

preface

IN THIS ISSUE, we reexamine the 1970s, when, in Marge Piercy's words, "the movement opened up." As we write this preface, the nation is awaiting the inauguration of President-Elect Barack Obama, and we hope that his presidency will be the catalyst for the next wave of the civil rights movement that is commemorated and explored in these pages. One of the tasks our contributors have set themselves in this issue is to try and tease apart the multiple feminisms that grew out of and alongside the civil rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s, and all the articles in this issue highlight the fluidity and the promise of that historical moment, when new theories and practices emerged with breathtaking speed. In their reassessment of early women's studies programs, Judith Kegan Gardiner and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy investigate not only the achievements but also the inevitable compromises that marked the debut of the academic arm of the women's movement. Roberta Salper reminds us of the counterforce of state surveillance during those years, while Georgina Hickey takes women's fight against their exclusion from certain bars and restaurants as emblematic of the broader fight for inclusion and empowerment. Breanne Fahs revisits the writings of Valerie Solanas to show the ways in which Solanas evolved her own political practices that were militantly at odds with the mainstream of the feminist movement, even as many of her ideas were later taken up by it. Review essays by Rosalyn Baxandall and Mary Ann Clawson examine the latest wave of scholarship on the early years of the women's movement, with a special emphasis on memoirs and testimony from those who were directly involved. Several retrospective art exhibits are reviewed by Josephine Withers as she poses questions about canon-making and feminist art. Creative work by Judith Arcana, Marie E. Goyette, Marge Piercy, and Christine Stark dramatizes many of the experiences that led women in the 1960s and 1970s to femi-

nism in the first place: unexpected pleasures, misunderstood pain, and a growing sense that the world could change if only enough people wanted it to.

That emphasis on personal experience also shapes three of the articles in the issue. In “U.S. Government Surveillance and the Women’s Liberation Movement, 1968–1973: A Case Study,” Roberta Salper explores FBI surveillance of “subversives” in the late 1960s and early 1970s and tells the story of her own attempts to get access to her FBI file. When she made her first Freedom of Information Act request in 1981, she was surprised to learn that over 640 pages had been gathered documenting her activities in the New University Conference, the women’s liberation movement, and other progressive organizations. Over the next twenty years, she managed to gain access to a total of 388 pages, covering the years 1968 to 1973. She still does not know what is in the remaining sections of the file; nor does she know what evidence was collected of her “subversive” activities after 1973. She did discover that twice, FBI field offices recommended that she be placed on the Security Index (“a list of persons whom the FBI thinks are potentially dangerous to the public safety or internal security of the United States and who should be interned in case of ‘national emergency’”). The first time, in 1969, the recommendation seems to have been based on her activities with the socialist-identified New University Conference, and women’s liberation was not mentioned, although she was already active in the movement. The second time, in 1971, Salper’s increasing prominence as a leader in the women’s liberation movement and her national exposure as a visiting faculty member at the newly minted San Diego State women’s studies program were cited alongside her membership in the New University Conference as reasons for the recommendation. Both recommendations were eventually rejected, but not until hundreds of pages of press clippings and other materials had been gathered—many in duplicate. Salper’s autobiographical piece conveys the euphoria of those days for people who were committed to leftist movements for social change; it also conveys the chaotic and inefficient attempts of the surveillance agencies to both infiltrate and contain them.

Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy in “Socialist Feminism: What Difference Did It Make to the History of Women’s Studies?” revisits the role of social-

ist feminism in the feminist movement in the late 1960s and 1970s, exploring the fluidity of feminist politics at the time and arguing that socialist feminism's engagement with antiracism has been underplayed partly because of the influence of identity politics on subsequent analyses. Kennedy's case study is the women's studies program at her own university, State University of New York, Buffalo, where an initial desire to transform institutional practices along socialist lines eventually gave way to a series of uneasy compromises with institutional structures.

In "What Happened to Socialist Feminist Women's Studies Programs? A Case History and Some Speculations," Judith Kegan Gardiner also examines the foundation of women's studies programs in the United States. Incorporating comments from thirty-six feminist academics, all of whom were involved with women's studies in the early days, Gardiner asks what role socialist feminism played in the first women's studies programs, how its ideals affected the ways in which women's studies programs were institutionalized, and what roles socialist feminism plays in women's studies programs today. Looking back at the beginnings of her own program at the University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC), Gardiner argues that "socialist feminist women's studies was a discernible strand in U. S. academic feminism and played a significant role in shaping women's studies as a field." Gardiner describes the evolution of the UIC women's studies program out of a loose affiliation of leftist women and shows how the UIC women's studies community employed a collective model while endeavoring to stay within institutional guidelines, unlike, for example, the San Diego State women's studies program, which disbanded after four years because collective members found it impossible to operate in the way they wanted to within the highly regulated environment of the university. By the late 1970s, she argues, socialist feminism outside the academy found itself significantly weakened by attacks from the Maoist Left, possibly with the connivance of the FBI. The women's studies movement, by contrast, went from strength to strength, perhaps because, Gardiner suggests, the pragmatic, flexible style of socialist feminism served women's studies programs well as they strove to adapt to a changing environment, even as few of them explicitly called—or even thought of—themselves as socialist feminist.

One of our review essays is also concerned with personal experience. In “Historical Life Stories,” Rosalyn Baxandall discusses six women’s autobiographies, all of which reexamine the 1970s and the roots of the women’s movement in the civil rights movement and the New Left. Three of them (Bettina F. Aptheker’s *Intimate Politics*, Josie Mendez-Negrette’s *Daughters Betrayed*, and Doreen Baingana’s *Tropical Fish*) describe childhoods spent in traditional families with fathers whose abuse and inadequacies were variously masked by the political affinities between a Communist father and daughter (Aptheker), concealed by paternal violence and family migrancy (Mendez-Negrette), and reinforced by the strains of immigration (Baingana). The three other books under review (Amy Hoffmann’s *My Life at the Gay Community News*, Susan Sherman’s *America’s Child*, and Lynne Segal’s *Making Trouble*) examine the uncovering of alternative communities and kinship structures that stand in for families of origin and propel the authors’ activism and political development. Here, Baxandall notes, are pieces of a forgotten history of grassroots organizing alongside vignettes of life in 1970s London, Boston, and New York. She analyzes these texts in the context of early feminist activism and consciousness raising (CR), arguing that autobiography as a form is a little like CR with supporting evidence such as newspaper accounts, judicial records, and archival documents. Her review implies that autobiography, an enduring and elastic form, was itself partly remade in the aftermath of the 1960s, encapsulating all the variety and flexibility of contemporary political experience.

A second review essay, Mary Ann Clawson’s “Looking for Feminism: Racial Dynamics and Generational Investments in the Second Wave,” focuses our attention on one of the most complex and contentious aspects of 1970s feminism, namely, the relations between white feminists and feminists of color, allowing us to look through the lens of historical retrospective via five recent books that explore the subject in depth. These books address such issues as the impact of the ideology of color blindness on white feminists and ultimately the Second Wave feminist movement (Winifred Breines, *The Trouble between Us*); the internal dynamics of difference within the black feminist movement and how they produced the theory of intersectionality (Kimberly Springer’s *Living for the Revolution*); the

complex interconnections between black, Chicana, and white feminists, as well as the productive role of ethnic separation, in the formation of the Second Wave (Benita Roth's *Separate Roads to Feminism*); how women of color, particularly Puerto Rican women, were uniquely instrumental in transforming the abortion rights movement into a more comprehensive movement for reproductive rights and freedom during the 1970s (Jennifer Nelson's *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*); and social class diversity among women fighting workplace discrimination during this same period (Nancy MacLean's *Freedom Is Not Enough*). Clawson highlights the fact that several of these authors point to emotional asymmetries in the relationships between feminists of color and white feminists more than political, economic, or ideological disjunctures as the cause of the Second Wave's implosion, or, at the very least, refiguration, by the early 1980s. Clawson observes that a younger crop of feminist scholars is making useful conceptual distinctions between feminist movements, organizations, activists, and practices that more finely illuminate the process of change in feminism from the 1960s to the 1970s to the 1980s. It is almost as if these younger sisters see a different Second Wave history than the one so many of us have taken for granted for so long—one that makes a kind of retrospective healing within feminism possible now.

Many of the younger feminists writing and working today cannot personally remember a time when women were barred from public spaces and accommodations, which is what makes Georgina Hickey's article, "Barred from the Barroom: Second Wave Feminists and Public Accommodations in U.S. Cities," such an important piece of scholarship and reflection. Hickey makes it possible for us to remember—or perhaps encounter for the first time—what it was like to "do feminism" during an era when an unescorted woman could not enter or be served at many restaurants, cafes, and drinking establishments. She reviews not only the multitude of strategies used by feminist activists—some liberal and some radical—to open up these spaces, but also the mind-boggling array of reactions these feminist activists got from the resistant patriarchal public. This article provides an opportunity for older feminists to review how far we've come and for younger feminists to reflect upon some of the most

concrete and undeniable accomplishments of the Second Wave in spite of its many documented shortcomings.

One of the most controversial documents of the Second Wave is Valerie Solanas's *SCUM Manifesto*, explored adroitly here in Breanne Fahs's essay, "The Radical Possibilities of Valerie Solanas." Although this text was originally produced in the late 1960s, its greatest influence unfolded during the 1970s. Fahs challenges us to disentangle the politics of Solanas's text from her famous shooting of Andy Warhol, two events that are tightly linked in the public imagination. How might we understand and contextualize Solanas and her text more deeply, in ways that free us to consider her foundational contribution to radical feminism, and ultimately to all of Second Wave feminism, without prejudice? In Fahs's view, Solanas's extremist text, from the fringes, helped to consolidate and mobilize a feminist center that was ultimately quite effective in dismantling key pillars of patriarchy. Indeed, when we view Fahs's perspective in light of Hickey's article on feminist activism around public accommodations, we see the connection. Even if Valerie Solanas's personal life was filled with contradiction and distress, making her hard to place within feminist histories of consciousness and social movement, her text qua text stands as an ideological and historical anchorpoint of the Second Wave.

Finally, Josephine Withers, in her essay, "All Representation Is Political: Feminist Art Past and Present," reviews three recent retrospective exhibits of 1970s and 1980s feminist art: WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution; Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art; and Claiming Space: Some American Feminist Originators. Withers highlights the ways these exhibits document a history of Second Wave feminist art, claiming for feminist artists a "place at the table," as well as a place in the "histories and in the ongoing discourse" about art. She questions whether there has come to exist a canon of feminist artists, to which many of the artists featured in these exhibits would belong, and whether creating such a canon of feminist artists is an unmitigatedly positive step toward full inclusion of feminism and feminist cultural products into art.

As if weaving all of the foregoing themes together, much of the creative work in this issue dramatizes the pain, fear, and triumph with which women reacted to the reframing of their private experiences as

public issues. In Judith Arcana's "A Matter of Fact," for example, a mother matter-of-factly recounts the story of her pre-*Roe v. Wade* abortion to her listening daughter, almost as if she is passing the torch to the next generation. Christine Stark, in "Click Click" and "Andrea Dworkin and Me," describes hearing echoes of her experience of sexual abuse in a class discussion and finding some kind of healing in her encounter with Andrea Dworkin. Marie E. Goyette, in "One Pink, One Black," imagines the self-lacerating reactions of an eight-year-old boy to his coercive sexual play with a little schoolfriend, and Marge Piercy explores the constraints of her 1950s adolescence and the subsequent feelings of liberation in the 1970s in two new poems, "Growing Up Female in the '50s" and "When the Movement Opened Up."

In summary, we are excited that this issue may provide readers with a fresh look at feminism in the 1970s—one that balances the pleasures of nostalgia with the joys of unexpected discovery and the excitement of new lines of inquiry.

Suzanne Raitt and Layli Phillips,
for the editorial collective