

Dancing With Another Bird





Resource Center Update

ISIS International Resource Center invites you to feast on our latest acquisitions of books in this latest update. This issue's update features 16 selections covering agriculture, trafficking, ecofeminism, healing, refugees, female sexual energy and other equally stimulating themes.

We have also included reviews of three books in our collection plus one that we hope to add to our shelves. Four perceptive women have woven together these incisive reviews which you will find in our book reviews section.

In this issue, our poetry comes from the Pacific and Bangladesh. Let the poems of Grace Molisa from Vanuatu, Cita Morei of Palau and Taslima Nasreen speak to your heart about their pain and struggles in their cultures.

And, of course, we have not left the fun out of our pages. We have an easy-to-follow recipe for recycled paper for your creative hands and a visual treat for the restless mind in our regular Recipes, Clicks, Ideas & Puns section.

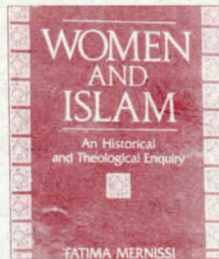
The Resource Center Update of Women in Action is a regular section put together by the staff of the Resource Center and Information Program (RCIP). It is our way of sharing with you information from our collection of books, journals, films, arts and crafts, information packs, conference and workshop reports, and other unpublished material.

If you have any suggestions about books and other material that we ought to stack in our shelves, we would like to hear from you. We are also looking for reviews of books and films for publication in this magazine. Our next issues will be out in August and December.

If you are after information, contact us by phone, mail or E-mail. We can provide photocopies of non-copyright publications upon request. We may not be able to provide you all the information you need, but we do our best.

From the Isis Shelves

Mernissi, Fatima. **Women and Islam: an historical and theological enquiry.** Translated by Mary Jo Lakeland. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1991. 228 pp. (CUL 02040.00)



Mernissi sheds light on the status of women in Islam by reassessing literary sources as far back as seventh-century Islam. Ample historical evidence portrays women in the Medina, the Prophet's city in the seventh century, as they liberate themselves from slavery and violence to become participants in the making of Arab history.

Women fled aristocratic tribes in Mecca by the thousands to enter Medina because Islam promised equality and dignity for all—men and women, masters and servants. During that time, women could gain access to full citizenship, the status of *sahabi* (the Prophet's companion). They enjoyed the right to enter the councils of the Muslim umma, to speak freely to its Prophet-leader, to argue with the men, to fight for their happiness, and to be involved in managing military and political affairs. The evidence is found in the works of religious history and in biographies of *sahabiyat*. Later impositions on women such as the veil were never the Prophet's intention.

Available from:
Kali for Women
B1/8 Hauz Khas
New Delhi 110 016

Rogers, Barbara. **The domestication of women: discrimination in developing societies.** London: Tavistock Publications, 1980. 200 pp. (DEV 02042.00)



How do development planners deal with women's issues? The first part of the

book discusses Western male ideology about gender distinctions and the division of labor. It explains how interpretations of other societies are used to bolster myths about women's "natural place" in society. The second part analyzes this process. It focuses on discrimination against women in development agencies, distortions in research and data collection on which development planning is based, and the relegation by planners of Third World women to the domestic sphere. The third part delves into the discriminatory impact of the planning process in subsistence agriculture, the sector in which most Third World women are concentrated.

Available from:
Tavistock Publications
in association with
Methuen, Inc.
733 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017



Women writing in India. Vol. I: 600 B.C. to the early 20th century; and Vol. II: the 20th century. Edited by Susie Tharu and K. Lalita. New York: The Feminist Press, 1993. (LIT 02041.00)

The two volumes offer more than 140 texts from 13 languages never before available as a collection or in English, along with a new reading of cultural history that draws on contemporary scholarship on women and India. These illuminate the lives of Indian women through 2,600 years of change, and expand the historical understanding of literature, feminism and the making of modern India.

Volume II brings the history begun in Volume I up to the present day. It offers poetry, fiction, drama, memoirs, critical introductions, and biographical headnotes. These map women's shifting roles and varying responses to the great social, political and cultural upheavals wrought by the struggle for independence,

the establishment of the Indian nation, modernization, and the women's movement.

Available from:
The Feminist Press
City University of New York
311 East 94 Street
New York N.Y. 10128

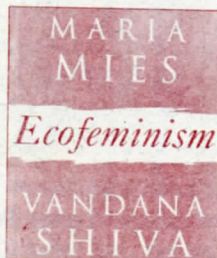
Minding our lives: women from the South and North reconnect ecology and health. Edited by Vandana Shiva. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1993. 164 pp. (ENV 02045.00)



Minding our Lives is based on the seminar on "Women, Ecology and Health: *Rebuilding Connections*" held in Bangalore in southern India from July 17 to 22, 1991. It centers on the cultural and political roots of the ecological and health crises; the link between environmental degradation and women's health, and between ecological and social breakdown; the impact of new technologies on women's health and ecological stability; and the strategies that women—and men—are using to respond to violence against nature and the related violence against women.

Available from:
Kali for Women
B1/8 Hauz Khas
New Delhi 110 016

Mies, Maria and Vandana Shiva. **Ecofeminism.** London: Zed Books, 1993. 328 pp. (ENV 02044.00)



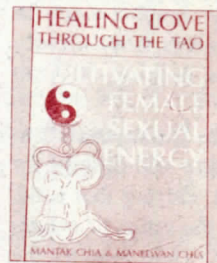
Ecofeminism shows the ways in which ecological destruction disproportionately affects women, particularly those in developing countries. It addresses the inherent inequalities in world structures which permit the North to dominate the South, men to dominate women, and the frenetic plunder of ever more resources for ever more unequally distributed economic gain to dominate nature.

Ecofeminism grew out of various social crusades—the femi-

nist, peace and ecology movements—in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It thrives on connectedness and wholeness of theory and practice. It asserts the special strength and integrity of every living thing. It recognizes the value of the feminine principle that is caring, nurturing and sustaining, and brings this to ecology. Feminism has politicized ecology in describing patriarchy's domination of the earth.

Other issues discussed: the concept of knowledge, poverty and development, industrialization of all life forms, the search for cultural identity and rootedness, the search for freedom and self-determination on a limited earth.

Available from:
Zed Books Ltd
7 Cynthia St.
London N1 9Jf, UK, or
Kali for Women
B1/8 Hauz Khas
New Delhi 110 016



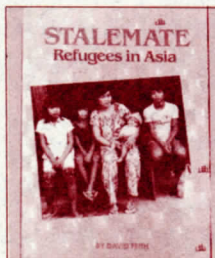
Chia, Mantak and Maneewan Chia. **Healing love through the Tao: cultivating female sexual energy.** Makati, Philippines: Institute for Inner Studies, 1986. 328 pp. (ENV 02045.00)

Sexual guidance and exercises are introduced plainly to the Western public for the first time. For thousands of years, a Taoist Master taught these secrets only to very small numbers of people in the royal courts in esoteric circles, who were sworn to silence. Now, the Chias are sharing their knowledge with the world.

According to them, there are two main practices for women to cultivate and enhance their sexual energy. One is ovarian breathing, which can shorten menstruation, reduce cramps, and compress more life-force energy (CHI) into the ovaries for more sexual power. Another is the orgasmic upward draw, which can be done solo or with one's sexual partner. When this practice is mastered, one can experience "total orgasm" beyond the ordinary vaginal kind without losing the life-force energy.

Available from:
Institute for Inner Studies, Inc.
2nd Flr., Evekal Building
855 Pasay Road corner Amorsolo St.
Makati, Metro Manila

Feith, David. **Stalemate: refugees in Asia.** Victoria: Asian Bureau Australia, 1988. 92 pp. (HUM 02048.00)



There are somewhere between 10 and 15 million refugees in the world, mostly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. They are neglected by-products of the many conflicts that this century has witnessed. They are "a sign of the times."

Stalemate depicts their lives and problems. Feith traces the history of the main refugee groups in Asia and how the international community has responded to their problems, including their search for asylum and protection. He presents three conventional solutions to a refugee situation: returning home; staying permanently in the country of first asylum; and resettling in a third country. Finally, he discusses what has become a de facto fourth "solution": long-term residence in a refugee camp.

Available from:

Asian Bureau Australia
173 Royal Parade Parkville
Victoria 3052, Australia

World Health Organization. **AIDS home care handbook.** Geneva: WHO, 1993. 178 pp. (HEA 02047.00)

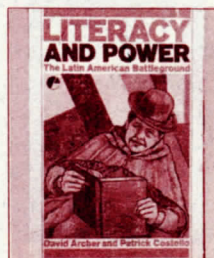


AIDS is a chronic disease lasting months or years. A person with AIDS may move several times from the home to the hospital and back again. Thus, much of the care of the afflicted occurs in the home, relying on two strengths—family and community. The handbook provides health care workers with information to help families gain confidence about their own ability to give safe, compassionate and helpful care to people with AIDS in their homes.

Part I is a teaching guide about HIV and AIDS for the community, the sick person, and the family, or anyone training to become a community health worker or a volunteer. Part II is a reference guide with detailed information about common AIDS-related problems and causes, what can be done at home to alleviate these problems, and when to seek further help.

Available from:

World Health Organisation
CH1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland



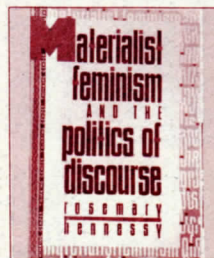
Archer, David and Costello. **Literacy and power: the Latin American battleground.** London: Earthscan Publications, 1990. 206 pp. (EDU 02043.00)

The often bloody struggles of Central America have long dominated the news. Behind the headlines lies the story of an enormous population of the desperately poor, who are impoverished even more by widespread illiteracy.

What actually counts as literacy, however, is less clear. Archer and Costello describe some of the most exciting and innovative programs designed to overcome the problem and, having worked with many of the people, how varied and controversial these are. The authors illustrate some of the political issues and problems of the continent (i.e., El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Ecuador, Mexico, Chile, Bolivia and Guatemala) through specific case studies, highlighting the impact of popular education on people's daily struggles.

Available from:

Earthscan Publications Ltd
3 Endsleigh Street
London WC1H 0DD



Hennessy, Rosemary. **Materialist feminism and the politics of discourse.** New York: Routledge 1993. 177 pp. (IDE 02051.00)

The book is a powerful account of creating feminist theory that appropriates the best of materialism and postmodernism.

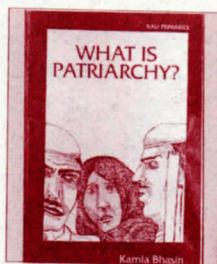
Hennessy stresses that her work is not an overview or a genealogy of materialist feminism, that it does not offer an introduction to materialist feminism or plot out its organizing concepts. It is, instead, an argument for and within a materialist-feminist problematic that takes as its particular focus the problem of the subject—more specifically, the discursively constructed subject. She also shows how some of the conceptual frameworks that Western feminists have found most valuable blind us to the regressive global politics that they advance.

Available from:

Routledge
29 West 35th Street
New York, NY 10001-2299

RESOURCE CENTER UPDATE

Bhasin, Kamla. **What is patriarchy?** New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1993. 31 pp. (IDE 02049.00)

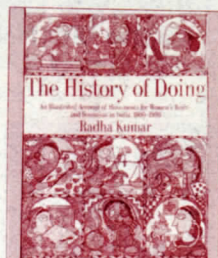


Has patriarchy always existed? How can we recognize it? Does it subordinate all women in the same way, everywhere? Is it a system of discrimination that has been institutionalized? Are all institutions patriarchal? Do all men benefit equally from it?

This booklet unravels the many strands of patriarchy in a lucid and accessible question-and-answer format. Focusing on South Asia, it locates women's struggles for social change in a context where the patriarchal control of major social and political institutions makes for specific forms of discrimination against women.

Available from:
Kali for Women
B1/8 Hauz Khas
New Delhi 110 016

Kumar, Radha. **The history of doing: an illustrated account of movements for women's rights and feminism in India 1800-1990.** New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1993. 203 pp. (SOC 02052.00)



This thematic history of the women's movement in India, both before and after independence, covers the nineteenth century to the present. It looks at how women's issues were raised, initially by men and as part of the movement for social reform, and then involving women in the nationalist movement.

Using photographs, old and new documents, excerpts from letters, books, and informal writings, the author chronicles the growing involvement of women and the formation of the early women's organizations. She examines the foregrounding of the women's issue during the reform and nationalist movements and its subsequent disappearance from the agenda of public debate until it reemerged in the post-independence period of the Sixties and Seventies.

The book raises key questions regarding the nature of the contemporary movement, the issues it has taken up (such as rape, dowry, environment, work and health), its directions and perspectives, its differences from Western movements, the role of autonomous women's organizations, and their relationship with

political parties, especially those of the Left. A wealth of information comes through accessible writing that should appeal to a wide cross-section of readers.

Available from:
Kali for Women
B1/8 Hauz Khas
New Delhi 110 016



Eisler, Riane Tennenhaus. **The chalice and the blade.** New York: HarperCollins, 1987. 261 pp. (IDE 02050.00)

The story of our cultural origins is told, based on interwoven evidences from art, archeology, religion, social science, history, and many other fields of inquiry.

War and the "war of the sexes" are neither divinely nor biologically ordained. The book affirms that a better future is possible, one firmly rooted in the haunting drama of our past.

Eisler reexamines society from a gender-holistic perspective, using a new theory of the cultural evolution: cultural transformation. This theory proposes that underlying the great diversity of human culture are two basic models of society.

First is the dominator model, simply known as patriarchy or matriarchy—the ranking of one half of humanity over the other. Second is the partnership model, with social relations primarily based on the principle of linking rather than ranking. Here, diversity is not equated with either inferiority or superiority.

The theory further proposes that our cultural evolution originally moved toward partnership. But, following a period of chaos and almost total cultural disruption, a fundamental social shift occurred.

Available from:
HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.
10 East 53rd St.
New York, NY 100022



Dorkenoo, Efa. **Cutting the rose—female genital mutilation: the practice and its prevention.** London: Minority Rights Publications, 1994. 196 pp. (VAW 02054.00)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the official term for the partial or complete

RESOURCE CENTER UPDATE

removal of the external genitalia. This medically unnecessary, painful and extremely dangerous operation has been performed on tens of millions of babies and young girls throughout Africa and many other parts of the world. No anesthetic is used. The instruments used are unsterilized knives, razor blades or even shards of glass. Tetanus, septicemia or severe hemorrhaging may result. Death is not unknown.

This book presents the facts about FGM. It gives comprehensive, up-to-date, incisive information and shows how the cooperation between health professional and local and international bodies is essential to eliminate this vicious abuse of the human rights of women and children.

It points out a number of ideas for action. (1) African women who are researching and organizing against the practice should be listened to and supported. (2) While voluntary organizations can play a valuable role, only governments can take the necessary steps to initiate and coordinate work against the practice in their own country. (3) Western governments should allocate funds in their overseas development budget to specific programs for African women's health, education and welfare, related to the elimination of FMG. (4) UN agencies should sponsor research, coordinate action, and give practical support to governments and NGOs working against FMG.

Available from:

Minority Rights Group
379 Brixton Road
London SW9 7DE, UK

Johnson, Janis Tyler. **Mothers of incest survivors: another side of the story.** Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1992. 162 pp. (VAW 02055.00)

The book is a direct account of incest-family mothers. Six women relate their experiences in accounts that challenge the collusive-mother model. The collusive mother is described as a cold, frigid, withdrawn, physically ill or psychologically impaired woman who resigns from her expected roles of responsible wife and mother. She pushes her daughter into taking on her duties in the family, including satisfying the emotional and sexual needs of the father. The collusive mother

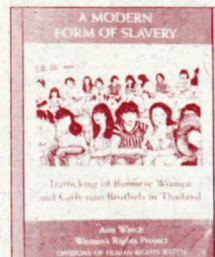


denies the incest between her daughter and husband. When confronted with its reality, she either disbelieves or blames her daughter. And following disclosure, she chooses her husband over her daughter.

The accounts detail how the mothers discover the incest, why they keep it as a secret, how they respond to and explain events, and how they interpret the consequences for their daughters, husbands, families and themselves.

Available from:

Indiana University Press Publicity Department
601 N. Morton Street
Bloomington, Indiana 47404
phone: 812-855-8054



Asia Watch & The Women's Rights Project. **A modern form of slavery: trafficking of Burmese women and girls into brothels in Thailand.** New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993. 160 pp. (VAW 02053.00)

Based on in-depth interviews with Burmese victims, this study reveals violations of internationally recognized human rights. Most of the interviews took place at emergency shelters for trafficking victims run by nongovernmental organizations in Chiangmai and Bangkok. Some of the girls were detained at the Immigration Detention Center in Bangkok. They found out that Thai police and border patrol officials are involved in both trafficking and brothel operations, but these authorities routinely escape punishment, as, for the most part, do brothel agents, owners, pimps and clients.

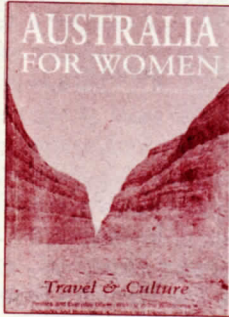
The Human Rights Watch assesses the responsibility of the Thai government. It presents detailed recommendations to the Thai and Burmese governments and the international community for improving the protection of the women and girls and ensuring the prosecution of their abusers.

Available from:

Human Rights Watch
485 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10017-6104

From the Publisher

A Tour "Down Under"
for Women



Australia for Women: Travel and Culture
Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein, eds.
Feminist Press Travel Series, September 1994
US\$17.95, illustrated with 68 black-and-white photographs
ISBN: 1-55861-095-2
Distribution:
Consortium Book Sales and Distribution
1045 Westgate Drive
St. Paul, MN 55114, USA
phone: (800) 283-3572

The Feminist Press at The City University of New York has launched an innovative series of travel guides for women with *Australia for Women: Travel & Culture*. Deliberately designed for browsing as well as absorbing reading, *Australia for Women* reads as if a convivial, entertaining feminist friend turns up in every locale to conduct an insider's tour. With 57 women writers from the featured country contributing to the volume, *Australia for Women* is a brilliant, entertaining portrait of Australian women and their contributions to Australian society and culture—today and in the past, complementing all available conventional guides to hotels, tours or restaurants.

Australia for Women is divided into three main sections. In Part 1, essays, stories, and poems reflect on Australian history, culture, and everyday life. From Aboriginal origins to convicts sent to the colony the British called "Botany Bay" two centuries ago, the book moves on to the stories of some famous, and ordinary women, including the nurses of World War II and leaders of the modern women's movement.

"Australia is the only country in the world with a continuous cultural history of 60,000, possibly more, years," observe editors Hawthorne and Klein in their introductory essay. "And Aboriginal women have been central to that cultural development."

Other chapters in Part 1 give evidence of the diverse society which is Australia: "Memories of Sydney's China Town" by Mavis Yen, "Multiculturalism" by Sabine Gleditsch, "Feminism and Colonialism" by Uyen Loewald, "Lesbians in Australia" by Diana Starski, "Koori Women: Racism and Politics" by Destiny Deacon, "Women Composers Have Got Australia Covered" by Sally Macarthur and "The Women's Art Scene in Australia" by Merren Ricketson.

Part 2 is entitled "Cities-Country-Rivers." It opens with engaging portraits of the flora and fauna found throughout the sprawling island nation, followed by a practical guide by regions: after all, Australia the nation is also a continent!

Australia for Women combines colorful and straightforward introductions to landmarks, national parks, and urban centers with essays by contributors imparting

the spirit of places or a sense of firsthand experience and lifestyles; Eliazbeth Jolley's "A Sort of Gift: Images of Perth," Tania Lienert's "Growing up in Woomera," Ruby Lmagford's "The Fencing Circus" (a memoir of Queensland and New South Wales), Jan Teagle Kapeta's "Darwin: A Letter," Jenny Maher's "Rural Women's Syndrome," and Kaye Johnston's "The Revolutionary Nature of Lesbian Organic Gardening" reveal the multiplicity of perspectives in this section of the book.

Part 3, "Resources," features a one-of-a-kind gathering of information (addresses, telephone and facsimile numbers) on women's networks today: travel agents, hotels, restaurants, night clubs, radio stations, bookshops, health and sexual assault services, and legal resources in Australia, as well as recommended books, periodicals and newspapers, making any women's adventure to Australia as complete as possible.

Australia for Women: Travel & Culture inaugurates the Feminist Press Travel Series. "Greece for Women" and "Italy for Women" slated for publication in 1995 and 1996, will provide further options for women travelers to the most popular destinations.

A poet, novelist, festival organizer, and publisher, Susan Hawthorne has lived and traveled in Australia for many years. She is co-editor of four anthologies of women's writing and has been active in the Australian women's movement for more than 20 years.

Renate Klein is Deputy Director of the Australian Women's Research Centre and Senior Lecturer in Women's Studies at Deakin University. She is known internationally for her work in Women's Studies and women's health. She has written and edited numerous books.

source: *The Feminist Press*, The City University of New York

First Accurate Translation of a Major Work in Western Feminism



The Answer/La Respuesta

by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz
critical edition and translation by Electa Arenal and Amanda Powell
includes a selection of poetry
(English translation alongside original Spanish text, 1994)
Consortium Book Sales, distributor
1045 Westgate Drive, St. Paul, Minnesota 55114-1065
phone: (800) 283-372

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648/51-1695), “the first feminist of America,” “the tenth muse,” “one of the most important women poets of the Spanish-speaking world” and “precursor of the 18th. century enlightenment,” remains a commanding figure in the history of the women’s struggle for intellectual freedom.

After she was commanded to acknowledge learning as unbefitting a woman and a nun, Sor Juana composed her *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz* (1691), now seen to be a key document in women’s emancipation. It remains one of the most moving prose works in Spanish, with its elegant defense of learning as a proper task for women and its eloquent criticism of a society dominated by men and a church dominated by the Inquisition.

“Other translations of the *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz* exist in English; this one differs by more fully drawing in and upon the spiritual, cultural, social and female context in which the author lived and wrote her *Answer*, and to which she refers in the text,” explain editors/translators Electa Arenal and Amanda Powell.

Stephen Greenblatt, The Class of 1932 Professor of English Literature at the University of California, applauds just this concern for rendering Sor Juana’s original linguistic intent: “The excellent translation and scholarly commentary are particularly sensitive to feminist concerns in the context of a nuanced understanding of the history and culture of Sor Juana’s time.”

In 1668 Sor Juana entered the Hieronymite convent in Mexico City, where she composed music, conducted scientific experiments, kept a 4,000-volume library and received intellectuals, while pursuing a polymathic literary career until threats from church officials silenced her remarkable voice.

Enjoying the favor of New Spain’s vicereine and viceroy

as well as great popular acclaim, Sor Juana wrote sacramental and secular plays, poetry and essays that are erudite and witty—writings that embroiled her in ongoing, and ultimately dangerous, controversy. Sor Juana’s work evidences a profound and subtle intellect, a spirit deeply opposed to the sexist standards of both society at large and the church hierarchy. She boldly critiqued accepted values which condoned for women only marriage, childbirth and religiosity. Her emphasis on secular knowledge conflicted with her status as a “bride of Christ.” She championed the rights of women and defended slaves and Native Americans in her texts.

Sor Juana’s social and intellectual independence inevitably generated hostility from the fathers of the church. Criticism reached a climax in 1690 in the form of a letter from the Bishop of Puebla. Hiding behind the female name ‘Sor Filotea de la Cruz,’ the bishop condemned Sor Juana’s theological views and her neglect of religious literature.

The Answer is Sor Juana’s final defiant salvo in her battle for free expression. She wrote only a few more pieces before she ceased all writing and renounced the world in 1694. After disposing of her books and instruments, she then devoted herself to penance and contemplation. A plague devastated Mexico City in 1695 and Sor Juana fell victim to it while tending the sick.

“Sor Juana used her art and her religion to be a scholar, and she used her scholarship to create a piece of literary art that defends the sacredness of poetry (as well as of women). She understood the power of language and ideology, and the unstated gender issued embedded in both. That is precisely why... Sor Juana seems so ‘modern’ and why she continues to rivet our interest.”

source: *The Feminist Press*, The City University of New York