UNITED STATES

Sandra J. Coyner

The Institutions and Ideas of Women's Studies: From Critique to New Construction

Women's studies began in the United States in the late 1960's from both a critique and a constructive impulse. An essential part of women's studies at every level, every activity, every faction, is negative in content: the critique, sometimes angry, of the pervasive patriarchy of academe and the utter failure of the curriculum, like the rest of the society, to explain or provide adequately for women at any level. But women's studies also incorporates a relentlessly optimistic hope: to create within academe a feminist enclave that is a positive force for the liberation of women, with its first mission the transformation of academe itself.

By 1983, women's studies in the U.S. has become established and legitimate. The new scholarship on women, including clearly identified feminist critiques and interpretations, is now an accepted part of most scholarly disciplines, with topics like the psychology of women or women's history as legitimate as any other subfield. Articles and papers are accepted in prestigious mainstream journals and conferences and by major publishers, as well as in new scholarly forums established specifically for women's studies. There are 445 women's studies programs in colleges and universities, and perhaps thirty thousand courses offered nationwide. The growth has been phenomenal: tenfold since 1972, when the first count was published. Some of these programs are small, sometimes just a committee of interested people who give each other mutual support, publish a list of courses focusing on women, and perhaps sponsor a colloquium on topics of interest to women. But 315 of these programs offer some form of undergraduate concentration, minor, or degree, and 55 have graduate programs as well. Although women's studies began in large rather than small institutions, and public rather than private ones, in recent years the most prestigious universities have joined the movement, as programs have been established at Stanford, Yale, and Princeton.[1]

It is extremely difficult to define or describe what women's studies is in the United States. It includes a number of different institutions and ideas, none of which is fully representative of the movement as a whole. Women's studies consists of a number of separate activities — notably both scholarship and teaching — which are to some extent located in separate networks, although often carried out by the same people. Some of the diversity comes from our history; women's studies courses, programs and scholarship have evolved in different ways from different starting points. Moreover, since so much of women's studies has been a critique of the inadequacy and especially the elitist narrowness of traditional academic life, women's studies has been unwilling to establish new, restrictive norms of its own.

But the most important factor is that a number of different kinds of people, with different interests and ideas, have always been active in women's studies. Women's studies has only the most general, hence rather vague, consensus on priorities. One of the few widely held

principles is an almost visceral determination that no woman (or group of women) should be shut out, which at least promotes continuing discussion and occasionally bitter argument among factions. But the lack of consensus also has meant that people with different ideas about what constitutes the important work of women's studies often work separately, with relatively little awareness of what other women's studies people do or think.

Several different cross-cutting divisions within women's studies are clearly visible. Splits are most easily identified during disagreements; and during its eventful thirteen-year history U.S. women's studies has had many. It is tempting to regard these splits as "radical" vs. "liberal," corresponding to the major division within contemporary U.S. feminism. Yet the splits are not really ideological. Arguments within women's studies are about internal matters like structure, process, priorities, style, strategy, and even personalities, rather than ultimate goals; and they spring frequently from status and position within women's studies itself, and correspondingly different ideas about how to change things, rather than from differing ideologies about the world at large.

One of the earliest, noisiest splits to surface was between "academic" and "community" women. The "community" women identified themselves primarily as feminist activists, though they may also have been students or faculty members; their primary interest is women's studies was as part of the broader women's liberation movement; and they felt strong hostility to academe's general elitism and irrelevance to women's real needs. "Academic" women, on the other hand, were often criticized for the positions they held (or aspired to) within academe, relatively prestigious and powerful professors or administrators, sometimes tenured. Academic women were able to operate within the traditional academic system, and often worked for structures and processes which could win reforms there. Such reforms naturally placed the "established" academic women in leadership positions, which did not conform to radical feminist principles of collectivity and non-hierarchical organization. The academic women were challenged for having too much power within the movement, constituting an internal elite to be resisted. In some ways these factions were "radical" and "liberal," in the sense of the feminist movement. The "radicals" want women's studies as a means to women's liberation, rather than an end in itself, placing relatively little weight on intermediate steps like establishing legitimacy and position within academic institutions, or on the traditional values of scholarship and the academy; they are hostile to hierarchy as means or end. The "liberals," in contrast, accept many of those values and are more interested in reform within the university itself, perhaps as a goal in itself, or with assumed faith that change within academe could lead to change in the larger society. This conflict was voiced at a number of early conferences in women's studies, and surfaced within many women's studies programs trying to establish their own structure and control.[2]

Though these tensions persist between women's studies' academic and activist goals, there has been less discussion of these issues for several years, and the "academics" are clearly in charge. No the noisy conflicts within women's studies are more likely to be about racism or heterosexism.[3] But one relationship between the factions is similar: ins vs. outs. The vast majority of women's studies, both in its institutions and in its scholarship, is white and heterosexual. Lesbian and "third world" women (primarily American Blacks, with some Native American, Hispanic American, and Asian American women) criticize the narrowness of established women's studies and demand that they be included before women's studies can be worthy of their support. There is no ideological struggle here, since

there is no opposition — no faction justifying racism and heterosexism per se — but there is insensitivity, ignorance, slowness, and considerable failure of imagination among white, straight women.

This paper examines women's studies in the United States today with special focus on its institutions and ideas. A model of change over time is also implicit. Women's studies is no longer a shapeless, powerless revolutionary vision. It has content and institutions of its own. From the anger and hopes of the early years, the fledgling institutions have developed and now have new needs of their own, which strengthen some ideas perceived as conservative. At the same time, however, and perhaps unexpectedly, the most surprising and sparkling development has been the new scholarship. Thirteen years of research and publishing have uncovered and developed new ideas, not just about oppression and revolution, but about women, women's culture, and what it means to be human. These ideas have turned out to be the true revolutionary force of women's studies, which will alter profoundly not only the institutions of higher education but all of the understandings and knowledge which are housed therein.

National Women's Studies Association: Limited Inclusiveness

The only organization which promotes and claims to represent all levels and activities of women's studies in the United States is the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA), founded at a special convention in 1977 in San Francisco "to further the social, political and professional development of Women's Studies throughout the country and the world, at every educational level and in every educational setting."[4] NWSA resembles a professional association of an academic discipline (e.g. Modern Language Association, American Sociological Association), with a membership up to about 2,000; national headquarters at the University of Maryland; a paid staff including a coordinator with an advanced degree; an annual conference featuring papers and workshops; and academically oriented projects, including a large federal grant to develop women's studies service-learning courses (which give students an opportunity to work in community agencies). NWSA leaders have been called on frequently to speak as official representatives of the women's studies.

But NWSA also differs from traditional professional associations in important ways. Wishing to combat elitist "professionalism," NWSA has attempted to include all the voices and viewpoints within feminist education, especially oppressed and underrepresented ones. This energetic and largely successful attempt is neglected in NWSA's constitution, structure, process, and activities. NWSA's founders were especially concerned about three factors that could prevent the organization from being fully representative: the dominance of certain geographical regions, societal oppression of certain groups of women, and differences of power and status within women's studies itself. Both the constitution and the budget have been structured to combat these factors.[5]

To make sure that NWSA represents the entire country, the basic structure provides for equal representation from each of ten regions, which are also expected to have independent organizations and leadership. (Regional organizations are strongest in the large urban centers of the north and west.) Furthermore, since the area near the location of the annual conference is likely to have more people attending and could dominate it, NWSA has no general member ship meetings; each region has a limited number of voting delegates. For some early meetings the association attempted to set up travel equalization funds to benefit

women traveling long distances, but this innovation has not worked well. The location of national conferences rotates around the country.

A unique caucus system also attempts to guarantee a voice to groups which are either oppressed within contemporary American society (lesbian and "third world") or whose views might otherwise be underrepresented within NWSA (students, community colleges, program administrators,[6] and prek-12[7]).

The caucus structure has had notable effects on NWSA. It has shaped our sense of who we are: NWSA has tended to focus on race, heterosexism, and academic status as factors that divide us, rather than class or ideology. The caucuses have also influenced the policies and finances of the organization. For example, the student caucus, with others, presses the issue of equal access for low-income women by requesting sliding scales for dues, conference fees, and below-cost services such as housing at the conferences. The Lesbian Caucus has raised issues of separate conference housing and closed sessions for lesbians. The Association has attempted since 1981 (although with very minimal success) to provide special conference scholarship and travel funds for third world women; and the Third World Caucus has challenged NWSA's acceptance of funding from and provision of space to the U.S. Agency for International Development because it is sexist, racist and imperialist in its dealings with third world countries. The theme of the third national NWSA conference in 1981 was "Women Respond to Racism," featuring daily consciousness-raising sessions so that NWSA members could personally confront and begin to change racist attitudes.

NWSA is also more openly political than traditional professional associations, finding the alleged distance between "professionalism" and politics intellectually dishonest in general, and undesirable in an organization explicitly linked with feminism. Although no one questions that women's studies is "feminist," the precise relationship between the academic work and the social change movement is not clear. The NWSA constitution attempts to define the relationship by naming women's studies a constituent part of the feminist movement: "Women's studies owes its existence to the movement for the liberation of women," it declares; and "Feminist education is a process deeply rooted in the women's movement and remains accountable to that community." Feminist education is defined as "not only the pursuit of knowledge about women, but also the development of knowledge for women, a force which furthers the realization of feminist aims." NWSA's "political" aspect, however, with respect to the world outside its own boundaries, consists mainly of taking official stands on a number of non-"academic" issues, by passing resolutions at the annual national convention denouncing or supporting something and sending follow-up letters. In the 1980's, this activity sometimes seems ritualistic and ineffective.

The resolutions do, however, reflect the nature and depth of NWSA's commitment to be a broadly inclusive organization. NWSA defines feminism not simply as the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, but against every form of oppression. The constitution declares:

> Freedom from sexism must by necessity include a commitment to freedom from national chauvinism, class and ethnic bias, anti-semitism, as directed against both Arabs and Jews, ageism, heterosexual bias — from all the ideologies and institutions that have consciously or unconsciously oppressed and exploited some for the advantage of others. . . . Feminist aims include the elimination of oppression and discrimination on the basis of sex, race, age, class,

religion, ethnicity, and sexual orientation as well as other barriers to human liberation inherent in the structure of our society.

Thus NWSA's Delegate Assembly has officially protested not only budget cuts in women's studies programs and censorship of feminist books in public schools and libraries, but also the proposed Family Protection Act; U.S. militarism, defense spending, and racist imperialistic policies in the third world; United Artists' film *Windows*, for its portrayal of lesbians; the illegal racist frameup of Black civil rights activists Maggie Bozeman and Julia Wilder; and apartheid. NWSA has officially supported Women's Studies Day, National Women's History Week, and the ERA, as well as the Voting Rights Act, legislation to prohibit discrimination because of sexual preference, and a policy on terrorism against Blacks in the U.S.[8] No one present objects that such resolutions are not "academic" or appropriate for NWSA. The association established its "political" nature so long ago that anyone with more narrow academic interests either keeps silent during the business meetings or stays away from them.

Because of its central position and its self-proclaimed mission and scope, it is tempting to identify NWSA with women's studies in the U.S. The only other candidate for the national voice of U.S. women's studies is the *Women's Studies Quarterly*, a periodical founded in 1972 by Florence Howe to help build a network among people interested in women's studies at all educational levels, and the official newsletter of the NWSA from its founding convention in 1977 to 1982.[9] The *Women's Studies Quarterly* does not publish scholarly research, but it is the only periodical to report regularly on women's studies at all educational levels, nationally and internationally, including programs, projects, courses, teaching materials and techniques, organizations, activities, and the NWSA.

Yet NWSA, despite its purpose and its constitutional innovations, it not an all-inclusive organization; and the influence of the *Women's Studies Quarterly* has limits. Many people deeply committed to women's studies in the United States remain outside NWSA — some because they are unaware or uninterested, some because they have resigned or refuse to become involved. The resulting boundaries of women's studies' major national voices thus take on functional implications. Most notably absent from NWSA are some of the leading scholars and researchers in women's studies, the "big names" whose writing is women's studies' most important content. NWSA and the *Women's Studies Quarterly* emphasize organizational and pedagogical aspects of women's studies, with NWSA in particular focusing on the links between women's studies and the feminist movement. The scholarly and research aspects of women's studies tend to be outside NWSA, with institutional structures that emphasize links to the traditional academic disciplines.

Scholarship and Publishing: Tied to the Disciplines

The premier U.S. journal publishing the new scholarship on women is *Signs*, founded by Catharine Stimpson in 1975 and published by the University of Chicago Press. *Signs* is a journal for all of women's studies, publishing research articles of the highest quality, and maintaining a broad overview of developments in all branches of women's studies through a series of review essays. U.S. women's studies also has several other successful journals carrying scholarship from throughout the field, such as *Feminist Studies* and *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (both founded in 1972), and *Frontiers* (since 1975).[10] These are all independent, not affiliated with NWSA or any other women's studies organization beyond their own editorial boards.

Yet even the combined output of these journals is but a fraction of the published research of women's studies. The bulk of our scholarship is identified not with women's studies, but with the traditional disciplines. It is sometimes performed, presented, or published in the forums of the established disciplines in the humanities and social sciences — since women's studies and feminist scholarship have by now securely won this limited legitimacy of token acceptance as permissible disciplinary specializations. In addition, there are a whole range of journals, conferences, and organizations dedicated to a single discipline's scholarship on women. These include a number of national and regional conferences every year, such as the highly respected conference on women's history sponsored by the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, or the Women's Theatre Program preconvention at the American Theatre Association; and publications like the *Psychology of Women Quarterly, Sex Roles: A Journal of Research, Women and Literature, Hypatia* (on philosophy), and the *Women's Art Journal.*

Many of these activities are affiliated with women's caucuses tied to the traditional disciplines, such as the Association for Women in Psychology, Sociologists for Women in Society, the Women's Caucus of the Modern Language Association, the Coordinating Committee on Women in the Historical Profession/Conference Group on Women's History. Some of these organizations were founded primarily to promote equal opportunity for women within their given professions, but they are also important to the new scholarship about women, pulling together bibliography, sponsoring publications and holding major academic conferences highlighting the new research. They generally lack paid staff, but have excellent newsletters, and together are far larger than NWSA.[11]

An effect of these arrangements is that the new scholarship on women tends to be located "closer" to the old disciplines than to women's studies. The disciplines, not women's studies, provide the prestigious avenues of publication, and ultimately the identity of women's studies scholarship. It is known as "psychology of women" or "women's history" of "feminist literary criticism" rather than "psychological women's studies" or "women's studies history"; and the scholars identify themselves as psychologists or historians not "women's studies people." This division of research into disciplinary specializations makes it more difficult to integrate the work into a coherent, comprehensive scholarship on women. the scholars write from their discipline's particular frame of reference; they don't speak each other's professional languages; and often are reluctant to learn about or write for people in other disciplines.[12] Relatedly, there is no comprehensive central index for women's studies (the *Women's Studies Abstracts* is an unsubsidized one-woman operation); and scholars have to search through the indexes and references of a number of different disciplines to get through coverage of work already published.

The scholarship of women's studies, closely tied to the disciplines, is also correspondingly less closely tied, at least in an organizational and rhetorical sense, to the feminist movement, since NWSA is women's studies' principal link to so-called "political" concerns. It seems possible that the strong political tone of NWSA, and its hostility to "elites," make many scholars uncomfortable and keep them away. On the other hand, it is also true that some individuals are active in both sets of institutions. Catharine Stimpson, for example, has been one of NWSA's strongest and most visible supporters, as well as founding editor of *Signs,* a poet and a scholar; others have been active in the organizational work of both NWSA and the professional associations. But the general pattern can be seen aside from the individuals who defy it; and the pattern has been to separate scholarship

from politics, and to leave it divided along disciplinary lines, rather than organized in a way that can provide not only services to scholarship (bibliographies as well as teaching aids), but the meeting of minds necessary to develop a solid, overall vision — in other words, an academic discipline.

One other major structure of U.S. women's studies unites scholars, teachers and administrators: the programs in colleges and universities, which now number almost 500.

Interdisciplinary Programs in Colleges and Universities

Women's studies in colleges and universities is, with few exceptions, organized as an "interdisciplinary" program,"[13] which means that it is not an autonomous department; it is a committee, or network, or collective, which coordinates (and depends on) resources actually controlled by someone else. The vast majority of faculty teaching women's studies are employed by traditional departments, on departmental budgets; their courses are officially by those departments. Women's studies itself usually has control over only a small operating budget, and an extremely small amount of paid staff time, if any at all; a common pattern is to "release" part of a faculty member's time for coordinating the women's studies program. At most, the interdisciplinary program may have a few lines, often part-time people, to teach a few "core" courses. The degrees offered in women's studies are seldom given in women's studies per se; they are either under a standard interdisciplinary rubric such as "social sciences," "humanities," "liberal studies," or "interdisciplinary studies," or specializations within a particular department, or individually designed majors.

We worked within this framework for over a decade, expanding it somewhat, learning its strengths and limitations.[14] It allowed us to become established fairly rapidly within colleges and universities, and it will probably help us resist utter destruction, since a widespread network is difficult to eradicate. Being "interdisciplinary" also gives us breadth, since we can draw on the perspectives, talents, and energies of a wide range of interested supporters from a variety of fields. It is a structure which maintains strong channels for communication and influence between women's studies and the departments; these ties may make it easier for us to change the rest of the university. At the same time, however, being interdisciplinary and dependent gives the departments influence over us, hampering the strongest development of our own programs.

We acquired this structure initially for two very different reasons. One reason is pragmatic: this was easiest. "Interdisciplinary" programs already existed in other subjects, so feminists were relieved of carrying the entire general argument for academic innovation and for interdisciplinary cooperation and degrees. The program model had already been used for academic units focusing on a particular place or time, on a particular social problem, or an oppressed group. Women's studies had only to fit into this common pattern. The "interdisciplinary" model also required only the resources we already had — namely a number of people with feminist commitments and developing, but not yet deep or broad, expertise in scholarship on women. It required little monetary commitment from a university, since the program was expected merely to coordinate resources already present. Moreover, an "interdisciplinary" structure obviates the need to demonstrate that women's studies is "legitimate". All individual faculty members and courses are certified by departments, presumably according to the criteria of their own disciplines; and the special interdisciplinary degrees also have established approval procedures.[15]

The "interdisciplinary" structure also fitted the ideology of both radicals and liberals within women's studies. Most women's studies programs have not wanted to be departments, even if they could be.[16] The more radical founders strongly rejected traditional academic structures. Departments reify the "male" fragmentation of knowledge into separate compartments, denying connections, whereas women's studies was to include all knowledge and eschew artificial divisions and exclusions. Departments are elitist and hierarchical. They are headed by a single individual; and only certain people, namely those with with high rank and power, may make important decisions — either only faculty, or sometimes only tenured faculty. Women's studies wanted to be much more open and much more democratic, partly out of general hostility to elitism and exclusion, partly because our collectivity is our major strength, partly to be able to include the insights and energy of our large, varied constituency, and partly because of out intuitive dislike of excluding anyone, at least openly. Early women's studies committees strove to include students, community women (feminist activists), and support staff (program secretaries and assistants) in decision-making positions whenever possible.

Sometimes these principles were applied in a constructive way to create dramatically new forms of academic governance. The first women's studies program in the country, founded at San Diego State University in 1970, was planned as part of a ten-part women's center run collectively. SUNY-Buffalo's program took advantage of a unique "college system," founding a large program in which both teaching and governance are mostly in the hands of students and non-university "community" people.

But these innovative structures have not survived intact; autonomous collective governance in particular has largely perished. In 1974, believing that their women's studies program was compromised and coopted by its close association with the university, the entire faculty of women's studies at San Diego State University resigned. The university hired new faculty, however, and retains a women's studies program structured as an autonomous department. Women's studies at SUNY-Buffalo has been threatened repeatedly with budget cuts and even dissolution, over issues such as collective structure and excluding men from certain courses. The program now may have only one coordinator.[17] At Portland State University, the women's studies program had a major crisis when it was required to appoint a single coordinator, and many supporters left the program in protest over the change. In 1981, women's studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle fought off disproportionate budget cuts proposed because their administrative structures looked costly to an administration not sympathetic to the rationale.[18]

But if the radicals' innovations have not lasted, the aversion to traditional academic department has; and the interdisciplinary program model at least appears highly democratic. Rotating the coordinator position prevents long-lasting hierarchy; and women's studies committees and meetings can be quite open. Even more important, however, is a very different rationale that came from an altogether different quarter: women with some position within academe, part of the "establishment" and more directly focused on changing universities than in the more remote effects on society at large.

This rationale for avoiding department structure is frequently expressed more as a fear than an ideology. Most to be avoided is isolation, or "ghettoization," a word used to describe what allegedly happened to Black studies and home economics (sometimes called an early form of women's studies that failed). According to the "ghettoization" scenario, neither Black studies nor home economics has had much impact on academe (or anything

else) because they were too autonomous, focused too much inward. Thus, although many colleges and universities established separate units for these academic subjects, the new units remained powerless. They were unable to gain respect from other academic units, and were unable to do anything significantly to challenge racism or sexism. Separation, in this scenario, leads directly to trivialization; and the interdisciplinary structure, with its dispersion of women's studies faculty and courses to the departments, was expected to give us more power for affecting the entire university.[19]

With both radical and liberal hostility to departmental structure, most women's studies programs have little alternative to being "interdisciplinary." The exact focus of the program varies somewhat from school to school, such as the combination of women's studies and ethnic studies at California State University-Chico and Illinois State University-Normal; the "Program for the Study of Women and Men in Society" at the University of Southern California and "Men and Women: Perspectives on Sex and Gender" at John Carroll University; "Feminist Studies" at Standford; and "Gender Studies" at Hiram College. There are also several "consortial" programs that combine faculty from several different colleges, as in the Great Lakes area, the Claremont Colleges (California), and the Five Colleges in Massachusetts. Sometimes women's studies is closely affiliated with (or part of) a particular department, most commonly American studies or history, or sometimes English, psychology, sociology, or a department in education. A few women's studies programs are combined with Women's Resource Centers, providing student services and programming as well as coordinating an academic program.

An important recognition of academic legitimacy now held by 37 women's studies programs is the degree granted directly in women's studies, without going through a general rubric such as interdisciplinary studies or liberal studies. Some programs are gaining staff lines of their own, and a growing roster of independent courses offered and listed solely in women's studies. But lack of autonomy remains the most important deficiency of the "interdisciplinary" structure. Only a few programs — notably those at the University of South Florida, San Diego State University, and the University of Hawaii — are structured as departments, with power to hire and grant tenure on a number of faculty lines of their own.[20] When courses taught and listed in departments are cross-listed by the women's studies program, the power of women's studies is limited to the choice of listing or vetoing a course already approved and legitimated by another unit, with little power to change the content of the course or to structure the women's studies curriculum coherently and comprehensively. While the experience of most women's studies programs to date is support and cooperation from many departments, and especially from femininist faculty members in departments, cooperation is not power, which usually shows itself only during disagreement. A dilemma faced by many women's studies programs is the departmental course taught about women but from a non-feminist perspective. An interdisciplinary program focusing on women simply as subject matter would have little legitimate reason to refuse to list such a course. If, however, women's studies is a separate academic discipline, with its own body of knowledge and its own approach to organizing knowledge, it can distinguish itself from other approaches to the same subject matter (women) in the same way that psychology is different from sociology.

Autonomy for women's studies is especially important for the faculty, who are evaluated for appointment, reappointment, promotion, tenure, and raises in their departmental homes. They may not be rewarded fairly for their work in women's studies; they may even

be penalized if women's studies is devalued, or seen as "outside" the "real" work of the department. Tenure for a women's studies faculty member in a department is cause for a major celebration; some women have been denied tenure because their work in women's studies was undervalued. Tenuring full-time faculty within women's studies itself would be a crucial step toward autonomy and permanence; but according to Florence Howe, fewer than five programs have tenured faculty or directors.[21] Probably the most desirable course for women's studies programs would be gradually to add faculty lines of their own, while continuing to cross-list departmental courses and to work with faculty housed elsewhere. Autonomy would thus be developed without losing the major strength of the "interdisciplinary" program model: the ability to draw on the talents of a comparatively large number of people distributed widely throughout the university, and to maintain working relationships with them.

Autonomy as Discipline and Department

Autonomy for women's studies implies two interrelated changes: being a discipline and being a department. In a logical world, academic structure should be shaped to fit the nature of the field, not vice versa, so the ultimate discussion should focus on the nature of women's studies as an approach to knowledge. I would argue that the interdisciplinary structure, though practical and reasonable for the early years of women's studies, is no longer appropriate because women's studies is maturing, becoming a distinctive academic discipline.[22]

But what about the often-expressed fear of isolation and ghettoization that allegedly accompany autonomy? Would the rest of the university ignore a department of women's studies more than an interdisciplinary program? The whole "ghettoization" argument, as used to support "interdisciplinary" rather than departmental structure, is probably a misunderstanding of the historical experience of Black studies and home economics, as well as an explanation that blames the victims (for making the wrong decisions or for somehow being too snooty and separatist) rather than the sexism and racism which were and still are at work. Was it really decisions made within home economics and Black studies, choosing autonomy and emphasizing the uniqueness of their academic fields, that limited their acceptance and influence within academe? I doubt it. Other new, "interdisciplinary" academic units have been founded in U.S. higher education, given autonomy, and accepted, such as linguistics and biochemistry. Formerly new approaches like psychoanalytic theory, various quantitative methods, and the use of computers have spread widely, regardless of whether there is a department of psychology, statistics or computer science. What make Black studies and home economics different, and women's studies as well, are racism and sexism.

Consider, then, what messages are given about the nature of women's studies by calling it "interdisciplinary." The other interdisciplinary programs were not created simply because they saved universities money. They exist because certain areas were seen as fundamentally different from the disciplines housed in departments.

While departments house major, "basic" divisions of knowledge, interdisciplinary programs are usually academic enrichments, something extra or peripheral, usually temporary and applied. Interdisciplanary programs might be dissolved for a number of reasons: the social problem might be resolved, grant money might dry up, interest might wane. Interdisciplinary programs are suited to temporary academic needs because so few resources

are committed permanently. Interdisciplinary programs also are usually organized around "problems" that seem to require the application of a number of different disciplines — with the fundamentally liberal assumption that throwing money and academic talent at problems will do something about them. We may think of sexism that way — a social problem to which knowledge should be applied — but I think that underestimates the way in which women's studies re-structures knowledge itself.

Interdisciplinary programs also, by their very nature, do not challenge but actually reinforce the primacy of the "regular" departments as the fundamental divisions of knowledge. The programs create formal means for people (and departments) to cooperate without losing any of their disciplinary identity. Faculty in interdisciplinary programs do not merge their disciplinary identities into some new identity because of their collaboration; they do not change their sense of how they and their work fit into the structure of knowledge. They may learn a bit about other disciplines, but they do not actually learn more than one discipline; and they continue to see themselves as firmly attached to the discipline of their training, which has shaped how they think, ask questions, and answer them. The same problem exists with the popular concept of "androgyny". This term denotes a combination of "masculinity" and "feminity" and gives that polarization legitimacy, which we might alternatively deny by focusing on a large and fundamental humanness and naming differences between the sexes as changeable results of power differentials. In reality, the existing disciplines (like sex roles) have been created by history and politics; and a new history may allow us to create a new discipline of women's studies that does more than simply combine the old ones.

There's more going on here than just symbolism. Our sense of community and ability to collaborate are influenced by out self-definition as well as by such practical issues as who pays our salaries and whether our offices are scattered among departments or located in a women's studies building. Of all our various tasks and commitments, this sense of community and collaboration is most important for our scholarship. Our teaching, our academic administration, and even our politics are coordinated reasonably well by the main institutions of women's studies — the programs, the NWSA, and the *Women's Studies Quarterly*; but we have been far less successful, either nationally or on many campuses, in coordinating research, which remains more meaningfully located "in the departments." I mean far more by this than simply our ability to produce scholarship, or to publish it, since the volume and quality of women's studies scholarship are not in question and the forums for its publication include so-called "interdisciplinary" ones. Research builds on itself in its most productive way only when researchers work on common ideas, visions, or paradigms. We must do more than simply work side by side on related topics or problems, with resulting anthologies of separate, incommensurable approaches that give us another opportunity to practice tolerance and pluralism. We could do far more to seriously evaluate our different approaches, and we could do far more to learn the strengths and weaknesses of the various ways of approaching the study of women. We will not be able to do this to our fullest potential unless our collaboration, our sense of community, is seen as something deeper than applying our varied skills to a common problems.

By now many women's studies programs are moving, however slowly, toward greater autonomy and control over resources. At the same time, it is precisely the lack of resources, both in women's studies and in higher education in general, that will make it difficult to establish much autonomy except over a fairly long period of time. We face other interesting

paradoxes too: we have neither Ph.D. programs producing scholars trained wholly "in women's studies," nor autonomous departments hiring scholars and teachers with these credentials. Which should we establish first?

I would argue that we should be moving in this direction, determinedly, for another reason, which has to do with the nature of women's studies: are we a subject matter, a political movement, or an academic discipline? If we are simply new subject matter, we should probably be absorbed and "mainstreamed" by the traditional disciplines and eventually work ourselves out of business. If we are a political movement, our longevity within a conservative institution like higher education is problematic, both because we will not win much support and because the fear of cooptation will drive the true radicals out. But it we are an academic discipline — by which I mean mainly an organized approach to knowledge that is more than the sum of its disciplinary parts — we ought most properly to have the academic autonomy and academic freedom accorded to disciplines by housing them in departments. I think that we are, or at worst are becoming, this kind of academic discipline — not because we willed it, or because it is politically correct, but because women's studies scholars are asking new questions, evolving distinctive ways of answering them, and developing coherent new ways of looking at and understanding not just women's experience, but human phenomena.

The Ideas of Women's Studies

The sheer volume alone of women's studies scholarship would make it difficult to write an overview of its content; but its division into categories corresponding to the traditional disciplines makes the task even more daunting. Most review essays, whether published in *Signs* or a disciplinary journal, are written from the perspective of a single discipline.[23] Even research published in interdisciplinary women's studies journals, as well as that presented in forums tied to the traditional disciplines, tends to be written in professional languages sometimes mystifying to outsiders. Grounding in a traditional discipline affects the way one views women's studies scholarships as well as the way one writes it. For many observers trained in one traditional discipline, and only newly acquainted with women's studies research done in a different discipline, women's studies scholarship seems to be new, young, unformed. The most basic concepts from another discipline often are overvalued as innovations — a misevaluation that Catharine Stimpson has called a "fallacy of misplace originality."[24] When one views women from within a traditional discipline, it seems that scholarship grows as these "new" ideas are grafted onto the perspective one understands best; it appears that time will help to integrate our work. From this viewpoint, women's studies seems young and unformed, and any assessment of its common themes or structure would be premature.

From another perspective, however — "outside" or "above" the disciplines — women's studies does have form; it is uncoordinated; it is growing by leaps and bounds but in dozens of different places under different disguises; and time may or may not help us integrate it — depending on how we use that time. One way in which we might view this scholarship as a somewhat structured body is to note that similar themes are found in feminist scholarship in many different disciplines, and those themes which we hold in common across at least some disciplinary boundaries are the real content of the discipline of women's studies. I offer here some generalizations about what those common themes are.[25]

Women's studies, in every discipline, has two basic impulses or commitments. One is negative, the other positive; one is critical, the other constructive; one is to challenge patriarchy, the other to study and understand women in their own right and in their own terms; one is a demand for liberty, the other a search for identity. Although some scholars focus more on one than the other of these two great themes, women's studies as a whole, and many individual works, interweave them.

The negative or "deconstructive" part of women's studies is founded on a deep challenge to all previous scholarship about women. The simplest is the early, by now convincingly demonstrated critique that traditional scholarship has simply left women out. Even within standard categories and conceptual frameworks women have been neglected, not to mention the absence of concepts and frameworks suitable for explaining and understanding women's live. The fundamental bias of "masculism," as defined by Shiela Ruth, is that it mistakes the part for the whole, assuming that the male realm is the human realm.[26] When women have been studied at all, they have been studied in a sexist way, affected by this masculist bias. Aristotle, Freud, Parsons, Kohlberg, Hemingway have all distorted our experience. Women have been defined as deviant, the "other," or in terms of men. Ignorance of women causes masculist scholarship to distort women's experience in countless different ways — as, to cite just one example, by seeing women as unchanging essences, unaffected by history, culture, class, race.

The critique of sexism has led women's studies scholars in many disciplines to denounce the foundations of traditional scholarship, including its methods and its underlying assumptions. An important criticism challenges "context-stripping" research, which views women's actions apart from the larger socio-political context which restricts choices and rewards or punishes women in particular ways. A more far-reaching challenge is to the very concept of "objectivity," which is seen as so flawed as to be useless. Feminist critics doubt that scholarship is very abstract, impersonal, or independent of the identity, status, and gender of the researcher, much less his or her values. Thus everything about modern scholarship, from the way experiments are designed to the way works of art and literature are evaluated, must be reconsidered for its maculist bias.[27]

The critique of sexist scholarship does not by itself and could not make women's studies an academic disciplines. It properly belongs within each of the traditional disciplines that it criticizes. The "constructive" part of women's studies is something else. If all other scholarship is flawed by its masculist bias, then women's studies has the possibility (and challenge) of creating a better understanding — either a more accurate and useful understanding of women, or perhaps by extension an improved vision of the whole world. A key question for women's studies is whether this new, better content is a coherent picture or whether it is dozens of different and unconnected pictures, corresponding to the traditional disciplines.

There are important obstacles in the way of women's studies' creation of a coherent constructive vision. Calling women's studies feminist scholarship does not solve the problem, even though virtually all women's studies people are self-proclaimed feminists of one sort or another.[28] Feminist thinking is clearly present in the critical part of women's studies, which centers on opposition to sexism, patriarchy, and any form of the oppression or undervaluing of women. But feminism provides no single or simple model for the constructive work of understanding women's lives in women's own terms. In the late 20th century, there are many different feminisms, with widely divergent theoretical frameworks

and strategies for change. Women's studies in the U.S. has not resolved these differences, and has generally preferred to be an inclusive pluralism, encompassing all of these approaches, rather than attempting to create either a super-feminism that will supercede the others, or a watered-down consensus which might give the illusion of feminist unity.

But the constructive impulse is clearly there, has always been there, and is perhaps the special mission of women's studies in the context of the larger feminist movement. For if men have ignored and then misunderstood everything about women, we still need to recover our heritage and have some sense of who we are, where we have come from, what divides us and unites us, whether our individual experiences are shared or unique, how women participate in every arena of human activity, what ideas women have had and what works women have made.

It should be no surprise, however, that the strongest theme even in the constructive scholarship of women's studies focuses on oppression, women's studies' first vision of the reality of women's lives. While some scholars wrote of derogatory images of women in male-produced culture, or of the undervaluation of the cultural creations of women, or the themes of suppression found in women's expression, others studied the underrepresentation of women in positions of power, the structural biases of institutions, or the gender roles, socialization, and power imbalances that cause alleged "sex differences."

Women's studies would be pretty thin stuff if it had stopped there. There are probably several reasons why it didn't. The focus on oppression is less congenial for the personally comfortable or the fundamentally moderate or liberal scholars, than it is for radicals and outsiders. It is also frustrating and depressing to see women always as victims; we want a better identity than that, and something that belongs to us. Even more important, this vision is not even true. We know this because of our basic methodology, in both teaching and research: the emphasis on women's own voices interpreting their experiences.

This principle was first seen in women's studies classes that emphasized sharing of personal experiences; it contributes to a preference for qualitative over quantitative methods in research. It led to a widespread search for new data, including documents by women — whether formal or informal, such as letters and diaries. Some scholars found mostly evidence of oppression — women telling us of suffering and restriction. But researchers also found more: a relatively private women's culture, in which women do different things than men and value their own lives differently than the men around them do. If we try to see women's lives as women themselves see those lives, and to throw off the masculist bias that undervalues whatever part of human existence has been assigned to women, we begin to value the work that women have done and to ask new questions about it.

Several key words and trends in different disciplines illustrate this phenomenon. In humanities fields scholars have shifted from studying images of and restrictions on women to study of women's creative works. Historians and anthropologists are seeing women's culture, behavior, and even certain ideologies about women's place as ways in which women create their own identity and make limited progress, albeit within boundaries imposed by patriarchy. Jean Baker Miller describes a 'new psychology of women" that builds from the psychological strengths of women as a subordinated group. Carol Gilligan has asked how women make moral decisions, studied their open-ended responses in detail, and found that women have their own pattern of moral development, different from the stages Lawrence Kohlberg described for men (and on which women seldom scored high). And in 1981 Jessie Bernard published *The Female World,* a large-scale focus on the social

structures and culture of women, with minimal reference to men, attempting "to deal with the female world in and of itself, as an entity in its own right, not as a byproduct of the male world."[29] This new scholarship, based in large measure on new sources as well as new viewpoints, brings such new ideas about women and women's culture that it challenges all heretofore existing, but limited, ideas about "humanness."

Mainstreaming

The long reach of women's studies throughout the university is especially useful to the newest, popular, and rapidly-growing activity of women's studies programs in the U.S.: "mainstreaming." This project extent reverses the flow of influence between women's studies and the disciplines, which are now being asked to accept the new ideas, scholarship, and approaches of women's studies in order to improve their own legitimacy. "Interdisciplinary" women's studies is well-suited for this activity, since faculty are already situated throughout the university, trained in the professional languages of the disciplines, and teaching courses which their departments have certified as a legitimate part of their subject matter.

The work goes under a variety of names: getting women's studies into the curricular "main stream," "integrating" the curriculum to include material about women, or "transforming" it — a name reflecting more accurately the magnitude and nature of the task. The first name is the most widely used. By whatever name, women's studies is a pioneer in this new activity. Neither home economics, nor Black studies, nor any interdisciplinary program, nor any traditional discipline for that matter, has tried anything like it.

A variety of activities are part of mainstreaming. Some are projects to revise general and survey courses to include new scholarship about women. Every survey course about "history," for example, should include women's history; it should not be limited to upper-level specialized courses. Another aspect of mainstreaming focuses on getting the specialized courses about women accepted toward requirements in general education; a women's literature course, for example, should be as acceptable as any literature course. Denison college recently set a new requirement that students take at least one course focusing on women or minorities. Yet another strategy is to get questions on women's studies included in standardized examinations such as college entrance exams, to motivate teachers "from the top down." Other mainstreaming projects focus on general faculty development. A number of projects at colleges and universities or sponsored by disciplinary professional associations have been funded by grants from federal agencies or private foundations.[30]

The simplest form of integration of the new scholarship on women occurs when a teacher inserts a day, a week, a unit, a reading, or a guest lecture on women into a course otherwise unchanged. This extremely minimal change has been widely denounced as insufficient. The material on women is so poorly integrated into the course that it is marked as different, extra, and probably not as important as the rest of the course. Not much more acceptable is to scatter material on women throughout the course, a procedure sometimes called "add women and stir."

The problem is that most courses are designed around viewpoints and objectives that are grounded in the male world. For example, humanities courses often acquaint students with the "great" works of humankind — but the achievements considered "great" are in the public arenas, from which women have been excluded (confined to private, domestic

spaces); and the genres of expression considered worthy of study are those in which women were not allowed to work (epic poems, sculpture, novels of alienation and quest). To transform the humanities so that they truly reflect humanity requires redefining which achievements and expressions are worthy of study — it is not mere coincidence that women are systematically excluded. In a similar way, most social science neglects the work of women (just as the value of their unpaid labor in the home or as volunteers is not counted in the U.S. Gross National Product) or defines "human" as male (with concepts such achievement motivation defined solely in terms of male roles, and social stratification assigned to women according to their husband's or father's occupation). Higher education, like the rest of society, reflects the confinement of women to certain roles, the devaluation of whatever women do or are, and the perception of women as "other" than fully and centrally human. Even a focus on the ways in which women have been oppressed, in part by exclusion from the male world, still considers women only as related to male roles and male standards. In short, the disciplines will probably have to redefine themselves fundamentally.

Mainstreaming is thus rightfully seen by its proponents as a transforming rather than a reforming activity. If not forced to compromise their goals or to stop short of achieving them, mainstreamers will effect profound changes in educational content. But even understood as a fairly drastic "transformation," mainstreaming does represent the triumph of liberal tendencies within women's studies over more radical ones. Mainstreaming is the total triumph of integrationist approaches over separatist ones; a narrowing of focus to existing institutions rather than new, alternatives ones; abandonment of innovation in structure and process for full concentration on content; a focus on changing education rather than on changing society (except insofar as changing education more of less automatically changes society, an element of liberal faith), and a change of audience from women who might make a revolution to men who hold power and (though only indirectly) students in general, whether feminist or not.

The mainstreaming transformation in not a subversion, for it does not seek to turn higher education to any other than its traditional purposes. Indeed, mainstreaming women's studies is justified by the claim that is will help higher education achieve its traditional purposes better, especially the goals of providing students with an education that is "liberal," "rounded," useful to them in the world they will actually face, more inclusive, and ultimately more truthful about the world, which does actually contain women as well as men. Mainstreaming is motivated by a demand for justice, truth, and "reality," as conventionally defined by liberals and positivists.[31] It is a sort of liberal revolution proposing to transform higher education to live up to liberal/positivist ideals by ending the exclusion and devaluation of women.

The criticisms leveled against mainstreaming from within women's studies have so far been scattered. Some are familiar themes: the disciplines are a patriarchal fragmentation of knowledge and we should stay away from them; or mainstreaming is an antifeminist strategy to divert us from other goals; or this is a retreat from necessary struggle within women's studies, where we must first work out our differences over race, class, sexual preference, and ideology. Some fear what would happen to women's studies if mainstreaming were only partially successful: minor reforms could be made without the complete transformation, and women's studies could be disbanded with the claim that it had already accomplished its mission. There is some uneasiness about possible competition between

the two goals of mainstreaming and autonomy.[32] On some levels, there is no conflict and needn't be. Most women's studies programs, for example, want both mainstreaming and strong, relatively autonomous programs: freedom to do our work, and recognition and change by others. Developing the scholarship and teaching of women's studies is essential if we are to transform the curriculum; and mainstreaming builds a broader base of support that can strengthen women's studies' claim to legitimacy.

The only real threat of mainstreaming — like the only real problem with autonomous programs — is what would happen if it were the only work we did. Mainstreaming without simultaneously insisting on our own autonomy puts us at risk of depending on men and male-dominated institutions to legitimize what we do. There is indeed a tone in some of the pro-mainstreaming literature that the main reason for seeking this integration is to satisfy men who are suspicious about women's studies. Judith Walzer, for example, who is assistant to the President of Princeton University, wrote critically of scholars who "retreat into a private, mutually supportive 'hideout' apart from the rest of the academy," warning us not to give "particular groups of people (male students and scholars) reasons to feel that they were to be excluded from its pursuits." She, too, holds up the model of Afro-American Studies, which allegedly sometimes became "an enclave for special interests and purposes which the university as a whole may ignore while supporting these enterprises financially." Acceptance by the academy is her measure for the value of women's studies, since it will prove "futile," she says, if it does "not become an accepted part of the corpus of conventional scholarship." She wants us to "prove" and "test" our work by selling it to the patriarchs rather than by testing its propositions against women's own experience of reality.[33] To me this looks like male-identified begging; to avoid it, we need a clear, consistent focus on the academic legitimacy of autonomous women's studies, a legitimacy that springs from the nature and quality of our work, not from somebody else's opinion of it.

Conclusion

In little over a decade, U.S. women's studies has undergone changes that seem to make its identity and future clearer, if only because some of the multiple strands present at its creation have weakened. I think it is clear now that women's studies is not the women's liberation movement, will not be primarily a political activist organization, and in particular will not be the radical branch of the women's movement. Women's studies is tied to a particular, limited set of institutions: established education. The radical founders knew that if women's studies became institutionalized it would become more conservative, that the structures would take on lives of their own, with needs of their own. The moderates countered that structure is necessary for survival and to accomplish practical work. Both sides were correct: we needed institutions, created them, and they now shape us. Some radical theorists and activists have quit women's studies, leaving moderates and academics in charge — which may be the best solution for both groups, who are still free to pursue their somewhat different aims in the most appropriate ways.

Women's studies will work to reform these educational institutions, alongside other feminist organizations working to change all of the other institutions that presently deny women equality and justice. Women's studies will devote much energy to this task, and it is not unimportant; feminism has for centuries focused on education as crucial in woman's search for autonomy.

This work of reform may be women's studies greatest achievement, but it is not, I think, its greatest potential. That lies in another part of the work that academe does: the

nurturance of ideas. Women's studies was born into a rather anti-intellectual climate, and much of the hostility to academic procedures, structures, and work seems, in retrospect, to have been related to general concern about the distance between intellectual work and the actual political events and forces that cause tangible hurt, especially to women. But it is difficult to be anti-intellectual when you are inside a university, trying to reform it.

This paper has argued that what women's studies most needs now is better coordination among its highly productive parts. In our intellectual work we are like that gaggle of blind people feeling an elephant — none of us understands the whole, and occasionally we yell at each other critically for having a "wrong" interpretation, or a wrong strategy for researching the rest of the elephant. What we do have to help us is a deep commitment to inclusiveness and to diversity — to include all women, to hear all women speaking in their own voices, to have an understanding that will not be limited by any oppression or exclusion. We strive for this in our organizations, and as individuals in our best scholarship. We are learning, much more slowly than we thought we would, how to get a diverse group into one place and talking; this alone turned out to be far more difficult than we first thought, because we all underestimated racism, heterosexism, social class, and other forces that divide us. If we can stay in this place together long enough, we may be able to learn to integrate ourselves in a way that does not oppress or denigrate any of us. If we do this, as organization and as thinkers, the world will change utterly, because no one who has seen or heard about our vision will see anything the same old way again.

I would like to close by quoting Berenice Carroll, who gave a speech at a regional meeting in 1978 with a surprising ending. She spoke at length deploring women's studies' inability to act in the community because it had become enmeshed in "traditional, masculine" value systems. But her final paragraph contained these words:

> Yet it is true that women have an intellectual life as well as a political, economic, emotional, physical, and sexual life. It is important for that intellectual life to be nourished — and restored. Women have a rich intellectual history, still largely unknown . . . Women have a right to know of this body of women's intellectual work, and we may have some things to learn from it. . . . Thus academic women's studies has its own tasks, its own contributions to make.[34]

Notes

I would like to thank Nupur Chaudhuri for her comments on a draft of this essay.

[1] The list of women's studies programs existing in 1982 was published in the *Women's Studies Quarterly* 10:3 (fall, 1982), pp. 21-31. The *Quarterly* has published such lists annually since 1972. (For its first eight volumes, until 1981, this publication was known as the *Women's Studies Newsletter;* throughout this essay it will be referred to as the *Women's Studies Quarterly*.) See also Florence Howe, *Seven Years Later: Women's Studies Programs in 1976*, (Washington, D.C.: National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs) June, 1977, p. 18.

[2] For an early analysis of these conflicts, see Catherine Stimpson, "What Matter Mind: A Critical Theory about the Practice of Women's Studies," *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 1:3, (1973), pp. 293:314, condensed in *Women's Studies Quarterly*, No. 2 (Winter 1972-3), pp. 1, 4.

Reports from two important early conferences also analyzed and evaluated the underlying conflict. Regarding a conference in Pittsburgh in 1971, see Rae Lee Siporin, ed., *Feminist Studies v: Proceedings of the Conference Women and Education: A Feminist Perspective* (Pittsburgh: KNOW, 1972), especially her introduction, pp iii-xiv. About the 1973 West Coast Women's Studies Conference held in Sacramento, see the conference *Report*, published by the Women's Studies Board at California State University Sacramento in 1974 (distributed by KNOW); Betty Chmaj, "Confrontation in Anger and Pain." in Betty Chmaj and Judith Gustafson, *Image, Myth and*

Beyond: American Women and American Studies, Vol. 2 (Pittsburgh: KNOW, 1974), pp. 24-39; and Deborah Rosenfelt, "What Happened at Sacramento," *Women's Studies Quarterly*, No. 5 (Fall, 1973), pp. 1, 6-7. On the first national conference of the National Women's Studies Association, see *Women's Studies Quarterly* 7:3 (Summer, 1979). These tensions existed also outside the United States; see *Women's Studies Quarterly (Newsletter)* 4:2 (spring 1976) for a report on a conference in the Netherlands.

For more recent comments along similar line, see Adrienne Rich, "Disobedience is what NWSA is Potentially About," in *Women's Studies Quarterly* 9:3 (fall 1981), pp. 4-6, calling for a "true" rather than "false rebellion," which cannot be carried out by "dutiful daughters," since it involves a disloyalty recognized and therefore punished by the "white, patriarchal university."

[3] See reports of the conferences of the National Women's Studies Association, in *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 7:4 and 8:1 (letters on the 1979 conference); 8:2 and 9:1 (for Barbara Hillyer Davis's reports on the evaluation forms filled out by conference participants after the 1979 and 1980 conferences); 8:3, 9:3, and 10:3 for reports on the 1980, 1981, and 1982 conferences respectively.

Discussions of racism and heterosexism within women's studies are found throughout the literature, and especially within the *Women's Studies Quarterly*, which also publishes strategies for overcoming these biases. Two accessible volumes which pull together much of the criticism are Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds., *All of the Blacks Are Men, and All of the Women are White, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (Old Westbury: The Feminist Press, 1982), and Margaret Cruikshank, ed., *Lesbian Studies* (Old Westbury: The Feminist Press, 1982).

[4] Preamble to the Constitution of the NWSA, revised and ratified in 1982, printed in *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 10:4 (winter 1982), pp. 41-43.

[5] See *Women's Studies Quarterly* 4:1 (winter 1976), 4:2 (spring 1976), and 4:3 (summer 1976) for articles by Elsa Greene and others outlining concerns of NWSA's founders, and 5:1/2 (winter-spring 1977) for reports from the founding conference in San Francisco.

[6] This group includes those persons, usually full or part-time faculty members, who are either coordinators or directors of women's studies programs in colleges or universities. This caucus was not named in the original NWSA constitution, but the group began meeting at national conferences and in 1981 requested official caucus status, which was granted a year later. Program administrators are not oppressed in society, but recognition was granted on the grounds that their voices and needs were underrepresented in NWSA, and that they are an existing, active, and organized group of strong supporters of NWSA. The caucus publishes its own newsletter, *Program Network Notes*.

[7] This caucus is to represent primary and secondary education. It includes some teachers from these levels, but also a number of professors from Colleges of Education.

[8] Resolutions have been printed in the *Women's Studies Quarterly* 8:3 (summer 1980), pp. 21-24; 9:3 (fall 1981), pp. 36-37; and 10:3 (fall 1982), pp. 32-33.

[9] In 1982 the NWSA decided that the *Women's Studies Quarterly* would no longer be its official publication, provided free as a benefit of membership, primarily because of financial problems, but also because of difficulties over content and personalities. The NWSA then began publishing its own independent newsletter, and the *Women's Studies Quarterly* is one of a group of women's studies journals and periodicals which are offered at reduced rates to NWSA members.

[10] *The Women's Studies International Forum* (London; founded 1978), *The International Journal of Women's Studies* (Montreal, founded 1978), and *Resources for Feminist Research (RFR/DRF)*, formerly known as *Canadian Newsletter of Research on Women* (Toronto, founded 1972) should also be named in this list, because they are essential for women's studies scholars in the U.S., even though they are published in other countries. Another important journal was *Chrysalis*, which published from 1977 to 1980.

[11] Rather little has been written about these caucuses; for an early description, see Ann Calderwood and Alice Rossi, eds., *Academic Women on the Move*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1973) pp. 359-391.

[12] Catharine Stimpson, who alone is probably in a position to know, has written that we have "been prone to overestimate our actual interest in other disciplines. As editor of *Signs*, I have met a

depressing amount of resistance, even among those most in favor of women's studies, to actually reading essays outside their areas of expertise." *University of Michigan Papers in Women's Studies*, May, 1978, p. 23.

[13] I put the term "interdisciplinary" in quotation marks since, as I discuss below, I believe it is a misnomer for women's studies, which is not "interdisciplinary" in the usual sense but actually a new discipline. Gloria Bowles has suggested that a more accurate word for what we do is "multidisciplinary" or "transdisciplinary." (See *Theories of Women's Studies*, ed. Gloria Bowles and Renata Duelli-Klein, London & NY: Pergamon, 1983.)

[14] Brief reports from about fifty different colleges and universities are found in the pages of the *Women's Studies Quarterly*. See also *Feminist Studies VII: New Courses/New Programs*, ed. Deborah Rosenfelt (Old Westbury: The Feminist Press, 1973).

[15] An excellent review of the literature of women's studies, and hence of most of its accessible history, is Marilyn Boxer, "For and About Women: The Theory and Practice of Women's Studies in the United States," *Signs*, 7:3 (spring 1982), pp.661-695. Boxer's essay gives an extended treatment of the issues involved in the establishment of the original women's studies programs, the rationales for various decisions made about structure, and changes over time.

[16] See Boxer, p. 688, and the *Women's Studies Quarterly* for virtually all of the colleges and universities reported on, such as the University of Washington (*Women's Studies Quarterly* No. 5 (fall 1973). Florence Howe has been a main advocate of the interdisciplinary model for many years; see especially "Structure and Staffing of Programs," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 3:2 (spring 1975), and *Seven Years Later*, p. 21, where Howe labels the department "an empire in one small corner of the campus."

[17] Boxer, pp. 670, 689-690; Roberta Salper, "Women's Studies," *Female Studies V*, ed. Rae Lee Siporin (Pittsburgh, KNOW, 1972) pp. 100-105; *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 3:3/4 (summer-fall 1975); 6:2 (spring 1978); and 10:1 (spring 1982), p. 32, on SUNY-Buffalo and San Diego State.

[18] See *Women's Studies Quarterly* 10:1 (spring 1982), p. 32 for Chicago Circle; and No.2 (winter 1972-73) and 3:2 (spring 1975) for Portland State; also see reports from Portland State in *Female Studies VI: Closer to the Ground — Women's Classes, Criticism, Programs, 1972* ed. Nancy Hoffman, Cynthia Secor, and Adrian Tinsley (Pittsburgh: KNOW, 1972).

For the most part, however, although many women's studies programs have faced budget cuts in recent years, they are part of the current budget crisis faced by higher education in the United States because of declining enrollments or decreases in state funding, not motivated by hostility to the subject matter of women's studies. The major exception was the attack in 1982 on the program at California State University at Long Beach, in which people from the far right alleged that women's studies did not teach "traditional American values."

[19] See, for example, Elsa Greene, "The Case for a National Women's Studies Association," *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 4:1 (winter 1976), p. 3; Boxer, p. 688.

[20] On the University of South Florida, see the reports by Juanita H. Williams, Director, in *Women's Studies Quarterly* 2:3 (summer 1974), pp. 5, 11-12; and 3:3/4 (summer/fall), p. 27; on San Diego State University, see *Women's Studies Quarterly* 6:2 spring 1978) pp. 20-23, and Boxer, p. 670 and 690; on Hawaii, see Madeleine J. Goodmen, "Women's Studies: The Case for a Departmental Model,;; *Women's Studies Quarterly* 8:4 (fall/winter 1980), pp. 7-9.

[21] Florence Howe, "Feminist Scholarship . . ." in *Change*, (April 1982), p. 17.

[22] See Sandra Coyner, "Women's Studies as an Academic Discipline: Why and How to Do it," in *Theories of Women's Studies*, ed. Gloria Bowles and Renate Duelli-Klein (Univ. of California-Berkeley Women's Studies Program, 1980; reprinted London & New York: Pergamon Press, 1983).

[23] *Signs* publishes review essays in most issues, which are an excellent source of information about the development and extent of women's studies scholarship.

[24] Catharine Stimpson, "Women's Studies: An Overview," University of Michigan *Papers in Women's Studies* (Ann Arbor: Women's Studies Program, May, 1978), p. 22.

[25] Other writers have discussed stages in the development of women's studies, usually naming three or four. See Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges," in *The*

Majority Finds its Past (NY: Oxford, 1979), pp. 145-153; Cheri Register, "Brief, A-Mazing Movements + Dealing with Despair in the Women's Studies Classroom," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 7:4 (fall 1979), pp. 7-10; Catharine Stimpson "Women's Studies: An Overview" (note 24 above); Nancy Cott *The Bonds of Womanhood* (New Haven: Yale, 1977), pp. 197-198. See also Sandra Coyner, "The Feminist Perspective: A Working Paper," presented at the Western Association of Women Historians, Los Angeles, May 1982. Stimpson is the author of the popular terms "deconstruction, reconstruction, and construction."

[26] Sheila Ruth, *Issues in Feminism: A First Course in Women's Studies* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980), especially pp. 7-8. This book was written as a text for an introductory course in women's studies and has been widely adopted for that purpose.

[27] Excellent articles outlining some of these concerns and others are Marcia Westkott, "Feminist Criticism of the Social Sciences," *Harvard Educational Review* 49:4 (November 1979), pp. 422-431, and Annette Kolodny, "Dancing Through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practices and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism," *Feminist Studies* 6:1 (spring 1980).

[28] Mary Brown Parlee notes that non-feminist psychology work about women is recognized, even by its practitioners, as not being in the field "psychology of women." See her review essay "Psychology and Women" in *Signs*, 5:1 (winter 1976), p. 121.

[29] Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women* (Boston: Beacon, 1976); Carol Gilligan, "In a Different Voice: Women's Conceptions of the Self and of Morality," *Harvard Educational Review* 47 (1977), pp. 481-517; Jessie Bernard, *The Female World* (NY: Macmillan/Free Press, 1981). See also Westkott (cited in note 27 above) for new concepts about the relationship between individual and culture, which emerge from women's studies.

[30] See Betty Schmitz, "A Current Status Report on Curriculum Integration Projects," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 10:3 (fall 1982) p. 16; and the special feature on "Transforming the Traditional Curriculum" in *Women's Studies Quarterly* 10:1, (spring 1982), pp. 19-31, which reports on two foundation-supported conferences held in 1981 for directors of 17 mainstreaming projects and for university administrators. See also Carolyn C. Lougee, "Women, History and the Humanities: An Argument in Favor of the General Studies Curriculum," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 9:1 (spring 1981), pp. 4-7, and Joan Hoff Wilson, "A Grand Illusion: Continuing the Debate on General Education," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 9:4 (winter 1981), pp. 5-6, which advocate, respectively, transforming general education courses and putting women's studies questions on standardized examinations.

[31] See especially two articles in the *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 10:1 (spring 1982), by Myra Dinnerstein et al (p. 20 on the commitment to liberal education) and by Peggy McIntosh (p. 30-31 on women's studies and the professed aims of liberal education); also Florence Howe, "Feminist Scholarship . . . ", *Change*, April 1982, pp. 17-20.

[32] See Anne Chapman, "Toward Respect for Diversity: Some Hard Questions about the Ideology of Integration," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 10:3 (fall 1982), pp. 15-16, reporting on sessions at the 1982 NWSA conference.

[33] Judith Walzer, "New Knowledge or a New Discipline? Women's Studies at the University," *Change*, April 1982, pp. 21-23.

[34] Berenice A. Carroll, "Women's Studies and Women in the Community," *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 6:3 (summer 1978), pp. 15-17.