WOMEN AND POWER: A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FEMINIST WRITINGS

This reading list is meant to provide a provocative, interdisciplinary sampling of recent works on power relationships in women's lives, from a feminist perspective. The concept of power is a slippery one, with many meanings; this bibliography is by no means comprehensive. Omitted, for example, are numerous reports of research projects that measure sex-differentiated leadership styles and attitudes toward power. The compiler welcomes reactions to this list and suggestions of additional relevant works.


Analyzes the ambivalence toward leadership within the women's movement, outlines the critical roles played by feminist leaders, and illustrates various leadership styles.


A wideranging examination of the "psychoeconomic condition of women," in which women's powerlessness is linked to their not having - and not understanding - money.


This collection of articles, fiction, and art defines lesbian sadomasochism as "a form of eroticism based on a consensual exchange of power." The contributors view S/M between women as a positive and safe expression of women's power.


A review of the research on women and men as leaders.


Using a radical radio collective as an example, Ehrlich urges the creation of alternative, nonhierarchical institutions.

Universities: Eau Claire, Green Bay, LaCrosse, Madison, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Parkside, Platteville, River Falls, Stevens Point, Stout, Superior, Whitewater. University Centers: Baraboo/Sauk County, Barron County, Fond du Lac, Fox Valley, Manitowoc County, Marathon County, Marinette County, Marshfield/Wood County, Medford, Richland, Rock County, Sheboygan County, Washington County, Waukesha County. Extension: Statewide.
Freeman, Jo. "The Tyranny of Structurelessness." MS. 2 (July 1973): 76-78, 86-89. In her classic critique of the leaderless group as the preferred organizational model within the women's movement, Freeman reveals how power becomes concentrated in informal elites. She sets forth some principles for democratic group structures.


A groundbreaking analysis of how nonverbal signals communicate and reinforce the inequality of women and men.


The title essay in this anthology sponsored by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, Howe's contribution explores the intersection of women's studies and the women's movement to show how educational strategies have the power to transform the curriculum, the world of work and the professions, and ultimately the lives of all women and men.

Janeway attempts to examine the nature of power from the point of view of the powerless. Several different groups come under her scrutiny: the working class in the 19th century, early Christians, Blacks, autistic children, the physically disabled, concentration camp prisoners, and, of course, women. She comes to the conclusion that power is not a characteristic of the powerful, but a social relationship shaped by both the powerful and the weak.

Reports data supporting the hypothesis that men and women are expected to use different bases of power and that women have access to limited modes of influence. Develops a theory of sex-role stereotyping and power use that is applicable to daily personal interactions.

This important study of organizational behavior includes a chapter on "Power," pp. 164-205. Kanter defines power as "the ability to get things done, to mobilize resources," and she concludes, "Power issues occupy center stage not because individuals are greedy for more, but because some people are incapacitated without it."
A broadly conceived examination of male-female power relationships, from the perspective of a feminist social psychologist.

Lorde speaks eloquently of the erotic as "an assertion of the life-force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives."

The author, a dean at UC-Santa Cruz, succinctly addresses the risks and rewards of feminists exercising power at the center of mainstream hierarchical structures. "We must recognize," she concludes, "that it is in the process of engagement - engagement of our better with our worse selves - that power might itself be purged and ultimately made the servant of empowerment."

Based on interviews and a mail survey, the authors predict that attitudinal changes resulting from women's entry into the paid workforce will cause a fundamental reordering of society, to women's benefit.

Five of the twenty essays in this anthology are grouped under the heading "Reflections of Power: Utilizing the Difference."

Russ explores the relationships among feminists by contrasting the rare, nurturant, guilt-burdened "Magic Mommas" with the more common, dependent, ineffective "Trembling Sisters." Both are victims of the "Feminine Imperative" that forbids women to use their own power for themselves, while requiring that they never hurt another women's feelings.

Drawing on her experiences as Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and President of Hunter College, Shalala calls for women in positions of power to identify a feminist agenda and to help other women.

Twenty questions designed to measure the reader's power in personal, professional, and domestic spheres. Power is defined as "the ability to get others to do what you want them to do."


A review of recent thinking on women and power, emphasizing women's experiences in upper management.


Interviews with twelve high-power women.


A Quaker woman muses on the meaning and effectiveness of nonviolent action in the causes of peace and women's equality.


Selected papers from Social Work Practice in Sexist Society, the first National Association of Social Workers Conference on Social Work Practice with Women, September 14-16, 1980. (Not seen.)

Compiled by Susan Searing, UW Women's Studies Librarian-at-Large, for the fourth quadrennial conference of the Midwest Federation of Library Associations, 11/83.