

Spring 1982

## Women's Studies Newsletter March 1982

Women's Studies

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# DENISON UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S STUDIES

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# NEWSLETTER

vol.7 no.3  
march 1982

## from the editors:

The Women's movement in the United States has been criticized for its class and cultural biases. The staff of the Women's Studies Newsletter realizes the accuracy and correctness of many of those criticisms. We realize the importance of understanding and discussing issues concerning women whose lives, experiences, and problems are widely different from our own. This issue is a beginning attempt to focus on some of those concerns. The next issue will continue this theme.

## dependency

*by Diego Ballivian*

As the rural family migrates to the city in search of a better life, the problems begin for the peasant countrywomen. Women in this new environment lose their economic independence while often retaining sole responsibility for raising children. Tensions in interpersonal relationships are intensified by this new division of labor, and the resulting dependence on men. In this way, new relations of production and lack of land act as disrupting factors in the lives of both men and women, changing traditional patterns of behavior that formerly allowed great adaptability for both.

Women become gradually more dependent on men who end up exercising a new kind of power over them. This new power comes from the new modes of production adopted in the city. Thus, women become dependent. This dependency serves to bind women emotionally, economically, and oftentimes unwillingly to men and through them, to the system.

*Diego Ballivian is an international student from La Paz, Bolivia. Here at Denison he is a junior majoring in French and minoring in philosophy.*

# 9 to 5

by Grace McDade

At Denison, I spent many hours talking with friends about ways to change people's attitudes and behavior in order to make this a non-sexist world. These conversations, plus courses I have taken, allowed me to have visions of an improved world. My expectations of a feminist organization were somewhat unrealistic.

For the last two months, I have been working as an intern at Boston's "9to5 Organization for Women Office Workers". At 9to5, I am realizing that improvement is possible, but it is a result of more than philosophizing with people in the world of academia. In reality, change is a result of such mundane chores as telephoning, and doing mailings, Public Service Announcements, and press releases. 9to5 is successful in improving conditions and educating the office workers in Boston because of the staff's organization and personal dedication.

The excitement of this job is not in the daily routine, but in the results: seeing a woman who does not identify herself as a feminist file for age discrimination, or watching the largest private employer look over a child care proposal. This is what drives me out of bed at 7:30 am, makes me fight the rush hour crowds on the subway, and work in an office from 9to5.

*Grace McDade is a junior from Denison who has designed her own Women's Studies major. Her internship at 9to5 is an integral part of her major.*

.....

## editorial staff

*Dr. Beverly Purrington*

*Jackqueline Ondy*

*Cynthia Owens*

*Shawn McEntee*

*Special thanks to Eliane Henseley for helping us with the typing*

# women and revolution

by Jose Luis Solis

Practically anywhere we can find women working for a better society: a just society without any kind of discrimination and where all of us can truly feel satisfied with ourselves. But let's talk about something special now; the participation of women in a revolutionary process.

In Nicaragua we can clearly see how women fight side by side with men to build a new Nicaragua. In the past our women have picked up arms and said, "Stop injustices and oppression." The time to wail and cry is over; the time when only men fought for improvement is over. In the same way that many of our women were willing to shed their blood to gain our victory, others are now willing to shed their blood to defend our achievements. We can see our own women deeply involved in all the new projects that the Sandinista government is developing. Many women have exchanged the rifles they used for tools to work our land; many also help by working together to improve our production and, of course, our economy. In the cities as well as the country, our women know how to respond to the needs of our people. For example, women were involved in the literacy campaign which decreased the illiteracy rate from 56% to 12%. Women have worked in the voluntary work brigades harvesting our production of cotton, coffee, and other products. Women are represented in our legislative body and take part in the decisions made there. They take part in the politics of everyday, expressing their thoughts and feelings in popular organizations.

I hope that the Nicaraguan women's attitude of working together and side by side with men to improve life for all can serve as an example to other women of the world.

*Jose Luis Solis is a native Nicaraguan attending high school in Newark. He is currently involved with the students from El Salvador, and knows much of Nicaraguan revolutionary history. This article was translated by Julieta Martinez, also from Nicaragua, and a sophomore at Denison.*

# equality in sweden

by Ulf Nilsson

The women's movement in Sweden is probably one of the more successful ones in the world, even though much remains to be done on the way toward a non-sexist society. The women's movement in Sweden, mostly in close cooperation with the Social Democratic party, is responsible for a number of political achievements.

A Swedish counterpart to the ERA has been taken for granted for a long time; the furious debate surrounding it here in the United States is quite astonishing to a Swede. Each "county" in Sweden is by law obligated to provide day-care for all children between the ages of one and seven years old, thereby making it possible for both parents in a family to work outside the home. While this fairly new law is not yet 100% effective, it is on its way. Companies that employ women in traditionally male occupations (and vice versa) get subsidized by the government during the first two years after employment. Universities which encourage men and women to study in non-traditional fields receive government subsidies in much the same way.

Politically and legally, there is not very much left to do for the Swedish women's movement as such. But the hardest task is still left: that of altering the attitudes of the people in general. Laws and regulations can only carry one so far; it is still the case that males dominate high-paid management positions, and women low-wage service professions. Inequality between men and women is less prevalent in Sweden than in other countries, but it still exists.

Finally, the Women's movement is not unified. Perhaps as a result of the fact that many of the major goals in Sweden have been reached, the polemics and rhetorics of the "finer" aspects of the issue have become more prominent, thus dividing the group.

*Ulf Nilsson, an international student from Sweden, is a sophomore at Denison. He is now majoring in philosophy and minoring in computer science.*

# struggle in south africa

by Sita Ranchod

Recently I returned from South Africa where I spent four and a half weeks doing a January-Term project. The purpose of the project was to make contact with people involved in resistance against the government imposed system of separate development, Apartheid. In the course of doing this I met, and subsequently spent two days with, three women (Shamim, Gugu, and Sheila) from an informally organized black women's group. Shamim is an Indian social worker in the Indian township of Phoenix. Gugu, an African woman who recently had a baby, is very involved in community work in the African township of Claremont. Sheila, also an African woman, teaches high school and lives in Claremont. Since both Shamim and Gugu are married to men who are under banning orders\* they are subject to the constant watch of the South African special security police.

The purpose of our first meeting was to exchange information about the interests of our respective groups. Since from the first moments of our meeting, Sheila and Gugu seemed rather suspicious of me, I decided to break the ice by telling them about our women's programs at Denison and also of some of the issues with which the national women's movement is concerned. I spoke of our concern for women's health care and reproductive rights, of our programs in awareness about rape and the WAR workshop, of equal pay for equal work, daycare facilities for children, and somewhere I am sure that I mentioned concern over sexist language. During the time I spoke, the women began to smile and by the time I mentioned sexist language, they laughed. The women then spoke of their concerns in light of what I had just said in a way that revealed a scorn for the American women's movement.

The infant mortality rate among African children in South Africa is so high that women want to have as many babies as possible in hopes that some will survive. Sheila told me of a woman she knew who went through fourteen pregnancies and had no surviving children. Gugu knew of another who went through nine pregnancies and had two surviving children. Infant death is often caused by malnutrition or diseases as they sweep through the African townships because of unsanitary conditions. Currently, there is no such thing as prenatal care among blacks and only recently have women organized to set up clinics for postnatal care. Therefore, women are concerned with health care not so much for themselves as they are for their children.

No such thing as a rape prevention program exists in the area I visited although the incidence of rape, including gang rape, is very high. Sheila told me that when a black woman is raped she must just take a bath and carry on with her work. She is not permitted the "luxury" of feeling terror or personal violence. All three of the women spoke of rape as though it were an everyday occurrence; the fact that it is disturbs me very much.

\* Banning orders, in general, are a way of silencing individuals who oppose the system. They prevent people from talking to more than one person at a time. They severely limit freedom of assembly and freedom to travel, prohibit the publishing of newspaper articles and the making of speeches. In extreme cases, individuals under banning orders are not permitted to leave their homes.

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The most important battle these women face is the one to gain equality between the races. The discrimination that is imposed on blacks, whether male or female, causes their struggle to be one of survival. In that context, the struggle for equality between men and women has little meaning.

All three of the women spoke strongly against the American women's movement. They viewed it as an "intellectual" movement that ignored the struggle of Third World ~~Woman~~—women who are struggling for survival. Before I left the country, they invited me to Gugu's home in Claremont. We spent the afternoon driving through the township and talking more about their struggles. When I left, all three of the women asked me to get women here know what the women of South Africa are fighting to achieve. They also asked that we include their struggle in our concerns.

*In the fall, Sita Ranchod became interested in the plight of Indians in South Africa. In January, motivated by her concern, she spent the month in South Africa. Sita is now a junior at Denison majoring in philosophy; she is continuing her research on South Africa by reading on her own.*

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## women in india

by Anjali Rastogi

A woman in India is likened to a flower from which the family derives the nectar. Loving, giving, unselfish, and forgiving, she serves as the pillar of emotional and spiritual support for the family. She possesses sublime qualities. Why then is her reflection in the mirror so distorted?

The scourges of the dowry system are still felt in India. The dowry concept, originally conceived as a condition of friendship between two families, has become an ugly means of exploitation of women. Although India has come a long, long way from the suttee ritual, it is ironic that the ancient woman, who vowed her very life to the man she loved, has not yet earned the dignity she so well deserves.

It is interesting to observe the diversity in Indian thought about women! Mahatma Gandhi, a great Indian nationalist, executed significant influence in the shaping of women's roles in public life. He encouraged women to participate in non-violent movements of civil disobedience which drew them into the mainstream. Now, ten years later, Indians have chosen a woman, Indira Gandhi, to lead the country. Certainly women are not equal to men in India, but Indira Gandhi's election to office provides hope that Indian women will ultimately earn respect as individuals.

*Anjali Rastogi is a senior at Denison originally from India.*



# WOMEN WEEK

March 30

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
		<p style="text-align: right;">30</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Film: <u>Salt of the Earth</u>, <u>Worlds of Women</u> Film Series (Slayter Auditorium)</p>	<p>"Jane Doe at Law: International the (time and to be an</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">4</p> <p>2:00 p.m. Film: <u>Lucia</u>, <u>Worlds of Women</u> Film Series. Discussion led by Ann Fitzgerald. (Slayter Auditorium)</p> <p>8:00 p.m. Women's Voices (Bandersnatch)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">5</p> <p>8:00 p.m. Susan Peterson, Denison '67: "The Education of a Woman Journalist" (Slayter Auditorium)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">6</p> <p>8:00 p.m. Laura Nader, Legal Anthropologist (Slayter Auditorium)</p>	

# WOMEN'S WEEK

10- april 6

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>31</p> <p>Attorney provisa- water group location announced)</p>	<p>11:30 a.m. Common Hour: 1 "The New Scholarship on Women and What it Means at Denison". Ann Fitzgerald and Lou Brakeman (Slayter Auditorium)</p> <p>12:30 p.m. Meli Davis: Film and performance (Slayter Auditorium)</p> <p>8:00 p.m. Susan Short Kelly (Faculty Lounge)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>8:00 p.m. Meli Davis, Mime artist: Lecture and performance (Burke Recital Hall)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>8:00 p.m. Ginni Clemmens, Blues and feminist singer (Burke Recital Hall)</p>
		<p>Plus two special workshops</p> <p>Thursday April 1: Mime/Dance Workshop with Meli Davis 6pm.</p> <p>Saturday April 3: Feminist and Blues singing Workshop with Ginni Clemmens (time to be announced).</p> <p>(contact Bev Purrington if you are interested in either of these workshops)</p>	

# announcements

April 15  
4:30 p.m.  
Barney Science 102

CAROL SHANESY AND ANN THROOP, Denison graduates now working as systems engineers for IBM. Sponsored by the Mellon Program.

April 15  
8 p.m.  
Faculty Lounge

SUSAN SHORT KELLY (Denison alum '75), Assistant Attorney General for the State of Tennessee. Final speaker in the Career Exploration Series sponsored by the Mellon Program and the Center for Black Studies.

April 17  
2 - 4 p.m.

PARENTS' WEEKEND. Open House at The Center for Black Studies (Knapp 104) and the Women's Resource Center (Fellows, first floor).

April 21  
8:15 p.m.  
Slayter Auditorium

MARGE PIERCY, poet. Convocation speaker sponsored by the Mellon Program and the English Department.

April 24  
Columbus

OHIO ACADEMY OF SCIENCE will hold its annual meeting in Columbus. Several of the papers will deal with women in science. Call the Mellon Program (366) if you would like to attend.

April 26  
4:30 p.m.  
Barney Science 102

DR. LOURIE BROWN, geologist. Sponsored by the Mellon Program.

April 30  
8:00 p.m.

THE CULTURAL BASES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN by Raven, a St. Louis Missouri men's group.

May 1  
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

WORKSHOP FOR MEN ONLY on the cultural bases of violence against women.

May 3  
8:00 p.m.  
Slayter Auditorium

DR. MAJORIE LEIDIG, clinical psychologist. Co-sponsored by the Mellon Program and the Psychology Department.

May 7, 8, 9  
Geneva Conference Ctr.  
Rochester, Indiana

WOMEN IN SCIENCE. A special conference designed for students and faculty to work out a feminist critique of science (both its content and methodology) and to discuss the implications for the teaching and learning of science at the undergraduate level. It will also give serious attention to the participation of women in the sciences and to the professional issues and problems faced by women scientists. If interested, call the Mellon Program (366).

# internships in women's studies

*by Suzanne Turner*

In January of 1980 I did a January-term internship in Washington, D.C., with the Secretariat for Women in Development at the New TransCentury Foundation. When I arrived, the Secretariat was launching a three-year program in Morocco to develop jobs for women. I participated in the orientation for the team of specialists headed for Morocco. From the experience, I gained information on project implementation on a day-to-day basis. I also witnessed the tremendous amount of networking, planning and coordination necessary to carry out such a massive project. The atmosphere at the New TransCentury Foundation was relaxed and informal. The staff was dynamic, engaging and totally committed to their work in development. Many of them had been active with the Peace Corps.

Following my January-term internship I spent a semester in Philadelphia on the Urban Program. I had two job placements and two seminars. I first started working with an Indian woman gynecologist in a clinic in the Puerto Rican community of Philadelphia. Soon after beginning I found my ability to actively participate in the clinic too restrained. As a result I decided to design a project by working through the American Friends Service Committee's Nationwide Women's Program. There, I designed a day-long conference on health care for Puerto Rican women. First, I asked a group of Latin American women to help me plan the event. We decided which health issues would be most useful to the women in the community. The conference was conducted in Spanish and the issues ranged from sterilization abuse to breast self-examination.

My second job placement was at the Elizabeth Blackwell Health Center for Women. I did pregnancy testing, counseled women, took classes concerning counseling for alternatives, and worked with abortion teams. The clinic espouses a holistic approach to medicine. They utilize traditional remedies such as herbs, yet also employ the most recent techniques and equipment in other aspects of health care. In addition to physical exams, pregnancy testing, and abortions, the clinic provides a variety of other services. For example, midwives at the clinic offer classes in various childbirth methods to pregnant women and their partners. The most impressive aspect of the clinic was the personalized and thorough attention given to the clients who were from a multitude of racial and economic backgrounds.

# the second stage

a review by John Schilb

Oops! I found a dangling modifier on page 93: "My own feminism somehow began in my mother's discontent, forced to quit as woman's page editor of the Peoria newspaper when she married my father." Pity the poor discontent that had to give up working! I always feel guilty after such a discovery. I wonder if I make it because the English teacher in me ruthlessly ferrets out grammatical errors while ignoring content. And in this case--Betty Friedan's The Second Stage--I hated to get petty about an author whose past record deserved respect. But I have decided the mistake signifies a sloppiness of thought pervading her new book. Moreover, I think it leapt to my eyes because the content has defects which could indeed disengage readers. Yet many will embrace her message, glad that she has abandoned the rashness of her sisters and tried cool reason for a change. So the book does merit close study here and elsewhere.

Friedan claims she wrote The Second Stage out of concern for people's suffering from a "feminist mystique." In less pun-filled terms, this is simply the challenge that feminists have issued to men, families, laws, and other bulwarks of social systems. She argues ad nauseum that feminists have indulged too much in reaction, and that in fact the time has come for them to build coalitions with their apparent foes. In particular, they should not only concede the importance of having a family in some sense, but also work with professed advocates of the family to promote legislation and housing arrangements that will stabilize family units. The Equal Rights Amendment continues to figure in her scheme because it will safeguard benefits for mothers, wives, lovers, and housemates who have to work. The right to an abortion also remains one of her values, although she prefers to characterize it as "the choice to have children".

Admittedly, the book has its strengths. It is fair, I think, to raise the possibility that feminists have written off people they might persuade to join them. Given the right rhetoric, perhaps they could enlist the support of working women who now see feminist protest against the tyranny of the nuclear family as an attack on all kinds of families. As a male feminist, I would like to believe that others of my sex are capable of espousing feminist principles if they have not done so already. Furthermore, Friedan does prove briefly interesting when she reports on her trip to West Point, where she found the officers sympathetic to the women's movements and the male cadets dedicated to the cult of macho.

The attitude of the cadets indicates, however, that Friedan overestimates the number of men willing to let women move out of traditional stereotypes. She underestimates the problems that certain women continue to face: breezily dismissing the bias against lesbians, blithely ignoring the plight of Black and lower class women, barely speculating about ways to help Third World women. Even worse, she scorns the concept of "patriarchy," thus invalidating in one extremely fell swoop the thousands of scholarly articles and critiques that have rendered it plausible. Finally, in her insistence that women control their anger at the people and conditions that have afflicted them, Friedan comes across less as a keen-eyed social analyst than as a blind devotee of Norman Vincent Peale.

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I guess I feel that the second stage has yet to arrive, and that it's only of limited use to depict any social movement as occurring in discrete phases. Friedan's title is suspiciously reminiscent of the pop Hegelianism that has earned Hal Lindsey and Alvin Toffler millions of bucks. At any rate, I hope that Betty Friedan herself keeps practicing the self-criticism she finds other feminists lacking.

## clan of the cave bear

*a review by Jackie Wenner*

Occasionally a novel hits home on all fronts: a living character who takes strong, decisive action, who lives in a real world, created by a talented author who has rapport with her readers. Clan of the Cave Bear is such a book. The author, Jean M. Auel, created a prehistoric world based on knowledge gained through her research and personal exposure to the wilderness.

The main character, Ayla, was only six years old when an earthquake eliminated her entire community, all her family and friends. She wandered with tears and pain, and knew somehow that the stream she followed would offer food and direction. When attacked by a mountain lion, she crawled deeply into a crevice. Although the lion mauled her arm badly, Ayla did not die immediately.

Iza, the medicine woman from a wandering clan, searching for a new home after the earthquake, found Ayla and convinced the clan to allow her to stay with them. Here, the real story begins.

Clan of the Cave Bear is more than just a story. Ms. Auel describes a way of life with great detail. The clan people, who take the Cave Bear as their magical symbol, have clearly outlined sociocultural norms based mainly on magic and mythological-type gods. The clan is governed by non-yielding rules and roles. Creb, the holy man, provides counsel for the people. Women have specific tasks they must perform at the whim of the clansmen. Many activities are forbidden. Yet Iza, the medicine woman, gathers herbs and heals her people.

Into this framework comes Ayla who is tall, blond, and has a definite chin--ugly in terms of the clan of the Cave Bear. Ayla is different in other ways, too. She defies rules and overcomes great conflicts with the people and the snowy wilderness.

The wonder of Clan of the Cave Bear grows not only from the strong character of Ayla, but also from the fascinating detail of the life of the clan with its rituals and its misconceptions. Don't miss the explanation of conception and childbirth--a struggle with the gods.

I loved Clan of the Cave Bear, it is a bright spot in the search for positive female images in the mass media.

# slaves of slaves

*a review by Shawn McEntee*

Slaves of Slaves, collectively compiled and written, shows how Latin American women's situations are both similar to and different from other women's situations. In order to accomplish that task the book is divided into two sections. Part I consists of discussions concerning the similarities between and the particularities of women's movements in various Latin American countries. It documents the history of social movements begun and sustained by women in Latin America and maps out the dangers of ethnocentrism in the international women's movement. The second section is devoted to a more in-depth account of the particular needs of and issues concerning women in some Latin American countries.

The value of this book is not only in the information it yields, but also in the authors' adherence to feminist and equalitarian ideals. The book both documents and serves as an example of the viability of collective action.

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## let me speak!

*a review by Shawn McEntee*

Similar in form to an extended interview, Let Me Speak! is the transcribed personal history of a Bolivian mine-worker's wife, Domitila. Through Domitila's words we learn what life is like in Bolivian tin mining communities, not only for politically active women like Domitila, but also for the other inhabitants of the community. Domitila tells us the history of the tin mining community, of the social organizations devoted to changing the hideous conditions, of the social conflict with the many Bolivian governments, and of conflict with macho ideologies. Her story unfolds in a way that allows us to see what kind of life her people are working for as well as the conditions which motivate them to work for change. As spokeswoman for her community, Domitila tells a story that is her people's story. It is a story of pain, hardship, and terror, as well as one of continued hope and determined commitment to the knowledge that she and her people are right.

For those of you who saw "The Double Day" (the film shown Monday, March 15, as part of the Worlds of Women film series), Domitila was the woman who appeared in the tin mining scenes. She had her hair in a ponytail and was wearing a white sweater.

# **pulling our own strings**

*a review by Jackie Ondy*

Pulling Our Own Strings is a collection of humorous writings and cartoons. The book includes selections from Nora Ephron, Gloria Steinem, Rita Mae Brown, Marilyn French, Jules Feiffer and many others. Compiled by Gloria Kaufman and Mary Kay Berkely, the book is an effort at raising consciousness through the ridicule of society's norms and beliefs. Feminists also need a change to release the pressure and strain of fighting a constant battle. Humor is a good way to maintain one's sanity in the face of insanity.

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# **while the guard sleeps**

*by Jackie Ondy*

Just a scared 'ol crow  
If she's fool enough ta believe  
That silly stuffed man  
Is awake and on guard.

His head's full of nothin'  
But straw anyways.  
He's just hangin' up there  
Snoozin' in the breeze.

They only give'm the job  
'Cause they thought he could handle it.  
What's ta scarin' crows?  
Just look domineerin' and they scatter.

Ya see he ain't even payin' no 'tention to her.  
'Sides he's been upon that wooden cross so long  
He can't get down no more.  
She ought just ear her fill 'fore they change the guard.



# nappy edges

*a review by Shawn McEntee*

Sometime over Christmas break while browsing in Fan the Flames ( a feminist bookstore in Columbus), I picked up a book of poetry by Ntozake Shange. Having seen the Denison Black Student Union production of her play, "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf", last spring, I was curious to read more of her work. In nappy edges Shange manages to reach the core of many issues that other writers seem to ignore. Both the technique and the content of her poetry are arresting. Poems such as "wow. . . yr just like a man!", "get it & feel good", "de poems gotta come outta my crotch?", and "with no immediate cause" sometimes make me laugh, other times catch my breath. If you ever wonder whether someone else cares about young black women who go to big cities, the nuclear energy horror, or being a woman in a man's world, read nappy edges. Shange's work is insightful, on target, and "happen(s) to you like cold water or a kiss".

**WOMEN'S STUDIES NEWSLETTER  
DENISON UNIVERSITY  
GRANVILLE OHIO 43023**