

Summaries of articles

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Convergences

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SUMMARIES OF ARTICLES

Diverse and Convergent : Feminist Research at the End of the 1980s

Huguette Dagenais

This introduction outlines some convergent thoughts emanating from the four articles and three research notes of this issue bearing respectively on interpersonal power in small mixed groups (S. Landry), the familial and professional trajectories of women managers (C. Andrew, C. Coderre, A. Daviau and A. Denis) and farmers (A.-M. Rieu), French Canadian Christian Feminism at the beginning of this century (M.-A. Cliche), lesbian existence (L. Chamberland), féminist semiotics (M. Beauregard) and women in literature and publishing (M.-J. des Rivières; P. Dionne and C. Théry). In spite of the broad spectrum of themes, theoretical and methodological approaches manifested in these texts, this author sees convergencies stemming primarily from the focus on power relationship at both micro and macrosocial levels and a common preoccupation among the researchers to encompass the complexity of women's lives and to take into account social change and resistance to it. She ends by underlining the necessity for more precise definitions of and terms for the diverse levels, locations and manifestations of power in order to avoid confusion in the assessment of social change.

Women's Power in Small Groups

Simone Landry

This article reports on an exploratory research on power and influence in three natural small mixed groups. The instruments used are a rank order questionnaire revealing the power structure within small groups and an original observation grid of influence strategies. The results are as follows. The first ranks within the power structure are mainly occupied by men; at the end of a long process, two young women emerge as leaders within their groups; more expert power is attributed to men than women; very few significant differences are found between influence strategies used by women and men; and practically no links are noticeable between reference power and influence strategies. These results are interpreted from a feminist epistemological frame of reference and lead to the questioning of Bales' complementary leadership theory.

Women Face Bureaucracy

Caroline Andrew, Cécile Coderre, Andrée Daviau and Ann Denis

Using data from a study of 214 women managers working in large companies and federal public services in Ontario and Québec, this article examines the

family trajectories of these managers. The authors endeavor to identify the nature of gender relations within management which, despite its recent growth as a profession, has excluded women. After outlining their theoretical approach with emphasises the interdependence of family and career paths, the authors outline the family strategies used by these women in the process of becoming managers.

Women's Socio-Professional Itineraries and Gender Relationships in Agriculture

Anne-Marie Rieu

Several field research projects in the Midi-Pyrénées area in France, grounded on complementary methods of inquiry (*i.e.* questionnaires, life-history approach) have enabled the author to assess the impact of gender on the building up of women farmers' occupational roles. Operating in all socializing institutions (family, school), gender has different effects on men's and women's occupational roles. However, despite the legal obstacles hampering their entry into the profession, women farmers still have some leeway which certain of them use to develop autonomy strategies. They thus take their destinies into their own hands.

Equal Rights or Increased Influence ? Women's Nature and Role According to Feminists and Antifeminists in Québec 1896-1930

Marie-Aimée Cliche

In their efforts to reconcile their goal of improving the condition of women with their religious convictions, early Québec feminist mainly emphasized the moral influence that women could exercise on society. An analysis of their writings, and in particular of the passages concerning the rights, responsibilities and influence of women, reveals that their dedication to the concept of women's « nature » severely limited the scope of their demands, and that their opponents used the well-known argument of the moral influence of women to persuade them to accept their inferiority in education, the professions and politics. The positions of these women appear extremely timid today, but in view of the violent antifeminist reaction, it took more courage to be a moderate feminist at the beginning of this century than to put forth radical ideas in 1989.

Lesbian Existence : Feminine Continuum or Marroon Experience ? Feminist Reflections Toward a Theory of The Lesbian Experience

Line Chamberland

In this article, the author presents briefly the origins and the goals of her research about lesbian life in Montreal during the 50's and 60's. Then she details the theoretical thinking which guided her questioning of this past experience. Based on a double postulate, constructionist and feminist, she examines successively some feminist writings which define lesbianism as a gender non-conformity; the constructionist perspective which apprehends it as a cultural phenomena; Adrienne Rich's thesis which places it in a continuum of resistance

to the patriarchal institution of heterosexuality; and finally the feminist materialist perspective which defines it as an escape from the appropriation of women by men. She concludes with some remarks on the difficulties of retracing lesbian existence in other historical periods without falling into ethnocentric biases.

Feminism and Greimas' Semiotic Theory : Two Problematics as Irreconcilable as Reality and Fiction ?

Micheline Beauregard

This theoretical essay tries to reconcile two apparently contradictory points of views in text analysis. Following the English expression of "gender bias", it is proposed that a similar term be used in French in semiotic analysis in order to conceptualize a female/male articulation operating at the deep semantic level of a text, thereby playing the same role as do other "universals" already acknowledged by semioticians (for example *life/death*, *culture/nature*). According to a generativist analysis of texts, discursive activity on the surface should eventually testify to a quest for these elementary deep level axiologic structures.

The World of Books : Women in Parenthesis

Pierrette Dionne et Chantal Théry

Women read more than men — 61% of women are readers. Women also go to book fairs more than men — 65% attend them. Yet, only about a quarter of published writers are women. The figures presented in this paper concerning women in publishing business, literary public relations, bookstores, publishing groups and associations, literary criticism, all point to an under-representation of women and women writers in the book world. Such a situation seems logically to call for a systematic study of this field, and also for action to change this state of affair.

Châtelaine and the Fiction Literature 1960-1975

Marie-José des Rivières

This article examines the evolution of fiction literature published in *Châtelaine*, in a well-known Québec magazine for women. A critical analysis from a feminist standpoint indicates that, for the most part, the short-stories focus on two main topics : *relations within a couple* and *woman's rôle in society*. One pattern emerges pointing to necessary choices to be made. Especially since the late '60s, the stories written by women authors stand out from the ordinary lot. A noticeable break from standards in observed.