

Spring 1994

Feminist Scholarship Review

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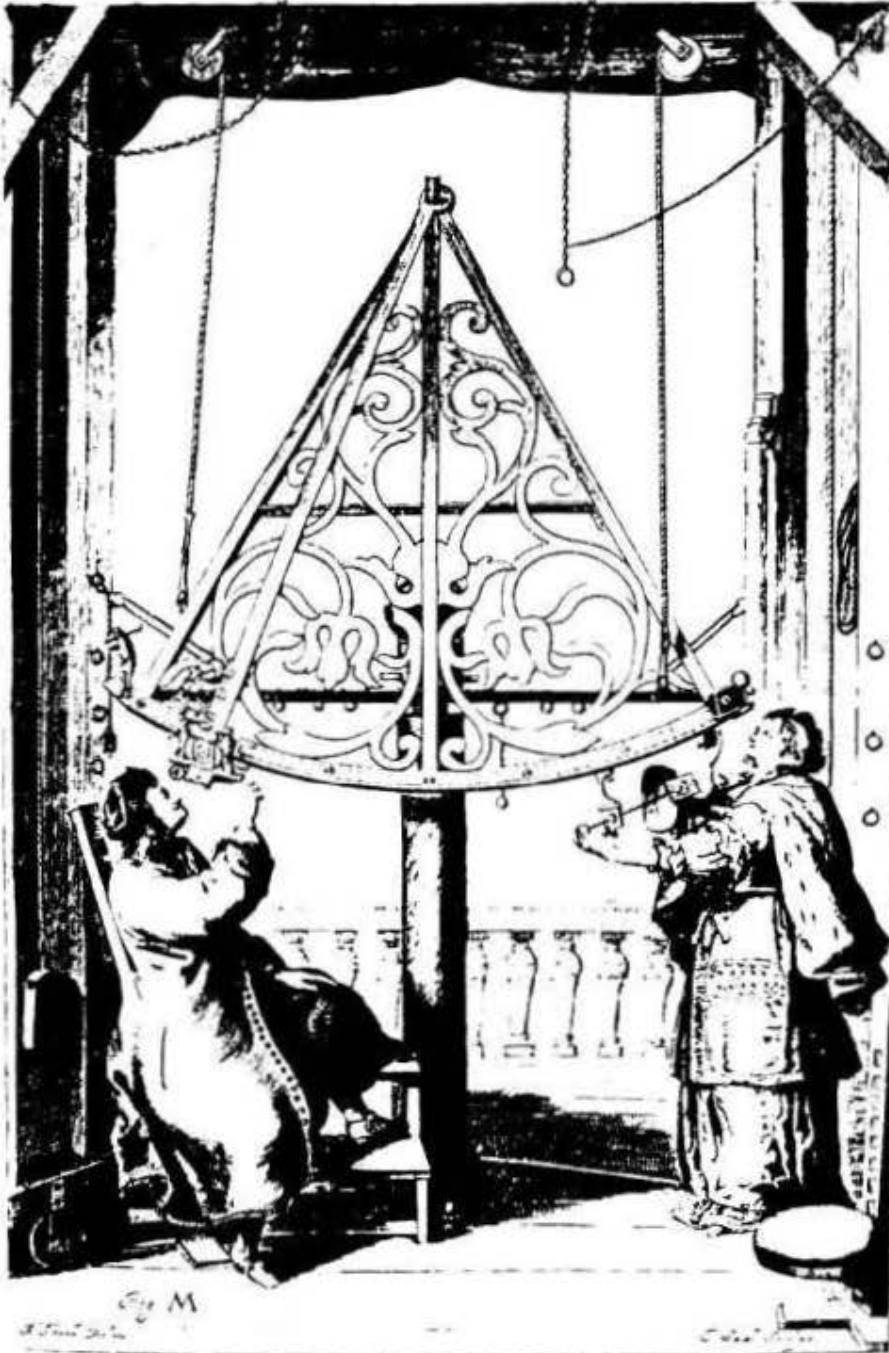
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Feminist Scholarship Review

Trinity College
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From: *The Mind Has No Sex?* Londa Schiebinger.
Harvard University Press, 1989.

Feminist Scholarship Review



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Feminist Scholarship Review

is a project of the Trinity College Women's Center

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Spring 1994

Letter from the Editor

To the recipients of *Feminist Scholarship Review*:

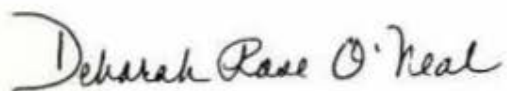
The ship has gone to Red Alert. There's a dangerous anomaly showing up on the view screen (a quantum filament? a cosmic string?). The call goes out on the Captain's communicator, "Science Officer to the Bridge?" Who shows up?

If you're watching Star Trek (no matter whether it's Old Generation or Next Generation), a totally emotionless male is the one who appears, either a Vulcan, whose entire way of life eschews emotion, or a man-like machine who is, as he often tells us, "incapable of feeling emotion." If you're watching the Star Trek spin-off, Deep Space Nine, the one who appears on the Bridge is a woman--in this lifetime, at least, though she's had several lifetimes and is affectionately called "old man" by the Captain because of his association with her in a former lifetime--who possesses a genderless soul and who has reached a level of Zen-like enlightenment in which emotion appears in her as little more than occasional, mild bemusement. These are the images we have of the theoreticians who inhabit the highest levels of scientific understanding.

There are always the scientific practitioners, of course. These are the Chief Engineers on these space vessels--Scotty, Geordi and O'Brien, respectively--who are sometimes irascible, always men "in the ranks". They'd be lying on their backs underneath the kitchen sink shouting for the pipewrench if they existed in the twentieth century. The practitioners also take the form of doctors--Bones, Crusher and Bashir (do these names sound particularly violent or is it just me?)--who are a highly emotional lot, all dedicated to saving the single human life, no matter what the cost to the ship as a whole. "Highly illogical," as Spock, the Vulcan Science Officer, would say. And they are, often ludicrously so.

So, assuming that these polished, popular sci-fi images tell us something important about what present day society thinks of science and the people who practice it, where does all this leave women in the sciences? As practitioners, not theoreticians, I'd say. As nurturing doctors and not engineers. And, certainly, if woman's image as the "emotional" half of the human equation is as strong and persistent as we all know it is, it leaves women out of a profession that is seen as requiring logic so intense and highly honed that it is even beyond all human capability (witness: the Vulcan, the Machine, the genderless, Zen-like alien).

Do these space age images reflect the true nature of women's role in the sciences? And, perhaps, equally as important, what are we doing right here on Earth to change images that might limit women's role in this crucial area of human endeavor? This issue of *FSR* details some of the resources which explore these questions. Read on--this issue may even take you "where no man has gone before."



--Deborah Rose O'Neal

Women's Center: Reviewed Sources

Scientific American 269:94 Nov. '93

It is significant that, in the midst of the proliferation of journals entitled "Women and..." just about every profession on Earth, I could not find a journal, or even a single issue of a general journal, devoted to women in the sciences. It is also significant that, when I finally located a single article on the status of women in the sciences, I opened this scientific journal to a full page ad which featured a beautiful blond woman in a black velvet dress with a side seam cut up to the hip.

Nevertheless, I moved forward into "A Lab of Her Own" in Scientific American, Nov. '93. The article, written by Marguerite Halloway, a staff writer for the journal (that's the good news), is summarized in this way: "After decades of sincere, earnest effort to engage women in science, the profession resists their admission into its informal clubs and networks more completely than does almost any other. The reasons range from sexism and the traditions of mentoring to the expectations that teachers and other adults harbor for girls and boys in the earliest years of school." (which, of course, is the bad news).

In all this, though, there is hope, and Halloway's article is, I think, a hopeful article. Inspiring anecdotes of active scientists out in the field, scientists who just happen to be women, begin the article and support the idea that "the fight that women wage so that they and their daughters can practice science *remains unfinished*" (italics mine). This particular phrasing reveals an optimism without which women might not persevere in this inhospitable profession.

Much of "A Lab of Her Own" is devoted to data which indicate degrees of success in the field: doctorates awarded, PhD's employed, salary levels of those employed. I found the most informative part of the piece to be the short biographical sketches (eighteen modern, eighteen historical) which frame the text. The historical bios range from Hypatia (c.370-415) who was murdered by a group of monks for her renowned expertise in mathematics and philosophy, to Rachel Carson, whose death from cancer may not be unrelated to her study of pesticides. The modern bios highlight living women who are oceanographers, astronomers, neuroscientists, mathematicians and more.

The article, as are all Scientific American articles, was complete, thorough and intelligently written. I'm delighted that the journal saw fit to explore the subject. The article is worth reading for its wealth of information alone.

---Deborah Rose O'Neal

Mothers of Invention

By Ethlie Ann Vare and Greg Ptacek. New York, 1987

O.K. Here's the quiz. If you get both answers right, you don't have to read the book. (Though you might want to, anyhow--it's a great one!)

1. Who invented the cotton gin? (Hint: it's not Eli Whitney, no matter what your sixth grade history book said.)
2. Who was the first to conceive of the complex structure of the DNA molecule? (Hint: it's neither Watson nor Crick. It's not even Wilkins who was the third member of the group that received the Nobel Prize for this discovery).

According to the authors of Mothers of Invention, the inventor of the cotton gin was "Mrs. Catherine Littlefield Greene, a Georgia belle who, unlike her Massachusetts-born house guest [now this is where Eli comes in] was quite familiar with the cotton boll." It is clear that Mrs. Greene allowed or maybe even requested that Eli Whitney build the machine that she had conceived of. She shared the production with him, though her name is lost to history. The story of Rosalind Franklin, the discoverer of DNA, is much more tragic. Watson and Crick, the men who are commonly thought of as the discoverers of DNA, stole Franklin's ideas and then would not even allow her into their discussions of her findings. The dishonest process was started by Maurice Wilkins, Franklin's supervisor and an eventual winner of the Nobel Prize along with Watson and Crick, who was affronted by her femaleness while astounded by her discoveries. He reconciled this conflict by stealing her work, handing it over to his colleagues, Watson and Crick, and then letting the world believe that these two men had conceived the notion of their own.

There's a lot in this book to make you proud. And a lot to make you angry.

Mothers of Invention, written by two former editors of Rock magazine, is comprised of dozens of easy to read, one-to-two page biographies of women inventors. Among the nearly one dozen sections in this book is a section on women in healing professions who have invented everything from penicillin to the Apgar Score, women in nuclear research, as well as women who have made inventions for everyday life such as Melitta Bentz (drip coffee), Marion Donovan (disposable diapers), Martine Kempf (the voice-controlled wheelchair) and clever Margaret Knight who, though best known for inventing the flat-bottomed paper bag, invented at the age of twelve a stop-motion device which prevented serious accidents in textile factories. The story is that Mattie witnessed such an accident in a factory where she had come to apply for work and invented the device on the spot.

I recommend this book for easy, interesting and informative reading. The beauty of the book is that, although much scholarship has gone into its writing, the result is accessible to all readers of almost any age. It will surely change some of your understandings and assumptions of the way the modern world has been constructed, and, by the way, since

it's that time of year, I should say that it's one of my mother's favorite Mother's Day gifts that I've given her. I don't know which she likes better--the title, or the fact that the book is dedicated by the authors "to our mothers...from two of their more dubious inventions". This book is serious, surprising and charming--a "good read".

---Deborah Rose O'Neal

Women's Center: Reviewed Sources

Living Laboratories: Women and Reproductive Technologies (1992)

Robyn Rowland

Robyn Rowland's Living Laboratories: Women and Reproductive Technologies takes a close look at the intervention of reproductive and genetic engineering in today's Western societies. Highly charged with emotional and ethical issues, this book examines the values of medical science and its resulting relationship to women and to political policy. Rowland's view is firm and clear, arguing forcibly against the proponents of unqualified technological control in patriarchal societies.

This book brings to light several common yet hushed practices in the world of reproductive technologies, practices that consciously harm or exploit unsuspecting patients. For example, it is noted that financial incentives encourage doctors to carry out caesarean section deliveries unnecessarily, and that it is common to falsely portray failed technologies (e.g. in vitro fertilization) by discussing only 'success rates' rather than 'failure rates' when 92 percent of clients go home without a child. Commenting on our masculine-dominated society's hold on women, Rowland reveals that legislation excluding lesbian and single mothers from reproductive technologies reflects "men's anxiety that women may take childbearing out of the heterosexual/family structure; a structure which has institutionalized women's economic dependence towards men (physically, sexually and emotionally.)" (251) The author also points out the hidden grasp society has on the existence of women's so-called 'biological clocks' and 'maternal instincts.' Thus arises the question: Is it so unnatural for a woman to choose not to have children? Rowland argues: "Women must have the right not to reproduce and mother because the alternative would mean that they are compelled to do so. Coerced motherhood is an assault on woman and child." (277) The author persuasively states that the continued support of new reproductive procedures (IVF, surrogacy, genetic engineering) ensures the subordination and control of women by a male-dominated society.

Living Laboratories critically explores the techniques and social repercussions of modern reproductive technologies. The author provides numerous personal accounts, as well as commentaries from professionals in the field, that add to the depth of her discussion. Although this book takes a strong stance against these new technologies, this perspective still allows for an objective analysis by the reader. Robyn Rowland's argument that new reproductive procedures do not enhance a woman's procreative choice and freedom is masterfully presented.

later switching to a non science field.

Table 2. Sloan Report Survey Results (Hewitt & Seymour)

	Women	Men
Why women choose science		
Family pressure	52%	30%
Encouraged by high school teachers	24%	9%
Enjoyed/Excelled in high school	16%	48%
Early career choice	8%	13%
Why women switched from science		
Conceptual difficulties with SME	50%	24%
Loss of self esteem	78%	43%
Poor teaching/unapproachable faculty	25%	30%
Overload and pace	36%	43%
Career goal	7%	24%
Rejected SME lifestyle	68%	46%
More appealing career option	32%	24%
Competitive culture	7%	12%

Importantly, although 50% of women in the Sloan study cited "conceptual difficulties" as a reason for switching, Hewitt and Seymour's analysis showed that "a more significant factor in explaining women switchers was the discouragement and loss of self-esteem they experienced from low grades in their freshmen and sophomore years." Hewitt and Seymour found evidence that because they often felt less secure in their own abilities, women were much more likely than men to feel demoralized by low grades and may have a bearing on attrition. These include the lack of sufficient female role models and mentors and "the 'old-boy network,' which draws promising male students into research projects and mentored relationships with faculty." They also noted that most of the women surveyed had no knowledge of programs intended to help them overcome these difficulties.

What Trinity and other schools are doing

As a result of the awareness gained from studies such as Hewitt and Seymour's, science faculty are beginning to develop ways to keep more students enrolled in science and to assure equity for men and women. Trinity and a number of other schools in the New England Consortium for Undergraduate Science Education (NECUSE) are currently pursuing a number of initiatives designed to support women science students. The seminal activity was an April 1993 Brown University meeting of 40 female students from NECUSE schools. This meeting featured talks by prominent women scientists and discussions on topics ranging from assertiveness in the classroom to starting Women in Science programs at their home institutions.

Jean Hoffman '95, one of the Trinity students who attended the Brown meeting started the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) program at Trinity in the Fall 1993. Relying entirely on volunteer effort, WISE has established a mentoring network that pairs upper class science majors, both male and female, with first year students

who have indicated an interest in science. Mentors and mentees meet regularly to discuss problems and talk about their various goals and interests. WISE has also sponsored campus visits by Trinity alumnae. In December, WISE sponsored a lecture by Trinity alumna **Karen Fink Kupferberg**, a '73 mathematics major who is now chief financial officer of Digital Equipment Corporation. Ms. Kupferberg talked about the importance of her mathematics education and her experiences as a woman in the corporate world. Not surprisingly, many of the questions following her talk focused on how she was able to balance her career and family obligations. More recently, WISE sponsored a panel discussion featuring five Trinity alumnae who have pursued careers in sciences. WISE is also attempting to expand its alumnae support network by compiling an "Alumnae Directory" that will present occupational profiles and contact details. Although less than a year old, WISE's mentoring relationships and efforts to inform the Trinity community about possible career and lifestyle paths for women science majors already appears to have had a significant impact.

During the next year or so Trinity will be participating together with other NECUSE schools in a project entitled :*"Women and Science in NECUSE: Making a Difference."* In February 1994, a small group of Trinity faculty and WISE students attended a workshop at Middlebury College. **Sue Rosser**, author of *Female Friendly Science*, gave a talk about making science instruction more attractive to females, after which several brainstorming sessions were held to address specific strategies that faculty can employ to change the classroom climate. A summary of the recommendations emerging from these sessions will be distributed to participating NECUSE schools.

The primary focus of this project will be a mid-fall working conference at Wellesley College. The conference, which will be hosted by Wellesley's Center for Research on Women, the source of much important research on women in science, will provide an opportunity for the NECUSE institutions to share information about their efforts to address women in science issues. Trinity will send four faculty and student representatives to the Wellesley conference. In anticipation of the conference Mathematics Professor **Paula Russo**, who will head the Trinity contingent, has already begun planning activities aimed at raising awareness of women in science issues at Trinity. In March the science chairs met with members of WISE, the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) and other female science majors to discuss what the students saw as some of the main issues and concerns here at Trinity. As a result of this meeting the science chairs are pursuing a number of initiatives aimed at building awareness of opportunities for women in the sciences at Trinity. These include (1) helping WISE with its effort to provide incoming freshmen with information about the sciences at Trinity; (2) helping WISE transform itself into a recognized student organization; (3) increasing access to Trinity's Interdisciplinary Science Program; and (4) exploring ways to improve the orientation and advising of the first year students interested in science.

Hopefully, these and related efforts at Trinity and other schools will lead to a climate in which women feel as comfortable as men in pursuing careers in mathematics, science and engineering.

Science and Women: An Historical View

Were there women in science during antiquity or the Middle Ages? How successful have women been in physics? Have there been any notable Polish or Irish female scientists?

These and similar questions can be researched using Marilyn Ogilvie's Women in Science: Antiquity through the Nineteenth Century: A Biographical Dictionary with Annotated Bibliography.

In Ancient Egypt women attended medical school with men or their own exclusively female school. Hypatia, the best known woman scientist of antiquity, lived in cosmopolitan Alexandria. Medieval women participated in science-related activities in nunneries and medical schools, especially those connected to universities. Women's involvement in science during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries varied greatly by country and was hindered by class bounds. As political and educational systems in both the United States and Europe underwent upheaval during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the likelihood of women becoming involved in all areas of science increased.

Marilyn Ogilvie is a professor in the history of science who has taken advantage of special library collections and archives. She has organized her discoveries in this reference book with a variety of access routes.

There are three main sections in Women in Science: an introductory essay which places the biographical accounts in a historical context, individual biographical accounts of women, and a classified, briefly annotated bibliography, which may be used in conjunction with the biographical sketches or by itself as a research tool for locating resources.

The individual biographical accounts include basic descriptive information: dates, nationality, branch of science, positions held, etc., a discussion of the subject's science, and assessment of her significance. Each account lists major or representative works by subject and includes for further information items that are entirely or in part concerned with the subject. The biographical accounts also list the subject's inclusion in one or more of five reference works: American Men of Science, Dictionary of American Biography, Notable American Women, British Dictionary of National Biography, and Dictionary of Scientific Biography. Trinity library owns a significant portion of the primary works, all the reference books listed, and will gladly get copies of any other work cited through Inter-Library-Loan.

There is an appendix to the main biographical accounts of additional nineteenth century women who merit further study but for whom current data is sparse. This appendix presents a starting place where further research is needed.

There is also a list of the subjects of the biographical accounts which sorts out the names by period, field and nationality for ease of access depending on your project.

The annotated bibliography of Women in Science has been divided into seven sections according to type of work and historical period. The sections are A. Bibliographic and reference works, B. General histories with biographies on women and collection biographies, and C-G divided by chronological period (antiquity, the Middle Ages, fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, eighteenth century, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries). These works can be used alone in research or as keyed to the particular women with biographical accounts.

If you are having a difficult time finding information about Willamina Fleming or are interested in knowing who were women scientists in the Middle Ages, Women in Science is an excellent first stop. You can find it in the Trinity library Reference section shelved under Q 141 .O34 1986. We are in debt to Ms. Ogilvie for her thirteen year effort.

---Linda McKinney
Reference Librarian

Gallows Hill Bookstore: Additional Sources

Great Women in Science

Recent years have brought to the forefront the many scientific advances made by women. Recognition is now being given to those women whose efforts have been overlooked over the years.

Foremost among those whose accomplishments have gone unrecognized is Rosalind Franklin. Working in Paris, this brilliant, Cambridge-educated physical chemist developed new techniques in X-ray crystallography (a process enabling scientists to view the chemical structure of molecules). In 1951, Franklin brought her skills to King's College in London, joining a team of scientists in the new and exciting field of DNA research. She began a series of X-ray studies that would lay the foundation for the theories of James Watson and Francis Crick. Much controversy surrounds their discoveries, as their access to Franklin's unpublished research was absolute and, until 1968, never publicly acknowledged. In 1962, Watson, Crick and Maurice Wilkins received the Nobel Prize for their discovery. Their three Nobel Prize lectures contain a total of 98 references, and not one of Franklin's papers is specifically mentioned. Rosalind Franklin's contributions to DNA theory are fully examined in *Rosalind Franklin & DNA*, by Anne Sayre, published in 1978 by W.W. Norton & Co.

One of the most famous and accomplished scientists of the 20th century is Barbara McClintock. Winner of the 1983 Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology, McClintock is responsible not only for much that is considered classical genetic theory, but also for what has just now come to be recognized as a fundamental and revolutionary concept of gene functioning. Her principal research (for which she was awarded the Nobel Prize) was the study of genes that shift their position, apparently in response to external stimuli. In a time where most genetic research was done using *Drosophila*, the fruit-fly, McClintock observed the changes in color patterns in kernels of Indian corn and correlated these changes with changes in chromosome structure. The story of this remarkable woman's life and career is told in *A Feeling for the Organism: The Life & Work of Barbara McClintock*, by Evelyn Fox, published by W.H. Freeman.

Published in 1962, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* spurred revolutionary changes in government policy toward the environment and was instrumental in launching the environmental movement that has made "ecology" a part of everyone's vocabulary. *Silent Spring* deals with the poisoning of the Earth with man-made chemicals, and the long term effects of such abuse.

Among modern women scientists, two have had successful careers in publishing, as well. Diane Ackerman has published two books: *A Natural History of the Senses* and *Whale by Moonlight*, both national best-sellers.

Perri Klass is a Harvard-trained pediatrician who has written books about how being a woman and a mother affects her relationships with her patients and the medical establishment. Her books include *Other Women's Children*, *A Not Entirely Benign Procedure*, and *Baby Doctor*.

For an excellent overview of the role played by women in science throughout history, take a look at *Women of Science: Righting the Record*, edited by G. Kass-Simon and Patricia Farnes, published by Indiana University Press.

---Michael A. Smith

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PERGAMON

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**The Vendetta
Against Anita Hill's
Supporters**

VOLUME IV NUMBER 4
FALL 1993/CANADA \$4.95

Women's Center: Additional Sources

Ms.

5:
The Best
And Worst
Of '93

POORN

Stop it? Use it? Ignore it?

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**Does women's equality depend
on what we do about it?**

Andrea Dworkin, Marilyn French, Norma Ramos,

ave their say



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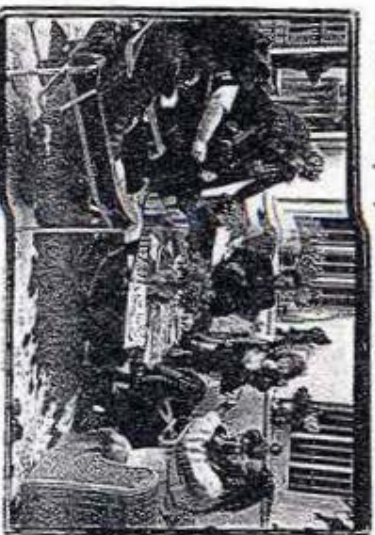
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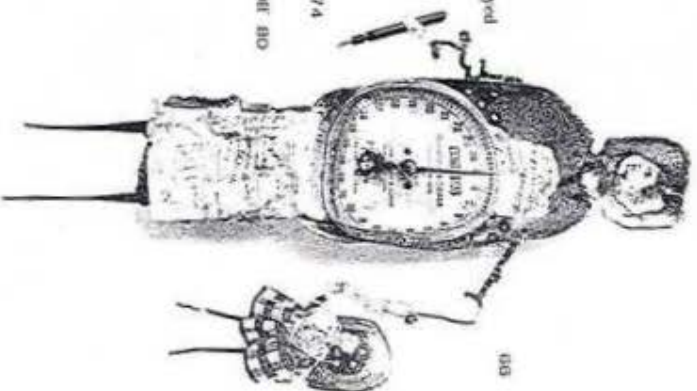
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The Women of Books

Women's Center: Additional Sources

Vol. XI, No. 7

April 1994

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Inside:



Wanda Gág, printmaker and "New Woman," in a 1928 portrait by Hal Phyfe. Her prints are reproduced, with revealing letters and journal entries, in a new study by Audur Winnan; Norma Steinberg reviews it, p.24.

◆◆ Judy Chicago's latest multimedia work raises disturbing questions about how—and whether—to represent genocide in art: Carol Zemel looks at *Holocaust Project: From Darkness into Light*, p.6.

◆◆ Asian American writers and critics are breaking out of the conventions of Western cultural traditions to create a literary world of their own: Karin Aguilar-San Juan reads two innovative studies of Asian American writing by Sau-ling Wong and King-kok Cheung, p.17.

◆◆ *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was only the most famous achievement of Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose long life as writer and activist has now been chronicled by Joan Hedrick: her *Harriet Beecher Stowe* "places the full sweep of Stowe's life and work within the America in which she lived," as Sandra Zagarell finds, p.13.

The right not to remain silent

by Nan Levinson

Sex, Sin, and Blasphemy: A Guide to America's Censorship Wars, by Marjorie Heins. New York: The New Press, 1993, 210 pp., \$22.95 hardcover, \$11.95 paper.

Americans used to like the First Amendment. Sure, sometimes we added a "but" at the end of our declaration of faith, but we had a real soft spot for the principle of speech free of interference by those in power. The first of our rights, freedom of expression was almost a civil religion, fundamental to how we defined ourselves as a culture and as individuals.

No longer. Now, with increasingly frequent and creative arguments, it is said that the First Amendment is not just inconvenient but downright wrong when applied to speech "we" don't like. Over the past decade, free expression has been recast as one of many competing rights—civil rights, commercial rights, the right to unruffled feathers—until determining what will be tolerated in its name has become America's defining controversy.

Enter Marjorie Heins, founding director of the ACLU's Arts Censorship Project and firm believer that the First Amendment means what it says—even when that means defending "art that is offensive, insulting, outrageous, or just plain bad." In *Sex, Sin, and Blasphemy*, she draws on her considerable experience as a lawyer and advocate to survey recent attacks on creative expression.

"Censorship happens," Heins writes, "whenever some people succeed in imposing their political or moral values on others by suppressing words, images, or ideas that they find offensive." But artistic expression has been tucked under the First Amendment blanket since a 1948 Supreme Court ruling, and bad taste, for better or worse, has never been a crime. Tolerance of words and images we find unpalatable, Heins insists, is "a small price to pay for the liberty and diversity that form the foundation of a free society."

She finds no shortage of efforts to censor, since moral indignation plays well with the



and more...

continued on p.3

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*We especially need imagination in science.
It is not all mathematics, nor all logic,
but it is somewhat beauty and poetry."*

*--Maria Mitchell
(diary, 1866)*

(Beacon Book of Quotations by Women)