

move for this group. So is the experience of periodically having to persuade modern scholars with whom one otherwise shares a primary political commitments to feminism that temporal diversity no less vital to rigorous intellectual inquiry and effective political strategizing than other forms of diversity. A rich resource of arguments and analysis, "History Matters" provides tools for understanding the gradual disappearance of pre-modern scholarship from our modernist colleagues' radars and helps explain the importance of what it is that pre-modernists do to a broader feminist audience within the field of history and beyond. I, for one, will recommend it especially warmly to feminist colleagues who work on modern materials.

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Angelika Epple, **Empfindsame Geschichtsschreibung. Eine Geschlechtergeschichte der Historiographie zwischen Aufklärung und Historismus**, Köln/Weimar: Böhlau 2003, 444 S., EUR 44,90, ISBN 3-412-15702-3.

Several interesting studies have recently been devoted to the history of women historians, providing a new and rapidly growing body of evidence on women's presence in the European historiographic tradition. To mention just a few recent contributions: Kate Lowe and Charlotte Woodford have studied the chronicles written by early modern nuns in Italy and Germany, while Faith Beasley has analyzed 17th-century memoirs by French women. Also on the French case, but for a later period, we now have a broad-ranging collection of essays, "Histoires d'historiennes", edited by Nicole Pellegrin. An outstanding volume on 19th and 20th century women medievalists, edited by Jane Chance, offers a detailed prosopography of women scholars in this area, while a comparative perspective on several European countries has been provided by a special issue of the journal "History of Historiography", aptly called "History Women". We have certainly learnt much about women historians since Natalie Zemon Davis opened this field of study, in 1980, with her path-breaking essay "Gender and Genre: Women as Historical Writers". Thanks to Mary Spongberg, Barbara Caine and Anne Curthoys, we now have at hand even a "Companion to Women's Historical Writing", a volume meant as a guide for further research in this area, with entries referring not only to individual women historians, but also to historical subgenres, national historical traditions, etc., all seen in a gender perspective. Though the "Companion" covers mostly the Anglophone countries and has some glaring gaps (Germany is absent, for instance), it is nevertheless a useful resource for this fast expanding sector of women's and gender history.¹

¹ Cf. Nicole Pellegrin ed., *Histoires d'historiennes*, Saint-Etienne 2006; Jane Chance ed., *Women Medievalists and the Academy*, Madison, WISC. 2005; *Storia della storiografia/History of Historiography*, 46 (2004), *History Women*, special issue ed. by Maureen O'Dowd and Ilaria Porciani; Natalie

Angelika Epple's volume on "Empfindsame Geschichtschreibung" is a welcome contribution to this field for the German area and for a period which was of great significance for the development of modern historiography. The book examines twelve case studies of German women who wrote history in the period 1771–1810. History is here taken in a broad sense to include subgenres such as autobiography and biography. Indeed, all texts examined by Epple are either biographies or autobiographies, with the single exception of Louise von Blumenthal's "Life of General von Zieten" (1797), which expanded into a history of the Silesian War, covering, in the author's intention, events that had been left out of Frederick II's "History of the Seven Years War". Epple argues that all these texts shared a new historical sensibility – or, more precisely, that they applied to historical narratives the Romantic notion of "sensibility" (*Empfindsamkeit*).

This "historiography of sensibility" (*empfindsame Geschichtschreibung*) had a female connotation though it was not practiced only by women. The notion of "sensibility", in fact, drew on gender stereotypes. In late 18th-century theorizing of letter-writing, for instance, women were said to write better letters, their style being supposedly more "natural", their impressions more numerous and varied, though more superficial, than men's. This was attributed to women's higher degree of "sensibility" – a higher aptitude to receive impressions from the surrounding world, and to communicate these impressions with freshness, unspoiled by learning and education. Their very disadvantage in terms of intellectual sophistication was thus supposed to give women an advantage in point of "sensibility". The gender hierarchy implicit in this line of reasoning is evident in the contemporary theory of history. In discussing the notion of historical evidence ("Von der Evidenz in der Geschichtskunde", 1767) Johann Christoph Gatterer described two kinds of readers of history – a "sensitive" and a "critical" reader, the first interested in the narrative aspect of history (the tale told), the second in its documentary aspect (the evidence supporting the tale). In Gatterer's view, according to the above described stereotype, the "sensitive reader" was feminine. The notion of "sensibility" thus implied a "trivialization" of the female intellect.

In other respects, however, the Romantic cult of "sensibility" gave new value to women's perceptions, encouraging some women to write a historical account of their own experience. "Sensibility" was also supposed to imply a clearer perception of an individual's "true nature", as revealed in private interpersonal relations. Epple shows that women especially used this facet of the notion of sensibility to develop a new form of historical writing based largely on experience, in which social and political change was examined through the prism of individual life. Epple identifies a first theoretical sketch of such a "historiography of sensibility" in Emilie von Berlepsch's commentary on Mallet du Pan's

Zemon Davis, Gender and Genre: Women as Historical Writers, 1400–1820, in: University of Ottawa Quarterly, 50, 1 (1980), 123–144; Mary Spongberg, Ann Curthoys and Barbara Caine eds., Companion to Women's Historical Writing, London 2005.

“History of the Swiss Revolution” (1799). Written in the form of letter to a woman friend, von Berlepsch’s text theorized a “history of feeling” (*Geschichte eines Gemüths*), to be found first of all in autobiographies, where individual experience came to the foreground, and social change was examined through its effects on individual life.

Keeping within the tradition of the moral-didactic use of history (*historia magistra vitae*), some of the women authors examined by Epple used models of self-analysis drawn from Jean Jacques Rousseau’s “Confessions” or Karl Philipp Moritz’s “Seelenkunde” to relate the story of their life. But in contrast with the model of character formation presented in the *Bildungsroman*, as exemplified for instance by Johann Wolfgang Goethe’s “Wilhelm Meister”, these women often told their story as a case of hindered *Bildung*, an often frustrated effort of *Individualisierung*. Why did these women find it difficult to relate their experience in the form of a narrative of personal development, along the model of the *Bildungsroman*? Epple answers that the gender stereotypes of the period assumed the female character to be basically invariant over time – it was only the male character that was supposed to undergo a process of unfolding and growth through the ordeal of traumatic experiences (*Bruchere-fahrungen*). All the autobiographies examined by Epple stressed, however, that women also are capable of personal development through the overcoming of trauma or crisis. They thus challenged the stereotypical opposition of female and male character.

It is interesting to note, furthermore, that the biographies examined by Epple, which include several cases of men’s lives written by women, emphasized the similarity, not the contrast, between male and female personal development. Women wrote biographies of men often using their personal ties of friendship with the subject of their study as a foundation of authority. This is the case, for instance, in Elisa von der Recke’s biography of the theologian Christoph Friedrich Neander (1804) and of Johanna Schopenhauer’s “Life of Carl Ludwig Fernow” (1810). Schopenhauer’s text is particularly interesting. She narrated the life of the philosopher and art historian Fernow following the model of Fernow’s own biography of his friend, the painter Asmus Jakob Carstens. By emphasizing her own friendship with Fernow, who had been her teacher and mentor, Schopenhauer inserted herself in a tradition of male intellectual friendship, like that of Fernow and Carstens. These texts, as Epple perceptively notes, described an ideal masculinity that was much closer to femininity, both in conjugal and non-conjugal relations, than the conventional view of manhood – as found also by Anne-Charlott Trepp in her study of epistolary exchanges between middle-class men and women in the same period.² Thus the texts examined by Epple questioned the traditional model of gender roles, with its sharp differentiation and contrast of male and female characters, and they extended also to women the model of personal development as formation of an autonomous self, traditionally reserved to men.

² Ann-Charlott Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit und selbständige Weiblichkeit. Frauen und Männer im Hamburger Bürgertum zwischen 1770 und 1840*, Göttingen 1996.

Epple concludes by arguing that the “historiography of sensibility” dealt with topics that later 19th-century academic historiography chose to ignore. Just as the “historiography of sensibility” was excluded from the canon of the history of historiography, so also “sensitive” topics such as interpersonal relations, the relationship between individual and society, the history of customs and morals, were marginalized. The daily life of people, she says, was excluded from scientific history up to the 1970s. This seems definitely overstretched, and it makes it hard to find her conclusion persuasive. The Romantic interest in manners and customs, in daily life, in the interplay of individual experience and social conditions, did not disappear from 19th-century historiography, far from it. On the contrary, it flourished in such pioneers of cultural history as Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl and Jacob Burckhardt. May we not then surmise that the “historiography of sensibility”, which Epple has brought to our attention, formed one of the rivulets that flowed into the mighty river of mid 19th-century *Kulturgeschichte*? If that were the case, Epple’s study, like other recent research on women historians, would confirm that a gender perspective can help us trace more accurately the patterns of development, the currents and undercurrents, of European historiography.

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Sabine Hark, **Dissidente Partizipation. Eine Diskursgeschichte des Feminismus**, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 2005, 464 S., EUR 16,-, ISBN 3-518-29353-2.

„Dissidente Partizipation“, so schreibt Sabine Hark, „verfolgt den Kurs, den der akademisch gewordene Feminismus seit seiner Entstehung in den frühen 1970er Jahren genommen hat. Angesiedelt an den Schnittstellen von Wissenschaftssoziologie, Hochschulforschung, wissenssoziologischer Diskursanalyse und feministischer Theorie fragt das Buch ebenso nach dem *feminist turn* von Wissenschaft wie nach dem *academic turn* von Feminismus.“ (10) Die Umsetzung dieses Programms erfolgt in drei Teilen. Zunächst werden die vielfältigen Wechselwirkungen von Feminismus und Wissenschaft detailliert dargelegt und die Einschreibung des Feminismus in das bestehende akademische Setting wird auf intellektueller, institutioneller und sozialer Ebene analysiert. Anschließend diskutiert Hark das Profil des Feminismus als zugleich wissenschaftliches und politisches Programm, das seine Bezugspunkte in der vorgefundenen Wissenschaftslandschaft ebenso wie in aktuellen (geschlechter-)politischen Debatten der 1970er Jahre fand. In den „Aporien des Widerstreits zwischen Aktivismus und Akademie“ (242) identifiziert sie eine der wesentlichen Determinanten der historischen Formierung des Feminismus. Schließlich steht mit der Inter-/Disziplinarität des akademischen Feminismus dessen wissenschaftliches Selbstverständnis als ‚undiszipliniertes‘ Wissen im Mittelpunkt. Die zahlreichen programmatischen Entwürfe von Inter-, Post- und Transdisziplinarität als Charakteristikum des Feminismus *und*