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Breaking Away from Reverence and Rape: The AFI Directing Workshop for Women, Feminism, and the Politics of the Accidental Archive

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Breaking Away from Reverence and Rape: The AFI Directing Workshop for Women,
Feminism, and the Politics of the Accidental Archive

Tucked away in a dusty corner of the Louis B. Mayer Library at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles are VHS tapes of some of the Directing Workshop for Women's earliest films. Founded in 1974, the Directing Workshop for Women (DWW) gave its female students money, a camera, and actors and staff so that they could gain some directorial experience as well as a tangible sample of their work. Many of these women were famous actresses, producers, and writers of their time, such as Ellen Burstyn, Julia Phillips, and Maya Angelou. Having flown to Los Angeles for the sole purpose of watching these movies, I was taken aback when the librarian pulled out a grubby cardboard box and apologetically said, "These were the only ones I could find, but I'm still looking." She spent several hours looking for more films even after I began my research, but only a few other VHS tapes surfaced.

Though the library has the original tapes on which the films were shot, most of them were never transferred to VHS, and consequently, are lost to any researcher, myself included, as the facility no longer has the appropriate technology for viewing them.¹ Others were transferred but not in their entirety. While watching one movie, Lee Grant's "The Stronger," the screen cut off in the midst of the climactic scene. The library assistant, an undergraduate student who shared my concern about the state of these films, used a small screwdriver to open up the tape. We both looked down and saw that though the movie continued, the reel did not. Forty years

¹ The Louis B. Mayer Library has several hundred films on DVD from more recent DWW cycles available for viewing. I would like to thank Robert Vaughn and Patty West of the Louis B. Mayer Library and DWW, respectively, for their support and help in securing accurate information regarding the library's DWW holdings, citation information, and the DWW's longevity. I would also like to thank Bethany Ross of the Blagg-Huey Library and Mary Quinn and Lee R. Hiltzik of the Rockefeller Archive Center.

after these women made these films, it is clear that the ones available for viewing were saved accidentally.

The inaccessibility of the DWW's earliest works demonstrates the political nature of an archive and its materials available for scholarly research, highlighting the separate implications embedded in "preservation" and "accessibility."² Lynne Littman, a documentary filmmaker and DWW student in 1974, attributes the accidental archive to a lack of organization, rather than a concerted effort to exclude women from film industry history.³ Whether the oversight in making these films accessible was deliberate or not, the little attention that the American Film Institute has paid to this collection manifests the same feelings of irrelevance these women directors tried to overcome.

In the first half of the twentieth century, women like Alice Guy-Blaché, Dorothy Arzner, Ida Lupino, and Maya Deren directed films in the United States and abroad, but as feminist researchers of the 1970s argue, the women's rights movement engendered a backlash that resulted in "director" becoming a virtually all-male occupation in Hollywood; in female characters that were either whores, virgins, or spinsters; and in the prevalence of the all-male homosocial film.⁴ The backlash accentuated American society's sexism, but nevertheless,

² For a discussion of film preservation vs. public accessibility, see Caroline Jane Frick, "Restoration Nation: Motion Picture Archives and 'American' Film Heritage" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2005), 122. Since its earliest days, AFI has struggled with funding issues that require difficult cutbacks, which may account for—but does not excuse—the oversight in making these films available to researchers, especially in light of the numerous criticisms that claim AFI spends far too much money on lavish events for Hollywood celebrities.

³ Telephone Interview, Lynne Littman, 2 December 2014.

⁴ Molly Haskell, *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 323 and George Gerbner, "The Dynamics of Cultural Resistance," in *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media*, edited by Gaye Tuchman, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and James Benet (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) 46-50. With the exception of Elaine May, who directed *A New Leaf* (1971), *The Heartbreak Kid* (1972), and *Mikey and Nicky* (1976), women were largely excluded from director positions in

feminists made gains in entering film. The 1970s, as Annette Kuhn argues, was a turning point for feminist filmmakers and critics. Between 1972 and 1975, the New York International Festival of Women's Films and the Toronto Women and Film Festival began, and Molly Haskell's *From Reverance to Rape* and Marjorie Rosen's *Popcorn Venus* were published.⁵ The 1970s also saw the rise of women's film collectives and distributors, feminist film journals, and the influx of women into film production schools, such as UCLA, USC, and NYU.⁶ The DWW emerged during the height of the feminist movement within an industry that has never been able to break away from the shackles of chauvinism, and within this complex context, these feminist filmmakers worked at the crossroads of race, class, and fame.

The films that survive comprise an accidental archive of the early work of many women directors in Hollywood, but they also tell their own story about the complicated relationship the commercial film industry had with feminism in the 1970s. All of the women who participated in

1960s and 1970s Hollywood. A 1972 *Time* article mentions that screenwriters Carole Eastman and Eleanor Perry would soon be making their debut as directors, though they never did. Some women found ways to direct outside of Hollywood. Joan Micklin Silver stated that though she could easily find work as a screenwriter, she could not find work as a director. She and her husband raised \$320,000 to fund the filming of *Hester Street*. Other women, such as Barbara Kopple, Shirley Clarke, and Jill Godmilow, directed independent documentaries and avant-garde films. "Behind the Lens," *Time*, 20 March 1972. "Visual History with Joan Micklin Silver, Interviewed by Michael Pressman," *Visual History Program*. Director's Guild of America, <http://www.dga.org/Craft/VisualHistory/Interviews/Joan-Micklin-Silver.aspx> (accessed April 2, 2015).

⁵ Annette Kuhn, *Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema* (Boston: Routledge, 1982), 75.

⁶ E. Ann Kaplan, "Feminist Criticism and Television," in *Channels of Discourse: Television and Contemporary Criticism*, edited by Robert C. Allen (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 215 and Suzanna Danuta Walters, *Material Girls: Making Sense of Feminist Cultural Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 29-49. See also B. Ruby Rich, *Chick Flicks: Theories and Memories of the Feminist Film Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998). For interviews with women filmmakers whose careers began in the 1970s, see Alexandra Juhasz, editor, *Women of Vision: Histories in Feminist Film and Video* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001) and Janis Cole and Holly Dale, *Calling the Shots: Profiles of Women Filmmakers* (Kingston, Ont.: Quarry Press, 1993).

the DWW, either as students, administrators, or critics, believed in women's equal rights, but the contentious conversations about gender equality that the DWW sparked often provoked questions of who should have access to upward mobility within a given field and whose successful journey from "film industry woman" to "director" would make headlines. These historical and cultural documents detail how 1970s progressive organizations working for gender equality not only battled with the institutionalized sexism of American society, but also the pervasive classism and racism that affected individual women's lives as well.

Both radical and moderate feminists believed that the best way to counter Hollywood's rampant misogyny would be for film companies to hire women as directors; however, even women who were already successful in the industry could not convince the film companies to hire them. Julia Phillips produced *Taxi Driver*, *The Sting* (for which she was the first woman to win a Best Picture Oscar in 1974), and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and despite her success, she found it impossible to find a job as a director. David Begelman, Phillips' boss at Columbia, promised her she would be hired as the director of Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying*; however, after years of negotiations, she realized that "they had no intention of letting [her] direct. A lollipop for producing *Close Encounters*."⁷ Whereas Phillips continued to work on major motion pictures despite the misogyny entrenched in the industry, other women began organizing against the gender discrimination of Hollywood, particularly against women's exclusion from directing large-scale productions.⁸

⁷ Julia Phillips, *You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again* (New York: Random House, 1991), 59.

⁸ Phillips' career as a Hollywood film producer was, for the most part, ruined by the late 1970s due to her excessive drug use, which she chronicles in her first autobiography, *You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again*.

In 1970, Francine Parker, a feminist filmmaker who wanted to break into the commercial film industry, helped create the Film Committee of Women for Equality in Media. The group attempted to convince studios to hire women directors for major motion pictures and increase women's participation in filmmaking education programs, such as those funded by the American Film Institute. As the organization's representative, Parker, who received a Master's degree in theater directing from the Yale School of Drama, stated, "[I]f anyone has to choose between you and a man, any man, it will always be the man. You just don't look right to a man if you're a woman director."⁹ In 1971, Parker, who was the eleventh woman to get a director's card from the Director's Guild of America, directed *FTA*, a documentary about the U.S.O. shows Donald Sutherland and Jane Fonda performed at various military bases in Hawaii, the Philippines, and Japan. The film also interviewed many active duty soldiers who unequivocally denigrated the army and the Vietnam War. *FTA*, as advertised in the United States, was an acronym for "Free the Army," but many soldiers overseas who were in the film claimed it actually stood for "Fuck the Army."¹⁰ A few days after the film's theater release, Jane Fonda made her infamous trip to Hanoi, and *FTA* was pulled from distribution with no reason given.¹¹ Parker never directed another large-production film, but instead found directorial work elsewhere. She led various directing workshops for the Director's Guild of America, directed equity waiver theater productions in Los Angeles, and taught for eighteen years at the Art Center College of Design in

⁹ "Behind the Lens," *Time*, 20 March 1972. Interestingly, the article also cites Elaine May and Eleanor Perry, who had different interpretations of the director's role. May argues that the screenwriter's intentions, and not the director's gender, should be the only influence on a film. Perry, on the other hand, argues that a woman director would bring a whole new perspective to Hollywood.

¹⁰ "Francine Parker, 81; Made Vietnam-era Anti-war Film," *Los Angeles Times*, 19 November 2007.

¹¹ "Francine Parker, 81, Director of Anti-War Film, Dies," *New York Times*, 22 November 2007 and *Ibid*.

Pasadena, CA.¹² Parker's limited prospects in Hollywood could not have surprised even herself. In 1986, she wisecracked to the *Los Angeles Times*, "When you're powerless, what good is your network?"¹³

In 1969, with a one million dollar grant from the Ford Foundation, the Center for Advance Film Studies (CAFS) opened at AFI, admitting eighteen students to its two-year program. During the first year, called the Curriculum Program, students' course of study focused on one of five fields: directing, production management, cinematography, screenwriting, or production design. Only the students showing the most promise continued on to the Conservatory Program, the second year, during which they received \$10,000 to complete their own films.¹⁴ In December 1970, Women for Equality in Media conducted a march on CAFS, the institution's most extensively funded film education program. Led by Francine Parker, over fifty feminists called for an end to the sexual discrimination within AFI's filmmaking programs. In AFI's three-year existence, it awarded close to sixty-five grants, only three of which went to women. Out of thirteen screenwriter grants, one went to a woman. Of twenty-four internships with directors and twelve television grants, the AFI did not award any to women. Finally, of all the AFI faculty and staff, only two were women.¹⁵

The feminists demanded twelve changes to AFI's policies and application process. They stated that since women comprised fifty-one percent of the population, fifty-one percent of all

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Nancy Mills, "Plight of Women Directors Improved—But Not Much," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 November 1986.

¹⁴ "The First Ten Years: The American Film Institute, 1967-1977," Jan Haag Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, The Blagg-Huey Library, Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas.

¹⁵ Mary B. Murphy, "Women on March, Give AFI Demands," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 December 1970.

grants, scholarships, and internships should be awarded to women, and fifty percent of AFI's faculty, staff, and Board of Directors should also be women. Nonwhite women should receive grants according to their percentages within the population. Women for Equality in Media wanted the AFI to begin a recruitment program for high school and college women and to provide public disclosure of who received each grant. Their most controversial demand was the establishment of a permanent, five woman committee that would "review and combat discrimination and stereotyping of women in the film industry and serve as a research and production group to be funded and have office space provided by the AFI."¹⁶ Other demands included the reconsideration of women whose applications were previously refused; an amendment to AFI's corporate by-laws that would include information on the agreements made between Women for Equality in Media and AFI; that film screenings and the AFI library be made available to the public; and that AFI's name for CAFS students, "fellow," be replaced with a gender neutral term.¹⁷

By August 1971, the two organizations were still unable to reach a compromise, and as a result, negotiations broke down. Women for Equality in Media filed a lawsuit against the AFI for "overt sexual discrimination against women."¹⁸ Kay Loveland, an AFI employee who resigned in 1971, said that AFI's discrimination policies violated the anti-discrimination article of the Civil Rights Act. If the AFI did not restructure its administration and practices, it could lose its funding.¹⁹ During the eight months of dialogue, the AFI had only appointed three women to the twenty-member Board of Trustees. Though twenty percent of all applications

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ "Feminists File Suit Against Film Center," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 August 1971.

¹⁹ The AFI received two-thirds of its budget from grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Ibid.

came from well-qualified women, AFI review boards continually failed to increase the number they admitted into any of the film programs or award them any grants. Following the feminists' announcement of the lawsuit, they picketed AFI's west coast facilities, Greystone, a mansion on an eighteen-acre property in Beverly Hills, for a second time.²⁰

Jan Haag, whom AFI hired as the Admissions and Awards Administrator in May 1971 shortly after the first Women for Equality in Media's march, contends that the extent of AFI's outreach to Women for Equality in Media was hiring "a token woman, Me!, right after that march."²¹ Haag's initial place as an AFI "token woman" engendered antagonism between herself and some of the members of Women for Equality in Media, such as Francine Parker. Haag explains,

Many filmmakers had deep, angry, long-standing grudges against AFI. So, though a feminist myself, I didn't count as AFI having done something about including women, because I was never a part of that crowd—or any other group for that matter. I never joined any of the groups of film women or feminists...I also felt that in my position it wasn't really proper to join one group and not another. So I just never did. I did go to some meeting and I did have a lot of sympathy with a lot of things they were doing.²²

By the middle of the decade, AFI and Haag received a unique opportunity to begin a program that would target women as the beneficiaries.

In the 1970s, Mathilde Krim was a cancer researcher at New York's Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, and by the early 1980s, Krim would become one of the few researchers to seriously study the HIV and AIDS viruses, founding the AIDS Medical Foundation and the

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Jan Haag jjhaag@gmail.com. "Directing Workshop for Women," Private e-mail message to the author. 6 April 2007.

²² Jan Haag <jjhaag@gmail.com>. "Directing Workshop for Women." Private e-mail message to the author. 10 April 2007.

American Foundation for AIDS Research.²³ In 1974, Krim received a personal tour of AFI's Washington facilities from the director himself, George Stevens, Jr.²⁴ She subsequently wrote a letter to Stevens offering to use her influence with the Rockefeller Foundation, as she was a member of its board, to help women in film. After being passed from person to person and from Washington to Los Angeles, Krim's missive eventually reached Jan Haag.

Immediately realizing the opportunity in Krim's letter, Haag showed it to her friend, mentor, and the person who hired her, Antonio Vellani, Associate Dean and subsequent Chairman of the CAFS.²⁵ Haag and Vellani prepared a pilot project to submit to Krim, but upon meeting her in New York, Haag quickly realized that their proposal overestimated the amount of Rockefeller support she could offer. Haag expected between \$200,000 and \$300,000, but Krim informed her that she easily could secure only \$35,000. Any more than that would require a lengthy evaluation with the entire board of directors.²⁶

²³ "Introduction and History," *AmFar AIDS Research*, 2007.

<http://www.amfar.org/cgibin/iowa/amfar/history/record.html?record=6> (accessed 30 October 2007).

²⁴ Mathilde Krim was married to Arthur Krim, entertainment lawyer, founder of Orion Pictures, finance chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and advisor to President John F. Kennedy and President Lyndon B. Johnson. In fact, when LBJ signed legislation creating the American Film Institute in 1967, Krim and the president were close, personal friends. "Trustees Remember Arthur Krim," *Columbia University Record*. 14 October 1994.

http://www.columbia.edu/cu/record/archives/vol20/vol20_iss6/record2006.31.html (accessed 30 April 2007).

²⁵ Jan Haag, "Women Directors in Hollywood: The Founding of the Directing Workshop for Women at the American Film Institute, a History," *By Jan Haag*, 2007,

<http://janhaag.com/ESessays.html> (accessed 29 January 2007). "Women Directors in Hollywood" is an excerpt from Haag's unpublished autobiography, *Vol. 3: Token Woman*.

²⁶ *Ibid.* Krim invited Eleanor Perry and Michael Novak, the Associate Director of the Humanities Program at the Rockefeller Foundation, to her initial meeting with Haag. Krim to Novak, February 27, 1974, folder 3488, box 536, series 200R, RG 1.6, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

Haag's new proposal to Krim outlined the Directing Workshop for Women, which used CAFS's Directing Workshop as a model, but with a much smaller budget. DWW students would have access to the CAFS equipment, the CAFS students would work as part of the film crews for DWW films, and the AFI negotiated with the Screen Actors Guild to allow their actors to act in DWW projects as volunteers. The DWW still needed new editing equipment, which would cost \$21,611, 62% of their budget. After the workshop met all expenses, each of the twelve students would receive a budget of \$352 to cover all costs for no more than two films. The program arranged for students to attend formal viewings and discussion sessions each time a director completed her film.²⁷

Haag and Vellani decided that in order for the DWW students to have the necessary skills and self-confidence to obtain directing positions, they needed to already understand how commercial filmmaking worked and how to surmount Hollywood's difficult and ruthless conditions. In Haag's initial letter to Krim, she states that the directing workshop "would be open to any woman with enough directing credits to assure her professionalism and potential as a feature film director."²⁸ Krim sent Haag's letter to Michael Novak, the Associate Director of the Humanities Program at the Rockefeller Foundation, when she arranged their initial meeting. Novak agreed, stating, "I'm delighted with the proposal from Jan Haag. It seems to me a

²⁷ "The First Ten Years: The American Film Institute, 1967-1977," Jan Haag Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, The Blagg-Huey Library, Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas. Initially, Haag envisioned the DWW being an eight-week summer program that would take place when the CAFS was not in session. Had this been the case, the DWW would have been able to use CAFS editing equipment. However, the Rockefeller grant arrived later than expected, which prompted the change to a year-round program. Therefore, it needed its own editing equipment. Neiner to Stifel, July 30, 1974 folder 3488, box 536, series 200R, RG 1.6, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

²⁸ Haag to Krim, February 15, 1974, folder 3488, box 536, series 200R, RG 1.6, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

marvelous idea to prepare a grant program for women who are already accomplished in the (sic) film. That is precisely the kind of work that I find most satisfying—where you know you are dealing with accomplished people, and yet for various reasons there has been a road block in their way.”²⁹

Two months later, Haag broadened the required qualifications when she submitted the official proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation, stating, “ It [DWW] will draw from the ranks of women already accomplished in the field of writing, acting, producing or any of the related film arts and crafts, or from women who have made other kinds of films but who have not had an opportunity to direct actors.” She also included a list of the “type of women who will be asked to participate,” which included several actresses.³⁰ Rather than advertising the opening of the program and sending out a call for applications, Haag states, “I called all the top women in the industry and asked them to recommend women who had talent and were interested in directing.”³¹ Haag received fifty-five applications; ten applicants listed their profession as “director” or “independent filmmaker.” Sixteen of the applicants listed their profession as “actress.”³²

²⁹ Novak to Krim, March 6, 1974, folder 3488, box 536, series 200R, RG 1.6, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

³⁰ “American Film Institute-Screen Actors Guild Workshop for Women: Special Pilot Project, Rockefeller Proposal Originally Submitted 1974,” Jan Haag Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, The Blagg-Huey Library, Texas Woman’s University, Denton, Texas. The women on the list are Maya Angelou, Candice Bergen, Joan Churchill, Juleen Compton, Carol (sic) Eastman, Mary Feldhaus-Weber, Nina Foch, Kathleen Freeman, Barbara Harris, Fay Kanin, Joan Keller, Viveca Lindfors, Shirley MacLaine, Nancy Malone, Portia Nelson, Kathleen Nolan, Nora Sayre, Triva Silverman, Maureen Stapleton, and Nancy Walker.

³¹ Mary Murphy, “AFI Women: A Camera is not Enough,” *Los Angeles Times*, 27 October 1974.

³² “The American Film Institute Directing Workshop for Women Annual Report—January 1979,” Jan Haag Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, The Blagg-Huey Library, Texas Woman’s University, Denton, Texas. Since the applications were not saved, it is impossible to know who all of the women were. Other information in the report states that fifty-one applicants were from California, and four of them were from New York.

Writer Joan Didion; Marcia Nasiter, Vice President of United Artists; talent agent Kitty Hawks; and Barbara Schultz, an executive at PBS, made up the applicant review board with the task of choosing twelve women.³³ The review board did not admit a single actress. But Haag and Vellani understood how much media attention famous actresses would bring to the new program.³⁴ Additionally, she and Vellani “didn't want to insult the women who had put their names and careers on the line by applying for a place in the DWW. They had declared their friendship just by applying, and who knew how much their successful directing of a film might help AFI as well as all women filmmakers in the future.”³⁵ They worried that the DWW would never make it passed the first cycle, that it would become another program with good intentions but no means to carry them out.³⁶

Another factor that troubled Haag, besides the lack of respected actresses, was the lack of minority women. Since AFI was a publicly funded organization, it needed at least one minority woman in the new program. Following the board’s decisions, Haag proceeded to conduct some “very carefully worded conversations, first with Barbara Schultz who had not been at the [board] meeting [at which the selections had been made], to get her ‘insistence’ that Maya [Angelou] be included.”³⁷ To make room for the additional students, the board decided to expand the number of women to nineteen.

³³ Patty West <pwest@afi.com>, “AFI,” Attachment: “AFI Directing Workshop for Women History,” Private e-mail message to the author, 9 April 2015. Patty West is AFI’s Director of the Directing Workshop for Women.

³⁴ Jan Haag <jjhaag@gmail.com>, “Directing Workshop for Women.” Private e-mail message to the author. 15 April 2007.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Haag, “Women Directors in Hollywood,” 2007.

³⁷ Jan Haag <jjhaag@gmail.com>. “Directing Workshop for Women.” Private e-mail message to the author. 15 April 2007.

The nineteen women admitted were Maya Angelou (writer), Karen Arthur (actress, director), Ellen Burstyn (actress), Juleen Compton (actress), Lee Grant (actress), Nessa Hyams (casting director), Margot Kidder (actress), Joanna Lee (writer), Lynne Littman (producer), Kathleen Nolan (actress), Julia Phillips (producer), Susan Martin (actress, producer), Marjorie Mullen (script supervisor), Giovanna Nigro (producer, writer, director), Susan Oliver, (actress), Gail Parent (writer), Marion Rothman (editor), Lily Tomlin (actress, comedienne), and Nancy Walker (actress).³⁸

Just as Haag suspected, the well-known actresses involved in the project drew media attention to the DWW. Many newspapers and magazines viewed the program, which they understood as a corollary of the feminist movement, as a positive step for women. *Playgirl* called Jan Haag one of Hollywood's six New Women.³⁹ In 1976, the *Washington Post* stated, "Jan Haag...has just about doubled the number of American women directors of feature films in the last two years. Of the 32 women who have completed the Directing Workshop for Women...five are now directing movies."⁴⁰

But not all film industry women viewed the DWW as a vehicle for progress. Many expressed confusion and bitterness at the fact that rich actresses were receiving funding to direct a film. In October 1974, the *Daily Variety* published Beverly Walker's article "Fem Breakthrough Mostly Symbolic." Walker's first statement is, "'You've come a long way, baby,' may suffice for the selling of cigarets (sic), but it won't be the theme song of women seeking to

³⁸ Patty West <pwest@afi.com>, "AFI," Attachment: "AFI Directing Workshop for Women History," Private e-mail message to the author, 9 April 2015.

³⁹ Daphne Davis, "The New Hollywood Women Executives," *Playgirl*, April 1976.

⁴⁰ Judith Martin, "Toward More Women Directors: Doubling the Odds for Success," *Washington Post*, 21 July 1976.

enter the directing and producing ranks of film and television.”⁴¹ Walker states that only four percent of the members of the Director’s Guild of America (DGA) were women, 160 out of 4,000. The DGA admitted one-sixth of those women within the year. After exposing the gender discrimination of the Director’s Guild of America, she states, “If invisibility [of women] has been the status quo within the DGA and PGA [Producers Guild of America] ranks, an overwhelming concern for ‘visibility’ characterizes the new American Film Institute workshop for training women in directing.”⁴² Walker claimed that the DWW “demean[ed] the accomplishments of women who have, in fact, directed feature films,” such as Francine Parker.⁴³ She argued that the DWW overlooked women with directing experience—with legitimate qualifications—to admit famous women as a publicity stunt. Of the nineteen women admitted, ten were actresses.

Walker also detailed how while in the initial brainstorming phase, AFI consulted with a group of professional film industry women—Walker, an independent screenwriter and producer, among them—to get their insight about the best approach AFI should take in helping women become directors. After this meeting, Walker did not hear from AFI again, and months later, read about the DWW in the newspaper. She argues that AFI’s subsequent secrecy in implementing the DWW was the foundation for the “inequitable conditions” that enveloped the program. Walker also claimed that though the DWW women refused to be quoted for her article, many of them “complain[ed] about the lack of cooperative spirit, the obsolete equipment being

⁴¹ Beverly Walker, “Fem Breakthrough Mostly Symbolic,” *Daily Variety*, October 1974.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

used, and the difficulty they are having in getting their hands on the \$300 for which each individual project was budgeted.”⁴⁴ Walker was not the only feminist to disparage the DWW.

In October 1974, the *Los Angeles Times* published what Haag says was “a poison pen article and very wounding to many of the DWW women and to me.”⁴⁵ Entitled “AFI Women: A Camera is not Enough,” Mary Murphy’s article gave depth to many of the grievances feminists, such as Francine Parker and Beverly Walker, voiced about AFI and the DWW. First, Murphy, who interviewed—and quoted—several DWW students, argued that many of these women had extensive knowledge about the film industry, and that the training and facilities that the DWW offered were inferior to their previous experience. Joanna Lee was a screenwriter who in the 1960s and early 1970s penned episodes of *The Flintstones*, *Gilligan’s Island*, and *The Brady Bunch* among others, and won a screenwriting Emmy in 1974 for an episode of *The Waltons*. In 1973, she wrote, produced, and directed a movie in Greece. Murphy states that Lee quit the program “to protest what she described as poor equipment, inadequate training and a meager budget.” In the article Lee states, “All the program offers is one little half-inch videotape camera and a couple of kids from AFI as crew. We are getting no advice from professional directors. I wanted to learn more about the technical aspects of directing—lighting, positioning of camera and shots...There is no point in working with students at the AFI—I already know more than they do.”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Jan Haag <jjhaag@gmail.com>. “Directing Workshop for Women.” Private e-mail message to the author. 6 April 2007.

⁴⁶ Mary Murphy, “AFI Women: A Camera is not Enough,” *Los Angeles Times*, 27 October 1974. After the article’s publication, Lee accused Murphy of misquoting her and sent a letter to the editor the following month. She stated, “I did not resign out of ‘protest’ over anything. Rather, since my specific needs were not met, I wanted to make room for another woman who could benefit...Although I discovered the program was not helpful for me personally, I had asked to be

In addition to highlighting the deficient training and equipment, Murphy criticized the way the DWW handled issues of feminism, class, and race. Denigrating the DWW's role as a feminist organization, Murphy states, "A recent attempt by women to meet informally to exchange ideas about goals and areas of inexperience was strongly discouraged by AFI staff—to the point of threatening to kick one woman out of the program."⁴⁷ Murphy's phrase "meet informally to exchange ideas" refers to a small group of women in the DWW who wanted to conduct a consciousness-raising group in AFI's facilities.⁴⁸ Haag responds, "Some DWW women wanted to make the DWW a...consciousness-raising group. But we felt the talk, and the protest, and the fighting for our rights were taking place in other places, and we with our meager resources...tried as hard as we could to make the DWW a place where they could stay focused on becoming directors."⁴⁹

Lynne Littman states that she was the woman whom the AFI staff threatened to expel from the program. She remembers discussing with Murphy, her close friend at the time, the fact that the AFI wanted to create a program to help women during the height of the women's rights movement, but intended to carry out that endeavor completely apart from feminism. She states that she wanted for the DWW women to be able to use feminist methods, such as consciousness-raising, to help them become better directors.⁵⁰ Ruth Rosen defines consciousness-raising as "the process by which women in small groups could explore the political aspects of personal

in it, and am thrilled at its existence." Joanna Lee, "Letters: Maligned Workshop," *Los Angeles Times*, 10 November 1974.

⁴⁷ Mary Murphy, "AFI Women: A Camera is not Enough," *Los Angeles Times*, 27 October 1974.

⁴⁸ Jan Haag <jjhaag@gmail.com>. "Directing Workshop for Women." Private e-mail message to the author. 10 April 2007.

⁴⁹ Jan Haag <jjhaag@gmail.com>. "Directing Workshop for Women." Private e-mail message to the author. 10 April 2007.

⁵⁰ Telephone Interview, Lynne Littman, 2 December 2014.

life.”⁵¹ The process meant “looking at your life through your own eyes, reflecting on the choices you had made, realizing who had encouraged and discouraged your decisions, and recognizing the many obstacles and constraints that had little to do with individual temperament or talent.”⁵² If the DWW women could meet and discuss their personal backgrounds in the film industry and their experiences making their films, then they could identify the political dimensions to their professional lives, further enriching the learning experience. Littman contends that though she gained a great deal from her work in the DWW, she could have learned more if they would have been allowed to embrace feminist methods in the process.⁵³

Walker’s article emphasized how difficult it was for feminists who were not admitted to the DWW to accept that so many wealthy actresses were—highlighting the impact class had on the way outsiders viewed the DWW. Murphy’s article sheds light on some of the ways in which class and race impacted the experience of the DWW women. Giovanna Nigro was instructed to spend her own money to complete her first project and the AFI would reimburse her for the costs. She details the difficulty of obtaining \$75 to begin her project and to get the reimbursement. Murphy quoted Nigro as stating, “They told me that I should not have tried to do the project if I was poor and finally they told me that my attitude stinks. What kind of elitist statement is that?”⁵⁴ Susan Oliver, another DWW student, received only \$160, saying, “The station wagon rental came to \$90, and with the cost of food for the crew for two days of shooting I was over budget. The money for the project came out of my own pocket.”⁵⁵

⁵¹ Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women’s Movement Changed America*, (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc.), 197.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Telephone Interview, Lynne Littman, 2 December 2014.

⁵⁴ Mary Murphy, “AFI Women: A Camera is not Enough,” *Los Angeles Times*, 27 October 1974.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Other women who were able to use thousands of dollars of their own money felt the DWW took advantage of them in a different way. Julia Phillips received \$704.88 from AFI for her film, but spent \$7,957.32 of her own money to complete it.⁵⁶ Having won the Academy Award for producing *The Sting* shortly after the DWW began, Phillips states that she believed the AFI sincerely wanted to help women become directors, but claims, “I was a little nervous when we were greeted by photographers at the first meeting. I’m sorry the workshop is being given so much publicity; it increases anxiety about the finished project and begins to make me feel exploited. I suspect that a lot of us were chosen because the AFI thought we could get free and classy help with our projects—which isn’t always the case.”⁵⁷ None of the evidence, either archival or oral history, points to AFI’s decision to admit wealthy actresses because they hoped these women would have access to better resources. All the evidence points to the admission of famous actresses for the publicity and media attention. In a letter to Michael Novak of the Rockefeller Foundation, Haag boastfully states, “As you can see by the enclosed package our press is getting so heavy that it takes me this long to have time to send it off to you.”⁵⁸ Included with the letter is a two-page list of all the newspaper articles that covered the DWW.

Haag also repeatedly stated that training well-known industry women in the field of directing would be the quickest way to increase the number of women Hollywood directors, telling Murphy that “if Ellen Burstyn or Julia Phillips turns out to have talent, Gordon Stulberg (president of 20th Century-Fox) is more likely to give her a chance than an unknown. Our whole

⁵⁶ Julia Phillips, THE ESTATE OF BILLY BUCKNER, Directing Workshop for Women, Conservatory Archives, The Louis B. Mayer Library, American Film Institute, Los Angeles, California. [unpublished videocassette collection]

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Haag to Novak, October 7, 1974, folder 3488, box 536, series 200R, RG 1.6, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

idea is to make the program effective as fast as possible so it will become normal procedure to hire women as directors.” Haag continued with this line of thought by stating, “I frankly don’t think there are that many women who want to direct feature films.”⁵⁹ Much of the evidence points to the contrary, and much of the anger toward the DWW stemmed from the fact that so many women who were not famous wanted to be directors.

As significant and as pronounced as class and fame were in shaping the ways in which both DWW students and outsiders perceived the program, race operated more subtly but just as pervasively. It is unknown how many minority women applied to the DWW, since none of the applications they received were saved. However, given the esoteric nature of the selection process, it seems unlikely that there were very many at all. Maya Angelou was the only person of color admitted to the first cycle of the DWW, and as Haag admits, she was admitted in a later process because she knew they needed one minority since the AFI received government funding.⁶⁰

By 1974, Maya Angelou had already established her career as an American writer. Having been a member of the Harlem Writer’s Guild since the 1950s, she published *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* in 1970. And her screenplay for the 1972 film *Georgia* was not only the first screenplay written by an African American woman to be filmed, but was also nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.⁶¹ In Murphy’s article, Angelou is the only one to claim that the obstacles of which the other DWW women complained were fitting to her personality, stating, “The program is fashioned for women who are not quitters, so while it supports it doesn’t hold hands. Which is

⁵⁹ Mary Murphy, “AFI Women: A Camera is not Enough,” *Los Angeles Times*, 27 October 1974.

⁶⁰ Jan Haag <jjhaag@gmail.com>. “Directing Workshop for Women.” Private e-mail message to the author. 15 April 2007.

⁶¹ “Maya Angelou, Lyrical Witness of the Jim Crow South, Dies at 86,” *New York Times*, 28 May 2014.

just right for me.” Many years later, in a 2003 interview, Angelou explained that her grandmother, the woman who raised her, “taught me not to complain.” She quotes her grandmother as saying, “There are people all over the world who went to sleep last night who did not wake again. Their beds have become their cooling boards, their blankets have become their winding sheets. They would give anything for just five minutes of what she was complaining about.”⁶² Given the values with which Angelou was raised, we must take into account that she truly believed what she told Murphy—that the program was there to help those who helped themselves.

If Angelou had concerns about the DWW exploiting her for her race, however, she did not share those thoughts, unlike Julia Phillips, who freely voiced her concerns about the DWW exploiting her for her fame. As the only minority woman in the program, Angelou was put in a position of always having to perform her race and background—emphasizing the bootstrap nature of her success and the character-building aspect of her hardships. Whether wealthy or poor, the other women’s whiteness gave them a privilege to voice their complaints about the program and about their discomfort for the ways in which they felt the DWW exploited them. Though the DWW only admitted women they thought would succeed in becoming commercial film directors, they were strategic about which women they admitted. Famous actresses brought media attention, and a famous black woman might also bring some media attention but would certainly maintain their government funding. Newspapers across the country published stories about the DWW in 1974, when it first began. Most of these articles focus on the fame and talent

⁶² Lucinda Moore, “A Conversation with Maya Angelou,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, April 2003, 96-100.

of many of the actresses. Murphy's article is one of the very few that mentions Angelou's involvement, and it is the only article that quotes her.

The DWW women published a letter to the editor that appeared the following month, asserting that Murphy's article gave "a totally false impression about our attitude toward the program." The women continue, "Why Ms. Murphy was unable to recognize the overwhelming enthusiasm the program has engendered among its members and chose to misquote, misconstrue, and emphasize whatever minor negative aspects may exist in the early stages of a new and ambitious program is beyond our comprehension."⁶³ The DWW women who chose to sign the letter, fifteen out of the remaining eighteen, sent a copy of it to Haag and AFI's Chairman of the Board, Charlton Heston.⁶⁴ Murphy published a response to the DWW women's letter to the editor, stating, "Seeing their own opinions in print has evidently frightened many members of the AFI's Directing Workshop for Women. In our conversations, the women recognized the potential value of the program but also pointed out many of its present failings—a mixed judgment that the article conveyed. The value may well outweigh the problems, but the article as I wrote it is accurate."⁶⁵ Whether the DWW women wrote the letter to the editor on their own or because of pressure from the AFI's administrators is unknown. But the AFI was certainly concerned with how the women felt about their experience as DWW students and how they

⁶³ Joanna Lee, "Letters: Maligned Workshop," *Los Angeles Times*, 10 November 1974.

⁶⁴ "Letter to the Editor," Jan Haag Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, The Blagg-Huey Library, Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas. In addition to the copy of the letter, the women submitted an attachment that states, "The following members of the Workshop, in attendance at the meeting [regarding how to respond to Murphy's article], did not wish to sign the letter: Lynne Littman, Susan Martin." The attachment also states that the eighteenth woman, Giovanna Nigro, was working in Baja California and did not leave a forwarding address or phone number; therefore, she was not cognizant of the women's response.

⁶⁵ Joanna Lee, "Letters: Maligned Workshop," *Los Angeles Times*, 10 November 1974. Murphy's response is printed directly under the names of the DWW women who signed the letter to the editor.

framed that experience to the public and possible funders. In trying to receive funding from the Rockefeller Foundation for a third cycle, Haag asked previous students to write letters describing how beneficial they found the program to be.⁶⁶

Mary Murphy, though, could not deny the DWW's effective impact. Inspired by Haskell's *From Reverence to Rape*, she argues that the misogyny prevalent in 1970s films is the culmination of a backlash against the feminist movement. The DWW, she states, "with all its drawbacks, may be the first positive indication that the atmosphere is changing."⁶⁷ Some women saw the DWW as a life changing experience. Karen Arthur states that the DWW was "one of the shining points of my life and...so essential in bringing women filmmakers to the attention of Hollywood." The DWW, Arthur states, "gave me the opportunity to make two films that I would never have had the opportunity to make...I applied to the AFI to get a grant about seven times." When asked if she thought the DWW provided adequate funding and equipment, she stated, "The point wasn't to make a Hollywood film. Somebody was giving you the access to make a film. It was about freedom to create in a safe place...to do whatever you want, and the equipment to do it...It's always effective for a person to make something without censorship and receive an honest critique and honest encouragement. It's the process, the experience."⁶⁸ Arthur won the Los Angeles Critics' Award for Most Promising Film Director, along with Steven Spielberg, for her 1976 film *Legacy*, which she completed with an AFI grant. She also won

⁶⁶ "Letters from DWW Women to Jan Haag," April-May 1976, folder 3489, box 536, series 200R, RG 1.6, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

⁶⁷ Mary Murphy, "AFI Women: A Camera is not Enough," *Los Angeles Times*, 27 October 1974.

⁶⁸ Telephone Interview, Karen Arthur, 20 June 2007. In her 1974 article, Murphy quotes Karen Arthur as stating astutely, if less enthusiastically, "The AFI is always walking a tightrope between Hollywood hoopla and serious filmmaking. Maybe the people who have money should have made films on their own, but maybe what they needed was this spark. Basically, I think it is good for whatever it opens up."

grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Ford Foundation and went on to direct episodes of *Hart to Hart* and *Cagney and Lacey*, for which she won a Best Director Emmy.⁶⁹

Working with well-known actors and meager budgets, many of the DWW students' projects countered the widespread misogyny of Hollywood by featuring feminist themes. Kathleen Nolan, who became the first female president of the Screen Actors Guild, made "Act Four" with \$400 of her own money and \$355.47 from AFI.⁷⁰ Featuring Martin Sheen and a very young Laura Dern, her film stars Diane Ladd as a playwright whose husband is both directing and ruining her play. Two weeks before opening night, she chooses her career over him, has him fired, and hires a better director. The balance between work and home has always been a salient part of discussions about feminism. In Nolan's film, her protagonist unequivocally chooses her work.⁷¹ In Nessa Hyams' "The Great Switcheroo," which is adapted from a Roald Dahl short story, two men decide to switch beds in the middle of the night without telling their wives. One wife, Mary, tells her husband, Vic, that the previous night of lovemaking awakened her sexuality. Hyams' adaptation acknowledges women as sexual beings in their own right, and

⁶⁹ Arthur, Karen. <apfilm1@aol.com>. "Bio & Resume." Attachments: "Karen Arthur—Bio" and "Karen Arthur Resume." Private e-mail message to the author. 21 June 2007.

⁷⁰ Kathleen Nolan, ACT FOUR, Directing Workshop for Women, Conservatory Archives, The Louis B. Mayer Library, American Film Institute, Los Angeles, California. [unpublished videocassette collection]

⁷¹ The plot of Nolan's film has an interesting parallel to Julia Phillips' experience directing her film. Phillips thought she was going to get Richard Dreyfuss to play the lead role, but when he came down with pneumonia after filming *Jaws*, she gave the role to her boyfriend. She could tell he was ruining her film, and she later discovered it was because he was a heroin addict. However, unlike Nolan's protagonist, she did not fire him during the shoot. Julia Phillips, *You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again*, (New York: Random House, 1991), 175.

undermines the husband's plot to relish his own virility by cheating on his wife.⁷² Norman Lear, the famed writer and producer for 1970s sit-coms, hired Hyams to direct several episodes of *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman* after seeing her DWW project. As Hyams wrote to Haag, "On that basis, he gave me a chance. Unbelievable!"⁷³

The most technically skilled project from the first cycle is Lee Grant's "The Stronger."⁷⁴ Adapted from a one-act August Strindberg play, the film stars Susan Strasberg, whose character is Madam X, and Dolores Dorn, whose character is Mademoiselle Y. The women are old friends and theater actresses, though Madam X is more successful. Throughout the film, Madam X is the only one who speaks; Mademoiselle Y listens, fidgets uncomfortably, and fosters the film's building tension with her silence.

Madam X, who is married to a theater actor, says of her husband, "He is faithful to me...All the women in the company are mad about my husband...Wouldn't be surprised if you'd run after him yourself. I know he was never attracted to you."⁷⁵ The irony, of course, is that Mademoiselle Y is having an affair with Madam X's husband. During this discussion, Grant's deft camera work adds to the tension of the scene. Filmed in one shot, the camera moves clockwise as Madam X begins her monologue, ending on Mademoiselle Y's profile, then slowly

⁷² Nessa Hyams, *THE GREAT SWITCHAROO*, Directing Workshop for Women, Conservatory Archives, The Louis B. Mayer Library, American Film Institute, Los Angeles, California. [unpublished videocassette collection]

⁷³ "Hyams to Haag," May 14, 1976, folder 3489, box 536, series 200R, RG 1.6, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

⁷⁴ As stated earlier, scholars cannot watch many of the films from the first several cycles, as no one has transferred all of them to any modern medium. Other tapes are broken or have extremely poor sound and visual quality, but about half of the films from the first cycle are available for viewing. Therefore, Grant's film is the most technically skilled film that I was able to actually watch.

⁷⁵ Lee Grant, *THE STRONGER*, Directing Workshop for Women, Conservatory Archives, The Louis B. Mayer Library, American Film Institute, Los Angeles, California. [unpublished videocassette collection]

moving counterclockwise, ending on Madam X's profile. When Madam X realizes her friend is having intimate relations with her husband, she shoves her hand in Mademoiselle Y's profile and screams, "Don't say a word! Don't you speak to me!"⁷⁶ At this point, the long shot ends, the camera pans out, and the audience sees both of the women suspended in the climactic moment of the next scene, in which they are silent, still, weeping.⁷⁷

Grant saw beyond Strindberg's misogynist storyline, which entails two women fighting because they are in love with the same man. In her film, which she completed after the first cycle of the DWW with a \$10,000 AFI Independent Filmmaker Grant, Grant saw a story about two women who loved each other. At the end of the film, after the vicious argument, she added a dream sequence of Madam X and Mademoiselle Y recounting their erotic and gentle moments together. A *Hollywood Reporter* reviewer called Grant's film "an exquisite gem—from the music to the photography to the editing."⁷⁸

The AFI chose Grant's "The Stronger" as one of the ten best film projects ever produced at the AFI (including films from the CAFS). Despite all the praise and attention, Grant left Los Angeles in 1980 because "it was really impossible for a woman to be a director in this town [Los Angeles]...I said I want to direct, it was like I was suddenly talking about channeling. I could see, like a kind of, you know, I could see the horror grow...it was like a giant fart had, like, enveloped me."⁷⁹ She continued, "I said none of this is going to work. Let's go to New York

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Unfortunately, this scene is also the end of the videocassette. Although there are 20 more minutes of the project, the entire film was not transferred to VHS.

⁷⁸ Gerry Levin, "Movie Review: The Stronger," *Hollywood Reporter*, 8 December 1976. Lee Grant discusses her experience directing "The Stronger" in her memoirs, *I Said Yes to Everything: A Memoir* (New York: Blue Rider Press, 2014), 298-299.

⁷⁹ "HLMS Lee Grant 10/20/1989, #89-25," Harold Lloyd Master Seminar, Special Collections, The Louis B. Mayer Library, American Film Institute, Los Angeles, California. [unpublished cassette tape collection]

and get out of here because I am not going to be able to break down anything in this town [Los Angeles].”⁸⁰ Shortly after Grant moved to New York in 1980, HBO contracted her to direct a documentary.⁸¹

Grant was not the only DWW student whose acclaimed film could not promise a future as a Hollywood director. During the DWW’s second cycle from 1975-1977, Dyan Cannon, Academy Award nominee for Best Supporting Actress in *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice*, invested \$25,000 to transfer her DWW project, “Number One,” from video to film.⁸² Examining the ways in which adults stifle children’s natural curiosities about their bodies and the bodies of the opposite sex, the project received an Academy Award nomination for Best Short Film in 1977. The *San Francisco Chronicle* published an article called “Cannon’s First Film Is Remarkable,” in which the journalist stated, “[I]t is the children [actors], all non-professionals, who, in their innocence and misery, are vivid, idelible (sic) and so natural that the *cinema verite* illusion of the film...is complete.”⁸³ The reviewer also mentions Cannon’s “realistic” plans to direct a film for a studio; however, Cannon did not direct another film until 1990, *The End of Innocence*, which she also wrote.

Despite its unstable financial beginnings, the Rockefeller Foundation increased its funding for the second cycle, which received more media attention than the first, to \$100,000,

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² “The American Film Institute Directing Workshop for Women Annual Report—January 1979,” Jan Haag Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, The Blagg-Huey Library, Texas Woman’s University, Denton, Texas. Marjorie Rosen’s 1977 article for *Ms. Magazine* states that Cannon “spent \$60,000 of her own money putting it [“Number One”] on film so that it might qualify for an Academy Award (it won a nomination in 1976) and be a springboard for a new career.” Marjorie Rosen, “From the Folks Who Are Taking over Hollywood,” *Ms. Magazine*. December 1977, 50-53 and 105-107.

⁸³ John Wasserman, “Cannon’s First Film Is Remarkable,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 October 1976.

but turned down Haag's grant proposal for a third cycle.⁸⁴ In a private handwritten note, Joel Colton, the Director of the Humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation, instructed Lydia Bronte, the Assistant Director of the Humanities, to decline Haag's grant proposal. He stated, "I don't think they should be encouraged to expect anything further from RF [Rockefeller Foundation]. (We've always been somewhat self-conscious because we have been helping some very well-to-do women.)"⁸⁵ In the initial planning stages, helping successful women become directors was exactly what "delighted" the Rockefeller Foundation about Haag's proposal. The wealth and fame of some of its students not only angered many working-class and middle-class feminists, but also changed the Rockefeller Foundation's attitude toward awarding them funding. But the DWW could not sustain its popularity beyond 1979. In 1980 for its fourth cycle, the AFI's new director, Jean Firstenberg, no longer allowed famous actresses admission, and predictably, the media stopped covering DWW women and their films. Additionally, in 1982 Haag left AFI and moved to New York, and later to India, to pursue a career as a writer.⁸⁶

In spite of the qualifications many DWW graduates held, studios were loath to hire them as directors for commercial films. Many of them, though, directed episodes of sit-coms and documentaries. For example, Lee Grant became a successful documentary filmmaker after she moved to New York, and Lynne Littman directed several documentaries, for which she won an

⁸⁴ For the second cycle, Julia Phillips also donated \$10,000 to the program. "Ten Chosen for AFI's Directing Workshop for Women," October 1975, folder 3489, box 536, series 200R, RG 1.6, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. Julia Phillips also donated \$10,000, and Lee Grant donated \$3,000 as seed money for the fourth cycle in 1979. Louise Sweeney, "Lights! Camera! Affirmative Action!" *Christian Science Monitor*, 14 August 1979.

⁸⁵ Colton to Bronte, memo June 16, 1976, folder 3490, box 537, series 200R, RG 1.6, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. Underlining in original.

⁸⁶ In 2014, Haag published a 600-page volume of poetry entitled *Ascesis*. "Letters, Good-bye from AFI," Jan Haag Papers; Haag, "Women Directors in Hollywood," 2007; and Jan Haag <jjhaag@gmail.com>, "DWW Article, Private e-mail message to the author, 2 April 2015.

Academy Award in 1977. Karen Arthur currently owns her own film company with her husband in New York and also directs documentaries. However, in spite of these success stories, studios remain reluctant to hire women directors. In 1974, when the DWW began, less than one percent of working directors were women; in 2013, after the DWW had operated for nearly forty years, women directors accounted for six percent of the top 250 films produced.⁸⁷

The Directing Workshop for Women, a program intended to help normalize the idea of a woman director emerged at the intersection of feminism, fame, race, and class. Though various groups of women believed in gender equality, they could not agree on how to attain it, nor could they agree on who should benefit from it. The DWW sparked protests and bitterness, gratitude and ambivalence, impacting the ways in which film industry feminists engaged with the women's rights movement and with each other. The fact that many of these women's films are unavailable to researchers testifies to their marginalization within the film industry and within narratives of film history, and serves as a metaphor for the conditions surrounding the DWW's existence. Just as the original films lie hidden away in an archive that can no longer view them, the DWW trains women directors to work in an industry that is reluctant to hire them.

⁸⁷ Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, San Diego State University, Quoted in Patty West <pwest@afi.com>, "AFI," Attachment: "AFI Directing Workshop for Women History," Private e-mail message to the author, 9 April 2015.