

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 too 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 Eliot 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 male-stream 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 Elshtain 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 "phallocratic" 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 us — 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.

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27. *Ibid*, p. 8.

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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.