

Women of Value

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Women of Value - Feminist Essays on the History of Women in Economics edited by Mary Ann Dimand, Robert W. Dimand, Evelyn L. Forget (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1995) ISBN 1 85278 959 X. 240 pp. £49.95.

Alfred Marshall and Mary Paley Marshall - *The Economics of Industry*, Classic Studies in the History of Ideas with an introduction by Denis O'Brien (Bristol: Thoemne Press, 1994). ISBN 1 85506 320 4. Pp xxxvi + 231 £16.99.

Given the inclusion of an essay on Mary Paley Marshall (by Rita McWilliams-Tullberg) in the first volume, it seems appropriate to review her joint product with her famous husband together with this collection of feminist essays on the history of women in economics. The ten essays it includes fall neatly into two parts. The first four, by the three editors and by Alison Thorne, address general issues on the topic - the neglect of women economists, PhD dissertations by American women economists up to 1940, networks of women economists in the 1930s, and women as mentors of women economists in the 1930s. The other six address individual women contributions, sometimes in pairs. They deal with Jane Marcet and Harriet Martineau (Bette Polkinghorn), Harriet Taylor (Michele Pujol) Barbara Bodichon (William Sockwell), Charlotte Gillman (Mary Ann Dimand), Mary Paley Marshall, and two early analyses of women's wage rates, and the contribution thereto by women investigators (Jim Henderson). The volume looks forward to the *Dictionary of Women Economists*, currently in preparation by the editors of this volume, and which will make biodata of women economists far more accessible than it has been so far.

One observation can be immediately made on this study, the absence of any investigation of contributions by continental women economists. This still seems to be a very unexplored field, requiring the detailed statistical investigation of the type included here (especially Essay 2) and attempted in Groenewegen and King (1984) with the same shortcoming. This shows how much work is yet to be done before the facts of the situation about women economists are satisfactorily available. Such facts are required to overcome the neglect (often benign) of the women economists' contribution to the discipline which Robert Dimand demonstrates in his opening paper to the volume. Modern improvements in the situation, at least for the United States, are now regularly documented by the American Economic Association. This practice should be adopted by the professional societies of other countries, either by the publication of a regular handbook of their membership (as the *Societa Italiana degli economisti* does so superbly on an annual basis) or by publishing a statistical report on an annual basis reporting the gender situation in economics faculties, graduate and undergraduate programs, business and government employment, and so on. Monitoring of the situation for the facts (of improvement or regression) perhaps supported by more in-depth research, seems to be a crucial condition for developing satisfactory equal opportunity strategies.

The book reveals how much further work needs to be done in other ways. The study of networking and other forms of support given by women economists to each other is probably

only the tip of the iceberg of what actually took place. It needs supplementation by studies of male support to their women colleagues (visible for example, in the Taussig papers at Harvard and argued to have been the case for Laughlin as editor of the JPE) and for downright obstruction and misinformation (Pasinetti's anecdote about obstacles to Joan Robinson's career at Cambridge; the Skidelsky story about Kahn's contribution to her *Imperfect Competition*) often visible in the literature. The detailed studies of individual women (I particularly benefited from Mary Dimand's essay on Charlotte Gillman) as earlier I had done from Betty Polkinghorn's splendid full biography of Jane Marcet (which place her *Conversation* in proper perspective vis-à-vis the later slurs by Marshall) and Rita McWilliams-Tullberg's research on Marshall's wife and (not included in the volume) his women students. Many more such biographies need to be constructed, because they contribute so greatly to our understanding of the motivations needed by women to tackle economics, the difficulties they encountered, as well as their required skill levels and areas of research interests. This book makes a valuable contribution to this need; it foreshadows the far more significant contribution the editors are about to make in their dictionary of women economists.

Some weaknesses in the book should be recorded. One essay wrongly includes Mary Paley Marshall among the first class of Girton students (p. 46); she was of course at Newnham, as Rita McWilliams-Tullberg correctly indicates some chapters later. The case of Paul Douglas, mentioned on p. 47, ought to have been more fully explored. Since he was one of the few male economists who regularly co-authored with women, the reason for such unusual behaviour would have been interesting to know. Among the Wellesley women (p.48) Anna Youngman who taught there for over a decade (1908-1919) is not mentioned, despite the fact that she was one of the more prolific contributors to the journals, a *magna cum laude* PhD from Chicago, a work when published cited by Mitchell (for reasons perhaps explained on this page) but not reviewed in the journals. Her career path implies some of the hurdles brilliant young women economists faced. She gave up the struggle and moved to journalism but retained her membership in the American Economic Association until her death in 1974. Finally, the treatment of Helen Bosanquet is peculiar. In correspondence, Marshall addressed her as a fellow economist, (she had been a rare female pupil in his Cambridge Advanced Political Economy class in the late 1880s), but Foxwell had blocked her for an Extension Lectureship, so she worked largely for the Charity Organisation Society, becoming its spokesperson on the Poor Law Commission, and subsequently its historian. Incidentally, Octovia Hill was one of the founders of the Charity Organisation Society, and one of Marshall's heroines in self help and the encouragement of a joyful life, whom he held up as a role model for the women to whom he lectured at Cambridge in 1873. There is also the enigma of the Marshall partnership, addressed inconclusively in this volume by Rita McWilliams-Tullberg in a delightful essay. Her role as co-author in *Economics of Industry* is addressed there, as it is in the introduction by Denis O'Brien to its reprinting in 1994, an action of which Marshall would not have approved.

O'Brien gives more credit to Mary Paley Marshall as a significant contributor to this book than I do in my account of Marshall's life on the basis of Marshall's correspondence with Foxwell, which O'Brien does not seem to have used. His introduction, it must be said, is also far less perceptive than that by Giacomo Becattini in his reissue of the book in Italian dress. Becattini demonstrates significant changes between the *Economics of Industry* and the *Principles*, on which Marshall had begun more or less immediately after the publication of their joint book in 1879. These relate to the use of evolution, the emphasis on cooperation and socialism, and on the ethical aspects of economics, signalling a change in broad thrust about the purpose of a fullblown economic text. By adding Whitaker's remarks on such differences relating to the nature of 'normal' value and the theory of distribution, Marshall's 'suppression' can be given some intellectual justification, even though the steps he took in achieving this

goal can never be justified. Reprinting the book is, however, a signal service. It has been rare for decades (despite its 15,000 copies printed) and contains much interesting material which Marshall never since adequately addressed. The material on industrial fluctuations which he himself frequently cited in the 1880s and after, is the prime example. It is a book which should be in every good economics library. The same goes for *Women of Value*, which should be essential reading for women studies courses which address the issue of women in the social sciences. Those teaching John Stuart Mill need also to study it with some care, particularly in the light of Pujol's provocative thesis on the Harriet Taylor contribution and her status as an economist, relative to that of her famous second husband.

Reference

Peter Groenewegen and Susan King (1994), 'Women as Producers of Economic Articles ...', Sydney: University of Sydney, Department of Economics Working Paper No. 201.