

BOOK REVIEW

GENDER AND ANTHROPOLOGY: CRITICAL REVIEWS FOR RESEARCH AND TEACHING, edited by Sandra Morgan, American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C. 1989. To obtain a copy, write to: AAA, 1703 New Hampshire Ave, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. The cost is \$15 for AAA members and \$20 for non-members.

This new volume culminates a three-year project designed to bring the last two decades' of anthropological research on women and gender to the teaching of anthropology (see "New Gender Perspectives in Anthropology," *AnthroNotes*, vol. 11, #3, Fall 1989). It is a gold mine of ideas, resources, practical teaching strategies, and activities for the classroom.

The book opens with a solid introductory essay by Sandra Morgan outlining the impact of feminist anthropology on the entire field of anthropology during the past two decades. Morgan traces much of the change to publications of the 1970's that heralded "a new era...as women became central to the research and theoretical agendas of both younger and more established scholars" (p.4). Eighteen chapters follow focusing on eight subfields or topics and ten culture regions. Each chapter contains a short conceptual essay laying out the basic themes, debates, and recent research in the subfield or topic under consideration; a listing of bibliographic and other resources such as films; and two curricular suggestions.

The book is very comprehensive. Topics include Early Hominid Evolution; Primates; Archaeology; Women in Biosocial Perspective; Public Policy in the US; Women, Technology, and Development; Gender and Language; and Sex, Sexuality, and Gender. Culture areas include the United States, modern China, Southeast Asia, Hindu Society, the Middle East, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, English-speaking Caribbean, American Indian Women, and Aboriginal Australia.

In most cases, the curricular suggestions are presented as "teaching activities," and provide a highly unusual approach and rich resource for the college or secondary school

teacher. Examples include "Images of Women and Men in Prehistory," "Material Expressions of Gender in the United States: A Case Study in Ethnoarchaeology," and "Manly Hearts and Changing Ones: Female Gender Variance in American Indian Societies." Together, these activities create a model "student-centered" approach to teaching anthropology. They provide ways to incorporate the new scholarship on women and gender and offer innovative and exciting classroom activities.

The practical utility of this Guide can be illustrated best by describing for our readers one of the special topic sections. The first chapter by Adrienne L. Zihlman from the University of California, Santa Cruz is titled "Woman the Gatherer: The Role of Women in Early Hominid Evolution." Zihlman begins by stating that the "purpose of this module is to provide guidance for incorporating women and their activities into discussions of hominid evolution and early hominid life" (p.21). The author focuses on the early stage of human evolution, two to four million years ago, and explains that several kinds of information are relevant: time, fossil record, living species, and the evolutionary process. She then summarizes information derived from the fossil record, primate behavior, and gatherer-hunters, information that can delineate women's reproductive, economic, and social activities and contributions to human evolution. She concludes "women made and used tools to obtain food for themselves, as well as to sustain their young after weaning; walked long distances; and carried food and infants bipedally on the African savannas. It is also reasonable to conclude that hunting did not emerge at the earliest stage of human evolution. Rather, hunting probably developed much later in human history and derived from the technological and social base in gathering" (p.31). Altogether, her argument supports her conclusion that "a balanced understanding of human evolution should incorporate women as well as men, children as well as adults into the picture and include the range of activities throughout the life cycle on which natural selection acts, rather than a narrower focus on one of them."

Following this essay is both a bibliography and an annotated bibliography of sources that may be assigned to students or used by instructors to focus discussion or prepare lectures on some aspect of the role of women in evolution. Zihlman's two curricular suggestions include one on Gender and Tools and another on Images of Women and Men in Prehistory. The objective of the first activity is to "examine female and male differences in tool use and associated activities among chimpanzees and gathering-hunting peoples in order to help students think about possible early hominid technology and activities associated with women" (p.37). Films and readings as well as three separate sets of discussion questions are used to focus students' attention on tool use among chimpanzees, contemporary gathering-hunting peoples, and early hominids of 2-4 million years ago.

The second activity, images of men and women in prehistory, has as its objective to "raise the awareness of how women have been depicted in evolutionary reconstructions, to question the assumptions underlying these depictions, and to focus on or create more positive images of women in prehistory. The author suggests many sources such as Time-Life Books or National Geographic Magazine articles and many films as well. (Most of the materials listed can also be found in the "Introductory Bibliography to Human Evolution" available from the Office of Public Information, Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.) Zihlman then poses very specific questions for students to ask while examining visual representations of early humans. Questions include:

1. Are women or female figures present? Assuming female figures are present, are the figures identified as women? If so, how?
2. Location: Where are the women placed? Foreground? Background? What does this suggest about their position in the group? Contrast this to where the men placed are in the illustration.

3. Body posture: Are women pictured standing, sitting, moving? How about the men?

4. Activities: In what kinds of activities are the women engaged? Are they holding or using tools? What activities are men doing? Is the range of activities for men greater than for women?



5. Demeanor: Where are the women looking (out, down)? Do they appear to be afraid? timid? in charge? Are women depicted burdened with children? as leaders? dependent? marginal? How are men depicted?

6. Overall, what kind of impression is conveyed about early hominid society? Is it women or men who are doing the work, sharing food, caretaking, making or using implements?

7. Is a sexual division of labor implied? How do these characterizations fit with what you have learned in this course?

8. How might reconstructions of the past reflect our own cultural stereotypes of what are proper roles for men and women?

9. With knowledge of nonhuman primates and gatherer-hunters, what kind of picture might you construct of early hominid life?

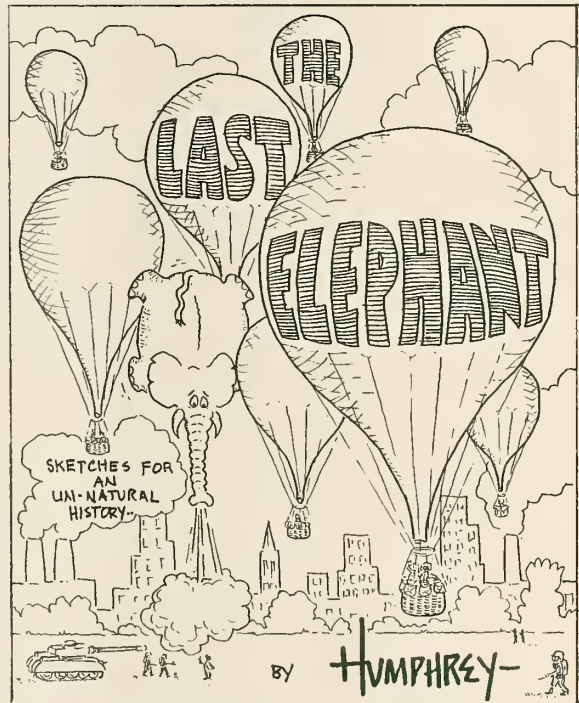
(continued on p.15)

("Gender" continued from p.12)

The Gender Project, and its resulting book, is a superb example of what commitment, hard work, and solid research ability can produce. The American Anthropological Association, the Advisory Board for the Gender and Anthropology Project, The Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), and Sandra Morgan are all to be commended for this worthy and helpful book. The results are now available, and the *Anthro.Notes* editors highly recommend that our readers obtain a copy for their own use and teaching.

Ruth O. Selig

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Anthro.Notes' cartoonist Bob Humphrey has just finished *The Last Elephant*, a cartoon book that will be published this fall by Friends of the National Zoo. For ordering information, write to: Susan Lumpkin, Friends of the National Zoo Publications, National Zoo, Washington, D.C. 20008.

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