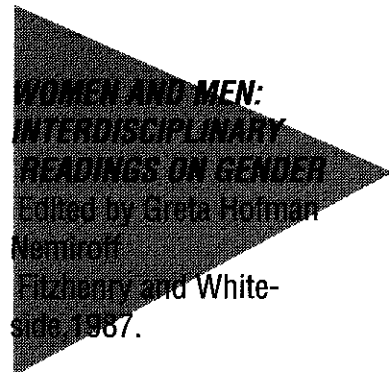


The above article is re-printed (with additions) from COMPASS (November, 1987). It has recently been submitted for a National Journalism Award in the book-review category.

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This is a big book. My decision to prepare a review was based more on duty than desire. It looked like a life's work, and, generally speaking anthologies, especially those intended for the compulsory markets of undergraduates, are not my favourite read.

I should not have been surprised that it turned out to be a very good book. The editor, Greta Hofman Nemiroff, is a formidable Montreal feminist and teacher. Persuading, cajoling and threatening thirty authors to submit manuscripts — interesting manuscripts covering a wide range of theoretical, methodological and substantive ground — might well have left her undaunted. Way back in the early 1970's Nemiroff co-taught the first Women's Studies course in Montreal with her close friend (and contributor to this volume) Christine Garside Allen, now Sister Prudence Allen of the Religious Sisters of Mercy. For several years the students hung from the rafters in their course, and together the two feminist scholars mobilized colleagues, staff and students to found Concordia University's Simone de Beauvoir Institute.

Then came the dark days of the counterrevolution. Hours after Allen went on sabbatical in August 1979 Nemiroff, who was director of the New School at Dawson College, was informed that her services would not be required at Concordia that September. Nemiroff was too energetic, too political, too charismatic and most especially too committed to student centred teaching for many of those in the

new institute she had been so instrumental in founding.

The entire episode raised, and many said answered, the question: to what extent will a university incorporate oppositional practices and perspectives? In this case, the university was prepared to tolerate plummeting enrollments in the women's studies course to save it from radicals and democrats. Students protested; so did some colleagues, and Nemiroff was indefatigable in struggle, stoic in defeat. And why not? As she puts it in the last chapter of *Women and Men*, "We are living in a mass revolution which has been especially active for over a hundred and thirty years. When we remember this, we will not lose hope or patience."

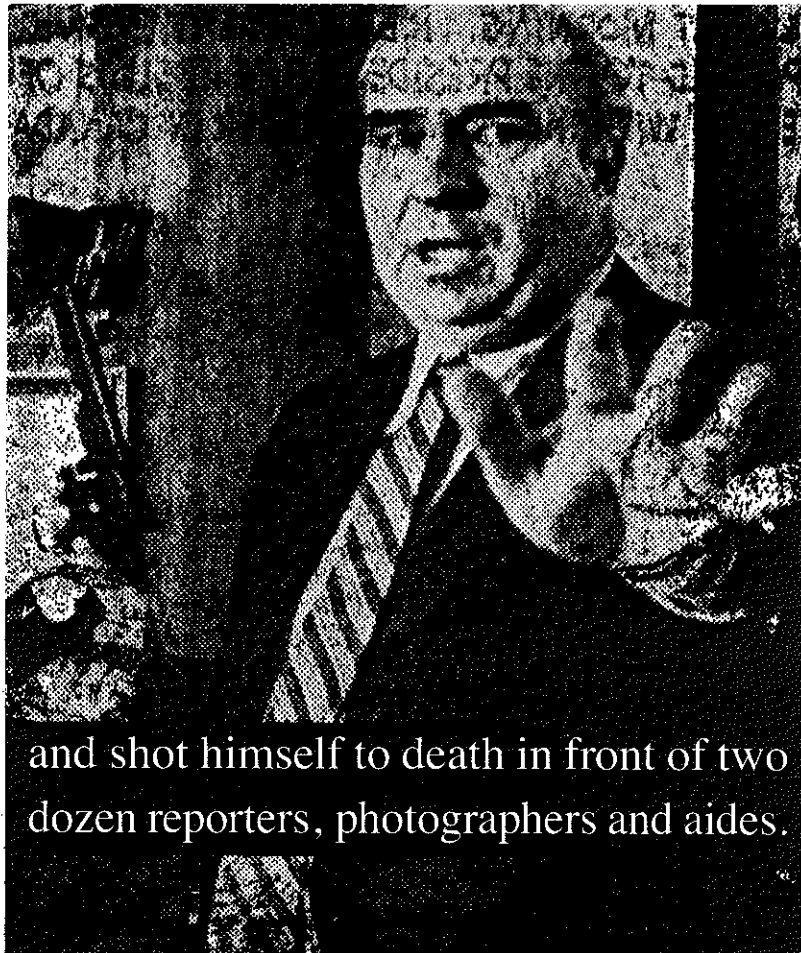
Through this book Nemiroff has found another way to reach students with her tough-minded but eclectic feminist scholarship and politics. The book's unadventurous title belies its contents, for here, in one article after another, students are introduced to the wide wide world of feminist critique. And the overall message conveys Nemiroff's view that the feminist struggle takes place everywhere, that it is a struggle between the powerful and the powerless, and that it is a *process*. The ultimate goal is successful revolution, but the only serious question is, which side are you on?

More than half of the articles in the collection are reprints, but most of them appeared in small journals with limited readership. Pat and Hugh Armstrong's "Beyond Numbers: Problems with Quantitative Data" moves beyond the now standard critique of sexist bias in data gathering and selection towards an exploration of the limitations of number-crunching for capturing the dialectics of history, daily life and oppression. Margrit Eichler's creative use of Kuhn's work on paradigms in scientific work is useful for new students and veterans alike. That her article ends with a question: how is it that work done within a sexist paradigm (eg. Kuhn's) can be useful for feminist social science? is a wonderful antidote for students who expect their books or their teachers to have "the answers." It is a question, moreover, that has preoccupied a whole generation of socialist feminists, unwilling to discard

marxism, and a growing number of feminists who are now raking over the works of Freud for insights into the perpetuation of patriarchal society.

Cerise Morris, on the other hand, in "Against Determinism: The Case for Women's Liberation" (written for this text), argues that feminists must discard both Marx and Freud. As a psychotherapist, Morris is properly interested in

provisions in the Canadian Constitution, and Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg's descriptions of the women's peace movement. There is also an innovative article by Jill McCalla Vickers on the patriarchal roots of nationalism. Drawing on the work of Mary O'Brien and others she provides a devastating critique of the current stock of theories on nationalism in which she uncovers the centrality of control of reproduction, and,



and shot himself to death in front of two dozen reporters, photographers and aides.

helping her clients become willing and able to make conscious choices, to abandon the protection racket that keeps us in our place. But her commitment to phenomenology leaves her with no analysis of the subtle interplay between structure and agency that, in my view, has been the hallmark of not only the best of feminist scholarship, but also the leitmotif of the no longer new social historians.

Absent from the text is the work of the feminist historians. Only in Pat Armstrong's excellent synthesis of her own work, "Women's Work, Women's Wages" would students derive any historical sensibilities. Nor is the challenging work in feminist jurisprudence represented. There are accounts of feminist encounters with the state, notably in Chaviva Hosek's account of the taking of 28, women's struggle for the equality

therefore, of women and their sexuality to national and state interests.

In her concluding chapter Nemiroff also provides an account of the taking of 28 which differs sharply from Hosek's account. But she does not explicitly draw attention to the difference, and, herein lies a major fault with this anthology which it shares with so many others. For it should be the editor's role to bring the contributors into dialogue with each other, pointing out what they share, and where they differ. This work is left to the reader, and because this is really an introductory text, this is problematic. Students are not initially in a position to recognize different sets of assumptions, let alone to judge between them. If there is a second edition Nemiroff should consider being more of an editor, both in this way, in

providing an overall bibliography, in standardizing format, and in insisting some authors update their material. Esther Greenglass's, "A Social-Psychological View of Marriage for Women" uses statistics that end in 1979. Given students' penchant for believing that relations between the sexes have turned around in the last ten years, and that their feminist teachers belong in a class with Mrs. Grundy for forecasting doom

perspective of the unprivileged. Those with a memory for Montreal history will remember that Grey was a leading figure in the McGill Francaise movement in the late sixties. Perhaps the women on the shop floor at Westinghouse were the beneficiaries of skills honed in earlier struggles of the oppressed.

There is a distinctly personal aspect to the accounts of the male authors, and unlike so many of

criticize it is the ideology and practice of romantic love. Kathryn Morgan's article extends de Beauvoir's existential critique of romantic love onto broader theoretical terrain, and also finds that it obstructs personal growth and the taking of responsibility. Like the other articles in this book it leads students, not always gently, towards a critique of patriarchal society.

In its conventional form — a big fat anthology with a nice glossy photograph on the cover — this book is deceptive. For between its covers is the counter-hegemonic ideology of feminism, in all its rich diversity. Such ideologies, as Gramsci pointed out, and as Mary O'Brien has recently reminded us, are fundamental to the struggles to transform society. In Nemiroff's words, "not only must ideology precede action and inform it with both consistency and meaning, but it is only through the discipline of a shared ideological base that the 'powerless' may become empowered to assume rightful control over their own lives." (P. 531).

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**CAMBODIA:  
A BOOK FOR PEOPLE WHO  
FIND TELEVISION TOO SLOW**  
Brian Fawcett  
(Vancouver: Talonbooks,  
1986) pp. 207.

"My metaphor is either the Global Village or the Trojan Horse, I am trying to see one through the other." This may be one of the more telling quotes from Brian Fawcett's new book *Cambodia*, which, as the subtitle implies, is not meant for the idle postliterate reader accustomed to the essentially slow speed at which one receives information from television.

*Cambodia* is not conventional fiction as there is no plot or sustained dialogue. What there is, is a series of "investigative fictions" which, among other things, probe discomfiting truths about life in the Global Village. The history of Cambodia under

the Khmer Rouge reign of terror is the physical subtext for these stories, which runs throughout the book on the bottom third of every page. Against the subtext of Cambodia, Fawcett counterposes thirteen satirical chapters that explore modern life under the impact of the mass media. So there are, in this rather unusually organized book that purports to make its subtext visible and palpable, a number of overlapping narratives. The reader ricochets between the Global Village, a wasteland of tawdry diversions in which fleeting impressions are mistaken for information, and the Khmer Rouge, who aspired to build socialism in Cambodia from the rice roots upward only to create murderous lunacy in its stead.

Engaging the reader with a two-tiered text is admittedly dicey, but Brian Fawcett is a forceful writer who shapes his material with skill, humour, considerable bravado and some fine investigative work. His essay on the Khmer Rouge and Cambodia is arguably one of the better detailed summaries of that debacle. Fawcett's analysis may lack the authority of those Khmer scholars like Michael Vickery and Ben Kierman, but it is more pertinent and imaginative. The literary imagination often fails when it confronts evil so grotesque and senseless. Fawcett, however, never loses his ability to rouse the reader. The strength and beauty of this book lies in Fawcett's ability to create a troubling juxtaposition between the attempts of the Khmer Rouge to tribalize Cambodia and the tribalizing tendencies of the Global Village. Fawcett, who consciously echoes the sentiments of Joseph Conrad, argues that what went on in Cambodia involved the release of a tribal violence of the type that occurred in the Congo nearly a century ago. Between 1890 and 1910 the Belgian administration in the Congo allowed colossal tribal brutalities to take place in order to suppress rebellious natives who were interfering with the expansion of rubber plantations. When it was over, 15 to 40 million Africans had died either by massacre or starvation: a conservative figure puts the slaughter at 25 million. In Cambodia, a group of petty bourgeois intellectuals (Pol Pot, one of the leaders of the Khmer Rouge, had studied radio journalism in France) in a country

devastated by U.S. American and Viet tried to install a pr of war communism a politically illiter Within three years Rouge takeover, as million people had execution, torture Both of these night the release of tribal country in turn bec without any vision destiny or the horr

By analogy Fawcett the Global Village r obliterated. Knowl the Congo and Cam somehow disappea consciousness. It m parenthetically wh Conrad's *Heart of L* when watching a m *Killing Fields*, but c all the more quickl about our daily life dia, the Congo, Arn Auschwitz, and nu modern day genoci effectively erased fr of a large portion of and comparatively population of the F seems preposterous since the people wh relative comfort zor claiming that the ba society and culture become informatio

Yet the kind of infor fed to us by the elec says Fawcett, bears resemblance to the l amnesia enforced by Rouge. After having capital Phenom Phe Rouge evacuated a l urban population in side and to certain c proceeded to whitev single sign in the cit signs, advertising, st identity markers of a These transmitters o information were m without messages w to the destruction of civilization. The ana medium without the argues Fawcett, is fo profusion of informa by the electronic me we have signs that c different kind of mir darkness. Under the instant electronic sti denizens of the Glob retreat towards const ing areas of forgetful direct ability to unde

you are sure of the ground upon which you are standing, had best be shunned.

REVIEWS

and penalties, they will assume that 1979 represents medieval history, and that the analysis, therefore, has only arcane value. There are some very interesting articles by men in this volume which help answer the question that Ann Hall raises in her excellent article, "Knowledge and Gender: Epistemological Questions in the Social Analysis of Sport": can male researchers (some of them convincingly feminist) comprehend and interpret women's experience? As Hall points out, a feminist epistemology is grounded in the assumption, that one can see "more" from the bottom looking up, an assumption shared by marxists. A most engaging article by Stan Grey on integrating women on the shop floor in a factory in Hamilton provides evidence that the privileged can choose to see the world from the

their sex who have chosen to see "liberation is for everyone" they begin from the point-view that men are privileged, that they are privileged because they are men, and that they must work towards divesting themselves of that privilege.

That the personal is political is explored by many of the authors, but in a most original way by Nemiroff, Judith Crawley and Arlene Stalker in "Art and Daily Life." This is a wonderful weaving together of their lives as women, mothers and daughters with their artistic production, visual and literary. Crawley's photographs, though strangely unacknowledged, appear throughout the book, not just in this article, and they are wonderfully evocative.

If there is one aspect of our society that students are most reluctant to