

# feminist collections

a quarterly of women's studies resources

vol. 7, no.3

spring 1986

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Feminist Collections is published by Susan E. Searing, UW System Women's Studies Librarian, 112A Memorial Library, 728 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706. Phone: (608) 263-5754. Editors: Susan E. Searing, Catherine Loeb. Graphics: Moema Furtado. ISSN 0742-7441. Publications of the Office of the UW System Women's Studies Librarian are available free of charge to Wisconsin residents. The subscription rate outside Wisconsin is \$12/year for individuals and women's programs, \$24/year for institutions. This fee covers all publications of the Office, including Feminist Collections, Feminist Periodicals, New Books on Women & Feminism, and bibliographies, directories, and occasional publications produced throughout the year.

## ARCHIVES

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### RECOVERING OUR PAST: MATHILDE FRANZISKA ANNEKE (1817-1884)

Speaking to the International Women's Congress held in Berlin in 1904, Susan B. Anthony described German political refugee Mathilde Franziska Anneke as the most loyal of colleagues, as a woman who had fought with her for American woman suffrage side by side year after year. To her work, Anthony asserted, American women owed the main part of what had been achieved up until that time. For Anthony, Anneke symbolized the transnational character of feminism; she broke down the cultural and language barriers that impeded a broad-based feminist movement in an ethnically mixed America.

Although her name is inscribed on the Suffrage Memorial of the League of Women Voters in Washington, D.C., today Anneke is a virtual unknown in our country. How could we be so ignorant about such a major figure in American suffrage history? The reason is that Anneke's written work was almost exclusively in her native German tongue. Because she lived and wrote in the German-speaking community, Anneke's experience has been lost to most twentieth-century Americans.

\* \* \*

It is an American truism that we are a nation of immigrants, a "melting-pot" of diverse cultures and races. Today some 12% of our population is of Afro-American origin; 6.5% is of Spanish origin. About 6.2% is foreign-born, and almost 10% of Americans live in homes where there is a language other than English spoken.

Today the mainstream culture is English speaking, middle-class in cast and tone, broadly Protestant in religious ambience, and dominated physically by the white European stock of earlier migrations. Nevertheless, minority cultures have in the last thirty years become more visible and outspoken in their struggles to preserve the integrity of their threatened heritages. In this context, contemporary feminists are beginning to recognize and affirm the diversity of our sisterhood. For those of us who would understand our history, it is equally important that we remember what a diverse group American women have been in the past. During the period between 1840 and 1920, when the large European migrations to the United States occurred, ten to fifteen percent of the population was foreign-born. Many more languages were spoken. To put the matter in perspective, some 51,000,000 Americans (twenty-three percent) considered themselves of German ancestry as of 1980. Yet in the past sixty years, these descendants of German immigrants have by and large been assimilated into the English-speaking culture, and much of their cultural heritage has been forgotten with the loss of their language. In trying to recapture women's history, today's feminists are not only hampered by the androcentrism of the written record. Educated and trained in the mainstream language and culture of our society, we are ourselves handicapped in our efforts to understand the experiences of our culturally diverse foremothers.

It is to recover something of this submerged past that we have undertaken the difficult task of researching the life and work of Mathilde Franziska Anneke.

\* \* \*

Mathilde Franziska Giesler was born in 1817 to an upper-middle-class German-Catholic family. She married in 1836 at the age of nineteen, divorced a year later, and was successful after a long battle in gaining custody of her daughter -- an unheard-of event in early nineteenth-century Germany. When the divorce removed her socially from the class into which she was born, she turned to writing to support herself and her daughter. In 1847, she married Fritz Anneke, a former Prussian Army officer, and they circulated in the heady radical society of prerevolutionary Germany. When the 1848 revolution broke out and Fritz Anneke joined the revolutionary army, Mathilde accompanied him on the field of battle in Baden. Together they published the Neue Kolnische Zeitung, a radical newspaper that traded articles with Karl Marx' Neue Rheinische Zeitung.

In 1849, after the failure of the Baden-Palatinate campaign, Mathilde and Fritz were expelled from Germany. They went to the United States with their children and settled in Milwaukee in 1850, where they immediately rose to prominence as speakers, journalists and educators within the city's burgeoning German community. Mathilde gave her first public lecture in Milwaukee in 1850 in Military Hall before a crowd reputed to be the largest ever gathered in the city for a public event. Her topic was "Political Events and Poetry in Germany," and it reflected the role she was to play as both political reformer and transmitter of German culture for the rest of her life. Mathilde combined a mid-nineteenth-century commitment to social and political reform -- republicanism, abolitionism and feminism -- with a professional interest in education and cultural criticism.

In 1852, Mathilde began the first women's newspaper in the U.S., the Deutsche Frauen-Zeitung. She conceived of the paper as a purely women's effort, and even used female typesetters. The local male typesetters were outraged, and pressured her to stop publication. In response, she and Fritz resettled in Newark, New Jersey, another community with a large German-American population, where the paper resumed publication.

In 1858, two of the Anneke children died of smallpox. Grieving, the Annekes returned to Milwaukee, but a year later Fritz went to Italy to report on the Italian wars of liberation. Mathilde joined him in Europe in 1860. When the American Civil War broke out, Fritz again crossed the Atlantic, this time to fight in the Union Army. Mathilde remained in Europe, writing anti-slavery tracts, fiction and German newspaper propaganda.

In 1865, Mathilde returned to Milwaukee. Though she and her husband maintained loving relations until his untimely death in 1872, they were in fact separated for most of their married life. Mathilde bore seven children (only three of whom lived to adulthood), and Fritz seemed unable to secure employment that would provide the financial support needed by the family. Their final separation was caused by Mathilde's decision to establish a school for girls in Milwaukee (the Milwaukee Töchterchule), which would provide her with a steady but meager income for the rest of her life.

She continued to be active in feminist and other social reform causes, and to act as a local spokeswoman for the German educational model. She served, for example, as the German delegate to the National Women's Rights Convention, the Vice President from Wisconsin to the National Women's Suffrage Association and keynote speaker at the fourth annual convention of the German American Federation of Teachers. Throughout her later life, Anneke worked to bridge the gap between German and American culture: she fought an uphill battle to interest the German-speaking community in women's rights, and she tried to convince her fellow suffragists that German women would not endorse suffrage as long as it was connected to the frequently anti-immigrant causes of temperance and sabbatarianism.

Despite the radicalism of many of her ideas, Mathilde Anneke was a respected member of her local community. The German community continued to patronize and support her school financially, and in 1882, her play Oithona (written in 1842) was produced in an honorary performance in Milwaukee.

Mathilde Anneke was, in addition, a figure of national importance. From her arrival in Wisconsin as a radical republican 48'er to her death in 1884, she collaborated and maintained a prolific correspondence with the major abolitionists and reform leaders of her time, among them Horace Greeley, Henry Ward Beecher, Frederick Douglas, Wendell Phillips, Karl Heinzen, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Peabody and Mathilde Kriege. She wrote for German-language publications around the country (Illinois Staatszeitung, Belletristisches Journal in New York, Anzeiger des Westen in St. Louis), and lectured widely on subjects ranging from feminism and educational reform to politics.

\* \* \*

The experience of Mathilde Anneke can provide contemporary feminists with a richer view of the diversity and depth of our own feminist heritage. Happily, Anneke's life and work have recently been reclaimed in Germany. In 1980, Dr. Maria Wagner of Rutgers University published the first of two volumes of Anneke's writings. Mathilde Franziska Anneke in Selbstzeugnissen und Dokumenten (Fischer, 1980) has sold well in Germany and has led to renewed discussion of Anneke's life in her home country. In 1983, Wagner published a second volume of Anneke's short stories, essays and speeches, Die Gebrochenen Ketten (Heinz Akademischer Verlag, 1983).

In the United States, however, her writing will remain inaccessible to most feminists until it is translated from the German. Thus we have begun a project to translate and publish her letters and writings. Several fortuitous circumstances allowed us to begin the project. First, there is a substantial collection of her papers readily available in the Wisconsin State Historical Society, including a typescript biography written by Henrietta Heinzen, Karl Heinzen's daughter. (He published one of the papers for which Mathilde wrote.) Second, together we have a basic familiarity with Wisconsin history, feminist history and German literature. We can piece together the myriad elements of Mathilde's nineteenth-century world. Third, Maria Wagner's publications have revived interest in Anneke. Fourth, 1984 was the centenary of Anneke's death; for the occasion, the Max Kade Institute at UW-Madison sponsored a one-day symposium on her life and work. Finally, we have received

some financial support from the UW-System American Ethnic Studies Coordinating Committee.

Nevertheless, the project still faces formidable obstacles. Funds to support the painstaking task of translation are scarce. It is always difficult to defend a translation project for someone who has fallen out of the public memory. Without a strong counterargument, the historical consensus tends to be that someone forgotten deserves to be forgotten. Further, we face some technical problems. For example, many twentieth-century German speakers have trouble reading Anneke's nineteenth-century German script; we have resorted to tape recording some of the work in German to facilitate the later task of translation.

In short, we are proceeding. Committed to presenting Mathilde Anneke to a broader audience, we have made presentations to historical groups, written articles in local newspapers, and so on. In the long run, our hope is that we will kindle a search for many more Mathilde Annekes and thus broaden our understanding of the heritage earlier generations of American women have left us.

-- Margo A. Conk and Renny Harrigan

[Margo A. Conk is Director of the Center for Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. For the 1985-86 academic year, she has an appointment as Mather Visiting Professor of History at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Renny Harrigan is a Specialist in the Center for Women's Studies, UW-Milwaukee, and a Ph.D. in German literature. Most recently she has worked on women and the popular literature of Weimar Republic.]

## FEMINIST VISIONS

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### COMPUTER EQUITY THROUGH GENDERED SOFTWARE?

Most feminist educators are aware of the gender gap in computer involvement both inside and outside the schools. A recent nationwide survey of seventeen-year-olds showed that boys outnumber girls by two to one in programming classes. The ratio is seven to one for college graduates. While one study showed that high school boys and girls differed little in their achievement in a standardized computer course, twelve times as many boys as girls said they actually enjoyed working on the computer. (1)

Controversy continues over why these gaps persist and what to do about them. One theory blames the types of video games used in arcades and in schools for discouraging girls from getting involved with computers. Most video games and some educational software involve violent contexts, are fast paced, aggressive, competitive, motor skill dependent, and lead to win or lose outcomes. Recent research claims that these types of games draw boys to computers. Girls, on the other hand, seem to prefer open-ended games that feature human interest themes, progress from intuitively obvious to more complex situations, and are played by more than one child. (2)

Working from the theory that girls will get involved with computers if they are attracted to the program content, Rhiannon Software has developed what has been termed "gendered software" -- adventure computer games designed specifically for girls aged seven to twelve. Cave Girl Clair, Jenny of the Prairie, and Lauren of the 25th Century are three examples. (3) The intent of this software is to encourage problem solving and logical thinking. Instead of accumulating points, meaningful goals are the objectives. The games are designed to be self-paced, to reward exploration and experimentation, and to present a strong female character in realistic and challenging situations. Cave Girl Clair and Jenny of the Prairie are survival games, in which the user helps the female protagonists to stay alive in the wilderness after they have been separated from adults.

Carol J. Kean, a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, recently reviewed Cave Girl Clair's technical features. (4) In this game, Clair must survive alone, with her pet rabbit, until her people return at the end of the harvest season. The object of the game is to help Clair build and maintain a fire, search for food and medicinal plants, and avoid dangerous animals. Kean found the instructions incomplete and unnecessarily frustrating; in addition, the limited types of interaction made the program monotonous. Like other reviewers (5), she judged the game to be slow and tedious. "Although the game is supposed to be self-paced, the user most often loses because the fire is not started soon enough or kept going properly." (6)

Kean recommended more animation and sound effects, and a greater variety of options for Clair in her quest. She found the program worth trying, however, because of its potential for "stimulating a great deal of social interaction at the computer."

In a recent interview, Dr. Mary Gomez, lecturer in Elementary Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, questioned the implications of Rhiannon software for antisexist education. The girl user is put in the traditional female role of helper and nurturer, thus perpetuating stereotypical gender roles. This type of software also threatens to perpetuate sexist notions about what girls like vs. what boys like. Gomez referred to research that shows that both boys and girls enjoy many different kinds of learning -- e.g., intrinsic and extrinsic; competitive and cooperative; open ended patterns, movements, and colors as well as linear, sequential goal seeking. "Computers can offer any of these. We need to offer all kids varied entry into technology, as individuals," Gomez said.

Gomez fears that Rhiannon-type software introduces girls only to the narrow range of computer skills suited to women's clerical jobs. Software used in male-dominated robotics courses, by contrast, prepare students for better paying, more challenging jobs. This of course points to one way that gender and class inequities intersect in computer education. Skills needed to develop alternative applications of computers, as well as feminist critiques of their social roles, are currently taught in situations dominated by boys.

According to Gomez, the gender gap is not only the result of software's failure to capture the attention and interest of girls; it is also the result of unequal access to computers. Teachers need to insure that girls have as much computer access as do boys. This may necessitate establishing all-girl computer time or no-hacker time in the computer lab, or changing the way

students sign up for computer time to insure that girls aren't literally pushed aside. General computer literacy skills can be taught in language arts and social studies classes to loosen the tie between computers and math education, thus countering the math anxiety apparently experienced by many girls.

It would also seem legitimate to refocus concern about the gender gap so that girls and their "needs" and "interests" are not defined as "the problem." We should be asking why war game software is being used to teach girls and boys how to use computers. We should be questioning why it is that boys get excited about learning about computers through war games. Why do teachers who wouldn't dream of bringing GI Joe dolls into the classroom allow (predominantly) boys to spend free time in class playing Space Invaders on the computer?

In a recent issue of Classroom Computer Learning, Holly Brady and Twila Slesnick reviewed a software package that they believe goes beyond stereotypes to an antisexist approach to teaching science and mathematics. (7) Voyage of the Mimi uses software and videotapes to tell the story of a group of eleven- to nineteen-year-olds that accompanies male and female researchers on an expedition to study whales. (8) Whales were selected as the object of study after a survey showed that they appealed to children despite sex, age, ethnic, or class differences.

According to Brady and Slesnick, this software entices girls into the male-dominated domains of science and mathematics in several ways. It features female as well as male scientists. It uses whales as its subject. And it links the mathematical study of whales to music (by studying the periodicity of whale songs) and to the students' own bodies (in a related classroom experiment, students measure heat transfer from their bodies to an inanimate object).

Pathways is a new "gender neutral" software package developed by the Technical Education Research Center. One of its five software pieces allows students to make up quizzes for their classmates about whatever subjects they feel knowledgeable about. This open-ended program validates children's knowledge regardless of whether it is seen as stereotypically "male" or "female."

While Rhiannon's Software for girls has drawn much attention and continues to provoke predictions that the way to achieve sex equity is through gendered software, there are few imitators. Antisexist programs like Voyage of the Mimi and "gender neutral" programs like Pathways seem to draw the most favorable reviews from feminist educators. (9)

For those committed to achieving sex equity in computer education, two conclusions seem to emerge from the debate about gendered software. First, software developers stand the best chance of getting girls excited about computers if they refrain from speculating about what girls "must" or "probably will" like. The software most successful in attracting both boys and girls seems to be that which has been field-tested with all kinds of students and then adapted to the preferences students show.



Second, girls must be given equal access to computers in supportive environments, for as the developers of Pathways report, girls get just involved as boys do -- when given the time.

-- Elizabeth Ellsworth

[Elizabeth Ellsworth is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, and a member of the Women's Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She teaches courses in media criticism and critical video production. She has a special interest in the ways that audiences (like the feminist community) resist patriarchal, racist, and classist discourses in dominant media events, and reinterpret those events so that they are useful within the audience's current political struggles.]

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Charles Piemonte, "Bridging the Gender Gap," Curriculum Review v.25, no.2 (November/December 1985), p.40.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Rhiannon Software, Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Microbooks Division, Reading, MA 01867; (800) 238-3801.

<sup>4</sup> Carol J. Kean, "Adventure Stories for Girls: Cave Girl Clair," Curriculum Review v.25, no.2 (November/December 1985), p.44.

<sup>5</sup> Holly Brady and Twlla Slesnick, "Girls Don't Like Fluffware Either," Classroom Computer Learning v.5, no.8 (April/May 1985), p.24.

<sup>6</sup> Kean, *ibid.*, p.45.

<sup>7</sup> Brady and Slesnick, *ibid.*, p.26.

<sup>8</sup> Voyage of the Mimi, Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, Director of Software Marketing, 383 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017.

<sup>9</sup> Pathways, Technical Education Research Center, 1696 Madison Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138; (617) 547-0430.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Lockheed, Marlaine, and Steven Frakt, "Sex Equity: Increasing Girl's Use of Computers," The Computing Teacher v.10, no.5 (April 1984), pp.16-8.

Schubert, Jane G., and Thomas Bakke, "Practical Solutions to Overcoming Equity in Computer Use," The Computing Teacher v.10, no.5 (April 1984), pp.28-30.

Unsigned, "Computer Learning: 'Boy' Software, 'Girl' Software," Curriculum Product Review v.10, no.6 (March 1984), p.8.

## FEMINIST PUBLISHING

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Marking its fifth anniversary, London's SHEBA PRESS is expanding its production, making a substantial commitment to publish new works by black and other Third World women. A mixed collective of four black and four white women, Sheba claims to be "the only British feminist publisher who is seriously committed to publishing Black women's books." (Happily, Sheba's commitment seems to be part of a broader publishing trend. For example, Virago Press recently issued The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain, by Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie, and Suzanne Scafe.) Among Sheba's recent titles are the following: A Dangerous Knowing: Four Black Women Poets, by Barbara Burford, Gabriela Pearse, Grace Nicols, and Jackie Kay, which went into a second printing after only six months; The Threshing Floor and Other Stories, a collection of short stories by black writer Barbara Burford; Charting the Journey: An Anthology of Black and Third World Women's Writings, edited by Shabnam Grewal, Jackie Kay, Liliane Landor, Gail Lewis, and Pratibha Parmar; and Gifts from My Grandmother, a book of poems by Meiling Jin, a Chinese woman from Guyana living in England. For a complete catalog, write Sheba at 10A Bradbury St., London N16 8JN, England. For a survey of British feminist publishers, including Sheba, see "Publishing and Flourishing" by Leah Fritz in The Women's Review of Books v.3, no.5, February 1986, pp.16-17.

A commitment among publishers to represent diverse feminist voices appears to be taking root in Canada as well. A notice in a recent issue of Fireweed announces the founding of SISTER VISION, "the first press in Canada dedicated to the works of Black and Third World Women." Sister Vision is at work on an anthology entitled Lesbians of Colour Living in Canada. For more information, write Sister Vision at P.O. Box 217, Station E, Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E2, Canada.

SILVERLEAF PRESS, a new feminist publisher, is seeking short stories for a collection about women living "nontraditional lives," surviving "outside the mainstream of expectations in our culture." Write Silverleaf at P.O. Box 70189, Seattle, WA 98107. (Information from off our backs, December 1985, p.23)

LOLLIPOP POWER, a feminist collective publishing children's literature, recently celebrated its fifteenth anniversary. Lollipop's latest book is I Like You to Make Jokes With Me, But I Don't Want You to Touch Me, a story by Ellen Bass. Their backlist includes such titles as In Christina's Toolbox, by Dianne Homan, and When Megan Went Away, by Jane Severance. Lollipop's address is P.O. Box 1171, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

TROUGH DOVE BOOKS, a new publishing collective, wants to publish "quality, original trade paperbacks, with an emphasis on writings of vision and fantasy, by women." Their first titles are It's Time: A Nuclear Novel, a feminist fantasy by Jana Bluejay, and Stone Clicking, by Nancy Tyler Glenn. Contact Denise Sheffield, P.O. Box 548, Little River, CA 95456. (Information from publisher)

HARRINGTON PARK PRESS, a new subsidiary of Haworth Press, publishes nonfiction paperback trade books focusing on psychology, feminist/women's studies, and gay and lesbian issues. Among their first titles are Lesbians in Literature and History, edited by Monika Kehoe (June, 1986); Philosophy and Homosexuality, edited by Noretta Koertge; and Bashers, Baiters and Bigots: Homophobia in American Society, edited by John P. DeCecco. Write Harrington Park Press at 28 East 22 St., New York, NY 10010-6194. (Information from the Harrington Park Press Spring 1986 catalog)

VANESSAPRESS is Alaska's first feminist press. Its first book is On Why the Quiltmaker Became a Dragon, a visionary poem by Sheila Nickerson. Contact the press at P.O. Box 81335, Fairbanks, AK 99708. (Information from Small Press Review, June/July 1985, p.43)

Ending on a sad note, we must announce the closing of the IOWA CITY WOMEN'S PRESS, after twelve years. Iowa City got its start when Ain't I a Woman, an Iowa City publication, was unable to find a printer to handle a special issue on women's health and self-help; local printers objected to the explicit illustrations. The Press was active in the women-in-print movement, and consistently argued for the importance of feminist printers as well as publishers and bookstores. Some of the works they printed over the years are The Greasy Thumb: Automechanics Manual for Women; Against the Grain: A Carpentry Manual for Women; books published by Aunt Lute Book Company, an offshoot of the Press; and many issues of Sinister Wisdom, Lesbian Connection, and Common Lives/Lesbian Lives. Debts forced the Press to close. According to Press member Lorna Campbell, these debts reflected both the collective's "business phobia" and the larger difficulty faced by a small-scale printer trying to keep prices low for the feminist community. For a fuller account, see the interview with Lorna Campbell which appeared in The Feminist Bookstore News v.8, no.4, December/January 1986, pp.12-17.

## NEWS FROM UW-STEVENS POINT

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The Women's Studies Program at UW-Stevens Point continues to grow. Women's Studies 300/500 ("Topics in Women's Studies") always has waiting lists for such topics as male/female relationships in literature, images of women in literature, and violence and women in literature and the media. Last year, the number of declared minors in women's studies rose to an all-time high, as did the number of students who graduated with a minor.

The Women's Studies Student Association has been active, holding fundraisers and cosponsoring campus programs such as the all-day celebration that kicked off Women's History Week last spring. One of our most active students was killed in an automobile accident in September on her twenty-ninth birthday. Students, faculty, and family of Susan King have established a memorial scholarship to be given annually to a nontraditional women's studies student.

Faculty teaching women's studies courses and sitting on the Women's Studies Committee have been quite active professionally. DONALD FADNER was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar grant in 1984 to study "Popular Culture and Gender in the United States from 1850 to 1950"

in Washington, D.C., under the leadership of Lois Banner. Fadner will be on sabbatical next year to work on his book, The Myth of the Hero. VIRGINIA FISH continues her long-term project on the Hull House circle (Edith and Grace Abbott, Alice Hamilton, Florence Kelley, Julia Lathrop and Sophonisba Breckinridge) and the reform organizations with which they were involved from 1890 to 1930. Fish frequently gives papers and publishes articles on her work. Librarian ALICE RANDLETT spent the fall semester in Spain with a group of Semester Abroad students from UWSP. CHRISTY CARTER appeared on a panel at the state women's studies conference last fall. KATHY WHITE was reappointed coordinator of the Women's Studies Program for her second three-year term. Her article on teaching about women and violence appears in the Winter 1985 issue of Women's Studies Quarterly. For that issue, she acted as editorial consultant for a special section on teaching about women and violence. White spent last summer at the University of California at San Diego and Santa Cruz on an NEH Summer Institute grant to study Charles Dickens.

-- Kathy White  
Women's Studies Coordinator

## NEW REFERENCE WORKS IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

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Olive Banks, The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists. Vol. 1: 1800-1930. Brighton, England: Wheatsheaf Books; distr. by Harvester Press, 1985. 239p. index. \$55.00, ISBN 0-7108-0132-7.

Canadian Women's Periodicals Title Word Index. October 1984-. Toronto: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women. 3/year. \$35.00. (Address: CRIAW, 151 Slater St., Suite 408, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5H3 CANADA)

Pat Gundrum, ed., U.W. Centers Women's List: Books and AV Items on Women's Issues Held by U.W. Centers' Libraries. Waukesha, WI: UW Center-Waukesha County, Library and Media Services, January 1986. 132p. free. (Address: Pat Gundrum, UW Center-Waukesha, 1500 University Dr., Waukesha, WI 53188)

Cheris Kramarae and Paula A. Treichler, A Feminist Dictionary. Boston: Pandora Press, 1985. 587p. bibl. \$28.95, ISBN 0-86358-060-2; Pap. \$12.95, ISBN 0-86358-015-7. LC 85-9278.

Judith Papachristou, Bibliography in the History of Women in the Progressive Era. Bronxville, NY: Sarah Lawrence College, 1985. 70p. index. \$6.50. (Address: Women's Studies Program, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY 10708)

Clare Potter, comp., The Lesbian Periodicals Index. Tallahassee: Naiad Press, 1986. 413p. Pap. \$29.95, ISBN 0-930044-74-6. LC 85-21798.

Sarah M. Pritchard, Women's Studies Resources in Microform at the Library of Congress. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, General Reading Rooms Division, 1985. 22p.

Women in American History, Vol. 2. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1985. 352p. Index. \$64.00, ISBN 0-87436-450-7. LC 78-26194.

New periodical indexes are cause for rejoicing, and this quarter we have two to celebrate. The Lesbian Periodicals Index, compiled by Clare Potter, provides author and subject access to some twenty-four thousand articles, letters, reviews, stories, poems, and graphics in forty-two lesbian periodicals, all but two now defunct. Ranging from the late 1940s when the oldest known U.S. lesbian periodical, Vice Versa, appeared, to the early 1980s, and representing "geographically separate and diverse communities" (Introduction), the volume is a testament to the depth and breadth of lesbian culture, and to the hard work and dedication of Potter and her colleagues in the Circle of Lesbian Indexers.

Many magazines and newsletters born in the 1970s folded after a few issues; their inclusion here helps create a fuller picture of the blossoming of women's communities and lesbian feminism in that decade. Among these short-lived sources are Amazon Quarterly, Desperate Living, Echo of Sappho, Furies, Purple Star, and The Udder Side. The index also brings needed bibliographic control to better-known periodicals with longer publishing histories, including Feminary, The Leaping Lesbian, The Lesbian Tide, Lavender Woman, Out and About, Sisters, and So's Your Old Lady. (Missing from this list is The Ladder; its issues from 1956 to 1972 are treated in a separate index available from Naiad Press.)

The main portion of the volume is an author/subject index. For personal and political reasons, many lesbians used pseudonyms or first names only in print. Potter has sometimes been able to identify pseudonyms, but we'll probably never learn if the six pieces by "Kathy" in four different magazines came from the same pen.

Although the index succeeds overall in providing topical access, I do wish for more cross-references. Such terms as "Gay pride" and "Lesbian pride" are not linked, nor are "Mothering," "Lesbian mothers," and "Children of lesbians." On the plus side, Potter incorporates terms that signal some of the main themes of lesbian life and politics: Butch and femme; Coffeehouses, women's; Coming out; Demonstrations, marches, and other fight back actions; Fat oppression; Lesbian straight splits; Lesbians in the closet; Male presence at women's events; Politically correct and incorrect positions; Sexuality, lesbian; Trashing; Women's land; and many, many more. Few of these topics can be uncovered in standard reference guides.

The index also points to materials by and about individuals (from Anita Bryant to Susan Saxe), events such as the Michigan Women's Music Festival and the National March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights, and a wide range of national and grassroots organizations. Multiple entries for Blacks, Jews, prisoners, younger lesbians, women from Third World and working-class backgrounds, and other groups reveal that lesbian periodicals have long been a forum for diverse perspectives. Following the main index are separate sections for lesbian writings (divided by genre), book reviews, and visual art.

In their preface, Joan Nestle and Deborah Edel of the Lesbian Herstory Archives call the index a "miracle." They do not exaggerate; The Lesbian Periodicals Index is indeed a major step forward in lesbian scholarship.

While The Lesbian Periodicals Index provides bibliographic access for the first time to older alternative publications, the Canadian Women's Periodicals Title Word Index highlights the most recent feminist articles by our sisters to the north. The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women sponsored three experimental issues in 1984-85, which proved popular enough to continue publication on a subscription basis. The experimental issues cover some fifty journals, including selected academic and popular journals, as well as those devoted to women's studies. Business, professional, legal, and local-interest periodicals are excluded.

Reminiscent of our own Feminist Periodicals, CWPTWI features reprinted tables of contents for some fifteen women's publications. The heart of each issue, however, is a keyword-in-context (KWIC) index, produced by computer. For those not familiar with the KWIC format, I'll try to explain. Each article's citation is treated as a string of words. The citation appears under each important word from the title and under the author's name. For example, an entry under "birth" reads: "Pilon, D. : Who's in Control? BIRTH Technology and Women's Lives." The same string will reappear under PILON and TECHNOLOGY, as well as under less meaningful terms from the title. While common words such as IN and AND are automatically dropped from KWIC listings, there will always be a certain percentage of useless and rather silly index terms. Another drawback, at least in this particular display, is that the beginning or end of long citations are cut off, which could hinder retrieval of the articles.

On the positive side, the compilers of CWPTWI enrich the entries with terms for genres and for topics when the title is ambiguous. And without doubt, computerized indexing is much faster than applying human judgment. The index can function, despite its limitations, as a valuable current awareness tool for researchers.

Examining indexing strategies, we come face-to-face with the centrality of language. A Feminist Dictionary devotes nearly six hundred pages to this concern. Cheris Kramarae and Paula A. Treichler specify several objectives:

...to document words, definitions, and conceptualizations that illustrate women's linguistic contributions; to illuminate forms of expression through which women have sought to describe, reflect upon, and theorize about women, language, and the world; to identify issues of language theory, research, usage, and institutionalized practice that bear on the relationship between women and language; to demonstrate ways in which women are seizing the language; to broaden knowledge of the feminist lexicon; and to stimulate research on women and language. (p.1)

Although the authors take pains to place their efforts in the long tradition of dictionary-making, readers will find this volume only superficially resembles the usual word-books on their desks. It is more closely related to

discipline-based handbooks -- but no such standard reference tool was ever so entertaining.

Kramarae and Treichler explicate feminist neologisms (Comparable worth, Gender gap, Herstory, Ms., Phallocentrism, Supermom, etc.), and provide definitions with a feminist (often satiric) twist for familiar words. (See, for example, the entries for Girl, Man, Menstruation, Sexual revolution, and Writing.) Many unique coinages by well-known feminists are treated -- including a variety of proposed nonsexist pronouns -- even though they have not entered into popular usage. Not simply words, but concepts, events, even book and journal titles are accorded entries. We find Christmas, class, and Cinderella; gothic novel, Gray Panthers, and Greenham Common; sob sisters, socialization, and Spare Rib.

While they occasionally invent their own definitions, Kramarae and Treichler usually quote words and phrases in context. By doing so, they grant feminist writers and speakers the stature of authorities on language. At seventy-plus pages, their source bibliography attests to the extent of their research. The dictionary doubles as a quotation sourcebook, though an author index would make it even more useful in this regard. The volume will be especially welcomed by students of linguistics, because it covers many linguistic terms and theories; it is as much a critique of standard scholarship on language as it is a celebration of women's own expressions.

Several new reference tools are in a more traditional vein. Women in American History, Vol. 2, attests to the ripening of scholarship about American women, not only in the major journals and anthologies in the field of history, but in local history magazines, academic journals in related fields, and key interdisciplinary publications. Unlike the first volume (covering 1964 to 1977), which utilized a chronological and topical outline derived from its parent series, America: History and Life, the second volume (covering 1977 to 1984) uses an organizational scheme more in keeping with feminist criticism of traditional periodization. Only about one-quarter of the entries appear in general or chronological categories. The remainder are assigned to the following major groupings: Domestic, Social, and Personal Roles; Women and Religion; Women and Education; Women and Ethnicity; Women in American Culture; Women in the Work Force; Women and Politics; Women and Violence; and Women and Biology. The revised subject approach is workable and makes for profitable browsing, although some of the categorization seems forced -- prostitution under the violence heading, for example, and sexual preference under biology. All citations are accompanied by abstracts.

Volume two again features the "Subject Profile Index System" (SPINDEX) developed by ABC-CLIO. Each document is assigned a list of generic and specific subject terms, personal names, geographic descriptors, and an indication of time period. The string of descriptors acts as a document profile, and is repeated in the index under each term. (The effect is similar to that of the KWIC index reviewed above, with the advantage that terms in Women in American History are chosen by indexers, not simply drawn from the titles.)

The first volume of a projected two-volume set, The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists, supplements recent biographical sources such as The Europa Biographical Dictionary of British Women (reviewed in FC, Fall

1984). Compiler Olive Banks is an expert on British women's rights advocates. The dictionary treats one hundred women and nineteen men. Biographies average two pages in length, and conclude with notes directing the reader to other secondary materials. The topical index is helpful, but incomplete; for example, Josephine Butler's entry is not indexed under "Contagious Diseases Act." While volume one covers the years 1800 to 1930, volume two is announced as spanning 1900 to 1945; it remains to be seen whether there will be significant overlap between the two.

Three other useful new reference tools come from outside the mainstream trade and scholarly publishing channels. Over the years, the Sarah Lawrence College Women's Studies Program has issued a number of pathbreaking guides, including bibliographies on American women's history by Gerda Lerner (4th ed., 1978) and European women's history by Joan Kelly (5th ed., 1982).

Bibliography in the History of Women in the Progressive Era, by Judith Papachristou, is the latest in the series. Concentrating on secondary sources for the period from 1890 to 1930, Papachristou organizes over 640 entries into nine categories: Women and Work; Gender and the Family; Education; Religion; Community Activism and Social Change; World War I; Feminism and Suffrage; Minority Women; Biography and Autobiography. Subdivisions within these categories, plus a topical index, make the bibliography easy to use. The entries are not annotated.

Women's Studies Resources in Microform at the Library of Congress by Sarah M. Pritchard is more than just a guide to one library's holdings. It is the most complete listing available of resources for feminist research on microfilm, microfiche, or microprint. Pritchard, a reference specialist in women's studies, provides annotated descriptions for microforms in the General Reading Rooms Division of LC, grouped in four sections: major microform collections in women's studies; microform collections with portions relevant to women's studies; microfilmed periodicals; and selected monographs in women's history filmed by the Library of Congress itself. A fifth section covers microforms in the Manuscripts, Science & Technology, Law, and Serial & Government Publications Divisions. Pritchard has also written a general introduction to the treasures of the nation's largest research library in a recent issue of Special Collections (see "Periodical Notes" below).

Finally, I want to spotlight a new bibliographic guide to women's studies materials within our own University of Wisconsin System. The U.W. Centers Women's List, compiled by Pat Gundrum, is a record of nearly two thousand books and audiovisual items held at the UW's thirteen two-year campuses. Gundrum organizes the list by broad subject categories: Art, AV, Education, Employment, Feminism, History, Legislation, Psychology, Religion, and Sociology. Within each section, entries are alphabetized by title; campus locations and call numbers are provided. Produced on a microcomputer, the entries are brief; author's first names are indicated by initial only, and only the first forty-five characters of the titles are printed. Still, this union list is an important step in the development of a women's studies curriculum at the Centers, and will serve faculty, librarians, and students well.



## PERIODICAL NOTES

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(Please write and let us know about any new periodicals or thematic issues that have come to your attention. We depend on assistance from our readers to make this listing as comprehensive as possible.)

### NEW PERIODICALS

Canadian Lesbian and Gay History Network Newsletter. 1985-. \$10 (employed); \$5 (low-income) (suggested contributions). c/o Canadian Gay Archives, P.O. Box 639, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, M5W 1G2, Canada. (Issue examined: no.1, December 1985)

The Canadian Lesbian and Gay History Network was founded at the Sex and the State International Conference on Lesbian and Gay History held in Toronto in July 1985. The first issue of the Network's newsletter includes a directory of lesbian and gay researchers and their research interests; news and notes; a bibliography of secondary sources for English-Canadian lesbian/gay history, compiled by Gary Kinsman; a review of recent work on homosexuality in ancient Greece and Rome, by Beert Verstraete; and a select list of new books of interest to historians, by Ed Jackson.

Feminist Action Feministe: News from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. 1985-. Ed.: Pat Daley. 8/yr. \$15 (indiv.); \$25 (inst./U.S.). 344 Bloor St. W., Suite 505, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1W9, Canada. (Issues examined: v.1, no.1, July 1985-v.1, no.4, January 1986)

Founded in 1972, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women is the largest women's organization in Canada, representing over four hundred nongovernmental associations from all regions of the country. Subscribers to Feminist Action Feministe also receive the NAC Action Bulletin. Both publications report on NAC's work, activities of women and women's groups across the country, and news of interest to feminists.

Peace Links Connection: Women Against Nuclear War. 1984-. Quarterly. 747 8th St. S.E., Washington, DC 20003. (Issues examined: v.1, no.2, Fall 1984-v.1, no.4, Spring/Summer 1985)

Peace Links is "a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to involving more and more people in activities that will prevent nuclear war." Peace Links Connection reports on chapters of the organization across the United States, serves as a forum for the Peace Links network, and carries news and brief analysis of national issues such as the Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars).

Resource Center News. 1984-. Eds.: Jeanne M. Barkey, Jim Koplin. Quarterly. \$25 (with membership in the Pornography Resource Center/Organizing Against Pornography). 734 E. Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 55407. (Issues examined: v.1, no.1, October 1984-v.2, no.3, September/October 1985)

Published by the Minneapolis-based Pornography Resource Center, this two-to four-page newsletter carries news on anti-pornography organizing locally and nationwide.

## SPECIAL ISSUES OF PERIODICALS

Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory v.9, no.1/2, Hiver/Printemps 1985: "Feminism Now: Theory and Practice." Eds.: Arthur Kroker, Marilouise Kroker. \$17 (indiv.); \$27 (inst.). Concordia University, 7141 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal, Quebec H4B 1M8, Canada. (Issue examined)

Partial contents: "Interview: Susan Sontag" (Eileen Manion and Sherry Simon); "Feminist Radicalism in the 1980's" (Angela Miles); "Embracing Motherhood: New Feminist Theory" (Heather Jon Maroney); "New Feminist Readings: Woman as Ecriture or Woman as Other?" (Pamela McCallum); "'What Are We Doing, Really?' Feminist Criticism and the Problem of Theory" (Patrocínio Schweickart); plus three articles on pornography, ideology, and power, and book reviews. In English and French.

City Limits: The News Magazine of New York City Housing and Neighborhoods v.10, no.4, April 1985: "Housing: A Women's Issue." Eds.: Tom Robbins, Annette Fuentes. \$15 (indiv., community groups); \$35 (inst.). Single copy: \$2. 424 West 33rd St., New York, NY 10001. (Issue examined)

This special issue links the housing crisis to the "feminization of poverty." Partial contents: "Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness" (Mary Breen); "No Kids or Dogs Allowed" (Jill Nelson); "Any Port in a Domestic Storm" (Diane Berg and Pam McAllister); "Neighborhood Women Keeping It Together" (Terry L. Haywoode); plus articles on housing programs for women, a list of readings, and a book review.

Ekistics no.310, January/February 1985: "Women and Space in Human Settlements." Guest ed.: Becky Dennison Sakellariou. \$48 (indiv.); \$36 (student). Athens Center of Ekistics, P.O. Box 3471, 10210 Athens, Greece. (Information from Women and Environments Fall 1985, p.23)

The seventeen articles in this special issue examine how planning, housing, and urban servicing address the needs of women in North America, Holland, Greece, Tunisia, Japan, and Israel.

Sociological Focus v.18, no.2, April 1985: "Structured Environments and Women's Changing Roles." Guest ed.: Willem van Vliet. \$15 (indiv.); \$40 (inst.). North Central Sociological Association, Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, Kent State University, Kent, OH 44242. (Issue examined)

Partial contents: "Introduction: Communities and Built Environments Supporting Women's Changing Roles" (Willem van Vliet); "From Refuge to Service Center: Neighborhoods That Support Women" (Gerda Wekerle); "Gender and Residential Preferences in the Suburban Era: A New Look?" (Sylvia Fava); "The Social Construction of the Physical Environment: The Case of Gender" (Karen Franck); "The Androgenous City: From Critique to Practice" (Susan Saegert).

Special Collections v.3, no.3/4, Spring/Summer 1986: "Women's Collections: Libraries, Archives, and Consciousness." Guest ed.: Suzanne Hildenbrand. \$95. Haworth Press, Inc., 28 East 22 St., New York, NY 10010-6194. (Issue examined)

This special issue gathers articles on collections at the Library of Congress, the Schwimmer-Lloyd Collection of the New York Public Library, the Bethune Museum-Archives, the Smith College Sophia Smith Collection, the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, the Texas Woman's University Library Woman's Collection, and women's studies

collections at the University of Waterloo Library. In addition, Suzanne Hildenbrand surveys "small but noteworthy" collections and provides a directory of representative women's collections in the U.S. and abroad; Susan E. Searing describes the services offered by the Women's Studies Librarian for the University of Wisconsin System; Ellen Gay Detlefsen discusses issues of access to information about women; and Beth Stafford reviews the best reference works for research on minority and Third World women.

## TRANSITIONS

Lesbian Inciter, a newspaper published by a Minneapolis collective for more than five years, has a new home. Two San Francisco women have taken over the publication; they hope to publish on a bimonthly basis. The paper is looking for new subscriptions and contributions. Contact Mariel Rae or Kate Anne at 2215-R Market St. #307, San Francisco, CA 94114. (Information from off our backs November 1985, pp.22, 27)

## ITEMS OF NOTE

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THE FAMILY OF WOMEN: STORIES FROM A WORLD GATHERING is a highly praised series of half-hour radio programs based on Forum '85, an open international meeting held last summer in Nairobi, Kenya, in conjunction with the official conference marking the close of the U.N. Decade for Women. Program topics include "Women and Work," "Women and Politics," "Reproductive Freedom," "The Institution of Marriage," and "Women as Peacemakers/Women as Warriors." The tapes feature interviews, stories, conversations, and music. Programs may be purchased as a series only, but there are no restrictions on broadcast use. Six-minute modules on related topics are also available. Order tapes or cassettes from Nan Rubin, Project Coordinator, P.O. Box 18755, Denver, CO 80218 (303-777-7737).

A series of thirteen lectures entitled THE JEWISH WOMAN IN HISTORY AND LITERATURE by Dr. Paula Hyman, Dean of the Seminary College of Jewish Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary, is available on six cassette tapes for \$39.95 from Jewish People's University of the Air, 30 West 44th St., New York, NY 10036. The package includes outlines, reading lists, and instructions for use.

ON THE EDGE: WALKING THE POVERTY LINE is an unusual videotape that explores the feminization of poverty in a Midwestern setting. It tells the story of four women in Green Bay, Wisconsin, who don't quite fit the stereotype of "the poor." The videotape, which has been well received at many area screenings, is available on interlibrary loan from the Brown County Library, 515 Pine St., Green Bay, WI 54301. See your local librarian to initiate an interloan request. For more information on the tape, call Pat LaViolette at the Brown County Library, 414-497-3492.

A project of The Woman Activist, which has been publishing feminist political action news for more than fifteen years, THE WOMAN ACTIVIST MAILING LIST is an attempt to set up a national action alert system and feminist political

network. To participate in the project, send \$5.00 to WAML, 2310 Barbour Rd., Falls Church, VA 22043 (703-573-8716).

Produced by the Women's Educational Equity Act Publishing Center, WOMEN IN THE COMMUNITY is a collection of materials focusing on women in nonacademic settings. The programs, workshops, filmstrips, and other materials are geared to people who work with families, working women, rural women, minority women, incarcerated women, and poor women. For a complete listing, contact WEEA Publishing Center/EDC, 55 Chapel St., Suite 227, Newton, MA 02160 (800-225-3088).

A timely report entitled CAMPUS GANG RAPE: PARTY GAMES? has recently been released by the Project on the Status and Education of Women. Authors Julie K. Ehrhart and Bernice R. Sandler suggest that gang rape is not an isolated or rare occurrence at many colleges and universities, and that fraternities are among the worst offenders. The twenty-page report, which includes suggestions on awareness and prevention as well as a resource list, is available for \$3.00 from PSEW, Association of American Colleges, 1818 R. St., NW, Washington, DC 20009.

The 1984 survey WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAMMES in Japan by Hiroko Hashimoto shows that ninety-two colleges and universities offered women's studies courses during that year, up from seventy-five institutions in 1983. The report is available free from the National Women's Education Centre, 728 Sugaya, Ranzanmachi, Hiki-gun, Saitama 355-02 Japan.

The WOMEN'S EQUITY ACTION LEAGUE, a national nonprofit organization specializing in women's economic and legal issues, has available a number of publications. Recent titles include: "Women and the Federal Income Tax System," "Tax Fairness for Women," "Comparable Worth and the Wage Gap," "Title IX Packet," "Women and the Military Mini-Kit," and "Special Attorney's Packet on Divorced Spouse Legislation." For more information, contact WEAL, 1250 I St., NW, Suite 305, Washington, DC 20005 (202-898-1588).

A new microfilm archive, FASHION ADVERTISING COLLECTION, 1942-1982: A HISTORY IN ILLUSTRATION FROM 200 NORTH AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS, may be of interest to libraries and other institutions collecting materials in fashion, costume, home economics, advertising, marketing, and popular culture. The 192 large-format volumes of the original paper edition, assembled by a fashion clipping service over a forty year period, cover advertisements for men's, women's, and children's clothing placed by leading retailers in the United States and Canada. A prepublication price of \$8,000 for Diazo 35mm microfilm is available until May 15, 1986 from Jerry Alper, Inc., 271 Main St., P.O. Box 218, Eastchester, NY 10707 (914-793-2100).

WOMEN AND MEDIA: ANALYSIS, ALTERNATIVES AND ACTION, edited by Kamla Bhasin and Bina Agarwal, is a joint undertaking of Isis International (Rome, Italy) and the Pacific and Asian Women's Forum of New Delhi, India. It is published by India's new feminist press, Kali for Women. Articles examine the ways women are portrayed in media, and report on actions by women's groups in the Asian and Pacific regions to protest existing portrayals and create alternatives. Bias in the development literature is a particular focus. India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Australia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Thailand are the countries represented here. The volume also includes a list of resources and networks,

and a select bibliography. For more information, contact Isis International, Via Santa Maria dell'Anima 30, Rome, Italy.

## BOOK REVIEWS

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### WOMEN AND DISABILITY, PART I

Susan E. Browne, Debra Connors, and Nanci Stern, eds., With the Power of Each Breath: A Disabled Women's Anthology. Pittsburgh and San Francisco: Cleis Press, 1985. 354p. ISBN 0-939416-06-9. LC 85-71206.

Gwyneth Ferguson Matthews, Voices from the Shadows: Women With Disabilities Speak Out. Toronto: The Women's Press, 1983. 192p. bibl. ISBN 0-88961-080-0.

As the women's movement gained momentum in the early 1970s, I felt strangely alone. All around me friends rebelled against sexism in the job market, raged over sexual harassment, and railed about the stereotypes that condemned them to be nothing but wives and mothers.

When I applied for jobs, employers saw me as a disabled person before they ever thought of me as a woman. Generally I felt sexually ignored rather than exploited. And all my life I had been subtly taught that I must be prepared to support myself, as no man was likely to choose me for a partner. The movement that was doing so much to liberate nondisabled women had never heard of people like me.

In the past few years feminism has finally recognized the existence of women with disabilities. In 1981 came Jo Campling's collection of autobiographical essays, Images of Ourselves: Disabled Women Talking (Routledge and Kegan Paul). In the same year, the feminist periodical off our backs and the Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare each published a special issue about women with disabilities. (2)

Today the pace is accelerating. In this two-part review, I will examine three recent books and a feminist journal, all of them focusing on the concerns of disabled women.

\* \* \*

"This book is a tool we can use to examine and challenge our ableism...and to demystify disability and the lives of disabled women," write Browne, Connors, and Stern in their introduction to With the Power of Each Breath. "These pages are a journey into our lives as we survive in an inaccessible society..." (pp.10-11). In creating this book, the editors (three women with diabetes and visual impairments who met in a support group) solicited contributions from women with a variety of backgrounds and a broad spectrum of disabilities. The anthology gathers together fifty-four poems, short stories, essays, and autobiographical accounts, each bearing on some facet of life as a disabled woman.

The pieces differ wildly; at times the collection reminds me of a dissonant modern symphony by some radical composer. A small, sardonic poem nestles between matter-of-fact personal histories; a formal essay follows a satirical skit; anger and bitterness resound against playful humor. The editors make a heroic attempt to control this disparate mass of material by fitting the pieces into seven sections. Each section is introduced by a graceful essay capturing the essence of a particular issue: using anger; growing up in the family; raising children. Many of the pieces, however, rebel against being categorized, and their placement seems arbitrary at best.

This disjointed quality itself may convey the diversity among women with disabilities. Edwina Trish Franchild writes of her parents' dogged refusal to accept the fact that she has low vision, and the mounting pressures that led to her psychiatric incarceration. Jill Sager and Carol Schmidt recount the horrifying medical treatments they have undergone simply to make them look more "normal." Mary Ambo describes her battle to build an independent lifestyle, despite the undermining attitudes of her mother and the social service establishment. There is a positive side, too. Kathleen M. White and Amber Coverdale Sumrall write with warmth of supportive friends, family members, and hospital personnel. Ernestine Amani Patterson speaks of her awakened sense of identity when she adopts an African hairstyle. JoAnn LeMaistre shares the pleasures and challenges of being a disabled mother.

Educated white women predominate in these pieces. But the editors have included selections by a few women who are black or Hispanic, and by some women who have not received a higher education. The disabilities represented include blindness, deafness, epilepsy, severe allergies, learning disabilities, retardation, agoraphobia and obesity.

Varied as this collection is, there are some startling gaps. Though many pieces have political overtones, only a few reach beyond personal experience to prescribe measures that might bring about change. (Outstanding among these is Anne Finger's "Claiming All of Our Bodies: Reproductive Rights and Disability.") None of the pieces deals with employment discrimination, and few relate experiences on the job.

Most puzzling of all, considering the amount of personal material the book contains, is the fact that very few of the writers reveal much about their relationships with close friends or lovers. Several mention that they are lesbians, and a few refer to boy friends or husbands. How these women build and maintain relationships, however, is seldom disclosed. The majority say nothing about intimate relationships, and between the lines I read of a yawning emptiness. Somehow these women can talk freely about anger at parents, living with physical pain, and the frustrations of dealing with doctors. But they are reluctant to expose the longing for closeness, the aching loneliness that lies all too often at the core of our lives as outsiders in a nondisabled world.

Gwyneth Matthews in Voices from the Shadows perceives a sense of desexualization as one of the most crucial problems disabled women face. Of the forty-five women she interviewed in gathering material for her book, only five were married, and several had been deserted by their husbands or lovers when they became disabled. Half told her they had had no sexual relationship since the onset of their disability. "The more I interviewed, the more I

became convinced that the majority of these women do not consider intercourse their highest priority," Matthews explains. "On the whole, it is the human contact that is missing from their lives; they need someone to hold, someone to talk to, someone to comfort them when they're depressed" (p.76).

If With the Power of Each Breath can be likened to a symphony of sorts, Voices from the Shadows is a concerto. The voices of the women the author interviewed form an orchestral background, over which Matthews' solo rises clear and strong. Glimpses into the lives of her informants are woven into the texture of the book. But it is Matthews' own story -- her adjustment to life as a paraplegic woman, her encounters with a daunting array of architectural and attitudinal barriers -- that gives the work focus and unity.

At times the women Matthews quotes tend to blur together. Most appear too briefly to come fully to life. They discuss the rehabilitation establishment, opportunities and frustrations in education and employment, financial worries, child-raising, and friendships with other women. Many of their comments are astute and intriguing, and I only wish there were space for their separate identities to emerge.

One of the most powerful chapters in the book is based on interviews with five severely disabled women who live in nursing homes. They speak of the lack of privacy, the demeaning behavior of the staff, the grinding indignities of inedible meals and lost laundry. Matthews admits that the specter of institutional care has haunted her ever since she became disabled herself, and she approaches these women with keen, often agonizing empathy.

The greatest strength of this book lies in Matthews' willingness to reveal herself -- her fears and doubts as well as her triumphs, the shaky moments that still descend upon her despite all outward signs of success. Matthews is married to a man who is wholeheartedly accepting, and is establishing herself as a freelance writer. Perhaps this sense that she has "made it," found a secure niche in the world, permits her to write so unsparingly of the hurts that still cut deep.

To acknowledge pain, anger, and loneliness should not, however, imply that most of us who are disabled spend our days in suffering and despair. Though the ramifications of disability are complex, it does not necessarily control or define our lives.

Women invited to contribute to books about women and disability naturally speak almost wholly about the ways impairment has affected them. As a result, these books may create the impression that the impact of disability is constant and all-pervasive, shaping every aspect of existence. The reader might easily conclude that blindness, deafness, or paraplegia is generally the central focus of a disabled woman's world.

In fact, most of us manage to deal with the practical problems posed by disability, and carry on with the business of living. We are homemakers or engineers; we play chess or listen to gospel music, follow pro football or practice yoga. We throw ourselves into a host of activities from planning a fun vacation to working to prevent nuclear war. Disability is only one thread in the intricate fabric of who we are.

Taken together, these books offer a thoroughly absorbing introduction to many of the concerns of disabled women. Yet, with their emphasis upon the effects of disability, they may subtly reinforce the notion that our lives are unusual, special, even remarkable. Disability notwithstanding, our lives are often very much like those of our nondisabled peers. Until there is some discussion of the ways in which disability does not affect us, any understanding of women with disabilities will remain unbalanced and incomplete.

-- Deborah Kent

[Deborah Kent works fulltime as a freelance writer. She has written numerous book reviews and articles on disability-related topics. She also writes young adult fiction.]

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Part II of this review will appear in Feminist Collections v.7, no.4, Summer 1986.

<sup>2</sup> Kathleen Hagen reviewed these and other early works on women and disability in Feminist Collections v.4, no.4, Summer 1983.

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#### SEX, GENDER, AND THE STATE

Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, Abortion and Women's Choice: The State, Sexuality, and Reproductive Freedom. New York: Longman, 1984. 404p. bibl. index. \$22.95, ISBN 0-582-28215-2. LC 83-11342.

Zillah R. Eisenstein, Feminism and Sexual Equality: Crisis in Liberal America. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984. 266p. \$26.00, ISBN 0-85345-644-5; pap., \$10.00, ISBN 0-85345-645-3. LC 83-4606.

These two works by political theorists stand as important American contributions to current feminist debates on the state, ideology, and political practice regarding sexuality, gender, the family, and feminism itself. I make mention of their nationality for two reasons. First, both are about the United States, but beyond this, they are both clearly prompted by the more specific context of the Reagan era. Second, although the feminist debates of which they are a part are international, their styles of approach, and especially the importance they attach to matters of governmental politics and policy, clearly distinguish them from the predominant French schools of analysis.

I read Petchesky's work first, and would suggest to those who plan to tackle both books that this is the correct order. Although the title might suggest her book is the more narrow of the two, it is not. The subtitle



should be taken seriously: abortion is, for Petchesky, the clearest case for analyzing the relationships of reproductive, sexual, and gender ideology and practice within the state.

In the first part of the book, "Fertility Control in Theory and History," Petchesky examines the period in the nineteenth century during which access to abortion became increasingly restricted by law, and the conditions for legalization in the twentieth century. As with the rest of the book, this section displays a lovely work of theory, especially in its emphasis on the interaction of social conditions, ideology, policy, and technology. In her attempt to explain changing use of birth control, Petchesky carefully analyzes the relationships among these factors, often highlighting points that have previously been underplayed. For example, she argues,

If the decline in fertility during the 1930's was not caused by a 'technological breakthrough,' neither was the 'baby boom' of the 1950's caused by a technological blackout. In both periods, effective techniques of contraception were available...but different social conditions determined differences in their use. (p.112)

Students of today often excuse the ills of the past (and thus misunderstand those of today) by laying the blame on the underdeveloped science or technology of the "olden days." Petchesky offers a needed corrective.

Part II, "Abortion Practice in the 1970's," includes important discussion of the connection between abortion and contraception as well as a unique and pathbreaking focus on teenage sexuality, pregnancy, and birth control. Petchesky recasts the issue of teenage pregnancy, and uses this as the medium for linking questions of (hetero)sexuality, the construction of gender, and autonomy.

Part III, "Sexual Politics in the 1980's," offers probably the closest complement to Eisenstein's book through its focus on current ideological debates on the state, sexuality, family, consciousness, and morals and ethics. Just as the New Right has symbolically appropriated the concept of "life" through its adoption of the "pro-life" label (a trick succeeding partly with the unwitting complicity of some feminists who accept this term), so have the right and the anti-abortion forces all but captured definitions of ethics and morality. In fearing questions of fetal life and death, feminists have tended also to avoid defining feminist ethics and morality, preferring to promote arguments based on "rights" and the autonomy of women. (1) Petchesky shows no such fear; indeed, opening up the question of feminist morality is one of the central missions of her book.

Zillah Eisenstein's Feminism and Sexual Equality offers a contrasting treatment of the politics of sex/gender ideology in the contemporary period. This book flows from her early explorations of ideology, state, and politics that emphasized first, socialist feminist theory and practice (2) and second, liberal feminist theory and practice. (3) This time she focuses on theory and practice within the context of the "crisis of liberalism," and examines the new formulations of both liberalism and conservatism during this period, especially in their manifestations of the sex/gender ideologies found within feminism and antifeminism.

The first part of Feminism and Sexual Equality, "Revisionist Liberalism," looks explicitly at the Reagan era, including the 1980 election and ideology, politics, and policy during the first three or so years of his term in office. These chapters constitute a feminist alternative to more conventional Marxist treatments of the crisis of welfare-state liberalism and the autonomy -- or relative autonomy -- of the state. (Her discussion and argument here will not be totally accessible to readers without some prior grounding in Marxist state theory.) She takes seriously, as most other state theorists (including some who write as feminist theorists) do not, the centrality of patriarchy to the structure of economic classes and the state.

Eisenstein's analysis of patriarchy, class, and state is the highlight of this first part of the book; the remaining chapters in the section are relatively weak. Electoral and policy analysis are not Eisenstein's forte; her discussion of political behavior (both of voters and leaders) sometimes lacks evidence, for example, when she discusses people's intentions and motives. Moreover, this section is already beginning to appear dated. This is a perennial problem for political scientists analyzing current events, but it is a special problem for one who analyzes what is essentially a three-year period, and even there focuses on only one of the important elections.

The second part of Feminism and Sexual Equality, "Revisionist Feminism," which looks at the different nuances of feminism and antifeminism, is in many ways more interesting. Eisenstein helps us understand -- if we did not know it before -- that neither feminism nor antifeminism is a monolithic social group or ideology. Among the antifeminists, she distinguishes between the old right conservatives, represented here by Phyllis Schlafly, and the New Right antifeminists, including the fundamentalists. Among the new formations of feminism, she considers "revisionist liberal feminists," represented by Betty Friedan, especially in her The Second Stage (4), and "revisionist left feminism," represented by Jean Elshtain. (5) Eisenstein does an excellent job of analyzing the differences among these ideologies, as well as their roots in broader theoretical and ideological perspectives.

The books are similar in many respects. Both explore the state, ideology, and political practice with regard to sex/gender systems. Both treat relationships between sexual and gender ideology, and relationships between these and more general ideological constructions (although Petchesky does more on the former and Eisenstein more on the latter). Both are concerned with change, particularly during the Reagan era, although Petchesky takes a longer view and does a more genuinely historical analysis. Both examine variations and controversies within feminism, although Eisenstein focuses more on ideological groups and Petchesky on social groups (e.g. class, race, and age). Both books are based in socialist analysis. Interestingly, although Petchesky is more explicit and thorough in her use of this framework, her book is also likely to be more comprehensible to readers new to this approach. In short, her book is extremely well written.

In a sense, neither book is a "first book" to look at in this field. Petchesky's book follows in large part from Linda Gordon's early and impressive study of the history of birth control in America (6), and as suggested above, Eisenstein's follows from her own earlier books. Nonetheless, they constitute a very worthwhile pair of books to read, as the

authors themselves would probably agree; each acknowledges her debt to the other in the pages of her book.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For an exception, see Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

<sup>2</sup> Zillah Eisenstein, ed., Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979).

<sup>3</sup> Zillah Eisenstein, The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism (New York: Longman, 1981).

<sup>4</sup> Betty Friedan, The Second Stage (New York: Summit, 1981).

<sup>5</sup> Among Elshtain's works are Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); "Feminists against the Family," The Nation, November 17, 1979; and "Feminist Discourse and Its Discontents: Language, Power, and Meaning," Signs 7 (Spring, 1982), pp.603-621.

<sup>6</sup> Linda Gordon, Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America (New York: Grossman, 1976; Baltimore: Penguin, 1977).

#### Alternative Cataloging in Publication Data

Feminist collections: women's studies library resources in Wisconsin. Madison, WI: UW System Women's Studies Librarian.

quarterly.

Began publication 1980.  
Includes articles, reviews, directories, bibliographies, interviews, and "items of note."

1. Feminist literature--Publishing--Periodicals.  
2. Feminist literature--Reviews--Periodicals. 3. Women's studies--Library resources--Periodicals. 4. Libraries--Special collections--Women's studies--Periodicals.  
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