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***American Women in the 1950s: Mothers and More.* By Eugenia Kaledin.**

Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1984.

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In articles published a few years ago, historian Leila Rupp made some important points about the nature and focus of literature on women's history. Whereas nineteenth-century material tends to focus on the broad themes of women's work, sexuality, feminism, and family issues, twentieth-century monographs seem to follow a more traditional periodization scheme and subject approach. Although the historical literature has grown since Rupp summarized this development, it remains true that twentieth-century work emphasizes women's lives during the wars, the Depression, or broad social movements, without identifying the key trends which might lead to more thematic approaches.

One reason for this difference is that women are more obviously affected by and involved with the events of mainstream history in recent decades than they were in previous centuries. Women enlisted in the armed services during World War II, whereas during the American Revolution they played economic and social roles no less important yet less visible. It is perhaps because the modern era lends itself to a more piecemeal, "event" type of approach that the first periodic approach to women's history begins with the year 1900 and accounts for women's experiences in "decade" segments extending through the 1960's. Of the proposed six volumes to be published in the American Women in the Twentieth Century series, three have now appeared: Susan Ware's Holding Their Own: American Women in the 1930's; Susan Hartmann's The Home Front and Beyond (1940's), and Eugenia Kaledin's Mothers and More, one of the first books to treat the subject of women during the 1950's. These works are designed to provide encyclopedic overviews of women's changing status. Since this is the first collection in women's history which parallels the many such series in other fields of history, it is important to examine the way these authors are presenting their material in a field which feminists once thought would not become the subject of traditional periodization.

The 50's were complex years for women. While the dominant ideology of

domesticity told women to remain at home, more women and mothers than ever before were entering the work force. In Mothers and More, Eugenia Kaledin aims to challenge the dominant view of women's victimization and to depict women as conscious actors asserting values and definitions of power different from those of men during this era of domesticity. According to Kaledin, women of the 50's did not perceive themselves to be limited by child-bearing functions. In fact, they shared a growing awareness that their own achievements need not be measured by male standards. In a wide variety of activities beyond those circumscribed by motherhood and the feminine mystique, the author explores the seeds of the explicit feminism of the 60's. Kaledin also argues that an "androgynous culture" was emerging in these years as a result of women's assertion of their own values and the corresponding demand that men become more like women, rather than the other way around.

Kaledin attempts to substantiate these rather large claims in a variety of ways. She begins by showing that a strong critical tradition existed during the 50's which rejected the red-baiting and other weapons of conformity during this period. Many women contributed to the development of this cultural criticism. Radical psychoanalysts, many of whom were women, rejected the dominant Freudian view of "femininity." Rachel Carson and other women concerned with conservation reacted against the technological barbarism of the day. "Women of Letters" anticipated both the broad social concerns of the 60's and feminist consciousness. For example, previously unacknowledged roots of interest in the lives of Native Americans appeared in the work of Mari Sander, while Marya Mannes's exposure of the media's role in shaping images of women anticipated feminist critiques of pornography and other male creations. Mary McCarthy offered one of the first and strongest criticisms of the influential work Modern Women: The Lost Sex, whose authors insisted that women were slaves of biological destiny.

Kaledin illustrates other ways in which women were intellectually and politically alive during the 50's. Borrowing Mary Beard's idea of women as civilizers, she emphasizes the pioneering role which women played in initiating movements against nuclear power. Among the first to engage in civil rights activities, women also remained politically active through volunteer work and local grass-roots concerns despite the fact that they were cut off from the usual channels of power. Black women emerged as activists, writers, and athletes. In one of the strongest parts of her book, Kaledin describes the view of the world, different from that of men, which emerges in the early writings of women such as Gwendolyn Brooks and Adrienne Rich. She also tries to show the ways in which abuse by the health professions--unnecessary hysterectomies and DES--seasoned women for the radical feminist critiques of the 60's and 70's.

This work is filled with abundant examples of the ways that women's activities during the 50's defy the image of domesticity. Yet the author does not really fulfill the promise of her introduction. Kaledin does make an important statement concerning this era, but not quite the one she intended. In many of her chapters, she is less concerned with women's actions or consciousness than with more general changes in the social thought of the 50's and the contributions which some women were able to make to these changes. Although Kaledin includes a chapter on black women, she addresses mainly the accomplishments of white middle-class women whose privileged position allowed them to participate in the cultural criticism of the day. For example, in her discussion of women's education, she depicts prominent women educators who played a role in influencing the male establishment as the latter recognized the need to make women's education relevant and to adapt it to women's special concerns and life-cycle. This is not to disparage Kaledin's efforts; it is important to realize that women educators were involved with the upgrading of education and brought to this development a feminist perspective. But it is not immediately clear how this affected the lives of most women during the 50's.

Similarly, the emphasis of Kaledin's chapter on women's work concerns government commissions, changes in social thought regarding work, and the role of a few women in helping to determine the shape of contemporary opinion. The historical actors are women who helped to break the myth of women's unreliability as workers and the purported relationship between juvenile delinquency and the employment of mothers. Of women as a whole she merely states that they benefited from the evolution in ideology and that they learned from the examples of a few highly successful women that women could do any type of work if granted the opportunity. Yet it is unclear how many working-class or suburban middle-class housewives even read The New York Times articles in which Kaledin finds some of her examples of exceptional women. In her efforts to show that positive change rather than dissatisfactions and contradictions in the lives of women generated the women's movement of the following years, the author remains unconvincing.

The ways in which women "redefined power" never becomes clear in this book. In many places Kaledin illustrates women gaining power by moving into positions traditionally held by men, as college presidents or business owners. Her uncritical stance throughout the text is disturbing: what are we supposed to make of the fact that the Hazel Bishops and Helena Rubensteins of the era made money through the emphasis on "women's place" and standards of beauty set up by men? Kaledin's ambivalence regarding women's power as a "moral force" also undermines her case. At one point, she explains that while women's inferiority was underscored in films of the expanding movie industry, these movies nevertheless depicted women positively in their ability to "influence men for the better." Yet in other places, she admits that women have always been expected to shoulder the world's morality; serving as man's "better half" is a traditional, and oppressive, role. She would have done better to explore the ways women's role as "social housekeepers" in the 50's differed from or resembled that of earlier periods.

Perhaps it is too much to expect any great level of analysis in a work designed as a survey. But Kaledin could have

weaved together more powerful themes than she did. Kaledin has included an enormous amount of information--too much. Sometimes she seems bent on using anything that will prove that the 50's were a positive time for women--for example, her efforts to resurrect Lynn White's Educating Our Daughters or the ideas of Margaret Mead from the disrepute to which some feminist criticisms have consigned them.

These criticisms aside, however, Mothers and More is a bold effort to make meaningful an era which historians have not yet interpreted. The "feminine mystique" has provided the lens through which we continue to perceive the 50's, and while not discounting Friedan's thesis, Kaledin wants to suggest a way to

Femininity. By Susan Brownmiller.

New York: Linden Press/Simon & Schuster, 1984.

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Webster simply calls it "the quality or nature of the female sex," but feminists for centuries have railed against its impositions, restrictions, and physical pain. In her first book since her landmark study on rape (Against Our Will: Men Women and Rape, 1975), Susan Brownmiller takes on the male-defined institution of femininity: that collection of looks, dress, and mannerisms that, in her words, "serves to reassure men that women need them and care about them enormously."

The book is divided into sections on body, hair, voice, skin, clothes, movement, emotion, and ambition. Each describes the various fashions, or descriptive components of femininity, how they evolved, and the ways in which they exaggerate or conflict with biology. For example, in the section on "Body" Brownmiller explains that before the twentieth century the ideal feminine figure was plump, exaggerating the softer curves and the higher fat/muscle ratio in women compared to men. In the 1920's, however, the fashionable figure became thinner, reflecting the new "emancipated" woman as well as the fact that only middle- and upper-class women had access to the fresh diet needed to maintain this figure. Brownmiller points out that the emaciated figure which became fashionable

appreciate the lives and concerns of the women of this period. Her work defines several themes which historians should develop in future monographs--the ways in which women tried to act and assert their values despite the limitations imposed upon their freedom, the effects of changing life-cycles upon women's lives, the increasing vitality and public roles of older women, the alternatives and challenges to domesticity, the unacknowledged and subtle roots of later feminism, and the contributions of women to the social thought of the 50's. This highly-detailed survey should provide points of departure for historians seeking to interpret the experiences of women who endured the most recent version of the cult of domesticity.

in the 1960's coincided with the popularization of the bikini, explaining that "fleshy curves that spilled out of the Band-Aid top and postage-stamp bottom looked gross." Not only is this emaciated weight unnaturally low for most women, it ignores the variations in size among women. Body styles may come and go, but Brownmiller asserts that "despite genetic variation, rarely is more than one type of female physique given sexual adulation in a given age."

Body hair is another aspect of beauty where biological differences between men and women are exaggerated. Women do have less body hair than men, but women are told they should have considerably less hair than they do, especially as clothing styles become more revealing. Brownmiller says that today "a bathing suit sets the limit on the pubic zone . . . to fit a designer's concept."

Brownmiller also mentions the special burdens Western standards of femininity impose on women of color, burdens expressed in the writings of Toni Morrison, Maxine Kingston, and others. Kingston, for example, discusses the difficulty Chinese women have affecting feminine American speech: "Normal Chinese women's voices are strong and bossy. We American-Chinese girls had to

whisper to make ourselves American-feminine."

The emphasis of the book is on the American version of femininity, although Brownmiller cites examples from Eastern and African cultures as well. The historical examples she gives are fascinating. I was surprised to learn that Catherine de Medici and Elizabeth I of England, of all people, should have popularized the corset, or that ancient Minoan frescoes picture women with their legs generously spread, or that traditional Mali art celebrates the downward sloping breast (which should be instructive to those who view this characteristic as necessarily vulgar or unattractive).

There are times, however, when Brownmiller's condemnation of what femininity compromises becomes somewhat righteous. In discussing make-up she asserts, "I am right to prefer my own authentic countenance and the authentic countenance of others," but goes on to add: "My unadorned face . . . appears stick-in-the-mud, frumpy and prim." Brownmiller is telling us that rebelling against this feminine standard does not make her feel good; it makes her feel unattractive. Still, she argues that women should follow her example out of principle. Had she merely expressed that her face feels lighter without make-up, or that she doesn't have to worry about getting mascara on the bedsheets, her arguments might have been more persuasive.

Along the same line, it bothers me that Brownmiller dyes the hair on her head and bleaches the hair on her legs, but feels she must apologize for this. She paints a no-win situation here, where a feminist can either rebel against fashion and feel unattractive, or acquiesce and feel guilty. Why reject the prevalent notion of femininity at all, if it doesn't make you feel good?

In the final chapter on "Ambition," Brownmiller describes how the popular idea that ambition is masculine and nurturance feminine has served to confine women to the home. "A lack of ambition," she contends, "is virtuous proof of the nurturant feminine nature." She argues that perceptions of ambition as masculine are so strong that even striving too hard

at nurturance is in itself considered unfeminine. Examples of this "aggressive nurturing" are the stage mother, the overprotective mother, and the "professional widow" who works to keep her husband's accomplishments in the public eye. Brownmiller makes some good points here, but this chapter as a whole is unfocused, at times becoming a catch-all for subjects not covered elsewhere, such as childbirth and sexual pleasure.

There are some areas of femininity, such as skill at certain jobs or interest in certain activities, which Brownmiller does not discuss at all, and the areas she does address are not exhaustive. The issue of physical space in posture is never dealt with explicitly, and the feminine manner of speech and writing is only touched upon. I wondered how these omissions fit into what Brownmiller says in the epilogue is her main point: "to explore [femininity's] origins and the reasons for its perseverance . . . to illuminate the restrictions on free choice."

I had trouble understanding what Brownmiller means by "restrictions on free choice." She discusses many negative aspects of femininity (painful shoes, clothes that restrict movement, the unnatural thinness mentioned earlier), but an examination of the limitations femininity poses for free choice is hampered because Brownmiller does not tell us, finally, about the origins of femininity, or what she thinks should be done about it. Should we (can we?) throw out the concept of a feminine style, or is there a form (or forms) in which it would be acceptable? What would constitute criteria for an acceptable form of femininity? Brownmiller says, "My aim is not to propose a new definition of femininity," yet to have free choice one must be aware of alternatives. The feminine customs Brownmiller cites from non-Western culture are for the most part harmful or restrictive to women, but positive alternatives might have been more apparent had Brownmiller looked at femininity in non-Western cultures in a more systematic way. She might also have looked at female images in various American subcultures, such as black, lesbian, or new wave culture. These groups are actively seeking alternatives to the code of femininity Brownmiller is critical of.

The closest Brownmiller comes to discussing what should replace the prevalent definition of femininity is her discussion of biology. In complaining that the dominant code of femininity makes all women feel unfeminine, she asks, "Why should this be so? The XX chromosomal message has not been scrambled, the estrogen-dominated hormonal balance is generally as biology intended, the reproductive organs, whatever use one has made of them, are usually in place, the breasts of whatever size are most often where they should be. But clearly biological femaleness is not enough." At times I wasn't sure whether Brownmiller was pointing out the ways feminine standards conflict with biological norms

or arguing that standards should reflect these norms. In describing Florenz Ziegfeld's ideal figure (36-26-28), she says, "Ziegfeld happened to be right in his ideal proportions. It is a fact of genetics that most women are built wider below the waist than above." I also couldn't help wondering what a new femininity based on biology means for women with mastectomies, women who are infertile, women with abnormal periods—all women whose reproductive health is less than perfect. In complaining that "biological femaleness is not enough," Brownmiller seems to transpose "the quality or nature of the female sex" from the male-defined esthetic to a male-defined biology.

***Sex and Advantage: A Comparative, Macro-Structural Theory of Sex Stratification.* By Janet Saltzman Chafetz.**

Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Allanheld, 1984.

***Sex Stratification: Children, Housekeeping, and Jobs.* By Joan Huber and Glenna Spitze.**

New York: Academic Press, 1983.

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In the discipline of sociology, a well defined and substantive focus on stratification has produced a great many theories dealing with the issue of class and a few with race, yet it seems ironic that virtually nothing is known about the most ubiquitous form of stratification to be found globally: sex stratification. Two recent books by feminist sociologists take on this issue, albeit differently, and shed some light on this hidden topic.

A few preliminary comments on the subject of sex stratification seem in order. Feminist scholars have produced a critique of existing theories of sex stratification which has conclusively demonstrated that structured inequality on the basis of sex is distinct enough that merely integrating women into existing conceptual models is entirely inadequate. Functionalist models are rejected for their total inability to explain the position of women due to their assumption of open, unidimensional patterns of competition, because women are systematically prevented from engaging in competition due to structural and psychological factors. Dual-labor models have some utility, but are rejected because they do not explain why, if women are

relegated to the periphery as opposed to the core, women are also not similarly disadvantaged in the periphery. Marxist theories, although they have some utility for identifying women as a reserve army of labor, cannot adequately assess the relationship between women's paid and unpaid labor.

The feminist critique challenges the organization of stratification studies at every level—conceptually, empirically, and theoretically. If sex stratification is indeed the most profound form of this phenomenon in existence, and current methods and theories are incapable of explaining any aspect of it, then feminist work in this area has not only the potential for finally rendering some understanding of women's status (and possibly greater understanding of the most appropriate means of elevating it) but of revolutionizing the stratification sub-field as well. Questions which remain to be answered include how women are to be conceptualized as a group (treating women as a class has not proved fruitful, as this obscures important class differences among women), the relationship of sex stratification to other forms of stratification and how these complex processes

function together, the effect or likely effect of the women's movement and demographic and structural changes on women's status, and inquiry into the origins of sex stratification.

In her book Sex and Advantage: A Comparative, Macro-Structural Theory of Sex Stratification, Janet Saltzman Chafetz adopts a broad and formal approach which she touts as the "first macro-level, testable theory of sex discrimination." Chafetz' greatest insight has been to recognize that a major problem with previous theories has been to treat female subordination, which is a variable, as a constant. Her framing of the issues involves using "degree" of sex stratification as a dependent variable with one constant and one variable component. The constant is that females have never been more advantaged than males, while the variable component is the extent of comparative female disadvantage. The purpose of her book then is to develop an understanding of why societies differ in degree of inequality between the sexes and insight into why women have never been more advantaged than men in access to scarce and valued resources.

Chafetz goes on to define "degree of sex stratification" as the extent to which societal members are unequal in access to scarce values of the society, including material goods, services, public decision making, interpersonal and familial decision making, prestige conferring roles, opportunity for psychic enrichment, discretionary time, etc. Her spelling out of these components of inequality vividly illustrates the complexity of women's universally depressed but variable status cross-culturally, although it is hard to imagine how such a problem could actually be assessed or measured comparatively using her model. She does not offer a means by which these indices of inequality can be collapsed into an overall "score" of inequality for various social systems permitting comparison, and indeed the complexity of her explanation of these processes suggests that this may not be at all feasible.

Her presentation of intervening and independent (causal) variables presents the same dilemma of applicability, although it is valuable for its il-

lumination of the factors which perpetuate sex stratification. These variables include degree of gender differentiation, degree of ideological support for sex inequality, type of family structure, the relative importance of physical strength/mobility in production, average percentage of the female life cycle devoted to child bearing/nurturance, level and type of technology, etc., as well as the central variable of the nature of work organization. Ultimately it is hard to imagine how such a complex theory could be meaningfully applied and tested cross-culturally due to the enormous variance to be found in different societies in all of the variables. If, however, the theory is not evaluated in terms of its testability, it can be seen to have merit for its explication of the enormous complexity of the process of sex stratification and the groundwork it lays for future work in this area. Her conclusions are interesting as well. Because she does successfully demonstrate theoretically the central importance of work organization variables to sex stratification, her suggestion that efforts to reduce female disadvantage are best directed at this structural level (rather than the level of ideology) should be of great interest to feminists.

Sex Stratification: Children, Housework and Jobs, by Joan Huber and Glenna Spitze, is more modest in its goals and ultimately more successful. They use what might be called a feminist materialist perspective to develop and test a theory about American response to changes in sex stratification. The two central propositions of their book are that, first, power and prestige accrue to those social members with control over the extradomestic distribution of valued goods; and, second, that this will largely be determined by the manner in which a society's subsistence technology permits women to combine pregnancy and lactation with valued work.

They propose a macrotheory to explain changes in sex stratification in the U.S. since the nineteenth century: a drop in mortality rates along with rising education levels for women prompted a drop in fertility, which permitted American women to enter the marketplace in increasing numbers when technology and economic conditions necessitated this. The macrotheory informs their microtheory,

which suggests that the last variable undergoing change (women's labor force participation) will be the most effective predictor of attitudes on sex roles.

The bulk of the book reports on results of survey data gathered in 1978 which generally supports their micro-theory. The fact of female labor force participation (and not the wife/husband wage ratio, which has remained quite stable over time) was demonstrated to affect perceptions of the division of household labor, sex-role attitudes, and even spousal thoughts of divorce. Their explanation for this is four-fold. First, as suggested in the microtheory, as the micro-variable last experiencing change it should have the most effect. Second, women's labor force participation makes wives economically independent. Third, female bonding and collective action on their own behalf (as seen in the contemporary women's movement) is a potential social effect of the participation of women in the labor force. Fourth, doing paid work can remind women of their greater responsibility for housework and the "double-duty" this entails, resulting in a change in consciousness. These findings in turn support the meta-theory of a relationship between the macro- and microvariables.

***After the "Second Sex": Conversations with Simone de Beauvoir.* By Alice Schwarzer, translated by Marianne Howarth.**

New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

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Although Simone de Beauvoir has spoken about her feminism in a few interviews given to various journalists during the past decade, Alice Schwarzer's collection of six interviews, conducted with the doyen of modern feminism during the years 1972-1982, constitutes Beauvoir's only substantial personal statement on the evolution and living-out of her feminist attitudes. As Beauvoir points out in her preface, The Second Sex was published in 1949 and it is perfectly appropriate for her ideas to have changed with time and experience. Schwarzer adds that it is also appropriate to present Beauvoir's life as an example of a woman who has seized control of her life and molded circumstances to suit her ambitions and desires.

As interesting as this more limited and conclusive work in the area of sex stratification is, one of the most valuable aspects of the book for feminist educators is its first chapter, which is a detailed and concise overview of changes in women's status over time with the development of new subsistence technologies. Anyone who deals in a classroom with issues of the how and why of women's status in American society (or anyone with an interest in these issues) should find this information quite valuable. It also provides some basis for cross-cultural comparison of female status due to its evolutionary orientation (adapted from the work of Gehard and Jean Lenski, who conclusively demonstrated that subsistence technology is the most important determinant of social organization).

Both of these books offer important contributions toward greater understanding of the phenomenon of sex stratification. The book by Huber and Spitze is more successful in meeting its stated goals, but each book furthers our appreciation of the centrality and complexity of the processes which socially determine the status and position of women.

In The Second Sex Beauvoir considers women's physiology and psychology, history and contemporary situation, and concludes that there is no justification for the way women are perceived as a secondary, "other" sex--one is not born a woman, endowed at birth with "feminine" qualities and instincts; rather, one is made a woman. Thus women must be freed from society's manipulations and restraints, and Beauvoir, convinced as she was of the truth and power of the leftist policies she and her companion Jean-Paul Sartre were formulating, believed that the imminent social revolution would liberate all classes and castes, women included. The sobering examples of women's essentially unchanged role in socialist experiments of the following decades persuaded her that

only by means of autonomous women's movements, not allied with male-dominated political systems, can women achieve equality and liberation. Early in the 1970's, then, she began to work with the French Women's Liberation Movement, through which she became friends with Alice Schwarzer and has campaigned for what she deems the essentials of women's emancipation: free abortion on demand, free contraception, better jobs, and equal pay for equal work. She maintains, though, that the liberation of women entails much more than the resolution of these single issues; these are merely mileposts on the road to complete, collective women's freedom. Freedom ultimately must involve the breakdown of patriarchal systems, of social classes, of capitalism, and even of the family. This, according to Beauvoir, is "the real task of feminism: the transformation of society along with the transformation of women's place in it" (p. 116).

In interview after interview, Beauvoir cautions women striving for freedom not to get caught in attractive traps: marriage, living with a man, raising children, homemaking--all of which tend to imprison and isolate women in traditional service roles. Women must be wary of any system relegating them to the status of "the other," as true freedom rests on the equality of all persons as human beings. Beauvoir scoffs at the priestesses of the cult of the new feminine mystique, those who extol the "otherness" of women as earth-goddesses in tune with nature, as peace-lovers, as instinctive mothers. Nothing in their psychology of physiology reserves these traits for women only: all human beings may share these qualities, and it is dangerous for women to think themselves destined for any specifically "feminine" role.

Beauvoir claims that she has in the course of her self-directed life avoided all these traps, and indeed her fifty-year relationship with Sartre, which in her autobiography she calls the "one undoubted success in my life," is a model of affection and independence: they never married, never lived together, never had children, maintained in their relationship

an inviolate freedom and equality. Schwarzer's interview with the two of them elicits their reasons for the success of their love, but as Beauvoir admits, their lives are not above criticism. Secondary affairs and friendships often left the third party hurt, and in Beauvoir's case they seem to have incorporated aspects not present in her non-traditional association with Sartre. For instance, she has adopted a friend as daughter and heir, lived for seven years with a young man she loved as a son, and engaged in a male-dominant affair for several years with an American novelist. Nevertheless, the overall pattern she has drawn for her life remains remarkably free from conventionality and narrowness of thought, and has been dedicated to achieving freedom for herself and for others, particularly for other women.

In spite of Beauvoir's landmark contribution to feminism, and in spite of the efforts of thousands of women currently involved in the movement, feminism, Beauvoir insists, has reached only a handful of the world's women. Many have benefited from the achievement of a single feminist goal--say, legalized abortion, which Beauvoir strongly supports--but most women are still "the little woman" at heart. Women must not relapse into the myths of femininity; neither should they repudiate all men and all male systems, but use these systems to gain power and, in time, transform society and their situation within it into a world of human beings living in freedom and equality.

Alice Schwarzer calls Beauvoir "the greatest source of inspiration for the new feminism" (p. 67) because of her pioneering theoretical work in The Second Sex. By her unflagging efforts towards the liberation of women, of which we are reminded by this book of interviews, Beauvoir continues to inspire feminists the world over.

A Passage to India

A film by David Lean.

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In his review of *A Passage to India* (*The New York Times*, February 10, 1985), William Borders assesses the sudden popularity of films about England's relationship with India. His review touches on a reason for the ineffectiveness of this film: that there is a conflict between the romantic design of the film and the content of the story. Despite the seductive cinematography and the fine performances by Peggy Ashcroft and Victor Banerjee, the film ultimately stifles, rather than generates, thought about the inherently complex and emotionally charged reality of colonialized India.

The primary conflict precipitated by colonialization is the inevitable confrontation between the colonizer and the colonized over the colonizer's assumption of his racial superiority; and this is precisely the central conflict of E.M. Forster's novel on which David Lean's film is based. Forster's novel constructs this conflict around the character, Dr. Aziz, a naive and somewhat obsequious personality when we first meet him. The conflict and resolution parallel the growth of his knowledge about the real nature of the British presence in his country. Lean, however, chooses to explore the exotic and erotic possibilities of India itself--of the land in general, and of the particular suggestibility in the mysterious Marabar caves. The film, consequently, romanticizes Forster's narrative conflict by giving it over to a camera with an eye for the beauty of the land; it also reinforces this romantic view by representing Adela Quested, Mrs. Moore, and their relationship in a very different way than Forster created them. Borders' review underscores this problem with the film when he contrasts the popularity of this genre, and its strong nostalgic appeal to British and American audiences, with criticism from Salman Rushdie, a novelist of post-independence India, and Ambassador K. Shankar Bajpal. They both express the opinion that these films are really about the English. India, they feel, serves as "an exotic backdrop" for melodramas of guilt that convey nothing of the Indian perspective.

But the novel itself does offer something more convincing of the Indian perspective. The story centers around the situation leading up to the arrest of Dr. Aziz, who is accused of raping Adela Quested while on a sightseeing expedition. The situation surrounding the

trial and its resolution turns on Forster's central dynamic which involves the relationships, first, between Mrs. Moore and Dr. Aziz, and secondly, between Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested. For the novel, Mrs. Moore generates the primary force which allows justice to prevail; she is the impetus that moves events and characters to the articulation of truth, unquestionable truth that manages to elude every attempt of the English judicial system to drown it out. When the Indian crowd begins to chant "Esmiss Esmoor/Esmiss Esmoor/Esmiss Esmoor" during Dr. Aziz' trial, the film's sound cannot duplicate the resonance of those words produced by the novel. This is because the film, in the service of simplicity and the minimization of ambiguity, loses sight of the important and pivotal position the older woman occupies in the minds of both Dr. Aziz and Adela Quested.

A Passage to India is about the passage of two women into India: Mrs. Moore, whose son is the British City Magistrate of Chandrapore, and Adela Quested, the young woman who may marry Mrs. Moore's son; the story is also about Dr. Aziz' passage into the realization that the British hate him not because of any crime he may have committed, but because he is Indian. Mrs. Moore is the first to manifest recognition of the inequity and injustice of British occupation. She leaves the stifling confines of a club entertainment to wander unescorted into the night, into the mosque where Dr. Aziz is meditating. To his amazement, Mrs. Moore knows and carries out the custom of removing one's shoes in a holy place. He claims that, "so few ladies take the trouble, especially if thinking no one is there to see." This early encounter establishes Mrs. Moore as someone whose knowledge is accurate and whose judgment of later events will guide Adela Quested's, and the reader's, evaluation of the incident at the Marabar Hills.

But it is the nature of Mrs. Moore's influence on Adela Quested, on her courage to utter a truth at the trial, that is the most striking alteration in the story's translation from novel to film. The film represents Adela Quested as naive, sexually repressed, and clearly inclined toward hysterical response to the alien environment that India poses. The scene where she wanders off, discovering and then fleeing from a long-since-abandoned

temple of lust, is constructed especially for the film. The viewer is left with the distinct impression that the alleged incident at the caves was purely a function of Adela Quested's imagination, and, further that her confession at the trial--her recanting of the charge against Dr. Aziz--manifests just another tangle in her fragile psychological condition. The film, then, shifts the locus of the problem to the confusion of a young girl whose fear of sexuality and possible attraction to Dr. Aziz prompts her hallucination.

Forster's Adela Quested, however, is a very different kind of character. She is less appealing precisely because she is very much like the British she criticizes. It becomes clear that her desire to see "the real India" is not to be confused with a desire to "know" the real India. Her sentiments are superficial and her confusion has to do with her ambivalence about marriage. The imagery of the novel--for example, a tree stump that is misinterpreted as a snake--supports the conclusion that whatever sensations might have been experienced by Adela Quested may have been misinterpreted. The reality here is very different in that the possibility always remains that something physical and not

psychological did happen to the woman. The issue becomes not a matter of the identity of the man who may have entered the cave, but the fact that the British interpret any allegation against any particular Indian as a demonstration of racial depravity.

Adela Quested herself ascribes to this view: "I can really behave as I like, cry, be absurd, I am sure to get my verdict." This character is much more cunning and psychologically present than the heroine of the film. What redeems her, and lends a peculiar force to Forster's plot, is that she cares about Mrs. Moore's opinion, and Mrs. Moore is clearly angered by the charge. She seems to know not only that Dr. Aziz is innocent, but that the issue of guilt or innocence is irrelevant in the context of the situation. She influences Adela Quested not so much to deny the incident, but to deny complicity in the consequences of that incident, which have gathered a momentum of their own. Adela Quested is redesigned to accommodate the romantic perspective of the film, and Mrs. Moore's function is trivialized, but in the process the film loses touch with, or maybe is finally ambivalent about, the story it attempts to tell.

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