the victim or former victim of incest a sense of sisterhood in suffering with the protagonist. But Vale Allen has deliberately stayed as far away from political analysis as she possibly could. Instead, she charts her personal recovery to an equilibrium tinged with bitterness. She does not, *Daddy's Girl*, detail her progress to a political awareness of incest through her own reading, writing and research. Yet, in person, she shares statistics and insights into incest that are startling in their audacity and clarity. She does not read from her book to audiences, as if she herself knew that the book did not go far enough.

For a thorough analysis of the problem of the sexual abuse of children we have to go to Florence Rush's *The Best Kept Secret*. While not underestimating the personal anguish of a child deprived of a protective father and a 'normal' family life, and the insult to small bodies involved in sexual acts with adults, Rush moves on to a critique of patriarchy — its history, myths, psychological theories — and concludes that sexual abuse of children is not an occasional aberration but an organic element of a system in which women and children are the property of males. This overview raises her work above the 'ain't it awful' tone of *Daddy's Girl*.

If you can afford only one of these books I have to recommend *The Best Kept Secret. Daddy's Girl* demonstrates that survival is possible and suggests ways of 'handling' one's anger. But the final chapter of *The Best Kept Secret* also suggests possible ways of channelling that anger into an effective challenge to the exploitation of children. Specifically, Rush asks us to reject the 'no-win contest' in which victims and their mothers are seen as the instigators of crime committed by men. This all-too-familiar pattern is clearly not 'personal' at all.

Sex in History

Reay Tannahill, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 480 pages, $25.95.
Eve Drobot

Reay Tannahill's treatise on humanity's stumbling and groping in its efforts to reproduce itself and have a good time in the process is so relentlessly masculine in its point of view that anyone with even a mild case of feminism should be urged to park his or her convictions outside the door before sitting down to read it. She claims in her preface that *Sex In History* 'is neither feminist nor anti-feminist' and seems to believe that by simply stating her intentions to be 'straightforward and objective', the text will inevitably be accepted as such. But as a historian, she is extremely conservative and prefers to rely on traditional (i.e., male) sources, dismissing in the occasional footnote any effort at reinterpreting events in women's favour as mere revisionism. If the histories of politics, religion, economics and art have always disregarded half of the human race, why should sex be treated differently?

As a result, the only women who have any life in her writing are whores; be they the hetairai of ancient Greece, the temple prostitutes of Rajput India or the *grandes horizontales* of royal France, the only women to have played a part in the affairs of men were those who sold their bodies to them first. She favours them above their sisters because the practice of professional sexuality through the ages has also required business acumen, social graces and being conversant with the arts and political events of the day. Any woman who has not been willing to make this trade-off has been confined, either literally or figuratively, to quarters, to ignorance, drudgery and the boring business of bearing children (preferably legitimate).

Tannahill's disdain for females outside the bedroom becomes tiresome. Roman matrons are insatiable shrews who brought down the Empire by their petty preoccupation with fashion — having nothing else with which to fill their time, they drained the imperial coffers by clamouring for silk and jewels, which needed to be acquired from abroad. Sappho may have written poetry, but it was maudlin and shrill. Religion is a high-minded pursuit unless, of course, the deity is in a female image such as Cybele, the Magna Mater of the Mediterranean, in which case her worship is merely a hysterical cult. And the women who helped pioneer North America were 'long-suffering conscripts' who couldn't wait for the land to be settled so that they could get back to the more important business of wearing fetching sunbonnets.

We find out everything that has ever been done with or to a penis (including the various ways it has been rendered useless in a gruesome but fascinating chapter on eunuchs) and the number of brothels in every major city in the world during the mid-1800s (621 in New York, leading a bishop to complain 'that there were more whores in the city than Methodists') but what women have had to do with sex, other than contributing their bodies to the cause, will have to be dealt with by someone else.

Having said all that, I must now admit that I thoroughly enjoyed this book. One-sided though it may be, Tannahill's account is nonetheless a terrifically good read, filled with enough tantalizing trivia to keep anyone equipped for the dinner party circuit for months. She writes in an amusingly arch way as though to distance herself from her material and let us know with a broad wink that her interest in the subject is academic, not prurient. She peppers her narrative with outrageous asides (St. Jerome's spiritual torments occurred in Chalcis, 'a popular, even slightly overcrowded resort for fourth-century hermits') to remind us that none of this is meant to be taken *too* seriously and indulges in delightfully bizarre anachronisms to score points off previous scholars in the field. After listing all the erudite explanations that have been put forward to explain the abundance of mis-shapen female forms found by archeologists all over central Europe (the best known of which is the Venus of Willendorf), she concludes: 'To say that no one — or no one desirable to the male —could look like the Venuses is modern Western arrogance. There is nothing to rule out the possibility that they were the paleolithic prototypes of the Playgirl of the Month.'

For all her good humour, Tannahill has not been able to escape the unhappy conclusion that, historically, sex has been anything but fun. It has either been formalized to an absurd degree, as in ancient China when 'there must have been times when even the most dedicated Taoist felt that celibacy would have been easier', or repressed in the name of religion or politics (or an unfortunate combination of the two as personified by the conquistadores in South America and the Puritans in the North). She chose the inscription on the frontispiece, a poem by Don Marquis, wisely:

i suppose the human race
is doing the best it can
but hells bells thats
only an explanation
its not an excuse

Eve Drobot writes Current

Coin, a column on etiquette for the eighties for the Fanfare section of The Globe and Mail.
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Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country

Jennifer Brown, University of British Columbia Press, 1980, 291 pp., hardcover $24.
Jacqueline Gresko

Jennifer Brown, an anthropologist, has used archival sources to study a long-neglected topic in the history of frontier North America — fur trade company family life in the 1700s and 1800s. Her discussion, although long and complex is of interest to general readers as well as university professors.

The title, *Strangers in Blood*, though puzzling in itself indicates the main themes of her work. The laws of Britain imposed a 10 per cent duty 'on the legacies of all heirs who were natural children or "strangers in blood" to a deceased party.' In North American fur trade territory, lack of religious and civil institutions meant that fur traders formed alliances with native women according to the custom of the country rather than by official marriage rites. Many of these country wives and their children had to go to court to prove their legitimacy in order to claim their inheritance. For Brown, 'strangers in blood' has a double meaning: this legal description of 'any relationship, even familial that the law refused to admit as legitimate [;]' and 'one way of characterizing the meetings of Whites and Indians . . . in the fur trade of North America.'

Brown's main points about these interracial encounters may be summarized as follows. Before 1821, despite 'their common British (and heavily Scottish) facade' the rival London-based Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and Montreal-based North West Company developed different types of social organizations in Indian country. Though men of both companies married Indian women 'according to the custom of the country', the HBC traders with their permanent residential posts formed stable social units and sought to bring education and civilization to their families. The North Westers were frequently transferred, had temporary arrangements with native women, and 'followed their personal inclinations with regard to their families.' After the coalition of the two fur trade companies in 1821, the traders and their families underwent the pressures of the reorganization of the fur trade by the economy-minded Governor George Simpson. Also armies of missionaries and settlers advanced into fur trade country. They, like Simpson, tended to denigrate native families. Brown contends that, within the new HBC, social distinctions between gentlemen and servants, between white and native, were 'strongly related to changing economic pressures'. Old HBC men, the traders with strong family loyalties and large kinship networks on the frontier, defended their country-born children. They tried to educate and place both their daughters and their sons in British or Canadian society. In the long run, they had more success in securing the positions of their married daughters, especially in the Northwest where country-born women were still the majority of educated women of marriageable age. By contrast the old North Westers tended 'not to assume an active paternal role'. Their children remained in the Northwest as halfbreeds or Metis and 'emphasized their naternal descent.'

While *Strangers in Blood* is an important book, it will be a difficult one for the student or the general reader to follow. It is still too much in the form of the academic thesis. It is complicated by seemingly insignificant bits of anthropological theory. This is perhaps a function of the anthropological system of references used in the book. That eliminates the need for long footnotes but it transfers the clutter of scholarly discussion to the text.

Modern women fighting for Indian rights for Indian women are interested in the legal cases concerning Brown's strangers in blood. Though Brown does not mention the study Kathleen Jamieson did for them *Indian Women and the Law in Canada: Citizens Minus*, (1978), she, like Jamieson refers to the Connolly case of 1869. According to Jamieson it 'established the legal validity of such marriages and indeed was held as a precedent for establishing the validity of all customary marriages until 1951.' Perhaps Indian Rights for Indian Women and Jamieson and Brown could cooperatively edit the records of the case for publication. And, since one of fur trader William Connolly's country born children was Amelia, the consort of Sir James Douglas, father of British Columbia, the University of British Columbia Press should be happy to assist with the project.

Becoming a Mother

Ann Oakley, Martin Robertson & Co. Ltd.: 1979, 328pp., $19.95.
Judith Posner

Ann Oakley's new book on motherhood is a strange sort of academic text. In fact, one can hardly call it a sociological study or analysis in the traditional sense of the term. It is comprised almost exclusively of verbatim quotes transcribed from 66 in-depth tape interviews with urban, middle class and working class women in England. The book is structured around a variety of sub-themes such as the childbirth experience, baby feeding and domestic politics. Aside from its organization and a few sparing remarks by the author interspersed throughout, the book is true to the belief that socio-psychological issues are best understood if the participants or actors are permitted to speak for themselves. And, in *Becoming a Mother*, they do so quite eloquently.

> I think probably more and more I've realized how women do get taken for granted. For example, when Howard and I go out shopping and he wants a drink on the way home, we sit in the pub and he might meet a couple of friends and sometimes I get the feeling that they're not interested in me: I'm just his wife and I've got a baby and I'm not a person. p.271.

Perhaps their perceptions are even more powerful because Oakley avoids the addition of extended analytic elaborations, even though it is quite clear that she must have edited and organized her data with great care and *empathy*. (Oakley is married and has three children). In this respect, her recent study is quite similar to her