

Abstracts

Gudrun-Axeli Knapp/Hilge Landweer, "Interdisciplinarity" in Women's Studies: A dialogue
The article illustrates facets and lines of development of the feminist debate on "interdisciplinarity". The controversial dialogue between Gudrun-Axeli Knapp (Sociology/Social Psychology) and Hilge Landweer (Philosophy/Cultural Studies) focuses on the normative character of feminist theory's claim to interdisciplinarity and discusses some epistemological and institutional problems that arise in this context.

Akiko Mori, Holding a grave in an Austrian rural parish: An anthropological study
This paper deals with the meaning of women's practices while maintaining the graves of their households. The description and the analysis are based on my fieldwork in a rural parish in south-east Carinthia, Austria. Austrian households may own more than one grave, and one woman in each household takes care of the graves. She often goes to the churchyard for ordinary care. How much effort the woman invests in one grave is affected by her sense of belonging to the grave. A woman's relationship to the household grave is not restricted to her role in the graveyard. She has looked after dying household members to their last moment, and has given them their funerals. She continues to provide occasional hospitality for her own children who have already married out, particularly on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, and she remains the core of solidarity for her family. Women's activities in the churchyard are inseparable from domestic services in the household such as looking after the sick and cooking for the family. Their activities determine the outlook of the churchyard, which reflects the constellation of families in the community. Researchers have usually regarded women's practices as domestic and private, but they may extend outside the household and also have a political meaning in a community.

Gianna Pomata, Perfection or corruption? Perceptions of male semen in early modern europe

This paper reviews the history of the theory of the derivation of semen from blood (hämatogene Samenlehre) from ancient medicine to the Renaissance. It then analyzes the medical discussion on semen in the 17th century, highlighting the obstacles posed by the Aristotelic view of the male as the non-material agent of conception to any research on the physical nature of the seminal fluid. In spite of the strength of the Aristotelian tradition, however, a materialistic view of semen was present in European learned and popular culture, as evidenced by some reactions to Leeuwenhoek's discovery of „little animals" in semen. Thus two different views of semen can be found in early modern medical culture: one that stresses the non-material, non corporeal nature of semen exalting it as the most noble and perfect among bodily substances, and one that, in contrast, views semen as matter and thus susceptible to putrefaction and corruption.

Hanna Schissler, Women's history on trial: The lawsuit between the US-american *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission* and *Sears, Roebuck and Company*
The national class action case in which the American *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission* (EEOC) had charged *Sears, Roebuck and Company* in 1979 with discri-

minating against its female employees was interesting from various viewpoints. While in the early 70s such discrimination cases frequently had been won by the EEOC and brought women considerable gains in the workplace, this case was lost, and thus signaled the backlash for women during the Reagan administration. The reason why this case attracted a lot of attention was that two well-known women historians testified on opposite sides of the courtroom. This brought women's history into public debate, raised the question of the function of women's history and the question of "objectivity" in history writing in general. It raised the question of public responsibility of scholarship and touched upon the academic reputation of women's history. The article describes the gains that women made in the United States as part of the civil rights movement. It tells the story of the actual case, deals with the question of expert witnesses in the courtroom, describes the debate that this case triggered in circles of women historians and beyond, and finally locates the broader question of how gender equality in the workplace can be achieved within the feminist debate of equality and difference.

Judith Stacey, Disloyal to the disciplines: A feminist trajectory in the study of family revolutions

Through a reflective analysis of theoretical, political and methodological shifts in the trajectory of her own research on family revolutions in China and the United States – moving from a socialist-feminist, "dual-systems", historical-sociological study to an ambivalently postmodernist, reflexive ethnographic one – the author discusses more widespread transformations in feminist theoretical and political discourse and in feminist relationships to the academic disciplinarity in the United States. She suggests that cultural critique has been eclipsing social analysis and that the successes of feminist inquiry within the disciplines may be endangering the interdisciplinarity of a critical feminist intellectual practice.