

that these women wrote differently about topics different from those that interested their male counterparts. Snyder provides mainly her own translations of the writings, which she then discusses in detail. Thus the book becomes an invaluable compendium of women's writing in Classical Greece and Rome. Copious notes, an excellent bibliography, and a useful index complete this readable volume.

It is, however, shocking for us to realize that inside these covers is amassed practically all that it is possible for us to know about women's contribution to the writing of that highly creative thousand years or so between the late seventh century B.C.E. (B.C.) and the fifth century C.E. (A.D.). That so little remains seems cause for anger. Classical scholar Snyder points out, however, how truly "astonishing" it is that we know so much:

Far from having only one woman writer of antiquity — Sappho — as we might be led to believe by a typical modern account, we possess tangible evidence of several handfuls of women authors whose voices can still be heard or of whom there is at least some report.

After reading her book, we tend to agree, for the forces militating against the survival from the Classical period of any women's writing were enormous — among them, the assumption of female inferiority, the trivializing of women's endeavours, the devaluation of women's writing by insulting the writers, and, in general, the refusal to take seriously what women were saying.

In her concluding chapter, Jane McIntosh Snyder hopes that her book will lessen "the sense of mutedness by pointing the way towards the origins of the tradition of women writers in the West." Indeed, she has done so, with scholarly integrity, in clear and readable language, and with a feminist consciousness. Her book is a welcome addition to the growing feminist reconstruction of women's past.

WOMAN AS MEDIATRIX: Essays on Nineteenth-Century European Women Writers

Avriel H. Goldberger, ed. Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1987

Deborah Heller

The fourteen chapters that constitute this rich and varied collection are drawn from

a Conference on Nineteenth-Century Women Writers held in 1980 at Hofstra University. Envisioned as a companion volume to *Nineteenth-Century Women Writers of the English-Speaking World* (Greenwood Press, 1986), this book concentrates on European (French, German, Swedish, Russian) woman writers, treating English-speaking ones only in three papers that deal with cross-cultural themes: Mary Wollstonecraft is introduced briefly in the opening essay as the pivotal figure who paved the way for women in the nineteenth century to engage in the writing of social commentary and criticism, a phenomenon then explored more fully in the work of the German Bettina Brentanovon Arnim and the French Flora Tristan (Marie-Claire Hoock-Demarle, "The Nineteenth Century: Insights of Contemporary Women Writers"); the English Frances Trollope is studied as a critic of George Sand (Marie-Jacques Hoog, "Trollope's Choice"), and the life and work of the American Margaret Fuller are examined in the light of the influence of Mme de Staël's fictional heroine, Corinne (Paula Blanchard, "Corinne and the 'Yankee Corinna'"). Staël and Sand, it may be observed, under one aspect or another, account for half of the essays in the collection (three on Staël, four on Sand), perhaps reflecting the fact that, among the writers discussed, only they, along with Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, are still read today for their "literary" value.

This difference among the subjects of the essays probably also accounts for the fact that while the essays on Staël, Sand and Droste are all on particularized topics (e.g. Alex Szogi's study of the influence of Sand's *Une Conspiration en 1537* on Musset's *Lorenzaccio*, or Maruta Letina-Ray's discussion of gender bias in the typically condescending German critical approach to Droste's "Die Judenbuch"), the others tend to be of the more general, introductory, 'Life, Times and Works' variety. Among the latter type are "Fredrika Bremer: Sweden's First Feminist" by Doris R. Asmundsson; "An Introduction to the Life and Times of Louis Otto" by Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres; "Toward a New Freedom: Rahel Varnhagen and the German Women Writers before 1848" by Doris Starr Guilloton; "A *Nigilistka* and a *Communarde*: Two Voices of the

Nineteenth-Century Russian *Intelligentska*"; a study of the Russian sisters, Anna Jaclard and Sofia Kovalevskaia, by Isabelle Naginski; and "Juliette Adam: She Devil or *Grande Française*?" by Jean Scammon Hyland and Daniel H. Thomas. This group of essays (whose titles suggest the abundance and variety of material covered) delineate the circumstances surrounding these women writers' articulate espousal of women's rights and other social issues, thus helping to illuminate the social and intellectual context from which the more lasting, "literary" achievements of a George Eliot or a George Sand emerged.

By contrast, the treatments of the more "canonical" authors focus sharply on quite specific subjects. While all are illuminating, I was particularly engaged by Julia Frey's discussion of George Sand and the puppet theatre at her estate at Nohant ("George Sand and the Seamless Theatre") and Madelyn Gutwirth's "Woman as Mediatrix: From Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Germaine de Staël." The Frey essay gives a fascinating account of the ideal "counter-community" Sand established for herself, her family and her guests at Nohant, while Gutwirth explores the seminal role of Rousseau's Julie (from *La Nouvelle Héloïse*) in the creation of literary and extra-literary female ideals and the ways in which Staël's Corinne can be viewed as re-scripting — both subverting and extending — Rousseau's model. Gutwirth's essay, incidentally, is the only one directly to discuss the position of woman as "mediatrix." The editor's decision to extrapolate her phrase as a unifying title to link the various essays in this collection may create false expectations. For despite the title — and the valiant effort of Germaine Brée's "Introduction" to superimpose on the essays a unity not present in the original conference (she suggests it can be found in nineteenth-century women's shared experience of the Industrial Revolution) — the essays remain irreducibly heterogeneous in their aims and scope. And why should it be otherwise? Any attempt to flatten out the rich diversity of this collection must end by implying that some essays are peripheral and others more central to a hypothetical norm. Instead, it is the very differences among the essays that make this collection such a lively one.