



# Women in Libraries

Volume 30, No. 1

The Feminist Task Force

Winter 2001

## Gwendolyn Brooks Dies at 83

The first African American to receive a Pulitzer Prize died December 3, 2000 at the age of 83. The career of this poet is virtually without parallel in American literature. She achieved extraordinary success at an early age, winning the Pulitzer when she was in her early thirties. The prize was awarded for her candid and compassionate poetry, providing a colloquial voice about poverty, racism, and drugs among African Americans.

Nearly twenty years later, she abandoned her position as an establishment author to undertake a socially oriented commitment, expressed both in a more direct and politically conscious style of writing and in tireless activities on behalf of her community. Whatever differences there may be between her earlier works and her later ones, she has remained from first to last a disciplined and

serious artist and an affirmer of the highest standards both in her work and in her life.

Gwendolyn Brooks, the daughter of David Anderson Brooks, the son of a runaway slave, and of Keziah Corinne (Wims) Brooks, was born on June 7, 1917, in Topeka, Kansas. At the age of one month, Brooks was brought to her parents' home in Chicago, where she lived for her entire life. She was always intrigued by words and the sounds they made, and as early as the age of seven, with her parents' full encouragement, she began to dream that she might become a writer. When she was 13, she had a poem published in *American Childhood*, a well-known magazine of the time.

While still a high school student in an integrated institution, she met the poets James Welton Johnson, who suggested that she read such

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**USAID Open House** - The U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Library staff invite ALA Midwinter attendees to an open house on Tuesday, January 16 from 9:00 am to 12 noon. The open house will include an International Development Information Fair. USAID Library staff will provide tours and demonstrations, and librarians from other organizations involved in international development will display publications and discuss their print and online resources. Participants in the resources fair will include Environmental Health Project, National Endowment for Democracy, International Center for Research on Women, International Foundation for Election Systems, Peace Corps, World Library Partnership, World Resources Institute, and U. S. Institute of Peace. The USAID Library, which is open to the public, is located on the Mezzanine level of the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW. Walk from the Washington Convention Center or exit directly into the Reagan Building from the Federal Triangle Metro stop.

# Notes

**Censored: *Wielding the Red Pen*** - This latest online exhibit from the Special Collections Digital Center at the University of Virginia Library focuses on "books, films, music, and works of art [that] have been suppressed, altered, expurgated, bleeped, blackened, cut, burned, or bowdlerized." Users move through the exhibit's 19 main sections via a drop-down menu that spans topics from the bowdlerization of the classics to Margaret Sanger's opposition to laws governing birth control.

According to the curators, the exhibit is designed to raise questions rather than to condemn censors, and perhaps in the service of that mission, the pages here range over a large number of censorship instances and issues without going into great depth about any one in particular. Despite our difficulty with the images (we could not enlarge some images from their thumbnails, and some images are not yet in place on the site, due to copyright and intellectual property issues), the exhibit is interesting and worth a visit.

—Diana Loreman

**From *Feminist Collections: A Quarterly of Women's Studies Resources* (Summer 2000):**

**Ariana Books** is a new press dedicated to producing small and feminist books on tape. For their first book, founders Jan Eshleman and Cindy Hollenberg selected *The Fifth Life of the Catwoman* by Kathleen Dexter, and their next project is *Brigid's Charge* by Cynthia Lamb. (PO Box 15691, Fort Wayne, IN 46885; 219-486-3554; [arania@earthlink.net](mailto:arania@earthlink.net)).

Roz Warren's **Laugh Lines Press** recently closed its doors. Warren, who had published for most of the past decade, said massive book returns followed by loss of the distributor were responsible for the need to shut down. Laugh Lines has published a number of works by women cartoonists and humorists, some of whom are not nationally syndicated.

**Raw Nerve Books**, a recent British academic feminist press start-up is hoping to publish

edited collections, short monographs, and experimental pieces. The publisher's first book is *White/Women: Critical Perspective on Gender & Race* ed. by Heloise Brown et al. The address for the press: Centre for Women's Studies, University of York, York YO10 5DD, UK; [rawnerve@yellowpolka.demon.co.uk](mailto:rawnerve@yellowpolka.demon.co.uk); <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cws/gsp/rawnerve.htm>



## Women in Libraries

<http://www.lib.wayne.edu/ftf/>

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Personnel: Nel Ward, Editor, Newport, OR; Sherre Harrington, Media Review Editor, Vanderbilt Science Library, Diedre Conkling, Publisher, Lincoln County Library District (OR); Theresa Tobin, Listserv Administrator, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

To subscribe to the Feminist List, send this e-mail message to: [listserv@mitvma.mit.edu](mailto:listserv@mitvma.mit.edu):

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Send articles, comments, or materials for review, but not subscription questions, to Nel Ward, 107 SW Coast Street, Newport, OR 97365. (541-265-9141; email [nward@beachhousebb.com](mailto:nward@beachhousebb.com))

Send books for review to Sherre Harrington, Stevenson Library, Vanderbilt University, 419 21st Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37240. For reviewing information, go to <http://staffweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/feministbooks>.

# Grolier Shows Gender Stereotypes

Check out Grolier ([www.Grolier.com](http://www.Grolier.com)) and see how they're doing with their online helper. In October, Jenny Baltes emailed the company to complain that their online helper was a little old lady librarian with her gray hair in a bun. She challenged them to come up with a less stereotypical graphic for their online help.

They came up with an owl, which Baltes said was fine, but they are asking those who visit the web site to vote on the owl's name. All the options are male names: Barney, etc. She complained again [correspondence shown below].

Following her email to the FTF listserv, Jeanne Foley checked out the site to find that the owl is wearing a bow tie, hinting that the "wise ole owl" is male, and then seeing six male names as choices. Foley asked them to consider gender neutral names such as Chris, etc.

Their response? "We already have 'Ask Jeeves.'"

Even Harry Potter's owl is named Hedwig, as GraceAnne A. DeCandido points out.

In the past FTF representatives have examined the ALA conference exhibits to identify offensive gender stereotyping and sexism. Perhaps it's time to reinstate this activity.

It also may not be too late to show Grolier that their name choice and stereotype are unwise. Contact [AShirley@grolier.com](mailto:AShirley@grolier.com) with your comments.

Email from Jennifer Baltes to Grolier: "Any chance the new online guide, the owl, could have a name that is not gender specific? All the names you offer for votes are boy names, and my students think that is unfair. How about 'Brainy' or 'OSO' (for One Smart Owl)?"

Reponse from Grolier:

Dear Customer:

Thank you for your recent communication. As a leading world-wide publisher of children's books and encyclopedias, Grolier prides itself on providing both entertaining and up-to-date educational materials for all ages.

Your ideas and suggestions on how we can serve you and your family are always welcomed. Your comments are very much appreciated as we are very interested in knowing how you feel about our service and products. Be assured that every comment is forwarded to our marketing Department for review and consideration.

We again thank you for taking the time to share your ideas with us and hope you will continue to be a member of the Grolier family for many years to come.

Sincerely,  
Anne Shirley, Customer Service

[Ed. Note: This letter has been printed in its entirety in case anyone needs a generic letter for response to patron complaints—or any other use.]

Small steps lead to big accomplishments.

***Grolier changes its "online helper" from a "little old lady librarian with her gray hair in a bun" to an owl with only male names as choices for on-line voters.***

# *Feminist Discusses Gender and Technology*

Recent postings on the FTF discussion list included food for thought.

"There seems to be a certain sensitivity around the issue of technology and its identification

**"Gender and technology is the big feminist issue of the future."**

with men. . . . I think that gender and technology is the big feminist issue of the future. It seems to me that the library profession is being redefined in a way that favors delivery of content or access (techie jobs?) over

work with users and knowledge of content (cataloging rules, reference tools, etc.).

"The 'official line,' of course is that computerization just gives us a new, more efficient way to do the traditional work. Maybe, but the 'new, more efficient' way involves loss of 'professional' library jobs as the systems are increasingly used by lower paid workers. This is very evident in cataloging, and I think it is becoming so in reference.

"We may still have mostly professional librarians at reference desks, but how many are part-timers? Or temps? Or interns? Of course, this kind of thing varies by library, but I do think it is an overall trend. Many (certainly not all but enough to encourage cost-cutting administrators) young users, who have been using the internet for years, are convinced that 'It's all on the Web' and they feel 'empowered' to find it themselves.

"Most of these changes are presented as 'reforms.' But what is the impact? It seems democratic to employ non-professionals in jobs from which they were previously excluded, but will they reap the same benefits as their predecessors? Will they be eligible for advance?

"Many internships are directed at under-represented groups, suggesting that they need more preparation than others. Real jobs for the under-represented are what is needed. Another important issue is the source of future leaders. Will future deans and directors be chosen from the ranks of the

techies? After all, if the 'important' work is technological, shouldn't the director have a strong background in it?

"I think we need a lot more data on the impact of library technology on library staffing, and gender must always be a variable along with race and ethnicity. But who is gathering it? Why isn't ALA doing this? Is it a job for COSWL? FTF?"

—Suzanne Hildebrand

[A discussion of advances during the past few years.]

"It is really not that long ago that there was so little tolerance for women's issues that we didn't even dare use the word 'feminist'—it used to be just the ALA Task Force on Women. . . . There have been many successes we now take for granted: day care at conferences; far more equitable numbers of women on Council and in divisional and ALA leadership; more women directors at large public and academic libraries; official policies on sexual harassment; absence of grossly sexist materials in ALA exhibits; acceptance of equity issues as legitimate ALA concern; just to name a few things that have come about only in the last 20 years.

"Sadly, some issues we fought hard for in the 70s and 80s have now moved backward, for example, the policy to require ALA official journals to

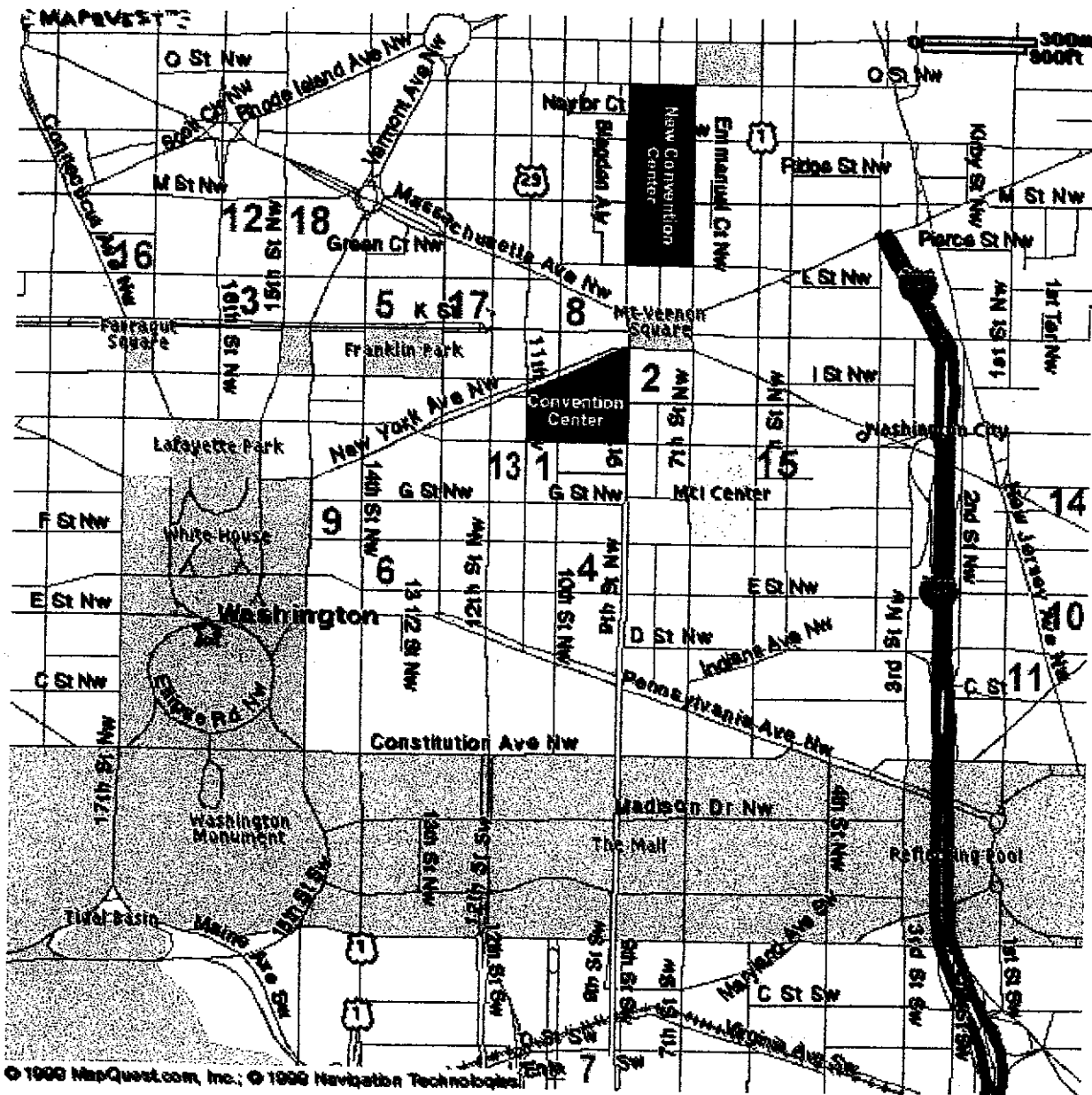
**"...we didn't even dare use the word 'feminist....'"**

print only job ads that list the full salary range. (Research showed that, when unaware of the full salary range, women were far more likely not to be successful in negotiating the top end salaries.)

(Continued on Page 7)

# ALA Midwinter Meeting 2001 Washington D.C. Hotel Locations

Online Hotel Registration



- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Grand Hyatt                             | 10. Holiday Inn on the Hill    |
| 2. Renaissance Washington, D.C.            | 11. Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill |
| 3. Capital Hilton                          | 12. Madison Hotel              |
| 4. Courtyard by Marriott Convention Center | 13. Marriott Metro Center      |
| 5. Crowne Plaza                            | 14. Phoenix Park Hotel         |
| 6. JW Marriott                             | 15. Red Room Inn Downtown      |
| 7. Loews L'Enfant Plaza                    | 16. Renaissance Mayflower      |
| 8. Henley Park Hotel                       | 17. Sheraton Four Points       |
| 9. Hotel Washinton                         | 18. Wyndham Washington         |

# Conference Meeting Schedule

Washington, D. C. - Friday, January 12-Tuesday, January 16, 2001

## Friday, January 12, 2001:

8:00-10:00 pm: GLBTRT Steering Committee  
(GHAT - Independence H-I)

## Saturday, January 13, 2001:

8:00-9:30 am: SRRT All Task Force Meeting  
(JWM - Salon IV)

9:00-11:00 am: FTF Membership meeting  
(GHAT - Lafayette Park)

9:30-11:00 am: COSWL Bibliography TF (May  
- State Room)

9:30-11:00 am: COSWL (WCC - Table 16)

9:30 am-12:30 pm: SRRT Action Council I  
(JWM - Salon IV)

2:00-4:00 pm: GLBTRT All Committee Meeting  
- Breakfast Planning, External Relations, Member-  
ship, Nominating, and Program Planning Commit-  
tees (MAD - Mount Vernon A)

2:00-5:30 pm: GLBTRT Book Award Commit-  
tee I [closed meeting] (MAD - Drawing Room 1)

## Sunday, January 14, 2001:

9:30-11:00 am: ACRL-WSS All Committee  
Meeting (WCC - Room 32/33)

9:30-11:00 am: GLBTRT Book Award Commit-  
tee II [closed meeting] (MAD - Drawing Room 1)

4:30-5:30 pm: ACRL-WSS Membership Meet-  
ing (JWM - Salon III)

6:00-8:00 pm: GLBTRT Social (TBA)

8:00-10:00 pm: FTF Program Meeting (WYN -  
Woodlawn)

8:00-10:00 pm: GLBTRT Read Aloud (REN -  
Room 7)

## Monday, January 15, 2001:

8:00-9:00 am: FTF Meeting (REN - Room 12)

9:30-11:00 am: ACRL-WSS Discussion (MAD  
- Dolley Madison)

11:30 am-12:30 pm: ACRL-WSS Ad Hoc Re-  
search Committee (WYN - East Room)

2:00-4:00 pm: ACRL-WSS Executive Commit-  
tee Meeting (WCC - Room 8)

2:00-4:00 pm: SRRT Action Council II (WYN -  
Vista A)

2:00-4:00 pm: GLBTRT Program Planning  
Committee II (Capital Hilton - Continental)

## Tuesday, January 16, 2001:

8:00-9:00 am: COSWL (WCC - Room 35)

9:00 am-12:00 pm: USAID Open House (Ronald  
Regan Building & International Trade Center, 1300  
Penn. Ave., NW - Mezzanine Level)

9:30 am-12:30 pm: GLBTRT Steering Commit-  
tee II (REN - Rooms 13-14)

(GHAT - Grand Hyatt; JWM - J.W. Marriott; MAD -  
Madison; MAY - Renaissance Mayflower; REN - Re-  
naissance Washington; WCC - Convention Center;  
WYN - Wyndham Hotel)

# FTFer Suggests Program on 'Looksism'

"We live in a looksist society that judges people, especially females, on the basis of physical appearance." Thus writes Lynn Romer in an article entitled "Calling All Tale-Tellers: A Plot to End Looksism." In this article she describes her founding an organization called The Pinocchio Plot "to raise public awareness about the socio-culture origins of looksism."

According to Romer, many books and movies use facial characteristics to identify between good and evil. "Evil witches and wicked step-relatives are pictorially symbolized as facially disfigured females. The pretty characters are kind and lovable." In addition, at least one guide to children's books uses "Appearance" under the subject access section called "Character Traits."

"Medical sociologist Frances Cooke MacGregor, a student of Margaret Mead, found that persons who have minor facial appearance impairments suffer more social anxiety than do severely disfigured people," Romer writes. "This is because people who have mild facial differences can't predict how others will respond to them." This is in contrast to those with severe facial disfigurements who consistently receive negative responses.

Romer suggests reading Ann Hill-Beuf's *Beauty Is the Beast: The Trials of Appearance-Impaired Children in America*. Other useful readings for young people are *Dreamsnake* (Vonda McIntyre) and *Road Song* (Natalie Kusz)

The publisher of Ability Network, where Romer's article was published, reports that men

also suffer from looksism. Spencer Bevan-John states that "these men are far less successful when looking for employment than their better looking competitors with identical CVs."

## *Sexism as a Library Issue*

(Continued from Page 4)

"Many of us know that the female-dominated nature of the profession and of ALA has created an interesting paradox: great areas of sexism within and external to the profession, yet plenty of resistance. Some of us will remember the bitter fight when we passed an ERA boycott in ALA, meaning no ALA conferences were held (for a short time) in Chicago, our own HQ city.

"Many women and men still claim that 'social issues' are irrelevant to ALA, not wanting to analyze the serious impacts on workplace equity and on information access.

"I've written . . . about this in an article published in *Wilson Library Bulletin* entitled "Backlash, Backwater, or Back to the Drawing Board." A nice overview is provided by Hope Olson, faculty member in LIS at the University of Alberta at [www.ualberta.ca/~holson/589/schedule.htm](http://www.ualberta.ca/~holson/589/schedule.htm). and the historical overview at [www.ualberta.ca/~holson/589/womenlis/summary.htm](http://www.ualberta.ca/~holson/589/womenlis/summary.htm)."

—Sarah Pritchard

[Ed. Note: To participate in discussions such as this, join the FTF listserv, information on Page 2.]

**"Evil witches and wicked step-relatives are historically symbolized as facially disfigured females. The pretty characters are kind and lovable."**

## **“Failure Is Inevitable”—Jean Kilbourne**

“We are surrounded by such images of ideal beauty,” says Jean Kilbourne, as she stands in front of a larger-than-life Revlon ad, lecturing in colleges across the United States. According to Kilbourne, we are all being judged against this porcelain perfection and all doomed to failure.

Her message, as described in *Ms.* (December 2000/January 2001): “how the ideal is unattainable and . . . how it is being used against us.” And her message has become a mission to show through lectures, films, and a book (*Deadly Persuasion*; re-released in November as *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*) how marketing's glossy allure can leave us feeling somewhat less than human. “Our face becomes a mask,” she says, “and our body becomes a thing.”

Although women today are as media savvy as we've ever been, we are exposed to something like 3000 ads each day, she estimates. And so, despite our growing cynicism, the message—that we are not good enough as we are and *need* certain products—seeps through. And the advertising industry has gotten smarter since Kilbourne began lecturing full-time in 1977.

She points to an ad proclaiming “Strength isn't always a shout” with the woman's mouth shut and says, “That's the message women get all the time. . . . Be strong but don't speak up too much, don't be too loud. *Don't.*”

Advertising also encourages women to substitute eating for love, Kilbourne maintains, while showing us images of impossibly thin women. While her message seems simplistic, the ads keep on coming and their influence seems to be escalating. “Advertising is cumulative, and it's mostly unconscious,” she says.

Her recommendations? “Break through the denial, the complacency, and act against whatever bad feelings ads inspire. The most important thing we can do is teach media literacy in our schools. Most other nations do.”

We also need to look at advertising-related problems as public health issues, Kilbourne argues. “We need to see that eating disorders and obsession with thinness and violence against women are [health issues] as well.” Her list of places to support include battered women's centers, rape crisis centers, and feminist groups. “What will bring about change is a critical mass of people who are seeing things differently.”

**Glamorizing Violence:** “Ad after ad implies that girls and women don't really mean ‘no’ when they say it, that women are only teasing when they resist men's advances. A perfume ad, running in several teen magazines, features a very young woman, with eyes blackened by make-up or perhaps something else, and the copy, ‘Apply generously to your neck so he can smell the scent as you shake your head ‘no.’” In other words, he'll understand that you don't really mean it, and he can respond to the scent like any other animal.”

**Replacing Relationships:** A backpack ad's copy reads “comes with a lifetime guarantee not to rip, tear, break, or ask for a ring.” Kilbourne says, “In a society in which so many marriages end in divorce, we are offered constancy through our products. As one ad says, ‘Some people need only one man. Or one woman. Or one watch.’” Another ad says, “The ski instructor faded away three winters ago. At least the sweater didn't.”

**Keeping Quiet:** “Score high on non-verbal skills,” says the copy for a clothing ad, encouraging girls to be silent, mysterious, not to talk too much or too loudly. “The silence of a look can reveal more than words,” says one ad for perfume, which features a woman lying on her back. A clothing ad says, “Classic is speaking your mind (without saying a word),” and an ad for lipstick says, “Watch your mouth, young lady.” In another ad, a young woman's turtleneck is pulled over her mouth. And an ad for a movie soundtrack features a chilling image of a young woman with her lips sewn together.



And now the movies are becoming ads. As Ellen Goodman points out in her "Commentary" on 12/27/00, halfway through Mel Gibson's *What Women Want*, she "felt trapped in a commercial, not a fairy tale [with] the feeling that I'd paid \$9 for a seat at a sales pitch."

According to Goodman, "this movie is not only about marketing to women, it is marketing to women. The plot does not just revolve around advertising. It is an ad."

The plot shows a boorish man who, losing a promotion to Helen Hunt, must be overhauled into someone who can get into a woman's psyche. Together they create an ad for Nike which persuade women that image is nothing and running is every-

thing.

So what's wrong with that? Isn't that what we want? Kilbourne agrees that the ad is "brilliant" but says that ads like this "take basic human feelings and yoke them with products. Even the desire to run away from it all is yoked to the brand of shoes you run away in."

Says Goodman, "What do women want? What are we made to want? The moment in this movie that had every woman laughing was when Gibson tested leg wax on his own hairy gams. After letting out a howl of pain, he asked in bewilderment: Why would any woman do that twice?"

Yes, indeed, why would she? Because the ads made her believe that it's the right thing to do?

**"The plot does not just revolve around advertising. It is an ad."**

*"Brooks saw them [the sonnet, the ballad, the blues] as ritualistic contests between chaos and order, enjoying the intellectual athleticism of kneading them to represent the varied portraits of ordinary blacks."*

(Continued from Page 1)

modern poets as T. S. Eliot and e. e. cummings—and Langston Hughes, who encouraged her in her literary ambitions.

"I am interested in telling my particular truth as I have seen it." Some of her truth came from early work experiences during the Depression as a domestic worker and as secretary to a spiritual advisor. "I wrote about what I saw and heard on the street," she said of her first volume of poetry, *A Street in Bronzeville*.

Influenced at first by the Harlem Renaissance, her early works featured the sonnet and the ballad, and she experimented with adaptations of conventional meter. Later development of the black arts movement in the 60s, along with conceptions of a black aesthetic, turned her toward free verse and

an abandonment of the sonnet as inappropriate to the times. She retained, however, her interest in the ballad—its musicality and accessibility—and what she called "verse journalism."



The political engagement that became pronounced in the late 60s was seen in her work until her death. It was also represented by her decision to use African American-run publishing houses rather than larger commercial publishers.

Gwendolyn Brooks, as her major biographer George E. Kent says, "has come to hold a unique position in American letters. Not only has she combined a strong commitment to racial identity and equality with a mastery of poetic technique, but she also has managed to bridge the gap between the academic poets of her generation in the 40s and the young black militant of the 60s."

# Feminist publishing news

Is there a difference in women's prose and men's? Sometimes. Yale University Press recently acknowledged the 20th anniversary of a groundbreaking study of women writers, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar.

The book brought the concerns of feminism to the study of female writers and presented the case for the existence of a distinctly feminine imagination, with female writers suffering from "the anxiety of influence" and "anxiety of authorship" and therefore unable to easily do what [Harold Bloom] said authors must do: wrest power from their predecessors in order to create their own literature.

—*New York Times*, Nov. 30, 2000, p. E-3.

New Words Live, the nonprofit sister organization of New Words in Cambridge, Mass., one of the oldest feminist bookstores in the country, has been awarded a \$75,000 grant from the Ford Foundation.

New Words Live, which produces the reading series at New Words as well as other educational and cultural programming, hopes to use the money not only to analyze the role that it serves in women's lives, but to reexamine the resources that women's bookstores offer their constituencies in general.

—*Publishers Weekly*, Nov. 13, 2000, p. 29.

When asked about the recent transitions in lesbian publishing, Joan Drury, the brains behind Spinsters Ink since 1992, said, "I don't think the recent changes are necessarily all "doom and gloom. Most of the women who founded and have run these presses have been doing it for a long time, and just want to retire and take things easy. Running a small press is a lot of work. But just as all of these women stepped forward in the 1970's to make sure that lesbian writers could break into print and be heard, a younger generation of women are stepping forward to take over and make sure that our voices won't fall silent."

—*Lambda Book Report*, Sep, 2000, p. 11.

Alice Street Editions, the lesbian imprint of the Haworth Press, has launched Lesbian Fiction Quarterly. Under the editorial guidance of Judith Stelboun and with an editorial board consisting such high-powered lesbian writers as Karla Jay, Leslea Newman, Ruthann Robson, Sarah Schulman, and Dorothy Allison, among many others, the first two issues have been most impressive.

The first two editions have included short fiction from Sarah Schulman, Donna Allegra, and Nicola Griffith, as well as poetry by Terry Wolverton, Gerry Gomez Pearlberg, and Elena Georgiou. Information on the journal is available at [www.haworthpress.com](http://www.haworthpress.com), or via e-mail at [getinfo@haworthpressinc.com](mailto:getinfo@haworthpressinc.com).

—*Lambda Book Report*, Oct. 2000, p. 12.

## Book Reviews

RATNER, ROCHELLE, EDITOR. *BEARING LIFE: WOMEN'S WRITINGS ON CHILDLESSNESS*. NEW YORK: FEMINIST PRESS, 2000.

This anthology includes work by women who are childless by choice as well as by women who have been, in the editor Rochelle Ratner's words "denied" children, through loss or infertility.

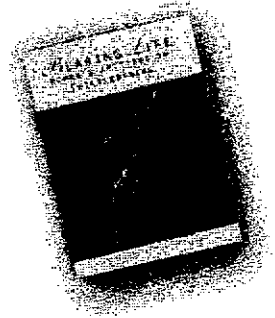
Ratner limits the collection to contemporary works by women living in the United States or Canada. While some of the pieces were written expressly for the volume, most were tracked down through the editor's relentless sifting through novels, poetry and meditative prose. Authors represented range from very well-known (Marge Piercy, Joyce Carol Oates, Margaret Atwood) to women who will be less widely familiar (Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Evelyn C. Rosser, Luci Tapahonso.)

For a reader, this type of anthology can be a joy, even in the absence of an actual interest in the "subject." Skipping

around, reading favorite authors, passages that catch the eye, discovering new writers to investigate more fully.

From a library perspective, it is less easy to see the audience for *BEARING LIFE*. Some childless women might not, as the editor hopes, "feel so alone." But the range is so great -- from Suzanne Ostro's depiction of pregnancy as "having a parasite growing inside" to Pamela Walker's haunting "The Wash House" -- that any comfort taken is likely to be diminished by an author whose writing engenders anger or rekindles barely controlled devastation.

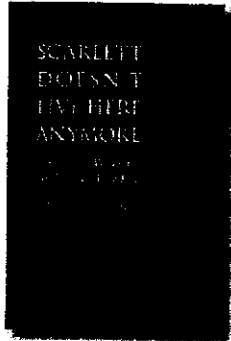
This is a selection for a comprehensive women's studies collection, or a companion volume for work exploring cultural attitudes toward motherhood.



# Book Reviews

EDWARDS, LAURA F. **SCARLET DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE: SOUTHERN WOMEN IN THE CIVIL WAR ERA.** URBANA: UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS, 2000.

Laura Edwards' stated goals in writing **SCARLET DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE** are to make the growing body of recent academic work about Southern women -- white and black -- accessible to a wider audience, and to show how this information changes our understanding of the Civil War and Reconstruction.



In large part, Edwards meets her goals. This is not a popular work by any means, but it will be accessible to undergraduates and sophisticated high school students. Drawing on primary sources such as diaries, newspaper accounts and court proceedings, Edwards focuses her discussion of issues (class, poverty, abolition, lynching) by telling the "story" of a particular individual. This technique creates a narrative that personalizes the complex ideas Edwards introduces to an audience who might otherwise lose interest.

The story of Sarah Guttery, for example, is woven into the discussion of the lives of working class white women. Guttery and her two illegitimate children lived on her father's farm in rural Alabama, allowed to stay only if she would work to earn her and her children's' keep. By the turn of the century, Guttery's life is again used, this time in contrast to younger women who migrated to the cities as factory workers.

Edwards' presentation of the lives of individual women makes **SCARLET DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE** not only an excellent introduction to Southern women's history, but also fascinating reading for historian or history buff.

DALGLISH, CASS. **NIN. DULITH: SPINSTERS INK, 2000.**

Nin Creed is a feminist poet embarking on a quest to recover the lost writings of her mother, a scholar and linguist who died the day she was born. Nin's search takes her from Minnesota to Israel, where she explores Haifa in search of her mother's work.

During the quest, Nin is joined by medieval intellectuals Christine de Pisan and Marguerite Porete, who tell their own life stories, discuss their writings, and use the Internet to debate the nature of woman with Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

This fantastical novel is the last title to be published by Spinsters Ink under the ownership of Joan Drury. After eight years of publishing feminist titles, Drury has decided to sell the business to another feminist press.

LABOVITZ, TRUDY. **DEADLY EMBRACE.** DULITH: SPINSTERS INK, 2000.

West Virginia private investigator Zoe Kergulin, introduced in Trudy Labovitz's **ORDINARY JUSTICE** is back again, investigating the ambush of Sheriff Ethan McKenna (her cousin) and one of his deputies.

Solving the mystery involves gaining the trust of a troubled teenager; defending Ethan's honor when there are rumors of an affair between Ethan and the female deputy; and explaining a mysterious, Jaguar-driving African American stranger.

As with most feminist press mysteries, **DEADLY EMBRACE** is competently written, with emphasis on motivation and characterization. The mystery is a vehicle for telling a story about the relationships between individuals who in other circumstances might never come together.

For fans of women sleuths, Zoe Kergulin promises to be a new favorite. Publishers Weekly called **ORDINARY JUSTICE** "strangely compelling," and **DEADLY EMBRACE** has been well-received on online review sites.

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