



THE LANAHAN READINGS  
in the  
**Psychology  
of  
Women**

Edited by Tomi-Ann Roberts

THE  
LANAHAN  
READINGS  
IN THE  
PSYCHOLOGY  
OF WOMEN

Tomi-Ann Roberts

*The Colorado College*

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# Preface

**M**y experience teaching the psychology of women is by far and away the most rewarding of all the many things I do as a professor of psychology. One hallmark of this kind of women's studies course is the integration of personal experience with course material. Along with the sharing of information among all members of the class come new insights—new insights about my students and myself, and about my daughters, my sister, my mother, and my grandmothers. Despite the distinctiveness of each class I have taught, based on its unique combination of race, class, and age among the members, there is almost always a universal sense of excitement and wonder about coming together to learn about *women's* lives.

In fact, I have taught on two very different campuses—the very conservative Brigham Young University and the quite liberal Colorado College. Even though my experiences on each campus have been as different as anyone could imagine, my women's studies classes at each have shared some special common features. For example, I have had one or two students find particular readings that so move them or alter their view of the world, that they feel they can never go back to being the person they were before. Each time too, the group seems to bond in a way that doesn't happen often in the other classes I teach. The bonding comes perhaps from the sharing of personal experience with emotionally laden topics. It comes perhaps from the

intellectual distance many travel to get to an understanding of feminism. And it often solidifies in a commitment to social action toward a better, less sexist world.

When I teach any women's studies class I find it essential not only to have my students read textbook-style material, but also to explore more primary sources of research, theory, and creative writing. This book provides such sources and is essentially the collection of readings I have been using in my own teaching; in effect, I have been class testing the book for the past seven years.

Although the focus of this book is decidedly *psychological*, there are many different kinds of voices represented here, so it is appropriate not only for psychology of women classes, but also for classes in psychology of gender, as well as introductory interdisciplinary courses in gender studies and women's studies. In nearly all sections of the book, I have included what are now thought of as "classic" papers on that topic, as well as very recent works. In this way, I have tried to represent both where research in psychology of women has come from and where it is going. In addition, this book includes a number of short stories, creative pieces, and news articles as a way of placing some of the research issues in more applied contexts.

*The LANAHAH Readings in the Psychology of Women* is divided into three main headings: "The Developing Woman," "Women in Society," and "The Developing Science." In Part I, the readings in each chapter explore women's lifespan developmental issues—from early childhood through old age. In Part II, issues of women's relationships with one another and with men, achievement and work, and mental health are explored. In Part III are feminist philosophical and methodological pieces, as well as the various theoretical approaches to the question of gender differentiation within psychology.

The order in which the three main headings of the book appear is arbitrary, therefore instructors using the book may approach it any number

enthusiasm for this project, despite its many fits and starts. He convinced me a long time ago that I had something to contribute to the teaching of psychology of women beyond my own classroom, and all along he has helped shape and nurture my ideas. He has become, and will remain, a good friend.

Thanks go to Susan Nolen-Hoeksema of the University of Michigan and to Laura Carstensen of Stanford University for being my mentors in graduate school, and for providing inspiring examples of how to teach students and to conduct research in the psychology of women. Several of the articles in this book came directly from classes they taught me many years ago.

For the stimulating, woman-friendly environment of the Nag's Heart Conferences, I thank Faye Crosby of Smith College. My discussions with fascinating women scholars at Faye's house over the past few summers have shaped many of the ideas included in this book.

I am grateful to all the students over the years who have commented on the selections in this collection. By their enthusiasm for some readings—and their clear rejection of other selections—they all have been my editor.

Most of all, I thank my husband Bill Davis for his patience and support during the many long hours I've spent on this project. Our conversations challenge and nourish me, and the quality of my work is a reflection of the always-exciting intellectual space we share.

This book is for Karin Gabrielsson, Asta Gabrielsson Roberts, Lisen Christina Roberts, Annika Karin Davis, and Mia Christina Davis—my grandmother, mother, sister, and daughters. Embraced by you and embracing you, my life is rich.

Tomi-Ann Roberts  
Colorado Springs  
July 1996

of ways. For example, some may wish to begin by having students read the pieces in Part III, “The Developing Science” first, as a way of setting the stage with feminist theory and research methodology before students actually read about development or social issues. Others, however, may wish to have students read this section last, with the perspective that, once they have read exemplary articles and essays in the psychology of women, they are in a better position to explore feminist theoretical and methodological critiques.

Each of the eleven chapters begins with a detailed introduction. These introductory sections not only orient students to each of the readings, but they also provide important background material and context for the broad topic of that section. I have written them with a special eye to students who are interested in how these readings and other research fit together. Because the introductions place the readings in context and provide broad research-based conclusions in various topic areas, the collection can be used either in addition to a textbook in psychology of women and other women’s studies courses, or it could well stand on its own as the main text.

As I mentioned, students in my classes have reflected the racial and ethnic diversity of our society. This has made the context of my classes richer. For that reason, I have included issues of women’s diversity throughout the collection, incorporating the research, stories, and critiques of women of color within the various developmental and topical sections of the book.

The writings in this book have been informative and inspirational to both me and my students. It is my hope that this book will instill in all readers an excitement about the psychology of women.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have a number of people to thank for helping this book grow. First, I must thank my editor at LANAHAN PUBLISHERS, INC., Don Fusting, for his

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PART ONE

# The Developing Woman