

explanations of the problems of using as sources "the writings of ordinary people" could be greatly enhanced with examples. Although these minor flaws are regrettable, Professor Brundage has written a clear, concise guide to historical writing, one that should be useful to many college students.

It is clear that the authors of these two books care deeply about student writing and very likely expend enormous time and effort in their own courses in helping students improve. *Writing about History* is the more comprehensive, with explanations of a wider range of writing and many more examples. While in general less detailed, *Going to the Sources* does include two unique chapters and much practical advice. The Marius book is probably more suited to upper-level and graduate students, while Brundage is more "available" to the average history student. However, the historiographical essay chapter in Brundage would also be helpful at the graduate level. Professors who are committed to improving student writing should review both of these books and select the one that most closely fits the type of writing assignments they prefer and that best meets the needs of their particular students.

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Paul K. Conkin and Roland N. Stromberg. *Heritage and Challenge: The History and Theory of History*. Arlington Heights, IL: Forum Press, Inc., 1989. Pp. xi, 260. Paper, \$12.95.

Gertrude Himmelfarb. *The New History and the Old*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1989. Pp. 209. Paper, \$8.95.

Heritage and Challenge, first published in 1971 and now revised, is intended for use as a textbook and is really two books in one. The first half, by Stromberg, is a history of history, while the second half, by Conkin, is an examination of the philosophy of history; only the chapter on "Recent Trends" and the brief epilogue are collaborative efforts.

Stromberg's six chapters on historians from ancient times to about 1960 are an analytical critique rather than a mere summary. His basic argument is that modern historical consciousness, which he defines as the ability to understand change, did not begin to emerge until the Enlightenment, and reached its full flower only in the nineteenth century—the "Golden Age" of history.

Historicism, whatever we may think of it today, gave history in the nineteenth century an influence it has never achieved since. Stromberg even suggests that this golden age of history was not merely a result of the French and industrial revolutions, but because of its emphasis on change, was a primary factor in molding nineteenth-century society. Perhaps so, but Stromberg gives no real indication that the relativism of historicism may have led directly to the historical skepticism that followed in the twentieth century—the new historicism, as he calls it, that, unlike the historicism of the previous century, argues that history has no meaning. For Stromberg, the question is whether history can withstand this loss of meaning.

The answer to both authors in their chapter on "Recent Trends" is that indeed history can. But their discussion may leave the reader skeptical, for except in one or two instances, such as the emphasis on gender (both authors make a bow in this direction by usually referring to the historian in the general sense as "she"), they proceed to deplore both the emphasis and methods of the New History.

Conkin, if we may judge by his half of the book, can best be classified as a member of the Walsh-Dray-Hexter school that argues that history is essentially a narrative—a story—written in ordinary language, which, while it makes some claim to truth, depends more on selectivity and coherence than upon some complete explanation of reality. Conkin's main point, reiterated throughout, is that history deals with cultural rather than physical phenomena; it is the product of human thought and actions and is therefore, though not completely, non-deterministic, non-generalizing, and certainly non-predictive.

In their final collaborative chapter, the authors consider the possible uses of history. They have no patience with the idea of history for its own sake, nor do they think its prime use should be for establishing public policies. Rather, they believe history's greatest value is in creating self-identity, both personal and shared, and their hope is that improved self-identity will lead society away from its present pessimism toward a brighter future.

Conkin and Stromberg are apologists for the Old History; Gertrude Himmelfarb's essays in *The New History and the Old* are, in its first six chapters, a blistering attack on the New; only in the last four does she directly defend the Old. All ten essays have been published previously, though most have been revised for this work; all are flat-out polemics, but for this "Old" historian, they are pure delight.

Himmelfarb's main thesis is that while the Old History has tolerated the New, the New refuses to tolerate the Old; the New will accept nothing less than complete victory, and indeed, the New is on the verge of achieving that victory, a victory that will be a disaster, both for history and for society. The irreconcilable differences between the two histories, both in philosophy and method, are that the New historian cannot concede the importance of politics, the idea that man is a political animal, and the Old historian cannot concede that man is merely a social animal; further, the New historian cannot admit the importance of ideas in shaping history, nor the Old historian the determinism of the New. The crux of the matter is the latter: to admit determinism is to admit the inevitability of Hitler, the Holocaust, World War II, and all that followed, and, what is worse, to deny the moral responsibility of not only of individuals, but of the entire human race, and even the value of reason itself.

In the final four essays, Himmelfarb begins by defending national history on the grounds that while nationalism is (or should be) obsolete, national history is not, and for the very reasons of self-identity so important to Conkin and Stromberg. From there she goes on to praise the nineteenth-century Whig historians, for their "overriding respect for the 'Noble Science of Politics'." The penultimate chapter calls for a return to the Idea of Progress in a purely secular sense, not so much to signify our faith in the future as to signify our faith in ourselves. Finally, she asks a most interesting question: Does history talk sense? Taking her cue from Friedrich Nietzsche's question, "suppose history is a woman?" she attacks Michael Oakeschott's contention that the past is dead and has no meaning as nothing less than an invitation to historical nihilism. For Himmelfarb, history is no mere prostitute uninterested in truth, nor is she Oakeschott's irreproachable (and dead) virgin. Instead, she is a sensible wife, who, while she may not tell the whole truth, does talk sense and can tell us something important about the past and (presumably) about ourselves. Does history really talk sense? Maybe. Maybe not. But Gertrude Himmelfarb certainly does.

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D. H. Pennington. *Europe in the Seventeenth Century*. London and New York: Longman, 1989. Second edition. Pp. xiii, 622. Paper, \$20.50.

It has been two decades since the first edition (1970) of the highly acclaimed *Seventeenth-Century Europe* appeared in the "General History of Europe" series. D. H. Pennington, now Emeritus Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, has produced an expanded, extensively rewritten, revised edition. The author offers new information on aspects of seventeenth-century social history, neglected topics in 1970, but does not succumb to the trendy issues of social history. The book retains the topical and narrative flavor of the earlier work. One example of the revision is dividing the original chapter on "The Thirty Years War and The Habsburg Empire" into two new chapters, "The Thirty Years War" and "Germany and the Habsburg Empire." The bibliographies that originally appeared at the beginning of each chapter are updated and placed in a separate bibliography. Redesigned maps, more appropriately located, enhance the overall quality of this new edition.

This work has an important role in a class, but probably not as the primary text for a course. In many ways it is most comparable to the appropriate volumes in the *New Cambridge Modern History* series. Each chapter is an entity in itself and any one of them could be assigned as reserve, ancillary