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when such women are found moody, and are thought capricious, it is this which is the cause of their ill-humor and dejection. . . ." She said that men did not want to educate women for fear they would lose their most reliable servants.

There is much more of this kind of feminist thinking buried in her long-neglected writings. In 1848 she wrote an article for the American Literary Magazine suggesting that when the French people came to draw up a new constitution they should provide for a separate convention of women to decide all issues affecting women. She would have liked, she said, to make such a suggestion for the state of New York but was afraid of being accused of "being an ambitious woman who wanted to make a place for herself." Of course she was an ambitious woman, but experience had taught her to deny it. . . .

. . .In the years between 1821 and 1871, when Emma Willard either was principal or was living on the school grounds and exerting a powerful influence upon Troy pupils, she was imbuing many young women with her own view of women's role, and with the need for attention to the "claims and rights of women." Yet parents trusted her because the school was so well run, because manners and morals were attended to. There is one lovely report of a legislative committee in 1852 recommending that some money be given to this school whose excellence was attested by the fact that no young lady had ever eloped from it!

I have been engaged for a while in trying to track down the women who went to Troy to find out what they did with their lives. The indications are that many of them did a great deal. Here I have time for only two illustrative examples of consequences of the Willard way of looking at the world.

One comes from the diary of a New England woman named Lucy Ruggles who left Troy in 1845 and went south to teach. She spent some time in a Charleston family (where she learned to hate slavery), and then she got a better job at a school in Virginia. To make the trip, she took a boat to Wilmington, North Carolina, then a stagecoach across that state. When the stage came to a swollen creek which it could not cross, the driver was much perturbed. The gentlemen, he said, could cross the creek on a floating log, but what about the lady? Lucy Ruggles recorded the incident in her diary. "'The lady can do almost anything she undertakes,' said I, 'so lead the way.'" The men were much impressed. Mrs. Willard would have been proud of her.

My second illustration comes from the letters of a graduate of 1856, Mary Newbury Adams, who went back to live in Dubuque, Iowa, and became in time a leading advocate of woman suffrage in that state. There is a book to be written about Mary Adams, who was, I suspect, as interesting a woman as Emma Willard herself. But I will just note here that in 1869, when her four children were all under ten, she founded the Iowa Institute for the Arts and Sciences, and set a generation of youngsters to studying geology and botany. She did many similar things while continuing to educate herself in a number of fields. What intrigues me most was that she was a serious student of women's history. In a letter to her sister in 1878 she wrote, "Our daughters must begin to know what women have done in the world. Historians have usually ignored them. It is well to buy a good square blank book and keep it as a Woman's Record Book. I did this years ago and was amazed at the number of noted women I needed to know about. . . ." There speaks a true daughter of Emma Willard, as well as a forerunner of the women's historians of our own day. . . .

I think Cum Laude speakers are traditionally expected to give advice, but I have chosen rather to tell a tale. The only advice I have is: remember, all the days of your life, that you are but a most recent link in that important cause which began at this school in 1814, the cause Emma Willard always called "the progress of my sex," and do your bit to further that progress.

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Brief, A-mazing Movements: Dealing with Despair in the Women's Studies Classroom

By Cheri Register

Women's studies majors at the University of Minnesota are required to take two quarters of a course called Women's Studies Seminar some time in their junior or senior year. While the theme of the seminar varies from quarter to quarter, its underlying purpose is constant: "to allow students to direct knowledge and methodology gained from courses and experience toward topics of an interdisciplinary nature with a focus on women." The variant that I taught in the fall of 1978 was called Feminist Learning: The University and Beyond. Its intent was to help students become conscious of the learning process and shift their focus from content to method, from what to how and why. It is a difficult transition to make, particularly in a university where passive lecture courses are the norm. The lack of tangible subject matter can be troubling, and it takes time to get used to the teacher's function, which is not to pass on information, but to guide, provoke, and challenge, often from the sidelines.

For their first lengthy assignment, I asked students to prepare an oral report on the impact of feminism on a particular discipline or area of inquiry. Many of our majors are double majors who seldom get an opportunity to tie together the two strands of their education. I expected the students to be excited about fresh approaches feminist scholarship offers to other disciplines. I did not expect the recitation of horrors that brought
the class to the brink of despair. Students presented reports about male medical researchers who do research on women and keep their results secret; about men intent on preserving a clublike atmosphere in the professions; and about male psychotherapists who imprison women in mental institutions for failing to conform to society's notions of femininity. Much of the evidence offered by the students was either speculative or outdated, but the class had its own horror stories to tell. An image emerged of a vast male conspiracy with an irresistible momentum, motivated by a conscious, deliberate evil.

Midway through the assignment, I collected the class journals and was overwhelmed by the emotions invested in them: anger, frustration, disillusion, despair. Many of the students elaborated on the horrors recited in class, while others expressed concern about how the course was going. One wrote that all this “wallowing in negatives” was paralyzing her. Another was bored: “You can almost predict when the groans are going to start.” I thought about intervening and clarifying the assignment, but it didn’t seem fair to invalidate the reports already given and offer extra guidance to those yet to come. I also suspected that this venting of anger was necessary and that the assignment was probably premature. I decided to hold off and then put the anger to some pedagogical use.

When the reports had all been given, I set aside a period to “summarize and synthesize”—an ongoing responsibility I had assigned myself. I said that I had been overwhelmed by the anger and frustration and was disappointed that so few reports had mentioned signs of change attributable to feminism. I offered some possible explanations for what had happened:

1. On the first day of class, we had talked about personal reasons for becoming a women’s studies major. Though one of the benefits extolled was the sense of community in women’s studies classes, in this particular class of sixteen, some students were transparently hostile to each other, while others seemed alienated. In fumbling for a common bond, the students hit upon their shared anger toward male supremacy. To become “us,” they focused on “them.”

2. Some students equated radicalism with intense anger; thus, they demonstrated their political stance by being angry.

3. Some students apparently felt unsure of their commitment to women’s studies and feminism, and worried that their interest might decline as their initial fervor waned. The recitation of horrors helped them sustain an emotional pitch on which their faith in the sincerity of their feminism depended.

I also wanted to put this anger into a wider perspective, to see it as part of a process, and to offer some assurance that it could be disciplined without stopping the process. I described my own development as a feminist scholar during the past ten years of changes in women’s studies and the women’s movement. I sketched this development also in a graph, identifying four stages and assigning them alliterative titles and catch phrases.

**Compensating**
- Women Were There, Too
- The Pope Joan Syndrome
- Women as Tokens

**Criticizing**
- Why Weren’t Women There?
- Woman-as-Victim
- Women as Objects

**Collecting and Constructing**
- Where Were the Women?
- Women as Creators of Culture
- Women as Subjects

**Conceiving (Conceptualizing)**
- Where Is “There”? 
- Gynocentric Vision
- Women as Definers of Truth and Knowledge

**Women Defined by Men and in Relation to Men**

**PLATEAU OF DISCOVERY**

**PITFALLS**

**THE PIT**

**PINNACLE OF PERCEPTION**

“Cheri’s Model,” or “that thing on the board.”
Compensating is a time of discovery, and the emotional graph represents a "plateau" of excitement. Learning that the cotton gin might have been invented by Catherine Greene is cause for rejoicing. We amass information about powerful queens and "first-women-who" and use it eagerly as a defense against arguments that women are by nature inferior. I called this "the Pope Joan Syndrome" to point up a fallacy inherent in it: because we do not yet question male-defined standards, the ultimate symbol of achievement is a woman who disguises herself as a man and proves her worth in an all-male arena. The supply of eminent women is limited, however, and we soon wonder why there aren't more of them. Thus begins the slide into what the seminar students named "The Pit."

In our search for heroines, we encounter examples of failure, as well as success, and attribute it to discriminatory barriers, which we identify one by one. Soon enough it becomes apparent that discrimination is the rule, part of a huge system of oppression which pits men against women. This is a terrifying realization, but an essential one. The mode of consciousness-raising that has the most indelible effect begins with a lowering: we descend into "The Pit," immerse ourselves in oppression, and "speak bitterness" to bolster our determination to climb back out on the other side. At the nadir on the emotional graph, we are indeed "wallowing in negatives," convinced that oppression is all-pervasive and irresistible. When we examine women's experience, we see only victimization. Yet we haven't forgotten all those exceptional heroines, and we begin to wonder how they resisted. Buoyed on our remembrance of them, we pull ourselves up to that first little "pinnacle" on the graph. From there, we discern a pattern in the oppression—one that we can possibly undo.

This leads to a new phase of discovery. What about women who haven't made it on male terms, but haven't succumbed to victimization either? What more is there to female experience? What have women done on their own terms? The transition from Compensating to Collecting and Constructing involves a crucial change in perspective. Previously, we have viewed women through masculine lenses or at least in relation to men, as the objects of oppression. Now women become the subjects of our inquiry, as we examine women's experience through women's eyes and from a feminist perspective—that is, with a consciousness of oppression and the need for change understood. We discover a female culture—several variants of it, in fact—in which women have been the creators of behavioral norms, values, social structures, and artifacts. This is very exhilarating and propels us upwards. There are "pitfalls" along the way, however: among others, an isolationism that admits the existence of oppression but neglects the task of undoing it to avoid being tainted by it; and a neo-feminine romanticism that simply glories in nurturance and needlework and forgets oppression altogether. If we keep moving beyond these pitfalls, we begin to wonder what the world would be like if the female culture were the dominant culture. What form would female norms take if extended to humanity-at-large?

We are now on the brink of "The Abyss," ready to ask all the crucial questions: Where is "there"? Where does the center of human experience lie? What acts are worthy of remembrance and emulation? How does a work of art communicate? What is power and what are its uses? The answers lie on the other side, in an ideal world where women can serve as defenders of truth and knowledge, where women's vision counts as a central perspective. To make the leap, we need to address the nature-nurture question and resolve the public-private split. We especially need to distinguish those aspects of female culture which are born of oppression from those which would be created even in its absence. Otherwise, we risk falling into the current that sweeps us back to where we began: we might argue female superiority along the same lines as the old anatomy-is-destiny doctrine, or we might be content with an illusory counterculture that poses no threat to the dominant male culture, or we might simply "value" our condition and forget why we undertook this process in the first place. Despite the dangers, I ended the graph with an arrow pointing optimistically upward and onward.

To show how women's studies has followed this process, I used examples from several disciplines. Rather than do that here, I would like to ask readers to trace their disciplines through the model and let me know whether it fits. My experience with feminist literary criticism may well have been my subconscious model. Under the Compensating title, I would put the emphasis on "great" women writers and the early resurrection of forgotten masterpieces, plus attention to major female figures in literature by men. Collecting includes exposés of misogyny in literature and of the exclusion of women from the literary establishment, which leads to further resurrecting of suppressed great works. Collecting and Constructing turns our attention to what women have written—regardless of its acceptance in the literary canon; to what women read; and to how literature works as a forum for artistic expression of "female experience" or "women's consciousness." The questions that will lead to Conceiving have been emerging all along. Some are the same questions literary critics have always raised but never answered from a woman-centered perspective: What is literature? Where are the boundaries between verbal art and verbal communication? Is there a universal aesthetic? Is there a female aesthetic? How should we decide what belongs in the literary canon? How does literature communicate? How much does the writer-reader bond depend on shared experience?

As additional guideposts, I mentioned publications that had played a transitional role. Between Compensating and Collecting, I put Linda Nochlin's "Why Are There No Great Women Artists?" (in Gornick and Moran, Woman in Sexist Society, 1971); and between Collecting and Constructing, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's "The Female World of Love and Ritual" (Signs 1:1, 1975). I saw attempts at Conceiving in Mary Daly's Beyond God the Father—particularly in the concept of "naming" and the exhortation to establish a new center "on the boundary" of patriarchy—and in Adrienne Rich's poetry, which strives for a "common language."

The initial response of my seminar class to the model was quite subdued: a few requests for clarification and some cautiously worded skepticism. One woman expressed concern that the graph might be used competitively, to put down people perceived to be at a "lower stage of development." I was grateful to have that danger pointed out, since the greatest risk I
see in developmental models is their tendency to become reified. This model is meant only as a conceptual framework, an attempt to understand graphically a process that many of us have gone or are going through. It is not a prescription for future generations of feminists, who must chart their own course.

On request, I built up developments in feminist activism. Compensating corresponds with a reformism that seeks more slots for women in the existing socioeconomic structure. Here, too, I put the first critiques of sex-role socialization, which underscore women’s right to behave in ways previously defined as masculine. Criticizing comes with the discovery of oppression and subsequent analyses of patriarchy, such as the study of rape as a ‘normal’ phenomenon and exposures of institutional sexism. Under Collecting and Constructing, I placed most alternative feminist institutions—self-help health clinics, presses, women’s centers, etc.—some of which claim to be drawing on a pre­existent female culture. What form Conceiving will take outside academe remains to be seen.

Despite the subdued discussion that first day, it was soon apparent that “Cheri’s model” or “that thing on the board” had made some difference. In class and in their journals, students reported that it gave them hope of overcoming their despair, a vision of better things to come, and a sense of direction. One woman, for example, resolved to stop dwelling on the irrelevance of political science to women and start working on devising a feminist political theory. This pleased me, naturally, but I was even more gratified when the class suggested improvements in the model itself, based on their experience. We decided that development is not unidirectional, but that you can move back and forth at random or at will. Each time you move or slip back toward “The Pit,” you bring along new insights from the Collecting and Constructing stage that give you a new perception of the pattern of oppression. Since development is cumulative, no stage is to be avoided. It might even be worthwhile to lower yourself into the negatives now and then, to regain the impetus for overcoming the pitfalls on the way up. We also agreed that it is possible to be in several stages at once, with reference to different aspects of experience. The static, linear configuration of the graph could be very misleading, and it would be better to visualize it in three dimensions and in constant motion.

Our most nagging question about the process was, “How will we ever make the leap without plunging into the abyss?” This threatened a new despair, until someone had sense enough to ask, “Is it necessarily a leap?” An answer was suggested on the last day of the quarter, when a team of students conducted a class on Adrienne Rich’s feminism and its implications for feminist learning. In her poem “From a Survivor,” we read:

... the leap
we talked, too late, of making
which I live now
not as a leap
but a succession of brief, amazing movements
each one making possible the next

Maybe the seminar has even been one of them.

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“Mrs. K.”: Oral History of a Korean Picture Bride*

By Alice Y. Chai

Introduction

In 1923, Mrs. K., a nineteen-year-old picture bride-to-be, left a small mountain village in Kyong-sang province, Korea, to marry a forty-five-year-old Korean immigrant who awaited her arrival in Honolulu, Hawaii. Now seventy-five years old, Mrs. K. has spent fifty-five years of her life as a resident of the island of Oahu.

For Mrs. K., one of the 101 remaining out of 1,000 Korean picture brides who came to Hawaii between 1910 and 1924, life in Hawaii followed a similar pattern to that of other picture brides. She worked alongside her husband at an army laundry service; then she ran a laundry shop, a boarding house, a vegetable farm; and finally she built and managed multi-unit apartment buildings. Mrs. K.’s life story reads like an American dream-come-true.

The primary emphasis of this study is her description of her life in her own words, recorded during extensive, open-ended interviews. As she speaks of her past, Mrs. K. punctuates her story with laughter and tears. Her speech is “Korean-American,” which can largely be understood in context. The following is Mrs. K.’s own story of her experiences as a Korean-American woman in Hawaii, as told to me and to another interviewer. This story not only has intrinsic value as a woman’s own life history told in her own words, but also has special

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