The field of women's history is now firmly established in the academy and rests on a solid foundation of over two decades of scholarship. As a result of the Women's movement of the 1970s, feminist historians began to question traditional historical narratives which rarely mentioned women or their achievements. One of the first tasks of these historians was to recover women's contributions to history by publishing women's diaries and letters and reprinting works by women who were well-known in their day but had not entered the canon of history. Women's historians also questioned standard historical periodization, and redefined history to include activities traditionally associated with women's domestic roles. These histories of women's lives within the private sphere dem-
onstrated on the one hand that women's work was integral to family and local economies and on the other that women manipulated rhetoric about their role in the private sphere (e.g., as mothers) to influence the public sphere (i.e., the world outside the home such as politics and commerce usually associated with men in Western cultures). Historians of women then began to interrogate the relationship between the private and public spheres and questioned the validity of the separation of these spheres in various historical contexts. Historians of women also began to examine the varied experiences of women in such public arenas as education, religion, politics, war, medicine, labor, crime, and landscape. By placing women at the center of the historical frame, these historians have significantly revised accepted interpretations about the past. In addition, historians of women created new topics of historical study by examining relationships between women of similar class backgrounds as well as across racial, ethnic and national boundaries.

During the 1980s, women's historians began to grapple with gender as a social construction—even questioning whether women's history per se should exist at all or whether the time had come to shift away from the paradigm of isolating women and their achievements to a paradigm which examined the dynamic ways in which women's and men's social roles as well as definitions of masculinity and femininity vary across cultures and through time. Many historians now point to Joan Scott’s 1986 essay “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis” as their starting point for defining gender:

"gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power."

Studies which take gender as their primary theoretical lens have encouraged historians to question the state’s role in structuring gender roles, the gendered nature of nationalist movements, imperialism and colonialism, the differences in the religious experiences of men and women, the ways in which the language of science has been used to construct women's and men's “essential” and “opposite” biological natures, the relationship between popular representations of women's bodies and their social, political and economic status, and the role of gender in the production of knowledge including feminist theory. Thus an examination of gender, many historians now argue, changes the way we perceive an entire historical period. As one group of historians wrote in their introduction to a recent anthology on gender and Chinese history:

adding women to the social and historical picture, and highlighting gender as a cat-
Women's history and gender history are frequently viewed as antagonistic. Borrowing heavily from poststructuralist theories of language, gender theorists have argued that women as a category is always created and that this creation is always intimately linked with systems of power. Jane Flax explains that poststructuralist theory makes "us skeptical about the ideas concerning truth, knowledge, power, history, self, and language that are often taken for granted within and serve as legitimations for contemporary Western culture." However, some women's historians interpret gender theory as a rejection of material experience as a factor in women's identity formation. For example, many historians of women of color argue that the history and theory of women of color must be based on the life experiences of their subjects. Patricia Hill Collins argues that her experiences as a black woman are critical to feminist theory formation because Black women "are the only group that has experienced race, gender, and class oppression as Black women experience them." These scholars believe that it is crucial to their projects to validate women's experiences of the world because those experiences have so often been ignored in historical practice. Historians of women of color and Euro-American women have also pointed out that just at the moment in which they are gaining ground in the academy and producing their own histories, the very notion of "woman" as a category has been called into question.

I believe that the articles in this volume indicate that women's history and gender history are eminently compatible. These articles each share a focus on women's experience illuminated by sophisticated use of gender analysis. They point to a future historiography in which the two fields may successfully merge without losing an emphasis on women. An emphasis on women in gender studies will be necessary until we have parity in research on men's and women's historical experience. However, as Françoise Thébaud commented in an introductory essay for a history of twentieth century Western women, "this history of women therefore has a subtext: that men, too, are gendered individuals."

In a recent essay, Linda Nicholson advocated thinking about:
the meaning of woman as illustrating a map of intersecting similarities and differences. Within such a map, the body does not disappear but rather becomes a historically specific variable whose meaning and import are recognized as potentially different in different historical contexts. Such a suggestion, in assuming that meaning is found rather than presupposed, also suggests that the search itself is not a research/political project that an individual scholar will be able to accomplish alone in her study. Rather, it implies an understanding of such a project as necessarily a collective effort undertaken by many in dialogue.45

We, the editorial board of the Journal, are proud to offer this volume as part of this on-going project and dialogue.

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Allison Sneider’s essay, “The Impact of Empire on the North American Woman Suffrage Movement: Suffrage Racism in an Imperial Context,” tests the limits of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan Anthony’s beliefs in women’s equality and right to vote by examining their views on the annexation of Hawaii and the Philippines. Sneider argues that Stanton and Anthony were caught between their racist assumptions about colonized peoples and their goal of women’s suffrage. Sneider concludes that their appeal to Congress to grant suffrage to Hawaiian and Philippine women was ultimately motivated by their desire to gain women’s suffrage in the newly-acquired territories in order to bolster their argument for women’s suffrage in the States.

Susan Englander’s article, “The Science of Protection: Gender-based Legal Arguments for the Ten-Hour Work Day,” and my article, “From Civilized to Savage: Changing Euro-American Perceptions of Pueblo Gender Roles and Sexuality, 1850-1920,” each examine the ways in which law was deployed to promote certain ideas about men and women’s biological nature. Englander traces the juridical deployment of science to construct women’s and men’s bodies to gain legal protections in the workplace. I demonstrate the way in which expert and anthropological definitions of native gender and sexuality were utilized by judges to rationalize classifying Pueblo peoples as uncivilized and therefore subject to intense Euro-American intervention to re-order Pueblo gender roles.

Carol Cini’s article, “From British Women’s WWI Suffrage Battle to the League of Nations Covenant: Conflicting Uses of Gender in the Politics of Millicent Garrett Fawcett,” explores the tension in Fawcett’s definition of women as innately anti-war, pro-peace and her desire to cast women as patriotic, pro-
war (and thus deserving of the vote) during World War I.

Kate Cannon's article, "The Separate Spheres of the State: Mobilization Rhetoric and Public Policy Objectives During World War II," reviews U.S. policies aimed at mobilizing women into the wartime workforce. Throughout the war effort, Cannon argues, policymakers held conflicting ideals about women workers. For example, rhetoric which suggested the effectiveness of women in the workplace ("equal pay for equal work") angered conservatives who feared women would be unwilling to return to their homes after the war.

Jennifer Kalish's article, "Spouse-devouring Black Widows and Their Neutered Mates: Postwar Suburbanization—A Battle Over Domestic Space," provides insight into the standard historiography of the suburbs and their impact on gender roles. In her analysis of anti-suburban literature of the 1950s, she argues that the suburbs were constructed as a female space where men lost their masculinity. Kalish concludes that such diverse sources as sociological treatises, popular fiction, and a well-known mental health survey of suburbia all shared a profound discomfort with the suburban home because it was a female-dominated space.

In her study of Tupperware and Tupperware hostesses, "'Parties Are the Answer': Gender, Modernity and Material Culture," Alison Clarke argues that U.S. suburban women were able to use Tupperware parties as a way of empowering themselves. Clarke grapples with one of the classic paradigms of modern economic theory which defined the private sphere as non-economic and the public sphere as economic. Clarke contributes to feminist critiques of modern economic theory by arguing that women—through Tupperware parties and sales—created a "domestic" economy centered in the home.

Lisa Materson's article "Sisterhood, Ideology, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: Formulating Policy on the Arab-Israeli Conflict During the 1960s and 1970s" examines efforts on the part of women to work together on an international scale. Materson notes that despite women's belief in promoting world peace, nationalism and cultural difference divided women.

Lisa Hopkins' essay, "Elizabeth I Amongst the Women," and Sangeeta Gupta's essay, "The Ambiguity of the Historical Position of Hindu Women in India: Sita, Draupadi and the Laws of Manu," each examine a particular country's mythic constructs in order to re-read women's agency. Hopkins notes that Queen Elizabeth I—introduced to all British children through their first reader—is a significant role model for girls and for her in particular. Despite her status as role model, Elizabeth I has typically been painted by historians as a misogynist. Hopkins re-reads the legendary tales about Elizabeth I's rivalry with women to
demonstrate Elizabeth's powers as a strategist during a time when her throne was constantly endangered and provides numerous examples of Elizabeth's affection for women. Gupta argues that the Hindu epics, Ramayana and Mahabharatha, have traditionally been interpreted as defining a subordinate role for Indian women. She re-examines the life of Sita (a prominent female figure in the epics) and provides a feminist reinterpretation for Sita's actions in the hopes of empowering Indian women.

In her article, "Exceptions to the Rule: German Women in Music in the Eighteenth Century," Christine Colin takes issue with the standard historiography of Western European music and argues that this canon has overlooked a large group of extremely talented women composers and musicians. She suggests some of the reasons why it was difficult for women to succeed in music, in particular she notes the class constructions of gender which prescribed music as a hobby for women and an art form for men. Colin begins and ends her article with a call for additional research on women musicians and composers in order to provide a more complete picture of music history.

Elizabeth Townsend's article, "This is the world I create: A Review Essay on Current First World War Scholarship," analyzes the historiography of British women and World War I. In addition to the enormous project of recovering primary texts documenting women's experiences during the War, Townsend notes the recent increase in historical studies demonstrating the ways in which women actively participated in the war effort.

Amy Thomas explores recent works in the field of Chinese women's and gender history in her essay "Women and Gender in Late Imperial and Republican China: Problems and Promise of Recent Western Historiography." Thomas concludes that the balanced use of gender theory to analyze Chinese women's experiences holds the most promise for the field.

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Notes


20. This development is most apparent in the recent plethora of journals with the word gender in the title. For example, *Gender & History* founded in 1989 stated in its inaugural issue: "The integration of the experiences, languages, and perspectives of women into our understandings of the past, therefore, requires a fundamental transformation of received categories and models of thinking, as well as new conceptualization of the very definition of historical study and of the nature of those who have the power to define it." "Editorial Collective, "Editorial: Why Gender and History?" *Gender & History* 1 (Spring 1989): 1-6, 4.


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History 5 (Summer 1993): 159-164; Feminist Review 44 (Summer 1993).


33. It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss the relationship between poststructuralism and feminist theory, for an excellent introduction see Chris Weedon, Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1987) and Linda Nicholson, ed., Feminism/Postmodernism (New York: Routledge, 1990).


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