

Progressive Librarian

Issue Number 5

Summer 1992



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NO LOVE LOST: LIBRARY WOMEN VS. WOMEN WHO USE LIBRARIES

by Michael H. Harris

Women have been driven mad, "gaslighted," for centuries by the refutation of our experience and our instincts in a culture which validates only male experience. Adrienne Rich, 1975

Has the sex of our majority helped shape our service assumptions? Mary Biggs, 1985

Over the past twenty years there has been a substantial body of work detailing the degree to which librarianship, a profession of women, has been dominated by a patriarchal world view. But with few exceptions, there has been little attention to why library women so meekly acquiesce to male-stream definitions of value, and almost no attention to the way in which library women are persuaded to accept male-stream standards of value, and undervalue female conceptions of value. Put another way, we might note that while the majority of recipients and providers of library service are women, there is a certain tendency to talk about library service as an ungendered program where the sex of those involved makes no difference.¹ In the pages that follow I intend to examine the complicity of library women in the production and reproduction of the dominant bourgeois ideology. Our central thesis is that one fundamental missing link in our understanding of Western library service, a vital "blind spot" in Western librarianship, lies in a deep reading of the ways in which librarianship, a feminized but male-dominated profession, has come to the unflinching conclusion that it can distinguish between high and low culture; between those books that are "priceless" and those that are "trash," between good and bad — books and readers. It is hoped that a fuller understanding of this fundamental paradox, a profession of women aggressively producing and reproducing a dominant patriarchal ideology, might hold the key to a rethinking of the nature of Western librarianship, and a genuinely emancipatory restructuring of library and information service as we enter the information era.

In more precise terms I intend to address this question in the following manner: first, I will attempt to illustrate the way in which library women have been encouraged to adopt an androcentric model of professional organization and practice; second, I will illustrate the ways in which library professionalism is founded on the process of book selection, and the ways in which the selection of materials is practiced within a male-stream definition of the literary canon; third, I will think about the ways in which this acquiescence in a male-stream of the profession, and the literary canon, places library women in unnatural conflict with the most voracious and perhaps the most literate group of American readers — those middle-class women who read what librarians like to term "trash"; fourth, I want to think about new feminist research on the women who read romances; and finally, I will conclude with a few suggestions of the implications of this work for an emancipatory notion of the way in which libraries might better serve all members of the human community.

Admittedly I am proposing to do rather a lot. For my thesis is that we can understand the way librarians do business by examining their conception of what it means to be a professional, and in understanding that definition of professionalism we can reveal the workings of the patriarchal system in society, especially the way that system subtly works to align library women with the dominant patriarchal ideology.

As a beginning it would perhaps be useful to note that I do not intend to begin by arguing for or against librarianship as a profession.² What interests me here, then, is the model that librarians have adopted in their quest for professionalism, and the implications of that quest for the nature of library service.

And even the most casual observer of American librarianship can quickly discern the outlines of that model. It is the ideal-typical model so brilliantly unmasked by Magali Larson in her award winning book. She defines this ideal model of the profession as those occupations which society grants "special power and prestige" because these professions have "special competence in esoteric bodies of knowledge linked to central needs and values of the social system, and because professions are devoted to the service of the public, above and beyond material incentives."³ This definition is drawn from the practice and

ideology of the "higher professions," medicine and law, and has been, I submit, uncharitably adopted as the model for the librarian's quest for professionalism.

The brilliance of Larson's book lies partly in her demonstration that this ideology really masks the way in which professions gain hegemony in society, and in her careful outline of what actually occurs in this process. In doing so she clearly delineates the path down which librarians are struggling to proceed and therein provides us with the essential insights into the problem that is the topic of this paper.

What she makes clear is that the codification of knowledge, and the establishment of a professional paradigm, are essential prerequisites to any attempt to achieve professional status. As she notes:

What makes the codification of knowledge so important from the point of view of the professional project is that it depersonalizes the ideas held about professional practice and products.... The more formalized the cognitive basis, the more the profession's language and knowledge appear to be connotation-free and "objective".... Professional identity is experienced as shared expertise and therefore involves a sense of at least cognitive superiority whose process of setting up a monopolistic market of services [is based] on articulating and enforcing principles of inclusion and exclusion.⁴

In short, what is necessary is the development of a cognitive base that at once distances professionals from clients, while at the same time providing the professional with the right to prescribe for clients. "The connection with superior cognitive rationality appears to establish the superiority" of the cognitive base independent of the profession's self-interest, Larson notes, and "the monopolistic professional project is legitimized, therefore, by the appearance of neutrality."⁵ The key, of course, is that the application of the cognitive base appear neutral to practicing professionals as well as their clientele.

Librarians are prone to heated arguments about whether librarianship possesses a cognitive base equal to the task, but I submit that the only cognitive base that qualifies in Larson's

sense of the idea is that body of esoteric knowledge librarians profess to possess relative to what is good and bad in literature. That is, it rests in our unwavering conviction that we are able to distinguish the enduring from the ephemeral, the valuable from the worthless, the useful from the useless, the good from the bad.

Of course, as even the most casual student of the theory of value can attest, this conviction is flawed in ways to numerous to mention. What is important, indeed crucial, for our purposes is the awareness that our belief in our infallibility in selection is paramount to our sense of professional autonomy, and thus represents a key lens through which we may examine the working of ideological influences in librarianship. The ground upon which we must focus this lens stands out when we consider the truism that the librarian's sense of what is good, what is bad, in literature, knowledge, and if you will, information, is derivative; that is, it is not developed independently by the library profession, but is rather derived from the judgements of experts in literature, publishing, and even authors themselves.

And here, of course, we come to the crux of the matter — the literary canon. How is it that society comes to value certain fictional or nonfictional works over others? How is it that certain works, ideas, or values become safely housed within the literary canon, while others are denied access? More specifically, how did librarians come to know the difference between high culture and low? In short, who decides and for what purpose?

Answering these questions is not simple. But as Carole S. Vance recently noted "feminist scholarship has delivered a scathing critique of an androcentric and falsely universalizing history in which the historical Everyman, like his authors, was male, white, heterosexual and affluent."⁶ But most of all he was a man. As regards women, Barbara Dubois argues that:

the androcentric or phallogocentric fallacy about women... has been this: the "person" has been considered to be male, and the female, the woman, has been defined in terms, not of what she is, but of what she is not. Woman has been defined as "not-a-man." And things female have tended to be seen... as anomalies, deviations from the male norm and ideal of the "person."

This androcentric fallacy, Dubois insists, renders "women not only unknown, but virtually *unknowable*."

Equally consequential was the male practice of defining woman's proper station as that of the private sphere, a sphere of influence "assigned a lesser order of significance and honor compared to the public, political activities of males."⁸ This patriarchal dichotomous value system served the dominant gender "by reinforcing the notion of the we and the not-we; the deserving and the undeserving; the competent and the incompetent." And as Cynthia Fuchs Epstein points out, men, "because they are the gatekeepers of ideas..., can affix values to these distinctions, and — when the distinctions lack a basis of reality — actually impose this conceptual inequality on reality."⁹

It is also now clear that men colonized the literary stage just as they colonized the political stage.¹⁰ Thus it should come as no surprise that the literary canon is constructed on a firm foundation of male-stream bias, and as a result "most of the knowledge produced in our society has been produced by men... Women have been excluded as the producers of knowledge and as the subjects of knowledge."¹¹

Once the male-stream system of values is firmly in place, the rest follows rather nicely. As dozens of prominent feminist critics have recorded, the literary canon becomes all powerful, and by the very process of becoming educated, women are encouraged to adopt the male-stream system of values as their own. In their training in English literature, not unlike the training received by most library women, these women underwent a subtle but unrelenting introduction to the patriarchal definition of value that ultimately led to a willing acquiescence in male definitions of woman's worth. Judith Fetterly, in a book entitled *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*, painfully recounts the way in which male hegemony is established. Noting that literature as transmitted via the study of the literary canon in American universities is male, she argues that in this literature "the female reader is co-opted into participation in an experience from which she is explicitly excluded; she is asked to identify with a selfhood that defines itself in opposition to her; she is required to identify against herself." The outcome for women, she insists, is "a

peculiar form of powerlessness — not simply the powerlessness which derives from not seeing one's experience articulated, clarified, and legitimized in art, but more significantly the powerlessness which results from the endless division of self against self, the consequence of the invocation to identify as male while being reminded that to be male — to be universal, to be American — is to be *not female*." ¹²

In the end, as dozens of educated women have now discovered, they find that they have been "taught to think as men, to identify with a male point of view, and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values." Women thus encounter a devastating "confusion of consciousness," which Lee Edwards says left here a "schizophrenic." "I do not use this term lightly," she said, "for madness is the bizarre but logical conclusion of our education. Imagining myself male, I attempted to create myself male."¹³

These same women remembered the way in which the study and adoption of the male-stream literary canon led them to become estranged from their own experience and unable to perceive its shape and authenticity and soon joined in "grateful complicity" in the male-dominant system of professional conduct as well.

Much the same has happened to American library women I think and the real question isn't why it happens so much, but rather why any library women could be expected to be able to resist the power of male-stream ideological hegemony. The women of this field, having so fully assimilated the male-stream definition of values, have chosen a straightforward, if not simple, path — they have attempted to envision the professional project in androcentric terms.

And here is the explanation of the phenomenon that I have captioned "Library Women vs. Women Who Use Libraries." For by accepting the male-stream definition of values, library women adopted a particularly potent mechanism of exclusion, which meant that they had agreed to, acquiesced in, the negative judgement about all women and especially those "real women" who are such voracious readers of romance fiction. As Elaine Showalter succinctly pointed out some years ago, in the

intellectual woman's attacks on trash writers and readers, we can sense the "rationalization of the old self-hatred of women."¹⁴

The strength of this patriarchal ideological hegemony is most evident in the length of time it has taken women to figure out how it works. It is only in the sixties that we begin to find a clear cut awareness of the problem. And it was not until the early seventies that the first detailed analyses were published. One of the earliest examples I have encountered is Meridith Tax's essay entitled "Culture Is Not Neutral: Whom Does It Serve?" in which she briefly, but incisively, dissects the conception of high and low culture and pinpoints the reactionary nature of the literary canon while "naming the system" explicitly when she flatly states that "low-brow" culture is the "kind we are taught to despise as we are taught to despise those who consume it."¹⁵ Five years later Elaine Showalter, in a book on British women novelists, analyzed in detail the "double critical standard," whereby great women novelists themselves came to believe that women novelists could only achieve greatness at the expense of the "denigration of the female experience."¹⁶

The systematic analysis of this double standard has developed with amazing speed and force over the past decades, and feminists have now clearly "named the system" and detailed its workings. The extent of the advance is brilliantly represented in Tania Modleski's book entitled *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women*. In this work Modleski carefully and forcefully presents the case for the way in which the wide spread adoption of the male-stream definition of values led educated women to embrace a "persuasive scorn for all things feminine" and encouraged them in the "habit of denigrating what George Elliot called 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists.'" And while she admits that such denigration is to some extent justified:

what is most striking is that it too seems to manifest a defensiveness which has not been felt through.... Thus women's criticism of popular feminine narratives has generally adopted one of three attitudes: dismissiveness; hostility — tending unfortunately to be aimed at the consumers of the narrative; or, most frequently, a flip-pant kind of mockery.

She pointedly grants the merit of some of the criticism, but insists that:

it often seems to betray a kind of *self-mockery*, a fear that someone will think badly of the [intellectual woman] for even touching on the subject, however gingerly. In assuming this attitude, we demonstrate not so much our freedom from romantic fantasy as our acceptance of the critical double standard and of the masculine contempt for [literature by women].¹⁷

Modleski's book provides us with an invaluable theoretical intervention which helps explain the widespread hostility that the library displays towards thereaders of "trash." This hostility represents the working out of a process that Gaye Tuchman defines as the "Symbolic Annihilation" of women. Women fiction readers are consistently condemned, demeaned, or trivialized; symbolized as simple-minded adornments with salacious tastes that are beneath contempt.¹⁸ But the evidence I find most revealing is the consistently misogynist tone of American library literature. This constant refrain in the library literature demeans the readers of "trash" fiction (with special disdain reserved for romances written by women for women) while defending the canon — the best of the world's literary production.

One of the most striking of recent examples of this continuing power of the hegemonic literary canon to dominate the book selection process is represented by the appearance of Arthur Hafner's "In Defense of the Great Books," in the December, 1991 issue of *American Libraries*. Hafner, noting that while the "revised" list of "great books" does not include a single author "of color," and that while "of the 60 new authors added, 56 are men," we should not conclude "that the list is too narrow and that it fails to represent the contributions of women and minorities to Western Culture." Urging librarians to continue their support and promotion of the Great Books, Hafner confidently notes that the "Great Books are humanity's great conversation about the most important questions in life."¹⁹

That such an essay could find a prominent place in the official voice of the American Library Association confirms our reading of the barely diminished power of the canon to control

not only the acquisition of library materials, but as a consequence the structure and function of library services. For as Mr. Hafner points out "it is difficult to understand how anyone could argue that the Great Books have nothing to teach disenfranchised groups within our society." That appears to be the point, that the Great Books, and the libraries that produce and reproduce them, are designed "to teach" the lessons of the dominant class and sex to women and "persons of color."

I am not surprised at the complicity of women (more and more reluctant I admit) in this misogynist policy since I view it as the natural outgrowth of the widespread adoption of a mainstream value system. But I also agree with Andrea Dworkin who recently wrote that "every time this use of the lexicon of hatred passes unremarked, every time the hate is suppressed and there is no visible rebellion, no discernible resistance, some part of the woman to whom it happens dies and some part of the woman who watches it dies too." Dworkin insists that, whether the insults are encouraged or simply passively acquiesced in, "the devaluing of women is perpetuated, the intimidation of women is furthered." "Each time," she says, that "the insults are paraded...— used against women as insult — the insults gain potency... and women hating is that much more entrenched..."²⁰

In the case of the revised "Great Books" it should be noted that while Mr. Hafner (and the editors of *American Libraries*) feel that the project should illicit feelings of "excitement and celebration, not dismay and disdain," some librarians felt otherwise. Alma Simmons writing as an "African-American woman," noted that she refuses to accept the notion that "white males" have "exclusive rights when it comes to pondering the great questions of humanity," and she concludes with the counter hegemonic suggestion that "perhaps the disenfranchised have much that *they* could teach the enfranchised groups — ideas about freedom and justice that can only be articulated by those who have been oppressed."²¹ In another context Jean Beth Elshstain remarked that "those silenced by power... are not people with nothing to say but are people without a public voice and space in which to say it."²² Jocelyn Sheppard noted that Hafner's essay should have been labeled a "paid advertisement." What she fails to under-

stand is that the fact that such an outrageous polemic could be prominently and freely showcased in *American Libraries* reflects the barely diminished power of the canon to dictate the nature of collections and services in *American Libraries*.²³

It remains for us to examine one line of feminist research that holds direct implications for the phenomenon of library women vs. women who use libraries, and provides us with invaluable insights into the continuing influence of the male-stream definition of literary value in libraries. This research, so significant if library women are to come to know female fiction readers, and thereby themselves, might be labeled as research that (for the first time in American history) attempts to take the female romance reader seriously.

I have already discussed Tania Modleski's theoretical intervention in a debate about the romance reader, and now I want to focus on Janice A. Radway's path-breaking book entitled *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature*.²⁴ In her book, Radway begins by noting how critic, and librarians as well I think, tend to ignore the feelings of romance readers themselves "in order to privilege the critic's reading of the novel and her explanation of what is read." This process, which is very popular among librarians, emphasizes the power of the text to negatively influence the reader. Then she pointedly notes that "this belief in the irreducible givenness of the literary text and in the coercive power of its features to control reading... permits the romance critics to maintain that they can account for why people read romance by reading" a few of those romances. As a result, these critics are "hermetically sealed off from the very people they aim to understand."²⁵

Such an approach, she insists, is no longer acceptable. For the detached approach so common among critics and librarians is condescending in that it "discounts what readers do with texts and the various statements they make about them as irrelevant or mistaken... [and] is, in the end, the final, logical consequence of a theoretical position that reifies human activity, ignores the complexities of sign production..., and transforms interactive social process into confrontation between discrete objects."²⁶

Then, drawing on reader response criticism and feminist

theory, she argues for a new approach that is based on the following premise:

To know, then, why people do what they do, read romances, for instance, it becomes necessary to discover the constructions they place on their behavior, the interpretations they make of their actions.... The analytic focus must shift from the text itself, taken in isolation, to the complex social event of reading where a woman actively attributes sense to lexical signs in a silent process carried on in the context of her ordinary life.²⁷

Given this theoretical orientation, Radway sets out to let the reader back in, and prepares a brilliantly conceived ethnographic account of the reading experiences of seventy-five female romance readers. We need not pause to examine her work in detail, but I do want to summarize the revelatory findings of this, the first, modern study of romance fiction to pay any attention to readers of romance fiction.

After carefully analyzing the reasons women gave for their reading, Radway concluded that "romance reading and writing might be seen therefore as a collectively elaborated female ritual through which women explore the consequences of their common social condition as the appendages of men and attempt to imagine a more perfect state where all the needs they so intensely feel and accept as given would be adequately addressed."²⁸ But then she draws a conclusion that has dramatic importance for librarians, especially library women, when she notes that "the women who seek out ideal novels in order to construct such a vision again and again are reading not out of contentment but out of dissatisfaction, longing, and protest."²⁹ It is here that Radway provides a suggestion that I would like to recommend as a guide to a feminist library praxis. She cautions us against overestimating the extent of this barely conscious form of protest, for "a demand for real change in power relations will occur only if women also come to understand that their need for romances is a function of their dependent status as women," and

we as feminists might help this change along by first learning to recognize that romance reading originates

in very real dissatisfaction and embodies a valid, if limited, protest. Then by developing strategies for making that dissatisfaction and its causes consciously available to romance readers and by learning to encourage that protest in such a way that it will be delivered in the arena of actual social relations rather than acted out in the imagination, we might join hands with women who are, after all, our sisters and together imagine a world whose subsequent creation would lead to the need for a new fantasy altogether.³⁰

It will not be easy to overcome female subordination to patriarchal definitions of value and authority, especially in a post-industrial era dominated by the creation, codification and control of theoretical knowledge. Bernice Carroll has carefully mapped the way that men have always defined women's ideas as "unoriginal" thus legitimating the exclusion of women from the "upper ranks of the class system of the intellect." She sees no diminution of this "phallogocentric" tendency and concludes that it promises to perpetuate the segmented labor market:

The concept of "originality," though essentially empty of substantive meaning, is used today to justify and rationalize a class system based on claims of property in ideas. This system assigns most men and almost all women to positions in the lower classes and preserves for a small group of self-recruiting males both hegemony over received knowledge and control of a variety of rewards and privileges.³¹

Lorraine Code agrees and critically analyzes the long standing male practice of devaluing the intellectual capabilities of women. Beginning with Aristotle's insistence that "the slave has no deliberative faculty at all; the woman has, *but it is without authority*, and the child has, *but it is immature*," Code goes on to demonstrate the extent to which "latter-day authority shape women's professional lives and areas of earned expertise." Insisting that these "convictions seem to insure women's cognitive authority will remain as limited as it has been throughout the history of modern knowledge," Code counsels "continuous refusal" if women are ever to "claim the power to assume authoritative, expert status on their terms."³²

Such "continuous refusal" might begin with the recognition that libraries are intensely political sites charged with the production and reproduction of the hegemonic literary canon. Such an awareness would challenge the apolitical and ungendered notion of library service held by most library professionals, and might just force a confrontation with the way in which the literary canon has the power to structure the very nature of library service. Ultimately, what is required is a radical reconstruction of the normative tradition, and a thorough rethinking of our aggressive support for the canon that has served to "legitimize the gender that produced, defined and transmitted it."³³

Perhaps we might make a fundamental step towards that goal by recalling Hannah Arendt's admonishment:

The central events of our time are not less effectively forgotten by those committed to a belief in an unavoidable doom, than by those who have given themselves up to reckless optimism.... Comprehension does not mean denying the outrageous, deducing the unprecedented from precedents, or explaining phenomena by such analogies and generalities that the impact of reality and the shock of experience are no longer felt. It means, rather, examining and bearing consciously the burden which our century has placed on up — neither denying its existence nor submitting meekly to its weight.³⁴

NOTES

1. One of the most impressive bits of evidence to the extent to which women have accommodated themselves to patriarchal values is the wide spread consensus among library educators that there is nothing uniquely feminist about a profession that is 85 percent female. Thus we find solid resistance to any attention to women's concerns in library education and a near absolute taboo against any attempt to insert a seminar on women in librarianship into the curriculum. For one short lived exception to the rule see Karen Boucias, E. Catherine Moore, and Catharine O'Hara, "Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up To Me: A Course in Women in Librarianship," *Journal of Education for Librarianship* 19 (1979): 273-78. For a documented confirmation that library women have steered a surprisingly conservative course in the past several decades see Christina Baum, "The Impact of Feminist Thought on American Librarianship, 1965-1985." Ph.D. dissertation,

University of Kentucky, 1987.

2. Librarians worry over this matter rather too much, however, given the political and economic centrality of professions like law and medicine, it is my opinion that a marginal field like librarianship is not, and is not likely to become a profession. However, if by some significant realignment, such as the utopian dream of a new information age dominated by librarians, libraries did become central to the life of the society, then I submit that women would be displaced by men in this field. That, of course, is one of the hallmarks of a patriarchal society. For help in understanding this matter I recommend Barbara Melosh, *The Physician's Hand: Work, Culture and Conflict in American Nursing* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), especially page 20, where she notes that "by definition nursing cannot be a profession because most nurses are women." Another useful model for the interpretation of the feminization of librarianship is Margery W. Davies, *Woman's Place is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers, 1870-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), in which the author insists that the development of occupational sex segregation must be studied within a dual structure that takes into account patriarchal social relations and such political-economic forces as the expansion of capitalist firms... (p.4). She then analyzes the feminization of clerical work, "The proletarianization of clerical employees" which "transformed autonomous male managers to female operatives." For a particularly unhappy assessment of the current situation see Michael J. Carter and Susan B. Carter, "Women's Recent Progress in the Professions, or Women Get a Ticket to Ride After the Gravy Train Leaves the Station," *Feminist Studies* 7 (1981): 477-504. As far as the rosy vision of the post-industrial workplace goes see Sue Curry Jansen, "Gender and the Information Society: A Socially Structured Silence," *Journal of Communication* 39 (1990): 196-215; L. K. Rakow, "Gendered Technology, Gendered Practice," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 5 (1988): 57-70; and Cynthia Cockburn, *Machinery of Dominance: Women, Men, and Technical Know-How* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988).

3. Magali Sarfatti Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. x. Larson's book has literally changed the way we look at professional development. Other work is also very useful in considering this matter. Perhaps the most provocative is the controversy raging around the PMC — "The Professional-Managerial Class"—as first defined in Barbara Ehrenreich and John Ehrenreich in "The Professional-Managerial Class," which is conveniently reprinted along with a number of critiques of the concept in Pat Walker, ed. *Between Labor and*

Capital (Boston: South End Press, 1979). For other central work on the professions see Eliot Freidson, *Professional Powers: A Study of the Institutionalization of Formal Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Charles Derber, William Schwartz, and Yale Magrass, *Power in the Highest Degree: Professionals and the Rise of the New Mandarin Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); and especially Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). The latter contains the most persuasive projections for the success of the professional project of "information professionals" like librarians.

4. Larson, *Rise of Professionalism*, pp. 40, 55.

5. *Ibid*, p. 41.

6. Carole S. Vance, "Pleasure and Danger: Toward a Politics of Sexuality," in Carole S. Vance, ed. *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 17. The feminist literature designed to unmask this androcentric hegemony of knowledge is enormous, and in the main, very thorough. Much of it will be cited in the following notes. For a discussion of the canon and its impact on library collections with an extensive bibliography see Michael H. Harris, "State, Class, and Cultural Reproduction: Toward a Theory of Library Service in the United State," *Advances in Librarianship* 14 (1986): 211-52.

7. Barbara DuBois, "Passionate Scholarship: Notes on Values, Knowing and Method in Feminist Social Science," in Gloria Bowles and Renate D. Klein, eds. *Theories of Women's Studies* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 107. See also Dorothy E. Smith, *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge* (Boston: New England University Press, 1990); and Lorraine Code, *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

8. Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 15.

9. Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, "Ideal Images and Real Roles: The Perpetuation of Gender Equality," *Dissent* (Fall, 1984) pp. 443-44. On the way in which women have had the power of naming denied them see Dale Spender, *Man Made Language* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).

10. Nancy S. Reinhardt, "New Directions for Feminist Criticism in Theater and the Related Arts," In Elizabeth Langland and Walter

Gove, eds. *A Feminist Perspective in the Academy: The Difference It Makes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 48.

11. Dale Spender, "Introduction," in Dale Spender, ed. *Men's Studies Modified: The Impact of Feminism on the Academic Disciplines* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1981), p. 1. For more recent assessments of the impact of Feminism on the Academy, that draw slightly more optimistic conclusions, see Ellen Dubois, et al. *Feminist Scholarship: Kindling in the Groves of Academe* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1987), and Mary Margaret Fonow and Judith A. Cook, eds. *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

12. Judith Fetterly, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), p. xii, xiii.

13. The first quote is drawn from Fetterly, p.xx; the second from Elaine Showalter, "Women and the Literary Curriculum," *College English* 32 (1971):856-57; the third from Lee Edwards, "Women, Energy and Middlemarch," *Massachusetts Review* 13 (1972): 226-27. The latter two are quoted in Fetterly, pp. xxi-xxii.

14. Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists From Bronte to Lessing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 318.

15. In Lee Baxandall, ed. *Radical Perspectives in the Arts* (London: Penguin, 1972), p. 25. See also Lillian Robinson, "On Reading Trash," in her *Sex, Class, and Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), pp. 200-22.

16. *A Literature of Their Own*, p. 318.

17. Tania Modleski, *Loving With a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women* (Hamden CT: Archon Books, 1982), p. 13, 14. The most often cited example of the adoption of "the masculine contempt" for literature by women by women critics is Ann Douglas, "Soft Porn Culture," *The New Republic* (30 August, 1980) pp. 25-29. For two recent assessments of women and what (or how) they read see Judith A Howard and Carolyn Allen, "The Gendered Context of Reading," *Gender and Society* 4 (1990): 534-52, and Elizabeth Flynn and Patrocínio Schweickart, eds. *Gender and Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1986).

18. Gaye Tuchman, "The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media," in Gaye Tuchman, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and James Bent, eds. *Hearth & Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media*

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p.8. Also see Barbara Bee, "The Politics of Literacy," in Robert Mackie, ed. *Literacy & Revolution: The Pedagogy of Paulo Freire* (New York: Continuum, 1981), pp. 39-56, in which she raises the interesting possibility that librarians discriminate against certain readers because they bring to the library ways of speaking and acting which don't appear to be useful, which don't fit the male-stream definition of "valuable." p. 53.

19. Hafner, Arthur W., "In Defense of the Great Books," *American Libraries*, Dec. 1991, p. 1062-63.

20. Andrea Dworkin, *Right Wing Women* (New York: Perigee Books, 1983) pp.200-201.

21. Alma Wyden Jones, "Not-so-Great Books List," *American Libraries* 23 (1992):140.

22. *Public Man, Private Woman*, p. 15.

23. Jocelyn Sheppard, "Letter," *American Libraries* 23 (1980): 140.

24. Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). Also useful as regards the romance and its consumer are Ann Barr Snitow, "Mass Market Romance: Pornography for Women is Different," *Radical History Review* 20 (1979): 141-61; Joanna Russ, "Somebody's Trying to Kill Me and I Think It's My Husband: The Modern Gothic," *Journal of Popular Culture* 6 (1973): 666-91; Carol Thurston, *Romance Revolution: Erotic Novels for Women and the Quest for a New Sexual Identity* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1987); and Linda K. Christian-Smith, *Becoming a Woman Through Romance* (London: Routledge, 1990). The speed of advance in this area can be measured by comparing Radway's sophistication with the casual and cute approach used in Beatrice Faust, *Women, Sex and Pornography: A Controversial Study* (New York: Macmillan, 1980).

25. Radway, *Reading the Romance*, p. 5, 7.

26. *Ibid*, p. 8.

27. *Ibid*, p. 8.

28. *Ibid*, p. 212.

29. *Ibid*, p. 215.

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31. Bernice Carroll, "The Politics of Originality: Women and the Class System of the Intellect," *Journal of Women's History* 2 (1990): 136.

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32. Lorraine Code, *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 181, 219, 223, 232.

33. Langland and Gove, eds., *The Feminist Perspective in the Academy*, p. 5.

34. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1961), pp. vii-viii.

THE "FUCKING" TRUTH ABOUT LIBRARY CATALOGS by Sanford Berman

Anyone who tries to find FUCKING in a typical library catalog will be disappointed. Not that there isn't relevant material in the collection. There may be a lot of it, but "fucking" won't lead you to it. Why? It would seem like just plain common sense to make sex (and health) topics easy to identify, particularly since many folks simply will not approach librarians for help in locating books, tapes, and films on "sensitive" subjects. So why no entry or heading for "fucking"? Well, the primary reason is that most libraries depend almost totally on the Library of Congress (LC) in Washington DC for the subject headings and cross-references they use in their catalogs. (They also rely heavily on LC for many of their catalog records.) And, while the LC subject heading scheme does include a heading for SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, it neither specifies nor recommends a cross-reference to that primary term from "fucking." The result: most LC-imitating libraries won't add that familiar and possibly helpful "see"-reference even though they *could*. No law, no statute prohibits them from doing it. Yet because LC doesn't sanction it, they won't let it into their own catalogs.

That widespread LC-dependence and lack of local initiative likewise account for much other sex-related material being hard, if not impossible, to find in library catalogs. For instance, Gary Indiana's 1989 novel, *Horse Crazy*, dealt with AIDS and gay men in New York City's Lower East Side. It cannot be located, under, say, AIDS—FICTION or GAY MEN—LOWER EAST SIDE, NEW YORK CITY—FICTION, in most catalogs for one exquisitely simple and perverse reason: the Library of Congress routinely assigns topical or genre headings to *collections* of fiction, poetry, or drama, but almost never to an individual novel, play or book of verse. And inasmuch as most libraries uncritically — in fact, automatically — accept LC cataloging-records without correcting or expanding them, the Indiana book would be accessible solely by author and title, for the LC cataloging record mandated to subject access points. Likewise with John Weir's 1989 *Irreversible Decline of Eddie Socket*, which focussed on AIDS and Manhattan gays. No catalog access except by author and title.

Similarly, Joseph Hayes' 1989 *Act of Rage*, in which "a lovely young woman of 28... takes her life in a charming Connecticut village for granted — until the September afternoon she is brutally raped by an unidentified attacker," cannot be located in catalogs under RAPE—FICTION or RAPE—CONNECTICUT—FICTION. Right, LC assigned no subject headings whatever. And, usually, library systems do nothing to enhance access to these works, although they *could* add a subject heading or two themselves.

The problem with single literary works is one thing. What happens to non-fiction is, as they say, "something else." For starters, even though there's no "policy" against assigning subject headings, LC often doesn't apply enough of them to fully represent what a work's about, or, frankly, assigns the wrong ones. *Tales From Times Square* is a case in point. It's possible, of course, that the LC catalogers didn't see the whole book, perhaps "cataloging" merely from a one-page form without even front matter, but it's still hard to imagine that someone didn't notice the several clues about what the work was really about. The Dewey classifier tagged it with 974.71, a "New York" notation. And the subject cataloger assigned 4 tracings (access points), an uncommonly generous number.

1. Times Square (New York, N.Y.)—Social life and customs—Addresses, essays, lectures.
2. Times Square (N.Y.)—Social conditions—Addresses, essays, lectures.
3. New York (N.Y.)—Social life and customs—Addresses, essays, lectures.
4. New York (N.Y.)—Social conditions—Addresses, essays, lectures.

So what's the Big Deal, since the title was explicitly *Tales From Times Square* (a 1986 Delacorte volume by Josh Alan Friedman)? Well, in this instance the LC treatment wasn't wildly wrong. It just wasn't very right. For instance, shouldn't an unequivocal "acknowledgement" to Al Goldstein, who published the triple-X tabloid, *Screw*, have hinted to the cataloger that maybe this wasn't a run-of-the-mill NYC history or travel tome?

And what about chapter captions like "After the death of burlesque," "Old flesh agents," "Inside the peeps," "Queen of the Gang Bang," "Pros and pimps," and "Castrate the bastards!" Don't they at least suggest some prurient, carnal content? They *should* have. Because that's what these non-fiction "tales" concern: S-E-X. Not architecture. Not Broadway theater. Not New Year's Eve celebrations. Just sex. But the natural readership for Friedman's opus will not find it by browsing Dewey's 300 sex-sequence nor searching the catalog entries under SEX and related descriptors. In effect: another case of bibliocide-by-cataloging. How might it have been done better? To begin, by alerting catalog searchers to the work's genuine substance and approach through a note:

PARTIAL CONTENTS: After the death of burlesque, -Old flesh agents. -Inside the peeps. -Queen of the gang bang. -The saviours. -Father Rappleyea's parish. -Cops and Skells. -Pros and pimps. -Castrate the bastards!

And then, in addition to LC's first two subject tracings (but without the since-nixed subhead, —ADDRESSES, ESSAYS, LECTURES), perhaps these:

3. Sex industry—Times Square, New York City.
4. Sex shops—Times Square, New York City.
5. Peep shows—Times Square, New York City.
6. Prostitutes, Female—Times Square, New York City.
7. Sex customs—Times Square, New York City.

That's the treatment *Tales* got at Hennepin County Library — plus a revamped Dewey tag: 301.417 (the "sexual behavior" notation from DDC's 18th edition.)

A second case-in-point: the Summer 1990 *Good Vibes Gazette* reported that "the Sexuality Library catalog has decided to carry Robert Mapplethorpe, a collection of the late photographer's work in a volume edited by Richard Marshall. Although... not entirely erotic in nature, we felt that these photographs have become a powerful symbol of the extent to which free speech and expression — particularly speech and art about sexuality — are endangered in America today." Well, courageous libraries

that actually bought the Whitney Museum tome probably accepted the LC cataloged record "as is," meaning that the work will be findable under only two subject headings:

1. Photography, Artistic—Exhibitions.
2. Mapplethorpe, Robert—Exhibitions.

Now, LC has PHOTOGRAPHY, EROTIC, and PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE NUDE in its heading arsenal. But they didn't assign them. And so there's no "erotic" or "nude" access to Mapplethorpe in most Anglophone libraries.

Hold on, sex-seekers, for the worst is yet to come. Bad enough that LC — and, by extension, nearly all other libraries — doesn't permit sex-related access to literature like fiction and drama. Bad enough, too, that many "sexy" non-fiction works are under-cataloged, their erotic aspects in effect being buried or hidden. The really astounding fact is that a whole battery of sexual topics that are indisputably represented in books and AV material don't appear in the LC subject heading list at all and thus are not used by LC itself or by most other libraries. Here's a selection of non-sanctified terms:

ADULT BOOKSTORES
 AIDS ACTIVISTS
 ANTIPORNOGRAPHY CIVIL
 RIGHTS ORDINANCES
 ANTIPORNOGRAPHY
 MOVEMENT
 BELLY DANCERS
 BISEXUAL COUPLES
 BISEXUALS
 CHILD SEX RINGS
 DECRIMINALIZATION OF
 PROSTITUTION
 EROTIC FILM ACTORS AND
 ACTRESSES
 EROTIC FILM INDUSTRY
 EROTIC FOLKLORE

EROTIC HUMOR
 EROTOPHOBIA
 FAMILY PLANNING (it's
 merely a "see" reference
 to BIRTH CONTROL)
 FEMALE DOMINATION
 (SEXUALITY)
 FETISHISM (SEXUALITY)
 GAY SADOMASOCHISM
 HETEROSEXUALITY (yes,
 Virginia, the list *does*
 include entries for
 BISEXUALITY and
 HOMOSEXUALITY)
 INTERRACIAL SEX
 LESBIAN SADOMASOCHISM

PERFORMANCE ANXI-
 ETY (SEXUALITY)
 PROSTITUTES' RIGHTS
 ROMANTIC LOVE
 SEX AIDS
 SEX-CHANGE SURGERY
 SEX CLINICS
 SEX GAMES
 SEX MAGAZINES
 SEX MANUALS
 SEX SCANDALS

SEX SHOPS
 SEX TOURISM
 SEXPLOITATION
 SEXUAL FREEDOM
 SEXUAL MASSAGE
 SEXUAL PRIVACY RIGHTS
 SEXUAL REVOLUTION
 SEXUAL SLAVERY
 TELEPHONE SEX
 VIOLENCE AGAINST
 ABORTION CLINICS

And not only that. Among existing forms, a few are so bizarre or antique that no one would look them up first — and research shows that making people look something up twice can sometimes be deadly. That is, they just won't do it and so "lose" or "miss" the information. Examples: SCOPHILIA (instead of VOYEURISM), SEX INSTRUCTION (rather than SEX EDUCATION), and NOCTURNAL EMISSIONS (instead of WET DREAMS). Lastly, even when LC does finally establish a needed heading, it's often scandalously late. For instance, CERVICAL CAPS became a *bona fide* subject heading in 1987, but Hennepin County Library (HCL) had been using it since 1981; LC first introduced (and started using) COHABITATION in 1986, while HCL had been employing it for ten years earlier; HOMOPHOBIA appeared in the LC list in 1988, 12 years after HCL had established it; LC apparently experienced its first MALE ORGASM and PREMATURE EJACULATION in 1989 (HCL: 1986); and it took LC five years longer to start employing STRIPTEASERS and 13 years for GROUP MARRIAGE.

Notes can be extremely useful to catalog-users, as illustrated in the *Tales From Times Square* example. These are a few more instances of notes that LC didn't include in its cataloging records, but *should* have:

Rubin, Lillian B.

Erotic wars: what happened to the sexual revolution (1990).
 PARTIAL CONTENTS: -Teenage sex. -Sex, gender and power. -Quest for relationships. -Sex and the coupled life.

White, Evelyn C., editor.

The Black women's health book (1990).

Includes contributions by Audre Lorde, Sheila Battle, Luciile Clifton, Angela Davis, Zora Neale Hurston, Pat Parker, Faye Wattleton, and Marian Wright Edelman on such topics as incest, teenage pregnancy, Black midwives, abortion, AIDS, prostitutes, Lesbians, and "beauty."

Sipe, A. W. Richard.

A secret world: sexuality and the search for celibacy (1990).

PARTIAL CONTENTS: -Celibacy and the sexual revolution. -Papal pronouncements and example. -Practice versus the profession. -Patterns of heterosexuality. -The homosexualities. -The masturbations. -Priests and children. -The sex drive. -When priests become fathers.

Okay, the catalog sex-scene is admittedly grim. But it can get better. Some of us on the "inside" are trying, by means of letters, petitions, and articles to effect basic reforms at LC. And you — as readers and library users — can help enormously in 2 ways. First, report "failed searches" and poor cataloging to your local library, asking them to pay more attention to how sexuality materials are cataloged and classified. And second, send a copy of this article to: Director for Cataloging, Library of Congress, Washington DC 20540, underlining these requests for LC to:

- *make full or partial contents notes for nonfiction when such notes would significantly clarify the scope, tone, and substance of a given work.
- *assign topical and genre headings (e.g. AIDS—DRAMA, SADO-MASOCHISM—FICTION, TOPLESS BARS—FICTION, GAY POETRY, LESBIAN DRAMA) to individual literary and artistic works, including novels, poetry, essays, letters, humor, plays, comic books, and photography.
- *immediately establish and start assigning the earlier-listed subject headings, from ADULT BOOKSTORES to TELEPHONE SEX.
- *convert SCOPOPHILIA to VOYEURISM, SEX INSTRUCTION to SEX EDUCATION, and NOCTURNAL EMISSIONS to WET DREAMS.

*create a cross-reference to SEXUAL INTERCOURSE from "Fucking."

For more reading:

Berman, Sanford: "If There Were a *Sex Index...*," in *Joy of Cataloging* (Oryx Press, 1981), p. 37-59.

Cornog, Martha: "Providing Access to Materials on Sexuality," in *Libraries, Erotica, and Pornography* (Oryx Press, 1990), 165-86.

Greenblatt, Ellen: "Homosexuality: the evolution of a concept in the Library of Congress Subject Headings," in *Gay and Lesbian Library Service* (McFarland, 1990), p. 75-101.

LIBRARIES AND THE MIDDLE EAST QUESTION

by Noha Ismail

In a democracy, most major issues of public importance are influenced by public debates. We have seen this dynamic at work in debates over equal rights for Blacks and women, the nuclear arms race, abortion, human rights in South Africa, the plight of Soviet Jews, East-West relations, the state of the economy, and other such vital issues of the day.

In order for these debates to fulfill their intended objective we need, above all, an informed citizenry. That is the most important function of the free library system in a democratic society. To provide the public with free and equal access to materials that would help them to be clear on the issues that impact their lives.

Whereas that is generally true in most cases, unfortunately this potential has not been realized with respect to the Middle East issue, even though it has been on the forefront of the nation's consciousness for decades. And a few short months ago, half a million American soldiers put their lives on the line on account of it. Still, Americans have no clear understanding of the key facts, events and personalities that have shaped the area. This is profoundly disturbing given what is at stake here. It is also disturbing to those of us who are in the information field, and who also happen to care about what goes on in that part of the world, to see that the flow of information to which we are all committed is reduced to a trickle when it comes to Arab perspectives and Arab thought.

Indeed, there is certainly no shortage of books, periodicals, online databases and organizations dealing with the Middle East, but most sources of information available in libraries represent mainstream political thinking which often reduces the complexities of the Middle East to simplistic equations. East versus West, the forces of destruction versus the forces of humanity, communism versus democracy, Muslim fundamentalism versus Western civilization, and so on. This type of thinking is dominated by perceptions rather than by political realities. As such, it does not help the library patron get a better understanding of

why Arabs act, think and feel the way they do.

For over 60 years American perceptions of the Middle East have been molded by policy makers who chose to view the area in terms of an oil producing desert, devoid of its own culture, history, and political dynamics. While there have been many variations on this theme, this essentially is the message that still filters down to the American people. I was, for instance, on a university panel quite recently discussing American foreign policy in the Middle East. A debate quickly developed on whether the United States was justified in going to war to protect "its" oil in the Persian Gulf — as if this area was culturally blank and populated by an irrelevant people. It did not occur to anyone that perhaps America should review its relationship with these people and become a little more aware of their histories and of Islamic civilization. Nor did it occur to any of them that if we had understood these people better, maybe...just maybe we could have resolved the crisis without the need to go to war.

Israelis are understood to be what, in fact, they are: that is, complex human beings with hopes and fears. They exist in the public mind as individual people who have suffered and who continue to suffer. We know them, we can see them in our mind's eye and we can identify with them. On the other hand, Arabs are seen in the collective. Mobs of hysterical anonymous men who carry guns and dress funny. They are not real people. They are one dimensional, cardboard caricatures. How can the American public identify with them, or have any feelings of sympathy for what they say or do?

Given this gross misrepresentation of Arab humanity and Middle East realities, is it any wonder that there has been, up until now, no serious public debate? Needless to say, these perceptions are not in conformity with reality. In reality, Israelis, Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrians, Egyptians, Jordanians, Iraqis, and Kuwaitis have all suffered and continue to suffer. Israelis want peace: so also do Palestinians want peace, *and* justice, and security, and a state of their own in a land where they have lived as a people for thousands of years. But while these needs of the Arab people are as real as those of the Israelis, they are not known here in the U.S.

There is no shortage of Arab writers who are eager to make their views known. The problem lies with the American publishers who are simply not interested to pick up their work. In some cases the reasons are economic — as a rule, these books do not sell very well. But generally speaking, a great deal of self-censorship goes on with mainstream publishers where the Middle East is concerned. The Palestinian viewpoint is simply too controversial in this country, so they steer away from it. Arab writers have to turn to alternative publishers, or university presses, and the only problem with that is that their work is seldom reviewed in the popular media or trade journals.

American libraries have not responded in a meaningful way to remedy that imbalance. They continue to select their books on the Middle East from what the mainstream publishers make available. They depend primarily on the *New York Times* and established trade journals for their reviews — so they consistently miss what is out there. The result is that we do not have adequate materials on our shelves that represent all of the different perspectives on the Middle East. This became very clear during the Persian Gulf Crisis when the war significantly increased the daily number of requests for indepth information about Arab countries in general. When some more thoughtful Americans belatedly realized that such deep-rooted turmoil in the Middle East could not suddenly spring from a historical vacuum, they concluded that it takes more than CNN to become informed and turned to libraries for information to help them demystify Islam and unravel the roots of the historical complexities of the Arab World.

Libraries began feeling a need for long ignored works of history, politics and literature that provide clues to Arab culture and sensitivities. Readers who relied solely on U.S. textbooks or historical and social studies of the Arab World learned nothing about how Western colonialism paved the way to the current political chaos nor could they get a clear understanding of the detail, the human density and the passion of Arab Muslim life, because most Western authors persist in seeing the Arab World only as the second half of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The fact that 200 million human beings have a history of economic, political, cultural and social development quite independent of that con-

flict is ignored. So, many Arab countries that do not border Israel like Algeria, Morocco, Tunis, Libya, Sudan or the Gulf States, are very inadequately represented. For these countries, we depend mostly on the *Area Handbooks* that are prepared by the American University primarily for the benefit of military personnel who need a compilation of basic facts. These handbooks are dry and boring, and many of them are out-of-date.

The vast majority of books about the contemporary political scene focus on the Arab-Israeli conflict or on the politics of oil in the region and view the Middle East as little more than a battlefield for U.S. influence. Much of the research for these works has been conducted by authors who have rather well defined orientations: the orientalist, who is frequently condescending to Arabs; the academic, whose writing is often overweight with methodological jargon; the propagandist, who is more interested in myth than in reality; and, finally, the best-selling "pop" novelist, who often slips into racist stereotypes when writing about Palestinian "terrorism," "religious fanaticism," and "degenerate, oversexed Arab sheikhs." A typical example of this last genre is Leon Uris. These negative stereotypes have sunk into the national subconscious unchallenged for decades. Plato, that old sage, recognized the power of fiction when he asserted: Those who tell the stories also rule society.

Because we do not have enough material to cover the Arab World adequately, when a crisis such as the Gulf War explodes on the scene, it is necessary to consult periodical literature, and the library's electronic databases since they provide supplementary access to a much wider body of information. But, again, caution must be exercised when reading the press coverage of the Middle East. The media mainly serves the "center," and as such the reporting is often biased to reinforce the interests of the mainstream body politic. Any argument from the Arabs is subdued and converted into what is now a mindless cliché of the sullen Arab who will "not face reality." There is enough evidence to confirm that a double standard is at work here, to the detriment of a balanced public perception of the Middle East — and a balanced U.S. policy.

Because librarians are committed to intellectual freedom and to guaranteed access of information, we must make it our

business to ensure that the voices of the many people living through this critical period in Middle East history are heard. If that proves difficult because mainstream American publishers are not forthcoming and responsive to this issue, then we must turn to alternative presses and periodicals. Contact Arab-American organizations and solicit their help in locating materials that provide a better understanding of the issues and concerns that are at the root of the ongoing problems in the Middle East.

Such library practice could become critical to the issue of war and peace. While the Gulf War may be over, the problems that existed in that region for decades have only become more dangerous and critical. It would be a tragedy if, as a result of this crisis, the West once again were to miss the signals coming out of the Arab World. To respond rationally, we should try to unravel the many individual historical and political strains that have been woven together to generate the forces that drove this crisis.

If we are to avoid major upheavals and catastrophe in the region, a reassessment of outdated and inaccurate information and stereotypes is urgently required. As librarians, we can help the cause of peace by educating ourselves first, and then by keeping a truly global perspective on the issue. Above all, we must protect the library's integrity as a vital source of information and channel to the marketplace of ideas. Let me leave you with a quote from President Kennedy on the issue of intellectual freedom:

We are not afraid to entrust the American people with unpleasant facts, foreign ideas, alien philosophies, and competitive values. For a nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market, is a nation that is afraid of its people.

The above is the text of a presentation given on November 30, 1991 at the Midwest Federation of Library Associations' Conference held in Minneapolis.

DOCUMENTS:

A PROGRAM FOR LIBRARY CHANGE IN SWEDEN

What follows is the platform of the Swedish association called BIS (Bibliotek i Samhalle) which means "Libraries in Society." It was adopted at a general BIS meeting on February 26, 1989.

BIS is a politically independent organization working on a socialist basis to promote progressive librarianship. For BIS socialism represents the dream of human liberation and development, true satisfaction of needs, and the fair distribution of material and social resources. A society striving to realize these objectives, should be governed as directly as possible by its citizens.

LIBRARIES IN SOCIETY

The accelerating complexity and rapid growth of information in our political system is leading to widening gaps of information and knowledge. "Experts" are taking over and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the ordinary person to have real influence on the essential issues of the day.

Cultural life is becoming more and more commercialized. Where capitalistic forces dominate, culture and information become market commodities.

Refugees, immigrants, and other international contacts have made Sweden a multicultural country, which enriches and develops the culture of the whole. A multicultural society requires increased knowledge and understanding. It also must give all groups the opportunity to maintain a cultural identity.

POPULAR EDUCATION

BIS asserts it is the task of libraries to actively participate in the struggle to build a really democratic society. BIS recognizes that it is necessary to obtain substantial additional resources in order for libraries to offer quality culture and education. The library must be a true alternative to the commercial sector, not merely a compliment. BIS will work for libraries that will function as centers for the exchange of differing viewpoints and cus-

toms. These libraries should give people the social, ecological, and technical understanding necessary to involve them in creative group action.

BIS supports the lines of action established by the Swedish Public Library Investigation of 1984:

1. "To Fight for the Book and Reading."

Despite the growing dependency on the electronic media, linguistic understanding is the basis of knowledge and culture. For the foreseeable future we will depend upon the written word. The ability to read and to express oneself in speech and writing is vital to the participation of these individuals and groups in the life of society.

Library collection building should support lifelong learning with quality book, journal and audiovisual collections. The role of the public library is to bridge the gaps in information and knowledge due to social, cultural, economic, educational, and class differences.

Every public library needs to select quality literature for both children and adults in order to enrich their lives and stimulate the joy of reading. This must be done in competition with other media that seek to control human creativity and imagination.

2. "To Give Everybody Free and Equal Access to Information."

Library service can be enriched through access to electronically transmitted and stored information. BIS considers it vital that libraries use these possibilities in a way that provides information to all citizens, not merely to already information-rich groups and individuals. New sources of funding must be found for this extension of library activity.

AN EQUAL LIBRARY STANDARD FOR ALL

BIS considers public libraries an unbeatable source of culture, knowledge, and information. BIS demands legislation wherein the state guarantees an equal library standard throughout the country. Groups that currently do not use libraries should be involved in the policy-making and planning process. This means creating libraries in workplaces, schools, sparsely

populated areas, and small towns as well as providing outreach activities. The newer colleges throughout Sweden must get more library resources.

A well-functioning library requires that thinking in terms of "guild and territory" must be resisted, inside as well as outside the library. Thus BIS supports the democratization and integration which lies behind the introduction of district boards in some Swedish municipalities. Growth in bureaucracy must be fought however.

SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION

BIS is opposed to individually set wage rates. This way of looking at the public sector borrows inappropriate concepts from the private sector such as "competition" and "profitability." Such a system of wages replaces solidarity and cooperation in the workplace with competition and the building of private careers. BIS considers it the task of trade unions not only to diminish wage differentials but also to urge a higher estimation of library work and a higher general salary level. BIS demands increased access to education at the entry level and continuing education for all employees in the library.

It is the objective of the trade unions to actively support the public sector and the cultural policy established by the state. It is also their objective to insist on working conditions without unreasonable working hours, stressful understaffing, or restriction to monotonous assignments.

FIGHT CULTURAL IMPERIALISM

Scandinavian culture has become more and more influenced by Anglo-American language and thinking. BIS thinks that cultural imperialism is best countered by increased interaction with cultural and linguistic regions other than the dominating Anglo-American. Cultural exchange with the rest of Europe and with all those other parts of the world represented by immigrants to Scandinavia should be radically and purposefully increased.

BIS supports the struggle against imperialism and racial oppression by supporting solidarity organizations and other progressive forces in their work to inform public opinion.

BIS supports developing libraries in progressive countries lacking the needed resources.

BIS opposes any official contacts with libraries used in the service of oppression.

BIS thinks that UNESCO's manifesto on public libraries should be the self-evident foundation for the public libraries of the world.

BIS — THE ASSOCIATION

The association BIS shall through its journal "BIS" and in other connections participate in the cultural and social debate working for the extension and realization of its program. The association BIS shall through its internal bulletin and meetings constantly develop and deepen intellectual and ideological work on library issues. Members of BIS shall support one another in solidarity in the struggle for equal and democratic libraries.

Translation from the Swedish original was jointly made by Lennart Wettmark and Ebba I. Johnson.

RESOLUTION ON LOYALTY OATHS by University of Illinois, Student ALA Chapter

WHEREAS, A democracy must preserve freedom of thought and expression if it is to serve its people; and

WHEREAS, Loyalty investigations of library employees contribute to an atmosphere of suspicion and fear and place constraints on intellectual freedom by rendering it hazardous to hold or express other than popular views; and

WHEREAS, Librarians have a special responsibility to provide information on all sides of controversial issues, but cannot do so if intellectual conformity becomes a factor affecting their employment or tenure; and

WHEREAS, The American Library Association has received evidence that loyalty tests may easily lead to the violation of the constitutional rights of library employees, and in the last half century have historically done so; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the Council of the of the American Library Association, strongly protest loyalty programs which inquire into a library employee's thoughts, reading matter, associates, or membership in organizations. We disapprove of the compulsory affirmation of allegiance to the government or to the Constitution. We assert that loyalty oaths are inappropriate prerequisites for employment in any library, and we censure any library that openly or silently condones oaths as conditions of employment.

Endorsed by the University of Illinois Student Chapter of the American Library Association, March 1992.

Forwarded to the Council of the American Library Association for action, June 1992.

BOOK REVIEWS:

GOODBYE COLUMBUS

**A Review of Selected Quincentennial Literature
by Peter McDonald**

There is an old saw that says there's more than one way to skin a cat. And nowhere is this adage more apparent than when sorting through the responses to the Quincentennial of Christopher Columbus' voyage across the ocean blue in 1492. The official response began about four years ago, at the stroke of the presidential pen, when Ronald Reagan created the official Columbus Quincentenary Commission and placed at its helm a Miami real estate broker by the name of John Goudie. Barely two years later, Goudie was hounded from office under a cloud of allegations concerning nepotism, embezzlement and gross financial mismanagement. Funny how little things change. For this is precisely what happened to Columbus himself after his third voyage, for he was hauled back to Spain in leg irons for gross malfeasance as the governor of Espaniola.

Columbus supporters brush aside minor quibbles such as these. And even though a crop of new biographies have shown the man to have been a consummate liar, a cold-blooded murderer of women and children, and one who condoned rape among his crew, there are many doddering scribes on the Right, who have gone full tilt on the attack against anything that smacks of "revisionist" history, anything in fact which would place this half-mad adventurer in his proper place, alongside other messianic adventurers like Pol Pot and Idi Amin. Of course the rank irony of making a murderer like Columbus a hero is itself the ultimate in revisionism, but this is lost on the pundits of academe and their colleagues in mainstream media.

History, alas, is written by the victors and this is most certainly true with Columbus. Unfortunately things have not quite gone the way the free marketeers might have wanted, for the poor Admiral in this fifth hundredth year of his enterprise has suffered at the hands of a rowdy coalition of naysayers and activists. So loud, in fact, have the counter-Quincentennial coalitions become,

that the purveyors of our new and improved version of Manifest Destiny (now the New World Order of the White House teleprompter) have had to become deviously subtle in re-packaging the accepted wisdom with a refurbished blitzkrieg of euphemisms. We see this in other arenas, of course, where the David Dukes and the Pat Buchanans of the world no longer rant on about "shiftless niggers", but instead talk about "welfare mothers". This was not lost on the planners of the Quincentenary celebrations. For the supporters of Cristobol Colon, having had a similar epiphany of semantics, have been busily inflating the patched balloon of their blue-eyed adventurer, leaking though it is. We now have "encounters of cultures" (from George Bush) and "when worlds collide" (from the cover of Newsweek) and other half-baked nonsense which the somnambulant media serves up with the usual obfuscation in the guise of revealed truth.

We see this velveteen approach best in the way the status quo has dealt with such thorny issues raised in many new biographies, such as Columbus' guilt in the slaughter of children. Always a bit rough for the spin doctors of the Right to repackaging nasty bits like that, though by God they try. But what any school child can now read is that the preferred method of Admiral Colon's necromania was dismemberment of hands, ears, noses, occasionally genitalia. Not for any real offense, mind you, but simply because the innocent Indians he had enslaved could not bring in enough gold to satisfy his avarice. The fact that there was barely a pound of gold to be found on the islands he governed was lost on our jolly adventurer. The more the locals swore there was no gold, the more convinced Columbus became that they were a shiftless bunch of liars deserving of punishment for thwarting his grand designs. The indigenous populations of the Indies were slaughtered by the thousands, and poor bewildered Columbus never did get to take home the gold he had promised his king and queen. So instead he hauled back the Indians he hadn't dismembered as slaves in the hopes of getting a profit from them. Alas, almost to a man they died en route. Thus began the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

The euphemistic approach to the Columbian legacy is most apparent with the current crop of curated museum exhibits touring the country with Quincentennial themes. These muse-

ums have capitulated to the row on the Left just enough to avoid such loaded words as "Discovery" and "Noble Savage" or even "New World" by reaching deeper into the conquerors' lexicography to find blandishments like "First Encounters" (the touring exhibit of the University of Florida's Museum of Natural History) and "Seeds of Change" (the National Museum of Natural History's show in Washington DC, officially supported and sponsored by the ALA). These titles imply a sort of meeting of equal minds, where ideas and commerce were exchanged in an atmosphere of curiosity and mutual benefit. The fact that the conquistadors (and the Pilgrims after them) came with their swords drawn and stole every inch of the Americas from the Indians, whom they slaughtered as fast as they could grab their land, is never addressed except in terms of an inevitable sense that this was Europe's grand destiny.

The curators of these shows are not entirely to blame for the lack of substance in their exhibits, although it seems that they too often allow themselves to be constricted by the powers of big money and the noisy guardians of the status quo. More culpable are ~~museum directors, their boards of trustees and the~~ entire cozy apparatus of museum funding which systematically squelch alternative exhibits and almost never offer radical perspectives. But whatever the reasons for the lack of incisive revisions of our past in museum exhibits, the museum community has learnt with aplomb that the best way not to rock the apple cart, thereby preserving the textbook vision of history is A) perfect the conscious omission of unpleasant facts and B) make constant use of the passive voice. These are the great weapons in the curatorial armamentarium. Otherwise, perhaps some patriotic viewer from the boonies will be upset by the too horrible truth and make a fuss and who needs that with the likes of Jesse Helms waiting in the wings to clamor about public funding for anti-American plots? To avoid just this scenario, everything is thus made passive and safe and antiseptic. Here's an example from a wall panel in the "Seeds of Change" exhibit.

As settlers moved into the Black Hills, the Indians were displaced, and violence ensued.

Say what? You look for something more but that's it, there is nothing more. What on Earth does "violence ensued" mean?

And who are these settlers? The exhibit never explains it. What the curators consciously omit telling the viewer is that what actually happened to the magnificent hunting grounds of the Black Hills was bold faced theft on a grand scale. These lands are sacred to the Lakota Sioux and they were then and still are officially deeded to these tribes unto perpetuity by binding treaties of Congress. Despite these sworn promises of Congress, the Black Hills were overrun not by settlers, but by ruthless white marauders with nothing but greed in their veins. Lured by tales of gold, these murderous squatters shot their way into Indian territory while the US government (supplying the "settlers" with rifles as fast as they could grab them) turned a bemused blind eye as any and all Indians with a scalp, including women and children, were cut down. Indian scalps, by the way, were worth at least a couple of dollars apiece in the good old days at some notorious trading posts, although the hair of an Indian child only brought two bits in Minnesota c1870s. When the Indians fought back, in galloped the cavalry to mop up "the hostiles." Heinous scenarios such as this occurred at Sand Creek, Bear River and Wounded Knee and a thousand other sites because these "savages" were not "cultivating the land!" This, at any rate, is what the caption never explains. But then the point of these packaged exhibits isn't to explain and illuminate, but to keep the myth alive.

To accompany the "Seeds of Change" exhibit, a beautiful book full of glossy photographs has been published which bears the same title as the museum extravaganza. From first to last it plays the same coy game of euphemism and omission with the same curatorial skill as the exhibit it purports to explain. Although it tries to be "fair" by superficially describing the enslavement of sugar plantation workers and the decimation of the Indians by disease, it is also a seamless display of just how smoothly the curatorial mentality coopts the misery and slaughter of those who suffered the brutal invasion of Europe in the Americas by letting one or two non-threatening critics have their say in a coffee table book. A few "alternate voices" are sandwiched between richly illustrated chapters penned by "experts" explaining what really happened. Run your finger down the table of contents, and sure enough, near the end you'll find the obligatory bone thrown to the victims: "An American Indian

Perspective" by George P. Horse Capture. However, it follows the chapter by the great Columbus apologist, Joseph Sanchez, director of Spanish Colonial Research at the University of New Mexico. Sanchez, a tireless hack who has crusaded for years in the cause of Spain's dominion in the "New World", claims that the conquest naysayers have been misled by a diabolical plot. In his argument, the supposed brutality of the conquistadors is a pack of "lies" spread by vile persons, who have been "subverted by anti-Spanish propagandists" and who described "Spaniards as depraved and cowardly people who had committed crimes against defenseless natives," as if this wasn't the case. This is the "Hispanic" perspective, of course. So there you have it: one oppressed "alternate voice" vying against another in this Washington DC fantasyland of an exhibit and its accompanying book of talking pictures. For all its glossy pictures and its purported "balance", the context within which the entire book and exhibit are set is one of the sovereign right of Europe to have conquered and made over America in its own image.

To those who demand a less filtered vision of the past 500 years, to whom the cant of conquest is anathema, let me suggest a few selected books that actually are worth reading.

Hans Koning's *Columbus: His Enterprise*, 2nd ed. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991) is excellent. Originally published in 1976, it was the first Columbus biography to call a skunk a skunk and defrock the Admiral for the murderer and liar he was. Intended for a high school audience, the text is at times written in simple language, but the author is never dull although anyone who sets out to deflate a cozy childhood myth armed with a violent set of new truths may end up sounding like a preacher of doom at a yuppie cocktail party. However, this is not about deflating Columbian festivities, but about reclaiming the historical record for our children. It is about seeing how the lies of the past infect our present and that the greatest myth of all is that the slaughter and the conquering happened back then, whereas today we are more enlightened. Of course, the slaughter of Indians in the Americas continues unabated in Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Mexico and elsewhere, with the rape of Indian lands being the US specialty, precisely Columbus' ongoing legacy. Koning must be given full

credit for opening the door to the actual history of the early conquest without all the "phoney baloney," as he calls it, which the revisionist apologists for the last five hundred years have tried so frantically to propagate.

More scholarly but no less readable is Kirkpatrick Sale's *The Conquest of Paradise* now in paperback from Plume Books (New York, 1990). The beauty of Sale's work is that he brings to life the historical milieu of Columbus's era, the unimaginable brutality and amorality of Europe in 1492. Consider this for contrast. On January 8th 1992, Michael Berlin, director of the Ayn Rand Institute, wrote a guest editorial for *The Los Angeles Times*. Here is an excerpt:

Before 1492, what is now the United States was sparsely inhabited, unused and undeveloped. The inhabitants were primarily wandering hunter-gatherers, living hand-to-mouth and day-to-day. There was virtually no change, no growth for thousands of years. There was no wheel, no written language, little agriculture and scant permanent settlement but there were endless bloody wars. With rare exception, life was nasty, brutish and short.

Heady stuff, but it is absolutely categorically false. What Sale's book amply shows is that it was Europe, not Native America, which was little more than a stinking hell hole of plague, wars and famine before 1492. Agriculture in Europe was so hopelessly shoddy and stricken with superstition, that between 1427 and 1492 there were no less than forty full-scale famines in Europe. There were dozens of wars. Not a single city in Europe had so much as the barest form of public sanitation save open culverts in the street where you poured your poop bucket out the window straight onto the cobblestones. Europe had no astronomy. Medicine was non-existent unless you liked being bled dry with leeches. Even the holy Popes indulged in endless bouts of fornication and Machiavellian intrigue. And if you were just an average schmoe in Seville or Avignon, never a dull moment, you could dodge the sewer culvert on route to the public square to witness a drunken orgy called an *auto-da-fe* in which innocent women were burned alive as witches while black-frocked priests gleefully watched. Horrific as this all is,

something in Sale's wry humor makes this a truly enjoyable read, for we finally see corrupted Europe for what it was, an "old bitch gone in the teeth" as one modern poet has put it.

In the Americas, meanwhile, the astronomy of the Aztecs, Mayans and Incas has yet to be matched for precision even by Carl Sagan. The agriculture of the Indians of the Americas was peerless even by the standards of a modern Iowa farmer. The Incas alone cultivated over 2,800 varieties of potatoes and, per square acre, out-produced the modern Iowa farmer three to one. The sewer systems in the larger metropolitan towns such as Teochitlan were magnificent feats of engineering and sanitation. And even the most "uneducated" unclothed shaman of the jungle knew more about medicine than all the physicians of fifteenth century Europe put together. *The Conquest of Paradise* is a must for anyone interested in understanding the Columbus myth and it will remain a fine tonic to counter the gaseous blather of the free marketeers for years to come.

Confronting Columbus, edited by John Yewell and librarians Chris Dodge and Jan DeSirey, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland Publishers, 1992) is another must read. This book has the benefit of bringing together an excellent collection of essays covering many facets of the Columbian legacy, especially that legacy's impact upon the Indigenous populations of the Americas. The book includes seventeen essays by as many authors, a useful resource directory, an extensive bibliography, as well as eight separate appendices on a wide range of topics. Included among the authors are such exceptional Native writers as John Mohawk, Ward Churchill and Robert Allen Warrior. *Confronting Columbus* will not disappoint anyone interested in the ongoing cant of the conquest which thunders unabated against Indian sovereignty to the present day. There is also an excellent critique of the use of the passive voice in museum shows by Jan Elliott, a Cherokee, in a chapter titled "Exhibiting Ideology." It is perhaps the best deflation of the curatorial status quo I have ever read. If only as an antidote to the hooplah, this book should be displayed prominently throughout 1992 in all public libraries, with second copies on the shelves.

Finally, also for high school and college age readers, is an excellent history put out by the Chicago Religious Task Force on

Central America, titled, *Dangerous Memories: Invasion and Resistance Since 1492* (published by the Task Force, 1991). What this book does, which I think is most useful, is to divide each page down the middle with an historical narrative on the one side and quotations by an array of contemporaneous writers on the other. Although this format will make it difficult for anyone who wants a straight-forward bedtime read, as a teaching tool it is brilliantly evocative, offering a living testimony in words as a means to explain the historical horrors of the conquest and the ongoing destruction of the Americas by our purblind marketeers. Unfortunately, the book cuts short its tale of resistance in the 1970s, as if the struggles for justice and racial equality had suddenly stopped at this time, indeed as if the environmental and racist battles were not more dire and hard fought today. They surely could have covered the slaughter of Amazonian Indians in Rondonia and elsewhere, for instance. Also, the ongoing destruction of sacred Indian lands in the Black Hills and Big Mountain by mining interests and corporate profiteers is barely touched. These are struggles which are being hard fought as you read these words. At the expense of sounding didactic, surely we must begin to teach our children that the struggles and injustices go on every day, in every hamlet of the globe, and may well be going on in our very own neighborhoods. Nevertheless, for clear-eyed historical reporting *Dangerous Memories* is a worthy addition to any library, especially those with a substantial young adult readership. Teachers especially should consider using this book for their classes as an adjunct to their curricula.

Let me finish by saying that for those who want the best resource guide dealing with counter-Quincentennial activities and resistance groups, send \$11 to the South and Meso-American Indian Information Center, P.O. Box 289703, Oakland, CA 94604 (Tel# 1-510-834-4263). The beautifully bound and handsomely laid out SAIC 1992 *International Directory & Resource Guide* is an exquisite piece of work and well worth the investment of any person or library with an interest in these issues.

Goodbye Columbus! What's to celebrate?

PC FOR PRE-SCHOOLERS

by Marilyn Ackerman

Multicultural Folktales: Stories to Tell Young Children by Judy Sierra and Robert Kaminski with selected translations by Adela Artole Allen (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1991).

Within the past few years, the subjects of multiculturalism and bilingual education have been debated in the mainstream and alternative media. Professional library associations and journals have discussed multiculturalism and the importance of including multicultural literature in collections to reflect the cultural diversity of the communities being served.

Judy Sierra and Robert Kaminski have now brought together in one collection twenty-five multicultural folktales for public and school librarians to use as a resource for storytelling programs for children ranging in age from 2 1/2 to 7 years old.

Sierra, Kaminski, and Allen, who has translated three of the stories, all have extensive backgrounds in children's literature and storytelling. Sierra has a master's degree in library science, is a doctoral candidate in folklore, and is a leader of storytelling workshops. An assistant professor in the division of library and information science at San Jose State University, she is the author of *The Flannel Board Storytelling Book* (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1987) and co-author with Kaminski of *Twice Upon a Time: Stories to Tell, Retell, Act Out and Write About* (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1989). Kaminski, with a master's degree in theater, teaches English as a second language, has experience working as an artist in schools, and is a storyteller and puppeteer. Allen, associate dean of the Graduate College of the University of Arizona, has taught classes in children's literature and bilingual reading. Her research areas include multiethnic children's literature, storytelling, and library services for Hispanic children.

Sierra and Kaminski discuss in the introduction of the book the importance of folktales for children and what children can learn from listening to stories from different cultures. They do caution readers:

Although the study of folktales has a place in the social studies curriculum, it would be unwise to draw hasty or generalized conclusions about a culture or a country on the basis of its folktales — and particularly not on the basis of the select few that have made their way into North American children's literature. Folktales often portray a way of life that is centuries old, or that is pure fantasy. However, we do like to let our listeners know the source of the tales we tell them, and we stress that people everywhere enjoy stories and that the fact that we can appreciate one another's stories show how much we are alike. As we enjoy another culture's stories, we extend our knowledge and sensitivity of the global community.

The countries and areas of origin of the stories include West Africa, Spain, Mexico, Tibet, China, Korea, Japan, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Greece, France, Belgium, England, and, from the United States, stories from the traditions of African-Americans, Hispanics, and Anglo-Americans. Three of the stories ("The Elegant Rooster"/"El gallo elegante," Spain; "The Goat in the Chile Patch"/"El cabrito en la hortaliza de los chiles," Hispanic-American; and "The Little Ant"/"La Hormiguita," Mexico) include English and Spanish texts.

The stories in this collection have been grouped into two sections. The first section for children 2 1/2 to 5 years old includes fourteen stories, most of which are accompanied by traceable patterns for flannel board figures. The second section for children 5 to 7 years old with eleven stories encourages the use of puppets and storytelling props, and describes how to make hand and stick puppets. Each story includes background information, suggestions for storytelling and children's participation, and listings of picture book versions of the story and similar tales to connect storytelling with children's reading.

Sierra and Kaminski offer basic information on choosing and learning stories, storytelling techniques, selecting and preparing a storytelling space, introducing a story, discussing a story with children, and audience participation. They also describe in detail how to create and use flannel boards and flannel board figures and puppets in storytelling and how children

can make their own flannel boards and stage puppet plays.

Sierra and Kaminski strongly recommend the use of flannel boards and puppets: "Through the use of puppets and flannel boards, storytellers can better keep children's attention and help them develop their ability to concentrate."

They also comment that flannel boards can be used with students learning English and older and mixed-age groups.

In addition to providing twenty-five stories for public and school librarians to use in storytelling, Sierra and Kaminski have compiled resource lists of multicultural folktales, in picture book format and collections, and indexes and bibliographic sources for folktales from different cultures.

Sierra and Kaminski present their material in a very enthusiastic and encouraging style. The 8 1/2" by 11" workbook-style format is easy to use. Public and school librarians who are looking for multicultural collections of folktales should consider adding this book to their professional shelves. Librarians should be aware, however, that this book has a how-to orientation and does not go into detail about the importance of multiculturalism. Also, while Sierra and Kaminski have included a wide spectrum of stories from different countries and areas of origin, there are some omissions — Native American, Arab, and Jewish stories, for instance.

Anne Pellowski and Margaret Read MacDonald both have wonderful collections of folktales that involve audience participation and use objects, music, and visual devices. Sierra and Kaminski's *Multicultural Folktales*, as well as their other titles, complement the work of Pellowski and MacDonald.

READER'S FORUM:

LIBERATION TECHNOLOGY

by Al Kagan

In the August 7, 1991 PLG mailing, members were asked to submit short informal comments on the pros and cons of using new information technologies (on-line, CD-ROMs, fax machines, electronic mail, etc.) in regard to advancing a progressive agenda. We were asked to address whether this technology can be used to promote social change, or whether the technology carries with it intrinsic counter political implications. Furthermore, will computer technology in libraries challenge the democratizing influence of print culture?

I will argue that information technology has already been used to promote social change, that it can be a democratizing influence, and that it also carries intrinsic political implications. Furthermore, information technology is here whether we like it or not. We cannot reverse history, so we might as well use what we have for the best purpose. Those with political power are sure to use every means, including electronic, at their disposal. We would be in error not to do the same to advance a progressive agenda.

Let us look at some examples. The leaders of the recent Chinese democracy movement used fax machines to communicate with each other and connect with allies in other countries. Although the movement was suppressed, Chinese society was shaken, and technology helped shake it. During the attempted coup in the Soviet Union, most of the media was shut down, but electronic mail filled part of the void. The new Soviet electronic network, GlasNet, was so overloaded with messages, that the network managers had to ask that frivolous messages from foreigners (like us) be curtailed. The African National Congress of South Africa used computers and CD-ROM technology to help train its students in exile at the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom School in Tanzania. This was raining for empowerment to help create a future democratic South Africa. The Pan American Health Organization has cre-

ated a CD-ROM with several databases for use in the promotion of health in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is interesting that the software supports the use of four languages.

In another context here at home, libraries are buying CD-ROMs to take the place of expensive mediated on-line searching. I have the personal experience of seeing the democratization of database searching at my own workplace. It is no longer for the few who can afford to pay, but for everyone who walks into our library.

The Left's problems with new technology come from a number of sources. Information is certainly potential power, and advanced information technology has definitely helped to build nuclear weapons, stealth bombers, and polluting factories of all kinds. In short, information technology has been used against us for death instead of life. But information is also potential power for us.

We may feel that capitalist society values technology for itself as an end, instead of as a means. But when we look closely we find that high tech engineers are highly paid because they make large profits for their employers. Whether they are building weapons or video recorders, they have a direct effect on the bottom line of the corporations and the rich and powerful owners for whom they work. However, it does not then follow that we should reject technology because it is used as a capitalist profit-making tool. Instead, we should investigate how we can use what is available for our own purposes.

Outdated political notions also make us weary of new technology. Statism (and sometimes even Stalinism) influences the Left against using information technology. Progressives supported the Russian and Chinese revolutions to better the quality of life for millions of people. Many wanted to believe that democracy would be intermixed with material advancements, such as universal health care, literacy, and a reasonable level of nutrition. Many thought that a powerful state and vanguard party were necessary to reorient society. However, we did not always admit that freedom of expression and democratic values were often lost in the process. We now know that the Soviets did not make personal computers, fax machines, or even copy machines

and typewriters generally available because they feared the effects of the free flow of information. But many may still wonder how a just society can be created without strong centralized direction. We know that capitalism can overwhelm progressive efforts, and we are unsure of how to come to grips with this problem. Nevertheless, we do believe in access to information for all. We must develop new ways of defining "democracy" and "socialism" in order to create both a more free and more just society.

The Chinese and the Russian people now look to the ideals in our Bill of Rights for inspiration, not to the poverty and homelessness of a large proportion of the American citizenry. The promise of these ideals has served to energize democratic movements. At the same time, the export of our economic system is also beginning to cause homelessness in St. Petersburg and Moscow. It is clear that we must somehow create a social system that guarantees both human rights and economic security.

Advanced information technology does imply political consequences. It provides the opportunity for individuals to more easily communicate with each other and to access more and more varied information. As the technology becomes widespread, it results in the more free and extensive flow of information. It is our job to promote free and easy access to the technology, and to make sure that our views are well represented. We should be thinking about the distribution of technology in order to influence the distribution of wealth.

CD-ROM technology can be appropriate for poor countries and poor libraries. It does not rely on a national telephone or electricity grid, and the cost of computer hardware and CD-ROMs is decreasing at a dramatic rate. But technology will never be a panacea, and there are some basic practical problems. Computer technology changes quickly, and today's hardware and software will be obsolete tomorrow. Large First World libraries can budget to replace equipment as necessary, but Third World libraries will likely have to use their equipment for more extended periods of time. How will libraries in poor countries develop the expertise to keep the equipment running, day to day and over long periods of time? How will they get access to parts and service? How will extreme climatic conditions

A RESPONSE

by John Buschman

effect the equipment? For example, is CD-ROM technology useful in a tropical climate without the use of air conditioning? Careful planning will be necessary to prevent disasters.

We must lessen the gap between the information rich and the information poor — between countries and within nations. Electronic technology can be an appropriate equalizing factor, or a tool of the rich. If we withdraw from or try to ignore electronic means, we will lose the opportunity to use these very powerful tools for progressive ends.

Having read Al Kagan's essay, I am torn by two conflicting responses. The first is to applaud his determination to grab hold of these new resources and make them sources of democratic and critical resistance. My second response is to cringe at his acceptance of information technology as *tabula rasa* on which we are (relatively) free to write our own script.

I have argued elsewhere that librarianship is uncritically accepting information technology resources to the detriment of long-standing professional values (*Reference Librarian*, issue 31 and *American Libraries*, December 1990). Furthermore, there is a large body of critical literature which tells us that any technology is not neutral: it comes from a social, political, and economic context which is built right into the structure of that technology right from the start. In the case of information technologies, John Durham Peters notes that the origins of information theory, the programs to create / manipulate information, and the development of the hardware were products of the Cold War military (*Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 12 (2), 1988). Information technology resources, like television or nuclear power plants, have a "hidden curriculum" or, if you prefer, a "subtext" that must be identified.

Librarians have, for a long time now, blithely overlooked just these kinds of issues. Herbert Schiller has documented the corporate context and influence of information production (see his *Culture Inc.*, 1989 and essay with Anita Schiller in *The Politics of Information*, 1982). We are not yet seriously grappling with the issue of just how these new resources are affecting what we collect as John Haar suggests (*Reference Librarian*, issue 22.) The next step will bring us even more of the same electronic texts and perhaps we will "collect" electronic books. Eugene Provenzo (in *Literacy Online*, 1992) and Peters have both suggested that the archiving of the "real" record and the "original text" may be irrelevant. Further, the ability to truly change, edit, censor that text without traces of the original suggest real and serious difficulties with the library's mission of providing both a

history and current information. "The resistance of texts to interpretation, and their power to engender many and conflicting readings, evaporates when they become information Information lacks history" (Peters).

I do not mean to bombard the issue with citations to writings which tell us that the game is lost already. My point is that if we are to seize the possibilities of information technology, we must develop a critical intellectual stance towards it. I have touched on only a few among many sources of critical scholarship of use to or relevant to librarianship. There must be a real critical scholarship to address information technology. Schiller outlined what "Critical Research in the Information Age" would address: production (vs. consumption) of information; sources of power in communication / information processes; and historical context of information and its technology (*Journal of Communication* 33, Summer 1983).

My two possible reactions to Kagan's essay are not really in conflict. The two must work together: a grounded critique of information technology in libraries must exist for librarians to effectively impose a progressive agenda on them. To do otherwise is to fall into a version of the wide habit I have identified: librarians use the acquisition and "mastery" of information technologies to improve the age-old "status" and "image" problem. Without a grounded critique, the unexamined faith in technology remains the same, the intentions are just better.

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PROGRESSIVE LIBRARIAN Issue No. 5, Summer 1992
Published, Produced and Distributed by Progressive Librarians Guild

Editors:

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Managing Editor: Elaine Harger
Editorial Assistant: Bill Stack

Typesetting and Design: Mem Totally Graphics

Subscriptions \$15 individuals, \$30 institutions, 3 issues/year
ISBN 1052-5726

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PLG, c/o Empire State College-SUNY School of Labor Studies Library
330 West 42nd Street, 4th floor, New York, NY 10036

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PLG STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Progressive Librarians Guild has been established to:

- Provide a forum for the open exchange of radical views on library issues
- Conduct campaigns to support progressive and democratic library activities locally, nationally and internationally
- Defend activist librarians as they work to effect changes in their own libraries and communities
- Bridge the artificial and destructive gap within our profession between school, public, academic, and special libraries
- Encourage debate about prevailing management strategies adopted directly from the business world and propose democratic forms of library administration
- Consider the impact of technological change in the library workplace and on the provision of library service
- Monitor the professional ethics of librarianship from a social responsibility perspective
- Facilitate contacts between progressive librarians and other professional and scholarly groups dealing with communications worldwide

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