

Margaret
Cuninggim
Women's Center

Women's studies and politics

*Phyllis Frus, Assistant Professor,
English Department*

With the arrival this fall of Nancy Walker as the first Director of Women's Studies at Vanderbilt, the program gets a significant boost. Her appointment is both evidence of the university's commitment to the program because of its importance to students and a reward to those who sustained it for so long. For nearly fifteen years, faculty members have taught women's studies, served on its program and search committees, and lectured on women's issues to university and general audiences. At last they have a leader who by her presence will make the program more visible and enable it to grow more steadily.

The timing could not be better, for women's studies is coming into its own in the United States, as some academic programs begin their third decade. Besides being recognized as an intellectually sound and influential academic discipline, it has highly visible scholars. Many of them, in such fields as feminist psychology, family law, medical ethics, and women's history, have been able to contribute to the debates surrounding various national issues.

They have provided theoretical advice and research results to courts and corporations as well as to politicians and parents grappling with many vexing social and ethical problems. These include maternal and fetal rights, the so-called "mommy track" for executives, tears in the workplace, custody and economic support for children of single-parent families, wife battering and child abuse, acquaintance or date rape, and

the most publicized women's issue this year, abortion rights.

Women's studies is not just for undergraduate women.

Not all academic research has a direct effect on public debate, of course. National visibility is not the major goal of women's studies: publicity is a by-product. As an interdisciplinary subject, women's studies is directly related to many courses, both undergraduate and graduate. Even an incipient women's studies program like Vanderbilt's will interest students of both sexes in many departments and schools who pursue research projects directly dependent on feminist theory and research.

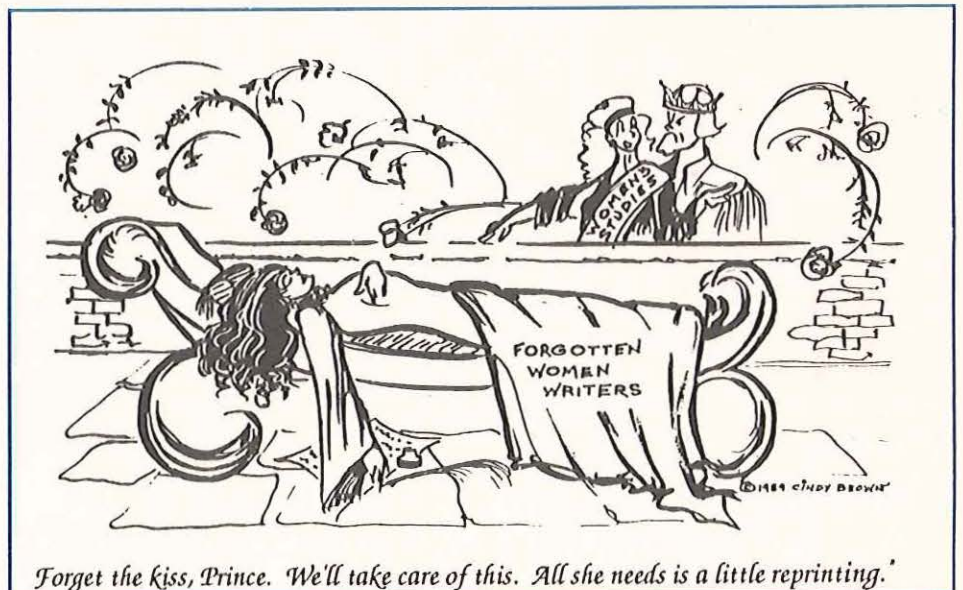
There are many ways to describe the connections among research in women's studies, public issues, and the curriculum. We need only look as far as any of the courses regularly offered in women's studies in

an academic year. Because I have taught the introductory course in the humanities, Images of Women, I will use it as an example.

The humanities might seem to offer a less direct relationship between subjects covered in a course and contemporary issues and politics than, say, Women and Public Policy in America or the two-semester history course, Women's Experience in America. Images of Women, however, draws on several disciplines, namely literature, art, film, popular culture, and psychology. This makes the link between moral and intellectual pursuits quite clear.

Because women's studies is inherently interdisciplinary (that is how it is constituted), the course leader can take a central question about gender difference and follow it across several kinds of texts and media. For example, one basic focus in Images of Women is how to account for the differences between men and women. Are they biological and essential (thus natural and inevitable), or are they socially and culturally determined? If differences are found to be cultural, the next question becomes, how determining of our social relationships are they? That is, how do they affect our family structures or our parenting

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In the news

Clare Boothe Luce Fund to encourage women in science

Clare Boothe Luce was many things in her life--member of Congress, U.S. Ambassador to Italy, playwright, magazine editor, war correspondent. But she was never a scientist.

Even so, Mrs. Luce saw a need for more women to pursue careers in science. When she died in 1987, she left \$70-million in a special trust whose sole purpose is to "encourage women to enter, study, graduate, and teach" science.

Believed to be one of the few sources of foundation support for female scientists--and by far the largest--the fund will provide an estimated \$3.5-million a year for professorships, fellowships, and scholarships to female students and faculty members.

National shortage predicted

Although women have made dramatic gains in higher education--they now constitute more than half of the undergraduate enrollment--they still lag far behind men in the sciences.

In 1987, for example, women received just under 12 per cent of the doctoral degrees awarded in engineering, mathematics, and physical sciences. The underrepresentation of women in the sciences is especially disturbing, educators say, given figures that project a national shortage of 500,000 scientists by 2010.

The Chronicle of Higher Education
July 5, 1989

Yale says "sexual assault;" Annapolis says "tradition"

Both Yale and the United States Naval Academies are historically all-male schools that have integrated women into the student body. Both schools have football teams. Despite these similarities, attitudes toward women in the two schools are vastly different.

These differences have been highlighted as a result of an incident during Navy's Homecoming Game last October. Before the game began, between seventy-five and a hundred midshipmen rushed onto the field

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and tried to grab Yale's female cheerleaders. The women fought back, but three were unable to escape and were passed feet first through the Navy stands. Cheerleader Kim Reeder charged that she was "sexually molested by the male students." The midshipmen rolled up her skirt and she suffered bruises and scratches on her upper and lower body.

Yale demanded an apology from the midshipmen and assurance that it won't happen again. Academy officials, however, maintained that the home game custom is just harmless fun. Navy is not scheduled to play Yale again until after the 1991 season, and as of now the Navy officials don't expect to abandon their tradition.

Nevertheless, on October 31, 1988, after reports of the incident were published in *Navy Times*, the commandant of Midshipmen Capt. Howard W. Habermayer, Jr. did address a letter of apology to Anna Maria Chavez, captain of the Yale University's cheerleading squad, and Academy officials were reported to have admitted that "the situation may have gotten out of hand" during the Yale game.

Minerva's Bulletin Board,
Winter, 1988

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More math = more \$\$\$

The National Longitudinal Study of over 20,000 students followed them from the time they were high school seniors in 1972 through 1986. Analysis of some of the data collected shows a positive correlation between the number of math courses taken and earnings in the first decade of employment. According to the math component of the data, best predictor of high income is earned credits in calculus and advanced math. The bad news is that, among those in the sample who earned bachelors degrees, 21 per cent studied no college math at all, and 62 per cent earned six or fewer credits in math. About 30 per cent of earned math credits were in pre-college level courses.

AWIS newsletter,
May/June 1989

It's your health

Beth Colvin Huff, RN, MSN
Department of OB/GYN

When a woman finds a lump in her breast, the odds are overwhelming (approximately 80%) that the lump is not cancerous. Of these benign breast lumps, fibrocystic breast disease (also called "cystic breasts" or "lumpy breasts") is the most common. There is some controversy over calling this condition a "disease" since so many women will have evidence of fibrocystic changes in their breasts.

The symptoms of fibrocystic breasts include pain, a lump or cyst, and rarely, nipple discharge. Breast pain may range from mild premenstrual tenderness to sharp, shooting pain. The lump is usually found under the arm. These lumps are usually freely movable and soft in comparison to the harder, non-movable lumps found in breast cancer.

To make an accurate diagnosis, biopsy may be necessary. In some cases, the fluid from the cyst can be aspirated with a needle. This deflates the cyst and allows the fluid to be examined microscopically for any abnormal cells. Mammography often can differentiate benign fibrocystic changes from malignant cysts.

Treatment generally consists of education and reassurance that this is not a malignant process. In some cases of severe breast pain and modularity, hormonal therapy is used. These drugs are often a last resort however, because of the side effects of menstrual irregularities, weight gain, and acne.

There have been a few studies published relating significant improvement in breast pain and nodularity by decreasing caffeine intake. Coffee, tea, soft drinks, and chocolate may need to be eliminated from the diet before noticing a change. There are also reports of vitamin therapy, especially vitamin E, being of some benefit.

Breast self-exam is another very important part of the treatment plan because you can learn your breast anatomy better than anyone else. That way, any deviations are detected and evaluated at an early stage.

Speaking of women . . .

Jan Rosemergy, Coordinator of Communication Services for the Kennedy Center, interviews Susan Wiltshire, Professor of Classics

Susan Wiltshire was one of the few women in the College of Arts and Science when she joined the Vanderbilt faculty in 1971. Since 1973 when she taught Vanderbilt's first Women's Studies course, she has advocated for a Women's Studies program. In 1981 she was a co-founder of WEAV an organization of faculty and staff women and men committed to advancing women's equity at Vanderbilt. Her book *Public and Private in Vergil's Aeneid* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1989) provided a basis for conversation about women's issues. Finding a balance between the public realm of career, community, and politics, and the private realm of family, friendship, and the raising of children is not a problem unique to women. Yet perhaps women, the traditional caretakers of the private realm, feel most acutely the pull of the two realms.

JR: You observe that women of antiquity lived outside of history. Today, do women, more than men, live outside history? Can one still equate, roughly, the public world with the male and the private world with the female?

SW: Historically, it's been true that the private world has been inhabited mostly by women and the public world most by men. In the contemporary world, those limiting stereotypes have given way to enlarge the capacities of men and women to participate in both the realms of our existence.

My book is a direct outgrowth of my experience at Vanderbilt, in understanding that if we take the public and private realms seriously, they will necessarily conflict. That's good news. There is conflict but also joy. It's a rich dilemma. If we live, on the whole, more in one realm than another, we are vastly diminished.

JR: You note that, in antiquity, gift-giving among men was a public transaction, while gift-giving among

women was a private transaction.

SW: It impressed me that women gave gifts as often as men did in the ancient world, but they were different gifts. Women's gifts were usually woven and useful; often they were garments. Instead of creating a hierarchy of status by who could give the best gift, they created community among those who gave and received. In the modern world, I'd like to think that all our gifts--those of men and women--can create community among us--in our research, in our teaching, in our work within institutions.

I'm very much aware that in college and in graduate school, I never had a female professor. That absence meant that women scholars of my generation had to create horizontal mentoring and caretaking. That creates community. Perhaps women bring that gift of collegiality to the larger university.

One of the greatest gifts of the women's movement may prove to be a critique of American individualism for the sake of enhanced community. For instance, at Vanderbilt, as staff and faculty women worked together, one of the results was the day care center -- which is good for our entire community, not just for women.

JR: In the conclusion of your book, you say that "in the contemporary world, the twin emphases of careerism and individualism jeopardize the efficacy of work and loyalty as bridges between public and private life." I visualize careerism and individualism as a kind of scylla and charybdis.

SW: It is. Too much individualism can be a bad thing. Living in that perilous path in between is better than heading straight into the scylla or charybdis. We make choices between them, but we are helped by reading literature, taking in what's happening around us, being self-aware as we make choices, knowing that we'll never get them tied down.

JR: Women's gains may also mean greater perils. Are women more at risk?



Jan Rosemergy and Susan Wiltshire

SW: It may be that women are increasingly at risk of the kind of careerism that has been limiting for so many men in this country in this century. It takes time to care for family, to be attentive to friends, to contribute to the larger communities in which we live.

JR: You suggest that the private and public worlds can be bridged by *labor*, "love made visible by work," and by *pietas*, "love attached to duty." Work we understand, but duty, it seems to me, is an alien concept today.

SW: Two forms of loyalty are evident in Vergil's *Aeneid*. One is loyalty to kin and close friends; the other is loyalty to the public realm. Vergil keeps those two in close relationship. Vergil's word for loyalty is *pietas* -- which does not mean piety, in our sense of religiosity. It means relatedness, being connected. Pure individualism does not have high status in Vergil's view. In that way he's a helpful corrective to our modern obsession of being so individual that we're not in relation with others.

Vergil understood work in a way that is helpful to us, too. Work is what translates our personal values back into the world. For Vergil that work was making an epic poem. Work builds bridges rather than creates monolithic achievements. *Labor* is the connection between public and private. We work our way from what we care about in the private realm to what we care about in the public realm.

Nancy Ransom said something once that was a good caution for me. I said that history is on our side. She said no, we make history. I've come to see that, as we go, we are all creators of the way our society will look.

Childhood incest

Joyce K. Laben, RN, MSN, JD, FAAN
Professor of Psychiatric Nursing

Patricia Wise, RN, MSN
Program Director, Parthenon Pavillion
Hospital

Conservative estimates indicate one in four women and one in ten men are adult survivors of incest. There is a greater chance of female incest being reported than male. Incest crosses all socioeconomic classes and boundaries.

The immediate effects shown by the child can be manifested as physical complaints, nightmares, aggressive behavior, anger, running away, not attending school, doing poorly in school, social withdrawal, eating disturbances, fears, and inappropriate sexual behavior. Often the child tells no one immediately. Because of the personal relationship with the offender, children are often reluctant or too confused to report the abuse. Other factors that may prevent reporting by children are lack of knowledge about their own bodies and personal rights, fear of punishment, and loss of the family as a unit. It is not unusual for the victim to at least temporarily lose the memory of the sexual abuse.

When molested child grows up

As the victim gets older, difficulty in dealing with normal stressors for their age group can be noted. As an adult, the victim feels shame, guilt, distrust of others, fear of intimacy, and a sense of isolation and aloneness. The individual may become involved in addictive behavior such as substance abuse, eating disorders, sexual promiscuity, multiple unsuccessful intimate relations, and chronic depression along with suicidal thinking. Commonly adults have flashbacks of the incidents leading to increased guilt, shame, and anxiety. Panic attacks with physical symptoms, difficulty breathing, headaches, palpitations of the heart and irritability in carrying out normal everyday activities can occur. The symptoms may become more acute at the birth of a child or when the son or daughter reaches two or three years and becomes sexually curious. It is not uncommon for the victim to be fearful of physically
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abusing his or her own child because of prior unresolved anger or rage. If the abused victim's mother or father dies, acute anxiety may follow.

Where abuse occurs most often

Abuse most often occurs in families who are socially isolated, have rigid family rules, secrecy, an intergenerational history of abuse, and have a history of substance abuse, particularly of alcohol. Offenders have often been physically, emotionally, and sexually abused as a child. Child victims tend to have a mother who was also victimized. When her child is abused, the mother looks the other way because of her own unresolved feelings of shame, guilt, and fear of abandonment.

Where to go for treatment

Treatment for this problem should begin before the offense can occur. Teaching children about their own bodies and their right not to be touched in certain places is imperative. If it doesn't feel right to be with someone, then it is all right to leave and tell another person.

A child who reports sexual abuse must be taken seriously and provided counseling individually or in groups depending on the particular needs of the child. Reporting sexual abuse to the state or local authorities is mandatory in Tennessee.

Treatment for adults can be in

Reporting sexual abuse... is mandatory in Tennessee.

one-to-one counseling or in group therapy. The authors believe that group therapy with survivors can lead to a resolution of the victimization. Here victims learn that others have experienced similar traumas and will believe the victim's account of the events. Feedback and emotion come from more than one person which enhances the development of positive self-esteem (confidence which leads to personal empowerment). The group also helps them work through previously hidden feelings of rage and guilt. It is most helpful if the family of origin participates in counseling because each family member has been affected in some manner by the incest.

Resources for treatment are provided by mental health agencies, the Rape and Sexual Abuse Center, and private therapists. ■

Women's studies (from page one)

models and thus perpetuate the differences? And after that, what do we do about changing the effects of these differences, such as those that produce visible inequity or widespread discrimination? Thus the connection to social and political change is made.

To give a few other examples of these relations from Images of Women in the spring semester:
How women can attain power.

The dominant problem that emerged from a unit on women and power was how women can attain and use power without becoming masculinized (competing at being men) or becoming asexual, which was the fate of many warrior-queens in history, such as Britain's Boadicea. The class viewed one contemporary adaptation of the Amazon or Woman warrior image: an ad trying to sell a body-building machine pictured a woman clad in leopard skin with exaggerated fingernail "claws" in a revealing pose. The students thought that the model represented a particularly challenging sex object rather than a compromise image of a powerful and beautiful woman. They found this mixed message more offensive than a simple exploitative "pin-up" image. The class concluded that it is not a good solution which allows women to assume masculine attributes of power (macho image) only to emphasize their sexual desirability.

It was in this unit that the recognition of the negative effects of restrictive gender stereotypes on men as well as women hit home. The students wanted to find other conceptions of both women's and men's beneficial use of power. In this regard, it also became evident that men as well as women have good reason to take women's studies courses.

Students in women's studies courses do not always leave with a sense of optimism about our society's gender arrangements and their effects. They frequently leave with the desire to learn more and to work at problems they have discovered. With the prospects for a strong women's studies program growing up on this foundation, many students will be able to do some of that work right here, and in so doing, will contribute significantly to the quality of intellectual life on campus. ■



Naomi Heiser, new librarian

In the library

Naomi E. Heiser
Women's center librarian

New acquisitions

"New" language, as opposed to gender-specific terminology, may sometimes sound awkward or even offensive to those unfamiliar with its uses and/or purposes. Although phasing out the "generic masculine" is becoming mainstream, one may not be as familiar with up-to-date substitutes for pronouns, descriptive terms, expressions, and phrases. To ease the transition to non-sexist language, it is often necessary to make careful, well-crafted choices (that is, until the "new" becomes the "normal").

To this end, the women's center library has acquired Rosalie Maggio's *The Nonsexist Word Finder: a Dictionary of Gender-free Usage*. The book contains an extensive thesaurus of nonsexist words and phrases, appendices housing current theory on the more problematic and widely used terms, and readings by prominent commentators in the field. It is a useful reference for anyone who wants to avoid using sexist language.

Your Legal Guide to Marriage and Other Relationships is part of the American Bar Association's "You and the Law" Series, a set of booklets for the layperson which attempt to answer frequently asked questions about legal issues. In this volume, types of relationships and the terms under which they may be established or discontinued are defined. It describes laws governing the products of these relationships including children, property, and finances. There is commentary on changes in

law, a response to society's acceptance of different social relationships and the special problems that arise from them. Of note are sections dealing with "modern" issues such as pre-marital contracts, living together outside of marriage, spousal conduct and duties, domestic violence, and the legality of rape within marriage. Unfortunately, this booklet does not provide specifics on a state by state basis; however, it

does include recommendations for further reading or assistance.

In February of this year New York Federal District Judge John M. Walker ruled that because the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) is discriminatory to girls, it cannot be used as the exclusive basis upon which to award scholarships. *The SAT Gender Gap - Identifying the Causes* by Phyllis Rosser and published by the
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Calendar of events

Call 322-4843 for further information on the programs listed below.

The Book Group will meet on Monday, September 11, 5:15 p.m. until 6:15 p.m. at The Book Oasis, 2824 Dogwood Place (turn on Bransford Avenue across from 100 Oaks Shopping Center, immediately right on Heather, second street on left is Dogwood Place). This will be a planning meeting to choose books for the next several months. The Book Oasis is a newly opened feminist book store. Arlene Samowich, the owner, has invited the group there to look at books they might want to choose for the monthly meetings.

Lunchtime Book Review will feature *One of the Guys: The Wising Up of an American Man* reviewed by Don Welch, Associate Dean of the Law School on Thursday, September 14, 12:15 p.m. at the women's center. Author Harry Stein recounts his struggle to adapt to feminism. Bring your lunch and join us. Hot and cold drinks provided.

Women's Faculty Organization Reception. The Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center and the Women's Faculty Organization invite all women faculty and administrators to a reception on Friday, September 15, 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. at the Vaughn Home (Center for the Humanities).

Noontime Seminar will unravel the stereotypes of Egyptian women by looking at the particularities of their lives. Seminar will be led by Kathleen R. Kamphoefner, Instructor Communication Studies, on Wednesday, September 20 at noon in Sarratt 118.

Dissertation Writers Group begins new year. Women who are writing a dissertation are welcome to join the women's center Dissertation Writers Group, which will reorganize at a special meeting on Wednesday, September 20, at 4:30 p.m. at the women's center. Anyone who is interested, but cannot attend the meeting, should call the women's center and speak with the director, Nancy Ransom.

The purpose of the group is to help its participating members finish their dissertations. To this end, each meeting is devoted to individual reports of progress and plans for the coming weeks, and to problem-solving for participants who have hit a snag. The group meets for two hours each month.

To sign up for the Dissertation Writers Group before the September organizational meeting, call the women's center.

The Erotic Still Life: Tossed-off Shoes and Neckties is an art history slide lecture to be given by Helen Dickinson Baldwin on Tuesday, September 26, 12:15 p.m. in Sarratt 118. Used as erotically provocative symbols, shoes and ties carry sensual messages in art, films, and advertisements.

The Margaret Cunningham Women's Center Advisory Board will hold its first meeting of the year on Tuesday, September 26 at 4:00 p.m. in Carmichael Towers East room 208. Chair Christine Kreyling presiding.

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Announcements et cetera

Women Helping Women Through Decisions. Women volunteers (faculty, staff, and students) are needed for a course in positive decision-making and life-planning skills at the Tennessee Women's Prison. Would you work one-on-one with a prisoner/partner for an hour weekly during the 8-week course, October 2 through November 27? Volunteer training is scheduled for September 23-24. For information, call Candy Markman at 383-6393.

Planned Parenthood of Nashville's education staff provides reproductive health seminars and training in the community. All programs are especially designed to audience needs and include such topics as birth control, self-esteem, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS, PMS, sexuality, and relationships. To schedule a training call Sandy Milliken at 327-1097.

The YWCA is offering a safe, sound weight control program designed especially for the YWCA. It incorporates current behavior

modification techniques and sound nutritional principles. Weekly classes will help participants learn to establish healthy eating habits that will result in a permanent weight reduction. Eight Mondays beginning September 11, 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Fee \$100. Call Suzanne Ezell at 269-9922.

1989 Women's Soccer. The Vanderbilt women's intercollegiate soccer team will begin its season at home, September 3, against Arkansas-Little Rock at 3:00 p.m.

A significant number of veterans will be returning, which includes sophomore Janis Rose who led the team in assists with eleven and was second to senior Mary Brailsford in goals scored with nine.

As many as twenty freshman women could be added to the '89 squad, which head coach Randy Johnson predicts will be the most talented group in the brief history (finished the '88 season ranked eighth in the south with a 9-5 record in their fourth year) of intercollegiate soccer at Vanderbilt.

In the library (cont'd. from page 5)

Center for Women Policy Studies, provides a comprehensive and detailed study of the possible causes and disastrous results of a discriminatory test. By identifying the areas in which this important "standardized" test fails certain groups, Rosser not only provides a plan for future rewriting of tests, but rightly questions the validity of such tests as the sole basis for entrance to colleges and gifted/talented programs, and for awarding merit scholarships. The study additionally provides data which evidences racial and class discrimination. ■

"Working mother—isn't that a redundancy?"

Joan Lunden,
Good Morning America co-host

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Edited by JUDITH T. HELFER

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