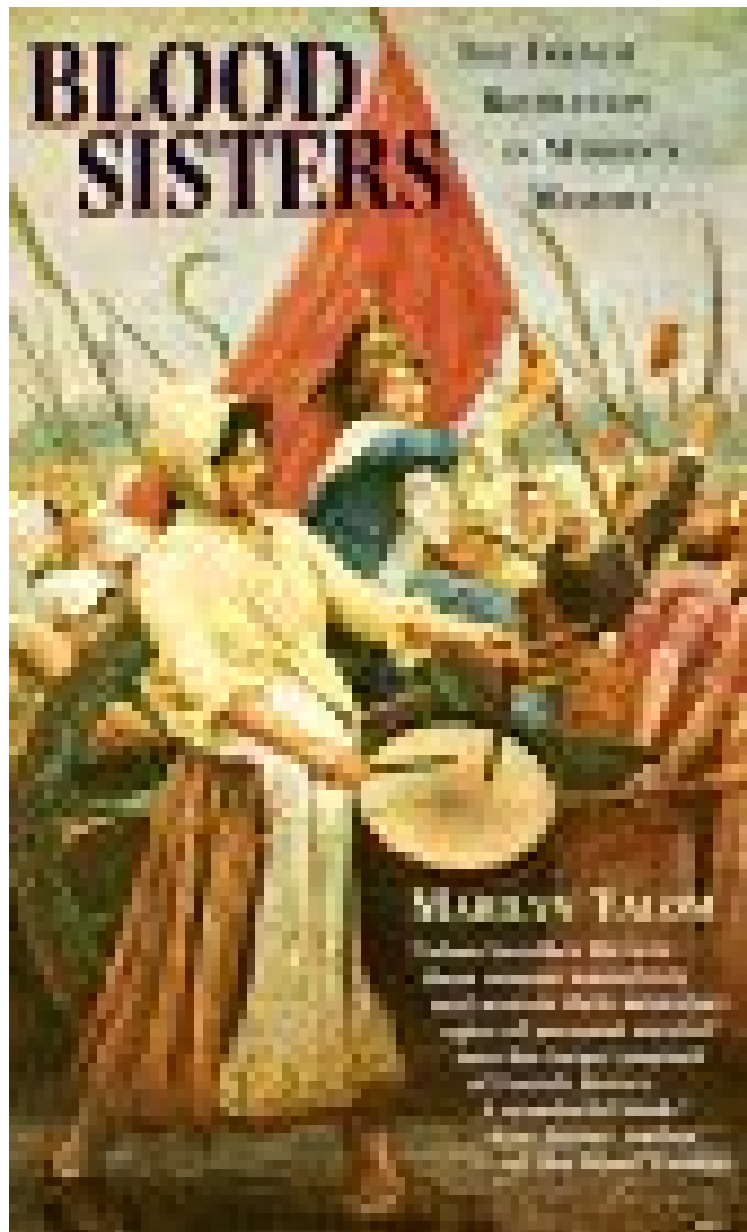


(Online library) Blood Sisters: The French Revolution in Women's Memory

Blood Sisters: The French Revolution in Women's Memory

Marilyn Yalom

**Download PDF / ePub / DOC / audiobook / ebooks*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#2233722 in Books 1995-01-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x 5.25 x 1.00l, #File Name: 0044409184308 pages | File size: 49.Mb

Marilyn Yalom : Blood Sisters: The French Revolution in Women's Memory before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blood Sisters: The French Revolution in Women's Memory:

24 of 24 people found the following review helpful. Deeply satisfyingBy A CustomerI had never read any book by

Marilyn Yalom before, but after finishing "Blood Sisters" I'm eager to do so! For anyone interested in the French Revolution and what I call "personal history" - the history of individuals, as opposed to that of economic or political processes - this book will be a gem. Frenchwomen from all walks of life come alive through their memoirs and recollections of a chaotic, painful time, and, under Yalom's intelligent guidance, paint for us a picture of individual lives shattered by the upheavals of radical change. The one thing which dissatisfied and somewhat irritated me was Yalom's insistence in drawing parallels between the violence and massacres aroused by the Revolution, and the Jewish Holocaust. I really don't see how this was necessary for the understanding and appreciating of the book and its message. I do not wish to call into question the horrors of the Holocaust, which is one of the great tragedies of our times, and undoubtedly one of the worst examples of what man is capable of - but there have been many other instances of barbarity and cruelty, notably in the context of other Revolutions before and since that of France, which would make better parallels. I cannot help but thinking (and I'm not saying this disrespectfully) that in this particular aspect Yalom's Jewishness has gotten the better of her discernment as a scholar. A minor bother in an otherwise rich and engaging book.

The voices of the women who witnessed the French Revolution are finally restored to history. Yalom focuses on the most unforgettable chronicles: the governess of the royal children; the servant attending Marie-Antoinette in her last days; Robespierre's sister, Charlotte; and others bound together by a common nightmare.

From Publishers Weekly Yalom, a faculty member of Stanford University's Institute for Research on Women and Gender who has written many books in the fields of French history and women's studies (*Rethinking the Family*), here uses her expertise to provide a thoughtful feminist analysis of the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror that followed. Quoting heavily from more than 75 memoirs, some written by women loyal to the throne, others by those who supported the Revolution, Yalom posits that, because the writers had in common both gender and a primary concern for personal relationships, they viewed the bloodshed differently than their male counterparts. She cites Rosalie Lamorliere's poignant chronicle of Marie Antoinette's last days, Charlotte Robespierre's memories of her brother Maximilian, who sent hundreds to the guillotine, and Alexandrine des Echerolles's account of the 1793 Lyons uprising as examples of the horror at the wanton loss of life that all these memoirists shared. A unique contribution to historical studies. Illustrations not seen by PW. History Book Club alternate. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal This masterfully crafted book adds a new dimension to our understanding of the French Revolution: it demonstrates how French women, as distinct from French men, remembered that event. Yalom (French literature history, Stanford) draws upon the memoirs of 80 women. While the majority were aristocrats, like Germaine de Stael and Madame Roland, a few were of the peasant and working class, and most were sensitive to areas in which gender affected their experiences and sensibilities. All, in some way, felt a duty to record the pain and tragedy they had witnessed. Yalom incorporates their reminiscences within the chronological narrative of the revolution and organizes her text geographically. Interspersed with insights from recent scholarship, the book includes a useful annotated bibliography. Scholars and students alike will benefit from this important volume. - Marie Marmo Mullaney, Caldwell Coll., Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s Yalom (a researcher at Stanford's Institute for Women and Gender Studies; *Maternity, Morality, and the Literature of Madness*, 1985, etc.-- not reviewed) offers a diffuse literary and feminist perspective on the 138 memoirs of the French Revolution written by women (out of a total of 1,502). Her role: to serve as a "medium for their resurrection." The memoirs (listed in an annotated bibliography) are by a diverse range of figures: Republicans and Royalists; the young child of Louis XVI; an aging nun; literary folk such as Madame Genlis and Madame de Stal; illiterate peasants who dictated their adventures; fashionable Parisians and rustics from the French Southwest. But these women, cut off by their sex from the political life that explained the excesses of the Revolution, saw and recorded only the hardship, violence, and suffering--remaining victims and spectators even when they managed, through cross-dressing, to join the battles, or when they served as intermediaries for their men in prison, petitioning for their release. Some of the women, like Charlotte Robespierre, entered history by recording the lives of famous men they were associated with. Others, migrants, helped spread French culture, acquired independence, and brought back to a restored France foreign ideas from Russia, England, and Germany. But Yalom's major theme seems to be writing, and she endows her subjects with many literary associations: Madame Roland, for example, the rare female Republican who perished in the backlash, is compared to Jane Austen for hiding her writing behind conventional domestic activities; to Virginia Woolf when she goes to prison and acquires a room of her own; and to Dostoyevsky, whose career flourished after being rescued--which, sadly, Roland wasn't. Yalom attempts too much here: to illustrate certain feminist assumptions about women in history; to define a genre (the memoir); to place these women in a literary context; and to convey the experiences they recorded. A sound though scattered exposition, then, and a good basis for future research. -- Copyright 1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.