

# feminist collections

a quarterly of women's studies resources

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## FROM THE EDITORS

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In the summer of 1985, engrossed in compiling and writing Women's Studies: A Recommended Core Bibliography, 1980-1985, we shared with our readers some "mid-project impressions." (1) We described the challenge of selecting a core listing from the thousands of worthy books published during that half-decade; we identified our selection criteria; and we summarized our observations about the changing shape of the literature. Overwhelmed by the books piling up on all sides, at that time we still naively looked to a completion date early in 1986.

We soon realized that we had been overly optimistic. As summer turned to fall, we redoubled our efforts to turn stacks of books and mounds of reviews into succinct bibliographic essays, demanding of ourselves ever increasing rates of productivity. Familiar to anyone who has tackled a major project with a deadline, the stress at times drained us. Yet there was a certain heady exhilaration, too, in the push to keep pace.

And it's hard to imagine better discipline for the writer. Aware that our manuscript-in-progress had already exceeded the publisher's expectations as to length, we strove to make our annotations ever more concise, mastering the art of distilling the essence of a given topic, a field of study, a group of books in as few words as possible. The task presented us with not only a compelling intellectual challenge but also a game at which we became increasingly proficient.

Our January 1986 deadline gave way to a revised estimate of March, which yielded in turn to a more realistic projection of May. By the end, the two of us, coauthor Esther Stineman, assistant author Meredith Ross, and student assistant Pamela Niebauer had melded ourselves into an impressively well-oiled machine for churning out annotations, edited copy, proofreading, corrections, and final text. On June 6, it was done; we sent off to the publisher a 1188-page manuscript, featuring citations to 1213 works and embedded references to at least an equal number.

But we were not yet through. Having agreed to publish in full a book that was double the anticipated length, our publisher, Libraries Unlimited, suggested that we next embark on a project to abridge the volume for paperback publication.

This task still lies ahead. But for the moment -- author, title, and subject indexes completed, the typeset manuscript proofed and corrected -- we are sitting back, trying to wean ourselves off the seductive frenzy of the past year, while we await with eager anticipation the appearance of our bibliography soon after the new year. We hope it will find a home in many libraries and women's studies programs, and that it will -- like the volume it supplements (2) -- become a basic tool for scholars, librarians, and students.

We offer deep thanks to the National Endowment for the Humanities, which provided funding and encouragement for the bibliography.

-- C.L. and S.S.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See "From the Editors," Feminist Collections: A Quarterly of Women's Studies Resources v.6, no.4 (Summer 1985), pp.3-5.

<sup>2</sup> Esther Stineman, with Catherine Loeb, Women's Studies: A Recommended Core Bibliography (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1979).

# FEMINIST VISIONS

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## CRITICAL VIEWING: THE DEPICTION OF WOMEN IN JOHN HUGHES' TEEN MOVIES

Between 1984 and 1986, John Hughes wrote, directed, and produced five films for and about Hollywood's primary consumers -- adolescents. In order of release, these films are Sixteen Candles, The Breakfast Club, Weird Science, Pretty in Pink, and Ferris Bueller's Day Off. Although none of the five was a blockbuster hit for Universal Pictures, their popularity with teens has been phenomenal. Each film remained among the nation's top thirteen films for ten to twenty weeks; a couple of them ranked in the top five for several weeks. (1) In Madison, Wisconsin -- a city with fourteen movie theaters and thirty-five screens, where most films run only five to six weeks -- Ferris Bueller's Day Off played for twenty-one weeks. Each film appeared in video format about seven months after its theater release, and rental figures have remained steadily high during 1985 and 1986. (2)

These films grab teenagers because they evoke teen culture in a powerful, even empowering, way. Yet the culture portrayed by Hughes denigrates women. These two facts -- the films' power and popularity combined with their negative images of women -- call for intervention to counter the films' messages and make the five films apt choices for teaching critical viewing in the women's studies classroom.

Characters in the Hughes world adhere to a strict code of gender-specific behavior. Listed below are several key elements of that code:

\* Hughes' heroines do not rebel. One girl is presented as rebellious but psychotic; she is eventually saved from this sorry state by a friend who teaches her how to apply make-up and threads a ribbon through her hair. Heroines engage primarily in talk and activities related to clothes and boys, even when at school. All heroines have dressing tables in their bedrooms.

\* Hughes' heroes are rebels and loners. Anti-intellectual but extremely clever, they talk about "the meaning of life" and have the requisite computer and high-tech equipment in their bedrooms.

\* Hughes presents mothers as forgetful, bossy, abject, gullible, angry, alcoholic, and neglectful of their families. Fathers fare better. When husband and wife are in the same room, the woman is always presented in a two-shot with her spouse, never alone.

\* Female teachers are underrepresented in the Hughes universe: of the many teachers who appear in these five films, only two are female. On the other hand, all of the disabled characters are women, and Hughes makes these characters the butt of his visual jokes.

\* Grandmothers are depicted as being totally out of touch with teen culture and as an embarrassment to their teen grandchildren. Their habits, clothes, and hairdos are ridiculed. Grandfathers are equally disparaged, however.

In one sense, there is nothing new about Hughes' portrayal of women; it is a rare film indeed that casts women in roles that break with prevailing stereotypes. I would argue, nonetheless, that these films are particularly pernicious because they are uniquely involving for their teen viewers. Not only do the statistics indicate that the films are being viewed repeatedly by millions of teens, but interviews with adolescents suggest that they "love" the films because they can "really identify" with the central characters.

Critics agree that what engages and holds the adolescent's attention is Hughes' superb ability to reproduce teen speech patterns of the late 1980s (3); the filmmaker has a knack for capturing the language in which adolescents talk about their lives. Yet what his young viewers seem to remember most vividly are the stock characters in the films. Hughes sets up visual and verbal codes for the representation of certain groups -- parents and grandparents; high school personnel; "jocks"; "brains"; "rich, popular kids"; and outsiders. Reproducing actual types in exaggerated form, Hughes creates characters that are readily recognized by teenage viewers. He then carries the same codes over from one film to the next. In fact, once he has established the codes for each group, he can invoke their full meaning with very few cues; such is the intertextual power of these films.

Having achieved strong viewer identification through his use of language and stock characters, Hughes intensifies audience involvement by mixing satiric and realist forms. In the satires, his central characters (always three) are spared ridicule; they are not laughed at as one might expect in classic satire and other teenage films, but are "identified with" as are characters in "realist" narrative. The filmmaker allows the principal characters to laugh at the other characters in the film, and at several points, he has a protagonist -- always male, never female -- look at or talk directly to the audience. Thus, he breaks from satire to realist narrative, and from narrative to documentary.

This mixing of forms is a powerful technique. Morreall has said that those who laugh at the vices or follies of others feel a sense of superiority. (4) By giving teen viewers the opportunity to laugh and feel superior -- both as audience and vicariously through their identification with the central characters -- Hughes gives them a sense of power. "These films are a good revenge," admitted one teenage boy I interviewed.

In a world where they have little real social power, teen viewers gain a sense of empowerment from Hughes' films. And it is precisely because the films are so engaging and so widely viewed that they could be effective vehicles for teaching critical viewing in the classroom. Teachers could have students examine the films carefully to see whether their male and female characters are equally empowered. They could point out the formulaic speech and behavior of Hughes' characters, helping students move beyond identification to a critical analysis of the films' messages -- particularly as regards women. Since Hughes' depiction of women is so uniformly negative, his films may act as catalysts for resistance to regressive social norms. In these films, parents and teachers have at their fingertips instructional resources that are part of nearly all adolescents' common experience. Thoughtful guidance in reading these films may give teens the power to reject Hughes' messages about women.

-- Ann DeVaney (Becker)

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Top 50 Chart," Variety (May 9 - June 13, 1984), (February 20 - April 1, 1985), (March 5 - May 22, 1986), (June 25 - October 1, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> I base this statement on a survey of all twelve video rental stores in Madison.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Corliss, "Growing Pains," Time v.127 (March 3, 1986), p.83; James Greenberg, "Universal Signs Hughes to Three Year Pact," Variety v.318 (May 2, 1984), p.19; Roger Ebert, Movie Home Companion (Kansas City: Andrews, McMeel & Parker, 1986); Pauline Kael, "The Current Cinema: Mars," The New Yorker v.62 (April 3, 1986), pp.91-92.

<sup>4</sup> John Morreall, Taking Laughter Seriously (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).

## WOMEN'S LANGUAGE: THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN.

This article is the first in a two-part series on the information projects of the National Council for Research on Women. The Council, founded in 1982, is a consortium of fifty-one independent and university-affiliated research centers devoted to expanding the body of knowledge about women and gender issues. One of the Council's top priorities has been the development of online databases about women and the creation of tools needed to access them. In this issue, I review the development of the forthcoming A Women's Thesaurus, a working list of subject terms for manual and online indexing, and discuss some of the linguistic and philosophical questions raised by the process of thesaurus design. In the next issue, I will look at other projects

supported by the Council, including the creation of specialized databases and the collaborative development of online networks.

\* \* \*

Tentatively titled A Women's Thesaurus: An Index of Language Used to Describe and Locate Information By and About Women, the first major product of the Council's information initiative is in the final stages of editing and should be published by summer 1987. Since Susan Searing described the project's early phases in a previous issue of Feminist Collections (1), I'll simply recap the project's history here.

The thesaurus officially got its start in 1982 when the National Council for Research on Women linked up with the American Library Association's Women's Studies Database Task Force, whose members had recently documented the need for improved online retrieval of women's resources. (2) We identified others concerned with resource access and in October, 1982, sponsored a meeting in New York that brought together a broad-based coalition resolved to coordinate indexing standards and develop other ways of applying state-of-the-art technology to our work.

At that meeting, we outlined the need for a comprehensive, machine-based thesaurus and created a Thesaurus Task Force to coordinate the project. Initial support came from the Business and Professional Women's Foundation (a Council member center). BPW had begun work earlier that year on their own thesaurus, laying the groundwork for computerizing their resource center collection. They provided funds for the first major phase of the expanded project, and their resource center librarian, Cheryl Sloan, provided initial technical coordination. Additional support has come from the Council's core operating grant from the Ford Foundation; project grants from the Lilly Endowment and Prudential Foundation; in-kind contributions of programming and computer time from Advanced Data Management, developers of the database software (DRS) used to build the thesaurus; and extensive volunteer labor from the Task Force, thesaurus subject specialists, and test sites.

We produced the first draft of the thesaurus by combining subject lists, catalog headings, filing system guides, and index terms from thirty-five research centers, libraries, publishers, and associations. This list was then shared with librarians, scholars, policymakers, and activists in each of eleven subject categories: Communications; Economics and Employment; Education; History and Social Change; International Women; Language, Literature, Religion, and Philosophy; Law, Government, and Public Policy; Natural Science and Health; Science and Technology; Social Science and Culture; and Visual and Performing Arts.

We asked subject specialists in each area to add missing terms and scope notes (definitions), delete terms, suggest cross-references, indicate preferred terms, and identify potential areas of ambiguity and conflict. Their charge was to produce a revised list of the language -- formal and informal, vernacular and scholarly -- currently used to define women's lives and research. We were concerned that the thesaurus accurately describe whatever would be indexed, sought, or filed and wanted to make the thesaurus accessible to the broadest possible range of users.

Subject specialists' recommendations were edited to conform to our structure subcommittee's guidelines; wherever possible, these guidelines adopted the standards of word form and form of entry set by the American National Standards Institute's (ANSI) Guidelines for Thesaurus Structure, Construction, and Use. (3) The lists were twice more submitted to subject groups for review, and a third round of revisions was then edited and tested at over sixty research, policy, and advocacy centers in this country and abroad. Incorporating test-site recommendations and suggested revisions, the current version of A Women's Thesaurus now includes over five thousand terms in six separate displays.

The Alphabetical Display lists all terms, with cross-references and scope notes where needed. Any preferred or "do not use" terms are also indicated. Cross-references include synonyms or related terms, broader "parent" terms, and all narrower, more specific terms listed. Looking up the term RAPE, for example, users will be referred to the larger concept SEXUAL VIOLENCE, to the more specific examples of DATE RAPE, GANG RAPE, MARITAL RAPE, and SLAVE RAPE, as well as to other related terms like CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN and INCEST. Looking up SEXUAL VIOLENCE, users will be referred to a still broader term, VIOLENCE, as well as to the narrower terms SEXUAL ABUSE and SEXUAL ASSAULT.

The Rotated Display, sometimes called a permuted display, alphabetizes all entries by each word in a term. This display is useful for finding clusters of terms that include the same word and would otherwise not be alphabetized together: for example, EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES, HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYMENT, MALE-DOMINATED EMPLOYMENT, and PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT.

The Hierarchical Display is two-way and shows terms with as many as four links up and down. In this display, each broader and narrower term is marked to indicate its relationship to its "parent" or "child" term. This format helps users broaden or narrow a search and puts terms in their broadest contexts. Looking up BOYCOTTS, for example, a user would be led up two levels to the broader term PROTEST ACTIONS and the still broader term ACTIONS, then down one level to the narrower term ECONOMIC BOYCOTTS. By expanding on the cross-referencing in the Alphabetical Display, the Hierarchical Display permits a high level of accuracy in indexing and retrieval.

The Grouped Term Display alphabetizes terms within each of the eleven subject groups, suggesting other search terms that, while not synonyms, might yield related references. INDOCTRINATION and IMAGES OF WOMEN are both listed in the Communications subject group, for example.

The Use/Use For Display alphabetizes "do not use" terms linked to their preferred terms and also alphabetizes the preferred terms linked to their "do not use" terms.

The sixth group, the Delimiters Display, includes search terms or proper nouns, often common to several subject groups, that can be used to "delimit," narrow, or refine an online search strategy or to standardize a manual filing system. Although most of these terms are also listed in the main Alphabetical Display, we have opted to group these descriptors separately to provide easier access to them. Key search words -- for example, BIBLIOGRAPHIES, TRANSCRIPTS, and QUESTIONNAIRES (all formats of information); FRENCH and AFRO-AMERICAN (national or cultural identifiers); or MEDIEVAL PERIOD and VIETNAM WAR

(chronological indicators) -- are listed alphabetically within logical categories. We expect that users will add terms, even additional categories, to the Delimiters Display to meet their needs for indexing or searching specialized collections.

These six displays present varied ways into the language to support different users' habits in locating terms they need. We expect the thesaurus to support a variety of applications. It can aid indexers and others who create, as well as those who search, manual and computerized filing systems; indexes for books, reports, government documents, magazines, scholarly journals, newspapers, and newsletters; multisource indexes and reference guides; bibliographies; and abstracts of books and research articles.

Another primary application will be to suggest cross-references and narrower terms that can sharpen existing classification and cataloging systems. It should be understood that the thesaurus is not itself a classification system. The thesaurus is not intended to replace existing classification and cataloging systems, and wherever possible, we have attempted to maintain compatibility with existing systems. We compared terms included in the thesaurus with terms used in the current Library of Congress Subject Headings, for example, and have chosen preferred Library of Congress terms where they fit our own guidelines. (4) We expect, however, that the ready availability of terms contained in the thesaurus will enable catalogers working with manual or online card catalogs to add detailed descriptors that will profile their collections more accurately and provide some imaginative correctives for biases embedded in existing classification systems.

We have also designed the thesaurus for optimum use with computerized retrieval systems. Except where multiword (precoordinated) terms are needed for defining a unique concept (such as GENDER GAP or SEX SEGREGATION), we have postcoordinated or separated terms so that both indexers and users will have maximum efficiency in assigning keywords and requesting search terms. Instead of NURSES--SALARIES or HOUSEWIVES AS AUTHORS (existing Library of Congress subject headings), for example, a user can index or retrieve literature on these subjects by pairing terms listed separately in the thesaurus: NURSES and WAGES and COMPARABLE WORTH or EQUAL PAY; or AUTHORS and HOMEMAKERS or WAGE EARNING WIVES or WOMEN WORKING OUTSIDE THE HOME.

We hope that still another use of the thesaurus will be to serve as a reference guide for the nonsexist use of the language. (5) Users looking up STEWARDESSES, for example, in the Use/Do Not Use Display will be referred to FLIGHT ATTENDANTS. Cross-references in the Alphabetical Display will lead users from HOUSEWIVES to HOMEMAKERS, from WORKING WOMEN to WOMEN WORKING OUTSIDE THE HOME. As a reference tool, the thesaurus is thus designed to broaden awareness of the ways in which language structures our thinking. Users are directed to terms that expand a concept. A term like SEXISM, for example, points to related terms like DOUBLY DISADVANTAGED, PORNOGRAPHY, and SEXIST LANGUAGE. Users will also be referred to the narrower terms INSTITUTIONAL SEXISM and LINGUISTIC SEXISM. Looking up INSTITUTIONAL SEXISM will in turn lead users to key concepts like BLAMING THE VICTIM, GATEKEEPING, and STRUCTURAL DISCRIMINATION. While no substitute for more in-depth analysis of linguistic biases, as a working tool the thesaurus attempts to provide comprehensive, accessible lists of terms that embody these important concepts.

We have also included some terms in the thesaurus from other languages where the terms express concepts that do not have more precise translations in English. We are in the process of exploring issues surrounding translation of the thesaurus -- using the thesaurus as a starting point for other European, Asian, Latin American, and Third World editions -- without falling into the trap of English-dominated or English-"normed" translations. Our ambition for future editions is eventually to work towards a common international vocabulary.

Although we are proud of the consensus, editing, and testing that have taken us this far toward a common vocabulary, the process is far from complete, even in American English. Nor should it be. From the beginnings of the project, we have stressed the importance of process, the importance of recognizing language as a continually changing, vital repository of our culture. We have had to attempt consensus in emerging interdisciplinary areas of knowledge that are still male-normed. As Searing pointed out in her 1983 article, the thesaurus represents a "unique opportunity to appropriate the power of naming." Yet attempts to standardize that process cannot avoid controversy.

There are inevitably trade-offs between descriptions of the language as it is used and our commitment to standardizing a language that empowers all users without prejudice. What are the norms, for example, implicit in a recently-coined term like FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY? Do we acknowledge its currency in the literature and continue to use it as a convenient index term? Our task force suggested WOMEN LIVING IN POVERTY or PAUPERIZATION OF WOMEN as alternatives, terms perhaps more cumbersome but also more accurate, not perpetuating the process of attaching negative consequences to FEMINIZATION.

It is essential that the process of naming, this process of standardization we have undertaken, be understood as a means of access, a way into the language. This standardization is not a silencing, a neutralizing of women's diversity. If anything, it is an attempt to evoke the complexity, the texture of women's lives in process. (Randomly selected sections of the alphabetical display yield some striking juxtapositions: PIECEWORK LABOR POLICIES, THE PILL, PILOTS, PIMPS, PIN MONEY, PINK COLLAR WORKERS, PIONEERS, PIRATES.) The last several decades of work have shown us possibilities for defining structures that are not oppressive. We have seen the potential for building consensus, for suggesting standards that call into question the existing, often unconscious norms that disenfranchise us. It is only this shared, ongoing process, ultimately, that will enable us to articulate our dream of a common language. We welcome your responses and suggestions. For further information, contact: The National Council for Research on Women, Sara Delano Roosevelt Memorial House, 47-49 East 65th Street, New York, NY 10021; (212) 570-5001.

-- Mary Ellen S. Capek

[Mary Ellen S. Capek, Executive Secretary of the National Council for Research on Women, coordinates the Council's Thesaurus Task Force and Database Steering Committee and is editing A Women's Thesaurus. A founding officer of the Council and former Director of Continuing Education at Princeton University, she has been active in building women's research and education networks since the early seventies. She received a Ph.D. in American and English Literature

from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has done research and writing on contemporary women's poetry; linguistics, technology, and writing; and women in higher education administration and governance networks. Portions of this article will appear as part of the introduction to A Women's Thesaurus, copyright by The National Council for Research on Women.]

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Susan Searing, "From the Editors," Feminist Collections: A Quarterly of Women's Studies Resources v.4, no.4 (Summer 1983), pp.3-5.

<sup>2</sup> Sarah M. Pritchard, "Developing Criteria for Database Evaluation: The Example of Women's Studies." In Evaluation of Reference Services, edited by Bill Katz and Ruth A. Fraley. New York: Haworth Press, 1984.

<sup>3</sup> American National Standards Institute, American National Standards Guidelines for Thesaurus Structure, Construction, and Use. New York: ANSI, 1980.

<sup>4</sup> Ruth Dickstein, Vicki Mills, and Ellen Waite, eds. Women: In LC's Terms. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, forthcoming.

<sup>5</sup> Casey Miller and Kate Swift, The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing. New York: Lippincott & Crowell, 1980.

## NEW REFERENCE WORKS IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

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Chapman, Anne. Feminist Resources for Schools and Colleges: A Guide to Curricular Materials. 3rd ed. New York: The Feminist Press, 1986. 190p. index. pap., \$12.95, ISBN 0-935312-35-8. LC 85-10110.

Cheng, Lucie, Charlotte Furth, and Hon-ming Yip. Women in China: Bibliography of Available English Language Materials. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1984. 109p. index. pap., \$12.00, ISBN 0-912966-72-6. LC 84-81228.

Klejment, Anne, and Alice Klejment. Dorothy Day and The Catholic Worker: A Bibliography and Index. New York: Garland, 1986. 412p. index. \$52.00, ISBN 0-8240-9045-4. LC 83-48221.

MacDonald, Edgar E., and Tonette Bond Inge. Ellen Glasgow: A Reference Guide. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1986. 269p. index. \$50.00, ISBN 0-8161-8218-3. LC 85-27045.

Matovich, Richard M. A Concordance to the Collected Poems of Sylvia Plath. New York: Garland, 1986. 623p. index. \$86.00, ISBN 0-8240-8664-3. LC 85-45126.

Powerful Images: A Women's Guide to Audiovisual Resources. Rome and Santiago: Isis International, 1986. 210p. illus. pap., \$12.00, ISBN 88-85840-00-0. (Address: Isis International, Via Santa Maria dell'Anima, 30, 00186 Rome, Italy)

Schwartz, Narda Lacey. Articles on Women Writers, 1976-1984: A Bibliography. Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio Information Services, 1985. 305p. index. \$50.00, ISBN 0-87436-438-8. LC 85-7484.

A Selected and Annotated Bibliography on Refugee Women. Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; Washington: Refugee Policy Group for the United Nations Decade for Women, 1985. 69p. index.

Signorielli, Nancy, ed. Role Portrayal and Stereotyping on Television: An Annotated Bibliography of Studies Relating to Women, Minorities, Aging, Sexual Behavior, Health, and Handicaps. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985. 214p. index. \$35.00, ISBN 0-313-24885-9. LC 85-9823.

The third edition of Feminist Resources for Schools and Colleges, compiled and edited by Anne Chapman, is a considerably expanded update of the classic Feminist Press guide. Addressing high school and undergraduate college teachers and students, Chapman highlights materials for designing women's studies courses and for restructuring the traditional curriculum. In gathering and annotating references to 445 items from the period between 1975 and 1984, Chapman reconceptualized the bibliography. The second (1977) edition, by Merle Froschl and Jane Williamson, had used levels of education (preschool and elementary, secondary, and higher) as its basic organizing principle, with a generous listing of general materials on sexism in education, textbook evaluation, school law, career counseling, and the like. Chapman chooses instead to separate print and audiovisual resources and to use as subdivisions within those two major categories academic subjects -- art, English, history, mathematics, science, and social science. She also includes interdisciplinary materials on such themes as minority women and women and work.

The most striking feature of Feminist Resources for Schools and Colleges is the strong, evaluative language of the annotations. Chapman not only identifies the grade level of the print works, but adds spicy comments on content and style, frequently cautioning her readers about technical or scholarly jargon that interferes with ease of reading. Although she emphasizes books, Chapman also cites journal articles that provide useful overviews (for example, review essays in Signs). The nonprint listings, with much briefer annotations based on distributors' catalogs, encompass films, videocassettes, filmstrips, slide sets, and sound recordings. All entries include prices. The guide concludes with a directory of publishers and distributors, and indexes by author/title and subject.

Despite such valuable sources as Kaye Sullivan's two-volume Films By, For, and About Women (Scarecrow, 1980, 1985), bibliographic access to nonprint materials in women's studies is still less than adequate. With the demise of the Catalyst Media Review, there is no ongoing reviewing medium. Our own New Books on Women & Feminism, in its brief nonprint chapter, provides one of the few current awareness listings. The very appearance of Powerful Images: A

Women's Guide to Audiovisual Resources therefore makes me cheer. Produced by Isis International, this illustrated guide offers unprecedented information about films, videotapes, and slide sets produced by women activists around the world. The two first sections of the sourcebook discuss the value of audiovisual materials in grassroots feminist organizing, outline the basics of how to produce and use them, and present accounts of nine Third World women's audiovisual projects.

From a reference librarian's standpoint, the most important section of the book is its middle -- a catalog of over six hundred nonprint resources, arranged by topic and region. There is a clear emphasis on activist concerns, although attention is paid to cultural as well as political and economic themes. Each entry is annotated, and describes the format, running time, language, producer, and distributor. Cross-references between subject categories add to the pleasure of using the guide. The final section presents an annotated bibliography of other catalogs, guides, and periodicals, and provides addresses for distributors, filmmakers, and grassroots women's organizations. Despite these aids, it may be difficult for teachers and program planners in the United States to obtain audiovisual materials from abroad. Still, Powerful Images is rousing testimony to women's use of nonprint media worldwide.

While some feminists venture into media production, others study the image of women in mainstream media. A new bibliography by Nancy Signorielli promises to assist in this field, but alas is a rather spotty effort. Role Portrayal and Stereotyping on Television: An Annotated Bibliography of Studies Relating to Women, Minorities, Aging, Sexual Behavior, Health, and Handicaps emphasizes scholarly articles and books, and excludes conference papers and dissertations. Although there is a large body of writing on this topic from a feminist perspective, it does not appear here. Of a total of 423 entries, 185 fall in the section on women. After examining the volume, I have to agree with the reviewer in Choice (Jan. 1986, p.730) who faulted the bibliography as "a troubling example of ingroup academic research" and wished Signorielli had conducted a more thorough search of the literature. Researchers can still benefit from Leslie J. Friedman's Sex Role Stereotyping in the Mass Media: An Annotated Bibliography (Garland, 1977), which ten years ago surveyed all the media and described over a thousand works. A comprehensive supplement to Friedman's volume would be ideal.

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Because bibliographies so rapidly go out of date, reference librarians always hail supplements and new editions. When a second volume improves upon the first -- as is the case with Narda Lacey Schwartz's Articles on Women Writers, 1976-1984: A Bibliography -- it's time to celebrate. Schwartz's first bibliography of literary criticism appeared in 1977. Attractively designed, it listed thousands of articles about more than six hundred women writers. Schwartz included only women who wrote in English, but her geographic scope embraced Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and African countries. Letter writers, diarists, and essayists numbered among the authors, as well as writers of fiction, poetry, and drama, from the Middle Ages to the present.

In the second volume, Schwartz continues the basic format -- an alphabetical organization by name of author -- in an even more pleasing, easy-to-consult layout. Entries total 7,796, and they treat over 1,000 women writers. The compiler has culled references from a number of standard reference sources (for instance, the Humanities Index, the Modern Languages Association International Bibliography, Abstracts of English Studies, and Women Studies Abstracts), as well as from bibliographies contained in major journals of literary studies. Book reviews are largely excluded. Although this is the best guide to substantive writings about women authors, one can find omissions and errors -- for example, one of the entries for Susan Stanford Friedman in the index leads nowhere, and Friedman's article on Adrienne Rich and H.D. from the Winter 1983 Signs is inexplicably absent from the listings for either writer. But the sheer size of the bibliography suggests that such omissions are rare, and that Schwartz has managed to capture the bulk of the last nine years' literary criticism. This book belongs in all libraries that hold the first volume, but it can also stand alone as a guide to recent studies.

Bibliographies devoted to single authors continue to appear, for the publication of comprehensive works like Schwartz's does not diminish the utility of specialized reference guides. Ellen Glasgow, a popular southern writer of the early twentieth century, is the subject of a new bibliography by Edgar E. MacDonald and Tonette Bond Inge. The compilers strive for complete coverage of English-language writings about Glasgow from 1897 to 1945 in Ellen Glasgow: A Reference Guide. While books, critical articles, dissertations, and material in standard reference volumes are all cited here, the most interesting entries are for newspaper reviews of Glasgow's works. MacDonald and Inge quote frequently from the reviews in their annotations, conveying the flavor of the critical response. The volume is arranged chronologically, with an author, title, and subject index.

If a full-length bibliography heralds a writer's acceptance into the canon of literary heroines, a concordance to her works marks perhaps the pinnacle of scholarly attention. Richard M. Matovich's computer-generated guide, A Concordance to the Collected Poems of Sylvia Plath, will be a boon to those analyzing Plath's poetic language. Dorothy Day (1897-1980) was a writer of a different sort, best known as the founder of the Catholic Worker movement and its organ, The Catholic Worker. Anne and Alice Klejment have put together a volume that combines a fifty-year index to The Catholic Worker with listings of writings by and about Day. Their introduction succinctly traces Day's life and work.

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Because of the growing interest in international women's studies, this column spotlights bibliographic resources on women and gender in other countries, including older materials that have just come to my attention. Although I've known of Karen T. Wei's Women in China: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography (Greenwood Press, 1984) since it first appeared, I only recently examined another work published in the same year -- Women in China: Bibliography of Available English Language Materials, by Lucie Cheng, Charlotte Furth, and Hon-ming Yip. Emanating from the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of California, it cites some 4,100 titles -- four times the number in Wei -- issued through the summer of 1981. The

bibliography is the product of a broad search of the journal literature and scholarly bibliographies in sinology and other fields. The authors divide the entries into broad topical groupings -- education; emancipation movements; health and population; labor and production; literature, art, and folklore; marriage and the family; politics and the law; psychology and religion; science, technology, and the military; sport and fashion; Western women in China. These sections are further divided. The detailed table of contents is thus the key to finding entries by subject; there is also an author index. For comprehensive research, the sheer scope of Cheng, Furth, and Yip's volume recommends it over Wei's bibliography. But Wei's annotations and her selectivity (she does not, for example, cover translation series from China's popular press) are a boon to students who don't need everything on women in China.

A short bibliography from the United Nations spotlights the plight of refugee women. A Selected and Annotated Bibliography on Refugee Women culls citations from international online databases, libraries, documentation centers, publishers, and organizations for refugee assistance in many countries. Nonetheless, it lists only 139 titles, and none from explicitly feminist sources. Missing, for example, are references to articles in the fall 1981 issue of Connexions: An International Women's Quarterly, which was devoted to women refugees and emigrants. Nonetheless, the bibliography is a good jumping-off point for research on this phenomenon, and particularly on the situation of Southeast Asian women in the United States. Materials in English and other Western languages appear with annotations, and a subject "index" identifies titles in ten areas: counseling, culture, demography, education, employment, family, general, health, integration, and protection. The compilers provide addresses for publishers, a very helpful touch because many of the sources are elusive agency reports, proceedings of symposia, church-generated background papers, and project newsletters.

-- S.S.

## PERIODICAL NOTES

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### NEW PERIODICALS

Canadian Journal of Women and the Law/Revue juridique "La femme et le droit." 1985-. Semiannual. \$20 (student/low-income); \$25 (NAWL member); \$35 (indiv.); \$60 (inst.) (outside Canada add \$5). Single copy: \$10 (student/low-income); \$12.50 (NAWL member); \$17.50 (indiv.); \$30 (inst.). 323 Chapel St., Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7Z2. (Issue examined: v.1, no.1, 1985)

This new multidisciplinary, bilingual journal welcomes papers by legal workers, activists, researchers, and academics. Included in the first issue are articles, comments, and book reviews demonstrating "the range, intensity, variety, and history of women's equality claims in Canada" (p.viii), written by women working in history, sociology, education, philosophy, and human rights, as well as law. A sampling of the contents: "'To Open the Way for Others of My Sex': Clara Brett Martin's Career as Canada's First Woman Lawyer" (Constance B. Backhouse); "Feminism, Equality, and Liberation" (Angela R. Miles); "Sexual Assault and the Feminist Judge" (Christine Boyle); "Focus on Black Women!" (Esmeralda Thornhill); "Compulsory Heterosexuality, Lesbians,

and the Law: The Case for Constitutional Protection" (Margaret Leopold and Wendy King).

Equity in Career Options & Education Newsletter. 1986-. Community College of Rhode Island, Project ECOE, 400 East Ave., Warwick, RI 02886. (Issue examined: v.1, no.1, October 1986)

Equity in Career Options & Education is "a center for dissemination of information on sex equity-related issues to people involved in education on all levels." The four-page newsletter carries news of services, conferences, projects, and resources related to sex equity.

A Friend Indeed: For Women in the Prime of Life.... 1984-. Ed.: Janine O'Leary Cobb. 10/year. \$18. Back copy: \$2.50. ISSN 0824-1961. P.O. Box 9, NDG Station, Montreal, Quebec H4A 3P4, Canada. (Issue examined: v.3, no.5, October 1986)

This twelve-page newsletter, also available in a French edition, aims "to explore menopause as MYTHOLOGY, as BIOLOGY, as FEELINGS; to offer moral support to those who need it; to offer an exchange of information from woman to woman; and to gather together in one place relevant information so that women can make knowledgeable decisions." The October 1986 issue features a ten-page article on the heart and risks of heart disease and a section of letters titled "The Exchange."

Matrix: A Place of Our Own. 1986-. P.O. Box 771, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159. (Issue examined: no.1, Spring 1986)

Matrix is a fundraising organization that hopes to buy land "to create an environment for vacation, health, education, celebration of life and rites of passage, culture and retirement living for lesbians." The four-page newsletter carries news of the project and photos of members.

The Newsmagazine: By Alberta Women. 1986?-. Bimonthly. \$12.50 (new subscribers); \$15 (renewals). 808, 10136 - 100 St., Edmonton T5J 0P1, Canada. (Table of contents for v.1, no.8, November/December 1986, examined)

The Newsmagazine is a "glossy, 48-page publication covering news of interest to women, from a feminist perspective." In addition to provincial, national, and international news, the magazine carries opinion pieces, reviews, features, health information, and a calendar of events.

PMZ Newsletter. 1985-. Publisher: Sadjia Greenwood. "Somewhat" annual. Single copies available with a SASE. Volcano Press, 330 Ellis St., San Francisco, CA 94102. (Issue examined: Fall 1985)

"PMZ" stands for "Post-Menopausal Zest," a concept developed by Sadjia Greenwood in her book Menopause, Naturally: Preparing for the Second Half of Life (Volcano Press, 1984). PMZ Newsletter serves as an update to that book. Four pages in length, the Fall 1985 issue offers information on osteoporosis and on hysterectomy, ovarian removal, and androgen replacement.

Preventing Sexual Abuse. 1986-. Ed.: Mary Nelson. Quarterly. \$25. Single copy: \$7. ISSN 0886-6694. ETR Associates, P.O. Box 1830, Santa Cruz, CA 95061-1830. (Issues examined: v.1, no.2, Summer 1986; v.1, no.3, Fall 1986)

Each sixteen-page issue of this new publication presents information on research and programs on sexual abuse prevention, a profile of someone working in the field, reviews, letters, resource lists, and a calendar of meetings and conferences held nationwide.

Women's Review. 1985-. Eds.: Helen Carr, Nicci Gerrard, Deborah Philips. Monthly. \$36 (USA). ISSN 0267-5080. Unit 1, 2nd Floor, 1-4 Christina St., London EC2A 4PA, England. (Issue examined: no.10, August 1986)

Attractively produced, this fifty-page monthly had its origins in the first Feminist International Bookfair in London in 1984. Published by a cooperative, its statement of purpose expresses opposition "to all oppression, whether on grounds of race, gender, class, age, sexuality or disability." The tenth issue features articles on detective writer P. D. James, early British women novelists, Maori women painters, and feminist poet Sonia Sanchez; an interview with feminist TV director Gina Newson; short fiction; book, theater, film, and music reviews; and letters.

Women's Voice of Columbus. 1986-. Ed.: Marian Gagnon. Monthly. \$12. Single copy: \$1.50. 683 Oak St., Columbus, OH 43215. (Issue examined: December 1986)

Advertisement-laden, this forty-page newsprint publication seems to be targeting the Ohio working woman. "A Busy Woman's Best Holiday Ever" counsels the busy woman on how to mobilize family members to help achieve a satisfying holiday season. Another piece gives advice on winter car readiness. Still others look at the status of women lawyers, genetic engineering, and the male/female earning differential.

Zonè: A Feminist Journal for Women and Men. 1986-. Ed.: Richard Waring. Annual. \$5.50 (indiv.); \$7.75 (inst.). ISSN 0882-1658. P.O. Box 803, Brookline Village, MA 02147. (Issue examined: v.1, Winter 1986)

Zonè (pronounced zō'nā) was founded to provide an outlet for women and men writers, a place where writing by feminists, lesbians, gays, and people of color could be brought together. The 124-page, tastefully produced annual publishes poetry, fiction, essays, and artwork. Contributors include Pamela Uschuk, Carolyn Berry, Judith Barrington, Lynne Conroy, Claudia Buckholts, Laura Glenn, and Martha Rodgers.

### SPECIAL ISSUES OF PERIODICALS

Educational Theory v.35, no.4, Fall 1985: "Symposium: Should Public Education Be Gender-Free?" (special section). Ed.: Ralph C. Page. \$12. Single copy: \$5.50. Education Building, University of Illinois, 1310 S. Sixth St., Champaign, IL 61820. (Issue examined)

Special section features three articles: "Genderized Education: Tradition Reconsidered" (Maryann Ayim); "Freeing the Children: The Abolition of Gender" (Kathryn Pauly Morgan); and "Gender Freedom and the Subtleties of Sexist Education" (Barbara Houston).

Fireweed: A Feminist Quarterly no.22, Winter 1986: "Native Women." Guest eds.: Ivy Chaske, Connie Fife. \$12 (indiv.); \$18 (inst.) (outside Canada add \$3). Single copy: \$3.75. P.O. Box 279, Station B, Toronto, Canada M5T 2W2. (Issue examined)

The editors bring together poetry, short fiction, and personal narrative by U.S. and Canadian native women representing over twenty nations. Among the contributors are Winona LaDuke, Beth Brant, Chrystos, Flying Clouds, Mary Moran, and Linda Hogan.

Hecate: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Women's Liberation v.12, no.1/2, 1986: "Black Women, Racism, Multiculturalism, Black Oppression and Resistance." Ed.: Carole Ferrier. \$8 (indiv.); \$4 (students and pensioners); \$15 (inst.). Single copy: A\$6. ISSN 0311-4198. P.O. Box 99, St. Lucia, Brisbane, Queensland 4067, Australia. (Issue examined)

Partial contents: "'Pure and Clean and True to Christ': Black Women and White Missionaries in the North" (Tony Scanlon); "'Don't Ask for the True Story': A Memoir of Bessie Head" (Susan Gardner); "Women in the Theatre in Aotearoa" (Helen White); "Black Women Poets Speak" (Terri Jewell).

Labor Studies Journal v.10, no.3, Winter 1986: "Turning the Tide: Women, Unions, and Labor Education." Guest ed.: Ruth Needleman. \$15 (indiv.); \$25 (inst.). Single copies (\$10 min. order): \$8 (indiv.); \$10 (inst.). (Checks payable to Transaction Periodicals Consortium) Transaction Periodicals Consortium, Dept. 8010, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08903. (Issue examined)

Partial contents: "Developing an Agenda: Expanding the Role of Women in Unions" (Naomi Baden); "Unions in Europe: Increasing Women's Participation" (Roberta Till-Retz); "The Survival of Affirmative Action in the 1980s" (Sharon Simon); "Strategies in Hazard Protection: California Experiences" (Marianne Parker Brown, Linda Delp, and Janet Schneider).

Legacy: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers v.3, no.1, Spring 1986: "Emily Dickinson: A Centenary Issue." Eds.: Martha Ackmann, Karen Dandurand, Joanne Dobson. \$15 (indiv.); \$12 (graduate student); \$18 (inst.). Single copy: \$9. ISSN 0748-4321. Dept. of English, Bartlett Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003. (Issue examined)

This special issue features articles on Emily Dickinson by Suzanne Juhasz, Gertrude Reif Hughes, Cristanne Miller, and Joanne Dobson, plus reviews of a number of recent studies of the poet.

Migration World Magazine v.14, no.1/2, 1986: "The Spirit of Nairobi and the U.N. Decade for Women." Single copy: \$9.50 plus \$3 postage and handling. Center for Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY 10304-1148. (Table of contents examined)

This issue focuses on presentations made at a special panel held in Nairobi at the 1985 NGO Forum: "Prelude to a Century: The Organizing of Migrant Women by Migrant Women." Partial contents: "More Myths of Migration"; "Domestic Workers in South Africa"; "Domestic Workers in Peru"; "Sri Lanka House Maids and Free Trade Zone Workers"; "Immigrant Women in France"; "Arizona Farmworkers"; "Asian Women Against Sexual Slavery"; "Chinese Garment Workers in New York City."

Reader: Essays in Reader-Oriented Theory, Criticism, and Pedagogy no.13, Spring 1985: "Gender and Reading." Ed.: Elizabeth A. Flynn. \$5. Single copy: inquire. ISSN 0742-9681. Dept. of Humanities, Michigan Technological University, Houghton, MI 49931. (Issue examined)

Contents: "Add Gender and Stir" (Patrocínio P. Schweickart); "Gender, Reading and Misreading" (Madonne M. Miner); "Re-Writing the Moral Essay: Eliza Haywood's Female Spectator" (Kathryn Shevelow); "Gender Bias in the Concept of Audience" (Elisabeth Däumer); "Selected Bibliography."

Red Bass no.10, 1986: "Women's International Arts Issue." Guest ed.: Eugenie Nable. \$6 (indiv.); \$10 (inst.). Single copy: \$1.25. P.O. Box 10258, Tallahassee, FL 32302. (Issue examined)

Partial contents: "Disinformation Warfare: A Breaking of Codes in Painting and Video" (Margia Kramer); "The Vicuña and the Leopard: Chilean Artist Cecilia Vicuña Talks to Lucy R. Lippard"; "Yosano Akiko: Poet, Essayist, Feminist 1878-1942" (Laurel Rodd); "Irony & Contradictions: An Interview With Filmmaker Christine Choy" (Eugenie Nable); "Lizzie Borden: Two Films" (Lida Reagan); "The Naming of Lives: Films of Marie-Genevieve Ripeau" (K. Hassall).

Rendezvous v.21, no.2, Spring 1986: "Women in Times of Crisis." Guest eds.: Eleonore Cervantes and Janne Goldbeck. \$3. Single copy: \$1.50. P.O. Box 8087, Idaho State University, Pocatello, ID 83209-0009. (Issue examined)

Partial contents: "A Community of Women: Surviving Marriage in the Wilderness" (Victoria Aarons); "Spanish Women and the Spanish Civil War: Their Voices and Testimonies" (Shirley Mangini Gonzales); "New Writers in New Times: Spanish Women Narrators of the Post-Franco Decade" (Catherine G. Bellver); "A Woman's View of the Holocaust: The Poetry of Nelly Sachs" (Eleonore Cervantes).

Sociological Inquiry v.56, no.1, Winter 1986: "Gender Roles and Women's Issues." Ed.: James K. Skipper, Jr. \$15 (indiv.); \$26 (inst.). Single copy: inquire. University of Texas Press, Journals Dept., Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713. (Issue examined)

Partial contents: "Knowledge and Women's Issues: Issues of Epistemology and Methodology in Feminist Sociological Research" (Judith A. Cook and Mary Margaret Fonow); "Social Theory and Feminist Theory: The Need for Dialogue" (Sondra Farganis); "The 1950s: Gender and Some Social Science" (Wini Breines); "Female Clerical Workers in Academic Settings: An Empirical Test of the Gender Model" (Joy B. Reeves and Ray Darville); "Nurses and the New Class: A Comparative Study of Values and Attitudes Among Professional and Semi-Professional Occupations" (Sara Wuthnow).

Urban Resources v.3, no.2, Winter 1986: "Women in the City." Single copy: \$10. Division of Continuing Education, University of Cincinnati, Mail Location 175, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0175. (Information from Women and Environments v.8, no.3, Fall 1986, p.25)

Papers published in "Women in the City" were originally presented at a conference of the same title. The articles examine the ways in which gender roles are embedded in urban design. Topics include housing and zoning policy, the plight of low-income single parents, nontraditional jobs in the municipal sector, and organizing for childcare in New Orleans. The issue also features book reviews, a bibliography, and "local interest inserts" offering articles relevant to particular locales. Local editions cost \$10; master editions with all eleven local inserts cost \$15.

Woman of Power no.4, Fall 1986: "Women of Color: A Celebration of Power." Guest ed.: Asoka Bandarage. \$22 (indiv.); \$24 (inst.). Single copy: \$5. ISSN 0743-2356. P.O. Box 827, Cambridge, MA 02238. (Issue examined)

Woman of Power continues to be beautifully produced and is full of photographs and artwork. Partial contents of the ninety-eight-page special issue on "Women of Color": "Misrepresentations of the Dark in Goddess Lore" (Pat Camarena); "Interview of Roberta Blackgoat, a Diné Elder" (Winona LaDuke); "Recollections of a Muslim Woman" (Sartaz Aziz); "Women Organizing

Against the Pinochet Dictatorship" (Marjorie Agosin); "Notes From Prison: Reflections on Survival" (Tera Evans, et al.).

## ITEMS OF NOTE

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SALT OF THE EARTH has the distinction of being the "only feature film blacklisted during the McCarthy era," according to Aleen Stein of Voyager Press. The story of how Chicanas mobilized to support their husbands' strike at a zinc mine in New Mexico during the 1950s, the film was boycotted by theaters all over this country. It got significant exposure in Europe, however, and was widely shown by U.S. women's groups during the 1970s. This classic film is now available in high-quality VHS or Beta video formats for \$59.95 plus \$2.00 shipping. Write Voyager Press, 2139 Manning Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90025, or call 800-443-2001.

NOTABLE WOMEN offers a selection of records and tapes by Canadian women. Write Notable Women, Box 3294 Stn. P, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 5J8 for a free catalog.

WOMEN'S STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES by Catharine Stimpson and Nina Kressner Cobb describes the "evolution of women's studies as an academic discipline." The Ford Foundation document reports that although women's studies continues to gain ground as a respectable discipline, funding for women's studies programs has been cut severely over the last five years. Most courses are still taught by faculty who either have joint appointments or are based in other disciplines, and many institutions are having difficulty supporting women's studies programs on their own. For a copy of the report, send \$3.50 plus \$1.00 for handling to Ford Foundation, P.O. Box 559, Naugatuck, CT 06770.

The Business and Professional Women's Foundation series WOMEN ON THE MOVE: CREATING JOB SATISFACTION summarizes three doctoral dissertations on women's work that were funded by the BPW Foundation. According to Foundation president Anne Steinbeck, the research on flight attendants, nurses, and clerical workers challenges the stereotypes about women in these occupations. "In all these female-dominated occupations, women have seized the opportunity to change their image and their work," says Steinbeck. Copies of the research summaries "Career Development of Flight Attendants" by Roberta Lessor and "Nurse Control of Nursing" by Betty Dix Robinson are available for \$1.50 each. "The Politics of Clerical Work" by Anne Machung, Roberta Goldberg, and Cynthia Costello costs \$2.50. Order from the BPW Supply Service, 11722 Parklawn Dr., Rockville, MD 20852. Single press and examination copies should be ordered from the BPW Foundation, 2012 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

The proceedings of the Second National Conference on Women and the Arts, held in Madison June 3-6, 1985, are to be found in THE GREEN STUBBORN BUD: WOMEN'S CULTURE AT CENTURY'S CLOSE, edited by Kathryn F. Clarenbach and Edward L. Kamarck. With a special introduction by Betty Friedan, the book will include Elizabeth Durbin's entire comprehensive research paper on women and the arts, plus each paper given at the conference and edited records of all discussion groups. The invitational conference was attended by representatives of many art forms, as well as critics and scholars. Scarecrow Press will publish the book early in 1987.

In response to increasing interest in National Women's History Week celebrations, the new NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT CATALOG contains an expanded selection of items geared to a 1987 Women's History Month. Materials range from elementary and secondary curriculum resources to books for younger and older readers to films, records, calendars, and games. Items are selected for the catalog only if they are "interesting to read, historically accurate, have a multi-cultural orientation and are a good buy for the money." Send \$1.00 for a single catalog (ask about bulk rates) to National Women's History Project, P.O. Box 3716, Santa Rosa, CA 95402.

## BOOK REVIEWS

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### WHEN IS A LADY NOT A LADY?

Sophie Watson and Helen Austerberry, Housing and Homelessness: A Feminist Perspective. London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986. 186p. bibl. Index. pap., \$14.95, ISBN 0-7102-0400-0. LC 85-14281.

One occasionally has the pleasure of reviewing a book that one would have been pleased to write. Housing and Homelessness by Sophie Watson and Helen Austerberry examines the particularly difficult position of homeless women without the sentimental "save the fallen woman" or the judgmental "it's their own fault" perspectives often found in the literature on this topic. Critically examining the assumptions underlying social and academic views of very poor and destitute women, they state at the outset:

[H]omelessness must be analysed in the context of the specific social and economic conditions.... [P]erceptions and definitions of homelessness have important implications for explanations of homelessness and for the nature of provision and policy towards the defined homeless population, as well as toward those not so defined. (p.6)

Homelessness is a Victorian term coined in the last century to obscure the desperate plight of the very poor in Victorian Britain. It is thus fitting that this first book-length study of homeless women in the current period should originate from Britain. Although grounded in the British experience, the book provides a starting point for a more general feminist analysis of homelessness and women. Watson and Austerberry base their work on a large number of interviews with women who use hostels and advice agencies, along with an extensive critical examination of past and current literature. One of the few disappointments of the book is the authors' exclusion of women who do not use shelters at all (i.e., women who live continually on the streets). These women have much to contribute to the analysis because they are even more "deviant" in lifestyle, yet they also have strong if ambivalent relationships to the housing market.

Women are often invisible to researchers on homelessness partly because they generally constitute only ten to twenty percent of the homeless population. A more interesting source of neglect by researchers, however, is

the cultural view that women are not supposed to be "derelicts," "vagrants," "hobos," or "bums." Indeed, the very concept of home is defined for many people by the caretaker presence of a woman (wife, mother, or daughter). Women who become homeless thus directly contradict social expectations of what constitutes the proper role of women and the proper relationship of women to housing. It is precisely for these reasons that the study of homeless women is fruitful not only for what it uncovers about the social phenomenon itself but also for what it reveals about the operation of patriarchal society as a whole.

Watson and Austerberry posit that the functioning of the housing market and government intervention in that market both reflect the patriarchal system. If patriarchal monogomy captures the economic, physical, and emotional services of the dependent wife, then the locus of that captivity is the home. Home is where the bulk of the dependent wife's free domestic labor, child care, and other services are generated and delivered.

Intrinsic to this system is the notion of privacy. Whereas communal domestic arrangements potentially undermine the patriarchal power balance, privacy protects and reinforces the control of individual men over individual women. For example, while domestic work itself may consume only thirty to forty hours per week, children require constant attention. Thus, mothers with young children in single-family housing units are effectively locked into a patriarchal social structure by the physical structure of the dwelling unit. It is the privatization of the domestic exchange that underlies the structure of the single-family housing market.

The linkage of the patriarchal social system and the single-family housing market, via the notion of privacy, is an important one in examining policies toward the poor. Since the poor are metaphorically, and sometimes literally, beggars, society can effectively impose whatever behavioral rules or housing structure it desires through its public and private agencies. These agencies select and rank those who are eligible for aid, incorporating, as they do so, patriarchal definitions of "deserving" and "undeserving" womanhood.

In the United Kingdom, the Homeless Persons Act seeks to codify selection and ranking principles for housing authorities assigning "council housing" (i.e., local public housing). Watson and Austerberry, mercifully, do not discuss the Act in detail (the legal case summary now runs to some seven hundred pages), yet their analysis cogently brings out several of the contradictions in public policy toward homeless women.

Women without children have always had problems in securing housing, either because of discrimination, lack of funds, or lack of appropriate housing units. Modern social service organizations have their roots in the Victorian period when the prevailing social view of single women was one of "virtue" or "vice." Poor single women were to be rescued if virtuous or condemned if "vessels of vice." Those regarded as virtuous were trained in domestic arts or in those labor force skills that were seen as appropriate for women. However, the generally low wages paid to women often prevented single women from securing decent housing. The next stage then was the construction of lodgings for "decent young women," usually by benevolent organizations; these housing projects often imposed strict rules on their female populations.

Watson and Austerberry note that single women are effectively marginalized because they are not "doing" anything in their housing. They are not tending children, or a spouse, or parents -- they are not producing any good except for themselves. Thus, we can view the lack of aid for poor single women as evidence of the social view of these women as "redundant."

Ranking above single women are women with children. Most government bodies grant women with children the highest priority for housing. But the priority is attached to housing the children, not the women. For example, when the waiting period for public housing in Washington, D.C., reached twenty-two years, one argument used in the decision to close the waiting list was that women with newborns would lose their eligibility before they reached the top of the list because their children would "age out" (i.e., reach eighteen years). Once the children are gone, women's right to public housing is called into question. Watson and Austerberry describe as a case in point the predicament of a woman whose marriage ended after her children were grown. Her husband moved "his new woman and her kids" into their dwelling. Yet when the first wife left and presented herself for public housing consideration, she was told she was not eligible because she still had "tenancy" (p.115). Many women are thus forced to take on shared living arrangements or other undesirable situations because they are not eligible for low-income housing.

The many troubling examples cited by Watson and Austerberry raise difficult questions about the responsibility of families for their members. What is the responsibility of the family to provide for familial fragments such as a widowed or divorced parent, or a never-married sister -- women who may have few job skills (perhaps because of low labor force participation), who may be older and facing age discrimination? Is it the responsibility of fathers to provide for families that they participate in forming? This last question is a particularly disturbing one because women who make unwise economic and social choices are forced to bear the full consequences. Thus, a poor woman who has children and is deserted by a spouse may, on the one hand, be viewed as undeserving of public aid because she should have known better or, on the other hand, as deserving, since the state has an interest in the welfare of her children.

To a large extent, governments have assumed the place of the absent parent and have provided housing and support to women while their children are minors. However, as the cost of such maintenance increases, ways to limit benefits are sought. In Wisconsin, the Abortion Prevention and Family Responsibility Act of 1985 (the "Grandparents Bill") places financial responsibility for the children of minor children on the infants' grandparents. In effect, the state forces grandparents to house young people who would otherwise be eligible for public housing. Far from a novel strategy, the bill is very similar to one passed in the 1870s, which in turn echoed the medieval parish laws.

Other strategies to limit public liability are work programs for recipients of AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), inclusion of assets such as cars in determining eligibility, and more stringent residency rules. The current sharp rise in the number of homeless women with children is a reflection of the withdrawal of the federal government from the funding of public housing. That withdrawal essentially has removed the emergency shelter system for women with children. It is an indication of the magnitude

of the housing crisis when women who would have been quickly housed in the past are now subject to the type of exclusionary practices formerly reserved for single women.

Watson and Austerberry do not offer neat solutions to the housing of very poor women. To unravel the complex functioning of urban housing markets as it impacts on the homeless population is a long-term task. But they have ensured that the discussion will include women. One hopes that their book will also provide the impetus for a deeper analysis of the relationship between cultural assumptions regarding the role of housing and the formation of housing policy.

-- Clare Stapleton Concord

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## A WOMEN'S COMPUTER LITERACY COURSE

Deborah L. Brecher, The Women's Computer Literacy Handbook. New York: New American Library, 1985. 254p. index. \$9.95, ISBN 0-452-25565-1. LC 85-7087.

Women who enjoy learning from a teacher who seeks to demystify and politicize without oversimplifying will appreciate Deborah L. Brecher's computer literacy handbook. The handbook originated in a course designed by Brecher for the computer school for women she opened in San Francisco. The course is now taught regularly in New York and Anchorage, as well as San Francisco; it is also offered on occasion in different locations throughout the country.

I should mention at the outset that Brecher's title, The Women's Computer Literacy Handbook, is somewhat misleading. Several men to whom I showed the handbook assumed from the title that the book was a simplified version of "real" computer books -- watered down for women! This is regrettable, as such condescension is far from what Brecher has in mind.

Brecher developed her computer literacy course for women after spending twenty years in the computer industry. Over the course of her career, she came to realize that although computer technology was undergoing rapid transformation, "computerphobia" remained a constant for many people, especially women. Brecher decided that the problem lay not with the technology itself but with the ways the subject is taught in computer courses, books, and instruction manuals. Most computer instruction has been developed by men and reflects a male perspective, emphasizing computer techniques and drawing examples from day-to-day experiences with which women are neither familiar nor comfortable. Computer documentation shows little or no concern for "why" information -- for example, for why computer programs work the way they do, or why pregnant women who sit in front of computer screens all day

should worry about possible health risks associated with this work environment.

After investigating existing classes and books, Brecher decided that there was no good beginning place for women to learn about computers. The courses and books that were available patronized women and paralyzed them with unnecessary fears. So Brecher undertook to develop a course that would counteract these problems.

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Brecher proposes three pedagogical principles to guide effective computer literacy courses: 1) all technical terms should be defined the first time they are used; 2) definitions should make use of students' own experiences; and 3) rules should be explained rather than offered for rote learning.

Most courses and books about computers, Brecher discovered, introduce technical terms without first defining them. Further, she observed that when definitions are provided, they often use even more technical words which have not been defined either. And nowhere are concepts presented in terms familiar to women.

In her handbook, Brecher never uses a computer term without offering a definition. And she defines terms using words and concepts highly accessible to women. This practice, she writes, is "just what any good teacher knows -- real education occurs best when learning is based on the student's own experiences" (p.4). To take one example, Brecher introduces the concept of a computer program by pointing out ways in which it is similar to a recipe. She writes:

I had a hard time understanding what a computer program is until I realized that it's really nothing more than a recipe that the computer can follow.

When you cook, you are the computer and the recipe is the program. You can read an instruction and perform it. Then you read the next instruction and perform it. After you've completed the whole set of instructions, you end up with the desired result, a chocolate cake, perhaps. In a similar way the computer follows instructions -- one at a time, just like you (p.17).

Next Brecher uses a diagram of a recipe card to illustrate that "a computer program is the part of the recipe that sets out the procedures the cook performs. The ingredients are the data.... They [computer programs] are generic recipes, that is, procedures without the ingredients (data)" (p.18). She develops the analogy further in the following passage:

When you buy a program (recipe), you get the set of instructions that the computer will follow. For example, you can buy a program that has instructions for the computer to do payroll accounting. You must give the program the data (ingredients) that it will use. Data can be the names of your employees, their wage rates, hours they work, and so on.

The data will allow the program to deal with your particular payroll. The result of the program depends upon what data you, the user, provide (pp. 18-19).

When this pedagogical approach is adopted, Brecher points out, students learn more than simply a set of new concepts. They gain an appreciation for what they already know. This experience brings with it the confidence they need to continue their learning beyond the classroom.

Brecher's third pedagogical principle -- that rules should be explained rather than presented for simple memorization -- inspires her longest chapter, in which the reader comes to understand computers from "the inside out." Sixty pages in length, this chapter details exactly how the machine works. Brecher calls her third pedagogical principle the "holistic approach" to learning because it prepares women (and men) to ask creative questions about how the computer works, as well as about its effects on people. She attempts to combine this holistic approach with a feminist perspective on technology with the intent of helping students develop a critical consciousness about computers and their personal, social, and environmental impact.

The key element of this approach is a holistic awareness of the entire system, which includes both the human operator as well as the machine. This approach is particularly suited to any discussion of computers, because computers are changing the way we work and live. Since computers are specialized tools for managing information, we can expect them to affect traditional "women's work" the most. It is the secretaries and file clerks who will feel the greatest effect from the new automated office. It is women who sit at computer screens all day, whether they are working as telephone operators or order-entry clerks at the chain store. These women will feel any health effect of low-level radiation first -- not the middle-management executives who made the decision to automate the office (p. 15).

Brecher advocates that women become informed about computers in order to help shape the policy decisions that determine how these powerful tools are used. She debunks the myth that younger women of today have rid themselves of the culturally learned patterns that sustain the gender gap in professions like engineering. Including research findings about girls' use of computers at all ages, she points out that today's high school girls are still more interested in romance, dating, and popularity than they are in academic achievement -- particularly in science, math, and computers, which they consider unfeminine.

Brecher also identifies career opportunities denied to women who do not possess computer skills. In her view, women who fail to overcome their "technophobia" will suffer the direst economic consequences. And, she argues further, unless women enter and advance within the technology fields, the electronic age will continue to reflect only the priorities of men.

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While Brecher does raise some provocative issues and speak to some feminist concerns, the bulk of her 248-page book teaches women how to select and use appropriate software: word processing, database management systems, and spreadsheets. And she largely takes the instrumental view that women must master computers to avoid suffering the economic consequences associated with not having marketable computer skills. Her presentation is exceptionally clear, and the book offers women an excellent point of departure. Yet gaps remain. A more ambitious women's computer course might incorporate additional perspectives on the philosophical, political, and epistemological foundations of the computer field. In this way, computer literacy training could become an integral part of feminist education, a vital way of teaching critical thinking skills.

Brecher's holistic approach is narrow in scope, emphasizing the underlying mechanics of computers. She pays scant attention to the normative assumptions about justice, fairness, human life, and nature that underlie approaches to computer technology in society today. Nor does she use feminist critiques of science and technology -- Ruth Bleier's Science and Gender, for example, Elizabeth Fox Keller's Reflections on Gender and Science, or Joan Rothschild's edited volume, Machina Ex Dea: Feminist Perspectives on Technology -- to introduce different perspectives on epistemology or to call into question the assumptions of scientific "objectivity" embedded in the computer-communications revolution. Had she done so, she would have provided students with a basis for imagining the different forms a computer revolution might take.

Brecher argues that women must arm themselves with knowledge about computers to influence the computer age. Yet one might ask whether such knowledge is the necessary and sufficient condition for women to gain the power to determine policy. This question and others like it, if posed in the computer science classroom, would require students to examine the powerful psychological patterns, cultural norms, and societal structures that perpetuate the present inequitable distribution of power in the home, the community, and the workplace.

To do more than teach about computer applications and career opportunities, computer educators need to ask their students to take a broad, critical view of the new technology. They might, for example, ask students to analyze the skills, thought patterns, and language demanded by current computer usage, and to think about the impact these are having on thought and language in general. Or, more fundamentally, they might raise questions about justice and fairness, asking students to contemplate how society can exploit the potential of the computer without compromising the full development of women and men as autonomous and creative human beings.

-- Marge Wilsman

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