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behind what W. E. B. Du Bois called the "colored woman's problem." Not too long ago, her subjects to offer up, for free, such intimate information, a precious commodity in this confessional age of Oprah and reality TV. Without forums to tell their stories in their own voices and on their own behalf, the poor often must depend on well-meaning reformers with advice that, in her words, "speaks more than once the stereotypes labeling them as lazy, dependent, ignorant, promiscuous, and manipulative thieves. They told their lives, therefore, with the same honesty that they would be recognized not simply as a "collection of clichés, but as whole persons."

In \textit{Fare Broke With Children}, Hays knows her subjects share their stories to achieve social visibility and, as Du Bois notes, "the struggle for eugenization" could one argue the new rules—such as unconsolable "family caps," or the refusal of aid to children born to mothers already on welfare—promote "family values." The ineffectual pursuit of deadbeat dads often alienates good men who don't have the resources to help their kids and antagonizes innocent ones whose abuse caused many of the women on welfare to seek public assistance and thus to lose their eligibility. But still, the women need never materialize or practically require the sacrifice of one's firstborn to obtain. Perhaps the greatest failing about reform is that women of color do not see the deal.

In \textit{Hayrs}, Hays argues, "[parents'] mothers' support for welfare reform is the single most convincing indicator that welfare recipients are not the "social outsiders" portrayed in the Personal Responsibility Act." Over the three years she researched the way the new welfare reform is working, Hays encountered clients and caseworkers who endeavored an increasingly unwieldy bureaucracy. She finds that, for the sake of the common good that reform supposedly represented, even as it became clear that the policies would never lead to independence or financial stability, Hays' finding correlates with LeBlanc's description of Coco's experience at a shelter for women on welfare: "Coco... was eager to devise a plan for her future.... She was open to the help [that shelter] offered, even though it was often unclear how it applied to her life." Hays breaks with liberal orthodoxy when she concedes that her research reveals that a very small percentage of mothers on welfare do hold "values that are distinct from the 'mainstream,'" but even the least sympathetic of welfare recipients reflect larger cultural patterns, she argues. They are no worse than the tax evaders, insurance frauds, and corporate criminals who plunder our nation. Despite these blatant failures and contradictions, polls indicate that the majority of Americans believe welfare reform will triumph, as they've watched the rolls decrease from 12.2 million in 1996 to 5.3 million in 2001. Hays argues that what people are celebrating is a symbol of poverty and so-called moral decline that ostensibly saves taxpayers more of the money that we have lost and that welfare reform placates anxieties without addressing the systemic reasons we are increasingly a nation of superwomen who earn less than our husbands and whose children are at risk and no one minding the children.

Though nothing about the rhetoric of reform supports its outcomes or social reality, Hays notes that there are "good intentions" behind it ("or at least a mix of good intentions, harsh realities, and incomplete moral reasoning"). For instance, the ten to fifteen percent of former clients who gained permanent jobs with a living wage because of the legislation can't be dismissed, but Hays notes that the numbers are small and that many women were kept poor at the purpose, and no one minding the children.

All the happy and sad complications of 21st century liberal and feminist culture and identity can be read off this list; as de Jong says, "fictions of Sappho are fictions of the feminine." To judge by Jong, the feminine seems to be in more of a mess than ever: Is the representative Woman a sort-of-girlfriend, or a "campy," or a "camp"? Was she an influencing woman with the phallic voice, or a sort of-girlfriend, or even all three? And sometimes her poledine tolerance belies this generous, let's-take-the-law-as-face- value stance. But for once, an advocate for the poor is not preaching to the choir. In creating a cultural space in which to talk about these issues, Jong does this to the good intentions of older values over politics to speak to a wider audience causes Hays to short-change her analysis of controversial points of view. By her account, even the most miserably poor don't want to keep poor women at the bottom. And sometimes her polemical tone belies this generous, let's-take-the-law-as-face value stance. But even for once, an advocate for the poor is not preaching to the choir. In creating a cultural space in which to talk about these issues, Jong does this to the good intentions of older values over politics to speak to a wider audience causes Hays to short-change her analysis of controversial points of view. By her account, even the most miserably poor don't want to keep poor women at the bottom.

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Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
University of Illinois at Chicago

Nominations and applications are invited for the position of Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC).

UIC is the largest public research university in the metropolitan Chicago area. UIC has assumed a leading role in defining the mission of urban universities in contemporary American life. Located just west of downtown Chicago, UIC serves as a significant contributor to the cultural, social and economic richness of the city. The campus includes 15 colleges and schools, serving one of the nation’s most diverse student populations, with a total student body of approximately 25,000, and a faculty and staff of 12,500. A guaranteed professional admissions program attracts many of the state’s most gifted undergraduate students.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) is experiencing a substantial increase in its research profile, reflecting the distinction of its faculty and programs. LAS also plays the central role in providing the general education curriculum for all of the 16,000 undergraduate students and shares a close relationship with the Honors College. The largest college on campus, LAS includes 22 departments and programs and has a faculty of more than 400 and a staff of approximately 200. LAS is a major research unit, providing graduate training through Masters programs in 21 fields and Ph.D. programs in 15 fields. Federal research grant expenditures total over $21 million annually. LAS vigorously supports interdisciplinary research and teaching efforts with other colleges.

The position requires a distinguished scholar to manage a complex organization while articulating a vision of the College's future. Candidates for the position should demonstrate the ability to enlist the support of diverse constituencies on campus and in the community. Candidates must have the following qualifications: an outstanding record of scholarship and educational achievement commensurate with an appointment as full professor in one of the departments or programs of the College; demonstrated commitments to diversity and to student learning; the ability to represent the college to external communities including alumni and potential donors; experience with and commitment to fundraising; a demonstrated commitment to shared governance; and a history of administrative experience.

Equally important is the ability to conceptualize his or her vision in terms of concrete goals and to organize resources to achieve strategic ends.

For fullest consideration, applications and nominations should be received by January 15, 2004. Please send to:

Judith Russi Kirshner, Chairperson
Search Committee for the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Office of the Provost (m/c 105)
University of Illinois at Chicago
601 South Morgan Street
Chicago, Illinois 60607-7128
http://www.uic.edu/depts/oaa/search/las-dean.html

The University of Illinois at Chicago is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Women, minorities, and people with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

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O, it seems, was The Sappho Hymn, a text that has been repudiated in international archives, its breezy style nonetheless clearly invites a general (lesbian) readership. “Sappho’s speaker may, or may not, have one,” as Reynolds describes it, but through the convinience of her words, she makes a new feeling, which is as much an interest as knowledge. Yours. Ours.” Those seeking a survey of recent scholarly work on Sappho and her reception might be better off with Prins, or de Jean, or Ellen Green’s two anthologies, Reading Sappho and Reading Sappho. For others new to Sappho, I’d suggest starting with Reynolds’ own capacious The Sappho Companion, which does enormous service by reprinting many later “versions” of Sappho, helpfully contextualized by informative and thorough historical headnotes. Work on the earlier books seems to have left Reynolds with a reserve of delightful anecdotes and a delicate awareness of a linear progress narrative of responses to Sappho across the centuries simply won’t wash.

But as a result, The Sappho Hymn is a bit of a grab bag. Reynolds jumps from century to century and country to country providing what she calls “snapshots” linked by dramatic claims that lack of synthesis is the point. “Sappho is nobody. She has no body.” “S - - - o is a space. For joining up the dots. Filling in the blanks. Making something out of nothing.” Page du Bois and others argue similarly that “Sappho” is a name, a concept filled with contradictions and uncertainty.

Reynolds capably shows how Sappho’s image and narrative have been mobilized simultaneously on all sides of every question. Male painters of the Neopolaric period used Phaon as an excuse to show heroic male nude beauty (and Sappho disconsolate); in the same period, women painters and writers invoked Sappho as an enabling foremother, in the face of Rousseau’s directive to tend to their needlework. Some snapshots are in clearer focus than others: I loved hearing about Lady Hamilton, who in the late 18th century transformed herself from bought concubine to respectable lady and artist by performing Greek “attitudes” in Naples for her husband’s guests; but the connection to poet Mary Robinson, and thereby to Sappho, is sketched metaphorically rather than demonstrated. The account of Tennyson and Hallam is interesting in itself, but the link to Sappho hangs on a very slender textual thread. Reynolds’ broad historical sweep means she can’t engage fully with scholarship in each period, which may leave experts peeved. (For example: The finer points of understanding H. D. may not be of general interest, but those who care may find Edith Gregory’s elegant and sensible H. D. and Hellenism: Classic Lens, and other recent works, more careful and better informed.)

“Female presence is perhaps a clue to Sappho’s persistence.” Perhaps. But the mobilizations of narrative and image Reynolds calls “impersonator phantoms” that throng into the spaces between the fragments of the text and her story—leave Sappho’s petty curiously untouched. Reynolds’ leaning enthusiasm for her farther and farther from Sappho’s restrained poetic mastery, the overemphasizing of desire’s tyranny through form. I find slightly overwrought gush ununfaacto- rily substitute for closely reasoned argument. “Sappho has given me much pleasure. As she has caused me some unhappiness. In my imagination she comes to me, she comes for me. I have looked at her with desire. I have imagined that she looks back at me.” Still, the desire she feels by “drier” literary criticism may be pleased and instructed by both of Reynolds’ books, and will turn back to Sappho herself, which is all to the good.
Rethinking Helen Keller

by Kim E. Nielsen


A s the recently published centennial editions of Helen Keller's 1903 autobiography The Story of My Life make clear, we continue to be fascinated by the famous deaf-blind woman who died in 1968 at the age of 88. Despite our fascination, we know so little about her that it is hard to imagine her as anything but innocent, inspirational seven year old taught by Anne Sullivan at the famous Tuscumbia, Alabama, water pump. Like most of us, however, Keller has been written about as childhood—and grew to be one of the most influential and widely recognized women of the 20th century, whose primary interests were in the dismantling of capitalism, and her passionate interna- tionalism. The sentimentalized story of the young deaf-blind girl has trumped the adult Helen Keller of political passion.

This historical erasure began while Keller was still alive. Throughout her life-time, hindered by attitudes about disability that hindered her access to education, less proof of her age, and attitudes that assumed her debilitation, she faced charges that her disability rendered her incapable of form- ing her own political opinions; indeed, incapable of generating her own thoughts, her own knowledge, her own self- image. Helen Keller reached in the afterword to his new edition of her biog- raphy, she was charged with plagiarizing "her very personality," by relying on a predictable ideology of self-relief.

The Story of My Life was and continues to be an immensely popular book. At its publication, it was translated into an almost unparalleled best seller. By 1954, the book, which has never gone out of print, was not only being sold in what Helen Keller's editor referred to as "the regular foreign language translations," but also in Arabic, Assamese, Bengali, Burmese, Dehshn, Chinese, Greek, Hiligayon, Hindi, Icelandic, Ilocano, Indonesian (just to name the first part of the alpha- beta). These two new editions restore the book to much of its original emotional power by including commentary and letters by Keller, Anne Sullivan Macy, and John Macy omitted from the editions of the last several decades.

The Story of My Life begins with Keller's recognition that, "It is with a kind of fear that I begin to write the history of my life." The 23 year old chronicler her acquisition of language and subsequent education, the very reason the world con- sidered her writing unoriginal, had reached the point perhaps where even, or especially, the beloved's imperfec- tions seem beautiful.

"There is no "suffering" may be the most modest of standpoints or the most arro- gant. How about, "Nobody owns Sullivan?" Then to quote the fragmentary end of the book, "all must be endured, since even a beggar..."

Alternatively—there are a few disputed words in there—it may mean all men are...dared.

The Old Story of My Life is that of a girl who overcame her disability with the aid of a young teacher. Keller herself, however, has never been about to be read by others. Helen Keller and "Phila." From The Story of My Life (Norton).

Charles Augustine Meechin, Sappho, 1877. From The Sappho History.

But to which Sappho should one turn? Noted classicist and acclaimed poet Anne Carson has provided a spare and elegant rendering of every word of Sappho's that has come down to us, including single-word scraps quoted by ancient grammarians. The ancient Greek is here on facing pages, but textual apparatus is minimal, and gaps in the papyrus or the translation are indicated by a backwardsacket. Large stretches of white space are so integral to these poems that to offer compressed quotations would betray their spirit. The impression is that one is reading the work and deep feeling through self-restraint—and of loss, of meaning torn briefly and hope- fully from a surrounding field of silence. Some of the results are conventionally beautiful, meaningful speech; others are haunting, mute, or surreal. Carson explains, "I like to think that, the mode I stand out of the way, the more beautiful Sappho shows through. This is in a marvellous fantasy (transparency of self) with which most translators labor.

Paradoxically, "standing out of Sappho's way" means leaving traces of the translator's labor on the page. "Brackets are an aesthetic gesture toward the papy- rological event.... Even though you are approaching Sappho in translation, that is no reason you should muck the drama of trying to read a papyrus torn in half or riddled with holes or smaller than a postage stamp." Notes provide clues toward interpretation ("Sappho's poem threatens the woman with an obliteration which it then enacts by not naming her") and explain "correction" and the force of the particle "δε". But Carson never pre- tends that implacable puzzles can be com- pletely solved; she provides matter for interpretations that may counter her own.

This makes Carson's an ideal edition for someone like me, who has just enough Greek to follow happily. The white space tempts me to treat it like a workbook. But readers for whom the Greek is, well, Greek may find Carson's abstruse but encyclopedic approach frustrating. They might prefer to begin with Mary Barnard's more reader-friendly modern version, first published in 1958 and still deservedly in print. When Victorians saw space, in a text in a drawing room, their instinct was to fill it up with bitis-a-bara; then high modernism claimed the phonetic vacuum with a blowtorch. What Mary Barnard showed for Sappho (and Richard Lattimore for Homer) was that Ancient Greek material could be enjoyed without scholarly annotations, but also without too much lying or embroidery. Whenever Jorg or Reynolds lifted me out of my chair in irritation—"Sappho would never say that"—the internal voice I heard, even though I knew it was "Sappho", was actually Barnard's. Because it was the first I encountered! Because my lover gave the book to me? Because liking modern- ism had prepared me to value Barnard's simple directness, to hear the underlying rhythm of her free verse as a deeper, I suspect, readers, even the savviest, carry within ourselves a version against which we measure the others, defensively or not. Perhaps with patience if, Not, Winter could work that way too. Even the briefest fragments are more polished than they first appear, and, without grandstanding, the results are poems. Here's desire, from the middle of Sappho's fragment 31 phainetai me [He seems to me]:

Sappho's tongue is the lilt of an / fire is racing under skin/ and in eyes no sight and drumming/ fills cars and / and cold sweat holds me and shaking/ grips me all— I prefer this to Barnard's more sedate "If I meet you, suddenly I can't / speak—my tongue is broken, a thin flame inside my noiseless body. / hearing only my own ear drumming, I drip with sweat / trembling grips my body..." Sappho's syntax comes close to the physical dissolving; also, Barnard's "If I meet you suddenly;" while helpful, is not exactly in the Greek. But but seems magnificent in light of this modern history: Reynolds reports that Boileau omits any reference to"swear" as "indelicate"; that the "matchless Orinda" transforms her "swear" to "sweat"; and Germane Greer (overcompensating?) suggests the overexcited poet has simply lost her fertility. Yes, all translations are fictions. You say, with Reynolds that all imag- nary Sapphics have been created equal doesn't the intellect. No version is perfect but some are worse than others.

Yet Sappho seems such a helpful, but her main interpretive work on Sappho is elsewhere, in well-organized scholarly arti- cles and, most memorably, Eros Bittermann, an incandescent thersaurus, or anatomy, of the paradigms of human desire, which takes off from phainetai me and ranges throughout Western culture ancient and modern. In that work, she often responds to and reworks other writ- ers in her own poems and sequences, in a desperate attempt to control and��, gripping way. If Not, Winter is different.

The effort here is to rescue lyric from the modern publication-structures of a woman almost unparalleled best seller. By 1954, the book, which has never gone out of print, was not only being sold in what Helen Keller's editor referred to as "the regular foreign language translations," but also in Arabic, Assamese, Bengali, Burmese, Dehshn, Chinese, Greek, Hiligayon, Hindi, Icelandic, Ilocano, Indonesian (just to name the first part of the alphabet). These two new editions restore the book to much of its original emotional power by including commentary and letters by Keller, Anne Sullivan Macy, and John Macy omitted from the editions of the last several decades.

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