

## THE NEW SCHOLARSHIP ABOUT WOMEN

In the 1970s feminist scholars spent a good deal of productive energy mapping the female world, Catharine Stimpson said in her October 8th talk on "The New Scholarship about Women: The State of the Art." Providing an overview of this new scholarship about women as the first speech of the Center's Fall 1980 Lecture Series, Dr. Stimpson noted, however, that the idea of a "female world" was actually only one of four paradigms that the short life of the feminist studies had already experienced. These shifting paradigms contributed to an accumulating wealth of images and ideas in the studies rather than a simple march from one concept to another,

Setting the stage for these studies, Dr. Stimpson pointed out, was the first of these paradigms, an attention to women's sufferings and invisibility, sex discrimination, male fear, and women as Others. Deeply influenced by Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex, this early study of an Other world "documented the belief that women, as victims of discrimination, were not hallucinating and were perhaps saying something real about the real world." Pervading this avenue of study was a quarrel: whether or not the subordination of women was universal. "No one doubted discrimination against women politically or subordination politically or repression psychologically," said Dr. Stimpson. "The quarrel was not over the fact: the quarrel was over rather the universality and the effect. If one believes it is, depression is an emotional consequence. If one believes it is not, a certain sense of hope may creep in through the cloudy sky."

In response, a more complex set of ideas evolved and a postulate of two independent, intersecting worlds was formed. In this second paradigm, the new scholars of women began to investigate the idea of women acting in each of these independent but interdependent spheres, one, "a world of production, of public activity, of culture, and of formal speech" -- the world of men -- and the other, "a world of reproduction, of private and domestic activity, of nature and the natural, and of informal speech" -- the world of women. It was the world of the male, or the realm of the father, which "had decided what history was. This world had formed our consciously collective memory, with all its repressions, omissions, and stutters," Dr. Stimpson noted. "The three words, performance, competence, and success were almost watchwords for studies in the 1970's. There is some belief that perhaps there was an internalized, implicit notion of success in these studies: to be successful was to be rich, public, and powerful." The realm of the mother and of the daughter was "at least in theory, the domain of love. Because it had lacked control over the codification of our conscious and collective memory, it had no collective memory, except perhaps in family histories, lost diaries, and old wives' tales." Topics of study as diverse as the economic of housework, the psychology of female friendships, and the histories of convents lent a new importance to the ordinary life and to the everyday. As a result, in certain academic clusters there was a new concern for the subjective and the articulation of a particular set of attitudes about women.

Dialectical reasoning, however, was one of the forces that soon crossed the course of the new scholarship, and this newest paradigm's validity was questioned. In its place, or rather, soon at its side was a new paradigm for study. Dr. Stimpson explained: "Some believe now that it [the notion of two spheres] may be an unconscious perpetuation of older habits of thought, rooted in the Greeks, that practice of dividing the world into polarity, a habit of thought the Victorians helped to burnish for the modern world. Others, very legitimately, believe that the paradigm simply does not account for the specifics of too many women's lives, for the differences in their existences." The model was considered incomplete for women who are black, lesbian, and citizens of the Third World. She continued, "The third development has been the insistence on particularities on the study of differences and on the creation of an enormous number of micro-studies, empirical studies that have value in and of themselves, even though they might not always have had an overarching theory behind them, but as the study of differences became popular, almost simultaneously, it was joined by the profound debate about sexual difference itself."

Forming the basis of this debate about differentiation for more than ten years and becoming the third paradigm was what Dr. Stimpson referred to as the minimal theory of sexual differentiation. The minimal theory stated that the biological differences, especially in terms of reproduction, had been inflated, and most differences were merely the results of culture, ideology, education, and socialization. Dr. Stimpson noted, "Everyone who believes in the minimal theory says nurture means more than nature. Gender controls sex; not sex, genders." She observed, "The political consequences of this are clear. For a logical consequence, the minimal theory of differentiation is the belief that history is a record of change and of cultural creations. If this is what history is, we can change. So Nancy Chodorow reassures her readers in The Reproduction of Parenting that parenting can be reconstituted as one step towards establishing a sexually egalitarian world."

However, this optimistic paradigm too shifted in the past four years into what Dr. Stimpson called the maximal theory of sexual differentiation: "Its implicit historiography is that history is an evolutionary record that stresses not simply change, but continuities....It is articulated by people who would call themselves feminists." She continued, "They believe that we must destabilize the bad treatment of women, not continue it. They believe we must release and not repress the female. They believe we must honor and not sentimentalize the maternal. They believe that we should applaud women's rich sexuality rather than mourn the lack of a phallus, but nevertheless, from several different sources, an interest in and an attempt to justify profound or maximal sexual differentiation has emerged."

Dr. Stimpson traced this theory to three sources: American social science, cultural feminism, and contemporary French theory and noted that the maximal theory had an analog in the political battles about the women's movement: "The political and intellectual movements have merged simultaneously in time, as part of our disquietude about shifts in our sex gender arrangements."

There is resistance to the new scholarship about women, Dr. Stimpson said, but counteracting this force are research centers and women's studies programs. Dr. Stimpson offered her only prognosis in the beginning of her speech: "I think for those of us who wonder if we're going to survive the 1980's it is important to remember that the new scholarship about women has survived the 1970's."

-excerpted by the Newsletter editor,  
Nancy Brocklehurst

- The Association for Women in Psychology has planned its Fall series of meetings:
  - . November 21, 7:30 p.m. - Room 1629, CUNY Graduate Center - "Humor, Sex, and Power," discussed by Leigh Marlowe, Pearl Lewyn, and others.
  - . December 14, 2-4 p.m. - Holiday Party
  - . January 16, 7 p.m. - "Professional Issues for Women in Psychology"

Also, the Association has formed small special-interest groups. For information about the "Psychological Research on Women" group, call Anne Viviano at 580-7774. If you're interested in "Peer Supervision for Psychotherapists," call Hilda Meltzer at 873-0314.

- The Committee to End Sterilization Abuse has disbanded. Some CESA members are now working with the National Women's Health Network on their sterilization abuse monitoring project. The Network can be contacted at 2025 "I" St., N.W., Suite 105, Washington, D.C. 20006.

Other organizations that have information on this issue:

Reproductive Rights National Network  
41 Union Square West, Rm. 206-9, New York, NY 10003

Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse  
386 Park Ave. South, Rm. 1502, New York, NY 10016

- Women's Pentagon Action will be a meeting of women in Washington, D.C. to recognize the connection between the violence of the Pentagon and the violence in women's daily lives. On Sunday, November 16, women will share political concerns, cultural experiences, and work skills. On Monday, November 17, they will demonstrate at the Pentagon, many participating in a nonviolent civil disobedience. For more information, contact Women's Pentagon Action, 29 W. 21 St., New York, NY 10010

- Paula Webster, a Center Research Associate, and Lucy Gilbert, a psychologist who works with battered women, are writing a book for Beacon Press on the psychological and cultural meanings of women victimization. Both have been active in the women's movement for the past 10 years.

"We're particularly interested in women's experiences of child abuse, incest, rape, and battering. We think that recording women's testimony is crucial in telling the story of women's coping strategies in the face of great danger. Without these stories, no understanding of the sexual antagonism and gender violence that conditions our lives can emerge. We believe that it is women themselves and not the 'experts' who will ultimately make sense of and change the social relations that perpetuate women's victimization. It is for these reasons that we are asking for your help," says Paula Webster.

If you have survived one or more of these experiences and would be willing to discuss it with them, please contact them at either 865-8742 or 663-0142.

- Dr. Joyce Gelb will teach a course on "Women, Power, and Public Policy" (Political Science 835.1) next semester at the Graduate Center. The four-credit course will meet Thursdays from 11:45 to 1:45 p.m.

- The Mothers' Center of Central New Jersey is a support system of mothers for mothers in the community. Founding member and CUNY psychology graduate student Ann Saltzman stresses the peer-centered orientation of the service. It offers support and study groups led by mothers (some with advanced degrees), workshops and lectures, resources and referrals, and research and dissemination of information. Call Ann at 201-889-5305 for information.

# Research

The Women's Educators' Fourth Annual Research on Women in Education Award will recognize a published or unpublished research report in journal or article format on any aspect of women in education that was conducted or written up during 1979-80. Entries must be postmarked by December 15, 1980. For more information about the award, see the Center's bulletin board or contact Carol Shakeshaft; Coordinator-Elect; Women Educators; School of Education; Hofstra University; Hempstead, New York.

Radcliffe College has announced a program of small grants to support post-doctoral research on women. Eligible projects must draw upon resources at the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America and the Murray Research Center and not be receiving support from any fellowship program at the time of research at Radcliffe. Three application deadlines remain in the coming year: December 15, 1980 and February 15 and April 15, 1981. For more information, see the Center's bulletin board or write to the Director of the Library or of the Center; Radcliffe College; 10 Garden Street; Cambridge, MA 02138.

The Women's Studies Program of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation will be awarding grants averaging \$1,000 to be used for research expenses connected with a dissertation for research about women in any field of study. The last day to request applications is November 14. For more information, see our bulletin board or write to the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation; Women's Studies Program; Box 642; Princeton, New Jersey 08540.

## NETWORKS

As the content of a Directory on the Research on Women, 1980, the Center for Continuing Education of Women at the University of Michigan seeks to identify people who have recently completed or are now working on research topics related to women. If interested, send your name to the University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women; 330 Thompson Street; Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109.

Interested in a chance to achieve a non-sexist, ecologically-sane future? The Clark Force Confluence of Feminists and Environmentalists is a network of women living in the Northwest who are involved in making connections between feminism and environmentalism, women's roles and technology. They are interested in contacting others who share their concern. For more information, write to them at 315 S. 4th E.; Missoula, Montana 59801.

Graduate students at the University of Miami need help in locating women who are returning to graduate school (or are recent graduates) after a hiatus of five years. They hope to create a guide that will alleviate the apprehension these women feel. If you have contact with such women, please ask them to write to Wendy Kheel or Barbara Gomez at 1750 NE 115th St.; Miami, Florida 33181.

## PROJECTS

Dr. Linda Ching Sledge asks Center associates to contact her if they would like to serve as subjects of her research. She is particularly interested in interviewing young Asian-American women with strong opinions on changing women's roles within the family structure. She may be reached at 68 Grandview Avenue; Pleasantville, New York 10570.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The Women's Studies Division of the Western Social Sciences Association is calling for papers for their 1981 meetings in San Diego, California on April 23 through 25. This year's focus will be on the effect of sex, race, and class. The deadline is November 15. See our bulletin board or write to Pat MacCorquodale; WSSA Women's Studies Division; Department of Sociology; University of Arizona; Tucson, Arizona.

Ethnic American Women will be the topic of a conference of the Program for the Study of Women and Men in Society at the University of Southern California on April 30 through May 1, 1981. The purpose of the conference will be to showcase ethnic women who are engaged in scholarly work within an academic framework and whose work may or may not be connected with their respective communities. If you can help identify such women, write to Patricia Lin Blinde; Chair, Planning Committee on Ethnic American Women; Program for the Study of Women and Men in Society; University of Southern California; University Park; Los Angeles, CA 90007.

The International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, which our Center is cosponsoring, will be held at the University of Haifa, Israel in December 1981. This Congress is designed to help feminist scholars throughout the world share their research with one another. Deadline for submission of papers is April 1, 1981. For more details, contact the Center or write to The Secretariat; International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women; 122 Hayarkon St.; P.O. Box 3054; Tel Aviv, Israel.

The Association for Women in Psychology seeks program proposals for their National Conference in Boston, March 5-8, 1981.

## Jobs

A tenure-track position is available at the University of New Hampshire in the Women's Studies Program. The applicant selected will divide time between teaching and program coordination, beginning July 1, 1981. The applicant should send a resume, names of three referees, and sample syllabuses or outlines of past or potential women's studies courses by December 1, 1980, to Barbara White; Women's Studies Program; Murkland Hall; University of New Hampshire; Durham, NH 03824.

Newcomb College of Tulane University is searching for a director of its women's center, who will hold an adjunct faculty appointment and teach one course in an academic department. Candidates should have the Ph.D. and experience in funded research, preferably in women's research areas. Salary: \$17,000-\$19,000. Resumes should be sent by December 1 to Dean Susan Wittig; Newcomb College; 1229 Broadway; New Orleans, LA 70118.

William Paterson College may have a part-time position for the Spring 1981 semester only to teach some of the following courses: women and politics, political socialization, and seminar on women in comparative politics. Teaching experience is required and a Ph.D. preferred. Send resume by December 1 to Mildred Weil; Dean, School of Social Science; William Paterson College of New Jersey; Wayne, NJ 07470.

SUNY at Albany is anticipating an opening, contingent on funding, which combines the directorship of the Women's Studies Program with teaching responsibilities in an academic department. Send applications before November 15 to Women's Studies; c/o Office of Personnel; Administration Building 318; SUNY at Albany; 1400 Washington Avenue; Albany, New York 12222.

# Conferences

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The Federation of Organizations for Professional Women will be holding their annual meeting in Washington, D.C. on November 14-15. The theme of this meeting is "Public Policy, Professional Women, and Politics: The Next Four Years. Registration forms may be obtained from the Federation office at 2000 P Street, N.W.: Suite 403; Washington, D.C. 20036.

"Women: A Developmental Perspective" is a research conference that will address a broad range of research issues concerning the physical and psychological development of women. It will be held in Bethesda, Maryland on November 20-21 and is sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Call Pamela Driscoll of the Office of Research Reporting, NICHD, at (301) 496-5133 for more information.

"Women in Science Careers" will be workshop that will encourage women who are unemployed or underemployed to consider training for a career in science. The workshop will be held in New York on January 15-16. For applications, write to Women in Science Careers; The New York Academy of Sciences; 2 E. 63rd St.; New York, NY 10021.

"Women and Men in Greece: A Society in Transition," will be a symposium held in Philadelphia on November 14-16.

The Modern Greek Studies Association will present a symposium on "Women and Men In Greece: A Society in Transition" in Philadelphia on November 14-16. For more information about this meeting, see the brochure on our bulletin board.

"In Praise of Half the Saints: Theology of the Changing Ministry of Women" will be a conference sponsored by the Committee on the Ministry of Women at The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine on Saturday, November 8. For more information, call the Cathedral or see the Center's bulletin board.

"Women Taking Charge: Personal and Political Empowerment" will be the theme of a conference at Ramapo College on Saturday, November 8. Robin Morgan will be the keynote speaker, and the registration fee is only \$7! For more information, contact Ramapo College Women's Center; 505 Ramapo Valley Road; Mahwah, New Jersey 07430.

The Women's Center at SUNY, Stony Brook is sponsoring a Lesbian Feminist Conference on November 22 and 23. Call the Center at (516) 246-3540 for more details.

The American Association of University Women will be having a community forum on "Women and Aging: Realities and Myths," on Thursday, November 6 at Brooklyn College from 7-9 p.m. See our bulletin board for details.

"The Identification and Treatment of Spouse Abuse: Health and Mental Health Agency Roles" will be the topic of a conference at the Warwick Hotel, New York City, on Friday, November 21. See our bulletin board or call Anne Boehme of Long Island Jewish-Hillside Medical Center at 470-2114 for more information.

# Publications

Read any good books lately? We'd like to hear about them. A one or two paragraph review or simply a short annotation about a new publication would be fine for sharing your finding with Newsletter readers.

Theories of Women's Studies, edited by Gloria Bowles and Renate Duelli-Klein of the Women's Studies Program, University of California, Berkeley. Selections include Bari Watkins on "Feminism: A Last Chance for the Humanities?" and Renate Duelli-Klein on "How to Do What We Want to Do: Thoughts about a Feminist Methodology." To order the publication, make checks for \$4.50 payable to the Regents of the University of California, Berkeley. The address is Women's Studies; 301 Campbell; UC Berkeley; Berkeley, CA 94720.

Women and Technology: Deciding What's Appropriate. Proceedings from a conference held in April 1979 at the University of Montana. Highlights include Judy Smith on "What Could Appropriate Technology Mean for Women?" and Corky Bush on "Cultural Images of Women and Technology." Copies of the proceedings are \$2.50 each from Women & Technology Network; 315 S. 4th E.; Missoula, Montana 59801.

International Directory of Researchers in Jewish Folklore, Ethnology, and Related Fields, compiled and edited by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, with Anne Kaplan, Devorah Sperling, and Toby Blum-Dobkin. This directory is the first comprehensive and detailed listing of over 350 researchers engaged in the study of Jewish folklore and culture in more than 16 countries. The directory is fully indexed and includes research on women. To order the directory, make checks for \$5.75 payable to the Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Newsletter and mail to JFEN; Max Weinreich Center for Advanced Jewish Studies (YIVO); 1048 Fifth Ave.; New York, NY 10028.

Proceedings of the National Conference on Rape Prevention Theory, Strategies and Research, November 17-19, 1978, Columbus, Ohio. Mail a \$5 check to Women Against Rape, P.O. Box 02084; Columbus, Ohio 43202.

Don't Go Dancing Mother, by Rose Safran. This unusual and informative story has a strong feminist thrust: women, not men, are the caretakers of the elderly. To order, send a check for \$4.95 to Tide Book Publishing Company, Box 268, Manchester, Massachusetts 01944.

The following publications are available from The Program on Women; Northwestern University; 1902 Sheridan Road; Evanston, Illinois 60201.

Grantsmanship, by Arlene Kaplan Daniels. \$2.75.

Managing the Life Cycle: Conference Proceedings and Commissioned Papers, edited by Marilyn D. Jacobson and Dorothy H. Salene. \$6.

The Health of Women at Work, by Vilma R. Hunt. \$6.

Women and Health Care, by Sheryl K. Ruzek. \$3.50.

# 1980

## November-December

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- Friday, November 7 2 p.m. Menstruation Study Group, Room 1401
- Thursday, November 13 7 p.m. Committee for Abortion Reform and Against Sterilization meets at 380 Second Ave., 22nd fl. "Our Lives on the Line," a video of black women discussing abortions, will be shown. Call their office at 532-6685 for details.
- Friday, November 14 2-3 p.m. JUDY WALKOWITZ, Associate Professor of History at Rutgers University, will speak about "'MURDER, MURDER, MUTILATION WHITECHAPEL': JACK THE RIPPER AND OUTCAST LONDON," a study of the effect of public discourse on class and sexuality on a working class neighborhood. Third Floor Studio.
- Tuesday, November 18 1:30-3 p.m. Steering Committee Meeting
- Friday, November 21 3 p.m. Women and Health Group, Room 1401  
"Effects and Experiences of Pregnancy in Different Social Groups" will be the topic of discussion.
- November 27-30 THANKSGIVING
- Tuesday, December 2 6:30 p.m. Women and Urban Environment Group, Room 1437  
Katrin Adams of the Women's Development Corp. will talk about "Working with Community Women on Housing and Community Services."
- Friday, December 5 2-3 p.m. Menstruation Study Group, Room 1401
- Friday, December 5 3-5 p.m. Associates Meeting, Room 1401
- Thursday, December 11 7 p.m. Committee for Abortion Reform and Against Sterilization meets in Room 207, Grad. Center. First of a two-part discussion on the relationship between reproductive rights and lesbian rights.
- Friday, December 12 4 p.m. LINDA NOCHLIN, Distinguished Professor of Art History at the Graduate Center, will speak on "THE IMAGERY OF THE WORKING WOMAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY."  
Third Floor Studio.
- Friday, December 19 2-5 p.m. Women and Health Group - Film Festival and Holiday Party - The well-known movie, "Birth," by R.D. Laing, and "All My Babies" will be shown. Third Floor Studio.
- December 24-31 WINTER RECESS