

---

**Book Reviews**

---

**Sex Equity in Education.** *Jean Stockard, Patricia A. Schmuck, Ken Kempner, Peg Williams, Sakre Edson, and Mary Ann Smith.* New York, Academic Press, 1980, 238 pp., \$18.00.

This volume attempts to document sex inequities at all levels of the American educational system. The book is divided into two parts: the first part reviews empirical research on sex differences among students and educational personnel and presents theoretical perspectives on how sex roles develop. The second part contains a discussion of what changes in sex discrimination in schools are taking place and what possibilities and avenues for future change toward more sex equality exist in education.

The book is written from a feminist perspective. The authors steadfastly and enthusiastically try to document their belief that sex discrimination is pervasive in education. Their attempt to present a balanced perspective is limited to a discussion of some of the negative consequences for males of sex stereotypes that operate in the classroom, especially at the elementary level. Only passing mention is made of the effects on males of such common occurrences in schools as female attainment of higher grades, a preponderance of female teachers, and male competition for scarce high status jobs. Instead, every chapter puts forth the same tenet — females have suffered from sex discrimination in terms of opportunities, access to resources and future job attainment, and mobility in education. While empirical evidence basically supports the authors' arguments, the book would be more balanced if it had presented negative and positive consequences for males and females of various aspects of the present system and placed greater emphasis on the anomaly that sex stereotypes can have advantages as well as disadvantages for both sexes. Nevertheless, the inequalities described are pervasive enough, and their negative consequences for females severe enough, to merit the close scrutiny this book provides.

The five chapters in Part 1 present empirical evidence to document existing sex inequities in schools, such as sex typing in curricular material, formal and informal sex segregation in classrooms and schools, segregation in extracurricular organizations, unequal access to schooling as demonstrated by the distribution of males and females across educational levels. The chapters also outline several social psychological and sociological theories of sex-role development and sex stereotyping. Chapter 2 contains the foundation of the authors' argument; it is a

compilation of empirical research on sex differences in cognitive development, academic achievement, and attitudes and behaviors from nursery school through university. Unfortunately, the authors seem to suggest that all sex differences represent inequities. Their argument lacks the analytical power that would separate the two and identify differences that result from inequality. These differences, of course, should be the focus of concern to feminists and to educators and parents in general. It is also unfortunate that the empirical studies are presented uncritically. The reader is given no indication of which studies are weak or strong in terms of methodology or analysis. Consequently, one is unsure how much confidence to place in different components of the argument. Moreover, the authors frequently go beyond the data to make points that the studies do not support. Finally, the arguments rely on research that spans several decades, especially the 1960s and early 1970s. No mention is made of the significant social change that has occurred, particularly in the 70s that would make many of the research studies cited anachronistic. There remains a need for a critical review of research on sex differences and sex discrimination in schools to determine what is known and what needs to be learned about sex inequities in education.

The theoretical discussion on sex roles relies heavily on Maccoby and Jacklin's *The Psychology of Sex Differences* (1974). Biological differences between the sexes are discussed, but the authors minimize these differences, which they claim are influenced in large part by the meaning society attaches to them. Cross-cultural evidence supports this notion. Three psychological explanations of sex-role development and sex discrimination are presented; social learning, modeling, and cognitive development. The authors agree with Maccoby and Jacklin that most evidence supports Kohlberg's theory of cognitive development, which states that once children identify themselves as male or female they adopt sex-typed behaviors because they understand or perceive sex-related attributes, and only later do they reinforce this behavior by choosing a sex-role model. The sociological explanations presented are those of role theory and symbolic interaction. Absent from the discussion is a sociological analysis of how societal, structural, or organizational constraints force persons into roles or influence their behaviors in a way to evoke sex-typed behavior. In general the explanations are psychological rather than sociological and review previous explanations, rather than advancing our understanding of how sex roles develop.

The discussion of males and females in the educational profession describes patterns of sex segregation in the labor market and focuses attention on sex discrimination and segregation in education. The statistics presented are stark. For example, less than .1% of school superintendents in 1972-1973 were women, while 91.8% of school librarians and 98.6% of school nurses that same year were women. In 1976, only 5.4% of superintendents and assistants were women. Similar discouraging data show salary discrepancies of women and men. The data show women to be severely underrepresented in the management of educa-

tion and overrepresented in the ranks and indicate that salary differences by sex occur within each rank. Explanations of these differences include the fact that men frequently enter the profession of education at different ranks than women, and women less frequently aspire to higher administrative positions. Since a history of sex discrimination can account for both of these phenomena, it is suggested that change will occur only if restrictions on women's opportunities for job mobility are removed and if women are encouraged to aim for and attain more prestigious positions within the field of education.

The second half of the book discusses the possibility of change in sex inequities in education. Chapter 6 draws heavily on social psychological literature to explain the formation of stereotypes and how they can be altered. This is one of the most interesting chapters in the book. Research showing that change in behavior generally supersedes attitudinal change is reviewed. Internal and external social intervention is discussed with some (but perhaps not enough) emphasis being placed on the importance of one's peer group or social network in precipitating change in attitudes and behavior. Based on these social psychological notions, the authors engage in an interesting and intelligent discussion of the extent to which legislation can affect social change.

The chapter on laws prohibiting sex discrimination in schools begins with a pedantic discussion of the legal system in the United States. More useful is the summary of laws that affect schools, and the discussion of the several educational areas affected by these laws including admissions, programs and materials, athletics, counseling, and employment. An occasional review of this material would be helpful to all school personnel.

Chapter 8 presents an historical view of women's place in the educational world and describes the feminist movement's influences on education. This discussion is activist in tone and is likely to appeal to persons with various modes and degrees of involvement in educational change.

The concluding chapter tries to show that the most significant attempts to eradicate sex inequities in education have been made by the federal government. These include direct change for students and employees, as well as indirect change through the promotion of research and program development aimed at eliminating sex discrimination. The chapter outlines two future steps to be taken: The first is stricter sanctions for violation of federal legislation such as affirmative action and Title IX regulations. The second is the development of a systematic theoretically based program of research activities to better explicate sex differences, their causes and consequences, in order to inform policies aimed at eliminating sex inequalities. The appendices include useful programmed material to assist groups in learning about sex roles and sex stereotyping and suggestions for changing a sex discriminatory practice.

One of the shortcomings of this book stems from the efforts of the authors to address an audience of both professionals and laypersons. One result is that

the authors are not sufficiently critical in the selection of material; this makes the work of questionable utility for researchers. The goal of reaching a lay audience is more likely attained. The book fails to present a new theory of sex-role development and does not attempt to integrate existing theories. It presents no new research. Rather, it summarizes existing theories and empirical work to bolster the argument that women are seriously discriminated against in education. The argument is convincing, even if the underpinnings are not as rigorous as one might desire. Consequently, the main contribution of the work is to sensitize the reader to a problem of enormous magnitude that deserves the serious attention of educators, policy makers, and all those interested in eliminating the barriers to opportunity placed by ascribed characteristics in our society.

#### REFERENCE

Maccoby, E. E., & Jacklin, C. N. *The psychology of sex differences*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974.

*Maureen T. Hallinan*  
*University of Wisconsin – Madison*

**Becoming a Woman in Rural Black Culture.** *Molly Crocker Dougherty*. New York, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1978, 122 pp., \$4.95.

Mollie Dougherty, a trained anthropologist and nursing professor, has written a book, *Becoming a Woman in Rural Black Culture*, concerning the significance of life-cycle passages of Black females to the social organization of their community. Edge Crossing, a small area in rural Florida, is the setting of the author's research.

Like other anthropologists (for instance, Kunkel & Kennard, 1971; Williams, 1980) who have investigated the structural, social, and ethnographic characteristics of a given Afro-American community, Dougherty uses the case study approach. Dougherty's work is similar to studies which describe and analyze the extended family (Shimkin, Louie, & Frate, 1978; Martin & Martin, 1978) and to those which emphasize kinship and family relationships, mutual cooperation, and responsibility, and sex roles (Ashenbrenner, 1975; Derby, 1980; Guthrie, 1977; Kennedy, 1980; Stack, 1974; Young, 1970).

In her introduction the author clearly identifies the book as a descriptive analysis, the focus of which is the particular "sequences of maturational events and the development of attitudes, beliefs and resultant behaviors" which occur

in the lives of adolescent girls moving into an adult stage; becoming a woman, which implies “adult bonding, sexual relationships, and motherhood” is shaped by forces both internal and external to the community (p. 1).

Part One correlates spatial usage in the home, yard, and community with social forms and behaviors. Patterns in domestic and public life are examined in terms of geography, settlement patterns, and housing arrangements. The economic ordering and formal educational system which community residents participate in tie them to the wider society. Yet the demands and expectations of the dominant Whites in control of these systems are in conflict with the interests and needs of Black employees and students. Adult men and women of mature age are responsible for the major income-generating activities.

The educational system and the racial barriers which employees and students face perpetuate traditional sex-role and racial divisions. Males and females fill different roles – males enact highly visible roles in economic pursuits and community activities, and the women play less apparent but remunerative roles related to child care and household management. Sex-role divisions are replicated in the symbolic expression apparent in the religious community rituals, but rituals also reflect the interdependence of the sexes. They promote community customs and solidarity through reinforcement of social norms and values.

Part Two addresses the meshing of kinship, family, and community in *Edge Crossing*. The structure of the kinship system demonstrates and clarifies the members' ties to the deceased and to the living, to the land, residential quarters, and domestic functions. Descent groups form and function over time and space to insure the members' continuity and to meet the needs of their members, especially dependent ones. Both men and women form descent groups of three or four generations. Each generation has an opportunity to be a leader of a descent group and thereby gain status, decision-making power, and authority in it. Child-rearing responsibilities, necessary for motherhood, procreation, and the perpetuation of the descent group, are highly valued. Consequently, women in the group – as biological and social mothers – share the responsibility for these roles. Financial, material, and emotional resources are also shared among members. There is a balance between support and assistance flowing between dependent and independent, male and female, and consanguineal and affinal kin. Household and related behaviors and functions are elastic. Flexibility in household sharing enables children to have a variety of experiences and emotional support from a number of core relatives in stable households. During the socialization period, mothers emphasize decisiveness, self-reliance, self-governance, and interaction with agetates and older children. This prepares children for experiences later in life in diverse settings outside the home.

Part One and Part Two have acquainted the reader with background information on the community, kinship, and family organizations to which the subjects of the book – female adolescents – are inextricably bound. In Part

Three Dougherty provides a detailed and skillful analysis of the phases and sub-phases of the "rites de passage" involved in becoming a woman. This section stands out for its insightful discussion.

Part Three contains a description of the passage from adolescence to adulthood, which involves both physical and social development. The authors's analytical framework for this section is based upon Van Gennep (1960), who has identified recurring behaviors in the transitional phases of the life cycle ("rites de passage") and delineated three phases in these rites: separation, transition, and incorporation. Using this model, Dougherty observed in *Edge Crossing* three more transitional states in the female maturation process, which she called sub-phases: "pregnancy, childbirth, and acceptance of motherhood" (p. 72). Then there is the final step into adulthood, as Dougherty notes: "Girls are admitted to womanly status when they become the primary nurturant figures for their own infants" (p. 72).

As young girls enter the early adolescent stage, a detachment from childhood is brought about with the assumption of domestic responsibilities, for instance, as surrogate mothers to younger siblings. A second dimension of adolescent behavior is courtship. Group activities in school, sporting events, stores and shops – provide the setting for an expression of fellowship among young boys and girls. Male-female pairs develop in an atmosphere of equality, and courtship relationships form. A third dimension, peer group behavior, formed from kin and friendship ties is an important aspect of girls who are courting. Thus, the three main areas for adolescent girls in which interaction occurs are shown to be the family, the courtship pair, and the peer group.

During courtship, procreation is a not unexpected result. It usually occurs during teenage years and causes changes in interactional patterns of girls in the aforementioned dimensions. An adolescent's descent group usually accepts the first pregnancy out of wedlock as an aspect of adolescent maturation. By the second pregnancy adulthood is imminent for the female, who is chided to take responsibility for supporting the child and negotiating with the father for support. Pregnancy and childbirth – important to the kin group because they potentially contribute to the expansion, continuity, and power of the group – have ascendancy over all else in achieving adult status: "Adult status is achieved through procreation. Although education, employment, religious endeavors, and the care role can ultimately produce adult status without procreation they are less frequently seen in *Edge Crossing*" (p. 88).

After birth occurs, the ordeal is over but the status of motherhood has only physically been attained. Gradually, the mother is socially incorporated into this new and exalted position, which is due to the new baby who helps perpetuate the family and unite two kinship groups. The acceptance or rejection of social motherhood is of great consequence to the new mother because it will determine the kind of life she will lead – as an adolescent or an adult (p. 100).

The significance of the newborn to the descent group is expressed through the watchful behavior of women in the kin group toward the new mother and child. They counter child neglect with offers of practical assistance and threats

of child possession. The biological mother and the descent-group women ultimately decide whether or not social motherhood is feasible for the former. This decision-making process is the last component of the rite of passage of female maturation. As Dougherty observes, when females are more concerned with employment, education, or courtship than with being mothers, they forfeit their children to women in or outside the family (p. 103).

Girls are given the opportunity for flexibility in assumption of womanly responsibilities. While this allows young mothers to pursue other interests, it also informs them that with the next pregnancy social motherhood as well as a more active role in descent group matters is expected. Generally, most females choose motherhood and the related descent group activities because of the elevated status of womanhood and because it is the initial step which leads to descent group headship and the establishment of their own household.

In this monograph Dougherty has provided many insights into the lifestyle within the Black community of Edge Crossing and more specifically into the problem which she has outlined in the Introduction. The author has successfully delineated and analyzed the series of occurrences which take place in the life cycle of young girls en route to the elevated status of womanhood. As Dougherty points out, becoming a woman is no easy job. It entails physical changes and social responsibilities both for oneself, the newborn child, and subsequently for one's descent group. But there is flexibility in determining when and where one becomes a woman.

Deep-seated values, convictions, and concomitant behaviors held within the family, kinship group, community, and more specifically among adolescent girls, have been examined quite thoroughly and apparently fairly presented. The writer has drawn her observations from anthropological fieldwork and from many years of nursing experience in maternity units. By examining female-adolescent maturation in terms of "rites de passage" encompassing three phases (separation, transition, and incorporation) and three subphases (pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood), the author has provided a workable conceptual framework for understanding the maturation process and the female interaction within it.

In addition to Afro-American studies and anthropology courses, the book is suitable as reading in child development, adolescence, public health, women's, and community studies.

## REFERENCES

- Aschenbrenner, J. *All our kin: Strategies for survival in a black community*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974.
- Derby, D. A. *Black women basketmakers: A study of domestic economy in Charleston County*, South Carolina. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1980.
- Guthrie, P. *Catching sense: The meaning of plantation membership among blacks on St. Helena Island, South Carolina*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. New York: University of Rochester, 1977.

- Kennedy, T. *You gotta deal with it: Black family relation in a southern community*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Kunkel, P., & Kennard, S. *Spout Spring, A black community*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971.
- Martin, E., & Martin, J. M. *The black extended family*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978.
- Shimkin, D., Louie, G., & Frate, D. The black extended family: A basic rural institution and a mechanism of urban adaptation. Pp. 25-148 in D. Shimkin, et. al., (Eds.), *The extended family in black societies*. The Hague: Mouton; Chicago, Aldine, 1978.
- Stack, C. B. *All our kin: Strategies for survival in a black community*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- Van Gennep, A. *The rites of passage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.
- Young, V. H. Family and childhood in a southern negro community. *American Anthropologist*, 72: 269-288, 1970.

*Doris A. Derby*  
*University of Wisconsin – Madison*

**The Women's Health Movement: Feminist Alternatives to Medical Control.**  
*Sheryl Burt Ruzek*. New York, Praeger Publishers, 1978, 350 pp., \$22.95.

This book traces the emergence and growth of the women's health movement in the 1970s. The movement is very diverse in its concerns and activities, but it tends to emphasize women's reproductive health (contraception, abortion, pregnancy, childbirth), physician attitudes toward female patients, and women's involvement in their personal health care. Activists and organizations in the movement vary in their specific concerns and strategies for change. Amid this real world diversity, Ruzek identifies themes of the women's health movement and presents a lively and thoughtful history. In addition, Ruzek (a sociologist) shows how the women's health movement has the typical features of other social movements.

The book is not a straightforward chronology of events, but is organized by themes and issues in women's health. Chapter 1 places the women's health movement among other contemporary reform efforts by health care consumers, women in general, and minorities. Chapter 2 discusses how women's principal attachment to health services is through their reproductive organs, and how the reproductive issue of abortion was the catalyst for the women's health movement. Chapter 3 discusses other health issues besides abortion which spurred the movement's growth in the 1970s. Chapter 4 is a well-written discussion of cultural and physician stereotypes about women and women's health. Chapter 5 shows how obstetrical/gynecological care is offered in four settings, ranging from a traditional physician-dominated one to a radical feminist one. Chapter 6 discusses strategies for change (health education, politics, and new health services) and shows how the women's health movement has used them. Chapter 7 discusses links between the women's health movement and the feminist movement. It notes conflicts that permeate the former, such as charges that control is held by White middle-class women, and disagreements about how to reform the American health care system. Chapter 8 evaluates the movement's impact

during the 1970s and its future prospects. Ruzek believes it will become more influential in the 1980s by developing stable lobbying organizations and a broad network of activists.

The book is a remarkable synthesis of scholarly and activist views on women's health issues. Ruzek is fair-minded and presents different views of an issue without taking sides. She is meticulous in citing sources for the views and draws on scientific publications, anecdotal evidence, feminist writings, newspaper and magazine articles, newsletters, public statements, and legal proceedings. Her writing style is fluid and easy, even when she discusses the theory of social movements. The result is a book that lacks rhetoric and stuffiness and excels in presenting information. Another aspect of style is Ruzek's fine use of nonsexist language.

The book has an excellent bibliography, with ample references and full citations. The index is also very good. I especially appreciated the indexing of acronyms; e.g., "National Women's Health Network (NWHN)". There are five appendices; the best are two extensive lists of periodicals and organizations involved in women's health. Another appendix lists conferences on women's health up to 1977. All three lists will become outdated quickly, but they are still valuable to readers. Two appendices present recommended questions for patient evaluations of physicians and clinics. These are interesting, but do not seem appropriate to the book's purpose and style.

In my view, the book has one major weakness — its loose organization. No introduction states the overall purpose and gives an outline of chapters. Chapter summaries are brief or absent, and there is no conclusion section at the end of the book. As a result, specific sections flow easily, but the overall design is difficult to see.

The book is a fine account of the women's health movement up to 1978. Social movements change quickly, and much has happened since then. Activists have tackled new issues such as tampon safety and availability of the cervical cap, and they have increased work on others such as unnecessary reproductive surgery. National lobby organizations for women's health have gained more visibility and respect. "Women's health issues" have expanded to include rape, domestic violence, illegal drug use, legal drug abuse, and alcoholism. Women's mental health, sexuality, and women health professionals — issues in the 1970s not treated by Ruzek — have become more prominent. These changes do not diminish the worth of *The Women's Health Movement*. We are fortunate to have such a clear account of a young and dynamic movement.

The most appropriate readers of the book are sociologists, psychologists, and general readers interested in the movement. Sociologists will be interested in how the women's health movement fits into general theories about social movements. For social psychologists, the book offers insights into such topics as women's body image, physician-patient interactions, and public attitudes about health care (especially reproductive services). Organizational psychologists will be intrigued by the problems of decision making in women's health clinics, of incorporating physicians into these clinics, and of friendly relations among

contemporary social movements. Cultural and developmental psychologists can also benefit from the book.

The Women's Health Movement is suitable for courses, especially at advanced undergraduate and early graduate levels. It is the best discussion of the women's health movement now available, and will probably keep this status for quite a while. Briefer discussions can be found in The Boston Women's Health Book Collective (1979), Marieskind (1980), and Stromberg (1982).

## REFERENCES

- The Boston Women's Health Book Collective. *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. New York: Simon and Schuster. (Revised ed.) 1979.  
 Marieskind, H. *Women in the health system*. St. Louis, Mo.: C. V. Mosby, 1980.  
 Stromberg, A. H. (Ed.). *Women, health, and medicine*. Palo Alto: Mayfield, 1982.

*Lois M. Verbrugge*  
*University of Michigan*

**Sex-Role Stereotypes: Traditions and Alternatives.** *Susan A. Basow*. Belmont, California, Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1980, 384 pp., \$10.95.

The recent rise in the discussion of sex roles and its recognition as a respected academic subject has resulted in the all too familiar, commercially motivated proliferation of carbon-copy textbooks. Basow's *Sex-Role Stereotypes: Traditions and Alternatives* offers a welcome contrast to this trend in making a distinctive contribution to introductory level sex-role analysis. The major strengths of the book are its inclusion of a variety of substantive interdisciplinary issues, all of which are seldom addressed in one book, and its unique and provocative organization of the material. The author strikes a meaningful balance between breadth and depth, thus affording the beginning student an opportunity to examine sex roles in a holistic and critical manner.

In a brief introductory chapter, Basow identifies and defines some of the major concepts traditionally used in sex-role analysis (i.e., masculinity, femininity, androgyny). Of particular value in this chapter is her critique of the conceptual framework that underlies many studies of sex-role stereotypes. In an abbreviated discussion of the methodology of sex-role research, Basow convincingly argues that researchers often create and/or reinforce an overgeneralized and oversimplified picture of sex-role typifications. For example, she notes that the use of trait checklists that require the respondent to contrast typical male and female characteristics contribute to the development of an exaggerated picture of sex-role differences and to the tendency to view masculine and feminine traits as bipolar. Such critiques can be instrumental in rebuking the biases inherent in both common-sense and theoretical models of sex roles.

The second section of the book undertakes an examination of the empirical validity of sex-role stereotypes. Basow devotes four chapters to summarizing the current state of research on sex similarities and differences in the areas of physical characteristics, cognitive abilities, personality and behavior, and sexual behavior. As in the introductory section, while differences are acknowledged, they are generally shown to be smaller in number and less significant than commonly believed. In fact, Basow provides evidence that suggests that differences within the sexes are often more pronounced than differences between the sexes.

Parallel to this summary of sex differences in behavior patterns, Basow develops a critique of the physiological and psychological explanations that underline much sex-role research. Her analysis leads to an interactive explanatory model. While biological factors are acknowledged as occasionally setting a broad basis for human behavior, her analysis suggests that social-cultural forces are the primary determinant of the way in which, and the extent to which, these traits are expressed.

The specific role played by social-cultural factors in the emergence of sex-role behavior is examined in the third section. In addition to including rather conventional discussions of relevant theories of socialization (Chapter 7) and of the social and cultural mechanisms that are influential in the socialization of individuals (Chapter 8), this section also contains an often neglected analysis of the historical roots of sex roles (Chapter 6). Drawing heavily on anthropological data, Basow argues that the contemporary division of labor between women and men has its historical roots in the interaction of two factors: (a) the biologically based reproductive function of females, and (b) the environmentally influenced social relations of production. She goes on to argue that, as a result of major social and technological changes, there is no longer any functional or practical rationale for the maintenance of sex roles in our society.

In a subsequent discussion, she also draws much needed attention to the role of economic power in redressing the historically based inequities between women and men. Although her arguments in this section are basically sound, her presentation might have been strengthened by reference to some of the earlier feminist writings on the origins of sex roles (see, for example, Mitchell, 1971).

The fourth section offers something unique in sex-role texts: a systematic and extensive discussion of the negative consequences of sex roles. Recent research evidence is used to support Basow's claim that the exaggeration of sex-role traits, and/or the repression of traits associated with the other sex, generally results in physical and mental malaise and in unhealthy interpersonal relationships. Additional support for this claim is gathered from the relative healthiness of nonsex-typed or androgynous individuals.

In the final two chapters of this section, Basow identifies and evaluates some of the major negative societal consequences of sex roles. Prejudice, discrimination in the work force, and power inequities in economics, politics, law and the military are identified as institutionalized manifestations of male dominance. The predominance of the "male mystique" is also noted as a primary

factor in aggression and violence as manifested in crime rates, sports, and war. In fact, it is suggested that the alienated priorities and properties of the American political economy are a direct reflection of the masculine stereotype.

Basow concludes her book with a brief discussion of alternatives to sex-role stereotypes, and an analysis of the various social change theories and strategies that might be employed to achieve such a goal. Androgyny is suggested as a useful, albeit problem-ridden, concept which might serve as at least an intermediate alternative model. The author also argues for the viability of a pluralistic hybrid model of change — a process that, while acknowledging individual differences stresses the need for both individual and institutional change. She ends with a critical evaluation of a number of practical strategies for change, ranging from consciousness raising to legal change to direct action, and an acknowledgment of the many problems that plague such a macrochange process. A possible weakness in this section is the cursory treatment given the relationship between sexism and issues of political economy, issues that present a serious obstacle to the humane goals espoused throughout the book.

Overall, the book is eminently readable, comprehensive in its coverage of relevant issues, and thorough in its documentation of factual claims. The book makes a valuable contribution to the sex-role literature and deserves serious attention in the text selection process for introductory sex-role courses.

#### REFERENCE

Mitchell, J. *Women's estate*. New York: Random House, 1971.

*Edward Lafontaine*  
*Clarkson College*

**Women and the Mass Media: Sourcebook for Research and Action.** *Matilda Butler And William Paisley*. New York, Human Sciences Press, 1980, 432 pp., \$9.95.

*Women and the Mass Media* is intended for those wishing an introductory perspective on the ways in which American mass media treat women. It is organized around three major approaches to understanding this important facet of modern life: the content mass media purvey, the people and institutions which produce and distribute the content, and the audiences who consume the content and are affected by it. These three sections of the book are preceded by an overview of the historical and societal context in which media function, and succeeded by an outline of future research and action. The structure of the book is well thought

out and eminently suitable to its goals. The execution, however, leaves something to be desired.

Fully a third of the text of the book is devoted to analyses of the content media purvey: four chapters on television and radio, magazines and newspapers, books, and film; a first chapter on how content is studied; and a final chapter on a scale for images of women. The first and last chapters of this section are easy to understand, informative, and conceptually helpful. The intervening four are a largely undigested seriatim report of all findings from all pertinent content analyses Butler and Paisley could find. The authors feel justified in erring "on the side of presenting too many rather than too few findings" (p. 69) because many of the sources are unpublished. I disagree. The detailed coverage is much more than a novice can handle and much less than an expert needs. The minds I know best want and need interpretation or valuation along with (and sometimes instead of) descriptions of methods and itemizations of statistical findings.

Butler and Paisley's solution to the problem of possible misidentification of some chapters as annotated bibliographies is propositional summaries, such as "In magazine articles and short stories, few women work; those who do quit upon marriage or the birth of a child" (p. 103). Such propositions encompass too few of the findings presented (1 of about 90 in the section of the chapter containing this proposition) and of the studies reviewed (5 of 12 in this example). Furthermore, the propositions are done separately for each medium and each type of content within a medium. So there are more of them (23 about content) than necessary.

These are serious problems in a book clearly aimed at the relatively uninitiated. Their effect is aggravated because they are characteristic of the chapters on employment in media institutions; on decisions affecting portrayals, training, and media audiences; and on media content — about one-half the book.

Those who manage to read at least the propositional summaries will be convinced, or reconvinced, that the media are not very hospitable to women. Ordinarily, this conviction leads to indignation, anger, and even rage. Assuming such feelings have been aroused and will motivate responses, constructive alternatives are explored in the final tenth of the book. A research agenda is laid out for identifying "media sexism" and actionable alternatives, testing alternatives and adoption strategies, and assaying long-term effects of changes. Finally, possible legal, economic, and social actions are described. These descriptions will not produce change agent experts, but they serve as good introductions to four useful alternative responses to indignation, anger, and rage.

Although *Women and the Mass Media* is likely to arouse readers and point them toward constructive change activities, it will not provide what I believe to be vitally important perspectives:

1. It will not place the media squarely in a societal context and keep them there. True, the book begins with such a context, but it is not maintained in the remaining 80% of the text.

2. It will not emphasize the fact that media are at most one of several contributors to sex-role development and enactment. True, the chapter on children and television written by Suzanne Pingree and Robert Hawkins is a most admirable exception to the other 95% of the book in this regard.

3. It will not challenge such easy assumptions as "It is unlikely that media products can become less sexist than the media organizations where they are produced" (p. 341). Despite mounting evidence to the contrary, this book allows one to infer that hiring more women, giving women more power in media organizations, or hiring men with better attitudes will yield egalitarian media content.

4. It will not make American society seem much larger than the White middle-class female. Perhaps this is an important antidote to the usual White middle-class male focus, but I still hate to see the pot calling the kettle black.

5. It will not remind one that the media stereotype everyone – men included – because entertainment comes from exaggeration and "biased" selections of reality.

Whether these perspectives should be included in an introductory book is now mostly a matter of politics and philosophy. For those whose persuasions are like mine, the lack of such perspectives is unfortunate. For those of a different mind, there is no lack. The focus is right. It emphasizes and remediates past omissions. It motivates interest and action. Surely, these are not bad outcomes from reading a book about media sexism in the United States.

*Aimée Dorr*  
*Annenberg School of Communications*  
*University of Southern California*

**Working Women in Japan: Discrimination, Resistance, and Reform.** *Alice H. Cook and Hiroko Hayashi.* New York: ILR Publications, 1980, 128 pp., \$12.50 (hardcover), \$7.95 (paper).

The different treatment of women workers in Japan is supported by strong societal attitudes, union and management policies and, in some cases, public agencies. Alice Cook and Hiroko Hayashi have written a short (91 pages of text) but useful book on the struggle faced by women workers in such an employment environment and the success of the few brave ones who have carried their fight against different work rules for males and females to the courts. *Working Women in Japan: Discrimination, Resistance, and Reform* is not a comprehensive discussion of any of the topics listed in the subtitle; nor does it give more than a quick overview of the major characteristics of the female labor force in Japan. Indeed,

the reader is left with a desire for much more information than is given in this book and a wish that the authors had discussed some of the issues raised in greater depth. Nevertheless, this is a very readable book on a little discussed topic in the English literature – working women in Japan – and a book that one hopes will provoke greater public understanding of the legal obstacles faced by Japanese women in achieving equal job treatment.

The book has three major sections: “Women in the Employment System,” “Cases on Discrimination,” and “What Lies Ahead?” The second is the heart of the book and the contribution made by its publication. The first section surveys the characteristics of the female labor force, the wage system prevailing in large firms, and the prevalence of “early retirement” rules under which females are required to quit work upon marriage or childbirth. It is unfortunate that the discussion in this first section of “Women and the Law” is not more intensive, for this background is important in understanding why women workers must repeatedly resort to the courts in a society in which litigation is not the accepted means of settling disputes.

Japan has a constitution and set of labor laws and programs that ostensibly guarantee equal rights and protection to a degree that is still the goal of women’s movements throughout the world. That women in Japan continue to face blatantly discriminatory work rules attests to the critical role of social attitudes in the interpretation and enforcement of equal rights provisions. While additional legislation is required in Japan to assure equal rights of working women, this book shows that a major difficulty faced by Japanese women is the narrow interpretation (and frequent ignoring) of existing legislation by employers and unions in such a way that work rules are consistent with the prevailing social attitudes about women and women workers. Thus, women resort to the courts when neither employers, unions, or regulatory agencies are willing to provide the rights assured by the Constitution or labor legislation. The court cases described in nonlegal terms in the second section of this book are indicative of the difficulties female workers face in achieving equal rights on the job.

In the final section the authors argue the need for additional legislation to explicitly define the rights of workers and establish a mechanism for enforcing new and existing legislation. Some recent proposals are outlined. However, without a clearer understanding of the Japanese political system, the current structure of governmental regulatory agencies, and the political power of the female members of Parliament mentioned in the book, it is difficult for the less knowledgeable reader to evaluate the possibility of future change. Indeed, it is curious that the authors did not include a section on the political system and governmental regulatory agencies as background material.

The reader is left with the impression that the court cases will result in a few important changes in the customary work practices of Japanese firms. The authors concur that progress towards equality will be slow. They cite the lack of enforcement, and the absence of a strong women’s movement pushing for change

as major reasons. They fail to pursue two additional reasons suggested by their own discussion — determination of women unionists to seek enforcement of protective legislation and the concentration of female workers in small and medium firms where employment practices may not be immediately affected by the outcomes of court cases contesting the work rules of large firms. The push for enforcement of protective legislation may be counterproductive, as the fight for menstrual, maternity, and nursing leaves (sometimes with pay) may provide fuel, if not factual backing, for employers' assertion that women must be kept in subsidiary jobs because of their lower productivity. A similar dilemma was faced by the women's movement in the United States seeking equal job opportunities and pay for women. Finally, much protective legislation was abandoned or extended to male workers. A discussion of this potential contradiction between the goals sought by working women in Japan would have been useful.

This book is not written for the Japanese specialist, but for the person interested in the struggle by women in other countries for greater equality in the labor market. It is a well-written book that is informative and provocative, but by no means does it give a complete picture of any of the issues mentioned in its subtitles. However, if it provokes further research or greater understanding on the part of the American public of the less well-known aspects of the Japanese labor market, it is a valuable book to have available. It would be extremely useful as supplementary reading for undergraduate courses in women's studies or labor economics. Its lack of detail and complexity of arguments may have been a well chosen strategy of the authors to increase its appeal to the general public, which is woefully lacking in information on the Japanese society other than that gleaned from the major weekly news magazines.

*Karen Holden*  
*University of Wisconsin — Madison*