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WOMEN'S *studies*

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President's Message

Supporting Women's Studies

In the last half-century much scholarly attention has been focused on the various and evolving roles of women in modern society. Researchers in history and cultural studies have shed new light on how and why gender roles are constructed and enforced at different times and in different societies. Such lines of inquiry today help explain the gulf between Islamic and Western views of women, and the multiplier effect of development aid to women in many emerging societies.

The present issue of *Focus* highlights some of the primary source materials that CRL has collected and preserved to support those studies. CRL collections are especially rich in popular literature, magazines like *Women's Wear Daily* and the Russian *Rabotnitsa*, which at times reflect and reinforce gender stereo-

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On page 1: “Mannish top-coat” in the *Sartorial Art Journal and American Tailor and Cutter* (June 1927). From CRL collections.

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types—and at times shatter them. CRL holdings also include German political tracts and treatises, and the the publications of activist groups that have at various moments in history affected women’s status. The issue also highlights a particular scholarly enterprise, the Modern Girl Around the World project at the University of Washington, which has mined these collections to create new understandings of an important phenomenon.

—Bernard F. Reilly, Jr., *President*

The Modern Girl Around the World



Advertisement from a 1921 issue of *Illustrirte Zeitung*, published in Leipzig, for applying Reichert's Sonnenbrand crème for a sun-darkened complexion. From CRL collections.

Editor's Note: This article is based on "The Modern Girl Around the World: A Research Agenda and Preliminary Findings," which appeared in the August 2005 issue of Gender & History. The Modern Girl project and research group are based at the University of Washington and comprised of Tani E. Barlow, Madeleine Yue Dong, Uta G. Poiger, Priti Ramamurthy, Lynn M. Thomas, and Alys Eve Weinbaum. Professor Lynn M. Thomas contributed substantial text to the article; Melissa Trevvett's contributions are based on the Gender & History article. The project exemplifies the kind of globally focused research projects that CRL collections and services support, in this case by providing extensive runs of trade journals, popular magazines, and newspapers.

The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group focuses on the emergence of a new kind of young woman around the world in the first half of the 20th century—a young woman who did not appear to value the roles of dutiful daughter, mother, or wife. Instead she pursued romantic love and provocative fashion. Often the Modern Girl combined and reconfigured aesthetic elements drawn from disparate national, colonial, and racial regimes to create a “cosmopolitan look.”

The research group developed the Modern Girl as a heuristic device to investigate global, social, and economic

processes at the beginning of the 20th century. The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group team examined the complexities of how the Modern Girl became a global phenomenon, particularly how her development intersected with global processes resulting from capitalism's identification of new markets and cultural changes resulting from relations between nations and colonies.

To understand how global commodity and cultural flows have shaped modern femininity, the Modern Girl research group has conducted extensive research and analysis on advertising content. Such sources possess the capacity to index the role of capitalist enterprises in shifting representations of femininity. The group chose to focus specifically on cosmetics and toiletries advertisements in trade journals, women's and family magazines, and newspapers published between 1920–1950 in the United States, Germany, South Africa, India, and China.

Defining the “Modern Girl”

The research group identified a number of common characteristics of the Modern Girl in the ads they analyzed. She is usually depicted with bobbed hair and an elongated body. The ads often depict her as a film star or movie fan, or as an outdoors and sports enthusiast. They commonly locate her in romantic or intimate poses, or admiring herself before a mirror.

*Flappers, garconnes,
moga, modeng,
xiaojie, schoolgirls,
kallege ladki, vamps,
and neue Frauen . . .*

Some of the key preliminary findings of the research group include the Modern Girl's near simultaneous emergence around the globe. The near-simultaneity phenomenon suggests that modern forms of femininity emerged through rapidly moving and multi-directional circuits of capital, ideology, and imagery; for example, they did not emerge in a simple pattern of diffusion from the West to the rest of the world. Another key finding is that processes of racialization were practiced and produced through the circulation of advertisements for cosmetics that promised to whiten, color, or tan the skin. ❖

Summary of interview with Lynn M. Thomas conducted by Melissa M. Trevvett of CRL

Lynn M. Thomas, Associate Professor of History at the University of Washington, emphasized the collaborative approach of the research group and the importance of bringing to bear the perspectives of regional and disciplinary specialists on studies of global problems and issues. Members of the group have extensive research experience in China, Germany, India, Kenya, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and work in Chinese, German, English, French, Hindi, and Swahili.

Thomas spoke briefly about her use of CRL resources. Although the University of Washington has very rich area studies resources, collections on Africa are not as deep as some of UW's other collections. Therefore, CRL collections were a valuable source of African resources for the project. The African resources that Professor Thomas has used in relation to the research group's and her own modern girl research primarily have been newspapers.

Some CRL Newspaper Titles from South Africa

Rand Daily Mail, Cape Times, Bantu World, Drum, Umteteli we Bantu, Ilangalase Natal, Imvo Zabantsundu, Abantu-Bath, and Umlindi we Nyanga

Ghana

Times of West Africa and West African Times

Kenya

Mwalimu, East African Standard, Daily Nation, and Taifa Leo

Browsing CRL's Newspaper Collection

To browse CRL's foreign newspaper collections, go to the online [catalog](#), the "Select Search Type" pull-down box, and select "Newspaper by Geographical Area." This feature enables users to search by country.

Popular Periodicals for and about Women



Women workers at construction site in Kazakhstan, from a 1957 issue of *Qazaqstan aielderi*, a woman's journal published in Almaty, Kazakhstan. From CRL collections.

Women's Wear Daily and the Beginnings of Juniors Fashions

Jaime Minard, a graduate student at the University of Missouri in Columbia, accessed more than 450 volumes of *Women's Wear Daily* from CRL's collections in her ongoing research of the St. Louis fashion industry from the 1930s–1960s. Findings to date indicate that St. Louis was the origin of the junior apparel craze and creation of that market sector. The origins trace back to Lang-Kohn, Inc., a St. Louis women's wear company, that manufactured the first junior size garments in the country in 1926. Shortly after, the first junior department opened at Kline's, a department store in St. Louis.

Minard's research of *Women's Wear Daily* and other sources illuminates how the fashion industry in St. Louis grew and how activities and innovations there influenced and drew from other parts of the country.

Search link of [Women's Periodicals](#)

These popular periodicals are a sample of CRL collections that support a global perspective for research on women. They represent three areas of the world on which CRL has strong collections: Slavic, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. In acquiring materials from South and Southeast Asia, CRL collaborates closely with the Library of Congress to identify and acquire key publications.

Soviet Popular Periodicals

A member's deposit of nearly 900 titles of popular Russian journals, mostly from the 50s through the 70s, contains magazines specifically targeted to women, such as Russia's *Rabotnitsa*. This magazine, like others in the collection aimed at women, provides instructional advice on home decorating, beauty and clothing, including sewing patterns. The women's magazines highlight activities by Communist women throughout the Soviet Union and criticize the United States and capitalism in political cartoons.

Magazines for Contemporary Women in Southeast and South Asia

Examples of periodicals held by CRL deal with family life, women's interests and issues, and fashion in these areas of the world.

- *Al Muslimah* (Malaysia) [CRL holdings; 1989–present]—A Malay-

language magazine that provides commentary on current events on an array of topics, including religion, education, social concerns, and family life. The magazine also offers consumer information, practical how-to advice, and inspirational stories.

- *Femina* (India) [CRL holdings; 1969–present]—*Femina* is the largest circulation women's English-language magazine in India and it sponsors the annual Miss India pageant, the most prestigious beauty pageant in India. The magazine appeals to upscale young women, offering tips on beauty, fashion, health, money matters, and relationships. It provides recipes, fiction, articles on travel, and celebrity interviews.
- *Visage* (Pakistan) [CRL holdings; 1993–present]—A glossy, upscale, English-language fashion magazine featuring designer fashions, personality profiles, book reviews, “Woman-talk” and “Mantalk” sections, and cosmetic, perfume, and public health advertisements. ❖

CRL Collections Supporting Research on Women's Studies



Illustration from *African Women's Development Task Force: Some Case Histories* (circa 1981).
From CRL collections.

African Training and Research Centre for Women Collection

The African Training and Research Centre for Women (Centre Africain de Recherche et de Formation pour les Femmes) was created in 1975 by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The program was designed to aid and encourage member states of the ECA to promote greater involvement of women—particularly rural and poor urban women—in development activities. The Centre pursued its objectives through three key strategies: improving skills among ECA women; increasing the quantity and quality of opportunities available to them; and conducting research on African women.

A vast collection of materials pertaining to the African Training and Research Centre were collected and preserved by the Cooperative Africana Microform Project (CAMP) and are available through CRL. A guide to the collection is available at: www.crl.edu/areastudies/CAMP/collections/women.htm.

Additional information is available through the following links:

- [Information on the ATR Centre](#)
- [Bibliographies on Women and Development in Africa](#)
- [Country Reports](#)
- [Research Reports](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Serie "Rapports de Seminaire"](#)
- [Workshop Reports](#)

Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance Archives

One of the oldest lesbian feminist organizations in America, the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance was founded in 1972. The organization has preserved archives of feminist, activist, and lesbian periodicals. The following are examples of holdings available through CRL:

- [Fighting Woman News](#)
- [Amazon](#)
- [The Matriarchist](#)
- [Moonstorm](#)

Bibliothek der Frauenfrage in Deutschland

With more than 6,000 titles, the *Bibliothek der Frauenfrage* in Deutschland (BFD) provides a record of the German-language literature on women's issues and the women's movement over nearly 150 years (1790–1930). The foundation for the microfiche compilation is the *Die Frauenfrage in Deutschland* bibliography, published by Hans Sveistrup and Agnes von Zahn-Harnack in 1934. The bibliography was a highly collaborative work, begun by members of the German Women's Academic Society, who were joined and supported by other women's organizations, including the union of German women's societies and the Women's Trade Union.

The original sources were books, pamphlets, and newspapers collected by the women's groups for their libraries to both facilitate and document their organizations' work. Over the decades, generally for financial reasons, these libraries could not be sustained. Occasionally university research libraries accepted items from these libraries, but the materials were not considered research materials, so no systematic collecting of resources in this area was done. The resources in the set encompass the entire range of political, social, and psychological issues concerning women, including subjects such as nutrition, education, childbirth, child care, women's health, and employment.



View the entire issue of *Womankind* newsletter. From CRL collections.

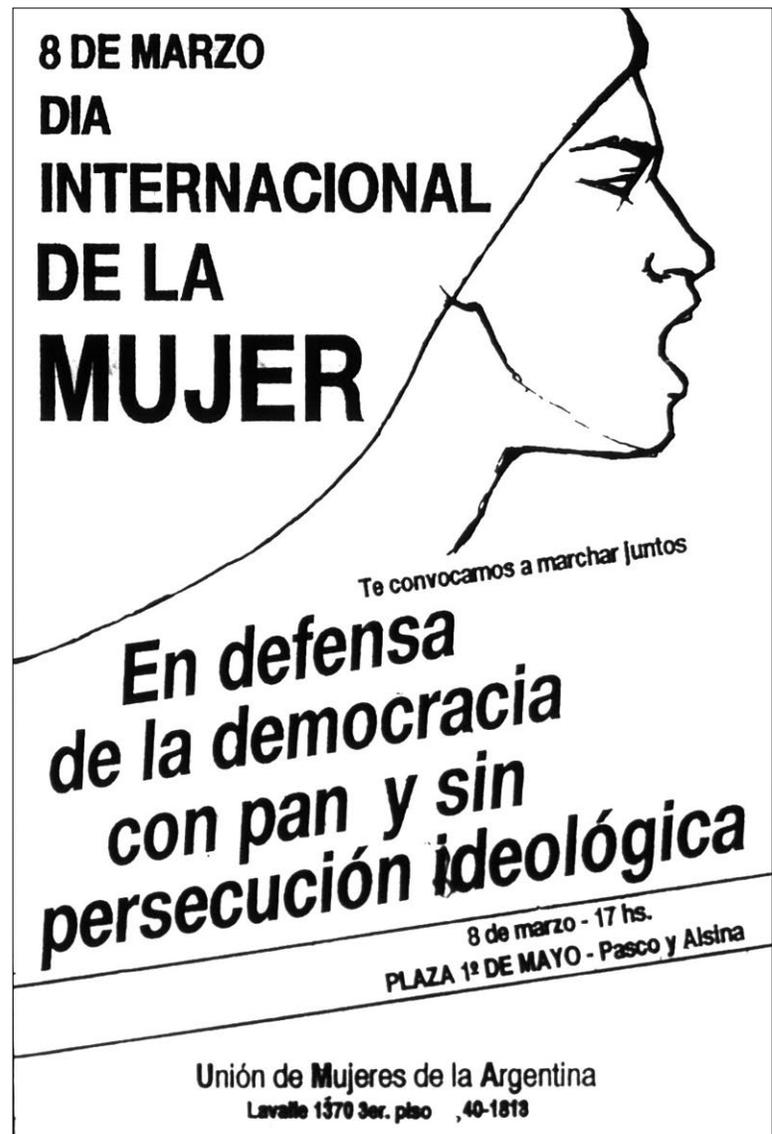
Under CRL's Shared Purchase Program, the University of Iowa initiated formation of a buying group to enable CRL to acquire the set. Each document in the set received separate cataloging, with subject headings, in CRL's catalog.

[Records for the set are available to member libraries for loading into their catalogs.](#)

Women in Latin America: Princeton University Latin American Pamphlet Collection

Through CRL's Purchase Proposal Program, CRL members voted to acquire a large collection of pamphlets and other ephemeral materials on Latin America collected at Princeton University, which had worked with Scholarly Resources, Inc. to microfilm them. The [collection](#) includes pamphlets, periodicals, interviews, and other ephemera that report on political and social conditions and issues in Latin American countries. The collection features publications by and about women from countries of Argentina, Brazil, Chile (1975–94), Cuba (1923–85), Ecuador (1983–88), Mexico (1938–1992), Nicaragua (1983–1986), Peru, and Uruguay (1986–90).

[How to Borrow from CRL](#) ❖



A Union de Mujeres de la Argentina pamphlet cover promoting March 8, 1989 as an International Day of the Woman. From CRL collections.

Additional Research Links

[Browse search for women and other subjects](#)

[Feminism](#)

[Women's legal status](#)

[Women and education](#)

[Women and employment](#)

[Women in politics](#)

[Women's rights](#)

[Women's studies](#)

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The Center for Research Libraries

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