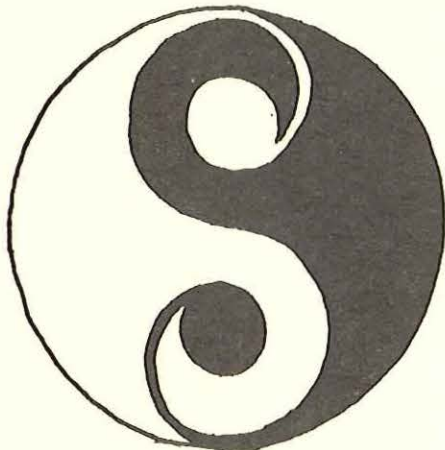


WOMEN'S VU

February, 1986

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VIII:6



THE CASE FOR DIVERSITY: Intellectual or Political?

February is Black History Month. Women's History Week is the first week of March, and Women's Week at Vanderbilt is the last week in March. Knowing this, we at the Women's Center have been thinking about diversity of race and sex and the continuing under representation of women and minorities in universities. So we asked Susan Wiltshire to write an essay about the intellectual and political dimensions of diversity in higher education.

Susan Ford Wiltshire
Associate Professor of Classics

At a recent meeting of the Board of Directors of the professional association of my academic discipline, the subject of a panel of papers proposed by the women's caucus came under discussion. One of the senior members of the profession remarked that the panel was "political rather than intellectual" in nature and therefore should not be treated on the same basis as the other panels being considered.

Such remarks about black studies and women's studies are so familiar to those involved in either that they would be boring if they were not so serious. My own dander has risen frequently on this point, and in the past I have usually hastened to object: "No, the issues are *intellectual*. They have to do with what we know and

how we know it. They have to do with taking the entire human experience into account in light of what we now know about it. We are not talking about *politics* at all."

No more. My perspective on this issue has changed, and it has changed for three reasons.

First, my understanding of what constitutes politics has become considerably wider. In its most basic sense, politics has to do with the city, with what people do when they live together in communities. The political person is not necessarily one who holds public office or participates in a formal way in public affairs, but rather the aspects of all of us as we live some part of our lives outside the circle of home, family, and intimate relationships. Politics is when we confront those who are not like ourselves.

Second, I have come to understand that all intellectual activity is socially constructed, which is a fancy way of saying that all intellectual activity is political. Put still another way, this means that how we filter and understand our experience is necessarily affected by our social/political situation. I am not saying that everything we *know* is contextual in this way—we may come to know some very important things from our genes rather than from our neighborhoods, political values, or racial or gender stereotypes. Rather, the books we read and write, the criteria we

establish for admission to our ranks, the values we attach to our own work and the work of others—all of these things are political. I recall with considerable chagrin, for example, a conversation I had with myself as a graduate student twenty years ago. "I would never write a book on the female characters of Euripides," I remember thinking, "I want to be a *real* scholar, and only women would write on a subject like that."

Finally, I now see that it has been our very presumption of intellectual objectivity that has effectively barred blacks and women from full acceptance in the academy. Recent research in political science has demonstrated a negative correlation between professionalism and public service. The more narrowly we construe professional standards, and the judgments of "peers," the more likely we are to replicate ourselves. That means that we can then think and talk only with a small group of others like ourselves and the public be damned. That means also that we have turned the marvelous complexity of human experience into a private enterprise for the initiate few.

So the case for diversity is political after all. When all of the polis is included in the inquiry, then our intellects will be more honestly engaged. Then all of us take our share in the task, then our professions will reflect more fully and more graciously the public world we all share.

Vanderbilt University Male/Female Ratios

	Total	Male	Female	Male:Female Ratio
Faculty (As of 1/86)	1250	995	255	3.9:1
Tenured Faculty (As of 1/86)	665	595	70	8.5:1
Students (As of 9/85)	8244	4433	3811	1.16:1
Staff (As of 9/85)	5942	1593	4349	1:2.73
Administrative III* (As of 9/85)	30	26	4	6.5:1

*Job titles for Administrative III are: Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Associate Vice Chancellor, Provost, Associate Provost, Deputy Provost, Controller, Dean, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, University Registrar, Director of the Hospital, Associate Hospital Administrator, Associate Director of the Hospital/Director of Nursing Services, Chancellor Emeritus.



Breaking Silence

What is a life worth? I suspect that the answer to that question relates to Margaret Wolfe Hungerford's worlds (1878), "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." In this case, worth is in the eye of . . . The value of a person, then, finds *public* expression through the eyes and voices of others.

The current exhibit at Sarratt includes an opportunity for us to confront life, our observation of it, and a political opportunity to tell. JoEl Loguidice, Asst. Dir. of Arts at Sarratt, has brought to the gallery artists whose works make political statements. One artist is Susan Gitlin-Emmer whose Women's History Altar reads, "Once upon a time there was a woman whose name was forgotten. Her story was not told. Her life was unrecorded except, perhaps, in the list of births and deaths, marked in her own hand between the pages of the family bible." Accompanying instructions invite viewers to help break that silence, by taking a provided index card and writing on it their name, their mother's name, her mother's name and the words "and I remember . . ." followed by something they wish to share about one of the women in their family. It is hoped that for many viewers this will be a highly emotional process of reclaiming their own history.

The exhibit will remain through February 22. If you haven't had a chance to drop by and participate, you have a few more days left to do so, to add to and reflect on the collective women's history that enriches us all.

PREDICTIONS FOR 1986

The *Eleanor Smeal Report*, a newsletter from Washington, D.C., in a recent issue made the following predictions for this year:

- Pay equity advances will continue—President Reagan can call it a "coc-kamamie" idea, but union, women, and civil rights leaders know it can result in tangible gains: dollars in the pocket of real workers.
- The strategy of multiple anti-abortion referendum campaigns of the Right-to-Life movement will prove to be an error. Too many campaigns will prove costly. Voters tend to vote "no" on referendum issues and the antis will be seeking "yes" votes.
- A state Equal Rights Amendment will be adopted in Vermont.
- Pro-choice forces will be more aggressive in fighting to maintain legal abortion and birth control.
- The Civil Rights Restoration Act (restoring Title IX) will be passed by Congress.
- The emerging backlash against the Right Wing's social agenda and against religious fundamentalism will intensify.
- The gender gap in voting will reappear as a significant factor in the 1986 elections.
- The first woman Democrat will be elected to the U.S. Senate.
- The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget amendment will provide a torturous backdrop for the 1986 elections for Republican Senators. The Reagan math of no defense cuts, no tax increases, deep domestic cuts in all but entitlement programs won't add up to the necessary deficit reduction. These domestic cuts may trigger a substantial gender gap in voting.

WOMEN IN AUTHORITY

Male executives are much more likely to accept women in top business positions than they were 20 years ago, according to a new survey published in the *Harvard Business Review*. The number of men expressing an unfavorable basic attitude toward women executives fell from 41% in 1965 to 5% in 1985. Twenty years ago, 54% of the men and 50% of the women thought that women rarely expected or wanted positions of authority, it said. Now, only 9% of the men and 4% of the women hold that view.

—Associated Press, 9/12/85

Preventing Teen Pregnancy

Recent research indicates that teenagers are initiating sexual activity at very young ages. Most of the young men who participated in a recent Teen Parent Collaboration sponsored by a coalition of national and community foundations said they began having sex at about age 14. The Alan Guttmacher Institute reports that pregnancies among girls 14 and younger increased by 18 percent between 1973 and 1981.

There is a growing recognition among professionals that schools and community agencies working with teenagers need to impress upon them the advantages of postponing sexual activity and that such efforts should begin before the high school years. By seventh grade, the patterns of poor attendance and failing grades that often precede teenage pregnancy are already well established. To be effective, however, pregnancy-prevention programs must provide more than information on reproduction and family planning. They must also give teenagers a sense that *their life choices will be severely limited by becoming parents.*

This is confirmed by recent testimony by teen mothers in front of a Tennessee legislative task force on teen pregnancy. Task force member Rep. Tim Garrett said, "They (the teen mothers) all seemed to know what happened, how they came to be pregnant." Some teens acquire birth control pills but are either careless or lack sufficient knowledge to use them effectively. One 16-year-old teen mother, who holds two part-time jobs while trying to finish high school, said, "I tell my friends that being a mother is hard work." It appears that solving unwanted teen pregnancies includes sex education, the availability of contraceptives, and both the education and *incentive* to postpone having sex or to use contraceptives effectively.

One citizens' group which is working to promote sex education in schools is Citizens for Family Life Education, 1808 Woodmont Blvd., Nashville, TN 37215.

—Ford Foundation Letter, 12/1/85
The Tennessean, 1/24/86

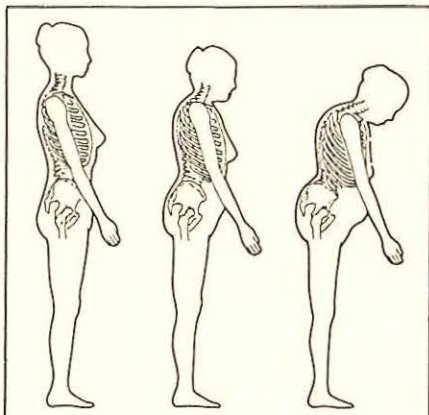
Used Computers a Bargain?

Used computers and computer equipment generally cost up to 30 to 40% less than the lowest discount rates for new equipment, but few sellers offer warranties and few retailers will repair them.

—Wall Street Journal, 12/31/85

A Progression That Need Not Happen

BONES



Taking Care of Your Bones

Osteoporosis—aging brittle bones—is of particular concern for women. Calcium can help prevent the disease and resulting broken bones. Doctors recommend that a woman take in 1000 or 1500 mg of calcium per day. That is a quart of milk, 5 ounces of cheese, or varying amounts of plain lowfat yogurt, sardines, salmon (canned with the bones), tofu, ice milk, soybeans and turnip greens.

Or you can take calcium supplements for all or part of your needs. You can pay almost \$700 a year or around \$22 a year for the same amount of supplement, depending on the brand name. The cheapest calcium (calcium is calcium—its all the same quality) is generic calcium. To find the most economical calcium preparation, ask your pharmacist for professional guidance in selecting the most calcium for the least money.

—*The Tennessean*, 10/14/85

NATIONAL MARCH FOR WOMEN'S LIVES in Washington, D.C., March 9. Coordinated by the National Organization for Women (NOW). *This is in support of keeping abortion and birth control safe and legal.* The Nashville NOW chapter is chartering two buses for the overnight trip at a cost per seat of under \$60. For information or reservations, write Nashville NOW, P.O. Box 120523, Nashville 37212. If you can't go you can send money to pay for someone with weekend time but limited funds.

Tuning In

Cynthia L. Schipper
Building Superintendent
Minneapolis, Minnesota

As a building superintendent, I always carry a walkie-talkie. On a recent tour through one of my buildings, I ran into a panicky new employee who was desperately struggling to stop a leaky pressure valve. Each time he let go of it to call for help, a geyser of water spewed all over the room. When the man saw me, he abruptly ordered me to hold the valve closed. I obediently did so and then tried to tell him how to shut down the entire system. Unwilling to take my advice, he insisted instead on using the paging system to call "the building superintendent." Rather ceremoniously, I waited for the beep, and then took my walkie-talkie out

from under my blazer, carefully readjusted its squelch control, and used it to tell him how to shut down the system.

—*Savvy*, Feb. '86

Thinking About Words

feminist (n.): a person who believes that women should have political, economic and social rights equal to those of men.

—*Southern Feminist*
Sept./Oct. 1985

Have You Seen This Book?

Women Poets of the Golden Crescent has been lost. If you find it, please send it to the Women's Center, Box 1513, Station B, Nashville 37235. Or call 322-4843. Thank you very much.

Women's Center Programs



"UNDERSTANDING MARITAL DISSOLUTION" is the title of a Lunchtime Seminar by Peggy Marini, Assoc. Prof. of Sociology. Prof. Marini will discuss the causes of marital dissolution that help to explain the increase in rates of separation and divorce over time. Thursday, February 13, 12:15-1:15 P.M. at the Women's Center. Bring a bag lunch if you like. Coffee and juice will be available.

PRE-LAW PANEL composed of women from the Vanderbilt Law School will convene at the Women's Center, E-2 West Side Row, on Tuesday, Feb. 11, at 4:00 P.M. All undergraduate women students interested in pursuing a law degree are invited to attend. Due to space limitations, pre-registration is requested. Call 322-4843.

PRE-MED SCHOOL PANEL DISCUSSION by women currently attending Vanderbilt Medical School. All undergraduate women considering pursuing a medical degree are invited to attend this informal discussion at the Women's Center on Wednesday, February 12, from 4:00-5:30 P.M. Call 322-4843 to reserve a place.

THE UNIVERSITY NETWORK LUNCH for all women faculty and staff will meet Wednesday, February 19, in the Faculty Lounge (room 126) of the Hill Student Center. Bring a lunch or go through the cafeteria line, then join the group for conversation.

THE DUTCH TREAT BREAKFAST CLUB will meet Thursday, February 20, in the Rand Faculty Room at 7:30 A.M. for breakfast. At 8:00 A.M. LaDonna Meuchel, Manager of Campus Recreation, will speak and then answer questions. Open to all women faculty and staff.

WOMEN GRADUATE STUDENTS' GROUP HAPPY HOUR Friday, February 21, 4:30-6:00 P.M. at the Women's Center, E-2 West Side Row. All women graduate students welcome.

ANNOUNCEMENTS ET CETERA

- **LADY COMMODORES BASKETBALL** team ranked 21st by *U.S.A. Today* in January. Home games Feb. 12, Alabama-Huntsville; Feb. 18, Louisville; Feb. 20, Memphis State; Feb. 23, South Alabama. Memorial Gym. For tickets, call 322-3544.
- **LADY COMMODORE TENNIS** match with Univ. of Tenn., Feb. 21 at the tennis courts, 2 P.M. Free.
- **LADY COMMODORE SWIMMING** meet with Southern Mississippi Feb. 14, 7 P.M., Memorial Pool. Free.
- **INTRAMURAL SOCCER:** Register Feb. 17-21 in Memorial Gym.

The Psychological and Counseling Center is now open on Saturdays, from 8:30 A.M. until noon. Among other groups this semester will be **COPING WITH PERSONAL LOSS** and **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS GROUP**. For information call 322-2571.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION 1986 RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN (ROW) PROGRAM:

- To provide opportunities for women scientists and engineers to become actively engaged in research as independent investigators; and
- To provide opportunities for independent research to women scientists and engineers whose research careers have been interrupted.

Proposals for ROW are accepted in all fields of science and engineering sup-

ported by the Foundation. Eligible women must have received their doctorates at least three years prior to submission of the proposal to NSF. Call 322-4843 for more information.

CRISIS INTERVENTION CENTER, INC. has changed the name of the Crisis Call program to **HELP LINE**. Counselors will now be answering the 244-7444 and 255-HELP numbers "HELP LINE." They are able to respond to all problems, whether for crisis intervention, suicide prevention or information and referral.

Planned Parenthood Assn. will offer the following education programs in conjunction with the Jewish Community Center (JCC) open to the general public:

- **HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT SEXUALITY** on Feb. 16, from 3-5 P.M. For parents.
- **FILM FESTIVALS FOR PARENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE:** March 2 - 4th & 5th graders; March 9 - 6th-8th graders; March 16 - 9th-12th graders. From 2-5 P.M. Parents are most welcome.
- **PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME (PMS)** seminar to discuss symptoms and treatment. March 3, 7:30-9 P.M.

Small registration fee for each program. Call the JCC at 356-7170.

The **RAPE AND SEXUAL ABUSE CENTER** needs adult volunteers for counselors, community educators, and victim advocates. Training program starts Saturday, Feb. 22. Call 352-1716 before Feb. 18.

COED WEEKEND CAMP AT FALL CREEK FALLS STATE PARK March 28, 29, 30, 1986. This program is for persons who want to change their lifestyle. Choose from a variety of educational, philosophical, physical, and recreational activities including nutrition (all meals will be designed for weight loss), appearance management, stress management, exercise classes, sports with and without instruction. \$80 per person (based on *double occupancy*); single rate is \$100.

"**SEARCHING FOR NEW STARS: RECRUITING WOMEN AND MINORITIES TO HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION**" is a Tennessee ACE/NIP Conference at Tenn. State Univ., Tuesday, March 4, 8:45 P.M. to 2 P.M. Registration fee: \$10 before Feb. 15 (includes lunch), \$15 after Feb. 15. Call Ms. Cathy Leeton, 251-1523.

"**ABUSE AND VIOLENCE IN FAMILIES,**" a program by Dr. Suzanne Steinmetz of the Univ. of Delaware, at MTSU, March 3, 2-4:30 P.M. in the Multimedia Room of the Learning Resources Center of MTSU. Open to the public. Free. Call 898-2508 for more information.

"**LITERARY WOMEN AND THE PATRIARCHAL THEORY OF LITERATURE,**" part of an interdisciplinary lecture series about female creativity and power. At MTSU in Keathley Univ. Center, room 305, 3 P.M., March 4. Free.

Edited by Joan Anderson

TO RECEIVE YOUR OWN LABELED COPY OF WOMEN'S VU return the form below or call the Women's Center, 322-4843, to place your name on the mailing list.

Monthly newsletters, excluding July and August, are sent to all students free. For non-student, off-campus addresses there is a \$3.00 fee for one year. Please make checks payable to Vanderbilt University Women's Center.

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