tradition was one and indivisible and certain truths were self-evident; British parliamentary democracy was preferable to French Revolutionary republicanism, protestantism was superior to popery, *laissez-faire* economics surpassed statism, secular philanthropy was more high-minded than the poor relief offered by the religious orders, and, in the last years of the programme, the conjugal use of birth control was better than the pursuit of natural fecundity, celibacy or sexual licence. Such courses omitted consideration of dissidents or other inconvenient subjects, including women. Nevertheless, it is precisely the Western Civ approach to chronology, periodization and history in the service of a cause which Kinnear has adopted.

Most of her subjects are therefore not people in their own time and place but prototypes for the white Anglo-Saxon post-protestant feminists of late twentieth-century North America. Kinnear has tinkered a little with the history of great movements, admitting that women did not benefit from the Golden Age in fifth-century B.C. Athens, the Italian Renaissance or the French Revolution and gained very little from the Reformation or the Enlightenment. But otherwise she retains much of the old approach, including, explicitly or implicitly, the priorities which seemed to the teachers of Western Civ to be so self-evident.

This is ironic, however, because many teachers of introductory courses on both sides of the border have recently realized that there is not one Western Tradition but many and that no historian, however well-informed, has the right to tell students what to think. Many have rejected the old methods in favour of the new social history which permits them to examine in a systematic way how people in the past actually lived, what they thought, what they believed, what they produced and consumed, how they were born and married, how they died and were buried. At its best this method tries to understand what was important to people in past time and how they saw themselves. It draws heavily on the work of the French historical demographers and French students of popular mentalities. In this reviewer's experience it normally involves discovering people—including women—who are unlike ourselves and who in consequence are the more elusive and the more fascinating. Canadians able to use French as well as English are ideally placed to pursue the research necessary to support this approach to teaching. It is unfortunate that Kinnear's book, despite the promise of the introduction, does not present this aspect of her subject. It will be a happy day for women's history when feminism demands that we learn about all our women forbearers in pursuit of their great variety of goals, rather than that we transform the convenient ones into our guides and inspiration as we seek our own goals. In the meantime, it must be admitted that where Mary Kinnear has failed to produce an adequate synthesis of what is known about women in Western Europe and the Mediterranean World over the past three thousand years, no one else has yet succeeded.

Finally, the publisher must be taken to task. No single writer could have been expected to master the basic material for such a long period. Publishers' readers capable of correcting Kinnear's erroneous reading of Luther and Rousseau as well as her mistaken understanding of the structure of orders in *ancien regime* France

and of the nature of the Paris Commune of 1792 ought therefore to have been appointed. And original publication dates of reprints ought to have been cited. The book is not based on quite so much new feminist scholarship as the bibliography in its present form suggests.

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Public Man, Private Woman - Women in Social and Political Thought. Jean Bethke Elshtain. Princeton University Press, 1981. Pp. 378.

In *Public Man, Private Woman* Jean Bethke Elshtain sets out to use the concepts of public and private "as a conceptual prism through which to see the story of women and politics from Plato to the present" (p. xiv), and to link the public/private distinction to various "understandings of human nature, theories of language and action and the divergent values and ends of familial and political life." (p. 3). Her subject is especially appealing to feminist thinkers, since, as she points out, the public/private distinction and the values attached to each realm are closely related to many people's beliefs about and attitudes toward women. Unfortunately, her treatment of the subject is disappointing.

Elshtain begins with a critical review of great figures in the history of political philosophy. She is clearly partial to Augustine, Aquinas and Luther and tells us that: "Christianity ushered a moral revolution into the world which dramatically, and for the better, transformed the prevailing images of male and female, public and private" (p. 56), and that: "Augustine, taken all in all, is one of the great undoers of Greek misogyny...." (p.73). Anyone making these claims surely must show some concern about Augustine's obsessive fear of women's capacity to

inspire lust, Augustine's and Aquinas' denigration of sexual pleasure, and Aquinas' agreement with Aristotle that woman is a man manqué, created for and justified by her role in reproduction. Yet Elshtain fails even to acknowledge that these are difficulties for her views, and she apparently feels no obligation to deal with feminist scholars' criticisms of Christian theology.

While Elshtain is unduly gentle with Christian thinkers, other "greats" do not escape her unfavourable, and often unfair, criticism. She is hard on J.S. Mill's *The Subjection of Women*, for example, but her reading of it is shallow and inaccurate. She misunderstands or misrepresents Mill's theory of the origin of women's subjection and his analysis of how men and women come to desire undue private and public power, both of which are clear in Mill's text. In addition, she attributes silly views to Mill without justification, claiming, for instance, that Mill always regards a human relation's or institution's being traditional as a reason to oppose it. Mill actually says: "The generality of a practice is in some cases a strong presumption that it is, or at all events once was, conducive to laudable ends."¹ Elshtain accuses Mill of failing to recognize the importance of men's economic power over their wives, yet Mill explicitly discusses this, concluding that women must have the *power* of earning their own living in order to have equality in marriage. There is much to criticize in Mill's feminist theory, and Elshtain draws our attention to some serious difficulties, but her criticisms are often misplaced because she does not deal carefully with the texts she discusses.

Elshtain's treatment of modern feminist texts in the second section of the book is no more satisfying than her discussion of the classics of political philosophy. She is ungenerous in her interpretation and criticism of feminist thinkers, apparently unwilling to see anything valuable in theories which contain mistakes and implausibilities. And although elsewhere Elshtain shows concern for the historical context of theories,