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BUCHAN, Lynne



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Lynne Buchan: 'men are the gatekeepers'

# Author fights women's case

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By ALANA PERKINS  
Times staff writer

Men are the gatekeepers of the literary traditions, so women have never been given recognition for the wealth of unpublished novels and poems they have produced, charges author Lynne Buchan.

In her book, *Unpublished Heritage: The Politics of Selection*, the 35-year-old Mississauga resident details the history of women's writing from the times women recorded their lives in diaries because publishing work cast suspicions on a lady's virtue.

While studying for a master's degree in English, Ms. Buchan was discouraged to find the history of women's writing was left untouched. Ms. Buchan did not appreciate the university's choice of literature and decided to embark on her own study which resulted in the eight-chapter book which will be published in England after Christmas.

Ms. Buchan has based the book on conversations with authors, newspaper quotes from people such as Margaret Laurence, and the unpublished writings of 19th and 20th century female authors.

"Publishing is an irrational process,"

said the O'Hagan Dr. resident. "The recognition and merit does not come at the selection stage when a publisher chooses to take your work. Recognition comes at a critic's hands.

"Men are the gatekeepers and publish women's writings only for financial or political reasons. When it suits men, women get published. You often hear of Margaret Laurence submitting her manuscript eight times. Can you imagine the unpublished treasures of women writers out there?"

Ms. Buchan says it is hard to pinpoint the line between deliberate oppression and women's reluctance to go public with their work. William Wordsworth's sister kept a diary and recent research has established that many lines in Wordsworth's poems are recorded in his sister's diary.

Feminist writings flows in Ms. Buchan's family. Sister Dale Spender's book, entitled *Man Made Language*, argues that language is literally man-made. For example, the words bachelor and spinster have the same meaning but different dictionary descriptions. Ms. Spender points out that a bachelor is seen as dashing and admired while spinster implies inferior and unwanted.