

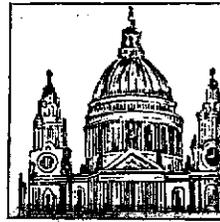


Women in Libraries

Volume 18, Number 2

November/December 1988

Midwinter Meeting Schedule Washington, D. C. 1989



Feminist Task Force Meetings

The Feminist Task Force has three meetings at midwinter, listed here after the last round of scheduling changes. Several other meetings which may be of interest are included here. Check later schedules to confirm times and to find room numbers.

January 6, 1989. Friday

4:30 - 7:00 p.m. ACRL, Women's Studies Section Social Hour (details on page 2)

January 7, 1989. Saturday

8:00 - 9:00 a.m. COSWL

9:00 - 11:00 a.m. American Indian Library Association

9:00 - 11:00 a.m. SRRT, International Human Rights Task Force

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. COSWL: Advancing Women in Library Management Subcommittee

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. EMIERT, Library Education Task Force

2:00 - 4:00 p.m. SRRT, Feminist Task Force

2:00 - 5:30 p.m. SRRT, Corretta Scott King Awards Committee (First of several meetings)

2:00 - 5:30 p.m. SRRT, Gay/Lesbian Task Force Membership Meeting

4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Minority Concerns Committee

4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Committee on Pay Equity

January 8, 1989. Sunday

8:00 - 9:00 a.m. COSWL: Legislation Subcommittee

8:00 - 9:00 a.m. EMIERT, Jewish Librarians Task Force

9:30 - 11:00 a.m. SRRT, Feminist Task Force

ACRL: Association of College and Research Libraries

COSWL: Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship

EMIERT: Ethnic Materials Information Exchange Round Table

LAMA: Library Administration and Management Association

RASD: Reference and Adult Services Division

SRRT: Social Responsibilities Round Table

2:00 - 5:30 p.m. COSWL

4:00 - 6:00 p.m. Reception, Lammes "Women's Books and More" (address and directions on page 2)

4:30 - 5:30 p.m. COSWL: Bibliography/Clearinghouse Subcommittee

8:00 - 10:00 p.m. Black Caucus

January 9, 1989. Monday

8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. COSWL, Minority Women Oral History Project Task Force - Interviewer Training Session

9:00 - 11:00 a.m. ACRL Women's Studies Section, Conference Program Planning Committee, Dallas 1989

9:30 - 11:00 a.m. RASD, Women's Materials and Women Library Users Discussion Group

2:00 - 4:00 p.m. LAMA, Women Administrators Discussion Group

January 10, 1989. Tuesday

8:00 - 9:00 a.m. COSWL, Advancing Women in Library Management Subcommittee

9:00 - 10:00 a.m. SRRT, Feminist Task Force

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. COSWL

2:00 - 4:00 p.m. SRRT, Gay/Lesbian Task Force Steering Committee

Networking is the fun part—Be there!

Social hours can be important to working in a profession, and they can be fun, too. Here are two special meetings for those active or interested in women's activities in ALA or women's studies.

ACRL-WSS will host a social hour to welcome new members, seasoned veterans, and interested non-members from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m., Friday, January 6, 1989, in the Shoreham Hotel's Garden Court. There is no formal reservation in the area; it is the general hotel lounge on the main floor. We'll try to congregate near one side. WSS Executive Committee members will serve as "greeters," directing and introducing you. By meeting this way at the beginning of the conference, ACRL hopes to help

people get acquainted and find out what's going on in our section and other women's groups in ALA. Make it a success and a regular conference event! Come, and bring your friends and colleagues.

LAMMAS "Women's Books and More," Washington's only feminist bookstore, will hold a reception for women librarians on Sunday, January 8, 1989 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. The address is 1426 21st Street NW, Dupont Circle, at 21st and P. This is just two blocks from either exit of the Dupont Circle Metro stop on the Red Line. If you get lost, call them at 202-775-8218. Try to attend, for this is a fine bookstore with a most welcoming and informed staff.

Women in the News

United Nations Policies

The United Nations Development Fund for Women, or Unifem, is making big changes on a small scale. The fund gives small loans to villages, mainly in the third world, for improvements. Recently, the women of a small Gambian village bought a millet mill; the mill does in five minutes what it used to take the women four hours to do, leaving them time to grow more crops for market. The fund is so successful and in such demand, Unifem is trying to solicit more money for the loans. The U. S. donation to the fund has nearly tripled this year, though it is still quite small. — From *The New York Times*, Nov. 3, 1988.

Children

Children's rights are also at issue in the U. N. The General Assembly is debating a convention on child abuse and the human rights of children. Though most of the rights, the obligations of parents, are already listed under the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights, for the first time they would be defined as children's rights. The rules also break new ground by establishing the right of children to enjoy a family life and extending international legal protection to adoption processes. — From *The New York Times*, Nov. 3, 1988

Elsewhere, children's problems are on the rise. In American cities, drug abuse, pregnancy, dropout rates, and homelessness have increased more for children than for adults. At the United States

Conference of Mayors on October 26, the mayors suggested that the next president's priorities in terms of children should be child care, drug abuse and education. — From *The New York Times*, Oct. 27, 1988

And Childcare

While the mayors looked at studies showing that 45 percent of the demand for childcare goes unmet, a professor of chemistry at Stanford University called for five-year subsidies for young scientists who are also young mothers. Carl Djerassi's plea for such aid reached prominence when Gertrude B. Elion received a Nobel Prize in medicine last month. Because of the difficulty in supporting herself, she could only attend school part time and had to forgo other commitments. She sacrificed a Ph. D., marriage and motherhood. "Professor Djerassi underscored that his proposal, which deals with the needs of a special category of women, is no substitute for broader child-care reforms. The greater neglect seriously harms the nation's children and the lives of women. The limited crisis in science merely puts the spotlight on the larger crisis." — From *The New York Times*, Nov. 9, 1988

Fathers' rights

Unmarried fathers are gaining some rights; married but separated fathers are suing for others. More unmarried fathers are seeking visitation rights or

custody, possibly a sign that at least some men are recognizing the benefits as well as the responsibilities of parenthood. States are yielding on surname requirements, as Rhode Island did in October, when it agreed to give a child her father's surname rather than the surname of her mother's estranged husband.

Married men are suing women to stop abortions, guided by the tightly organized anti-abortion movement to ask courts for restraining orders. State courts have heard 12 such cases this year, but the Supreme Court has so far refused to reconsider its 1976 ruling that a state may not make a woman's right to an abortion contingent on her husband's permission. — From *The New York Times*, October 28 and November 15, 1988.

Elsewhere in The Law

begun to find acceptance for a self-defense argument. Feminist scholars, beginning to influence law, have persuaded some courts to allow expert testimony which supports such defenses both for battered wives and abused children, resulting in acquittal or lesser charges like manslaughter. Similarly, in the 1970's, it was female lawyers who began to see sexual harassment in the workplace as unjustified, making legal arguments against it as a form of sex discrimination, though previously it was considered a given. Stephen Gillers, a law professor at New York University, said "it's not one doctrine that the feminists are proposing. It's a reconstruction of legal theory. Ultimately, we're going to feel it through an avalanche of a thousand little decisions." Leslie Bender, professor of the Syracuse University College of Law, writes, "The masculine voice of rights, autonomy and abstraction has led to a standard that protects efficiency and profit. The feminine voice can design a tort system that encourages behavior that is caring about others' safety and responsive to others' needs or hurts, and that attends to human contexts and consequences." Carol Gilligan's 1982 book, *In a Different Voice*, is credited with breaking new ground in feminist legal theory. She states that men think in terms of a hierarchy of values, but that women live in a "contextual web" where decision making depends on several interdependent factors. — From *The New York Times*, Sept. 30 and Nov. 11, 1988.

Women have not fared so well as victims. As men find themselves unable to control women, unsure of their roles, they are killing them and being excused by juries. Recently a new defense called "rough sex" has been making its appearance at trials of men who have killed their girlfriends. Two men in New York, claiming they strangled their

victims during sex games, were convicted of manslaughter, with a sentence of five to 15 years, and criminally negligent homicide, a lesser charge which carries a sentence of only about two to four years. Norma Ramos, legal counsel for Women Against Pornography, said the defense lawyers in these cases "are merely exploiting the inequality of women and reaping the benefits of the lack of credibility women have in our legal system." "This defense," she said, "comes straight from pornography: 'she wanted it, she liked it, she deserved it.'" Kenneth Littman, the Assistant District Attorney who prosecuted one of the cases, said "I think the situation is worse for women than just the idea that rough sex is being used as a defense. What's worse is the jury's willingness to believe it's the woman's fault." — From an article by Sharon Wyse in *New Directions for Women*, September/October 1988.

The system does not help most abused children, either, and the record is appalling. Harvard



Women in Libraries

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University in conjunction with Massachusetts General Hospital has conducted a study finding that 75 percent of children who say they have been sexually abused by a divorced or separated parent are not believed by courts that refuse to take any protective action. In one case, the judge ruled that there was insufficient evidence that sexual abuse had occurred even though a doctor testified that semen had been found in a girl's vagina after her father's visit. Dr. Muriel Sugarman, who led the study, reasoned that judges irrationally believe that fathers do not sexually abuse their children and that mothers lie. The Coalition Against the Sexual Abuse of Young Children is a new group working to help children who are victims of sexual abuse. To help, write to them at 5323 Nebraska Avenue, N. W., Washington D. C. 20015, or call 202-966-7183. From *New Directions for Women*, September/October 1988.

Unmarried Rights:

Why Can't Sharon Kowalski Come Home?

Sharon Kowalski can't return home because of popular attitudes towards disability and homosexuality. In 1983 Kowalski was seriously injured when her car was struck by a drunk driver. A permanently disabling head injury left her unable to communicate or move in traditional ways. For the next two years, Karen Thompson, her lover of four years, constantly remained by her side, using her knowledge of physical therapy to rehabilitate Kowalski in basic life skills.

In 1985, after many costly legal battles, Kowalski's father was awarded sole guardianship of his daughter. Within twenty-four hours he denied Thompson visitation. Since her father was awarded sole guardianship, Kowalski's condition has deteriorated. She has been moved to a nursing home hours away from Thompson and other friends and has received minimal rehabilitation therapy. Because they are not partners in the eyes of the law, Thompson has no legal right to affect decisions regarding Kowalski's medical care. Likewise, Kowalski has been denied companionship when institutionalized without choice. These tragic conditions could apply equally to other people in non-licensed relationships, gay or not. *Why Can't Sharon Kowalski Come Home?* by Karen Thompson and Julie Andrzejewski (Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1988), describes Thompson's legal efforts of the past four years to be recognized as Kowalski's partner and to ensure her the quality care she deserves.

Thompson's battle has been aided by the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union, the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, and now by the

National Committee to Free Sharon Kowalski. To help, write the Committee at 1725 17th St., N. W., Room 515, Washington, D. C. 20002, or call them at 202-667-3415. Order the book from Spinsters/Aunt Lute, P.O. Box 410687, San Francisco, CA 94141; \$10.95 paper, \$20.95 cloth, add \$1.00 postage for the first copy and .40 for each additional; California residents add 6.5 percent tax. Call them at 415-558-9655.

The Disadvantaged

Dorothy King, a black woman who operates a shelter for abused women, "has become something of a Joan of Arc to Colorado's disadvantaged." In August, King and a small group of supporters began illegally occupying a vacant house owned by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Denver. She is trying to get the department to lease 55 such houses, owned by HUD because of foreclosure, to charities. The agency is willing to lease the houses, but the city's residents are not, worried that "street people" might benefit from the hardships of former home owners. With lengthy waiting lists for housing assistance, and 47,000 vacant houses nationwide, King focused local attention on the issue. — From *The New York Times*, Oct. 23, 1988.

Women in the Army

For what it's worth, the Army has opened a number of occupations to women that had previously been closed to them. This could mean as many as 11,138 new jobs in the Army will be open to women. Women still may not be assigned to any combat positions. A new rule specifies that a particular occupation should not be judged on the basis of skills involved but on the risk of exposure to hostile fire. — From *The New York Times*, Nov. 15, 1988.

Libraries and the M. L. S.

New York state officials are considering a proposal that all library directors have an advanced library degree. Some librarians see this as a sign of professional librarians' contempt for small libraries whose main purpose is to supply the public with popular recreational reading material. Most small rural libraries, in the face of severe budget restrictions, could not pay a professional librarian. The new standards were proposed by a committee of librarians and library officials appointed by the State Board of Regents and have not yet been approved by the Regents. More than half of the public libraries in New York state are managed by librarians without advanced degrees. All of these

are in rural communities with fewer than 7,500 people. The Regents claim that "people expect more from libraries these days than just books." — From *The New York Times*, Nov. 6, 1988.

Bias-related Crime

In New York, a youth was killed in October, apparently because he was a black in a white neighborhood. *The New York Times* has called for the Legislature to take action. In an editorial, the *Times* claimed that the reason the Legislature has failed to pass a bill including stiffer penalties for bias-related crimes is that Republican legislators want to exclude sexual preference as a source of bias. Any bias should be condemned, and any law should reflect that. One question: if a law is to condemn violent crimes based on bias, given that a person's sex inspires such prejudice, will we see stiffer penalties for rape?

What Freedom of Information?

Already, any organization using federal funds for public health services may not give information or referrals for abortion, due to rules issued by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, effective last spring. Must libraries fear the imposition of similar restrictions? Must we wait until then to object to this kind of restriction of information? Many libraries are recipients of federal funds from other sources, and many librarians need to be able both to give and receive this kind of information.

Abortion and the Republican

Now that George Bush is president-elect, women have more work ahead of them. The Republican party's abortion plank gives us much to fear. The platform states "that the unborn child has a fundamental right to life which cannot be infringed." Marjorie Bell Chambers, a Republican

and a platform committee member, proposed an amendment to delete the last four words, arguing that the words "cannot be infringed" meant "that men and fetuses have a right to life at all times, but women lose that right when they become pregnant." The committee roundly defeated the amendment. We are now faced with a future president whose party believes that a fetus should not be aborted even to save an adult's life. Any reasonable adult can only react to such a proposition with horror.

Conference on Racism to Meet in Iowa

The Women Against Racism Committee at the University of Iowa Women's Resource and Action Center is presenting a conference, *Parallels and Intersections: A National Conference on Racism and other Forms of Oppression*, April 6-9, 1989, in Iowa City, Iowa. General sessions plan to cover topics like myths and misinformation, the dynamics of oppression, alliance building and outlooks for social change. The deadline for registration is March 1. Write to the University of Iowa Women's Resource and Action Center, 130 N. Madison Street, Iowa City, IA 52242.

National Women's Studies Association Conference

NWSA 1989 will meet at Towson State University, Towson, Maryland, June 14-18, 1989. The theme, "Feminist Transformations," is intended to emphasize how feminist education can change educational patterns and models, restructure ways of knowing and being, affect philosophical thought, and create new alliances between the academy and the community. For information, write NWSA '89, National Women's Studies Association, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742-1325, or call 301-454-3757.

The NYU Strike

Librarians and Pay Equity for Library Staff

Local 3882, United Staff Association of New York University, AFT, began what was to be a three-week strike August 29, 1988. The union represents 1500 NYU clerical and technical employees—70 percent are women, 50 percent people of color. NYU libraries employ about ten percent of the university's union members. At issue: pay equity. The university offered a 5.5 percent wage increase for each of the next two years; the union sought an 8 percent yearly increase in pursuit of salaries comparable to the predominantly male unions at NYU—those representing security guards, maintenance staff, and elevator operators. The clerical/technical union employees make an average of \$17,500 a year. The male-dominated unions tout average salaries of \$19,500 for their members. Hmmm. Other "women's issues" were at hand—the extension of unpaid maternity leave from 4 months to 6 months (a benefit NYU faculty, including librarians, already had), establishment of a child care program, as well as an agency shop and improvements in the pension, medical, and dental plans.

Three trying weeks later, our staff came back to work. Tired and bitter in some cases, they had won a great deal of respect and a child care leave, an increase in life insurance, and a guarantee of overtime pay after 35 hours instead of 37.5 hours. Alas, the contract calls for only 5.5 percent wage increases over the next two years. Although this increase percentage is tied to the pool for faculty and administrative staff, the contract does not include a remedy for the ever-inequitable wage structure.

During the strike, some NYU librarians and library administrative staff demonstrated support and

sympathy for striking colleagues. A few spent several days on the picket line. Others went to work, but walked the picket line some, too. A handful participated in a special faculty picket held one day about two weeks into the strike. About 40 of us sent signed letters to NYU president Brademas urging a quick remedy to the situation. Other librarians were supportive, so they said, but didn't feel compelled or able to take any action. Some did clerical jobs (those absolutely necessary); and others didn't (by conviction or by luck or both). Of those who did the clerical jobs, some hated it; others loved it. And, of course, still others did not support the striking workers' interests.

As library and university clerical workers unionize, strikes like this will occur with greater frequency. We need to think about how we can involve ourselves in these issues and how to respond to these predicaments. Many librarians are in unions with fellow library workers; most are not.

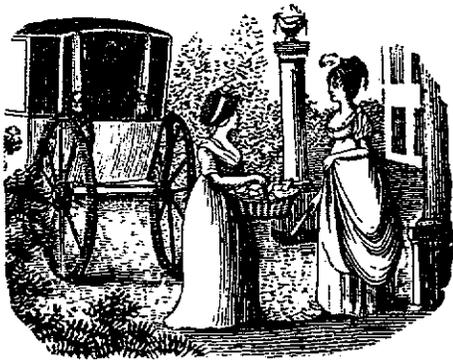
In the latter case, dilemmas abound. How do librarians support the union's quest for a fair wage when we are identified as administration? What do we risk when we do not work to support a labor action? Our jobs, our salaries, our intangible professional "future"? At what risk do we write letters to the university administration? How do we reconcile with teaching faculty who, while righteously teaching classes off campus, believe themselves nobler than we librarians, building-bound to our profession? Easy for them not to cross picket lines, they have all the library books they need on long term loan. Really, now, are there definable picket lines in an academic setting? AAARGH! Isn't it supposed to be easier than this?
—PT

Special Publishing Schedule 1988-89

We will still plan to publish five times this year, but we have changed the dates. This issue merges the November and December issues. January's will be our usual Midwinter ALA conference report issue, March will have a special issue to make up for the missing fall number, and May will again preview ALA's annual summer conference.

Late Issues, Bulk Mail, and Other Woes

We apologize for the lateness of our first two issues. An all-new staff had lots to learn about printing and bulk mail service—some copies of the September issue spent a month on the road! We are going first class rather than bulk mail this time, so you should have this pre-Midwinter issue in December.



Special Midwinter Review Section

Reconstructing the Academy

Minnich, Elizabeth, Jean F. O'Barr, and Rachel A. Rosenfeld, editors. *Reconstructing the Academy: Women's Education and Women's Studies*. University of Chicago Press, 1988. Cloth \$27.50, paper \$13.95. Originally published in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, this collection of essays presents a broad perspective of women's studies in the college curriculum. From the study of philosophy to sexual harassment policy on campus, from internalized values to a survey of the achievements of women college graduates, several of the most important scholars in women's studies, including Maxine Baca Zinn, Karen Anderson, Rachel A. Rosenfeld, Berenice Fisher and others, make their contributions. Like so many studies, on the one hand we are glad to know how far we have come, and on the other, dismayed to see how far we still have to go.

Ellisabeth Young-Bruehl describes the changes coming to the study of philosophy in "The Education of Women as Philosophers." At first, she writes, feminism wished "to free women from their circumscribed mental worlds and let them enter into male rationality, participate in it as equals." Instead, true recognition of female equality and female thought is breaking down the mind-body division characteristic of patriarchal monism. Rather than merely participating in male rationality, women contribute new ways of thinking, of asking questions, and examining the kinds of questions we are asking.

"Definitions of Sexual Harassment," by Phyllis L. Crocker, examines the sexual harassment policies of several well-known universities; Tulane University appallingly requires that "conduct be grossly objectionable to most students and faculty" in order to be defined as sexual harassment. The victim's perceptions, then, are seen as inconse-

quential. Crocker asks "Who defines sexual harassment and from what point of view?" She points out that this is problematic when "coupled with the inescapable fact that university administrations have a strong scholarly and financial investment in their professors."

Eleven more equally thoughtful articles complete the selection. *Reconstructing the Academy* includes a bibliography of other related articles published in *Signs* and a thorough index. This book is vital to any higher education institution women's studies collection, and would be useful as a reader in many courses in the field. —MT

The Goddess and Indian Art

Mookerjee, Ajit. *Kali: The Feminine Force*. New York: Destiny Books, 1988. Paper, \$12.95. Kali is the Hindu Triple Goddess symbolizing creation, preservation and destruction. Her name means "time," and she is associated with all aspects of life, especially the dark side, sleep, dreams, dance, and violent, transforming death. She is the one who chooses from among the corpses those souls which shall be released from the bonds of existence; she is wet nurse to invincible warriors, yet death lingers in her womb.

Hindu tradition names this the age of Kali, a time of the resurgence of divine feminine spirit, and if this book has a thesis, this is it. Confused in its approach, however, it claims to be an art book, strives also to be a feminist manifesto, and hence succeeds at neither. Though the volume is well made with marvelous illustrations, the text is so densely packed with the names of Hindu deities, demigods, temples, shrines, place names and concepts that the reader may become more confused than enlightened.

Kali, meant for western readers, would be more accessible if it seriously attempted to integrate the psychosocial, gender-oriented literature currently available; it mentions ideas from Nor Hall, Esther Harding, C. G. Jung and others, but only briefly. The short bibliography is helpful but the index is inadequate. This extremely complex and fundamental concept deserves much more attention. A good place to start is Barbara G. Walker's *Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983). — TM

Women in the South

Timberlake, Andrea, Lynn Weber Cannon, Rebecca F. Guy, and Elizabeth Higginbotham, editors. *Women of Color and Southern Women: A Bibliography of Social Science Research, 1975 to 1988*. Memphis, TN: Center for Research on Women, Memphis State University, 1988. Paper \$15.00. In 1984 the Center for Research on Women created an on-line bibliographic database, *The Research Clearinghouse on Women of Color and Southern Women*. This bibliography, the first book printed from the database, was designed primarily as a research tool for students, scholars, policy makers, and social work and health care professionals. Entries focus on women in the United States, specifically African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinas, Native Americans and Southern women.

The citations reflect current research in each of the social sciences and health. More than 1800 citations are taken from published articles and books, chapters in books, and unpublished works such as conference papers and doctoral dissertations. The bibliography is organized by six headings: culture, education, employment, family, health, political activism and social movements. Additional indexes are provided for authors and keywords.

Each citation includes fairly complete bibliographic information. In place of abstracts, three to twelve keywords are assigned to each item. Although the subject keyword assignment is very precise, abstracts would be desirable, especially when the bibliography is intended for use by students. One very cumbersome feature occurs with the 800 duplicate citations which fall under more than one subject heading. The citations are fully listed only once; elsewhere cross-references lead to the one complete citation. The book is attractive in layout and typography, although journal titles are not highlighted.

Aside from the abundance of duplicate entry cross-references and the lack of abstracts, *Women of Color* will be a useful library research tool. The editors are bridging the gap between researchers and the mainstream and more elusive scholarly

literature on women of color and Southern women. Building a database also reflects the Center's strong commitment to the continuing support of women's studies research. — LM

Front Page Women

Mills, Kay. *A place in the news: From the women's pages to the front page*. Dodd, Mead, 1988. Cloth \$17.95. Kay Mills presents a newsy, chatty account of women's efforts to achieve equal treatment in the field of journalism. Mills follows women journalists as they progress from recipes and fashion to political conventions, war and economics, even adding politics to the women's section of the newspaper. Filled with anecdote, informative and entertaining, the book is more fun than scholarly, though it is footnoted and includes an index. — MT

Women in Ireland

Brady, Anna. *Women in Ireland*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988. This annotated bibliography of more than 400 pages covers such topics as biography, literature, religion and witchcraft, marriage and the family, human sexuality, perspectives on women's liberation, and many others. It contains useful remarks and indexes. This is generally a fine bibliography, though Irish feminists and lesbians are not acknowledged in the work, with an exception or two. This title is number six in the Greenwood series, "Bibliographies and Indexes in Women's Studies." — BCS

Hard Living

Allison, Dorothy. *Trash*. Firebrand Books, Ithaca, NY, 1988. Paper, \$8.95; cloth, \$18.95. Dorothy Allison describes a childhood in a huge family in the rural south, growing up where gruesome cruelties are a fact of life, where the problems are only the large ones and survival is everything. Life passes without love and only with courage and endurance. These autobiographical short stories follow the development of one woman, fighting and tough, as she grows, survives her childhood, and leaves her family to go to college and make a better life.

The first story, "River of Names," is the strongest, a dreamlike array of faces and names, appearing and disappearing as ripples in a river. These portraits of a family grab and torment, haunting imagination and memory. Allison's protagonist has not found much in men to charm her, given the patterns of abuse and dominance she has observed and suffered, but she admires the tenacity of the women of her family, and begins a lifelong search as a lesbian

for value for herself and love and respect among women, hard to come by in her early years of poverty and dirt.

"Mama" has her own story, a hard-working diner waitress who still cannot put together the means of escape from her abusive husband, cannot summon the strength to protect her daughters from their incestuous stepfather. The aunts, the female cousins, try to help each other, not to do anything—for there is nothing to do—but to accept the fact that their survival depends upon tolerating and placating the brutal and uncaring men. The horror remains; happiness is only temporary.

"Gospel Song" is most reminiscent of Flannery O'Connor as Allison sets the stage, placing there an abandoned and unhappy girl and the sound of gospel music in the shimmering moist summer heat: "Gut-shaking, deep-bellied, powerful voices rolled through the dried leaves and hot air. . . I could feel the whiskey edge, the grief and holding on, the dark night terror and determination of real gospel."

"Once in a while," Allison writes, "I can make the world I know real on the page." Indeed she can. This is her second book, though we expect to hear more of her. For mature readers, the stories include some sexually explicit episodes. —MT



Incest and Hope

To a Safer Place. Producer: National Film Board of Canada. Distributor: AIMS Media. 1988. 58 minutes, \$795 16mm., \$195 video, \$75 rental.

In this real and intimate documentary, Shirley Turcotte explores her childhood of sexual abuse at the hands of her father. After years engaged in the hard work of healing, she returns to remind herself and others how it happened, to give hope that recovery is possible.

The gentle, graceful narrative and interviews with the people in her past tell the story of Turcotte's recovery, of the strength she and children like her must have, and their wistfully expressed wishes for a normal life. As a child, she and her two brothers and one sister were beaten, though the boys suffered the most physical abuse. For the girls, it was different. Her first memories are of sodomy; her younger sister remembers sodomy as a toddler with the first act of penetration at age five. This sister remembers being imprisoned for hours in a closet at the age of two "for not touching him." As a teenager, she was forced to bear his child. She was also, as a child, the plaintiff in a court case—which the father won because she could not list

exact dates and times. "How can you tell how many days there were," she says, "when there were so many?"

When the children were still young, the father left the mother and went to live with a girlfriend; he took the children with him. In a house in the country, the four children were kept in the basement, allowed out only to go to school, never to use the bathtub nor to watch television, never to be loved but only used.

On this difficult pilgrimage to her past, Turcotte visits her mother for the first time in many years. She begins to understand why her mother wasn't able to protect her children, confessing that, understandably, "I used to be angry." Her mother was very frail, and Turcotte begins to understand that the mother could not take care of her children; she was barely able to take care of herself. The father beat the children even as babies, the mother says; she believes it was the infants' crying that changed him from a loving man to an abuser. "The little baby was all blue for days," she says, from the beating. Her attempts to get help from the law or from social services are met with rebukes; they tell her to go home and solve the problem there. Turcotte learns to forgive her mother, who was too weak to help her. "I may have lost twenty years," Turcotte says, "but Mom lost a lifetime."

Wilfred, the elder of her two brothers, has had the most trouble finding an aim in life, and he has been in jail for assault and drug charges. "It's not hard to understand when you know his childhood was spent recovering from one beating after another," Turcotte says. Wilfred describes an occasion when his father was beating him and the family dog tried to protect the boy. His father picked the dog up and threw it, killing the pet. Wilfred wished for his father's love. The times it hurt the most, he says, he was in jail and the other men's fathers came to see them. His own father never came. "I loved him, even though he wasn't there," he says.

Turcotte remembers the constant fear. At night, she lay in bed, afraid to sleep, never knowing when her father would come for her. To protect herself, she sent a symbolic part of herself into the basement wall, the safer place of the title, too hard and cold for him to enter. But always he took her upstairs, where "he took me until there was almost no me left."

Turcotte ran away from home at 14 and spent time in foster homes. In therapy, she learns to give up the dreams she had of normal parents and their love, the dreams she had as a child, and to turn elsewhere, to other healthy relationships, for that love. She was afraid to have a child herself; she

was afraid of the violence and rage that might emerge. Now she has a beautiful little boy, a husband, and the normal family she always dreamed of. She was afraid to marry, "afraid of being absorbed by him, of losing my spirit, and I'd only just found it." But she has found that it is possible to find love without powerlessness or violence.

Because of a caring psychiatrist and friends, including other survivors of incest, and after years in foster homes and a mental institution, she has built a full and successful life. It has not been easy, it is not over, but she represents a well of strength that seems miraculous. This documentary is a paean of hope, a message of inspiration. It is a film that would be helpful in guidance and counselling the abused as well as helping the rest of us see what people like Turcotte have lived through. And because Turcotte has had the courage to tell her story, someone else may find the strength to escape from the patterns of abusive family situations. This documentary won the 1988 Emily Award, Best of Festival at the American Film and Video Association annual competition, for good reason. Sensitive but unflinching, expertly and intelligently produced and edited, this program should be available to all survivors of incest and child abuse. —MT

Needless Surgery

Hufnagel, Vicki, M. D., with Susan K. Golant. *No More Hysterectomies*. New American Library, New York, 1988. Cloth \$18.95. Hysterectomy is one of the most frequently performed surgeries in America. Why are there so many? The numbers are especially interesting when you consider that only about half of the population is eligible. In *No More Hysterectomies*, Vicki Hufnagel presents a clear case for better education and more research into the function and pathology of women's reproductive organs. She first presents some amazing facts about the frequency of this surgery, and then begins a straightforward description of uterine pathologies and possible treatments, surgical and chemical. She writes clearly, in layperson's language, yet without condescension.

Too often, she writes, the uterus is deemed useless, and it is removed for benign or misdiagnosed ailments. Sometimes, hysterectomy creates problems worse than those it is supposed to solve. Hufnagel favors repair and retention of organs as much as possible, for they are never useless. Our organs serve as parts of an interdependent system of glands, hormones, organs and physical and psychological functions. Many of the functions of the uterus are still unknown, though it secretes hormones and chemicals that work on other organs and interact with brain chemistry and other

hormones. As Hufnagel writes, if men had uteri, there would be a whole field of medicine dedicated to preserving this organ. Now, if its reproductive purposes are over, it is often removed without considering options.

In medical school, she writes, she was taught to remove the ovaries of women over 40 during a hysterectomy. This was to reduce risk of ovarian cancer, though only 4% of women are stricken with this form of cancer. Removal of the ovaries, however, contributes to early aging, loss of sex drive and osteoporosis, as well as other, more subtle problems. She charges, also, that in order for specialists to support a medical practice, they must perform surgery, and the most acceptable frequent surgery available to gynecologists is hysterectomy. She does make it clear that there are times when there is no alternative to the complete removal of the uterus or ovaries, as in some forms of cancer. In these instances, hysterectomy or oophorectomy is lifesaving. But, Hufnagel says, it is a last resort, only after all other options have been tried.

Hufnagel's battle becomes ours, as she tells us, again and again, to be informed. She favors introducing informed consent laws, which require that doctors give patients adequate information before making a decision, and has succeeded in promoting the passage of such a law in California. The book includes the complete text of this law, for use in promoting similar legislation in other states. Her own favored surgical methods include what she calls "Female Reconstructive Surgery." She has devised several surgical techniques for repairing without removal, which she describes.

The best way to avoid unnecessary surgery is to become informed, and this book may be the best place to start. Hufnagel includes a list of organizations involved in gynecological information and research, a bibliography, and an index. —MT

Women's Research Centers

Jackson-Brown, Grace. *Libraries and Information Centers Within Women's Studies Research Centers*. SLA Research Series no. 3. Washington, D.C.: Special Libraries Association, 1988. Paper \$7.00.

Based on a survey of women's studies research centers, this study explores the nature of such centers and of the library and information services maintained within them. The first part of the report indicates the varieties of services, staffing, and clientele reported; the remainder focuses on the broader history and operations of the centers as a whole. Overviews of publishing activities within the centers and of the database projects of the National Council for Research on Women and

other organizations are included. It is gratifying to see research on this topic supported by SLA and the recognition that many of these small collections are in fact "special libraries" with the services and problems thereof.

Jackson-Brown has brought together a useful basic survey of women's studies research centers, although some information is already out of date. The report is sketchy and descriptive rather than critical, and does not go into depth about the information problems faced in the centers nor suggest areas where more work needs to be done. It would be interesting to know whether her survey helped increase awareness among the centers of the role of librarians nationwide in the development of women's studies resources. The study cites definitions of the nature of women's studies that are rather limited considering the current evolution of the field. Minor errors in bibliographic citations occur throughout. — SP

Swedish Mystery

Peterzen, Elisabet. *The Last Draw*. Seal Press, Seattle, 1988. Paper \$8.95. This Swedish murder mystery takes on a new and interesting topic: serial murders where the only common thread among the victims is that they are men. Two journalists seek to unravel the mystery, hoping to scoop the police. While Peterzen has written several books, this is her first to be translated into English, and its appeal to mystery fans should result in more translations. The characters of the journalists are rather flat, but the main idea of the story is intriguing enough to lure the reader on, and the victims and suspects make up a rich cross-section of Swedish life. This mystery is part of a new International Women's Crime Series from Seal Press. — MT

Yay! Softball

Zipter, Yvonne. *Diamonds are a Dykes Best Friend*. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1988. Paper \$9.95, cloth \$20.95. Yvonne Zipter's book is a pioneering examination of one of the most common and beloved elements of North American lesbian culture—SOFTBALL! This is a thoughtful, passionate piece of work. Gleaned from intelligent library and archival research (with a Midwestern bias I don't hold against her), gossip, personal stories (a.k.a. oral history), and insider's knowledge (Zipter's a right-fielder), *Diamonds* is a wonderful look at how softball is woven into our lives, our heritage, our sensibilities. For jocks, fans, and academics alike, this is a must read. — PT

City Poetry

Gossett, Hattie. *Presenting . . . Sister No Blues*. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1988. Paper \$8.95, cloth \$18.95. This is a fine, compelling collection of poetic writings. Gossett writes sharp and clear. Her titles read like her text: 'born into this life the child of houseniggahs,' 'at the convention/uncle sam the song & danceman,' 'lunchcounter conversation overheard/commentary,' 'colored pussy,' 'womanmansion,' 'dreadlock office temp/labor relations #5.' Read this book. — PT

Time Travel

Butler, Octavia E. *Kindred*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1988. A young black woman, Dana, settling into her new home in California, is suddenly transported through time to an antebellum Maryland plantation. The young son of the plantation owner, her ancestor, is drowning, and in his extremity has discovered a magical power to summon her. From this beginning, Butler builds a compelling sequence of events that seems somehow inevitable. Dana learns the realities of slavery first hand, and she finds that all the descriptions she has read about life in the enslaved South have not prepared her. This is an example of a modern genre of fiction about this period, first-hand accounts of slave life from the point of view of our times. A children's story, *A Girl Called Boy* by Belinda Hurnence (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1982), is based on the same premise; a modern black girl steps through time to live for a short time among slaves. This is a useful approach to modern understanding of the period, and *Kindred* is well written, exciting and suspenseful. Originally published in 1979, this edition with a new foreword by Robert Crossley, is part of a new Black Women Writers Series from Beacon Press. — MT

Gothic Fantasy

Galford, Ellen. *The Fires of Bride*. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1988. Paper \$8.95, cloth, \$18.95. This novel will please those interested in matriarchal societies, legends, a nice twist on theological thinking or a good story. The past and present lives of the women on an isolated Scottish island come to the foreground when Maria Milleny, an artist, arrives for a short visit, recuperating from a crisis in her artistic development. Maria comes as the guest of Dr. Catriona MacEochan, the island's general practitioner and the heir to the castle. Other important characters come from the ancient nunnery which is being excavated. Throughout the book, the reader sees and feels the spirals of life from the beginning to the end of time.

Some of the early passages move a little too slowly, but it is well worth reading past those sections. Galford has an excellent sense of the appropriate places for humor. This wonderfully blasphemous book should be read in front of a fire on a dramatically foggy or stormy day. —DC

Erotica

Bright, Susie, ed. *Herotica*. Burlingame, CA: Down There Press, 1988. Paper \$8.50. This is a rather uninspiring collection of women's erotica. I would have liked to recommend it, but the pieces included really are mediocre. No one expects a lot of character development in erotic fiction but we do expect to have a stronger feeling for the events than these stories inspired. Stick with Lonnie Barbach's collections, *Erotic Interludes*, 1987, and *Pleasures*, 1985 (both New York: Harper & Row). —DC

Individual Evolution

Corpi, Lucha. *Delia's Song*. Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 1989. Paper \$8.50. Delia attempts to put her life in perspective from her first year in college, her participation in the Third World Strike at the University of California in Berkeley, and through the completion of her novel. Lucha Corpi uses some interesting techniques in her book. The thought and dream sequences flow like thoughts and dreams, in scattered bits and pieces. At times these sections are almost poetic.

The amount of introspection in the work, however, is almost overwhelming and gets a little tiring. Nevertheless, the book is an interesting look at an individual's evolution, from fearing the experiences that life brings to being a person who is satisfied with herself. —DC

Seasons Greetings



Acquisitions Notes

Resources for Educational Equity, a free catalog of educational materials, is now in its eleventh edition. Published by the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) Publishing Center, the catalog includes nearly 300 print and audiovisual materials for all grade levels, women's studies classes, vocational and job training programs, staff development courses, and programs for special students. For more information or a copy of the catalog, write the WEEA Publishing Center, Education Development Center, 55 Chapel Street., Newton, MA 02160, or call 800-225-3088 (in Massachusetts, 617-969-7100).

With the feminization of poverty comes increasing need for attention to women's health care problems. *Too Little, Too Late: Dealing with the Health Needs of Women in Poverty*, edited by Cesar A. Perales and Lauren S. Young, Ed.D., is a collection of critical commentary focusing on the health consequences of this trend including social policies, the relationship of poverty, gender, and health, the merits of federal and state programs dealing with the high rates of poverty among women, safety conditions of work environments of the working poor, and special issues affecting women of color. In paper for \$14.95, order from Harrington Park Press, 12 West 32nd Street, New York, NY 10001-3813.

The Project on the Status and Education of Women (AAC/PSEW) has a new publication, *Peer Harassment: Hassles for Women on Campus*, for \$5 prepaid. The report looks at many examples of peer harassment and possible causes of the behavior, even collusion by women, and includes an institutional self-evaluation checklist and more than 75 recommendations to help administrators prevent or deal with the problem. Order from AAC/PSEW, 1818 R Street, NW, Washington, D. C. 20009.

AIDS is a women's issue. In New York, it is the leading cause of death for women between ages 25 and 34. *AIDS: The Women*, is a collection of reports of women involved in the epidemic, edited by Ines Rieder and Patricia Ruppelt. These intimate accounts by ordinary women, caregivers, lesbians, prostitutes, and relatives, from a dozen countries, personalize the diversity of experience. Order from Cleis Press, P.O. Box 8933, Pittsburgh, PA 15221. The book is 300 pages, \$9.95 paper, \$24.95 cloth, and includes an appendix with a

glossary, a list of resources, and a bibliography.

Gallerie: Women's Art is a new quarterly journal from Canada founded in June, 1988. Amply illustrated, with biographical notes on each artist, and including essays on women's culture, the journal's intent is to "assist in building a women's culture that claims an alternate economy and a greater consequence for its artists." Subscriptions for three issues and a special annual are \$20 from Gallerie Publications, 2901 Panorama Drive, North Vancouver, B. C. V7G 2A4, Canada.

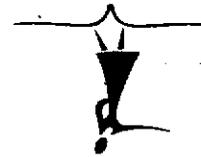
Another new journal is *Gender & Society*, the publication of Sociologists for Women in Society. A scholarly quarterly established in 1987, its aim is to confront sociological, economic and political assumptions about women in our culture. Each issue has a theme, like December's "Gender and Work," in which articles examined this topic in terms of social structures and cultures, office and domestic work, and the radical and liberal implications of comparable worth and the feminization of poverty. Subscriptions are \$28 for individuals, \$65 for institutions from Sage Publications, 2111 W. Hillcrest Drive, Newbury Park, CA 91320.

While Library of Congress headings may need some changes and additions, it is helpful to know LC's current listings. *Women in LC's Terms: A Thesaurus of Library of Congress Subject Headings Relating to Women* attempts to deal thoroughly with this subject by listing 3,500 terms and cross references in LC's vocabulary. The book, edited by Ruth Dickstein, Victoria A. Mills, and Ellen J. Waite, includes an explanatory introduction, the alphabetical list of headings, eleven broad subject categories, and five appendices including a list of LC call numbers relating to women and women's topics. For your copy, send \$28.50 to Oryx Press, 2214 North Central at Encanto, Phoenix, AZ 85004-1483.

Another new reference book lists women's organizations worldwide. Alphabetically organized by country, with descriptive information concerning the climate for women in each country, *Women's Movements of the World: An International Directory and Reference Guide* contains addresses, names of officers, and descriptive information about each organization's ideology and aims. For \$95, order from Longman Group UK Limited, Longman House, Burnt Mill, Harlow, Essex CM202JE, United Kingdom.

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