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Guest editor, focus on Alice Schwarzer: Jeanette Clausen

Feminist Europa.

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Beograd: Filološki fakultet, 2007. ISBN 978-86-86419-20-0.

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Shorttakes

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Welcome and Editorial

Tobe Levin and
Waltraud Dumont du Voitel

Costumes of the soul, books in a myriad of shapes and sizes find their place in *Feminist Europa. Review of Books*.

To share the old continent's new communications, *Feminist Europa. Review of Books* now brings you the latest issue devoted to women's and gender studies in languages other than English. Whereas most review journals are marketed mainly in national languages, at best offering a skimpy English abstract, our reviews ease access to research otherwise hidden in a foreign idiom and thereby help authors meet.

The fact that *Feminist Europa. Review of Books* is published in English acknowledges globalization's need for a lingua franca. But it also challenges language barriers. In women's studies, academia insists on looking beyond national borders. Sadly, however, those born to English, though admitting a need to broaden horizons, often miss what frankly shouldn't be left out of feminism's bibliography.

For a key example, take our target in this issue, a feminist famous on the continent but little known in the English-speaking world, author Alice Schwarzer, whose books, articles, editorial work, public appearances, and erstwhile tv talk show have made her a household word. For thirty years she was editor-in-chief of *EMMA* (not unlike the U.S. *Ms.*), a journal she launched in 1977 with money brought in by her best-selling *The Little Difference and its Major Consequences*. Schwarzer's friendship with Simone de Beauvoir, about whom she has also written, brought her into view of English-speaking audiences with a translation of the Beauvoir biography. But Schwarzer has published so much

more of value that could have been influential as well.

Guest editor Jeanette Clausen, in her *Preface*, fleshes out this portrait of an energetic, highly productive, incisively articulate German feminist and introduces the English-speaking reader to many of Schwarzer's best known books. We are pleased to pay tribute to such a remarkable woman, activist and author, who has also received Germany's highest medal of honor in recognition of four decades of dedication to women's human rights and feminist communication. We are equally indebted to Professor Clausen for brilliant editorial choices, translations and presentation. She has provided feminist academics with an unparalleled service.

But beyond the special focus, we continue *Feminist Europa. Review of Books's* expected features. Under *Politics*, for instance, we highlight two books published in French, followed by accounts of six in German. These cover fields as diverse as sociology, women in business, German literature and Hedwig Dohm—in a tribute to the 175th birthday of Germany's pioneering nineteenth century advocate for women's rights (*The Avant-Garde's Avant Garde: Hedwig Dohm*). Here we are especially keen to acknowledge the reviewer's biological persuasion: Dohm's reader is one of the rare men to be welcomed on our pages.

Female reviewers continue broadening the range of subjects you'll find here, for instance, gender and opera, or creative writing as it emerged from the *Center for Creative Writing and Conflict Resolution* in Greece, a project headed by Christiana Lambrinidis whose contribution pioneers a suggestive style never in our repertoire before. Writing on books published in Italian, Claudia Vitale reviews three, including *Elfriede Jelinek: A Different Prose, a Different Theatre* and *The Global and the Private: Site of No Return* as well as *More Kudos to Little Girls*. Two important pieces on books from Spain also

appear: on *Women in the Catalanist Movement*, a study that fills an important knowledge gap; and Carmen Magallón's *Women on the Peace Path. Thought and Praxis*. Ruth Klüger returns us to German-language texts, looking at the latest work by Swiss radical feminist Verena Stefan, *Alien Sleeper*.

So much for Western Europe. For the appearance in our in-box of Eastern European books we are always grateful. In this issue two Hungarian authors appear. Katalin Koncz and Andrea Pető highlight the political dimension in gender studies, analyzing 'women's place' from regime change in Hungary to the present day. In Pető's biography of Júlia Rajk, Stalinist dictatorship as it affected women is also described.

Our rubric *Publications on literature* continues politically, revealing a significant influence on East European reception of popular Western, often U.S., authors. Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić of Serbia has provided three reviews that do this, looking at Dubravke Đurić's *Govor drug*, Svetlana Slapšak's *Female Icons of Antiquity* and Biljana's own study of *John Updike's Novels*. And here an editorial policy reminder: since 1998 when we began to serve the European feminist community, we have broken with a reviewing taboo against 'conflict of interest'. That is, we permit and even encourage authors writing in minority languages to self-present if the alternative would be keeping their work in the closet.*

The *Shorttakes* section, quite open to this lenient approach, also adds nations otherwise not represented. In this issue, we count Bulgaria and Israel as well as more news from France, Germany, and Serbia. Finally, **Books Received** merely hints at the flood of knowledge pouring out of European pc's, only a fraction of which can satisfy English-speakers' thirst for a range of views.

Very special thanks go to guest editor Jeanette Clausen as well as to everyone who writes for us. Your pro bono contributions to this non-profit project cannot be

over-praised. And with this idealism in mind, we are especially pleased to welcome two new talents to our associate editors' board, Professors Tomi Adeaga und Wangui wa Goro whose biographies you will find in the Notes on *Contributors* section.

*Another unique aspect of *Feminist Europa. Review of Books* is that, though dedicated to work published in languages other than English, we have always made an exception for the English language scholarship of members in Women's International Studies Europe (WISE). For that reason we are celebrating here the 2008 publication of

Violence: 'Mercurial Gestalt'

Edited by Tobe Levin. Amsterdam; Rodopi, 2008 in the series *At the Interface/ Probing the Boundaries* 32.

"One afternoon, a patient who had been in three times weekly psychoanalytic psychotherapy with me left my office after her session, drove down to the train tracks half a mile from my office, and sat down facing an oncoming train." This tragic event opens the essay by psychoanalyst Susanne Chassey, who explores the relationship between private and political terrorism. Her viewpoint complements analyses of violence—that 'mercurial gestalt'—by other contributors to this collection derived from a 2003 Cultures of Violence conference held at St. Catherine's College, Oxford, organized by Inter-disciplinary Net. From fields as diverse as philosophy, sociology, psychology, history, political science, literary criticism, and forensics, authors consider, for instance, hostility to European minorities; military training and torture; the 'endemic violence' aesthetically recorded by Haitian novelists; child abuse in film; female genital mutilation (FGM) in fiction; and the massacre of Koreans during the 1923 Japanese earthquake. Violence in contact zones in Northern Ireland and in the memory of South African museum directors trying to comply with Truth

and Reconciliation Commission mandates are also objects of scrutiny here. Finally, the volume probes that vexed, primordial issue of violence—nature or nurture?

CALL for Reviews

Readers familiar with *Feminist Europa. Review of Books* may find something missing which has been part of every issue since our launch. This time there is no coverage of books on female genital mutilation. Why? Because we plan to devote the entire coming issue to that subject which will also include a retrospective of everything that has already appeared in our pages plus reviews of books in English. In other words, our ambition is to present a solid overview of the literature on this subject in a way which has not been done before, in part because, on the one hand, we are among the few well situated to deal with the multitude of languages in which engaged literature is being written, and on the other, we act on the borderline between activism and scholarship, many of our editors proudly both, activist-scholars whose main concern is to spare girls from the blade. So please bring all books on this subject to our attention, no matter where or when they were published, in Africa, of course, as well as in Europe or the U.S.A. Reviews and reviewers are sought.

(In)Particular: The German Feminist and Author Alice Schwarzer



Who Is Alice Schwarzer? And What Has She Done Lately?

Jeanette Clausen

Preface to the Special Issue

The name Alice Schwarzer has become synonymous with feminism in Germany's mainstream media—that is, with feminism as it is popularly defined and, often enough, misunderstood. She needs no introduction to those of us who followed her career from the abortion rights rallies of the early 1970s through the first issue of *EMMA* in 1977, her passionate anti-pornography campaign PorNO in the 1980s, her participation in countless debates with other journalists and public figures, and her seemingly endless stream of publications.

Probably many women of my generation still have their copies (as I do) of *The "Little Difference" and Its Big Consequences. Women on the Subject of Themselves* [Der "kleine Unterschied" und seine großen Folgen. Frauen über sich, S. Fischer 1975] and remember the rush of recognition

(known as a “click” among American feminists in the 1970s) that came with reading the women’s interviews, protocols, and confessional literature that proliferated at the time.



But Alice Schwarzer also deserves to be better understood by younger generations of feminists and more widely recognized beyond German-speaking countries. That is the purpose of this special focus: to highlight achievements and selected works by this now iconic figure to provide a more accurate and complex picture. The impact of her work as an activist who planned, organized, and led feminist actions and projects over several decades should be assessed. The book *Das bewegte Leben der Alice Schwarzer* [The Activist Life of Alice Schwarzer, 1998], reviewed below, provides a starting point for understanding her drive, creativity, and commitment. Other texts included here afford glimpses of her recent activities—you can count on it, she's been busy!

The range of Schwarzer's published work also merits wider attention. Few of her books have been translated into other languages and only one, a homage to her friend and intellectual mentor Simone de Beauvoir, has been translated into English: *Simone de Beauvoir Today: Conversations, 1972-82*. Trans. Marianne Howarth. London, 1984 (American imprint: *After the Second Sex. Conversations with Simone de Beauvoir*. New York, 1984). Several of her books a-

bout other remarkable individuals are reviewed below: *Eine tödliche Liebe* [A Fatal Love, 1993], her response to media coverage of the deaths of the Green political figures Gert Bastian and Petra Kelly; her sympathetic yet critical portrait of actress Romy Schneider (1998); and her 1996 biography of Marion Dönhoff, a founding member of and long-time contributor to the weekly newspaper *DIE ZEIT*. The understanding and insight with which she writes about these people whom she knew and admired is a dimension not as readily apparent in her collections of essays assembled and republished for purposes of periodically taking stock and summing up.

Three such books are reviewed below: *Der große Unterschied* [The Big Difference, 2000], *Alice im Männerland* [Alice in MrLand, 2002], and *Die Gotteskrieger und die falsche Toleranz* [The Jihad Warriors and False Tolerance, 2002]. Still another facet of Alice Schwarzer is evident in *Liebe Alice, Liebe Barbara* [Dear Alice, Dear Barbara, 2005], based on letters between two friends catching up with each other after many years—and having a wonderful time doing it. The special focus concludes with an account of a research visit to the FrauenMediaTurm by American feminist Germanist Monika Moyrer and a review essay on the reception of Schwarzer's latest book *Die Antwort* [The Answer, 2007].

Like so many of us, Alice Schwarzer is a bundle of so-called contradictions (does anyone really believe that consistency is a human trait?). She is seemingly selfless in her pursuit of causes she believes in, yet also self-promoting as she repackages, reedits, and republishes her earlier writings. She is courageous, even fearless in speaking up about unpopular causes and in facing critics, yet unyielding when contradicted and resentful of would-be allies (especially women) who do not express their support publicly. She has a knack for memorable phrases and pithy commentary but also writes with insight and sensitivity about women from very different walks of life. She calls things as she sees them, yet often stops short of analysis that is worthy of her

gifts. She has been criticized for insufficient attention to women in eastern Germany (the former German Democratic Republic), a gap that is all the more disappointing given Schwarzer's long-standing friendship with the uniquely talented GDR writer Irntraud Morgner (d. 1990). A word often used to describe Schwarzer's statements is "sweeping" (*pauschal*). Some criticize her work for being insufficiently nuanced. In fact, her critics are often inspired to articulate a more nuanced analysis themselves, surely a desirable outcome. Could it be that those "sweeping" statements are a tactic rather than a shortcoming? It is hoped that this special focus will inspire many questions for further study of Alice Schwarzer and her work.

Congratulations to Alice Schwarzer, winner of the 2008 Ludwig-Börne-Prize.

Reviews of Books by Alice Schwarzer

A Human Being Is Not a Program

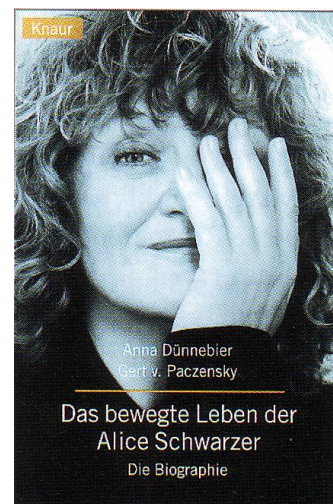
Jeanette Clausen

Review of Dünnebier, Anna and Gert von Paczensky. *Das bewegte Leben der Alice Schwarzer. Die Biographie.* [The Activist Life of Alice Schwarzer. The Biography]. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1998; München: Knaur Taschenbuch, 1999, pp. 272. ISBN 978-3426774359.

This is an unabashedly partisan book, written by two of Alice Schwarzer's long-time friends. The authors make clear in the preface that they will counter the image of Schwarzer as a "verkniffene Emanze" [narrow-minded women's libber]: "We know the participants, we know better. Shouldn't their story be told for once?" (p. 7).

The book is in two parts. Anna Dünnebier, a television journalist who created a portrait of Schwarzer for the German TV channel ARD in 1980, authored Part I [The Biography], except for three brief chapters focused on specific controversies. Those three chapters and Part II, "Zwei Jahrzehnte

Peinlichkeiten" [Two Decades of Embarrassing Situations], were authored by Gert von Paczensky, founder of the TV-magazine "Panorama." Photographs from five decades of Schwarzer's life help readers keep track of some of the major personalities. An appendix contains a chronology of Schwarzer's life up to the founding of *EMMA* in 1977 and lists publications, major initiatives and awards through 1998. An index of persons concludes the book.



Early chapters present "defining moments" in Schwarzer's life. Born to an unmarried mother and raised by impecunious, left-leaning grandparents who gave her much freedom, she had a childhood that, at least in retrospect, qualifies as "good preparation for a rebellious life" (p. 11). Essentially self-supporting after age 16, she drifted through apprenticeships and office jobs before deciding, at age 21, to seek a career in journalism. After a year in Paris studying French and broadening her political horizons, Schwarzer secured a traineeship with the *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, where she earned respect for her energetic, innovative reporting and also a couple of reprimands for caustically critical articles about prominent public figures. She later worked briefly for *Frau und Film* [Woman and Film] and the satirical magazine *Pardon* before returning to Paris as a free-lance political correspondent.

The years in Paris (1970-74) were decisive for Schwarzer's career. She wrote to support herself and began studying at the

Faculté de Vincennes/Paris, where students could be accepted without an *Abitur* [High School Examination]. She became active in the French women's movement and met many well-known feminists, among them Monique Wittig and Simone de Beauvoir. Profession and activism soon converged: "She was one of the dozen hard core members of the MLF [French women's movement, *Mouvement de libération des femmes*]—but at the same time she was 'outside' She organized the same actions that she later wrote about, normally a taboo" (p. 67). Having participated in the French campaign against the ban on abortion, she was inspired to organize a similar action in Germany, "Ich habe abgetrieben" [I have had an abortion]. Reported in the mainstream magazine *Stern* in 1971, this action is credited with launching the second-wave women's movement in Germany.

Many chapters and episodes make exciting reading. Schwarzer's creativity in the face of obstacles is admirable. With no prospect of funding to start a magazine on the model of Gloria Steinem's *Ms*, she had the genial idea to begin on a smaller scale; the result was the first *Frauenkalender* [women's calendar] in 1975, which turned a sizable profit; in the same year *The Little Difference* became a runaway best-seller, with earnings that brought plans for the magazine closer to reality. The chapter "EMMA—Eine schwere Geburt" [EMMA—A Difficult Birth] reviews Schwarzer's clashes with the Berlin founders of a rival feminist magazine *Courage* and her nearly disastrous attempts to run the magazine's staff as a "collective," with the inevitable contradictions of a project based on identity politics: *EMMA* was supposed to be better than all other magazines, yet also publish whatever women wrote (p. 130). Throughout, we see Schwarzer as the guiding force and also the one who does most of the work. Her commitment was and is unmatched—but one wonders what *EMMA* would be like had she been more inclined to share power, decision-making, and editorial control.

The chapters by Gert von Paczensky give background on a number of much-pub-

licized scandals and controversies, among them "Der Aufstand der 32" [The Uprising of the 32], as reported here, a trumped-up internal dispute over Schwarzer's leadership style that was "leaked" to the public; "Lärm aus der Baracke" [Noise from the Barracks], another trumped-up charge, this time an accusation by the SPD press service that Schwarzer had advocated an election boycott; and the "Stern-Prozess" [*Stern* Trial], in which Schwarzer sued the magazine *Stern* because of its sexy cover photos.

The suit was dismissed, but according to von Paczensky, the court was sympathetic to Schwarzer's position.

More disquieting are controversies surrounding Schwarzer's standpoint on Islamic fundamentalism, for which she has been much criticized. A prominent example was the publication in *EMMA* (July/August 1993) of a dossier titled "Fundamentalism" that began with the words "Fanatics and fundamentalists kill in the name of their truth and their arrogance" (p. 227). The "Mediawatch" office of the Heinrich-Böll Foundation responded, accusing *EMMA* of racism. Anti-racist feminists in Germany and elsewhere were also critical of Schwarzer and *EMMA* for evading difficult questions about Germanness, race, and responsibility (e.g., Sara Lennox, *German Studies Review* XVII, 3 [October 1995], pp. 481-502). Von Paczensky defends Schwarzer's position, but the reader longs for a voice that looks critically at all sides in this debate—not to try to force Schwarzer into a politically correct stance, but to take the accusations and her responses seriously.

Coup de Grace for Petra Kelly

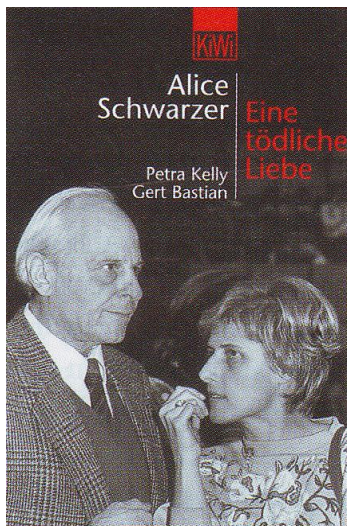
Elke Schmitter

Trans. Jeanette Clausen

Review of Schwarzer, Alice. *Eine tödliche Liebe. Petra Kelly und Gert Bastian*. [A Fatal Love: Petra Kelly and Gert Bastian]. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1993, pp. 189. ISBN 978-3462030402. Review originally appeared in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17 July 1993.

Alice Schwarzer's book about the Bastian/Kelly case poses the decisive question: Why did the public accept the "double suicide" hypothesis so readily? For it was murder.

Napoleon is credited—probably erroneously—with a frank definition of history: It is "a lie agreed upon by historians." Long before this ideology was invented, historians had understood it thus, and, ever since, not only have events come thick and fast, but also justifications. Only a few are privileged to take a long look, with presence of mind, into the ideology production site (Department of Tranquilizers and Sedatives) and return unanaesthetized with a list of instructions in hand. Alice Schwarzer has achieved this.



Schwarzer has examined, from the perspective of a feminist journalist, the Kelly/Bastian deaths, which took place on 1 October 1992 and remained undiscovered until the 19th of that month. After persecution *Feminist Europa. Review of Books*. Vol. 7, No 1, 2007. Vol. 8, No 1, 2008.

theories of all stripes had been constructed and discussed for several days, clarity about the actual, intimate course of events was quick to come. "In the judgment of the prosecuting attorney, it is established that the fatal shots were fired by Gert Bastian. He killed Petra Kelly, who was lying in bed, with a point-blank shot to the temple from his Derringer pistol. He then took his own life with a shot to the crown of his head." These are the events. But they are reported as a "double suicide." The public prosecutor also testified that "the absence of a farewell letter is no reason to doubt the suicide of the two former members of the German Parliament."

His interpretation is widely shared. The Greens as well as the general public quickly reached consensus on this imaginative reconstruction, almost without opposition. Statements are circulated in which Bastian laments the disintegration of the relationship. Friends confirm the "total exhaustion" of their Green political colleague and her dependence on Bastian's care, her statement that she "can no longer live" without him.

Schwarzer sums up the falsification of a murder as double suicide: It is not only the public prosecutor for whom "Kelly's often repeated statement 'I can no longer live without Gert' becomes identical with 'Please kill me'."

Since Schwarzer's book is not only larded with references to the dialectical relationship of the political and the personal (now fallen into oblivion) but also concludes with a confession, the reviewer must of course make public her own self-criticism: Only through Schwarzer's offensive action did this reviewer become aware that she had unwittingly endorsed the prevailing opinion, that she too had spontaneously spoken of "double suicide," and she too found herself more susceptible to the tragic-romantic version à la Kleist¹ than to the plain fact: man kills woman.

¹ Heinrich von Kleist, 1777-1811, German dramatist and poet, who killed himself and a woman companion in a supposed suicide pact.

The fact that the woman was a pacifist and an outspoken feminist, that the man was a retired general and eloquent pacifist, that he was a father figure while she, despite her tenacious energy, was perceived as fragile and girlish, that for both of them, private life merged with the political in ways that were hardly beneficial—all these antagonisms and spectacularly obvious facts had, if anything, a surprisingly muting effect. Schwarzer calls the mainstream press “strikingly differentiated.” I recall moments of unaccustomed stiffness at staff meetings of the *taz* [*Tagesszeitung* (Daily Newspaper) in Berlin] as well as half- or fully articulated fears of succumbing to the morbid fascination of this case: the couple’s death was something like a spy in the political editor’s office—the world spirit wafts across one, it is touching and one feels important. Presumably to ward off these yellow-press urges, the serious media behaved discreetly on the whole—and in their flight to the civic front lapsed into gooey romantization, which in this case was not exaggeration but a lie.

It is not Alice Schwarzer’s concern to serve up a new reconstruction of the case—though she begins her book with an abridged version that demonstrates her talent as a short-crime-story-teller. She wants to find the truth not by augmentation but reduction. Michelangelo (to cite a second great man) supposedly once said that sculpture is very simple: “You take a stone and chip everything away that doesn’t look like the model.” That is what Schwarzer does and the result justifies her method. Page after page she dismantles the legends that have developed around the deaths of these two people. Impartially but relentlessly she cites those who were quick to contribute to the Grand Opera Libretto: the Green Party, which staged a common funeral service for victim and perpetrator; the [news magazine] *Der Spiegel* with its court psychiatrist testimony in which the murder was interpreted as a last act of love; Pastor Zink at the graveside, for whom Kelly, “this vivacious woman,” has “gone to her death”; psychoanalyst Horst Eberhard Richter, who exhorts us to show “respect for the incomprehen-

Feminist Europa. Review of Books. Vol. 7, No 1, 2007. Vol. 8, No 1, 2008.

ble”; *DIE ZEIT* [weekly newspaper], which rather reluctantly concedes: “Even if he is said to have shot her without an agreement of mutual suicide... who dares to condemn a Gert Bastian, who steered Petra Kelly like an invalid through her last years.” Schwarzer acknowledges that all-inclusive motifs, such as piety for example, may have a euphemistic effect. But: “Let’s take a moment to imagine the drama the other way around: After a twelve-year relationship, Petra Kelly shoots Gert Bastian in his sleep and then kills herself. How would his family have reacted? His friends? The retired military officers and the new politicians? The public? Would murderess Kelly have been able to count on the same sympathy as murderer Bastian?”

Some telling questions have obvious answers. Schwarzer has asked those questions and therein lies the significance of her book. Her psychological description of the Kelly/Bastian relationship and its link to sociological and historical considerations is simplified rather than subtle, and the hand of an attentive editor would have done no harm. But compared to the challenge she poses with her book, these are trivialities. One who wants to correct history before it has been consecrated for eternity must be fast and effective. Schwarzer against Napoleon: one to zero for the lady.

Always Curious

Margrit Gerste

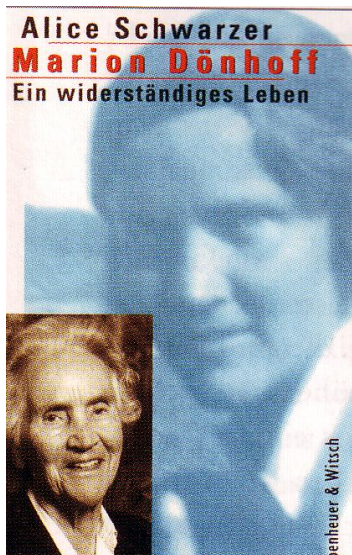
Trans. Jeanette Clausen

Review of Schwarzer, Alice. *Marion Dönhoff. Ein widerständiges Leben.* [Marion Dönhoff. A Resistant Life]. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1996, 345. ISBN 978-3-426622063. Review originally appeared in *DIE ZEIT*, No. 13, 1996.

What good luck that she was never interested in women’s stuff and in 1945, immediately after her flight from East Prussia, chose to write “two rather long memoranda” to the British occupying power instead of helping to stir the barley soup. It

was the beginning of a wonderful friendship, for the memoranda by Marion Countess Dönhoff did not land on the desk of a British general, but fell into the lap of the newly founded paper *DIE ZEIT*.

That would explain the origin of her beautiful relationship with this paper. But how did the Countess and Alice Schwarzer meet? It was in 1987 that *EMMA*-editor Schwarzer asked her great role model (“without this single female name in the first ranks of political journalism I would probably not have been able to imagine myself as a future journalist”) for an interview. So the Countess, always curious, dropped in at the feminist studio in Cologne—“you have a nice place here”—and a portrait was published with the apt title “The Chieftain” [der Häuptling]. “Truthfully,” Dönhoff² wrote to Schwarzer later, “no member of my family has ever been portrayed with such kindness and with such an investment in research and precision—the fact that it is about me touches me most deeply. For actually, I do not deserve that much consideration—least of all in the house of feminism.” And why not?



In any case, Alice Schwarzer plucks up her courage a few years later and makes the Countess an offer. The offer to write her biography. Schwarzer, herself a woman who bursts all bonds of convention, wants to understand “what [Dönhoff’s] material is wo-

ven of, where she got the courage for resistance and the strength to take responsibility. What are the roots of this sensitive rationality, this sensible presumptuousness, this high-minded modesty?”

Marion Dönhoff says yes. She trusts and respects her intelligent colleague. Thus begins a—shall we say tension-filled—collaboration between the two unlike women, “a year of affection and anger, of understanding and falling silent,” in the biographer’s words.

In conversations with the Count’s large family clan, with the family of *DIE ZEIT*, with friends of both genders and with protégés, the experienced journalist tries to get close to her subject. For example, Richard von Weizsäcker [long-time CDU member of the German parliament and President of Germany 1984-94, trans. note] answers a question about the role played by Marion Dönhoff within the circle of like-minded colleagues: “She was the ringleader of us younger ones—though we were actually not so young any more; we had after all borne responsibility during the war. But she was the one who asked: What are your plans now? What do you intend to do? That was no different in 1945 than in 1995.” Or her favorite nephew Hermann Harzfeldt (the countess helped to bring up the orphaned child, who as an adult was her confidant and traveling companion for many years) comments wittily about his part: “I had the role of the wife, so to speak.” Among the most important sources are books by the Countess herself, such as *Childhood in East Prussia* [Kindheit in Ostpreußen] and the moving volume *For the Sake of Honor* [Um der Ehre willen], about her murdered friends of the 20th of July, 1944 [failed attempt on Hitler’s life, trans. note].

Alice Schwarzer ends the biography with a collection of Marion Dönhoff’s articles under the title “Democracy and Responsibility” that make clear what has always moved her—and does today more than ever.

Is your curiosity aroused? Rightly so.

² She died in 2002.

A Talent Is Also a Destiny

Elise Liebscher

Trans. Jeanette Clausen

Review of Schwarzer, Alice. *Romy Schneider — Mythos und Leben*. [Romy Schneider—Myth and Life]. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1998, pp. 214. ISBN 978-3886985173. Review originally appeared in *BerlinerLeseZeichen*, Issue 2/1999. © Edition Luisenstadt, 1999.

Thanks to Luisenstädter Bildungsverein e.V., www.luise-berlin.de for this review.

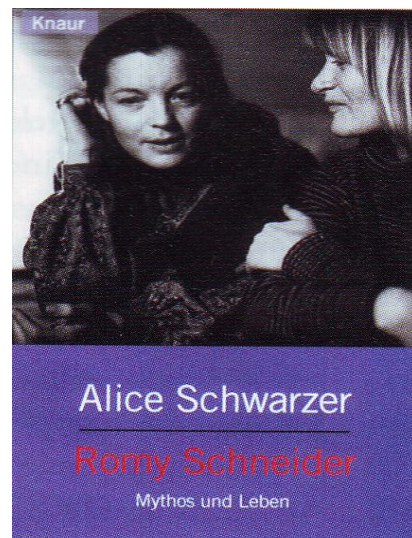
Romy Schneider would have turned sixty in 1998, the year Alice Schwarzer's book was published. She died of cardiac arrest in 1982 at age 43. In her opinion, none of the 59 films she made was really outstanding; ten of them she considered good. Alice Schwarzer concurs with her appraisal, though not without repeatedly recalling the actress's enormous talent, passionate dedication to work, obsessiveness and sensitive creative ability. It is a harsh evaluation. In passing, Schwarzer compares (West) German film to Italian, English, and American film of the second half of the 1950s but does not return to the topic later, not even in connection with the art of French cinema, in which Romy Schneider's second, actual career was realized in films by Claude Sautet.

That oversight — considering Alice Schwarzer's sense of social criticism, which determines her view of Romy Schneider's biography—is noteworthy in that the question of significant female figures in outstanding films of the Western world is thus omitted from consideration in shaping the portrait. For no one knows better than Alice Schwarzer how inadequate conditions were for creating truly great women's stories of the sort that Romy ardently wished for in her more mature years.

The ultimate, tragic conclusion reached by the author, who expresses great sympathy, empathy, and admiration for the actress, is that in all her roles, Romy Schneider personified male fantasies of woman's hybrid nature, the saint and the

whore, which began with her "Sissi" image [in the eponymous 1955 film, with sequels in 1956 and 1957, trans. note], from which she fled to France and Alain Delon, and continued more or less throughout her "good" films, including the last one, *La Passante du Sans-Souci* [The Passerby, 1982].

In her first chapter, Alice Schwarzer describes an October 1974 appearance by Romy Schneider on German television, an event that in her opinion reveals all of Romy Schneider's sensitive and fastidious qualities as well as their inherent potential for conflict. It is a good chapter, intelligently orchestrated. Those who liked Romy Schneider and wish to read a description of a dazzling and glamorous life can close the book here and hold on to their pleasant illusions.



Alice Schwarzer researched Romy's life in the usual ways. Her own meetings and conversations with her are important sources for her views and appraisal. Even more important are quotations from Romy Schneider's letters and diary entries recording the dreams and desires of her early years, illnesses she suffered as a young girl in a strict Catholic boarding school, moments of exuberant happiness and inner turmoil, constant battles for inner freedom, and defeats. These show Romy to be a sensitive observer of herself and her environment. The image that Schwarzer creates of Romy, the image of an insecure woman tortured by fears and self-doubts who was always an object of male exploitation both at work and

in her private life, would surely have been vehemently denied, were it not confirmed by Romy's diaries.

All the conflicts she could not resolve with her tormentor of the moment, be that her stepfather Hans-Herbert Blatzheim, husbands Harry Meyen and Daniel Biasini, be it Luchino Visconti or Heinrich Böll, by whom she felt misunderstood, or conflicts with herself—all these she dealt with spiritedly and passionately, also with wit and excess, by writing.

Schwarzer the journalist testifies to Romy's writing talent. She acknowledges the covert criticism with which Romy reacts, for example, to her parents' closeness to Nazi bigwigs by her film portrayals of Jewish women's destinies and by giving her children Jewish names. She also discovers Romy Schneider's belated reactions to women's struggle for emancipation and her dogged, though "blind," search for an egalitarian partner relationship. She describes Romy's addiction to pills and alcohol under the influence of her partners Delon and Meyen. With all due respect for her struggles, "vacillating between subjugation and tyranny," she concludes in the end that it was Romy's "half-heartedness" that "prevented her from taking the last step, which is so urgently necessary for highest quality." The statement may be true, but is it also justified? If meant as quintessence, it seems somewhat small-minded.

Schwarzer's biography itself contradicts the statement. As described by Schwarzer, Romy Schneider's life appears as a prime example of unscrupulous male society's degrading, almost murderous approach to women's life expectations and vitality. Romy Schneider represents the type of woman who endures this destiny more or less knowingly, who lacks the heart for permanent combat. Such battles require life-long action. Romy Schneider, according to Alice Schwarzer, could muster a fighting spirit only partially. She had talent, which is also a destiny, and wanted to make the most of it. What choice did she really have? And what, in reality, might the "highest quality" prize have been?

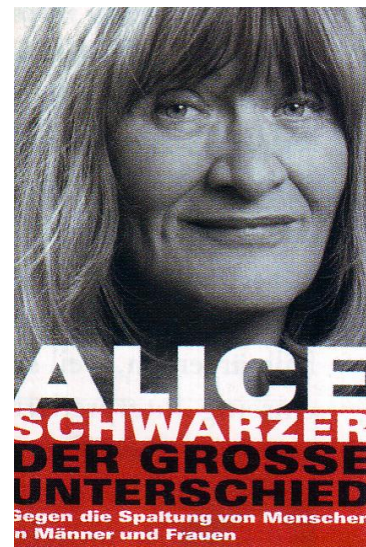
Schwarzer Sees the Difference

Kirsten Liese

Trans. Jeanette Clausen

Review of Schwarzer, Alice. *Der große Unterschied. Gegen die Spaltung von Menschen in Männer und Frauen*. [The Big Difference. Against the Splitting of Human Beings into Men and Women]. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2000, pp. 297, pp. 297. ISBN 978-3596152377. Review originally appeared in *Die Welt*, 23 December 2000.

Actually, there is no difference at all. Men and women originate from one gender with two shapes. This is the finding of Alice Schwarzer's new book. She goes on to say that the "big" difference lies only in the significance we attach to gender, and demands that traditional role assignments finally be abolished.



That position is scarcely different from the slogans with which the famous feminist declared war on men in her notorious "Little Difference" in 1977. "It is not penis and uterus that make us into men and women, but power and powerlessness," the editor of *EMMA* wrote at the time. But then, many theses seemed more dogmatic in those days. Women were basically victims, men were perpetrators; women were slaves, men their masters. Therefore she accorded heterosexuality no chance: "Two-thirds of all

women [are] . . . acutely or occasionally ‘frigid’,” she wrote once. Today she would probably find few women who would defend her conviction that feminism is the theory, lesbianism the practice.

It would be an injustice to the “Big Difference” to dismiss it as a remake of the “Little Difference.” Rather, Alice Schwarzer takes stock of feminism in the past 25 years, profoundly and with an agreeable touch of irony. Has women’s situation improved? The result is up and down. She reports successes, especially in the world of work. For example, in Germany today [2000], almost as many women (43%) as men are gainfully employed, leading to the conclusion “that the family, 30 years ago still the stronghold of fulfillment for every ‘real’ woman, is no longer a calling, but only a part of life.” Things have changed, especially in branches “which were long closed to women.” Nowadays there is no lack of possibilities and role models, from the president of the court to the party chairperson.

Far be it from Alice Schwarzer to claim that it is now the norm for women to hold prominent positions, although it’s exactly this type of token woman that men point out when it’s time to put the brakes on women’s emancipation, under the motto: Why do we need a quota when the women are already involved everywhere? She does not fall for such games. She is perhaps the last woman warrior, even when presenting her more moderate side. Without making it black and white, she points to the price that many women still have to pay for their professional career, such as mobbing and sexual harassment.

But women get their just due also. “A feminist will rarely doubt men, but often women,” the author sighs. Why? Because when things get serious, many women would rather complain than act. She is especially critical of the fact that her sisters still do not have solidarity among themselves and that many women expect advantages from currying favor with men, then toss their own ideals overboard and stab other women in the back. Alice Schwarzer tells about the many letters she received

from female politicians or journalists who claim to share her views and priorities completely—but express the opposite within the circle of their male party colleagues or supervisors.

A central theme of the “Big Difference” is sexuality. Alice Schwarzer can document that, according to the 2000 UN report, one of two women is a victim of sexual violence. She acknowledges progress—a greater degree of public sensitivity, at least with regard to the sexual abuse of children—but finds that there is still too little attention to violence against women, as if such assaults left no physical or psychic injuries as a result. It appears that feminism has so far been ineffective against sexual violence. Of course Alice Schwarzer cannot eliminate all evils from the world. But she creates an awareness that much remains to be done by feminists of the 21st century.

Women’s History as It Was Lived. Alice Schwarzer, Journalist and Woman Warrior.

Ilse Nagelschmidt

Trans. Jeanette Clausen

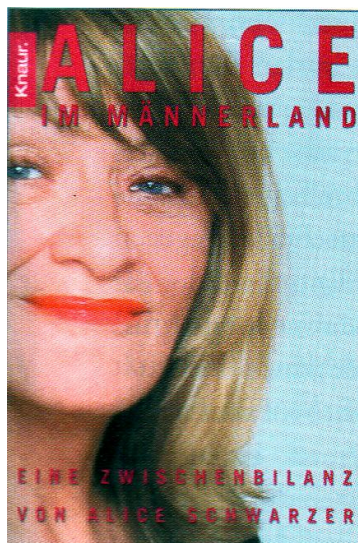
Review of Schwarzer, Alice. *Alice im Männerland. Eine Zwischenbilanz*. [Alice in MrLand. An Interim Appraisal by Alice Schwarzer]. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2002, pp. 368. ISBN 978-346-203 1430. Review originally appeared in *Das Parlament*, 3-10 March 2003.

“Alice im Männerland”—the very title evokes the most diverse associations. In light of the famous “Wonderland” and Alice’s voyages of discovery, the intended paradigm is easily recognized. In this book, which contains texts published between 1971 and 2001, Alice Schwarzer presents her very personal “interim appraisal.” Thirty years of the women’s movement in the Federal Republic of Germany are on the one hand thirty years of actively wrestling with the structures of a patriarchal society, and on the other hand thirty years of steady advance

into areas that were often not taken up until years later by female or male politicians.

The transformations and upheavals are gripping to read about from today's perspective. While at the start [of the women's movement] debate focused especially on the integrity of the female body and thus on the right to abortion, topics such as sexuality and identity, work and love, and (sexual) violence against women have dominated since the 1980s.

Plain Language. The topic "Women and the Military" is certainly not a new political subject in the 1990s; the author presented food for thought about this already in 1978. For me, her reflections on the TV-conversations with Esther Vilar and Rudolf Augstein and the TV talk-shows with Klaus Löwitsch and Verona Feldbusch are among the high points of the book, since more than thirty years of debate culture is revealed here.



Even though my view of relations between the sexes is far less rigid than the one I have inferred from many passages in this book, it nevertheless presents a piece of women's history that was dominant, lived in and uniquely characteristic of the old Federal Republic. To me, it is very regrettable that Alice Schwarzer takes so little notice of the lives of women in the new federal provinces. The biographies, ruptures, and diverse experiences of East German women could have undergone the author's very personal interpretation via her feminist methodologi-

cal orientation. These female experiences have, with few exceptions, been cut out. Thus—and I regret this most deeply for a book published in 2002—only one part of female history and female tradition of the Federal Republic is reflected.

Despite these limitations the book is recommended for all who are interested in lasting change and in investigating life patterns that continue to be ascribed to men and women. Feminist ideas and attitudes are concretely explained so that concepts can be understood in their historical dimensions. In her foreword, which is among the most noteworthy passages in the book, Alice Schwarzer identifies herself as a universalist—however, her view of women and men is certainly not objective and her thinking and appraisals are mired in hierarchical models, from which she would like to free herself—seemingly insoluble contradictions in contradiction-filled debates.

The essay "30 Years of the Women's Movement," published in *EMMA* on 6 June 2001, contains key sentences such as "Women have no history." Much of that which is newly testified here breathes the spirit of former times and sprays a mist of the charm of old battles—really new approaches are sorely missed. Nonetheless, I hope that Alice Schwarzer continues to raise her voice, continues to argue provocatively and with humor for a truly human way of cooperating because—and here I can only nod in agreement—women are not the better human beings. Rather, it is much more a question of creating a true gender democracy beyond all role expectations and assignments. For this, the knowledge and creativity of both women and men are needed. "The future is human."

**Machismo, Islamismo.
Alice Schwarzer Reheats Old
Essays from *EMMA* for a
Volume on Jihad Fighters and
Muslim Societies**

Franziska Sperr

Trans. Amy Young

Review of Alice Schwarzer, ed. *Die Gotteskrieger und die falsche Toleranz*. [The Jihad Fighters and False Tolerance]. Köln: Kippenheuer & Witsch, 2002, pp. 208. ISBN 978-3462031058. Review originally appeared in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 01 July 2002.

Trans. Note:

Contributors to the volume, in addition to **Alice Schwarzer**, are **Elisabeth Badinter**, French author and Professor of Philosophy at the École Polytechnique in Paris, France; **Johannes von Donanyi**, a German-American foreign correspondent who teaches at the Heinrich Heine University in Düsseldorf, Germany; **Cornelia Filter**, a German author and journalist; **Bettina Flitner**, artist and photographer known for her photo essays about women; **Heiner Geißler**, a German author and former General Secretary of the Christian Democratic Union in Germany; **Wilhelm Heitmeyer**, head of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence at the University of Bielefeld, Germany; **Wolfgang Günter Lerch**, editor of the German *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and author of numerous books on Islam and Near Eastern politics and religion; **Khalida Massaoudi**, Algerian author and feminist activist; **Robin Morgan**, American author, political theorist, and former editor of *Ms. Magazine*; **Bassam Tibi**, a German of Syrian descent, A.D. White Professor at Cornell University and Professor of International Relations at the Georg-August-University of Göttingen, Germany; and **Gabriele Venzky**, a German author, journalist and Asian correspondent.

Have we spent the last thirty years in a coma, not noticing the harbingers of danger? The images of the collapsing Twin Towers in New York have shaken us awake. Since then, we have become more suspicious of the people from Islamic countries who live and work with us. The word “sleeper” has quite suddenly lost its harmless meaning.

“Is it five minutes to midnight, or later already? Are the crusaders stoppable on the way to Islamic world domination—and can the enlightened world still be saved?” With dramatic rhetoric, feminist journalist and author Alice Schwarzer names the dangers she sees as central, specifically, that of advancing Islamic fundamentalism and the possible consequences for democracy.

Overrun by Islam. The southern flank of the former Soviet Union, as well as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Kashmir, and portions of the Balkans are in danger of being overrun by the Islam of the Taliban, according to the contributions of Gabriele Venzky, Johannes von Dohnanyi and Wolfgang Günter Lerch. Poverty and antiquated ideas are the humus in which fundamentalism thrives. The American bombs on Afghanistan have by no means eliminated this danger. The central point of these three articles, grouped under the title “And tomorrow the whole world,” is complicity on the part of liberal Europe, which from the authors’ perspective reacts to extremist Islamic groups with a mix of naïveté, helplessness and false tolerance. This opinion is also shared by Muslim academician Bassam Tibi in his contribution regarding the specifically German “prescribed” love of the foreign: “In place of the mentality of the Nazis, who demonized everything foreign, we now have the other extreme of the ‘good’ German, who glorifies the foreign.” To be sure, this opinion is not pulled out of thin air, yet it does seem overly broad. Can all the values of our hard-won post-war democracy, built on freedom and tolerance, have been wrong and simplistic? Is there not a danger that the opinion expressed here plays into the hands of those who would prefer to seal off Germany against foreigners? Would anyone even be capable of reliably distinguishing between “good” and “evil” foreigners, so that terrorist attacks could be discovered already in the planning phase and therefore be prevented? And how high would the price be for domestic politics?

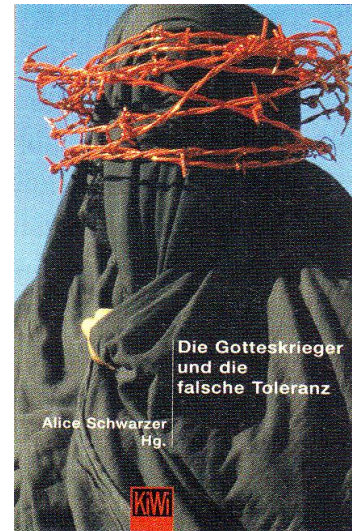
Such considerations, which could lead to a differentiated perspective, can re-

grettably not be found in this book. That is unfortunate, as many of the arguments presented are quite worthy of consideration. Everyone who studies the outgrowths of modern terrorism knows how extremely difficult it is to deal with this form of violence. The terrorism of Bin Laden is simply not locatable: the murderous attacks come out of the blue. A secret formula to prevent them does not exist, and the authors of this book, it may be assumed, know that as well.

On her “spiritual trip through Germany,” Cornelia Filter discovers that under the guise of an incorrectly understood tolerance, groups or institutions that sow the seeds of worldwide terror are tolerated or even promoted. The seven-day trip documented here leads to the Islamic centers and institutions in Hamburg, Munich, Cologne and Muenster, and supposedly shows “how an Islamic network is woven across Germany.” Everywhere she goes, she meets “supposedly” peaceable Muslims, “zealous converts,” and, as she describes in a condescending tone, “tolerant Christians and enlightened democracy advocates.” The many peaceable Muslims who live and work in Germany, without connection to terror or violence, remain unmentioned. The words “tolerant and enlightened” have a clearly negative connotation here. That is intentional, and therefore irritating.

Filter’s contribution too would have been more convincing had she made more precise distinctions. It is true that some of the so-called “sleepers,” such as the suicide assassins from Hamburg, were able to prepare their insane deed so meticulously and successfully because they could study and make contacts in Germany without disruption or discovery. On the other hand, they also gave the authorities no reason to be suspicious of them. At most, more attention should have been paid to what was happening in many of the Islamic centers in Germany. On that point, the author is correct: “A young man doesn’t become a jihad fighter in his sleep. According to the German Federal Criminal Police, the three sleepers from Hamburg were presumably provided with the ideological tools for the

‘holy war’ by the Islamic center in Muenster, which had openly declared, prior to September 11, its sympathetic stance toward the Taliban in Afghanistan.”



The liveliest and most convincing part of the book is dedicated to women’s issues, though it unfortunately consists mostly of reprints from the magazine *EMMA*, edited by Alice Schwarzer. Is this supposed to show that these topics were overlooked by everyone else but discussed in *EMMA* since 1979 and that the Cassandras have been calling for a long time, but were not heard? Be that as it may, Elisabeth Badinter’s article, which appeared in a 1991 special issue of *EMMA* called “War,” deals with the so-called headscarf scandal in France in 1989. Badinter, the well-known professor, author and philosopher, manages to avoid oversimplification, carefully and intelligently analyzing the reasons why the three veiled girls “touched the most explosive problems in French society” at the time³. But that was 13 years ago.

The contribution of feminist activist Robin Morgan is also only an updated version of the introduction to her book *Demon Lover* from 1989. It is about the outgrowths of a “phallogocentric” cultural tradition, about macho societies in the Middle East, Asia and

³ The reference is to a highly publicized incident in which three Muslim schoolgirls were expelled for wearing the scarf (hijab) to classes, an action that was deemed contrary to French prohibition of religious symbols in educational settings.

the West. She locates the typical Islamic hero at the “intersection of violence, eroticism and masculinity.” In a 12-page appendix, Robin Morgan refers to many events, some from the more distant past, that should have drawn the attention of the public and the authorities to the misogynistic positions and practices of Islamic groups. Instead, in her opinion, an unbelievably careless naiveté and ignorance prevail nearly everywhere. When asked what he thought of the Taliban during the campaign, George W. H. Bush reportedly said, “Is that a rock group or something?” Again, the tenor of the article is that nobody was paying attention, even though the catastrophe could and should have been predicted.

Even if the tone of hindsight know-it-all can occasionally get on the reader’s nerves, this book remains worth reading. It focuses attention on Islamic machismo and is simultaneously a warning to adherents of democracy not to overlook fundamentalist danger out of indulgence and romantic multiculturalism.

Prefeminist Girlhood

Ruth Klüger

Trans. Jeanette Clausen

Review of Schwarzer, Alice and Barbara Maia. *Liebe Alice! Liebe Barbara!* [Dear Alice! Dear Barbara!]. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2005, pp. 240. ISBN 978-3453-640191. Review originally appeared in *Die Welt*, 5 March 2005.

Two sixty-year old women on a quest for a lost era: Germany’s most prominent feminist and her “best friend” from girlhood writing letters to each other in 2004. The two women have not seen each other for years, renew the friendship, hit it off just as in old times, and decide to share memories in an exchange of letters about the years 1957 to 1964, when they were between 14 and 21. To cut to the chase: the friend, Barbara Maia, writes just as impressively as the more famous author Alice Schwarzer.

The tone is casual and ironic, now angry, now funny, basically cheerful. They take seriously the girls they used to be, but without nostalgia. Anyone who likes reading memoirs will get his or her money’s worth here: school days, fads, crushes, American films, pop music, fashion (the detested nylon stockings, the coveted close-fitting jeans), detaching from one’s family—all from the perspective of “Do you remember?”

Do you remember the nylon stockings?

The authors proceed chronologically, but the format of letter and reply provides a dialogic momentum and intellectual breadth. They argue over who remembers “correctly,” for the details of the past become blurred for everyone, but a little differently for each woman. Since the letters are written years after the events and experiences they are about, the power of memory itself unexpectedly becomes a subject for discussion.

The two women are from Wuppertal—like Else Lasker-Schüler, Alice Schwarzer’s favorite poet—, attend the same schools, are inseparable, and later, craving independence, move to Munich together where they share a room and yearn for Paris. The end of the friendship, which also signals the end of youth for them, coincides with Alice’s move to France and the start of her journalistic career and with the beginning of Barbara’s unhappy marriage and her life as a mother.

At first these texts are admittedly a bit superficial and glitzy, radiating cheeriness and high spirits. Political and social problems are merely intermittent drops of rain in the consciousness of young people, concerned as they are with dancing and personal possessions. In that respect the two did not have it easy as children.

Both were fatherless with helpless mothers who could not be role models for them. Schwarzer, an illegitimate child, regarded her mother as an older sister; only her grandparents, with whom she lived (“my outcast-ish family”), and especially her beloved grandfather, were authorities. Barbara

despised her mother, who regularly had screaming fits. To a great extent, the girls were left to their own devices. There were any number of prohibitions but no warnings; the society was prudish and more interested in restricting young people than in enlightening them. The pervasive theme of silence when one should have spoken up is expressed also in the grownups' reluctance to deal with the Nazi past. In Munich the two meet Jewish immigrants. They feel sympathetic to them but do not dare to ask them about their past.

Starting with the time in Munich, the letters become more serious, the memories more ambivalent. What caused the friendship to break down? Was it the men who, after all, were less important to the two young women than their relationship with each other? Their partly contradictory exchanges about this acid test, when friendships and love affairs cross paths, make very suspenseful reading.



No less gripping are their memories of attempted rape, which both report from personal experience. Barbara experienced it no less than five times. “Plus other dangerous situations.” Alice is of the opinion that such attacks inevitably encompass death threats. She comments: “What do we women do with all that? And where do we get the confidence, a few days later, to go out swimming, dancing, and flirting again?” And why is it not talked about? Probably so as not to overburden one’s self-esteem.

Alice Schwarzer is no naïve, one-note feminist. She speaks up for women and

their rights, but she can also be sharply critical of women and analyzes what she believes to be feminine foibles. Concerning an anti-female film critique by a woman journalist, she writes: “Women can be downright mean and cowardly. It struck me that only men have written accurately about this film.” And in another context: “Funny, these scheming nasty behaviors have followed me my whole life. And of course they always came only from women. Since they are too weak to attack head-on, they do it from the rear.” Conversely and yet of a kind, “the rage and revolt of an Ulrike Meinhof . . . surely [had] far deeper reasons than the great political idea. It was, I believe, also her petty, humiliating life as a woman that caused her to flip out.”

Nowadays we women are better off!

These are feminist theses argued on the basis of examples from the private life of the founder of *EMMA*. The focus is primarily on Alice, even in Barbara’s letters. But Barbara also writes vividly about a woman’s life that Alice did not know, about housewives’ woes that could not be brought out in the open given the pressures of society in the nineteen fifties and sixties.

The unanimous conclusion of this collection of letters is: Nowadays we women are better off than we were then.

What is captivating about this book is the mixture of thoughtfulness and everyday silliness, of awakening political consciousness and the hair-curling (literally!) private life, of soul-destroying, boring office jobs—at the time there were hardly any other options for women—and the conviction that one could make more of oneself. In the end, the back-and-forth of two women’s voices expresses affirmation of life and affirmation of friendship.

The FrauenMediaTurm [FMT]/ Women's Media Tower

Monika Moyrer

In January 2007, Monika Moyrer Visited the FrauenMediaTurm. This is Her Report.

**'Wiever alaafl!' [Women to the Fore].
"Wer den Turm hat, hat die Macht." [She
Who Has the Tower Has the Power].⁴**

When Alice Schwarzer, Germany's most renowned feminist and editor of the women's journal *EMMA* exclaimed „Wiever alaafl!”⁵ (Women to the Fore), she celebrated the fact that in 1994 the FrauenMediaTurm (FMT = Women's Media Tower) had finally found an appropriate home. Negotiations with the city of Cologne to use the medieval Bayenturm (Bayentower) as an archive dedicated to feminist research had been successfully completed. Since then, the FMT, located on the banks of the Rhine, has become the most comprehensive modern special collection for gender inequity and gender research in German-speaking countries.

Schwarzer's project started in 1984 with the founding of the "Feministische Archiv und Dokumentationszentrum"⁶ (Feminist Archive and Center for Documentation) in Frankfurt that sought to counter women's collective obliteration from history books. With the move into the Bayenturm, Schwarzer felt that her project had found a space to adequately represent the archive's mission, to give women access to their history in a room (or rather a collection) of their own. Thus Schwarzer stresses the symbolic occupation of the (phallic) tower by women

and its re-creation as a woman-only space. An advisory board headed by Schwarzer took over the leadership of the FMT. [*Feminist Europa* editor Tobe Levin is an advisory board member. Editor's note.] The archive's primary mission became to collect and archive historical documents of the first-wave feminist movement (roughly from the mid 19th century until 1933) and the second wave (from 1971 until the present). It has since expanded its scope to include documentation about a wide range of feminist topics such as feminist theory, sexual politics and sexual violence, work (domestic and labor), literature, art, and biographies.

Schwarzer's double role as the editor of *EMMA* and chairwoman of the advisory board of the FMT proved beneficial for the archive's publicity. The FMT's work is often featured in *EMMA*. The FMT, in return, archives Schwarzer's writing in general and *EMMA*'s in particular. The close relationship between Schwarzer's *EMMA* and the FMT benefited my work directly. Living in the United States while doing research on photographer Bettina Flitner, one of Schwarzer's close allies, I contacted the FMT via the online collection accessible through the Internet and requested an appointment to coincide with a fieldtrip to Cologne where I planned to visit museums and interview the photographer as well. I knew that Flitner had been working and publishing for *EMMA* for many years. Upon my arrival in January 2007, an employee introduced me to the collection, explained the search system and guided me through the on-line catalogue. Because of the FMT's personalized support service I was able, within two days, to find around twenty-one articles to which Bettina Flitner had contributed. It was only a matter of hours to photocopy the material.

The unique atmosphere convinced me to stay longer and explore the collection. The tower itself with its remodeled modern and harmonious interior is impressive. Located on the last (and highest) two levels of the tower, the archive enjoys full daylight and offers breathtaking views of Cologne. Five to ten users were present, so the place did not feel crowded. The quiet atmosphere

⁴ Alice Schwarzer. „Wer den Turm hat, hat die Macht.“ *EMMA* 5. 1994. 90-94.

⁵ Alice Schwarzer. "Ein Turm für Frauen allein." Turm der Frauen. Der Kölner Bayenturm. Vom alten Wehrturm zum FrauenMediaTurm. [A Tower of Our Own. Tower of Women. The Cologne Bayenturm. From Old Military Tower to Women's Media Tower] Alice Schwarzer, ed., Cologne: Dumont: 1994. 52-70.

⁶ The *Feministische Archiv und Dokumentationszentrum* and the *FrauenMediaTurm* have received financial support from the Institut für Sozialforschung [Institute for Social Research], Hamburg.

is enhanced by desks in corner niches that allow for individual working spaces. The remarkable architecture features metal staircases leading higher up in the tower and allowing for comfortable browsing through the upper bookshelves.

I consider one of the FMT's strengths its broad definition of scholarship. Observing the feminist principle that the private is political, the collection has grown over the years and includes, besides books, articles, sound documents, and films a selection of buttons, posters, flyers, photographs, slides, and personal letters. While the published material has been catalogued and can be researched online, the visual archive is only accessible on site. An additional strength, however, is the refined electronic research system that has been created with the "FrauenMediaThesaurus" (women's media thesaurus). Conceived as an instrument that supplies meaningful search terms characteristic of women's and gender research, this system allows for differentiated and systematic searches organized in sub-categories (a list with 49 pages of alphabetical and systematic categorization can be accessed online). I highly recommend web access and online search first. It helps to determine whether you can simply order articles or printed sources (for a reasonable fee) or whether you should make the trip. You can also easily contact the professional staff via e-mail or phone. They respond right away and are eager to give advice.

Although the *FrauenMediaThesaurus* allows for systematic and differentiated searches, I wonder whether issues such as race have been exhaustively addressed. The focus on biographies of successful women and especially on second wave feminism reflects, in my opinion, a blind spot in the German women's movement. In the same vein I believe that the close relationship between the archive and Alice Schwarzer, as beneficial as it was for the success of the FMT, may constitute a risk, especially if it narrows the archive's focus. One should not have any doubts: it is mainly Schwarzer's agenda that is pursued here. Yet in voicing this critique, I do not mean to diminish the

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importance of the FMT. Rather, I encourage everyone to demonstrate their commitment to gender and women's research by using critically (online or on site) this fine research institution. Women of all colors, nationalities, and means join the chorus ...
alaaf!

The FMT has a highly recommended website with an extensive on-line catalogue. It is accessible under www.frauenmediatum.de.

Who Has the Answer?

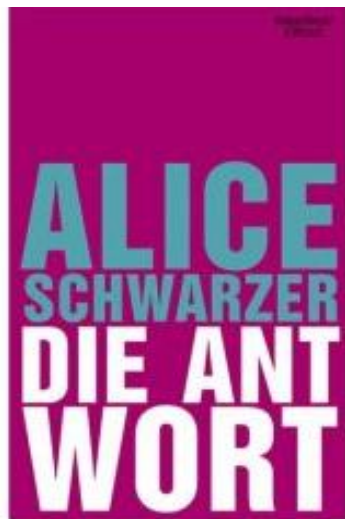
Jeanette Clausen

A Review Essay on Media Reception of Alice Schwarzer's *Die Antwort*. [The Answer]. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2007, pp. 208. ISBN 978-3462037739.

Media reception of Alice Schwarzer's latest book, *Die Antwort*, reveals much about attitudes toward feminism in Germany as well as toward the author herself. More than any of her previous books, this one generated wide interest and was reviewed in most major news media. It was serialized in its entirety in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* prior to its June 2007 publication. This review essay is based on seven interviews and ten reviews that aired or were published shortly before, during, and after the serialization.

Die Antwort contains little new analysis: Schwarzer reiterates and expands on points she has made before to answer the question "Where are we now?" (p. 25). She readily admits, when challenged, that the title sounds a bit arrogant ("*The*" answer!), and responded good-naturedly to a suggestion that the book reads like a "best of Alice Schwarzer" ("The best of is not bad," Althaus and Arnet). *Die Antwort* consists of an introduction and eleven chapters, some as long as 20 pages, some as short as six. Chapter titles highlight contentious issues within feminism (Ch. 2, "Women are different by nature"), one-note opposition (Ch. 4, "Abortion is murder"), truisms that obscure real, and unsolved, problems (Ch. 5, "A child needs its mother"; Ch. 6, "A profession alone won't make you happy"), com-

plicity by women, including the author, in unrealistic images of beauty (Ch. 7, “I’m too fat”), shallow “liberalism” (Ch. 8, “Pornography is sexy”) and excuses for lack of meaningful progress (Ch. 9, “There will always be prostitution”). The chapter on Islam (Ch. 3, “In the name of the prophet”) provides an overview of experiences and events that shaped the author’s views on this subject. Later chapter titles reference myths about families (Ch. 10, “We used to be happier”) and about men (Ch. 11, “Men will never change”)—but they can, says Schwarzer, if women will only take them seriously as human beings and insist on negotiating equality in the family. Her statement in this chapter that there are some men—though not many—with whom she gets along better than with certain women (p. 160) is picked up gleefully by several commentators. The final chapter (Ch. 12, “Women shouldn’t go too far”) echoes American feminist Robin Morgan’s famous *Going Too Far* (1968). Schwarzer: “Quite the contrary. We women can’t go far enough, in my opinion, for after all, we’re coming from a long way off” (p. 167). The book concludes with an index of names and suggested readings.



A theme taken up by nearly all the reviewers and interviewers is whether *Die Antwort* espouses a new, “conservative” feminism in, for example, Schwarzer’s approving comments in the book’s introduction about Germany’s conservative prime minister Angela Merkel and equally conservative

minister for family policy Ursula von der Leyen. Her invariable response is to restate her position that “autonomous feminism” is not inherently more rooted in the left than the right but crosses party lines. Some interviewers seem unwilling to engage this issue, instead trying (without success) to bait the author or provoke her to anger (e.g., Gorris, Voigt, and Stielke in *Der Spiegel*; Althaus and Arnet for FACTS). Some readers who expected to find their [negative] stereotypes of feminism and of Schwarzer herself confirmed in *Die Antwort* point out the absence of man-hating diatribes (Busse) or waggishly describe the author as so “tamed” that men need no longer fear her (Peter). Several find her more conciliatory than in the past (Gaschke & Niejahr; Newmark; Krings). One reader even sees *Die Antwort* as an unwelcome departure from Schwarzer’s earlier writings that exhorted women to risk becoming unpopular for the sake of feminist causes (Zuleger).

An opposite response is that of Julia Voss, writing in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* as its serialization of *Die Antwort* begins. Voss, noting that people from “very different political camps” have felt provoked by Alice Schwarzer, interprets the latter’s refusal to align with one side or the other as a tactic to avoid both false friends and false enemies (a claim that Schwarzer herself has made). She cites Germanist Ruth Klüger’s essay “Women read differently,” which asks why, when analyzing works of art such as “The Rape of the Sabine Women,” no one says anything about the content. Voss: “And that is what Alice Schwarzer always did—say something about the content.”

At least one reviewer applauds Schwarzer’s “calling it as she sees it” on the subject of Islamic fundamentalism (Laurien, also in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*). However, other reviewers express concern, e.g., Gaschke and Niejahr to Schwarzer: “You even see tendencies of an Islamic infiltration of the constitutional state. Doesn’t that sound like conspiracy theory?” Schwarzer responds by citing abuse of women that is “tolerated” out of misplaced respect for Islamic tradition: “Politicized Islam is more

than hostile to women; it is hostile to human beings and to democracy” (*DIE ZEIT*, 31 May 2007). Turning to the chapter on Islam in *Die Antwort*, we find a brief account of Schwarzer's relationship to her Algerian “extended family,” ongoing since 1994 when she interceded on behalf of journalist Djamila Seddiki, who was seeking asylum in Germany. She claims to have found a “measuring stick” in Djamila's cousin Ganoud, a devout young Muslim whose faith is “not so strict but yet strict enough to start every third sentence with ‘Alice, the prophet said . . . ‘Whenever I attack politicized Islam, I ask myself ‘What would Ganoud say?’” (p. 65).—One looks in vain for any details of Schwarzer's conversations with this young man that might provide insight into her position. Perhaps that will be another book.

The title of social historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler's review encapsulates both his support of Schwarzer and his analysis of her leadership: “A Lance for Alice Schwarzer” [Eine Lanze für Alice Schwarzer]. He goes so far as to state that the world would be worse off without her and offers this assessment of the campaign for equal rights legislation in Germany: “Without the dynamism, critical analysis, and continuing engagement of a spokeswoman like Alice Schwarzer, that success would probably not have come about in this form. One need only imagine [Alice Schwarzer] absent . . . in order to recognize the extent to which this journalist and de-facto-politician, often on her own, has convincingly championed the cause of women.” (Weltwoche.ch, Issue 21, 2007). Whether one agrees with his analysis or not, one cannot deny Schwarzer's importance as a public voice for women's issues in Germany.

Allgemeine Frankfurter Zeitung reviewer Hanna-Renate Laurien responds enthusiastically and personally to *Die Antwort*: “How gratified I was to see [Schwarzer], in complete control, refuting publicists' attacks on gender-mainstreaming and returning to the question of power. . . .” Laurien praises the author's courage in expressing controversial opinions while also criticizing points

that she disagrees with (e.g., Schwarzer's support for abortion rights). She concludes her review with these words: “We are responsible for the quality of our society. This is a book for men and women who think of themselves as citizens.” Of all the reviews, Laurien's is perhaps the one Schwarzer would have wished for: praise *and* criticism based on passion and conviction. In the end, readers must find the answers.

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Two New Publications by Alice Schwarzer: Brief Introduction

Waltraud Dumont du Voitel and Tobe Levin

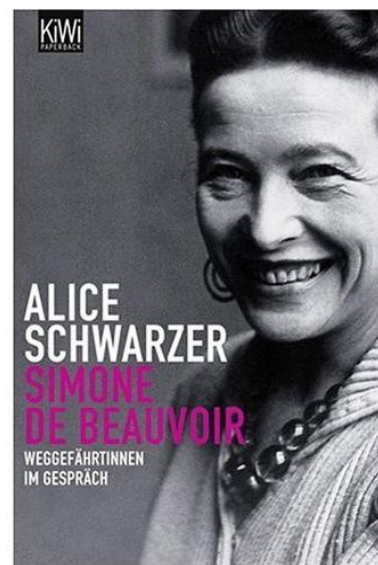
Schwarzer, Alice. *Simone de Beauvoir und Alice Schwarzer. Weggefährtinnen im Gespräch. Interviews 1972 – 1982*. [Simone de Beauvoir and Alice Schwarzer: Comrades in Conversation. Interviews 1972 – 1982]. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2007, pp. 121, ISBN 978-346 20 39563.

“My work is my life” was her motto: Simone de Beauvoir, French author, philosopher and feminist. To ensure that this work is not forgotten, Alice Schwarzer took the 100th anniversary of de Beauvoir’s birth to place her friend once again before the public. For Simone de Beauvoir’s jubi-

lee on 9 January 2008, Schwarzer announced two new books on the writer who passed away in 1986. The two women had known each other well, both engaged since the early 70s in the women’s movement.

These discussions with Simone de Beauvoir can be understood as key to her political work as well as to her life. Intimate and open talks, they treat identity, love, power, politics, children, and men—all still burning issues.

In a newspaper article about both publications, Schwarzer mentions that “although [she] knows de Beauvoir’s work well, [she] constantly finds something new, something surprising.” And Schwarzer is “always thrilled by the clarity of thought, the integrity of de Beauvoir’s sense of justice and the cleverness of her vision as expressed in political essays, above all in *The Second Sex* [1949].” In the memoirs and letters, in contrast, it is the “passion and vulnerability” that “exercise great attraction” (*Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung*, No. 274, 24 November 2007, Z 3). Two of de Beauvoir’s most beautiful compositions, *Les Belles Images* (1966) and *La Femme Rompue* (1968), further testify to her refined emotional quality, but Schwarzer confesses one lacunae here: to this day, both novels remain on her future reading list.



Schwarzer, Alice ed. *Simone de Beauvoir. Ein Lesebuch mit Bildern*. [Simone de Beauvoir. An Illustrated Reader]. Rowohlt Verlag: Reinbek bei Hamburg, 2008, pp. 334, ISBN 978-349 8064.

Offering excerpts from Simone de Beauvoir's most important writings, an impressive photo section and a comprehensive essay, Alice Schwarzer takes the measure of the French philosopher's life work, asking what meaning she holds for today's society and how the future will receive her. What about the insights and demands of the women's movement that has achieved so many positive changes?

This excellent introduction to the older woman's oeuvre includes a promenade through her memoirs, letters to Sartre, and her "trans-Atlantic love" Nelson Algren. Novels and essays are presented as well.



„But who is she?” Schwarzer asks and immediately answers: „She is a woman on whom the nineteenth century placed its stamp but who wrote herself into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. She is a woman who called for absolute equality in an age which hadn't yet imagined such a thing—and at the same time remained conscious of her own all too obvious 'feminine' conditioning” (*Frankfurter Allgemeine*

ne Zeitung No. 274, 24 November 2007, Z 3).

For a complete bibliography of Alice Schwarzer's books go to:

www.emma.de;

www.aliceschwarzer.de.

Politics

Bodily Constraint

Yvonne Guichard-Claudic

Trans. Tobe Levin

Review of Marquié, Hélène and Noël Burch, eds. *Emancipation sexuelle ou contrainte des corps*. [Sexual Emancipation or Bodily Constraint]. Paris: L'Harmattan, collection Bibliothèque du féminisme, 2006, pp. 178. ISBN 2-296-0 0222-6. Review originally appeared in *Bulletin de l'ANEF* Automne 2006. 75-79.

This is the fourth volume to emerge from a course on “Social Relations of the Sexes in Culture,” let first by Geneviève Sellier and Odile Krakovitch, then by Éleine Viennot and finally by Delphine Naudier and Brigitte Rollet at the University of Versailles Saint-Quentin. In this trans-disciplinary seminar, participants aim to “illuminate, always in historical context, the complex relations between men and women and the collective imaginary whose cultural products are both pillar and result” (Introduction 9).

Here, a passionate program analyzes the discourse of sexual freedom associated with out-of-the-mainstream erotic milieus. These tend to be called transgressive merely because such praxis is considered liberating. Yet, it is this very link between violation of sexual norms and women's liberation that the volume questions. In literature, cinema, and choreography, on which models are bodies constructed? Which sexualities violate norms? Is there really a necessary tie between alternative sexual behaviors and women's

emancipation? Or, more precisely, who profits from contravention and the resulting increase in freedom? This doubt is all the more crucial because cultural critics and media tend simply to take it for granted that such works disturb the moral order. But do they really? The fact that these books are female-authored already grants them a patina of the egalitarian and underwrites their opposition to a kind of feminist criticism presented as moralizing, conservative, and puritan. This, however, hides what it is in these discourses that reflects, produces or legitimizes gender domination in sexual matters.

Hélène Marquié provides a clear introduction. The first three contributions analyze contemporary artistic production while the four following look at 16th and 17th century libertine literature and 18th century opera. The diversity of disciplines—sociology, aesthetics, literary history, literature, musicology and more—underlines the transversality of gender and the importance of seeing sexual difference socially constructed from various perspectives.

Sandrine Garcia studies the emergence in French culture of virulent criticism of the feminist movement in the name of sexual liberation and the need to move toward decriminalizing sex commerce already symbolized by the existence of a “contract” freely entered into by consenting adults. The chapter privileges work by Michel Houellebecq and Kate Millet, essays by Elisabeth Badinter and Marcela Iacub, as well as their statements in the press. It may seem exaggerated to assimilate the positions of Badinter and Iacub, despite certain convergences, not to mention their link to the other authors mentioned, given significant contrasts in their work. The demonstration is nonetheless convincing in so far as Sandrine Garcia reveals the many manipulations that permit presenting sexual practices censured by the ethical community (partner swapping, prostitution, pornography, etc.) as emancipating.

The trick is to insist on the consent of the individuals involved and to obscure

the political presupposition of a contract and instrumentalization of women’s bodies that many practices effect. Garcia denounces with particular vehemence the depoliticization of social relations, notably those of gender, derived from confusion that these authors seem to cultivate between sexual misery and social misery, the moral order and the social order, the struggle for sexual liberation and the struggle for a more just and less unequal society. In her view, a “utopia of freely exchanged sexual favors” is far from emancipating; on the contrary, such a viewpoint cements women’s bodies even more firmly into commercial space permitting unleashed consumption, “even when accompanied by profound violence against those men and women who have nothing but their bodies to sell” (44).



Similar considerations are at work in relation to dance. There, carried through by an aesthetics of the provocative, the staging of sexual violence is presented as an egregious transgression against the dominant order. Nonetheless, the work of Marquié’s female choreographers fails to escape from a conservative representation of sexual relations, the woman’s body appearing systematically as the object of men’s desire. A work’s hold on concrete reality is evacuated to benefit a purely theoretical interpretation that negates any

political analysis of the gender relations enacted.

The study of writing (on) the body in novels by 20th century women undertaken by Audrey Lasserre shows a similar aesthetic of the miserable: females are murdered, violated, reduced to their sex. Claims made by partisans of “l’écriture féminine” cannot liberate in a world that markets women’s bodies. Even if new generation novelists offer protagonists in revolt, too often they also reduce heroines to their curves, described from a masculine viewpoint.

In her interpretation of a famous 16th century tale, *Les Comptes amoureux*, Éliane Viennot supports this thesis. In these ‘amorous tales’ reputedly by a woman author, Jeanne Flore, a sexual discourse was celebrated for its sensuality and the piece appreciated for its critique of marriages that couple younger women and older men. For Éliane Viennot, however, it’s not a problem of young women being liberated into the arms of elderly partners; rather, behind it are the desires of young clerics giving vent to their frustration at being deprived of access to female bodies other than those of prostitutes. These youth are really calling out against the monopoly held by older and more powerful men.

Women’s sexual emancipation in the seventeenth century is Danièle Haase-Dubosc’s theme in the following chapter. At the time, women were unable to confront the movement head on but schemed undercover. Although sexual restraint is on the surface, women softly called for recognition of their sexual desires and pleasure. Yet, only a few grand courtesans and high nobility were able to freely flaunt social convention. Women’s texts continue to talk more about love than sexuality and are interested to know whether or not love is compatible with liberty. Libertine writing is done by men; it questions morality and religion but fails to assess women’s place in libertinage in terms of real risks.

Sophie Houdard also looks at 17th century libertine literature and philosophy. In harmony with renaissance epicurean

thinking, libertine texts displace philosophy on the topics of marriage, pleasure and desire, and to counter religious credulity, they furnish a subversive framework for reflection. Even if women rarely escape masculine domination, especially in this century which had not yet recognized an ontological difference between the sexes, the era produced a limited space in which real sexual equality could be conceived within a philosophy of gratification, nature and liberty of thought.

Raphëlle Legrand’s chapter closes the work with a study of opera divas and stars of the *opéra comique* in 18th century France. Did the fact of exercising a respectable profession contribute to women’s emancipation? The ambiguous and contradictory images of the epoch do not permit an affirmative answer. For one thing, the women had to work extremely hard with innumerable rehearsals and performances. Yet extant writing includes performance reviews and songs that hardly dwell on effort and talent but instead describe the women’s bodies and the writers’ own sexual fantasies. In addition to several singers known to be virtuous wives, we find a multitude of virulent critics of women’s appearance or supposed lifestyle. Raphaëlle Legrand suggests that these women, horrifying and fascinating, were ultimately imprisoned in the concept of the prostitute, an image of the most unfortunate. The more favored either tried to escape or to instrumentalize its stigma en route to perfecting their own emancipation.

In sum, the work poses a question as interesting as it is rare and makes a solid contribution to reflection on the ways that sexual inequality remains inscribed at the heart of artistic representations of the sexual—as complex and ambiguous.

Physician, Architect, Attorney in France: Feminization of the Liberal Professions

Sandra Frey

Trans. Tobe Levin

Review of Lapeyre, Nathalie. *Les professions face aux enjeux de la féminisation*. [Liberal Professions and Feminization]. Toulouse: Octarès. Collection Travail & Activité humaine, 2006, pp. 214. ISBN 978-2915346305. Review originally appeared in the *Bulletin de l'ANEF* Automne 2006. 64-74.

Nathalie Lapeyre's detailed work, based on her doctoral dissertation, addresses specialists and students wishing to acquire a solid theoretical foundation in labor sociology. Its four chapters consider "the professions," the concept of "gendered work," "waves of feminization in the liberal professions," and "intra-professional relations of class." It proposes a dynamic approach to the question of gendered labor.

Before looking closely at content, let's consider the book's usefulness, convinced as I am that "the nobility of science derives from its utility and practical application," criteria that Lapeyre honors.

The author inscribes her research at the interface of several sociologies: the study of professional groups and their gendered relationships; sociology of the family; labor; and public policy, especially since the French state is an important actor in configuring the liberal professions. The well-written text reveals a remarkable skill in manipulating concepts while applying theory to large chunks of empirical data. Solid and dense, it exhibits an extensive knowledge of the liberal professions as such and constitutes an important contribution to studies of gender in the sociology of these fields. As a matter of fact, to interrogate gender and the professions appears not two projects but one, since twentieth century history may be read as a tale of feminization in professional life. After all,

employment in these fields has witnessed women rise.

Lapeyre sets out from certain indicators showing how women and men negotiate gendered professional space. Simple as this first step may seem, let's not underestimate the heightened challenge in defining what actually happens when social relations of the sexes are changed by the imposition of policy recommendations aimed at creating equality where it had not been before. In this sense, the book furnishes a roadmap of the processes involved.

Then, continuing a pragmatic approach, the author shows how the sexual division of labor and social differentiation by sex emerge, over and over again, even where this is not expected because it counters common sense. Thus, Lapeyre deploys the accepted theory by which professions are devalued as soon as larger numbers of women enter them, and then shows, in a second move, how the professions studied—medicine, law and architecture—re-establish internal sexual hierarchy, horizontally and vertically, with the practical result that women remain barred from entering the upper echelons on a par with men. In addition, men and women work differently, men over-represented among independents and associates, women among dependent salaried employees.

The book analyzes sociological processes of feminization in the liberal professions, based on the experience of women and men who are physicians, attorneys and architects. Feminization itself can be understood only in light of numerous intersecting theoretical and historical approaches. Having researched the terrain, Lapeyre defends the idea that French women's accession to professions has been prey to dynamic factors affecting male/female relations not only at work but also at home.

The study reveals what happens when women in significant numbers show up in "male bastions" of the labor market, here the liberal professions. Inspired by Anthony Giddens in England and Beck and

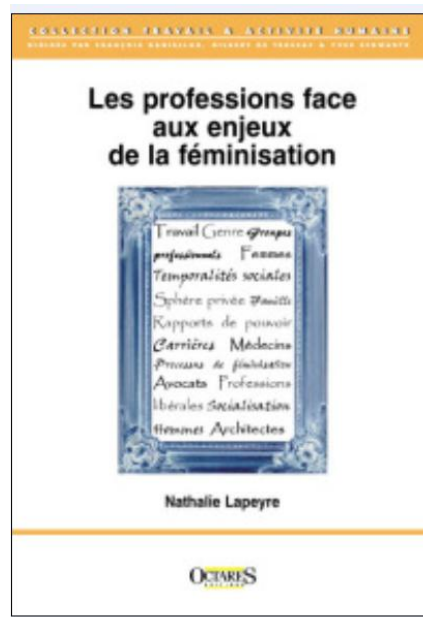
Beck-Gernsheim in Germany, the author accepts the hypothesis that western nations have indeed entered an era of “democratization” in gender relations; she thereby takes her place alongside French and foreign sociologists attentive to signs of change and willing to juggle evidence showing fissure in dichotomous masculine-feminine thinking. Thus, she gives content to the notion of “partial configurations of gender,” arguably her primary contribution to the field, and thereby avoids several pitfalls common to research on gender in the labor force.

Given the specific history of the liberal professions, a study of women’s accession to them constitutes a rich object of sociological analysis, propitious in revealing how gendered relations are negotiated. Still, you might assume that feminization of the liberal professions challenges our traditional understanding of the domestic sphere because women lawyers, doctors, and architects are no longer as “available” to fulfil household duties as before. At the same time, women’s entry into these fields challenges the liberal professions’ ‘ethos’, forcing values, organizational principles and career maps to adapt. Lapeyre’s focus not only on women but also men and their rapport with each other, looking closely at professional couples, produces a practical, dynamic and relational study of gender.

Regarding methodology, various levels of analysis reveal the underlying complexity. First, employment policy is examined. How does it confront the central issue of combining paid work with family responsibilities, the so-called “social contract between the sexes”? This approach opens several frames. Next comes a focus on internal changes within professions supported by statistical demographic data, information that opens vistas onto various waves of feminization. Finally, an empirical study is based on hundreds of interviews with women and men of various social classes and ages who are presently active in one of the three liberal professions and includes employees. The investi-

gation highlights the variability of individual trajectories, varying status and forms of practice. To help navigate these interviews, a typology of differing “positionings” for men and women “in a partially gendered configuration” was worked out. Such biographical accounts permit elaboration of a typology focused on the temporal dimensions of investment in profession or family.

Several indicators lead to three main “types”: “normative,” “transitional,” and “egalitarian.” Even if the author stresses the process of “negotiation” which permits individuals to modify (or rationalize) their position vis-à-vis the “partial configuration of gender,” she doesn’t adopt a “pacifist vision of rapport between the sexes.” She therefore succeeds in dissecting pertinent mechanisms inscribed in the way a sexual division of labor is maintained, but also introduces tensions and opportunities seized by individuals and especially by women to escape their assigned place.



The first chapter deals with the “professions,” adumbrating the concept “configuration of gender,” inspired by the work of Norbert Elias (1991, 1993, 1996, 1998, 2000) and presenting a certain vision of social change borrowed from writings by Claude Dubar (1991, 2000), Anthony Giddens (1991, 1992), Ulrich Beck (2001)

and Robert Connell (1987). Liberal professions tend to be characterized by specific norms, in particular the extended duration of work time as a national average, approaching sixty hours per week. Historically these fields have been constituted, first, on the exclusion of women and, second, on male career patterns based on the idea of delegation. What was delegated? Domestic and family arrangements were left to (male) professionals' wives; business activity was underwritten by employees (secretaries, accountants, organizational planners, reception of patients/clients, etc.)—that is, given over to other female social categories. Now, clearly, the arrival of women at the professional level disrupted this model, so that it may appear to be in a state of re-negotiation and re-composition.

In this instance, reconfiguration isn't the same as that in other employment sectors; rather, it is women's ultra-investment in their work when measured against women's average labor hours elsewhere. This permits Lapeyre to affirm that a "local configuration of genre" exists within the liberal professions. Yet she continues listing missed opportunities tied to a detailed analysis of links between the grand sociological theories and the way in which studies of professional women operate in general (neo-Durkheim/Parsons, interactionists, neo-Marxists and neo-Weberians).

The first chapter advances the hypothesis that these professions have witnessed a partial redefinition of the "professional ethos" resulting from the movement of women into previously male ranks: the figures are 37% for doctors; 47% for lawyers, and 17% among architects.

Chapters two, three and four concern sociological interpretations of feminization in the professions. The second chapter deals with processes and waves of feminization. Bibliographical analysis of French and Anglo-Saxon sources reveals a dominant interpretative theme: the "devaluation" of professions in the process of feminization. The author tests this hypothesis

by deconstructing the relation between feminization and revaluation in the various waves of change, both internally and externally. Interestingly, the hypothesis doesn't hold up because feminization is one factor among many in a net of multiple and varied changes in the liberal professions.

Chapter three, considering the influence of educational reforms and professional reconfiguration on feminization, evaluates women's place in various careers given differences in labor hours and revenue, professional hierarchy, density, geographical dispersion, and so forth. In the last twenty years architecture, medicine and law have experienced a marked increase in women yet have not undergone simple devaluation. Rather, a "local configuration of gender" is evident. Despite continuing internal segregation by sex, feminization in these groups has entailed a rewriting of the so-called "professional ethos," i.e. what is typical of a career, particularly concerning work hours. It was found that the path to success had changed in response to interaction between women and men, resulting in new organizational structures and variable length of the working day.

Chapter three also looks at the social lives of liberal professionals. Analysis of more than one hundred biographies takes shape around four grand axes: socialization within the family; transmission of gender identity and development of career aims; entry into the labor market while coordinating productive and reproductive schedules; and dealing with career demands in relation to family life. The author shows how an "increase in qualifications" due to women's striving is not the only significant result of having more women; a structural reorganization of the entire profession is also part of it, reflecting new ways of assigning work according to informal or improvised criteria. Redefinitions of the "professional ethos" are visible in any number of practices, and not only those adopted by women, namely "densification" or working in time blocks; "flex-

time”; and limiting hours available for work. In practical terms, this means organizing meetings more tightly, ensuring that no unproductive time enters into the working day, and keeping up with a set rhythm. It involves choosing the kind of patients or clients one desires; scheduling non-stop appointments; for physicians, eliminating periods ‘on call’, home visits or vacation duty; and for attorneys and architects, limiting travel. Other indicators point to delegating work or dispensing with lunch breaks to work straight through and finish earlier in the evening. Being associated with a group practice, as a physician or lawyer, also facilitates rearranging time to interface family and career. Labor hours become easier to limit with specialization: physicians, for instance, go into homeopathic medicine or acupuncture; attorneys focus on environmental law and architects on urbanization. It is therefore pastiche, tinkering, and honing chunks of time that permit women to attain a form of “temporal sovereignty” at the heart of the new liberal professions.

Finally, the fourth chapter presents a typology of positions that differentiate women from men to reveal the “local configuration of gender.” These ideal types result from a dynamic approach to the relationship between time and production. As we have seen, three positions emerge: the normative, transitional and egalitarian. The typology enables us to understand why an individual logically belongs in one group or the other, determined by that person’s relationship to the process of democratizing social relations of the sexes. First, the normative describes situations where, for instance, women fit their professional commitments into the domestic calendar, school and daily life: that is, they work part-time or have limited hours. Leisure is spent for the most part with family. In this context, complementarity comes into play as a principle tacitly demanded of women and with which they willingly comply. The transitional position, in contrast, evidenced by most respondents in the study, incorporates women’s heavy commitment to work.

The world of work represents the sole arena for self-realization which implies negotiation within the couple as to who takes on which domestic responsibility—or involves the delegation of tasks to (generally speaking) other women (as nannies, maids, etc.). Men also negotiate their investment of time at home, although the division of labor tends to be lop-sided in that men don’t think about home tasks as much while still expecting domestic and educational norms to be maintained. The egalitarian position in turn privileges improvised exchange between women and men, creative assignment of domestic and care-giving tasks, as well as distance from gender stereotypes, allowing spontaneity and creativity. Women and men both mould working hours to mesh with family. Strategies include loosening otherwise strict familial traditions and pedagogic norms (for instance, introducing quick meals, liberal child-raising principles, etc.)

In conclusion, the book advances the thesis that women’s arrival in significant numbers in the liberal professions has led to fissures in the usual sex-gender system as local variations, at times partial and fragile, emerge. Nonetheless, subjective and objective analyses also show that feminization has not revolutionized labor patterns in the liberal professions. The habitus and ethos; the structure; the way work gets done as well as internal segregation continue largely undisturbed. At the same time, a certain globalized homogenization may be in process, as significant numbers of men are, for the first time, among salaried employees and women numerous among partners, the most prestigious and best remunerated ranks.

To sum it up, well anchored in statistical and narrative data supported by expertise in French and Anglo-American literature on social relations between the sexes, professional groups and time-management, the work supports an original, central hypothesis that combines inductive moments with deductive elaborations and leads to the concept of “partial configurations of gender.” This in turn demonstrates

that we are dealing with two different developments inappropriate to assimilate one to the other: “democratization of gender relations” and an “increase in equality in the liberal professions.” For even the best qualified women approve of gendered divisions of labor, and massive feminization of the liberal professional labor force has not necessarily sharpened consciousness of “the glass ceiling.”

Women’s Studies’ Women: Inroads into Sociology

Birgit Blättel-Mink

Trans. Tobe Levin

Review of Vogel, Ulrike, ed. *Wege in die Soziologie und die Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung. Autobiographische Notizen der ersten Generation von Professorinnen an der Universität*. [Approaches to Sociology of Gender and Women’s Studies. Autobiographical Sketches of Female University Professors—the First Generation]. Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag, 2006, pp. 326. ISBN 10 3-531-14966-0.

„On the way to class in Kiel, a fellow student —both of us in the fourth semester —asked me, ‚Do you already know how you get to be what you want to be?‘

I was surprised and answered that I didn’t even know what I wanted to be, let alone how to get there. I knew only what I didn’t want, and that was to become a schoolteacher. ‚And you?‘ He said, ‚A professor‘. I stood there in awe. How could anyone want to be a professor?”

(Helga Krüger, 61)

“It was a new development for sociology in Germany, that from the mid-70s the first generation of women sociologists made it to professorial rank. And what was even more decisive, some of them founded the discipline of Gender Studies in the Federal Republic. ... Autobiographical sketches of the first visible minority of women sociology profes-

sors shed an equally important light on the development of the discipline. Why?

Because these women are at the same time the heirs and the antithesis of the post-war generation of German sociologists.”

(Ulrike Vogel, 10)

Gesturing toward Karl Mannheim, Ulrike Vogel, one of the women to take the floor in this collection, highlights what is typical of her generation of 23 women sociologists portrayed here. Born between 1935 and 1949, they all became professors at German institutions of higher education.

Some are now retired, some not. Six of them were associated with the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University of Frankfurt am Main and an equal number with the Free University of Berlin—both schools the first in Germany to offer a major in sociology (1956-1958). At the University of Frankfurt, Helge Pross pioneered women’s studies in the 60s and 70s as assistant to Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, and many of the women presented were her students.

Cologne, represented by René König, and Hannover, with its “Institute for Women and Society,” also played a central role in smoothing the path, especially for older female faculty. Known to scrutinize women’s social position in general and her place in the profession in particular, René König enjoyed an exceptional reputation among women sociologists. The generation represented had either trained or already been professionally active during the positivism debate, with Adorno and Popper on the one side and Albert and Habermas on the other.

In her Afterword, Vogel emphasizes two characteristics shared by these academic women: experience of war in childhood or the early post-war period with mainly absent fathers (“incomplete families”) and (more or less well) educated mothers, who rarely exercised a profession and yet guaranteed the family’s survival. “Because these mothers revealed their resentment at having been forced into a

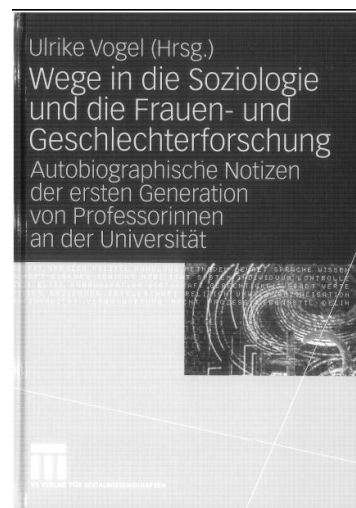
housewife's role, the daughters, as they often stated, wanted to avoid the same at any cost" (291).

The author sees a second influence in the institutional development and content of university sociology in the 60s and 70s, offering women increased opportunities to become professors and therefore to introduce their favorite topics. But this alone would not have sufficed to effect permanent improvement for women academics⁷. The new women's movement has been responsible for this, as most of the faculty were part of it, critiquing gender relations in society and differentiating themselves from the "patriarchal mainstream" in order to overcome the barriers in both. "Among the first generation of women sociology professors, many turned to women's and gender studies for their inspiration and themes ..." (290).

Yet, the road was rocky. Interviewees state again and again that the status of professor didn't protect against discrimination, in part because no one trusted them to combine career and family successfully, or because their chosen research topics were ignored or, if recognized, then only with reluctance. As Marianne Rodenstein notes: "My social engagement had crystallized [in light of the end of the student movement in the 70s (Blättel-Mink)]; I was no longer concerned with abstractions or distant lives but rather with my own situation as a young academic, and the condition of other women whose rights and opportunities were limited by an infinite number of male privileges. I understood sociology as then taught to be a piece with patriarchal dominance, legitimizing efforts to keep women subordinate" (140). Eva Senghaas-Knobloch wrote: „Two themes of personal importance to me were women's awareness of their place in a profes-

sion that had not anticipated their entry into it, and the possibility of cooperation in relationships aimed at overcoming international hostility" (156). With slightly different emphasis Regina Becker-Schmidt argues: „It took me quite a while before I figured out that Adorno bracketed out androcentric thinking and behavior when he theorized interaction between epistemology and social criticism and that, although he laid bare the class structure of capitalist society, he neglected to reveal the mechanisms of gender hierarchy" (40).

Interviewees are differentiated by childhood social class and private lives. Yet neither of these leads to any systematic difference or significant influence on the later biography. Among the academic women we find petit bourgeois, as well as educated middle class childhood, and professors with partners and without, with children and without. Remarkable, however, is enthusiasm for learning in many parental homes and, above all, among mothers.



Two broad assumptions therefore cannot be sustained given this sample. The first is that Catholic daughters from rural areas have as good as no chance of making it professionally, and the second that combining career and child-rearing remains nearly impossible. Tilla Siegel describes the strength of her petit bourgeois parental home: "... my mother was the one who gave us a hefty dose of cultural capital [in Pierre Bourdieu's terms, Blättel-Mink] in

⁷ Current statistics show that, following a period of stagnation in the situation of women academics in the 80s and 90s, things are gradually getting better, that is, the difference in status compared to men is shrinking; see

<http://www.blk-info.de/fileadmin/BLK-Materialien/heft136.pdf>.

that her conviction that we were intelligent and capable of thought convinced us, too” (193). With regard to private lifestyle choices, the older women experienced the double burden as mothers and academics differently than the younger ones: “Even though I was already set up career-wise before I became an ‘older mother’, I still had to perform a balancing act between work and home, taking into account the structural inconsideration of our profession vis-à-vis the family, society’s (self)-proclaimed concept of the ‘good mother’ and our deeply anchored convictions concerning femininity and masculinity” (Sommerkorn 30f). In contrast Ursula Müller: „... Lacking public childcare, I co-founded a nursery on university grounds as a charitable association, and had in addition to my profession, child, and political work other appointments and service, since the nursery school required parental initiative and responsibility. But it taught me an invaluable lesson about professional mothers’ situation” (282).

One additional difference that is to a certain extent in the nature of things can be described as follows: the younger the women are, the more often they refer to mutual interaction with each other, gesturing toward constructive discussion, shared research and publication. These coalitions led in 1979 to the founding of a women’s caucus within the German Sociological Society (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie). Not all of the women represented in the book participated but all have certainly contributed in their own ways toward institutionalization of women’s and gender research. Not all began by majoring in sociology—for the older women, that wasn’t even possible. Some entered the field while doing their doctorates and discovering the theme of the individual in society. One group, however, sees itself explicitly as doing women’s and gender research in terms of theory and methodology. Another underscores its specialization in one or more sociological sub-fields but links its special focus to analyses of gender relations.

The lives narrated here, while highlighting striking individual traits, also reveal the biases by which subjects orient themselves toward their profession. Some emphasize key experiences in childhood or youth that led them down a certain path; specific people played a role; or drive and determination are keys to triumph over career hurdles. At times we find student experience crucial, as undergraduate or doctoral candidate, and finally, the field of sociology itself fascinates so many and has led to the discipline’s growing richness.

Here are just a few individual portraits. Carol Hagemann-White grew up in the USA and first came to study in Berlin. She had received her B.A. (I suppose) at Harvard, which had given her the opportunity to experiment with various subjects (such as physics, math, and history of the Middle Ages). Her biographical note makes clear how important it is to try out different areas at a university level before deciding in which to settle, and therefore with which deliberateness she made her choice of major once in Germany. Irene Dölling and Hildegard Maria Nickel were both socialized in the East German educational system, and Dölling was already a professor at Humboldt University before reunification. Coming from various domains, they found in the humanities a niche for women’s and gender studies and were able to institutionalize their efforts after transition in the new German states.

Among the academics presented we also find more than one controversy regarding theoretical or methodological approaches in women’s and gender studies. The Afterword briefly explains these but devotes more space to reporting on a group whose task was to analyze not only content in gender and women’s studies but also the field’s institutionalization. On this level, at issue is strengthening women’s and gender studies as an interdisciplinary field, on the one hand, and on the other, integrating insights the field has produced into sociology itself. In terms of content, “the feminist dilemma” (Ute Gerhard) in women’s and gender studies can be described thus:

traditional disadvantages women are thought to labor under must be denied while, simultaneously, women's position in comparison to men must be considered (see Vogel 296)—and all this in light of reforms in higher education demanding from every discipline “impeccable professionalism.”

German Women Executives

Lotte Habermann-Horstmeier

Overview of Habermann-Horstmeier, Lotte in co-operation with Albrecht, Kathrin, Bettina Braun, Eva Ganter & Maria Thierer. *Karrierehindernisse für Frauen in Führungspositionen. Ergebnisse einer empirischen Studie an 300 Frauen aus dem deutschen Mittel- und Topmanagement.* [German Women Executives in Middle- and Top-Management. Report on the Glass Ceiling—Results of an Empirical Study of 300 Women Managers]. *Schriftenreihe, Vol. I des Steinbeis Technologietransferzentrums (STZ) - Unternehmen & Führungskräfte. Villingen-Schwenningen, 2007, pp. 165. ISBN 978-3-932824-12-8.*

In economic, administrative and scientific communities in Germany today, equal opportunities for men and women in management do not exist. Because political measures intended to redress this inequality often miss their mark, we thought it important to ask women executives to assess their own career obstacles.

Our empirical study "Career obstacles for female executives" was planned and delivered in 2006 by STZ Companies & Managers in cooperation with Furtwangen University. The survey defines women in leading positions as those in senior and middle management who were contacted mainly via e-mail to women's networks, companies, administrative institutions, clinics and universities. Altogether, more than 300 women completed the e-mail questionnaires consisting of 50 questions. More than 50 percent of respondents were

between 36 and 45 years old, with more than 60 percent working in a major enterprise (> 500 employees or > €50 million annual turnover).

Most of the female executives had above-average qualifications. 17.5 percent graduated from a university of applied sciences (Fachhochschule) and more than 70 percent were either university graduates (Universität) or had a Ph.D. (Promotion) or a State doctorate (Habilitation). For the majority, self-confidence and assertiveness were the most important qualities that a female executive must have to attain a leadership position within an organisational hierarchy. And to remain at this level, respondents stressed, they had to be both assertive and cooperative. Their primary aim was to achieve financial independence through their work; secondary aims were gaining knowledge, wisdom and personal independence.

One perhaps contradictory finding, however, was that two thirds of respondents had not consciously planned their career while more than fifty percent of the youngest executives (aged from 25 to 35) had not done so. About 80 percent—especially the younger ones—did not recommend specialist university courses for women in technical subjects. More than 80 percent emphasized the importance of female career networks. Yet only about 30 percent said such networks had been useful in their own careers, whereas nearly 40 percent did not even know that these networks existed when they were on their way up.

Most respondents worked between 51 and 60 hours a week. Single and childless women had longer hours; most mothers put in between 41 and 60 hours a week yet had to take long business trips as frequently as childless women. Most had been absent (due to illness et cetera) only zero to three days in the last year, and of interest here: married women had the shortest absence from work; divorced women the longest.

Approximately 80 percent of respondents were in a long-term relationship

(married or co-habiting) and 42 percent had children. In recent times, the age at first delivery had risen. Most mothers worked in education and research. One third of managers, when asked about private choices, responded that external circumstances were responsible for their current family situation, especially the younger ones. Only 17 percent did not want to have a family at all. Nonetheless, many respondents claimed that their current career was more important than starting a family. Still, about 30 percent of singles would like to have children even though some also mentioned that they feel it is already too late. Approximately 30 percent of the childless women could not imagine having children without a steady relationship.

Nearly all said that sufficient childcare in Germany is only possible with the help of a partner, grandparents, nannies, au-pairs or housekeepers. Less than a quarter of the mothers interviewed had the opportunity to use a crèche or a day-care center for their children. There are simply not enough operational childcare centers and too few places for the children. Most female executives required flexible working conditions (referring to place and time) and complained that even in cases where the company permitted executive flex-time, they were not expected to claim it.



Nearly 90 percent of respondents thought that parental leave longer than one year could harm further career development. Moreover, around 30 percent believed that part time work would result in fundamental harm to career prospects. In the case of part-time work longer than one year, 40 percent believed it would have an immediate negative effect on promotion.

Contributing positively to career development, emotional support from partners or families ranked high; unmarried executives received significant emotional support from friends. Still, on the other side, 44 percent said their career had had a negative effect on their social lives. Still, almost 65 percent said it had had no negative or positive effects; for mothers in particular this seemed to be the case.

Nearly 85 percent of the women, when asked if they ever considered themselves “lone warriors” said “yes.” Of those, more than 50 percent described this feeling as continuous or frequent, a response prevalent among single women and those having consciously planned their career. Most wanted to retire only when forced to so do for reasons of poor health. But the desire for children, too much work-related stress, workplace bullying and an employer's expectation of rising occupational mobility were also reasons to consider ending their careers.

Above all, these female executives considered the incompatibility of family and career as well as the preference given to male competitors as the main obstacle for women in the path from middle to senior management. Additional factors were, in many cases, lack of assertiveness, lack of a straight-line career path, and lack of assistance by specialist female career networks.

In summary, the study shows that companies in Germany do not offer sufficient support for women executives wanting to combine managerial success with family life. Because parental leave and part-time jobs are seen as having a detrimental effect on career, these opportunities are rarely taken. Additionally, the prefer-

ence given to male competitors, women's frequent lack of courage to take risks and, in many cases, women's lack of self-promotion play a major role in blocking their way to the top.

Thus targeted and early information along with support for women students by female networks could be helpful in nurturing future female executives. Gender studies should form part of the school and university curriculum. From a young age, girls should be encouraged to gain mastery in technical and scientific subjects. This in turn should ease entry into lucrative and influential career paths in the economy of the future.

However, despite awareness that graduates from the American Seven Sisters schools realize above average rates of professional success, German female executives do not recommend special female universities or courses of study. These women think it necessary first to establish more state-run and operational childcare centers with longer and more flexible opening hours for children of all ages. They also stress the need for more flexible care facilities on evenings and weekends and, to promote family-friendly executive opportunities, flexible working conditions.

What Women are Writing

Ruth Klüger

Trans. Tobe Levin

Review of Loster-Schneider, Gudrun and Gaby Pailer, eds. *Lexikon deutschsprachiger Epik und Dramatik von Autorinnen (1730 – 1900)*. [Dictionary of Women Authors of Epic and Drama in German (1730 – 1900)]. Tübingen, Basel: A. Francke Verlag, 2006, pp. 491, ISBN 978-3-7720-8189-7 and 1 CD-Rom. Review originally appeared in *Die literarische Welt*, 6 January 2007, p. 7.

It's true. In the last decade many reference books have appeared that offer access to famous as well as little known women writers. What is new in the *Lexikon*

deutschsprachiger Epik und Dramatik von Autorinnen (1730-1900) [Dictionary of Women Authors of Epic and Drama in German] is that it concerns itself far more with the works themselves than with their authors. Among other advantages, that means you can browse through the expertly narrated tales. Well-known academics present a full three hundred and forty-three titles composed by 170 women authors over a period of 170 years. Many contributions come from English-speaking countries, which is no surprise given that German gender studies has been inspired by the USA where the field is more broadly developed and taken more seriously than in Germany.

Voyage of Discovery to Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer.

Each entry follows a pattern. Following a comprehensive exposition of content and literary critical as well as historical reception, the text is placed in its original context and then re-visioned as it is read today, often by including known feminist interpretations. That is, context is privileged but not in the usual way that relates a work to its author's biography. And both praise and condemnation are scarce. The accompanying CD ROM also permits quick access to desired individuals.

In my view, the *Dictionary* makes a perfect gift for anyone concerned with German women's literature before the twentieth century. But beyond that, it provides book lovers with a wonderful opportunity for exploration.

Who hasn't heard the old canard, that women are born incapable of writing drama? The collection overflows with comedies, tragedies, plays of all kinds, historical, Biblical, and socio-critical, with authors ranging from Gottsched to Ebner-Eschenbach. Comedies penned by the former sound like amusing anecdotes. True, much of the drama was intended to be read rather than performed, if it even escaped the desk drawer, because throughout the entire 19th century women in public continued to be thought disreputable. Still,

Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer, whom Heine appeared to envy, as well as others wrote for the stage, taking their places among the most successful dramatists of the century. One of Birch-Pfeiffer's pieces was performed 123 times at Vienna's Burg Theater and had taken as its storyline, not coincidentally, a narrative by a woman, George Sand.

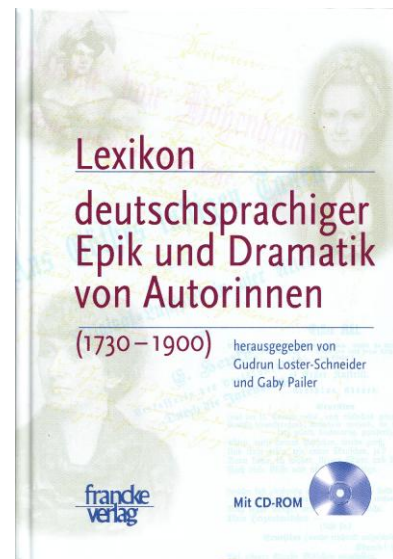
Tales of a Russian Empress.

Socially-critical engagement can increasingly be found, starting in 1848 with Fanny Lewald whom Sigrid Bauschinger calls "the most important representative of emancipation of her age" in Germany. Also associated with socio-critical prose is Bertha von Suttner whose 1889 novel *Die Waffen nieder* [Down with Arms] brought her a Nobel Peace Prize in 1905. Often the politically active are male figures, but as the century draws to a close, more and more female writers demonstrate awareness of women's disadvantages in the public and private spheres. They treat the theme not as they did earlier, covertly, but openly and targeted toward increasing emancipation. With so many tales from the same era, readers obtain a developmental vision of the Zeitgeist and an overview of the period, a perspective impossible with individual works.

In this collection we also find the first girls' books, often tagged for 'grown-up girls' (and therefore not children's literature). These include Clementine Helms' *Backfischen's Sorrows and Joys*; Johanna Spyris' *Sina. A Tale for Young Girls*; and Emmy von Rhodens' boarding-school novel, *Der Trotzkopf* [Stubborn] (Yes, the first volume of the well-loved series was published in the 19th century.) The Dictionary also includes those highly successful writers of so-called light reading [Unterhaltungsliteratur] like (Nataly von) Eschstruth and the often criticized Eugenie Marlitt, well known, notorious and intimately linked to "Gartenlaubenkultur" or an aspect of bourgeois culture [*Gartenlaube*: the first 19th century mass-produced German magazine with strongly bourgeois connotations. Translator's note].

At the other end of the spectrum, Empress Catherine the Second of Russia makes her cameo appearance as author of moralistic tales.

The fact that so many of the authors came from nobility is striking, percentage-wise a far higher representation than among men who as authors tended to come from the bourgeoisie. This probably results from bourgeois women suffering under repressive patterns of thought, household duties and time spent sewing, as a task forced on them, and they therefore lacked the leisure and stubbornness required by writing. Not that the noble women had it much easier, but this class was spared some of the middle-class woman's burdens, and their households provided both more money and more freedom to be 'eccentric' and engage in 'unfeminine' pursuits.



Whoever thought that women in the 18th century rarely published and were seldom successful will find an eye-opener here regarding the amount, breadth, and originality of literature penned by German-speaking women. It's easy enough to conclude from the introductions and summarized narratives that many of the works should be brought back and made available to contemporary readers.

The Avant-Garde's Avant-Garde: Hedwig Dohm

Rolf Löchel

Trans. Tobe Levin

Review of Rohner, Isabel & Nikola Müller, eds. *Hedwig Dohm – Ausgewählte Texte. Ein Lesebuch zum Jubiläum des 175. Geburtstages mit Essays und Feuilletons, Novellen und Dialogen. Aphorismen und Briefen.* [Hedwig Dohm—Selected Texts. A Reader to Celebrate the 175th Anniversary of Her Birth with Essays, Serials, Novellas, Dialogues, Aphorisms and Letters]. Berlin: Trafo Verlag, 2006, pp. 317, ISBN 3896265598. Originally published as „Vorkämpferin und Vordenkerin. Hedwig Dohm, Feministin der ersten Stunde, wird zum 175. Geburtstag beschenkt“ in *literaturkritik.de* No 9, September 2006 „Feminismus“ Geburtstag. http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/reze_nision.php?rez_id=9804.

From time to time an earlier generation births a visionary, and even while thinking they follow in her footsteps, those born later fall behind their ancestor. One of Germany's pioneering feminists, Hedwig Dohm, enjoys this type of posthumous acknowledgement, in particular when her views on prostitution are compared with those of feminists today who insist it is a profession like any other and try to enlist clients in the struggle against the coerced sale of sex. It may be unintentional, but in nearly all media and many minds, the approach succeeds in strengthening a pre-existing sexist image of women while also vitiating arguments opposing pornography and sexist advertising. Because the sex market is demand-driven, advocates for normalizing the industry may manage to oppose forced prostitution subjectively, but objectively they contribute to it as their trivialization of its harm lures increasing numbers of young women and girls naïve enough to swallow the proffered false promises and lies should they have been

lucky enough to evade equally prevalent brutal threats and drugs. In sum, what proponents really promote is an understanding among men that buying sex is normal. The logical result is an increase in demand which leads to an increase in force.

Dohm disagrees with organized whores who claim prostitution is sacrosanct and counter all criticism by claiming discrimination. Dohm, not blind to the fact that women can collude in destroying their own honor, called prostitution a “disgusting caricature of the erotic” that represented one of “the darkest moments in human history,” a “mark of Cain distorting the face of the earth, so repellent that its Medusa's gaze makes the heart shudder.” Why? Because men saw in the prostitute all women at the “lowest level” of existence.

Now, one possible response is to allow that this may be true but also to insist that individuals be free to deal with their own dignity however they wish. For if a woman insists on degrading herself, shouldn't she have the right? There's a caveat, however. The prostitute isn't degrading herself alone. Instead, the institution, a product of sexism, degrades society in that it also promotes sexism. “What [men] experience in the brothel throws its shadow over marriage,” Dohm already noted at the debut of the twentieth century. But not only are the wives and girlfriends of johns affected. All women are, and all men as well, no matter how distanced from such transactions each one feels.

Criticism of prostitution was an important element in feminist Hedwig Dohm's thinking but by far not the only issue close to her heart. She was also a critic of marriage and perhaps even more articulate against the ideological elevation of maternity and its “inherent lie,” that mothers alone are “born to raise their children,” a trump in the patriarchal hand dealt out against the women's movement. But even a “cursory glance” at the nursery run by mothers should make it clear that mommies make “the worst educators” of their children. Why? They reveal “a nearly

boundless ignorance” of their own child’s character, a lack of awareness that can only shock the compassionate on-looker.

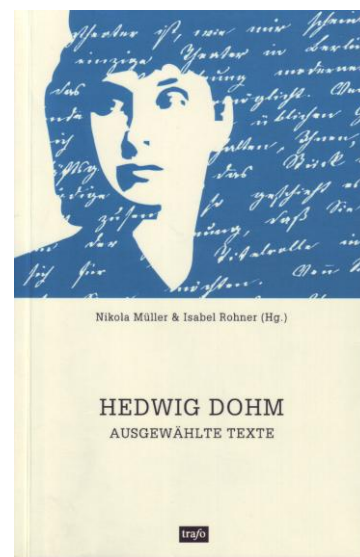
For Dohm, marriage and the over-valuation of motherhood stood high on the list of candidates for societal change. Yet women were everywhere urged to bear more children, and legislation promoted heterosexual union as the only privileged type of partnership, thereby discriminating against all other forms, including remaining single.

The autodidact Hedwig Dohm, who regretted her whole life having received an insufficient formal education, was also vehement in support of women’s right to enter the sciences and to enjoy all other educational opportunities and institutions. Against all those who argued that scientific occupations went against feminine nature, Dohm proved to be a sharp-tongued critic. And in her essay on “The scientific emancipation of women,” she anticipated Virginia Woolf’s deployment of Shakespeare’s sister, though in Dohm the figure was named Frederike Schiller.

Dohm also preferred the term “feminist” to the label “women’s affirmative activist” [Frauenrechtlerin] with its “odd sound” coined by the opposing camp and intended to work “ironically with an insinuating after-taste.” In innumerable publications, she in turn would write about “men’s affirmative activism” and its “devilish viewpoint concerning the spiritual inferiority of the female sex.” And if she sensed anti-feminist propaganda, her “resolute feminism” spared no one, neither female authors nor the otherwise greatly admired Nietzsche whose misogynist stupidities “astonished” Dohm. Thus, in one of her most successful books, *The Anti-feminists*, in a chapter called “Woman against woman” in which Laura Marholm, Ellen Key and Lou Andreas-Salomé appear, she also devotes a section to Nietzsche. Counted among the “orthodox on the woman question,” Nietzsche reveals in his “dispirited” chatter about women that, unlike Socrates, he doesn’t know what he doesn’t know.

An untiring feminist, Hedwig Dohm not only wrote essays, theoretical articles and innumerable popular pieces for magazines but also literary works: novels, novellas, short stories and comedies. The latter were praised by Theodore Adorno. Her „obvious talent as a playwright,” Adorno wrote, „is revealed in her precise knowledge of modern society, her ability to seize the comic moment, make it original or at least appear so, and then concentrate all her energies in igniting around it an on-going firework display of jokes and puns.” Dohm pens “really comic” lines.

She had little to say about her own creative work. In a December 1902 letter to feminist colleague Anna Pappritz, however, Dohm appeared self-critical, noting that *Sibilla Dalmar* (1896) is the first of her fictions she found worthy. Whatever came before in terms of “belles lettres” was no more than “bloody dilettantism.” Similarly, she found in her early feminist pamphlets a “preppy ton” that angered her. Another letter written in 1907 to Rosika Schwimmer complained about the tendency, still alive today, to read her novel *A Soul’s Destiny* [Schicksale einer Seele] as autobiography: “I wrote nothing about my marriage in that book—out of consideration for my daughter.”



The quotes come from a volume of texts by Dohm recently edited by Nikola Müller and Isabel Rohner which no self-

respecting feminist library or otherwise interested reader should be without. Celebrating the 175th anniversary on 20 September 2006 of Dohm's birth with essays, serials, novellas, aphorisms and letters, the book reveals the skillful hand of two conscientious editors who did meticulous research.

Therefore, announcement of Müller and Rohner's plans for a comprehensive edition of Dohm's work is welcome. In 2007, *Sibilla Dalmar* and *Schicksale einer Seele* are scheduled to appear as the first two of 15 volumes. This is indeed an ambitious project and certainly the best present on the anniversary of her birth for a woman called the "pioneer activist and thinker of a new image of women," as noted in a 1914 volume dedicated to Dohm. It is also a gift to readers as the "selected texts" make you hungry for more.

Women, Music, Culture

Susanne Rauscher

Trans. Tobe Levin.

Review of Koldau, Linda Maria. *Frauen – Musik – Kultur: ein Handbuch zum deutschen Sprachgebiet der frühen Neuzeit*. [Women—Music—Culture: A Handbook on German-speaking Regions in the Renaissance]. Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2005, pp. 1188, ISBN 978-3-412-24505-4. Originally published as "*Frauen – Musik – Kultur: ein Handbuch zum deutschen Sprachgebiet der frühen Neuzeit*" in *Feministische Studien. Zeitschrift für interdisziplinäre Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung*/ No. 2/24, November 2006: 351-352.

Women and music: the combination seems so obvious that you may wonder what purpose a new handbook on the subject could possibly serve. For haven't we left the era of compensatory research behind? And if we turn to music production, don't we encounter a vast number of women who earn an adequate living and, in some cases, are considered major art-

Feminist Europa. Review of Books. Vol. 7, No 1, 2007. Vol. 8, No 1, 2008.

ists? And isn't this equally true for the world of opera and orchestra? Female interpreters are there, too, in record numbers, not to mention women composers.

Yet a historical survey quickly reveals that for centuries before the twentieth, women did not enter the historical record, either as singers or composers. Reasons abound; many are banal; and researchers in other disciplines have already exposed women's consistent association with the trivial. Music, which afforded professional status, required education, built stature, and kept women out, either by direct exclusion or by conflicting demands in their daily lives. One example of the former: the Papacy's refusal to allow women to sing in church which led to "business" with castrated boys who then performed the alto and soprano choral parts, or, to illustrate the latter, normative expectations of women's self-effacement in certain classes.



Given this background, the present text should be lauded, not only as a pioneer effort but a work of Sisyphus as well. True, other authors have also approached the subject matter—Eva Weisweiler in her book on *Women Composers from the Middle Ages to the Present* (1999), for instance. But Weisweiler offered a first overview of themes and looked only at composers. Koldau's view is broader and, therefore, more suggestive. She considers

the entire musical field from the Renaissance to the present to assess women's influence on the development of the art itself.

Koldau examines a wealth of primary sources that promote a detailed questioning of women's musical creativity. To illuminate German women's influence from the 15th through the 17th centuries, the author explores feminist research in history, theology, literary studies and other disciplines. Noblewomen's diaries are exposed in her pages; letters from convents as well.

These and similar first-person accounts show without a doubt how involved women were with the day-to-day making of music. They produced it, composed it, and 'patronized' it. And just as their biographies varied enormously, so, too, did the kind of influence they exercised on the world of music. Koldau looks at the nobility (great and small); at religious; at the bourgeoisie. Among the latter, conditions weighing on married women differed from those on single women in musical families who, at times, became professional musicians, playing in processions at court or performing in convents. These female artists also enjoyed an extraordinary degree of emancipation. Traveling in troupes, they were expected to possess not only musical but also acting talent. Many played one or more instruments.

Against this background, in the second half of the 17th century, the opera singer pioneered a new image of female success on stage. As the genre developed most rapidly in Italy, most divas of the time were Italian. Yet, the opera singer became the first model for Germany, too, of the independent professional woman earning her living by music. If sufficiently gifted, she could rise to enjoy the fruits of stardom and income as a diva, and this took place long before women were welcome to join men in the orchestra.

The *Handbook*, in sum, provides a treasure trove for further research on women in music.

Prima Donna: Between Love and Madness

Heide Seele

Trans. Tobe Levin

Review of Gebhardt, Volker. *Frauen in der Oper. Große Stimmen – große Rollen*. [Women in Opera. Grand Voices—Grand Roles]. München: Elisabeth Sandmann Verlag, pp, 224. ISBN 978-39 380-45022. Originally published as „Prima-donnen zwischen Liebe und Wahnsinn“ in *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung*, 18 February 2007.

In a new volume from Elisabeth Sandmann publishers, Volker Gebhardt presents his research on women and opera.

Worlds separate Dido from Lulu. In Englishman Henry Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas," the Queen of Carthage mourns the betrayal of her lover and dies in the arms of her female companion Belinind, while in "Lulu," Alban Berg presents a heroine whose utter lack of soul smothers the smallest ember of audience empathy. By taking inspiration from a thirty year old Wedekind play whose protagonist was simply incapable of experiencing spiritual pain, the composer created a wholly new type of female figure.



Volker Gebhardt's new book on *Women in Opera* analyses these female leads, describes the operas in which they appeared, introduces their composers and reports on productions. What clearly emer-

ges is a history of change in women's roles and social position over the last 500 years. For if we leave aside the magic of elegant sopranos, protagonists represent their epochs' female joys, fears, triumphs and defeats.

A freelance writer in Berlin, Volker Gebhardt knows opera well. This book proves it as it moves majestically from baroque, with its affect and passion, to the "devil women" on the modern stage. But as a connoisseur of music and art, the author is interested not only in the historical survey. He finds equally fascinating the "grand voices and grand roles" of his subtitle, brought to life in the text's many illustrations of actual performances and sketches of the great interpreters of the last fifty years. The narrative therefore escapes capture by the historical and moves with grace onto the stages of today.

Normally, Monteverdi's "Orfeo" is celebrated as the inaugural piece in a new genre, but seven years before Orfeo's premier at the Ducal Palace in Mantua in 1600, the forgotten Jacopo Peri had already innovated in "Euridice." He replaced with song the spoken text and linked lyrical scenes to one another by orchestral contributions. Regarding the "bitchy prima donnas," as far as Volker is concerned they were no better than the castrati: vain, lacking in collegiality, addicted to fame and hungry for money. Individual singers swallowed up the roles they were meant to represent. Händel was among the first to oppose this 'star' system by creating more complex and differentiated female figures.

Following "reformed opera" as pioneered by Gluck, one of the earliest composers avidly interested in theory, it is with Mozart's women that the truly human breaks into the genre. Each of Mozart's operas looks carefully at the fictional female figure as she first appears in the book. This procedure benefits, for instance, the Countess in "Figaro," as her destiny is no longer determined by ancient myth but rather by the infidelity of her husband, whom she succeeds in managing nonetheless. Here Gebhardt draws a direct line of

influence to Verdi's "Traviata" and Strauss' "Rosenkavalier."

Intrigue. Seduction. What would opera be without conflict? Yet social and political developments also leave their mark on the genre, as the chapter on women's self-emancipation in Beethoven and Cherubini shows. Now we find women who stride the stage as self-directed subjects, not enthralled to men. Quite different, however, is the romantic era. For instance, in Weber's "Freischütz," the heroine is damned to "holy idleness," while in the golden age of Bel Canto (Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti) prima donnas are torn between love and madness. The text pays tribute not only to the heroines of a Berlioz grand opera, but also bows to those in Richard Wagner's musical dramas and the great figures in Verdi without neglecting emancipated protagonists among the realists, in Tchaikovsky's "Eugen Onegin" or Bizet's "Carmen," and concludes with the femmes fatales as in Strauss (Salome) or Puccini (Turandot).

In the end, however, the author notes how the earlier splendor of women's roles has, since the Second World War, been lost to operatic intrigue no longer always ignited by men.

Introducing ... The Center for Creative Writing & Theatre for Conflict Resolution

Christiana Lambrinidis

The Center for Creative Writing & Theatre for Conflict Resolution. An Overview. «Η επινόηση της γραμματικής ή της Αμστερνταμ» first of its kind in Greece, provides a space for creativity, theory building and international exchange to advance creative writing and theatre deployed for peace. Committed to social change, the center organizes and implements seminars, workshops, writing projects, performances with voiceless and voiced populations of the periphery and of

the center. It aims to establish a tradition of creative writing by overturning the unspeakable through textualities that can be published **and/or** performed in and out of conventional cultural settings.

The Center for Creative Writing & Theatre for Conflict Resolution, located across the street from Aristotle's Lyceum in Athens, employs the conceptual tradition of Greece in its methodology geared to break down barriers between right and privilege, intelligence and experience, articulation and invention.

The Center for Creative Writing & Theatre for Conflict Resolution collaborates with individuals, cultural organizations, NGO's, local government, educational institutions, to carry out its writing projects with literate and illiterate women, borderland populations in conflict, street kids, immigrants, refugees, professionals, youth workers, university professors, children from elementary inner city schools, adolescent boys and girls from underprivileged urban areas and the border towns between Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria, students, health workers, educators, psychotherapists.

The Center for Creative Writing & Theatre for Conflict Resolution's activities include:

- Creative Writing Seminars
- One-to-One Tutoring for Manuscript Completion
- Creative Writing Summer Academy
- Writing Projects
- Theatre for Conflict Resolution Performances
- Comparative Literary Theory Women's Seminar
- Writers Meet New Writers
- Salons
- Conferences / Colloquia
- SHOUT: e-journal for creative writing

The following piece, in a style unique on *Feminist Europa. Review of Books's* pages, was submitted by the director of the Center, Christiana Lambrinidis.

No Longer Asking Daddy

Christiana Lambrinidis

Review of Stratigopoulou, Angeliki. *Δεν θα ξαναρωτήσω τον μπαμπά*. [I Will Ask Daddy No More]. Athens: Melani Editions, 2006.

We find ourselves inside the **Arcade of Books**, a privately run organization that gathers book-sellers into the center of Athens, creating a successful and on-going book-fair. Daily, book-related events are organized here in a space now familiar space to the publishing world in Greece. The **Center for Creative Writing & Theatre for Conflict Resolution** presents one of its authors schooled in a feminist pedagogy of creative writing. Many people who have steadfastly fought against the field as a topos of theory and practice are present tonight as are many others who participate in writing workshops abroad and in secret, not to betray the "divine calling of writing." Many who cover book reviews in the main literary and non-literary publications are also dispersed in the crowded auditorium.

A new book has come out: Angeliki Stratigopoulou's⁸ *I Will Ask Daddy No More*. Athens: Melani Editions, 2006. A new kind of writing has been developed in between the unspeakable, family-history, writing selves, and memory. Aware of the patriarchal, heterosexual, hegemonic voices inside the Arcade of Books, I have staged a phantasmatic battleground, a disclosure of what has attempted to keep the Center's methodology silenced and enclosed for the last decade. Because of the nature of *Feminist Europa. Review of Books*, because of its function among

⁸ Angeliki Stratigopoulou works at the Book Arcade as director of outreach programs. She has a child. The book, *I Will Ask Daddy No More* is her first novel and was nominated for a book award in 2006 by literary journal (*de*)*kata*. Angeliki Stratigopoulou has been a student of the Center for Creative Writing & Theatre for Conflict Resolution since 1999.

feminist scholars, because of the whispering milieu of Greek feminist literature, I chose to translate my speech and publish it amid the European scholarship of women's writing.

The invention of *grammar* or of *Amsterdam*

“Promise me something that continues daddy and I promise I will not grow up” (p. 59).

Remove your head from the underworld so that I can see it and make me a promise. And I, before the crowd of readers, will ask once again to become your daughter. By the time they comprehend and feel fear I will have called for my departure. Devour me and turn me into material of writing amid the jaws of your discourse. Devour me and save me from the crowd. I know you must dismember me alive and then proceed to consume me in their presence. Remove your head from the underworld so that I can see it and come to you.

Father do you hear me?

Calm down. The readers are agitated. Shift their state of mind with your book and I will come.

Yes, but let them see you.

Why?

Because if they don't they will not understand the art of invention. And if they do not understand I will be consumed in vain.

Not true. If I devour you, you will be protected. You will be able to return to that obscure kindness in between the underworld and earthly surroundings.

So, you want me in between your jaws as the space in-between?

I do, but like that, I bestow on you the kindness of a totem; and that can be construed as safety.

Then you are not father at all, you are mommy; the pre-oedipal monster who by murdering me will sanction the desire of narration. By devouring me, you will acquire the space of in-between—the space of transference—but the subverting displacement of language will defeat you.

I am the one you asked to keep you a child. Isn't that the reason you challenge my emergence from the place of the dead?

I need to learn I cannot subvert you. If I am torn to pieces, I become a totem and writing becomes a taboo. It becomes prohibited and I become an accomplice to the prohibition.

I will not eat you then. I will let you exist before the crowd of readers to write. You do not seem to survive your overwhelming sense of guilt.

You consent to my writing but only as the time of abandonment.

Abandonment is not subversion. I am not interested in your abandonment. I am invested in the practice of my discourse, the authority of invention.

Mommy is invested in the desire of narration. Who of you determines the space of language? I am going to be eaten anyway so why not give the crowd of readers the affirmation of homophagia as participation in the act of writing? Isn't that a primary prohibition? The affirmation of homophagia as writing, I remove from you since I have invited you to devour me, assigning to my self attributes of a materiality constructed mainly from the power invention holds.

Father do you hear me?

Do you need the opus to conjure up another activity from that of interpretation?

If I accept that interpretation results from cohesiveness, then I lose the authority of invention.

Your loss is my return. I will leave interpretation to you but I will keep invention for me.

If I lose invention then interpretation is an addiction, an obsessive construct that promises to change void into the functionality of narrative. If that happens I return to the space of the mother without any substantial negotiation with you.

There is the possibility of rendering; you could call homophagia interpretation. If you do that, then the crowd of readers will surrender themselves, without guilt,

to their desired cannibalisms — within the opus called “your book.” Your book will become an empty space wherein perpetual cannibalisms will prove its permeability and its exemplary nature for the lifting of guilt.

Like that my book becomes an opus of trajectories where systems of choice lose sight of their co-dependency on assumed practicing of choices as a much-invested construction of non-guilt.

Isn't this enough for you? To define the possibility of ever-lasting promise?

This is your way to rule, not mine.

I have mother promising she will succeed in subverting me; in doing that she keeps her alliance to you even though she always fails; which in essence is irrelevant because she is able to maintain her space in language by simply exercising her promise.

I already allow for chapters inside my book where I succumb to my acceptance of guilt as “It Is Not My Fault”: “It is not my fault when Spring comes and most people think it is for the best. It is not their fault either. It is not my fault I understand what a bad thing Spring is. It is not my fault that moment comes when the crack is opened and you see through it everything you always wanted to see. It is not my fault the crack shuts with a thud and you are left half inside half outside unable to decide. It is not Spring's fault it is so indecisive. When it grows up it might learn how much that cost, but by then it will be called something else and it will assume it is to blame for everything” (p. 104).

But these things are not your own; they are inventions you allow them to see.

So now that we have reached somewhere, now that we both comprehend it is a war between us, you take me back to the authority of a pledge. So interpreting is promising.

Father do you hear me?

I am not leaving, don't worry. I expect to devour you. In the meantime, while you are waiting, while the crowd of readers is waiting, we can talk about *Amsterdam*.

The point where invention becomes interpretation.

Amsterdam is I after I allow you to consume me. She is the textual subject we read and become textual subjects; we do not read and remain ourselves.

So *Amsterdam* is the boundary between us. Are you suggesting that I devour her instead of you?

You are much more precise than I am used to. What I am telling you is that if there is no *Amsterdam*, I and all of us are the devoured children of the original father.

So it is absolutely certain I want *Amsterdam* and not you?

It is possible I will withstand betrayal by bartering the boundaries of a totem. If you eat her, then I am not slowly turning into totem and writing into taboo.

How wrong you are! If I eat her she exists as an agent of invention.

I don't know what you are talking about. *Amsterdam*, for me, is the empty body trespassing into the infinite spirit. And the book that displays her is the theatre of writing.

“Our arduous goal is to clarify the primary function within which we make to exist for us, or employ, space, object or functional instrument, and to describe the body as the space where this appropriation takes place...”

Do not talk to me as Merleau-Ponty; it is you. I am not going to be consumed to reward the void as the acquired space of the “arduous.” The only instrument you actually have to subjugate me and stop me from asking you to devour me in front of them is the obscure kindness in between the underworld and earthly surroundings.

So you do accept that books are the theatres of writing.

I accept writing is a theory of chaos.

You consider theatre chaos?

I consider theatre to be language and the actions it instigates the only possibility perhaps for subversion.

So you confiscate the power of language, and thus of invention by saying that language itself consents to both its subver-

sion and its destruction to occur within it.

If we actively participate in homophagia, our own actuality, intimate boundaries become permeable, infinite—especially since the entire construction of the book I bring forth is based on the removal of guilt. **I want to tell you what *Amsterdam* is because I do not believe that you can, in any way, overcome me or deprive me of something that is mine. I believe *Amsterdam* is the unrest of a system—let us call it family—informed by the perception of the theory of chaos. It is a transferring screen—from interpreter to writer to reader—upon which the inherited order of systems makes itself apparent. Don't forget in ancient Greek the word ΧΑΟΣ (chaos) meant the primary void. The erroneous interpretation that followed transformed the meaning of chaos to mean disorder.**

So family is the primary void. The unbeatable system—that which contains but cannot be contained.

I never said anything like that.

You imply any which way to disorient me. You wish for my extermination. Not symbolically, or semantically, or imaginatively any longer. You actually desire me extinct. You cannot exist if I am the one to have *Amsterdam* as the invention of rules, or rather as the depiction of unborn coherences called grammar. But, daddy, I do have *Amsterdam*. I am the one who accepts the analysis of chaos and the possibility of a staged exit as grammar becomes totem within the taboo of extremity. I am the one who accepts this is language and not invention. Am not I the one who calls you from the underworld and invents your voice to be heard?

Women in Politics—Hungary 1990-2006. An Overview with International Comparisons.

Katalin Koncz

Summary of Koncz, Katalin. *Nők a politikai hatalomban. Számvetés a rendszerváltástól napjainkig*. [Women in Politics. From the Start of Regime Change to the Present]. Budapest: Magyar Női Karrierfejlesztési Szövetség. [Hungarian Association of Women's Career Development], 2006, pp. 452. ISBN 978 963 06 1709 3.

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<http://www.neww.org.pl/en.php/news/new/s/1.html?&nw=3421&re=2>

Approaching the turn of the century, the Central European region became the scene of dramatic changes. Post-socialist countries embarked on a political and economic path that was new in every way. The most important aspects of regime change in Hungary were democratization of society, alteration in the structure of ownership, and free reign given to development of a market economy leading to a fundamental transformation not only in the political and economic spheres, but also in interpersonal relationships within families. Individuals found opportunities and perspectives redefined. Though the scale of winners and losers of this restructuring was not meant to be tipped along gender lines, some of the most obvious consequences of the changeover affected men and women in different ways.

While in the more advanced half of the world the call for equal opportunity for both genders in the social and political spheres has by now become reality, in Hungary the change in regime did not bring a substantial qualitative improvement in the approach to women's issues nor in the opportunities open to women in politics. Women's equality is not among political and economic priorities. As paradoxical as it may seem, the gradual exclusion of women from political decision-

making is a phenomenon of our democratized society. In every one of the countries involved, following regime change, women were forced into the periphery of the political arena and nowhere else as blatantly as in Hungary.

To ensure that social transformation not disadvantage women more than it has already done, the danger to women's interests must be recognized and, correspondingly, institutions engaged in serving their interests must be strengthened. The political sphere has a fundamental role to play in this respect that cannot be replaced nor relegated to any other sphere, since only this one has the means (legal, institutional, and financial) indispensable for turning intent into reality.

Women are underrepresented in all sectors of political life. After regime change, the number of female parliamentarians was drastically reduced, and today, with its present ratio of women (10.6%), Hungary ranks 120th of 173 countries. This discrepancy is equally glaring in comparison to European Union and post-socialist countries alike. The new era's first elected Parliament had, in fact, no women at all in the upper echelons of political office holders. Although a breakthrough came in 2002, when Dr. Katalin Szili was elected President of Parliament, women continue to be underrepresented in committee leadership, even fewer than MPs.

In accordance with international trends, however, the number of women mayors exceeds the female percentage in Parliament. Opportunities for women in small towns and settlements are substantially greater than in big towns and cities. Lower levels of local government provide entryways through which women can access the political arena. And in this respect, women are at an advantage when elections are based on personal knowledge, since only personal contact can counteract the prejudice against them. Though women enjoy greater scope in forums of local decision-making than nationally, their ratio of participation still does not satisfy the principle of parity democracy, which relies

on the ratio of men to women within a particular population as its gauge.

The number of women in the central government is negligible although, in the wake of regime change, one woman was entrusted with the office of minister without portfolio, while today two women hold top government posts (Dr. Kinga Göncz and Dr. Mónika Lamperth). In the second layer there are 2 - 4 under-secretaries of state, and 4 - 5 deputy under-secretaries of state who are women. While the government administration has been steadily improving, the substantial setbacks we are experiencing today, orchestrated by the equal opportunity commission, have resulted in these institutions being relegated to a lower level of the hierarchy. Any policy for women in government is yet to be worked out.

The ratio of women leaders at the top of various parties and unions is also low. Simultaneously with regime change and as part of it, the women's movement was pluralized, so that parties and unions had sections dealing with women's issues. The women's organizations play a major role in the recognition, popularization and safeguarding of women's interests. The women's sections of the parties and unions, in contrast, lack effective power, and the number of NGOs in the developing civil or public sector dealing with women's issues is extremely low (189 out of 65 thousand). The civil sphere is under-financed and its influence limited. Given the lack of government support and sufficient experience, further organization along these lines is difficult. The movements are not strong enough to organize themselves as they direct their efforts and attention at the everyday struggle for survival. Women in general also show little interest, while the active nucleus has not yet found the common goals and programs that would make the mass of women spring into action. Finally, cooperation between the feminist movement and scientific-academic feminism as well as the various women's organizations representing different ideologies is next to nonexistent.

Measured against their importance to society, women's insufficient participation in decision-making bodies holds up a mirror to their place in the social order. To enable them to play a greater political role, changes on every level are called for, while all politicians need to adopt a "female friendly" perspective.

Clearly, political leadership is insensitive to women's issues and women's equality. Demands for equal opportunity and its major strategies worked out by the European Union can be found only in traces. If political leadership pays attention to the subject at all, it does so exclusively with regard to population growth and the family, with disregard to special needs, expectations, and opportunities for women, conditions for their fulfillment and development as human beings. Not seen by government as a priority, women's policies remain under-funded, ensuring that the European Union mandate for equal opportunity continues unfulfilled, although the Union is more interested in economic stabilization than in policing equality. Thus, lacking an impulse from outside, opportunities for women take a back seat to economic interests.

Parliamentary and local elections also clearly indicate that results depend on all participants: parties, nominees, and voters. The parties do not nominate a sufficient number of women to run for office; women do not accept nomination in sufficient numbers; and the majority of voters vote for male candidates. Unlike in leading countries of the European Union, political parties in Hungary do not resort to "positive discrimination" in order to satisfy or increase what might be considered the acceptable ratio of men to women in politics. Political parties do not feel the negative effect of women's absence because there are plenty of "suitable" men for political posts. Men's ability to achieve their aims and capitalize on their connections is greater than that of women, and men in decision-making prefer to see other men in positions of power. Except for the young, metropolitan, educated layer of society,

popular opinion is conservative and considers a wider participation of women in politics unnecessary. People trust women less than men, and as voters, they let the country know it.

From the point of view of education, it is sufficient for women to participate in politics. Other conditions, however, are not favorable. The level of women's employment has declined and is appreciably below the European Union average. The sinking budgets of Hungarian families and the burden of working men (if they have jobs at all) increasingly bind women to the traditional role of homemaker, an activity that in itself is becoming more and more difficult to organize, leaving women little energy for family care, relaxation or hobbies. Conditions that could ease combining work and homemaking are unsatisfactory (reduction of childcare networks, out of date appliances, antiquated forms of housekeeping, lack of quality services, and the high price of subscription meals). Women with families wanting to participate in political decision-making find it impossible without a reduction in dual duties and without social assistance.

The women's movement has not focused on women's shared interests, and for lack of this common ground, its defined aim is arbitrary. Given the present social environment, it is still too weak to become a factor in shaping contemporary politics. Given their customary roles, women lack ability to integrate themselves into the manly world of power politics. The traits to which they have been socialized as well as competencies gained in school and at work do not yet nourish successful political careers. The present century, however, may witness women's leadership bearing fruit.

Regarding political opportunities open to women today, women's interests can at best trickle into the political arena through narrow channels. As a result, females are being left out of the redistribution of political power. This leads to a paradoxical situation, namely, that although democracy is a basic requirement for

bringing the interests of special groups to the surface and asserting them, a society in the process of democratization is pushing the disadvantaged layers, including women, to the periphery of the political sphere.

To find alternatives when searching for change and opportunity, we must look at the factors defining women's political activity. The example of advanced market economies proves that speeding up integration of women and accelerating recognition that women should be integrated is the by-product of acknowledging mutual interests. Pressured by European requirements, and in the wake of ratified treaties, the government will hopefully see the need to engage a larger proportion of women in legislative processes. It will probably take the European Union's equal opportunities policies to make the government alter its views on this issue because the forces that could bring about change without outside pressure are missing inside (knowledge and preparedness, openness, moderation and self-restraint).



Leading party organizations, during preparation for the elections, will, in the future, hopefully recognize the necessity of approaching the principle of parity democracy and will place more women candidates running for top office on their lists. Union leaders, too, should realize that their sphere of influence with regard to safeguarding interests will have to shift toward female employees and will reshape their policies in accordance with those of their

more advanced European partners worked out in the 1980s.

In the civil sphere—including women's organizations—it is hoped that self-organization will be recognized as the major means of representing special interests and setting limits on power. It is hoped that in the wake of this new recognition, interest group networks will be more efficiently organized and make a point of representing and keeping on their agenda the need to realize equal opportunities, part and parcel of any democracy. The women's movement will, hopefully, continue to gain strength, as women will come to understand that they are endangered, and it is hoped that women will join forces with activists fighting for recognition and enforcement of their interests. They will hopefully define, from the body of common interests, the aims and goals whose representation they can trust to willing politicians—men and women both.

On the basis of the above, we may assume that a more “female friendly” social environment than what we are experiencing today will inspire all talented and qualified women to take up the cause of furthering and safeguarding women's interests in the interest of society. What they achieve may well convince political parties to nominate more women, and voters to vote for them in greater numbers. In this process, which will affect every member of society, education as consciousness-raising should play a major role.

Principled opposition

Andrea Pető

Trans. Tobe Levin

Description of Pető, Andrea. *Geschlecht, Politik, und Stalinismus in Ungarn. Eine Biographie von Júlia Rajk*. [Sex, Gender, Politics and Stalinism in Hungary: A Biography of Júlia Rajk]. Studien zur Geschichte Ungarns, Bd. 12. Herne: Gabriele Schäfer Verlag, 2007, pp. 214. ISBN 978-3-933337-43-6.

After 1945, the names of two public personalities were long taboo in Hungary. The first, László, was the post-war Hungarian minister who, following a show trial in 1949, was accused of ‘Titoism’ and hanged. His rehabilitation and public burial became the overture to the 1956 revolution. The second personality whose name was taboo for many years was Imre Nagy, the nation’s Prime Minister in 1956 at the time of the revolution. In 1958 he was sentenced to death; thirty years later, the transfer of his remains from an unmarked to an honorable grave signaled the opening of a new era.

These two ‘burials’ attained symbolic status in the collective mind. And in both incidents, family members or, more specifically, the daughter of Imre Nagy and the wife of László Rajk played a decisive role: exactly as Greek theater teaches us, it’s women’s duty to ensure that family members enjoy a proper burial.

To the ‘widow’ Júlia Rajk, both these powerful men, Mátyás Rákosi and János Kádár, who denied their victims a grave and thereby hoped to extinguish their memory, were not only personal enemies but also political opponents against whom one was duty-bound to fight—wholly in the spirit of Milan Kundera who understood opposition to the Communist Party as “the people’s struggle against power for memory and against forgetting.

In 20th century Hungarian history you’ll find hardly another person who fought more tenaciously against the politics of forgetting decreed from on high as Júlia Rajk. After her husband’s execution, she felt compelled to clear his name. As a result, she became one of the era’s most steadfast proponents “of memory” and one of the major figures in the developing opposition to the Kádár regime, grounds for seeing her life story as one with Hungary’s civic history.



The book features a woman instrumental in forming her era with special emphasis on aspects associated clearly with women.

Although the methodology—oral history—sufficed in leading to other sources that were relied upon, the biography depends to a large extent on interviews with family, including Júlia Rajk’s son, fellow prisoners and comrades-in-arms.

Using interviews as the principal resource, the author was able to describe the life of an extraordinarily strong, independent thinker for whom specific norms and values were simply non-negotiable.

A sort of heroine of the Hungarian opposition movement Rajk never accepted compromise with her husband’s murderers and continued to defy those for whom the motto “the lesser evil” allowed collabora-

tion with the Kádár regime. Rajk is, in contrast, a model of principled resistance.

From the perspective of the present, she is certainly an inspiration for any young women who wants to make a name for herself in history.

A Different Difference: Nobel Laureate Elfriede Jelinek and a New Critical Anthology

Claudia Vitale

Review of Svandrlik, Rita, ed. *Elfriede Jelinek: una prosa altra, un altro teatro*. [Elfriede Jelinek: A Different Prose, a Different Theatre]. Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2008. ISBN 978-8453-725-6; 978-88-8453-726-3.

A precious contribution to scholarly studies of Elfriede Jelinek, this book edited by Rita Svandrlik contains six essays by Italian and foreign experts in gender studies on both the theatrical and prose production of the Austrian writer from a “different” point of view. As the title suggests, all essays focus on the principal aspect of Elfriede Jelinek’s poetics, its “otherness.” The gender perspective supports and gives significance to such a specific theme.

Rita Calabrese’s opening essay (“From the Margins of Hebraism. The Patrilinear Writing of Elfriede Jelinek”) is dedicated to the importance of Jelinek’s father in her works. Deceased in a mental hospital in the sixties and wrongly neglected by the critics for years, Calabrese shows her father to have played a significant role in Jelinek’s late literary production. The father figure symbolises the link between Jelinek and her Hebraic roots, and, particularly in her mature work, he becomes a real subject, the voice of all the victims of Jewish history.

Maria Fancelli’s essay (“An Egyptian Mummy in Elfriede Jelinek’s *Burgtheater*”) analyses Jelinek’s *pièce* *Burgtheater* written in the eighties, one of the most significant examples of political theatre after Brecht. Interrogating the responsi-

bility of artists and writers who supported Nazism, Jelinek’s play uses radical language to unmask the Viennese tradition that sacralizes the actor.

Rita Svandrlik’s study (“Conflicts’ Typologies in some Prose Works: *Die Liebhaberinnen* and *Oh Wildnis, oh Schutz vor ihr*”) considers discord in two prose pieces, *Die Liebhaberinnen* [Women as Lovers] (1975) and *Oh Wildnis, oh Schutz vor ihr* [Oh Wilderness!] (1985) underlining the significant interconnection between gender and social tensions: every gender difference always relates to a socio-economic “Fremdheit” [foreignness or, in the Brechtian sense, alienation]. Both gender and social conflicts are linked through the most important clash in Jelinek’s work, the one with language itself.

Renata Caruzzi’s essay (“The Power of Words. Notes on Elfriede Jelinek and Elias Canetti”) accounts for analogies between Jelinek’s and Canetti’s desecrating use of idiom. Although in different ways, the typical demystifying traits of the two authors’ texts interrogate language itself and its potential. Language criticism and scepticism, its fragmentation and distortion, express Jelinek’s and Canetti’s implacable opposition to reality.

Lucia Perrone Capano’s paper (“Linguistic and Visual Surfaces: texts for Jelinek’s ‘different theatre’”) emphasizes the main characteristic of Jelinek’s stage: its otherness. Such theatre offers multiple voices that are like single “pieces” of a total body. In this way the text appears as a “speaking body,” laden with a performative value, whose multifaceted places are simultaneously visual, acoustic and spatial.

Writing about “Princesses! Children! A particular Representation of the Collective and Individual Imagination from the work *Der Tod und das Mädchen*,” Neva Šlibar focuses on the mythicized figure of the “princess” consigned by the collective imagination to a dimension of “apparent death.” In Jelinek’s plays women try to free themselves from such traditional stereotypes—derived from the

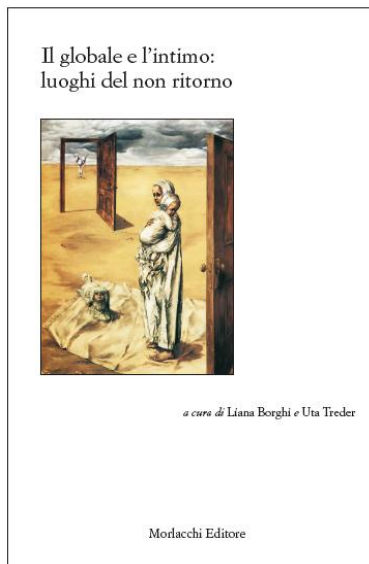
male imagination—in order to be “real” women in the flesh.

Rita Svandrlik’s translation [into Italian] and interpretation of Jelinek’s Nobel Prize speech “Im Absents,” defined as a “poetical document,” end the volume with a provocative suggestion, as it is only “elsewhere,” in a different dimension, in extreme isolation, that it remains possible to write. The updated bibliography that mentions all Italian studies and articles on Jelinek’s works enriches the book and shows an increasing interest in the Austrian writer on the Italian academic scene.

Women’s Discursive Geographies

Claudia Vitale

Review of Borghi, Liana and Uta Treder, eds. *Il globale e l’intimo: luoghi del non ritorno*. [The Global and the Private: Sites of No Return]. Perugia: Morlacchi, 2007, pp. 193. ISBN 978-88-6074-139-4.



The third publication of the local Florentine group “Società Italiana delle Letterate” (Italian women writers society) represents another innovative and provocative way of rethinking women’s reality and locations in our era. Paradoxically, such a “no woman’s land” must be seen not as a neutral and negative space but, on the contrary, as an open and creative venue devoid

of rigid barriers that remains constructively in the “in-between,” in the tension created between the global and the private. Rethinking the delicate dynamics between “house” (private) and “outside world” (global) in women’s history, the authors discover new approaches to reality, whose strength lies precisely in individual women’s capacity and desire to “cross ... the border” (Uta Treder, Liana Borghi). Such “nomadic movement towards” always implies a connection: the focus is not on the difference and distance but on the “relationship.” In this way “global” and “private” are no longer in conflict (house vs. world) but become synonyms, two related terms, as their “rapport is an analogic one, that is, a connection based on mutual affection” (Monica Farnetti).

Analyzing works by famous women writers (Anna Maria Ortese, Hélène Cixous, Dolores Prato, Sujata Bhatt, Eva Hoffman, Ingeborg Bachmann, Bettina Brentano, Karoline von Günderrode, Emily Dickinson, Christa Wolf, Elfriede Jelinek) or in which women play important roles (“Alice in Wonderland,” the figure of Penelope in Homer’s *Odyssey*) the authors reflect on the two terms and find new, boundless paths. Women’s “sense of adventure” is “different,” based on empathy and the desire to know the “other,” “the foreigner,” without which no self or identity is possible (Monica Farnetti). The relationship between “in” and “out” involves ideas of “threshold” and “passage” (Luciana Floris). Significantly the term “threshold” calls to mind the German word “Schwelle” which comes from “Welle,” i.e. wave. As Virginia Woolf’s *Waves* suggests, women’s knowledge of the world is like a flux, a stream which starts inside—in the heart—and creatively breaks out into the outside world. Memory and nostalgia are the main expressions of this mental and emotional fluidity. Such a psychophysical revolutionary attitude can be called an “instability principle” (Uta Treder), which demonstrates women’s capacity for never-ending transformation (Maria Letizia Grossi) and which contrasts with the li-

mitted ideals of patriarchal society: straightforwardness and consistency.

Such “variability” reminds us of the so called “Schwebe-Religion” [floating spirituality] of Bettina Brentano and Karoline von Günderode in the 18th century, as Uta Treder points out, and it relates not only to Rosi Braidotti’s *Nomadic subjects: embodiment and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*, 1994, and Adriana Cavarero’s philosophy, *In Spite of Plato*, 1995, but to women’s fluid ways of transforming themselves in time and space (Penelope) that reflect a “new sense of self” as constructive, passionate, emotional and vital, opposite to patriarchal domination by the two ideals of “death” and “rational thought.” Indeed, such flexibility also supports the most recent neuroscientific discoveries that highlight affect and emotivity even in cognitive processes: no knowledge of the world is possible without an authentic emotional involvement.

The “emotional brain” of women transforms the world in different ways: the verb “to confine” means “to be near to” (Maria Luisa Wandruszka); “to be in the world” means to “experience creativity and change” (Rita Svandrlik); and “to use the language” means “finding new ways of expressing the self” (Brenda Porster). In a word, it means “passing” (Eleonora Chiti Lucchesi).

Stefania Zampiga’s stunning performance at the end of the book not only enriches the volume but also gives it authentic significance: by following the rhythm of her “heart-body-sea” the author recollects and revitalizes the past before returning to the womb and, passing the limits of her mother’s death, experiences nostalgia, desolation and memory in her very flesh.

Pink: Or How Things Haven’t Yet Changed Much for Girls

Claudia Vitale

Lipperini, Loredana. *Ancora dalla parte delle bambine*. [More Kudos to Little Girls]. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2007, pp. 285. ISBN 978-8807-17139-0.

Nowadays, what new models do we have for little girls? What do they want to become? Mothers? Dancers? Beauticians? Football players’ wives?

The female heroes of their favorite comics want them to be nice; their favorite magazines offer romantic tests and make-up application instructions. Their schoolbooks still contain images of mothers and housewives who care for children and husbands. Advertisements represent them as young women cooks, and fashion shows see them with miniskirts and tangas. Their dolls are sex-bombs and mirror (or drive) their own dreams: to become mothers, dancers, beauticians, football players’ wives. This is the world of the last generation of little girls.

In the seventies, Elena Gianini Bettoli (who authored the preface to this book) described the educational process to which girls were subjected; it led to a condition of inferiority that could be considered achieved even before schooling began. According to Loredana Lipperini, things have not changed at all, even if they seem to be different: even if the pink school smock has been shed, pink is the color of Barbie’s world and Barbie’s “sisters.” And although books, movies and cartoons propose more women characters than in the past, they still saddle them with stereotypes such as witches and fairies.

Loredana Lipperini’s book focuses on a crucial question: how is it possible that those girls who wanted to become first ladies and presidents of the United States have given birth to daughters whose main dream is to wiggle their hips half-naked close to a rapper?

Lipperini, a famous Italian journalist and writer, brilliantly analyses the meaning of those institutions which still play a significant role in women's apprenticeship: family, school, media, books and cartoons.



Filling a Gap in Historical Knowledge: Women in the Catalanist Movement

Marina Massaguer

Review of Gonzàlez i Vilalta, Arnau. *La irrupció de la dona en el catalanisme (1931-1936)*. [The Irruption of Women in Catalanism (1931-1936)]. Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat (Biblioteca Serra d'Or). Barcelona: 2006, pp. 246. ISBN 84-8415-855-1.

La irrupció de la dona en el catalanisme (1931-1936) collects articles that had appeared in sections of the press linked to the movement in defence of the Catalan national community's political rights between the proclamation of the Spanish Second Republic in 1931 and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. The common thread linking these texts is debate on the role women played in Catalan politics and society in a period marked by social and political progress and by the politicisation of daily life. The text is prefaced by *Feminist Europa. Review of Books*. Vol. 7, No 1, 2007. Vol. 8, No 1, 2008.

the author Arnau Gonzàlez i Vilalta's comprehensive introduction on women in Catalan nationalism during this period.

Catalanism emerged in the course of the 19th century and encompassed a diverse range of political, social and intellectual movements calling for affirmation of the personality of Catalonia as a nation and for recognition of its collective rights in terms of identity. It arose out of fierce political and linguistic repression suffered by Catalonia under the rule of successive Spanish governments since the 1714 defeat by the Bourbon monarchy. In the 1930's, Catalanism exhibited two currents, one on the left, basically grouped around Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, and the other on the right, dominated by the Lliga Regionalista. The proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931 represented the beginning of gradual recovery of Catalan people's freedoms, an improvement that was cut short once more in 1939 with the Francoist victory in the Civil War.

Gonzàlez i Vilalta's work fills a gap in studies of women's role within this movement. To the present, publications on this issue have been virtually non-existent, in contrast with the large number of studies largely dealing with Spain as a whole on the role of women in communist and anarchist parties and trade unions, in the Civil War or under the Franco régime. The reason for this scarcity is probably that women did not play a major role in the Catalanist movement and, as an analysis of the texts in this collection reveals, they almost always responded to events as they occurred.

The selection of documents—the primary source of information offered by this book—and their contextualisation by the author in his introductory study form a whole which makes it possible for the reader to draw—inductively—a series of conclusions about the topic at hand.

The first of these conclusions is that what might be referred to as “feminism” in Catalonia throughout the 1930's had little to do with the feminism then reigning in the rest of the Western world, in particular

in Great Britain: in many of the articles the movement in favour of votes for women is associated with a form of agitation and a way of doing things deemed ridiculous, unnecessary and counter-productive.

Shouldn't a distinctive discourse suited to the realities of Catalonia, i.e. a traditional Latin, Mediterranean society, arise instead? This feeling was present on both left and right, though it was among the right that the Catalan word *sufragisme* provoked veritable terror, as may be seen in the texts from *La Veu de Catalunya*, the mouthpiece of the Lliga Regionalista, and other publications close to the Catholic Church. The latter were scandalised by a way of doing things which clashed with values that, in Catalonia in the 1930s, associated femininity with discretion and obedience.

The articles also reveal, however, that the problem was the non-existence of a distinct feminist alternative applicable to the social and political context of Catalonia. Why did women lack an independent voice? The main reason was that policies made by and for women had always followed in the wake of political events occurring on a general scale. That is, they were never generated or caused by women themselves (unlike in Anglo-Saxon countries), but were a consequence of overall changes in society and politics, such as the legislative advances that sprang from a desire to modernise Spain.

A good example to illustrate this absence of a feminist discourse and movement in Republican Catalonia is the granting, for the first time in Spanish history, of women's right to vote, thereby making suffrage genuinely universal. Suffrage was not a consequence of women's demands, however, but rather led to the timid emergence of such demands. In other words, no women's movement had called for votes, freedom and rights. Yet, on the basis of this measure, women began to enter politics, as may be deduced from this collection.

In this context, women did not participate actively in Catalan—or Spanish—

politics until society, the whole country, all aspects of life, had become completely politicised. It was then that, so to speak, they jumped on the bandwagon of changes that were taking place.

Once women could go to the urns, they became a political target, i.e. a potential source of votes. This was the moment they stopped being politically invisible. One consequence was that women began to play an active role in political parties, slowly ceasing to be passive objects but becoming civic subjects. In other words, they not only received political proposals, but also generated discourse and shaped opinion.

It was in this context that the parties—somewhat disconcerted by the new development—began to organise themselves in order to attract women's votes, hastily deploying a discourse concerning women's social and political role. At first, both left and right eyed the new constituency with distrust, probably because they had no idea what might be about to happen as a result of this change in the rules of the game.



The difference between Esquerra Republicana, the main left-wing party, and the Lliga Regionalista, the main party on the right, lay in the way each went about adapting to the new situation. This is shown by texts from sections of the press linked to one party or the other. Esquerra Republicana had active women in its ranks

—with a major role within the party in some cases—who wrote articles (many of which are included in this collection), gave talks throughout Catalonia and, in general, generated a discourse. On the other hand, the Lliga Regionalista had no organised female membership among its grassroots; and it was party leader Francesc Cambó who persuaded Francesca Bonnemaison to organise a women's movement within the party, made up largely of its male members' wives, sisters and daughters. This difference at the grassroots in the two main parties can be discerned if one pays attention to the authorship of the texts in the book. Nearly all those from *La Humanitat*—the mouthpiece of Esquerra Republicana—are signed by women, while many from *La Veu de Catalunya*—the mouthpiece of the Lliga Regionalista—are signed by men.

Nevertheless, these same texts indicate that the problem, for the left in particular, was not creating a discourse about women, but applying it to Catalan realities: the left believed that women's suffrage would lead to a rise in votes and consequently a victory for the right, due to the influence of the Church over women in a society which was still strongly impregnated with a conservative Catholicism. This created a major contradiction on the left: on the one hand, ideologically the fact that women had no right to vote was a sign of backwardness compared to other democracies; on the other, this same vote could mean their losing the government. Female suffrage represented a clear social and political advance but, paradoxically, the right was more in favour of it because of a general belief that it would favour them. At the same time, some sectors on the left—women members included—saw it as more of a risk.

It is extremely interesting to see, throughout the book, the contortions and circumlocutions in the writing by women from Esquerra Republicana—deeply democratic, socially aware women—to justify their party's ambiguous stance, which must certainly have placed them in a

highly uncomfortable position from an ideological point of view.

Apart from strictly political issues, this book also offers the reader insight into concepts of femininity and marriage which prevailed at the time, as well as into the roles of men and women in society and proposals for change which were beginning to emerge.

Authors of texts included in González i Vilalta's book were ignorant of the future which awaited them, but modern-day readers are well aware of it: proposals for change were not to bear fruit because of the outbreak of the Civil War, the triumph of the fascist armies, the fall of the Second Republic and the subsequent Francoist dictatorship, marked by severe repression in all areas of life. Of course, this affected both the movement which had arisen through women's participation in politics and the Catalanist movement, both of whose demands were to be frozen for four decades. This was, then, a double defeat for Catalanist women, and even a triple defeat for those of them who were on the left.

La irrupció de la dona en el catalanisme (1931-1936) is therefore an account of a period still marked by certain social prejudices against the entry of women into politics, by the strong influence of conservative Catholicism in some sectors of society and by a distribution of roles which limited women's independence in all areas (in the family, the economy, at work, in politics, etc.). At the same time, however, there was a clear will to advance towards a situation in which equal rights for men and women would be guaranteed in order to ensure a society more fair and democratic overall.

Women and the Culture of Peace

Eva Virgili Recasens

Magallón, Carmen. *Mujeres en pie de paz. Pensamiento y practicas. [Women on the Peace Path. Thought and Praxis]*. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2006, pp. 297. ISBN 84-323-1244-4.

An excellent book in peace studies emerges from Spain, penned by Carmen Magallón, member of the magazine *En pie de paz* editorial collective and currently director of the Peace Research Seminar Foundation (SIP) of Zaragoza as well as vice-president of the Spanish Association for Peace Research (AIPAZ). *Women on the Peace Path. Thought and Praxis* pioneers new ground in this important field.

To achieve her narrative objectives, Magallón opens with the personal, drawing on experience of more than twenty years of committed work for feminist and pacifist causes, from the anti-nuclear movement of the 1980s to her on-going editorial commitment to publishing *En pie de paz*. She provides a genealogy of different women's practices and proposals for building peace, from the First World War to UN Security Council Resolution 1325; and attempts to influence debate about the female sex as a separate political player in favour of peace.

Despite various studies confirming that the most prevalent violence suffered by women in war zones is rape,⁹ Enric Tello reminds us that

Rape, like all abuses of power, is born out of a power relationship that is socially legitimated ... Above and beyond formal laws governing equality... a dichotomous concept of the male and female worlds, nature and culture takes root. Between these two poles, women continue to identify themselves [and be identified with] na-

ture ... with the earth. In this way, considering the female body a continuation of the earth, aggression towards the enemy and conquest of their land are projected onto women's bodies. The rape of women on [either] side [is then] justified [as a] right of domination over one's own land.

Only after the crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda do we find rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy or sterilisation and other serious forms of sexual violence included in the definition of war crimes in the Rome Statute (1998) of the International Criminal Court.

The main aim of *Women on the Peace Path* is not, however, to discuss the violence inflicted on women, though this does not mean devaluing its effects and consequences, but rather to call for a specific role for them in building peace and to draw up a genealogy of their practices and proposals.

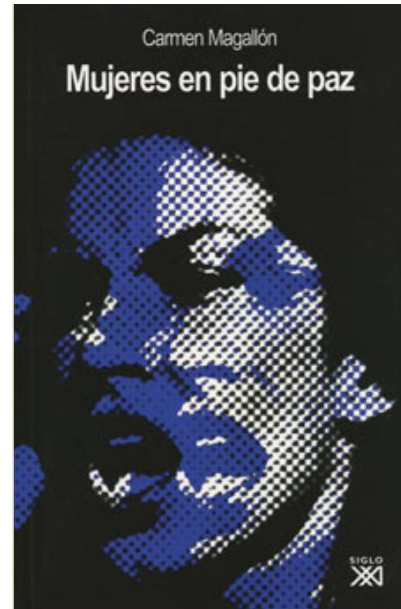
The common ground that linked female nature with pacifist virtues was trod upon by the first feminists; in 1914 the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, in the name of twelve million women in 26 countries, wrote a manifesto stating the need to find channels of dialogue over the conflict that was about to begin. While it is true that the First World War divided the suffragette movement over the options of war and peace, it is also true that in 1915, not without difficulty, the first International Women's Congress for Peace was held in The Hague, with the principal objective of creating a strategy for peace. The second congress, held in Zurich once the war had ended, witnessed proposal of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, aiming to unite the feminist and pacifist movements.

Feminist NGOs currently working to build peace are spread all over the world. They can be divided into six groups according to their goals: 1) those that are opposed to war and the military policies of their governments, the international move-

⁹ We must not forget that many women suffer this violence in places where war is non-existent, in their everyday life.

ment of Women in Black¹⁰ and the peace camp of Greenham Common¹¹ (1981-2000); 2) those that intercede between opposing groups, to break down barriers between divided communities through relationships and research into points of contact, Bat Shalom¹² and Hands Across the Divide;¹³ 3) those that search for non-military solutions to structural conflicts such as the Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres in Colombia;¹⁴ 4) women who fight against impunity in conflicts such as the Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala (CONAVIGUA),¹⁵ the committee of mothers of the disappeared in El Salvador (COMADRES) and the mothers and the grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina;¹⁶ 5) groups that support women who live in situations of war or lack of freedom in other countries through the international *sorority* and 6) groups that lobby for the grassroots work done by women to play a part in decision making. In this way, the work of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security¹⁷ together with the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and UNIFEM, was vital for approval in 2000

of Resolution 1325.¹⁸ Despite the importance of this resolution, as Sanam Anderlini states, not all women in power or in decision-making positions are willing to defend the rights of women.



The activities of these women's groups in building peace are essential on two levels: at the grassroots, which is necessary because the processes of peace involve the whole social group, and in the birth of alternative practices, such as those showing that even in war situations it is possible to think and act beyond national, religious and state borders to promote a peace that, according to Carmen Magallón, must transcend the traditional concept of peace understood as the absence of war. Needed is the concept of positive peace.¹⁹

The interpretative line followed by Magallón to build positive peace is rich. Peace-building work presupposes the socio-historical deconstruction of the dichotomy that linked the male gender with war and the female with peace via a faulty

¹⁰ I found the references to the websites of some movements that the author has included in the text to be of great interest. Therefore, I will report here the references cited in the book and some others that I have found, to provide readers with quick access to more complete knowledge of the movement in question. Women in Black:

<http://wib.matriz.net/>

¹¹ Greenham Common:

<http://www.greenham.common.org.uk/ixbin/hixcli nt.exe?a=file&p=greenham&f=greenham.htm>

¹² Bat Shalom: <http://www.batshalom.org/>

¹³ Hands Across the Divide:

<http://www.handsacrossthedivide.org/>

¹⁴ Ruta Pacífica: <http://www.rutapacific.org.co/>

¹⁵ CONAVIGUA:

<http://members.tripod.com/CONAVIGUA/>

¹⁶ Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo:

<http://www.abuelas.org.ar/>. Madres de la Plaza de

Mayo: <http://www.madres.org/>

¹⁷ Formed by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Amnesty International, the Hague Appeal for Peace, International Alert, International Peace Research Association and Women's Commission For Refugee Women and Children.

¹⁸ Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council urged the Secretary General and all of the Member States to work towards greater inclusion of women in the processes of building peace and in post-conflict reconstruction.

¹⁹ Positive peace is defined as the absence of all types of violence, direct, indirect, structural and cultural, as opposed to negative peace, the absence of armed conflicts.

binding of romanticized maternal experience to an erasure of the violence that women, too, have perpetrated throughout history.

Nature has not made women more pacifist than men nor men more violent than women. As Virginia Woolf notes in *Three Guineas*, the power of women for peace is not based on motherhood, on their nature, but on their historical exclusion from power and wealth; thus, preventing war involves the dismantling of the patriarchal sex-gender system.

The defence of peace for Woolf is therefore a free option for both men and women and, while it is true that women are not better or more pacifist than men, it is equally true that they have played and continue to play a significant role in the cause of peace.

Building peace, Magallón argues, involves the practice of difference, through the creation of new methods and new words that are differentiated from hegemonic patriarchal discourse.

There is, however, a caveat: the practices she proposes, of fundamental importance for building peace, stem from the feminine, from the female experience of care and sustainability.

Sara Ruddick studied the potential of maternal thought in building a culture of peace. For this feminist, a mother “is the person (male or female) that takes responsibility for the life of children; he or she who provides care in infancy is a substantial part of their work and their life.” And the practice of dedicating time to care for life is intrinsically linked to the culture of peace.

The practice of maternal thought is thus intimately tied to *mothering*, which arises from caring for children but, in relation to feminist movements for peace, extends to political approaches that aim to place human life at the center of culture and of political decision-making.

At the same time, the logic of the sustainability of life, which unites humanity with nature and is inseparable from the notion of equity, stands as a new way of

seeing development based on traditionally female values such as acceptance of vulnerability and dependence.

Building peace stands under the concept of imperfect peace, peace as a process and not as something static and definite; it includes practices that emerge from the feminine and make it possible to build peace through care and sustainability.

Subversion of the hegemonic discourse, of the patriarchal practices of individuality and egotism, and promotion of the primacy of care and sustainability that have traditionally been associated with women but are not exclusive to them appear throughout Carmen Magallón's discourse as a “revolutionary” path to follow in order to build peace.

Migration – Aliens Asleep?

Ruth Klüger

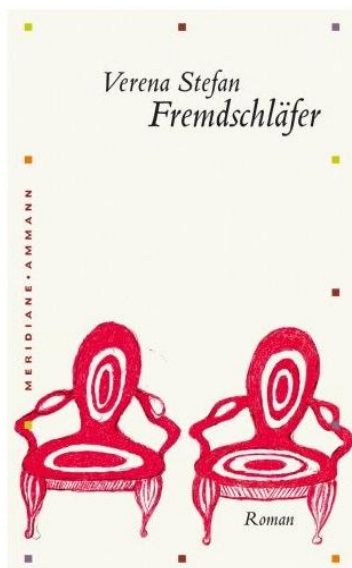
Trans. Tobe Levin

Review of Stefan, Verena. *Fremdschlüfer*. [Alien Sleeper]. Zürich: Ammann Verlag, www.ammann.ch, 2007, pp. 219. ISBN 978-3250601159. Review originally appeared in *Die literarische Welt* 06. October 2007.

Surely you remember what happened when Verena Stefan's first book *Häutungen* [Shedding] appeared in 1975 in the cheeky new publishing house Verlag Frauenoffensive. It quickly reached astonishing sales figures and became one of the foundational texts of the German women's movement. At that time, the author was immediately classified as a “radical feminist,” at least in those circles where such an epithet is a sign of scorn or a mark of danger. And Wikipedia presents her as such today. The moniker, however, betrays something of a shrill marketing impulse, like the cry of a fishwife, exactly the opposite of Stefan's style and mood, moving from the soft and dreamy through the sleep-walking to the sure-footed voice that captures her readers.

Hers is a style that deploys astonishment and curiosity, in fascination before the cornucopia of sight and sound. I'm reminded of Stifter when reading about Stefan's travels and gardens, and I also think of Gottfried Keller and his famous poem about the "golden excess in the world."

Stefan's text comprises snapshots and fragments of thought, sometimes playful, at others deadly serious. For despite the label *Roman* on the cover, the book is not a novel; it lacks a comprehensive plot but instead is conceived as a kind of essay carried along on the stream of authorial impressions, punctuated by segments you might call prose-poems which, taken together, create a whole much larger than the sum of its parts. The voice says "yes" to life and a humane vision that embraces animals, people, nature and civilization.



In the broadest sense, *Fremdschläfer* [Alien Sleeper] deals with what is foreign or familiar to us in our home or adopted countries, what we see again with new eyes or pick up along the way. It dialogues and argues with two nations, the mother country and the lover's land. The Swiss Verena Stefan has been living for seven years in Montreal and sees herself as a kind of alien in the broadest sense. The narrator, who discovered Canada with its friendly people and inhumane weather, lives in an English-French language mix. It

feeds reflections on speaking a foreign tongue: "You have the feeling as though you went shopping in the wrong store, as though you weren't really on the best of terms with yourself, the shoe is too small, it's squeezing your toe, you didn't work the language right, it's not cut to size ... On your tongue, sentences are aliens, strangers to the corners of your mouth." We learn that after the war, bureaucrats considered the narrator's family foreign because the mother, although born a Swiss citizen, had married a German, thereby losing her citizenship. Illogically, only the man's nationality counted to determine that of family members. An engineer whom Switzerland could well have employed at the time, he entered the country illegally. Although the canton's police and immigration authority could be buttered up, Verena Stefan, like her mother born in Switzerland, experienced her childhood marked by the fact that she was officially considered foreign. As far as the neighbors were concerned, her father remained an "alien," an outsider who never really learned the Bern dialect even though he tried. "As the locals would say, his language was in his mouth, not in his brain," his daughter writes.

Stefan's humanism also encompasses the animal world: housecats, wild cats, beavers, seals, and the ideal of a free-roaming wolf. In contrast, animal abuse is deplored, for instance the exhibition of Bern bears locked in a tower deprived of a view. On the one hand, her beloved Switzerland scintillates in Technicolor, though, on the other, not all currents bathe in harmony and peace.

The most foreign element of all, however, is illness, specifically cancer. Following an idyllic swim in a mountain lake, the narrator discovers a hardening in her breast. "In a fraction of a second, your lifetime is frozen in shock." The clinical details of medical examinations and subsequent treatment are told in the same rhythm as the rest, fluent and thoughtful like descriptions of the landscape though the pretext has changed. Discovery of the tumor alters human relationships and leads

to a place “in which even silence is still, that silence that lets you lie back without words, stretch out and feel good.” During chemo the author switches from direct address in the second person (you) to the impersonal “one,” writing paradoxically: “One feels an urgent longing to pronounce the pronoun ‘I.’” The illness causes identity loss. “One” stinks, but it isn’t one’s own odor.

Readers looking for the feminist in *Alien Sleeper* will find it mainly in the lesbian love story. Even today, when homosexuality is far less stigmatized than twenty years ago, the tranquil taken-for-grantedness of a loving relationship between two women is admirable. From Verena Stefan we can learn why feminism embraces the humane or, conversely, why true humanism enfolds feminism within it.

Publications on Literature

Others’ Speech: Creative Essays

Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić

Review of (essays by) Đurić, Dubravke. *Govor druge*. [Speech of Others]. Beograd: Rad, 2006. ISBN 86-09-00933-5.



If anti-modernism was dominant in 1990s Serbian culture, Đurić’s essays are

an articulate reaction to it. Beginning in 1995, she aimed to construct a canon of urban high modernist and postmodernist poetry based on 1980s publications whose main protagonists were women. These works would then encourage a new generation of urban women poets.

Regarding methodology, the author combined gynocritical criteria, the dominant paradigm of feminist literary criticism at that time in Serbia, with cultural approaches developed by American language poets in materialist readings. As a result, most chapters reveal an effort to place the work within a concrete political space that highlights social context. Poets discussed include Radimla Lazic, Ljiljana Djurdjic, Judita Salgo, Ivana Milankova, Nina Zivancevic, Jelena Lengold, and the youngest generation born after 1974. The author has also included two texts that explicate her critical method.

Female Characters of Antiquity

Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić

Review of Slapšak, Svetlana. *Ženske ikone antičkog sveta*. [The Female Icons of Antiquity]. Beograd: edition XX vek, 2006. ISBN 86-7562-047-0.

Following her successful book, *The Female Icons of the XX Century*, Svetlana Slapšak published this collection of 70 short anthropological essays on female characters in the ancient world, *The Female Icons of Antiquity*. Among the titles are “How to become a mythical mortal woman,” “Myths and the movies,” “Television and myths,” “A love activist: Aphrodite,” “Alkmene: a woman in politics,” “Cassandra: the fate of a talented woman,” and “Penelope.”

For Svetlana Slapšak, reading out *female* from myths of Antiquity means reading Antiquity itself in a new way, revealing an unmistakable relevance to present times in the deployment of particular myths. Starting points in this critical reading are the differences between various

versions, their discrepancies and/or ambivalent conclusions.



Although the product of great erudition and lengthy research, the book is written in an almost conversational narrative style, like telling and re-telling these stories once again. And as the author notes, the selected bibliography is based on the idea of *favourite*, not *obligatory* reading.

John Updike's Novels

Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić.

Summary of Dojčinović-Nešić, Biljana. *Kartograf modernog sveta: romani Džona Apdajka*. [Modern World Cartographer: John Updike's Novels]. Beograd: Filološki fakultet, Beograd, 2007. ISBN 978-8686 419-20-0.

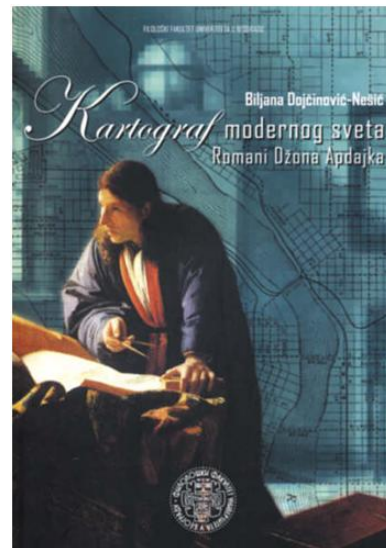
Modern World Cartographer: John Updike's Novels uses narrative strategies applied to a narrow range of topics to catalogue Updike's work, which in turn requires narratological and contextual analysis. Among the analytical approaches, feminist criticism and gendered readings take prime of place.

The five central chapters deal with "Novel and Romance," "The Scarlet Letter Trilogy," "The Uses of Autobiography," "The Rabbit Angstrom Show" and "Meta-fiction and Self-Parody" discussing 19 Updike novels in all.

The chapter "Novel and Romance," concerned with *Marry Me*, *Brazil*, *Couples* and *The Witches of Eastwick*, focuses on the combination of European and American novelistic traditions and the form known as "romance."

"The *Scarlet Letter* Trilogy," *A Month of Sundays*, *Roger's Version* and *S.* are analyzed in the next chapter as specific readings of Hawthorne's romance. Theoretical problems addressed include focalisation, first-person narration, and the reliable and unreliable narrator.

In "The Uses of Autobiography" devoted to the novels *The Centaur*, *Of the Farm* and *In the Beauty of the Lilies*, the narrative techniques in focus include shifts in perspective within the narration, usage of mythical references and creation of biobibliography.



The subsequent chapter on "The Rabbit Angstrom Show" concerns the central cycle of Updike's writing, the novels *Rabbit, Run*; *Rabbit Redux*; *Rabbit is Rich* and *Rabbit at Rest*. Techniques analyzed include the notion of realism in literature, the covert narrator, present tense narration and, especially, characterization and research on characters within analyses of narrative strategies in general.

The final chapter, "Meta-fiction and Self-parody," discusses *The Memories of the Ford Administration*, *The Coup* and the *Bech* books from the standpoint of their

combining modern and postmodern techniques.

The conclusion reached is that John Updike has not been merely a witness of the modern world; he has also created a fictional map of that world, borrowing from his own experience and turning this raw material into language that brings pleasure and artistic joy to so many of us.

Practical Use

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Contact info@stiftung-frauenforschung.de

Shortakes

Compiled and translated by Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić, Waltraud Dumont du Voitel, Tobe Levin, Christiane Makward.

Thébaud, Françoise. *Écrire l'histoire des femmes et du genre*. [Writing the History of Women and Gender]. Preface by Alain Corbin. Collection: Sociétés, espaces, temps, 2007, pp. 313. ISBN 978-2-84788-093-9. Trans. Christiane Makward

Do women have a history? How can it be written? What is a history of gender? What does it contribute?

Tidbits of a thesis in cultural history, bursts of ego, manifesto in defence and illustration of a research field, *Writing the History of Women and Gender* is primarily the story of an intellectual adventure that has absorbed a growing number of female and male historians in France and elsewhere for the past three decades.

Deploying mainly contemporary examples, this book throws light on the cultural and political roots of women's history, illuminating stages in a chronicle of the feminine concerned with liberation and memory and then moving on to a more complex and global history of gender. Along the way, the work brings up methodological landmarks and offers a critical reading of French historiography in order to lay the foundations of a disciplinary memory, to contribute to diverse approaches and research trends and to elicit a fruitful confrontation with non-French women historiographers.

This is a new, substantially enlarged edition of the 1998 original. It provides today's readers a panorama of one of the most exciting laboratories in the fields of history.

Françoise Thébaud is a professor of contemporary history at the University of Avignon, France, co-director of the journal *Clio, History, Women and Society*, and Chair of Mnémosyne, the Association for Development of the History of Women and Gender. She directed Volume 5 (*XXth Century*) of the series *History of Women in the Western Hemisphere* (Plon-Laterza, 1992; enlarged edition in paperback in 2002). She also co-directed *Féminismes et identités nationales* [Feminisms and National Identities] (Lyon, Center Jacques Cartier, 1998) and *Le siècle des féminismes* [A Century of Feminisms] (Editions de l'Atelier, 2004).

„Écritures transculturelles“ – Frankophone Gegenwartsliteratur als Ort der Verhandlung geschlechtlicher und kultureller Differenzen/ Différences sexuelles et culturelles dans le roman contemporain de langue française. [„Transcultural Writing“: Contemporary Francophone Literature Negotiating Gender and Cultural Difference]. Tübingen: Narr Verlag, Reihe: Cahiers lendemains, 2007. Trans. Tobe Levin

“Écritures transculturelles” was generated by the section on „Gender and

cultural difference in the contemporary French-language novel,” whose workshop took place during the Fifth Congress of the (German) French Studies Association 25-29 September 2006, headed by Prof. Dr. Gisela Febel, Karen Struve, M.A. and Dr. Natascha Beckmann. Principal themes were worked out in cooperation with the *Center d'Etudes des différences sexuelles et culturelles* at the University of Paris VIII.

Contributors ask how cultural difference and gender interact, mutually influence each other, can be studied and expressed. In recent years a great deal of ink has flowed over gender and its construction, social aspects of sexual difference and their incarnation in aesthetic and cultural representations. Chapters reflect on questions of hybridization, creolization, and other inter- and trans-cultural matters, ranging from post-colonial studies and Anglo-American theory to cultural contact including aesthetic and political writing by francophone authors showcasing such concepts as *négritude*, *créolité* or the articulation of difference in the Magreb or West African literature. These two aspects are considered together in terms of their specific influence derived from interaction of cultural and gender difference. How does the one change the other? How is each amplified? Confirmed? Undermined? In other words, it is a question of „crossing sexual and cultural differences,” resulting in more complex trans-cultural descriptions of life as experienced by concrete individuals. Chapters focus on issues of patchwork or multiple identities, hybridity, and deconstruction of gender identities.

Flowing from two lines of theory are three major axes bound together as *Doing Culture/Gender*: 1. In what sense are gender differences cultural? 2. To what extent are cultural differences „engendered“? 3. Does a literary and visual aesthetics of difference in novels and film exist? How can we identify characteristics of a trans-cultural manner of writing, „écritures transculturelles,” in the contemporary French novel?

Diversity and breadth of difference emerge from contestatory novels published in the aftermath of French colonization on the one hand and significant migration and exilic movements of the last fifty years on the other that have insinuated themselves in significant numbers onto the French market and have therefore exercised considerable influence on it. All chapters examine the cultural context of the writing from acts of violence to erotic events, and this multiplicity offers rich possibilities for research. At the same time, the number of women writing and publishing in France who also include the theme of gender has exploded exponentially. In unique ways, these authors apply their own consciousness and gender positioning to the global thematic of cultural difference, questioning traditional roles. These tendencies produce a complex picture of cultural dynamics and contacts, a swirl of cross-currents that contemporary literature represents, takes up, and works out.

The contemporary novel in France and the francophone world is largely influenced by these tendencies and questions, with a multiplicity of crossings between cultural and gender difference to exhibit. The analysis of these interwoven strands of culture and gender is a long overdue contribution to francophone literary studies.

Fries, Jana Ester, Ulrike Rambuscheck & Gisela Schulte-Dornberg, eds. *Science or fiction? Geschlechterrollen in archäologischen Lebensbildern*. [Science or Fiction? Gender Roles in Archeological Biographies]. Münster: Waxmann Verlag, 2006, pp. 240, ISBN 978-3-830917-496. Trans. Tobe Levin

Science or fiction? Gender Roles in Archaeological Biographies represents the proceedings of the second meeting of the “working group on gender studies” at the 5th German conference of archaeologists in Frankfurt/Oder in 2005, plus two additional papers.

Since archaeologists have only rare leftovers of prehistoric lives to work with,

their biographical sketches of prehistoric human beings always require supplementation and speculation. Interpretation is necessarily subjective and relates more or less to (sub)conscious perceptions of life in prehistory; this projection, in turn, leaves its imprint on the scientific picture, a distortion that academics themselves rarely perceive. Even in the 21st century, conceptions of gender role models, in particular, are in complicity with those of the 19th century middle class as it appears in scholarly publications as well as in text-books and in other mass media.



This edited volume by Fries and colleagues combines—by means of pictures and text—scientific literature with biographical sketches, as prepared by the Neanderthal Museum for a broad public and for inclusion in curricula, historical film and cinema. An introductory contribution asks how the concept of gender has changed within western/ occidental philosophy in the course of the centuries. The biographical narratives replicate scenes from daily life beginning with the Paleolithic era and moving on to Roman times. With the “biographical sketch of a female archaeologist” the chronology ends in the 20th century.

Stojanović-Pantović, Bojana, ed. *Gradovi, sobe, portreti: ogledi*. [Cities, Rooms, Portraits: Essays by Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić]. Beograd, Serbia: KD “Sveti Sava,” 2006. ISBN 86-86143-41-5.

This collection of essays on Anglo-American literature has been influenced by various kinds of feminist theory. An introduction and two chapters in the segment entitled *Cities* present the themes of writing, bodies and the urban environment in Henry James' novels *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Ambassadors* and *The Wings of the Dove*. The second segment, *Rooms*, deals with V. Woolf and Michael Cunningham's novels and the movies based on them as well as with Charlotte Perkins Gilman's story “The Yellow Wallpaper.” The third segment, *Portraits*, includes an essay on Margaret Atwood and John Updike's novels as well as Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*.

Gordić-Petković, Vladislava. *Virtuelna književnost II: književnost, tehnologija, ideologija*. [Virtual Literature II: Literature, Technology, Ideology]. Zrenjanin: Gradska narodna biblioteka Zrenjanin, 2007. ISBN 978-86-7284-095-7

The 79 micro-essays collected here were first published in a weekly column in the Serbian daily *Danas*. Representing a hybrid approach to literary, social and cultural topics, they offer witty prose on serious themes. The author Vladislava Gordić-Petković is professor of English and American Literature at the Universities of Novi Sad and Belgrade, and also teaches at the Belgrade Women's Studies Center. Her extensive readings in literature, history and feminist theory are here combined with „topics of the week” to create new and sometimes startling topoi ranging from Proust to Madonna. Of the many attractive titles, we will cite “Models and Idols: Zen Proustism?”, “Archipelag Absourdistan”; “History of Histerya”; “Madonna Trouble”; “The Animal Measure of Humanity”; “Generation Google.” Interested?

The author's strategy is either to take up some “hot” topic or highlight one herself, examine it in both local and global contexts and then point to some of its other, less expected, traits. Her text on Madonna, for instance, by locating the

singer in the context of cultural and media studies, points to the ambiguity she presents for any kind of serious “reading” of her work, including analyses by feminists on fluid identity, parody and pastiche, techniques that Madonna deploys. Without producing a footnoted academic text, Gordić-Petković sums up feminist readings of Madonna in quite a relaxing way.

If genres really have “memory capacity,” then, along with the books by Svetlana Slapšak and Vladislava Gordić-Petković, these mini-essays in Serbian culture should certainly be called a “woman’s genre.”

Gordić-Petković, Vladislava. *Na ženskom kontinentu. [On the Female Continent]. Novi Sad: DOO Dnevnik — Novine i časopisi, 2007. ISBN 978-86-84097-88-2.*

On the Female Continent collects essays on women’s writing and writing about women.

The 28 essays, divided into three segments—Female Net, Shakespearience, Ideology and Identity—, have been previously published in conference proceedings, collections and journals. However, gathered in a single volume, they reveal extensive feminist readings of the literature and culture itself. A professor teaching a course on Shakespeare, Gordić-Petković finds new angles on this topic—comparing the “cases” of *Hamlet* and *Wuthering Heights*, for instance, or finding Shakespearian heroes and motives in contemporary Serbian drama.

The first and third parts of the book feature essays which form an alternative, other, history of Serbian literature. One on Serbian women’s prose in the 1990s presents the first attempt to systemize this production. Some chapters compare Serbian and foreign production by women writers while others elucidate female characters in Serbian male literary works.

Milena Kirova (Bulgaria) and Maja Bojadžijevska (Makedonija) and Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić (Serbia), eds. *Гласове, Нова хуманитаристика от балкански*

авторку. [Voices. New Humanistics from Balkan Authors]. SONM publishers, Sophia, 2007. ISBN 978-954-8478-89-2

This collection of essays from Bulgaria, Macedonia and Serbia represents feminist thought in this part of Europe. The editors, who provided introductory texts for their countries, laying out general trends in the development of feminist theory, also feature among the authors in national segments.

Writers include, from **Bulgaria**: Nadežda Radulova, Nadežda Aleksandrova, Natalija Afejna, Ralica Muharska; from **Macedonia**: Katica Kulavkova, Rajna Koshka, Slavica Srbinovska, Katerina Kolozova and Jasna Koteska; and from **Serbia**: Zorica Ivanović, Dragana Popović, Svetlana Slapšak, Jasmina Lukić and Dubravka Đurić. Topics range from the history of literature, body theory, Bible and female ethics all the way to women and science.

Note of the editors:

A **Museum for Women of the Balkans** was founded in Sofia/Bulgaria, Boulevard “Janko Sakasov”, 19.

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Shadmi, Erella. *ופמיניזם נשים - אישה לחשוב שדמי בחברה גברית תאראלה. [Thinking Women: Women and Feminism in Masculine and Racist Israeli Society]. Tzivonim Publications, 2007.*

This book, the first of its kind in Israel, examines from a radical feminist perspective integrating personal experience, theory and politics, Israeli society, the feminist movement and the position of women in Israel. The study grew out of the author’s personal involvement in feminist activism and gender research and includes an introduction on radical feminist theory and politics—a theoretical and political position never thoroughly elaborated before in Israel. Each chapter critically analyzes one aspect of the topic (e.g., male violence, teachers as women, police and

trafficking in women, lesbians, pornography and lesbianism, women's studies, Women in Black, the feminist movement). All together they show the way Israeli society is gendered and racialized.

Thinking Women argues that the Second Zionist Revolution (incorporating the revival of Ashkenazi racism, the power of capital owners and male sexism) has developed in the last decade. From a personal and experiential standpoint, the author honestly discusses her Jewish and Ashkenazi identity and her view of men in patriarchy. The book pays tribute to women's resistance and analyzes achievements as well as failures. It concludes with an attempt to illustrate new directions for Israeli feminism as a critique of society, politics and culture in the contemporary state.

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Contributors' and Translators' Bios

A Nigerian who has lived and studied in Germany since 1992, **Dr. Tomi Adeaga** received her doctorate degree in 2004. Her BA (Combined Honours) in French/ German was awarded by the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. An expert in translation studies and African Diasporic studies in Europe as well as the theme of African Presence in Europe, Tomi Adeaga is also a poet, writer and literary critic who speaks and performs in Africa, Europe and the USA. Her workbook, *Translating and Publishing African Language(s) and Literature(s): Examples from Nigeria, Ghana and Germany* (2006) is used in universities and translation institutes. She has also published a short story, "Marriage and Other Impediments" as well as poems including "Neger 3km" addressing the complexities of Europe-African dialogue. The English translation of Beninnoise Olympe Bhêly Quenum's novel,

C'était à Tigony is Dr. Adeaga's. Theoretical work includes "The Problems of Translating Two African Novels into German" as well as "Intercultural Translation or Dualité, the Afro-French Example." She is a member of the African Literature Association, African Studies Association (ASA), Modern Language Association (MLA), and the European Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (EACLALS). Founding Secretary of the Translation Caucus of the African Literature Association (TRACALA), she currently serves on the International board of the *Acta Scientiarum* at the State University of Maringá, Brazil. Engaged in humanitarian work for over 15 years, she is a member of the European Academy in Bonn (part of the Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation, Berlin) which takes her around Germany to address African development issues. The African Concern Organisation (an NGO) in Paris, France, also benefits from her participation. *Feminist Europa. Review of Books* is happy to welcome **Dr. Tomi Adeaga** to our Associate Editor's board. tomiadeaga@gmx.net

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Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić, Ph.D. co-founded the Women's Studies Center in Belgrade, Serbia. She has also been a Center co-coordinator and has lectured in literature and feminist criticism. In 2002 she became editor-in-chief of *Genero, A Journal in Feminist Theory*. Her MA thesis, published as a book *Gynocriticism: Gender and Women's Writing* in 1993, was a pioneering work, introducing gender categories to literary studies in Serbia. She has been teaching literary theory in the Philological Faculty of Belgrade University since 2003. sbnesic@Eunet.yu

Waltraud Dumont du Voitel, Dr. phil. studied anthropology, sociology and history of South Asia in Heidelberg, Germany. She has been engaged in human rights for women and has researched gender issues in agricultural environments in Europe, specifically Germany (rural midwives) and West Africa. One of her major publications is *Macht und Entmachtung der Frau. Eine ethnologisch-historische Analyse* [Power and Disempowerment of Women. An Ethnological and Historical Study] published in 1994. She founded and chairs the German Foundation for Gender Studies (Deutsche Stiftung Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung), Heidelberg, is Co-Editor of *Feminist Europa, Review of Books* and works as a free-lance academic.
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Currently an Associate fellow at the Institute of Human Rights and Social Justice at London Metropolitan University, **Wangui wa Goro**, Ph.D., recently served as Senior research fel-

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Feminist Europa. Review of Books is happy to welcome Dr. Wangui wa Goro to our Associate Editor's board.

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Ruth Klüger is the author of *Still Alive*, a Holocaust memoir that has been translated into nine languages and has received numerous awards. She was born in Austria, immigrated into the US in 1947, studied English and German literature at Hunter College and UC Berkeley and is a retired professor of German at the University of California Irvine. rklugel@uci.edu

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Kirsten Liese, born in 1964 in Berlin, studied music and German literature before becoming a journalist, author and editor specialising in opera, chamber music, concerts, cinema, and women in literature. She has published in various German daily newspapers (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Berliner Morgenpost*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, *Die Welt*), has reported on the radio, contributed to professional journals and produced on-line magazine features (Kinofenster, BR-KinoKino). In 2005 she joined the association of German

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Franziska Sperr, born in 1949 in Munich, studied political science including two years in Paris. From 1982-1987 she was editor of the political-literary magazine *L'80* and from 1998-2001 press secretary for culture in Munich's municipal government. Presently she is a free-lance journalist and writer living in Berg on the Starnberger See and in Berlin. The feuilleton section of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* receives her work, as does *SZ-Magazin* and numerous anthologies and literary magazines. She translates from English and French and has produced a radio play, "I want to be-

long to all or none." A member of German P.E.N., three of her books include *Die kleinste Fessel drückt mich unerträglich. Das Leben der Franziska zu Reventlow* (1997); „*Stumm vor Glück*“ *Erzählungen* (Munich: Knaus, 2005); and *Das Revier der Amsel*, a novel, to appear in 2008. franziska.sperr@t-online.de

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What is "Feminist Europa. Review of Books"?

Feminist Europa. Review of Books is a journal written in English which reviews feminist scholarship, creative and popular work by women published in Europe, (preferably) in languages other than English.

Feminist Europa. Review of Books was launched in 1998 as a project of the Division Communication and Cultural Practice of Women's International Studies Europe (WISE) under whose generous auspices six issues were produced. Starting with its new issue 1:1-2 of 2001, it has been relaunched and is now published frequently by the German Foundation for Gender Studies, whose projects are in perfect tune with the goals pursued by our reviews journal.

Feminist Europa. Review of Books wants to strengthen ties among feminist scholars and women's communities active in all European countries. Have you ever wondered what happens in the rest of Europe, outside of your own country and in languages you do not command? Our aim is to facilitate awareness of the productivity and debates within women's studies across linguistic and cultural barriers in Europe, drawing on an extensive pool of scholars and activists committed to transcultural and transnational discourse. We host publications that have an impact on women's culture and deserve to be known outside their local context; we foster the flow of information across national borders and language boundaries.

Feminist Europa. Review of Books is a unique project dedicated to transnational communication and committed to the creation of a new Europe, a Europe in which, i.e., feminists in France are perfectly aware of the discourse articulated by feminists in Ukraine, and communities in Seville can build networks with scholars in Sarajevo and activists in London.

Feminist Europa. Review of Books can greatly profit from the contributions offered by the networking community that the journal aims at creating. Our policy since the beginning has supported the presentation and diffusion of individual works and has encouraged reviewers to shape their contributions in different and personal ways. We believe that a community of women must speak in different voices and aim at offering a forum in which they can all find a place and a fruitful occasion for exchange and communication.

Clearly, **Feminist Europa. Review of Books** contributes to the objectives and projects pursued by the **German Foundation for Gender Studies**.

What is The German Foundation for Gender Studies? [Deutsche Stiftung Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung]

It is a private initiative, which supports international projects. To make visible women's agency, traditions, culture and contributions to the history of humanity — these are the Foundation's aims.

Largely excluded from the historical record, women, like men, have always acted on the broader stage but too often remain unacknowledged. Such erasure inspired Dr. Waltraud and Dr. Roland Dumont du Voitel when, in December 1996, they inaugurated Germany's first feminist foundation.

Funded projects decipher the complex relations of power between the sexes derived from historically constructed gender differences and promote intercultural understanding among peoples, for academic research must descend from the ivory tower and address the broadest public.

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