

# WOMEN at the CENTER

**Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture**  
**David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University**

Issue 27, Spring 2015

## Jean Kilbourne: Feminist Anti-Advertising Activist

Jean Kilbourne is a renowned author, speaker, and filmmaker whose critique of advertising and its impact on society has brought her international acclaim. Her central argument is that the advertising industry sells more than products or services: it sells values, gender roles, success, self-worth, sexuality, and addiction. Dr. Kilbourne's papers are now a part of the Rubenstein Library through a joint collecting initiative undertaken by the Bingham Center, the Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History, and the Archive of Documentary Arts.

Dr. Kilbourne was the first person to focus on advertising as an object of study for its social impact rather than how well a particular



ad sold a product. Her lectures quickly gained popularity and notoriety, and she was named by *The New York Times Magazine* as one of the three most popular speakers on college campuses. Almost 40 years after her first public lecture, she has appeared at about half of all the colleges and universities in the United States, all of the major universities in Canada, and at scores of secondary

schools. In 2014, she delivered a TEDx talk.

Dr. Kilbourne's lectures, films, and television appearances have been seen by millions of people throughout the world. Her best known films, the "Killing Us Softly" series, chronicle how advertising depicts women over a 20-year period. Her other films include, "Slim Hopes:

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## Jeanne Audrey Powers: A Powerful Journey

*Contributed by Rachel Sanders, Technical Services Intern.*

The Jeanne Audrey Powers Papers is a treasure trove of materials that I have greatly enjoyed processing. In 1958, Reverend Powers became one of the first women to be ordained in the United Methodist Church, and in 1995, she publicly came out as a lesbian in her sermon, "The Journey." The reactions she faced were mixed. Many, like the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, supported her unswervingly, while others, most notably the Institute on Religion & Democracy, campaigned against her, hoping to force Powers into an early retirement.

Reverend Powers was involved in organizing the Re-Imagining Conference, the 1993 Minneapolis interfaith conference of clergy, laypeople, and feminist theologians that stirred

controversy in U.S. mainline Protestant denominations. "Re-Imagining: A Global Theological Conference By Women: For Men and Women" grew out of a response to the World Council of Churches' *Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women 1988-1998*. The conference aimed to encourage churches to address injustices to women worldwide and promote equal partnership with men at all levels of religious life. It brought together 2,200 people, one third of them clergy, and most of them women. Powers' papers include planning materials, conference recordings, and material documenting the backlash from the conference by opposing groups.

Rev. Powers' papers also document her extensive professional accomplishments and contributions as well as her personal history.

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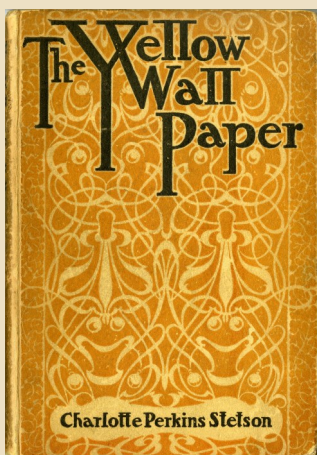
## Recent Acquisitions

### Judith Fortney Papers

Retired demographer from Family Health International, whose papers include her groundbreaking research and writings related to maternal mortality and contraceptive epidemiology.

### Elizabeth Grosz Papers

Professor of Women's Studies at Duke, whose papers document her pioneering work in comparative literature, critical theory, and philosophy.



**The Yellow Wall Paper** by Charlotte Perkins [Gilman] Stetson. Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1899. Original boards printed in yellow wall-paper design, with black lettering.

**Silent Spring** by Rachel Carson. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1962. 1st Edition in original cloth and dust jacket.

## 2015-16 Mary Lily Grant Awardees

Congratulations to this year's recipients of the Mary Lily Research Grants!

**Meaghan Beadle**, Ph.D. candidate, history, University of Virginia, "This is What a Feminist Looks Like! Photography and Feminism, 1968-1980."

**Hanne Blank**, Ph.D. candidate, history, Emory University, "Southern Women, Feminist Health: Activist Health Service and Communities of Radical Conscience in the Southeastern U.S., 1968-1990."

**Samantha Bryant**, Ph.D. candidate, history, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, "Black Monster Stalks the City: The Thomas Wansley Case and the Racialized Cultural Landscape of the American Prison Industrial Complex, 1960-1975."

**Jaime Cantrell**, Visiting Assistant Professor of English, The Sarah Isom Center for Women's and Gender Studies, University of Mississippi, "Southern Sapphisms: Race, Sexuality, and Sociality in Literary Productions, 1968-1994."

**Ariel Dougherty**, independent scholar, for book research on film teaching programs for young women, women of color, and queer women.

**Anne Gray Fischer**, Ph.D. candidate, history, Brown University, for dissertation research on the politics of prostitution in the US from 1960s-1980s.

**Anna Iones**, Ph.D. candidate, English language and literature, University of Virginia, "Shocking Violence, Contested Consent: The Feminist Avant-garde from Kathy Acker to Riot Grrrl."

**Catherine Jacquet**, Assistant Professor, history, Louisiana State University, "Responding to Rape: Contesting the Meanings of Sexual Violence in the United States, 1950-1980."

**Whitney Stewart**, Ph.D. candidate, history, Rice University, "Domestic Activism: The Politics of the Black Home in Nineteenth-Century America."

**Mary Whitlock**, Ph.D. candidate, sociology, University of South Florida, "Examining Forty Years Of The Social Organization Of Feminisms: Ethnography Of Two Women's Bookstores in the US South."

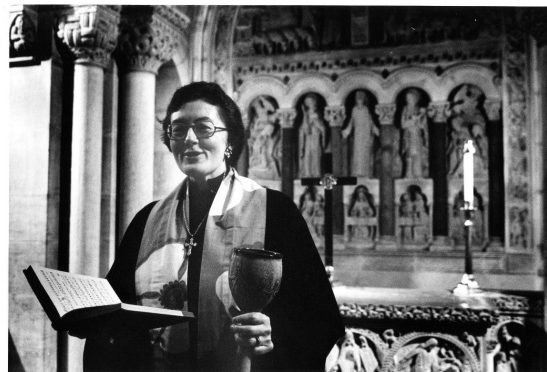
**Leah Wilson**, Master's student, English, Iowa State University, "Fleeing the Double Bind: Subverting the 'White Trash' Label through Female Solidarity and Erotic Power in Dorothy Allison's *Cavedweller*."

Mary Lily Research Grants: [library.duke.edu/rubenstein/bingham/grants](http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/bingham/grants)

### Jeanne Audrey Powers *continued from page 1*

The materials related to Rev. Powers' activism, including her support for equal treatment for all persons in the church, are my favorite feature of the collection.

For example, the collection includes Rev. Powers' files associated with Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian/Gay Concerns. In 1984, in response to "unwelcoming policies toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons," the group issued a call to local churches to "reaffirm that their ministry was open to all persons, including gays and lesbians." The "Open the Doors" campaign was sponsored by the Reconciling Congregation group. The goal was to go to the United Methodist Church's 1996 General Conference in Denver, Colorado to foster discussion around creating a more welcoming atmosphere in the church for lesbian and gay members.



**Jeanne Audrey Powers in Riverside Church, *People Magazine*, 1980**

Rev. Powers continues to work for full inclusion of LGBT persons in The UMC, most recently helping to establish The Center for Sexuality, Gender and Religion at Claremont School of Theology.

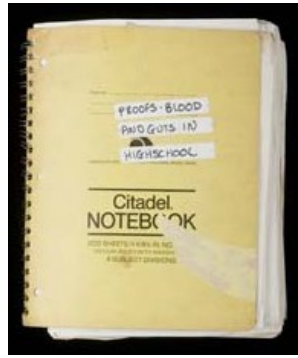
## Profiles in Research: Georgina Colby

Contributed by Mary Lily Travel Grant recipient Georgina Colby, Lecturer in Contemporary Literature, University of Westminster, UK.

In April 2014 I carried out research in the archive for my book manuscript, *Kathy Acker: Writing the Impossible*, which is under contract with Edinburgh University Press.

Critics and scholars in the field of contemporary literature have largely understood Kathy Acker as a postmodern writer. My monograph challenges such readings of the writer and her works, paying close attention to the form of Acker's experimental writings, as a means to position her within a lineage of radical modernisms.

Consulting the Kathy Acker Papers at the Sallie Bingham Center shaped my research in a number of ways. Most striking, and perhaps the aspect of the archive that has been most formative to my work, is what the archive revealed in terms of the materiality of Acker's various manuscripts. The original manuscript of Acker's early and most renowned work, *Blood and Guts in High School* (1978), is a lined notepad with text and image pasted onto the pages. It is a collage, an art object. The dream maps that punctuate *Blood and Guts in High School* are archived as separate framed objects. Dream Map Two is an artwork measuring 56 inches by 22 inches. Such archival discoveries



**Acker's Blood and Guts in High School notebook**

enabled the development of my book. The monograph takes a specific work of Acker's for each chapter as a means to explore six key experimental strategies in Acker's oeuvre. A substantial knowledge of Acker's avant-garde practices would not have been possible without the research carried out in the archive.

The Kathy Acker Papers also illuminated a central line of enquiry taken in my monograph: the importance of Acker's early

poetic practices to an understanding of her later prose experiments, which often dislimn the distinction between poetry and prose. The repository of unpublished poetic works provided rich material for the first chapter of my book, which explores Acker's engagement with the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets in the 1970s. Reading other materials in the archive, letters, early drafts of published works, speeches, Acker's teaching notes and notebooks on philosophy, as well as Acker's handwritten annotations on various texts, and her invaluable collection of small press pamphlets, cultivated a rich understanding of the diversity of Acker's experimental work and the writer's remarkable lifetime achievements, many of which remain unpublished.

## Jean Kilbourne *continued from page 1*

Advertising and the Obsession with Thinness," and "Pack of Lies: The Advertising of Tobacco." She has written numerous articles and editorials, and authored the 1999 book, *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*, in which she analyzes advertising's effects on gender roles, alcohol and substance addiction, relationships, violence, and the objectification of women and men. *Publishers Weekly* called it "a profound work that is required reading for informed consum-

ers." She also co-authored the 2009 book, *So Sexy So Soon: The New Sexualized Childhood and What Parents Can Do to Protect Their Kids*.

Dr. Kilbourne's papers include her extensive collection of clipped and categorized print advertising, book manuscripts and other writings, her films, recorded interviews with her, her research files, slides of the ads used in her presentations, teaching files, and other materials related to her research, writings, and film projects.

## Spring Instruction

**Archival Appraisal**  
UNC School of Information & Library Science

**LGBTQ History & Activism**  
Documentary Studies

**Activism, Women, and Danger**  
Women's Studies and Documentary Studies

**Constructing Transgender Identities**  
Writing 101

**Queer Theory: Place & Space**  
Writing 101

**The Rockumentary**  
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## The Lisa Unger Baskin Collection Comes to Duke



The Rubenstein Library is pleased to announce the acquisition of a significant collection documenting women's work, broadly conceived, from the mid-15th century to the mid-20th century. Carefully assembled over 45 years by noted bibliophile, activist, and collector Lisa Unger Baskin, the collection includes more than 8,600 rare books and thousands of manuscripts, journals, ephemera, and artifacts. Among the works are many well-known monuments of women's history and literature, as well as lesser-known works produced by female scholars, printers, publishers, scientists, artists, and political activists. Taken together, they comprise a mosaic of the ways that women have been productive, creative, and socially engaged over more than 500 years. Materials from the collection will be available to researchers once they have been cataloged. Some items will be on display in the renovated Rubenstein Library when it reopens to the public at the end of August 2015.

**Virginia Woolf's Writing Desk,**  
Painted by her nephew Quentin Bell, c. 1929  
*Photograph by Annie Schlechter*

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/bingham/lisa-unger-baskin>