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Review of Hillbilly Women by Kathy Kahn

The Feminist Press

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BOOKS — NEW AND RECOMMENDED

THE FEMINIST PAPERS: FROM ADAMS TO DE BEAUVOIR, edited by Alice S. Rossi (Columbia University Press, 1973: \$12.95; Bantam, 1974: \$1.95), will be welcomed as a text by teachers and students in need of a single collection of "essential" feminist writing both by theorists and activists. Chronicling the two hundred years of western feminist thought, this 716-page volume is impressive for its inclusiveness: twenty-two writers, plus selections from the *History of Woman Suffrage*. In addition, Rossi brings to the study of history a sociological perspective invaluable especially in her review of the Blackwell family and the friendship between Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as well as in her generous biographical essays and the analytical introductions to the four sections of the text. The essay on Margaret Fuller is especially noteworthy, as is Rossi's rediscovery of the eighteenth century Judith Sargent Murray and the contemporary Suzanne LaFollette. While the reader may long occasionally for lengthier selections from particular theorists, there is no comparable comprehensive, scholarly collection.

FRAGMENT FROM A LOST DIARY AND OTHER STORIES: WOMEN OF ASIA, AFRICA, AND LATIN AMERICA, edited by Naomi Katz and Nancy Milton (Pantheon, 1973: \$10.00), contains twenty powerful stories (one of them in verse) thematically organized to catch the changing lives of women, chiefly in Asia (eleven stories) and Africa (seven stories). Such lives are bound not only to marriage, family, custom, and poverty, but to struggles for freedom in resistance movements above and below ground. Two of the most moving stories are of revolutionary women, one immobilized by pregnancy (the title story, by Shih Ming), the other a Vietnamese "liaison girl" who has seen her father—also a resistance fighter—only once in her lifetime ("The Ivory Comb" by Nguyen Sang). Other stories chronicle the changing class and caste of women in marriage and at work in contemporary India or Tanzania, for example; and the torments of life in apartheid South Africa. In two respects the collection is disappointing: only two stories by the Cuban Dora Alonso represent Latin America; and only six of the nineteen writers are women. Nevertheless, we hope that a paperback will soon allow this collection the wide distribution it deserves.

HILLBILLY WOMEN by Kathy Kahn (Doubleday, 1973: \$7.95) "tells what it means to be a woman when you are poor, when you are proud, and when you are a hillbilly." This book focuses on women who are usually left out of feminist discussions of oppression: poor and working class white women who live in the Southern Mountain region. The lives of such women appear in almost no other available literature. Nineteen women tell, in their own words, their personal stories about life in the Southern Mountains: hard work, poor working conditions, and the struggle to raise a family. The women who speak are strong women: Granny Hager, who organized Roving Picket lines in the coal camps of the 1960's; Ruby Green, who raises a family on her wages as a waitress and struggles to overcome the deadly "brown lung" she contracted as a factory worker in the cotton mills of Henderson, N.C. *Hillbilly Women* will be valuable to teachers, organizers, community workers, and policy-makers because it helps draw the relationship between poverty and sexism; it tells of a people long ignored or caricatured by the rest of the world; and it demonstrates that the lives of ordinary women are filled with courage and pride.

THE WOMEN, YES! by Marie B. Hecht, Joan D. Berbrich, Salley A. Healey, and Clare M. Cooper (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973: paperback, \$5.95) is the first interdisciplinary feminist high school textbook on women. In four units of seven to nine chapters each, the editors offer analyses of major social and institutional forces which define and discriminate against women (advertising, history,

WOMEN'S STUDIES AT SUNY/ALBANY

Women's studies at the State University of New York at Albany began in the fall of 1971 with a course on Women in Modern Literature offered through the School of General Studies. The following fall the faculty Women's Caucus at SUNY/Albany formed a subcommittee to develop a women's studies program, which by the spring of 1973 offered an undergraduate minor. We now face new decisions.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Women's Studies first concentrated on increasing the number of course offerings, working to identify and encourage those in different departments to develop new courses, gaining departmental acceptance of these courses, and shepherding the courses through the regular university committees and bureaucracy. We favored an interdisciplinary program as opposed to a separate department, as has been established at this university for Afro-American Studies, Judaic Studies, and Puerto Rican Studies. A separate department would not only be virtually impossible to achieve under current budgetary and political conditions, but might pose a danger of "ghettoizing" concerned women.

With determination, time, effort, and some discretion we set about securing new courses. While some of these were offered through the special topics or colloquium format of different departments, we preferred approved catalog courses since they stood a greater chance of survival than what in reality were "one-shot" courses. A university may easily discontinue specific women's studies courses if those lack their own rubric with stated title and identity. Then the "revolving door" of women's studies faculty and courses may turn even more quickly.

Working with interested faculty as well as with the students' women's liberation group, which has sponsored films, lectures, and two Women's Weekends involving workshops and speakers, and with the support of the Women's Caucus on campus, we put through such new course offerings as Women in European History, History of Women in the Americas, and Women in Antiquity. Other courses given once, usually under the special topics format, included Women in the Drama, The Rhetoric of the Women's Rights Movement, Women in the Peace Movement, and Contemporary French Women Authors. Administrative regulations prevented the application of these temporary courses toward the total number required to create a minor in women's studies, although students taking such courses could count them as part of their minor. On the other hand, several existing courses (Urban Puerto Rican Family and Processes of Socialization, for example) could be applied. When an undergraduate minor in women's

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law, economics, religion, sports, the arts, language); significant documents from the movement for women's rights; excerpts from American literature that portray women young and old; and recent essays by feminists involved in the current women's rights movement. Because they are high school English and social studies teachers, the editors have also provided mechanisms (in the discussion topics and suggested activities at the end of each chapter) for learning traditional social science skills through the study of the history and status of women: the statistical method, interpretation of graphics, historical research, structured observation, investigative reporting. The extensive use of graphics throughout, particularly a lengthy photographic essay, adds to the beauty of this handsome book. A graphic of Emily Dickinson appears on the cover. Readable biographic, bibliographic, and explanatory notes introduce each chapter.