

As I said in the beginning of this review, *In Subordination: Professional Women, 1870–1970*, does not tell me anything new about professional women's work experience. *In Subordination* delivers exactly what its title promises: documented evidence that, within the limits of Kinnear's study, "[p]rofessional women were among the most favoured women in the paid labour force, yet individually they were almost all in subordination to men." Has the situation changed since then? Not according to one respondent, Canadian jurist Mary Jane Mossman. She "argues that professional men's deep suspicion of women remains in the 1990s."

SEEDS 2

Ann Leonard, ed. New York: The Feminist Press, 1995.

by Pamela McDermid

Seeds 2 provides an interesting combination of celebrations of women's achievements in economic development with a critical analysis of strengths and weaknesses and clearly delineated lessons gained from experience. These lessons and the recommendations of knowledgeable workers, is one of the most valuable parts of the book.

The introduction discusses the changes in thinking and approaches that have come about since the beginning of the United Nations Decade for Women (1975–85). At that time, it was thought that "... women's economic conditions and perceptions of women would have changed to such an extent [by the end of the decade] that documentation such as *Seeds* would no longer be necessary."

Regrettably, *Seeds 2* is definitely necessary and Martha Chen's synopsis of world trends and their effect on women's work and social, physical,

and economic well-being, sets the context for the entire volume. I found the discussion of the shift from women in development to gender and development interesting and consistent with other work on the issue of the critical effect of gender in societies. The change in approach following from this shift, from fitting women into existing frameworks and programs to involving women in setting agendas, goals, and priorities, seems to be a factor crucial to successful projects.

In total there are nine cases studies. The projects described include ones from Africa (four), Asia (three), North America (one), and South America (one). The contributing authors have slightly different approaches to describing the projects. However, all include extensive information about the situations of the women in the specific area, give administrative and operational details of the projects, and provide a summary of the related learning. I particularly enjoyed the chapter on child care for working mothers as it presented three strategies employed in three different countries.

Overall, this is an excellent reference book. It is generally "readable" with only a few slightly tedious or "dry" sections. It contains both historical and contemporary information and gives a social and political context for each endeavour. For people entering the field, it is a useful introduction. For those developing new initiatives, its recommendations would be very helpful, and for funders assessing proposals, the lessons would be of great value. The credibility of the information is enhanced by the involvement of the authors in the actual operation of the projects; their expertise goes beyond the theoretical.

The pervasiveness and persistence of women's disadvantage, poverty, and oppression come through very clearly; not surprisingly there is no "quick fix." However, the hopefulness generated by the successes experienced by women involved in the work was evident and left an extremely positive impression.

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

Anita Hill. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

by Rebecca Murdock

We know the basic plot of Hill's two-year stint as Clarence Thomas' personal assistant at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and her revelation eight years later that she was sexually harassed by Thomas. Thomas' Republican backers knew that their political fortunes would rise and fall with his. And so began the vilification of Professor Hill and a political lobby made the more nasty by its charade as an impartial inquiry into Thomas' fitness for a life-time appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Were its heroine a male, it would be the stuff of Hollywood legend. Small-town professor takes on Washington including a platoon of power-hungry senators. Thus far tinsel-town studios have only dredged up Michael Douglas as the subordinate rejecting the sexual come-ons of Demi Moore in *Indecent Proposal*. Apparently, female victims don't make good box office unless they're thinly clad and fleeing through the midnight woods.

In the surreal world of American politics, *Speaking Truth to Power* contains some surprising details: that two other women complained of similar treatment by Thomas—Angela Wright and Kaye Savage—but neither was called to give evidence before the Senate Judiciary Committee. In fact, Wright's subpoena was withdrawn by Chairman Biden at the last minute amid claims of time constraints by Committee members. Meanwhile, the panel heard from numerous Thomas supporters claiming he had never harassed them.

But for the Senate Judiciary Committee's routine investigation into nominee Thomas, their solicitation of a written statement from Hill, the leak of that statement to the press, and her subpoena to give evidence

before the Committee, Hill's story would have remained a painful but private memory. Following the inquiry, the FBI investigated Hill as the prime suspect of the press leak; however, despite a truckload of mail, phone, and fax receipts no connection between Hill and the press was ever established.

Conspiracy theories continue to circulate in many quarters of the U.S., including Hill's home state of Oklahoma, and the University of Oklahoma's Law School from which Hill recently resigned. The stigma and trauma of sexual harassment do not easily abate, especially when those allegations implicate the highest levels of American government and judiciary. A virtual recluse since the internationally broadcast Hill-Thomas hearing, Professor Hill's autobiography is a welcome and authoritative voice on what many view as the Senate's colossal mishandling of the Thomas appointment, and the awakening of the American public to the reality of sexual harassment in the workplace.

On the specifics of harassment, Hill neither embellishes nor recants. She simply repeats the salient portions of her testimony from the Senate hearing. While the strategy of sticking to the facts as they were presented in 1991 keeps her story well out of the reach of any defamation suit, Hill's approach achieves something greater. She wrests her story from its infinitely titillating spin-offs during six years of journalistic reporting, and from a public primed for the salacious and sordid. Firmly and with dignity, Hill sets the record straight and exemplifies how an experience of sexual harassment can be told in a manner that escapes voyeurism and victimhood.

Anita Hill changed the course of American history. Immediately following the senate hearing, public demonstrations against the Senate's action took place all over the U.S. including Capitol Hill. Eventually the senators most hostile to Hill would apologize to the American public for the way they treated her. In the years

following the Hill-Thomas hearing the number of sexual harassment claims sky-rocketed in the U.S. Hill's very public ordeal legitimated what many women were feeling and experiencing in the workplace.

Was she a woman scorned, an erotomaniac, a lesbian, or a sexual prude? Each of these accusations was leveled against Hill by the senators who sought to discredit her. Hill's experience typifies the relentless sexualization of victims of sexual harassment. That she recently left the University of Oklahoma further demonstrates the all-too-typical fate of women who complain about workplace sexual harassment. As Hill documents, with startling regularity, women who sound the warning bell eventually find themselves out of a job or on an alternate career path.

Impeccably written and edited, *Speaking Truth to Power* hits its stride when Hill addresses the wider social implications of her experience and the fact that professional status does not insulate women from sexual harassment, it merely raises the stakes. Hill's analysis of several prominent American sexual harassment cases is especially provocative, as is her calling to account in the post-script "An Open Letter to the 1991 Senate Judiciary Committee."

Race is the other theme of Hill's text, a dynamic played out in both the hearing and the black community. Except for Ted Kennedy's plea for impartiality, the Democrats who might have been her allies sat speechless throughout the hearing; in part, Hill speculates, they were simply "unwilling to place any value in the word of a black woman or to pursue the statements of the white male colleagues who supported her."

As to Thomas' electrifying claim that the hearing was a "high-tech lynching," Hill summarizes that the Democrats were uniformly stupefied because "none of the senators appeared sure enough in his own perspective on race to address such a charge." The combined race and gender homogeneity of the Senate loomed large as a barrier to due process and

any substantive understanding of the claims of a black woman against a black man.

Particularly painful to Hill was the schism that developed in the black community over what some viewed as her betrayal of the African American community and their hope for representation on America's highest court. In this, *Speaking Truth to Power* is a compelling example of how minority women are often forced to choose between gender and race relations.

Ultimately, Hill's text is about community at every level—about the enduring faith of the Hill family, of colleagues Susan Hoerchner and Joel Paul who incurred great personal risk in their public support of Hill, and of the power brokers who held allegiance only to their own success. Part political intrigue, part treatise on the rights of women, *Speaking Truth to Power* stakes its place in the annals of women's history.

SELF BEYOND SELF

Anjali Bhelande. Bombay: SNDT Women's University.

by *Shelagh Wilkinson*

A condition of complete
simplicity
(costing not less than everything)
—T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"

T. S. Eliot's lines from "Little Gidding" occur to me every time that I read, and teach, Ethel Wilson's *Swamp Angel*. There is a profound sense of self-knowledge and spiritual awareness that sustains and anchors the central character Maggie Lloyd. In fact in many of her stories Wilson creates her protagonists as essentially pragmatic while simultaneously revealing them as women who operate from an epistemology that allows them to transcend the practical, the mundane, and become almost "other-worldly." They are characters who, as one student explained, are "entirely comprehensible—but inexplicable."