

she struggles, sometimes in stutters, sometimes in the silence of the written word, with both herself and the forces that are destroying her relationship:

You gon kick and we gon move on. Keep on being baddDDDD togetha. I'll help you man, cuz I know you want to kick. Flush it down the toilet! You'll start kicking tomorrow and I'll get a babysitter and take us fo a long drive in the country and we'll move on the grass and make it move wid us, cuz we'll be full of living/alive/thots and we'll stop and make love in the middle of nowhere, and the grass will stop its wintry/brown/chants and become green as our Black bodies sing. Heave. Love each other. Throw that stuff away, man, cuz we got more important/beautiful/things to do.

The voices of many famous black people are also woven into this blanket: Martin Luther King, Jr.; Malcolm X; Jesse Jackson. We can hear the voice of Margaret Walker, “a woman celebrating herself and a people.”

Let a new Earth rise. Let another world be born. Let a bloody peace be written in the sky. Let a second generation full of courage issue forth; let a people loving freedom come to growth. (“For My People”)

When Sonia Sanchez resorts to the mechanisms of rhythm and rhyme as she does in “A Song,” the threads of the blanket are unable to withstand the cold, the ice that gathers around us in our world, the world of the black female poet. But just as we cannot let the ice cold of life affect us, at least not for very long, just as we must go on and on to the next day, to the next week, to the next year and life, we must go on to the next poem, the next story, and there we will find the strength, the warmth, to sustain us.

—Aisha Eshe-Carmen
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Virginia Sapiro. *Women in American Society: An Introduction to Women's Studies*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1986) xvi, 511 pp., \$19.95 paper.

Political scientist Virginia Sapiro's introductory-level women's studies text is unusual in the ease with which it integrates the data bases which form the foundation for its multidisciplinary approach. Although it assumes no background in the social sciences, the book is nevertheless demanding in the rigor and complexity of its analysis. Striking a balance between societal and individual concerns, the work moves easily from one framework to another, drawing content and methodology from fields

as diverse as biology and religion.

Working with current research findings from throughout the social sciences, Sapiro brings a healthy skepticism to the conventional wisdom in these fields. Emphasizing the need for critical reevaluation of the supposed truths underlying an andocentric social order, she broadens and redefines the legitimate areas of enquiry for the field of women's studies. The four sections of the book cover theoretical constructs on both the social and individual levels; social institutions which express an hierarchical gender system; life choices, particularly in communication and sexuality; and commonalities and differences among women.

The very breadth of the work creates its only significant drawback: specialists in particular content areas might have opted for more or less emphasis on specific points. For example, the sociobiologists are given more attention than might be merited in the theoretical chapters. On the other hand, in the section in cognitive development, Carol Gilligan's reasoned critique of the standard understanding of moral reasoning is acknowledged briefly, rather than given the treatment such a profound redefinition warrants. However, these points of relative emphasis detract little from a wide-ranging and broadly balanced work, and substantial bibliographic references are given to provide the researcher with direction for further pursuit of the topic.

Special categories of women, such as racial minorities, older women, lesbians, or working-class women are treated in a manner consistent with the book's integrative purpose. Material about the varieties of women's experience in contemporary America is presented chapter by chapter where appropriate, integrating their diverse situations in a treatment that emphasizes commonalities over differences. This deliberate stylistic decision leads to a broader consideration of the possibilities for success of mass-appeal women's organizations.

Beyond the ambitious range of topical areas covered, the text offers a rich variety of resources for the student. Twenty-seven tables graphically present current information on income, women's sports, regional differences, work, and other matters of interest. Thorough indexing facilitates access to information contained in the volume, and a comprehensive and current reference list leads the researcher on.

Women's studies faculty have frequently worked from handouts, anecdotal material, reading lists, and texts of severely limited range. *Women in American Society* provides one solid, comprehensive response to this need. The author has explicitly taken on the monumental tasks of societal reevaluation and of combining the experiential with the theoretical. To a remarkable extent, she has succeeded.

—Linda M. C. Abbott
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