RACISM AND HOMOPHOBIA: READINGS TO RAISE AWARENESS

A bibliography prepared for the Women's Transit Authority by Susan Searing

I recommend these books for WTA volunteers and others who want to improve their understanding of the forces of racism and homophobia in our society. There are many, many books on these important themes, so this bibliography is necessarily very selective. The "fiction and poetry" sections, for example, include only anthologies. Unless otherwise noted, all titles are currently in print in paperback editions.

Nonfiction about women of color and racism

Lesbian feminist, literary critic, and poet, Paula Gunn Allen redefines American Indian culture by examining matrilineal traditions with strong female deities and positions of power for women.

This pathbreaking anthology presents writings and graphics by women of forty Indian nations, speaking powerfully of their lives in the Native American community and white society. Lesbian perspectives are evident.

Bulkin (a Jew), Pratt (a Southern white), and Smith (a Black) explore the tensions among women of different backgrounds, attempting to move beyond accusations to coalition politics.

Thirty-five articles are grouped in five sections: Work; Families; Sexuality and Reproduction; Religion; and Politics. They cover Afro-American, Asian American, Chicana, Native American, and Puerto Rican women, as well as women of several Euro-American ethnic groups. In addition, Cole includes readings about women of different class backgrounds, lesbians, women in rural areas, urban women, women with disabilities, and older women.

These political essays by an outspoken Black activist address head-on the problems of racism, sexism, and capitalism. See also Davis's earlier collection, WOMEN, RACE, AND CLASS (New York: Random House, 1981).

Interviews with New Mexican women reveal the common themes and customs within each generation, as well as the diversity of Hispanic experience.


Giddings traces the active roles of Black women in confronting racism and sexism and in shaping U.S. history, from the post-Civil War years to the present.


Written by a Black woman, this book speaks out about the sexism of Black men and the racism of white feminists. Hooks extends her arguments in two more recent books: FEMINIST THEORY: FROM MARGIN TO CENTER (Boston: South End Press, 1984) and TALKING BACK: THINKING FEMINIST, THINKING BLACK (Boston: South End Press, 1988).


Two professors -- one Black, one white -- create a dialog on women's liberation, mothers and daughters, and sexuality and sexual attitudes.


In these fifteen essays, Black lesbian Audre Lorde deals boldly with sexism and racism, including racism in the women's movement. See also her latest prose collection, A BURST OF LIGHT (Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1988).


One of the first comprehensive books on Chicanas. Includes a historical essay, plus chapters on the family, work and education, images of women in Hispanic literature, and Chicana feminism.


This anthology (first edition, 1981) signaled the coming together of women of color in the eighties. Black, Chicana, Asian American, American Indian, and Puerto Rican women contributed essays, poems, letters, and first-person accounts that reveal both the differences and commonalities among women, and speak about the challenges women of color must raise against a simplistic notion of sisterhood.

This collaborative collection of prose pieces by three Black women explores women's friendships and relationships, mothers and daughters, sibling rivalry, revolution, and the "tight spaces" to which Black women are relegated in a sexist, racist society.


This collection of fiction, poetry, interviews, essays, reviews, and photographs addresses four central themes: blood ties and the meaning of family; artistic identity; lesbianism; and feminist issues and organizing.


In this collection of essays, Walker explores the position of Black women, the civil rights movement, nuclear warfare, the Black literary tradition, and her experiences as a Black woman writer. Walker's latest volume of prose is titled LIVING BY THE WORD (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988).

Fiction and poetry about women of color and racism

Cochran, Jo, and others, eds. BEARING WITNESS/SOBERVIVIENDO: AN ANTHOLOGY OF NATIVE AMERICAN/LATINA ART AND LITERATURE. Corvallis, OR: Calyx, 1984. 128p. $6.50.

A beautifully produced collection of poetry, fiction, and artwork.


Artwork and writing by women of color in the Pacific Northwest, organized around three themes: self-discovery, community perspectives, and cultural awareness.


These fifteen short stories revolve around points of diversity and conflict among women -- racism, lesbianism, class barriers, anti-Semitism, the generation gap, and other themes.


Designed as a textbook for courses on minority women's literature, this anthology gathers contemporary fiction, poetry, narratives, and criticism by American Indian, Black, Chicana, and Asian American women.
This pathbreaking collection of short stories focuses on themes of biculturalism and bilingualism; explores issues of womanhood and sexuality; and examines discrimination within traditional Hispanic culture and in white American society.

Tradition and change are interwoven themes in this excellent anthology of literature by Indian women of many tribes.

Works by four poets, two fiction writers, a playwright, and three visual artists appear in this volume, alongside five critical papers.

A stunning assemblage of poetry, prose, art, and book reviews by women with roots in several Asian countries.

Lobo-Cobb, Angela, ed. WINTER NEST: A POETRY ANTHOLOGY OF MIDWESTERN WOMEN POETS OF COLOR. Madison, WI: Blue Reed Arts, 1987. 110p. $5.00.
Fifteen women poets are represented in this slim volume of Native American, Asian American, Afro-American, and Latina poetry.

Samples of writing by Black American women writers from Colonial times to the early twentieth century are supplemented by biographical sketches and short bibliographies. Shockley covers both well-known and long-forgotten authors.

This anthology collects poems by fifty-eight Black women, from Colonial times to the present.


These plays challenge the traditional content and themes of American drama and introduce the politics of race and gender to the theater.
Nonfiction by and about lesbians and homophobia

Vignettes of the lives of older lesbians -- some describing youth, others the experience of aging.

Baetz interweaves extracts from interviews to convey the variety of lesbian experience and the many "crossroads" lesbians face in affirming their identity.

This anthology broke the silence about homophobia in the Jewish community and anti-Semitism in lesbian circles.

Most of the essays, autobiographical sketches, and letters in this collection were first published in "underground" periodicals in the 1970s.

Thirty-five first-person accounts, grouped under headings like "Young Lesbians," "Struggles," "Public Lives," and "Adventures."

This anthology is an excellent introduction to the lesbian experience and the lesbian-feminist movement in the United States. The pieces -- an eclectic blend of scholarly research, opinion, criticism, and personal revelation -- are classified under the headings "Identity," "Oppression," and "Culture and Community."

Faderman mines literary and biographical sources to trace the history of lesbianism in modern Western culture.

Grahn, a gifted lesbian poet, draws on legend, anthropology, myth, and history -- as well as her own experiences and spiritual insights -- to bring to light the traditionally powerful roles of gay men and lesbians in societies across centuries and continents.

Twenty-two first-person accounts by lesbians from varied backgrounds.
In this landmark book (first published in 1976), Katz reprints primary
documents from four centuries of lesbian and gay history in the U.S. See
especially the section titled "Passing Women," which offers accounts of
women who dressed, lived, and worked as men between 1782 and 1920.

Klaich, Dolores. WOMAN + WOMAN: ATTITUDES TOWARD LESBIANISM. Reprint
ingition. 287p. $9.95.
First issued in 1974, this book explores the lives of distinguished
lesbians of the past and adds insights about lesbian life today.

$10.95.
This reassuring manual is written for lesbians, but it doubles as an
informative book for straight women who can't help wondering, "What do
lesbians do in bed?"

Pharr, Suzanne. HOMOPHOBIA: A WEAPON OF SEXISM. Inverness, CA: Chardon
This just-published book analyzes why homophobia exists and how it works.
In addition, Pharr discusses the chilling effect of homophobia on women's
liberation, the connections among oppressive systems (sexism, racism and
heterosexism), and internalized homophobia among lesbians.

Pollack, Sandra, and Jeanne Vaughn, eds. POLITICS OF THE HEART: A LESBIAN
This anthology presents varied perspectives on lesbian parenting, a subject
currently receiving long-overdue attention.

Rafkin, Louise, ed. DIFFERENT DAUGHTERS: A BOOK BY MOTHERS OF LESBIANS.
A range of feelings are represented in these pieces by women who have
acknowledged their daughters' lesbianism.

Ramos, Juanita, ed. COMPANERAS: LATINA LESBIANS. New York: Latina Lesbian
Some in English and some in Spanish, these essays, poems, oral histories,
short stories, and illustrations reveal the experiences of Latina lesbians
in the U.S. and South and Central America.

This collection of prose writing by poet Adrienne Rich includes her often-
quoted essay, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." Rich's
earlier essays are collected in ON LIES, SECRETS, AND SILENCE: SELECTED
Fiction and poetry about lesbians and homophobia

Short stories by contemporary lesbian authors on themes such as motherhood, old age, Southern life, sexual relationships, work, illness, family bonds, and racism.

Bulkin, Elly, and Joan Larkin, eds. LESBIAN POETRY: AN ANTHOLOGY. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press, 1981. 296p. (out of print)
Poetry by contemporary lesbian writers of varied racial and class backgrounds.

Prose and poetry by contemporary writers, as well as some rediscovered works by deceased authors.

Seven plays "by, for, and about lesbians."

March 1989.