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BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

The present volume represents a unique contribution to the history of publishing in Russia, and will expand general understanding of this field as it pertains to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Excellent book-length studies have mentioned many of the activities chronicled here, yet the present articles add meaningful background and flesh out the field. Also, as any work in a marginality field, it helps move the focus more centrally to an otherwise overlooked contribution of the work under discussion.

If women’s studies, falling under marginality studies – a more modern term encompassing the “socially determined cultural complex formed historically” – still bears the burden of a historical apathy, the cultural prejudice largely left unexamined in “mainstream” scholarship remains an issue in such specialized investigations. Such specialized work provides the necessary groundwork to create a more thorough, well-rounded perspective in mainstream scholarship.

The tendency in literary studies is to exclude “groups” which might be studied under a more sociological purview, thus any indication that a “group” deserves more central interest is met with suspicion, even hostility. However, the sociological and cultural boundaries, historically proven, have not abated and...


2. Gender studies encompass enormous areas, including empire, violence, education, political movements, and social conflicts in addition to more theoretically grounded works on gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity studies; race studies in the U.S. have evolved into subsets of African-American men, African-American women, non-conspicuous racial stereotype discrimination, among others.

3. Early theoretical studies by DeBeauvoir, Woolf, were followed by Kristeva, Moi, Gilbert and Gubar, and Paglia. Barbara Heldt is considered the pioneer in Russian women’s studies.
some of even the most convincing demonstrations of marginalizing factors may not achieve their objective to ensconce their subject in mainstream scholarship. The effort to adjust one's perceptions and recreate a fuller, more realistic history in retrospect must be made universally, and the present work will relieve a great burden for scholars interested in the field of publishing in Russia by providing extremely rare information and original insights regarding the matter, over the course of the last one hundred fifty years.

Clark's article introduces the history of women publishers, expanding on the work of the Lisovskiis, and providing an overview of the women publishers active from the 1860s to the early twentieth-century. It will probably come as a surprise for most scholars that almost one in ten publishers in this period in St. Petersburg and Moscow were women, and the range of their publications spans the entire gamut of the late imperial Russian press. Reporting that the early twentieth century brought new periodic literary forms to prominence, Clark points out how special interest periodicals and the illustrated "thin" journals provided additional entrée for women publishers and also commercial possibilities. The focus of these publications was primarily reader interest, and advertising covered a goodly portion of the production overhead and their intention diverged from earlier publishing, with commercial interests replacing tendentious purpose.

While ostensibly a matter of record, the publications themselves and the history of their production in the hands of women is not widely recognized. Some women received this role as part of a legacy from their families; others worked very assiduously on their own to become a part of this process. The work of these women succeeded in influencing directions within the publishing establishment by its very appearance, and must be seen as having a profound meaning in the course of historical events, both by presenting their subject in print and by being widely seen as commercially involved women. However, the women publishers Clark describes are virtually unknown in present day scholarship, through no lack of principle or strength of their own.

Ruthchild provides an overview of the history of feminist journals at the turn of the twentieth century. Publications containing feminist writing at this time across the Western world began to emerge with greater success, indicating that the most advanced readers and members of the most enlightened social strata were interested in the writing. Problems of sponsors, patronage, and the wealth of their readership plagued publishing about the "women question" directly as feminist journals were "too specialized." This very problem remains an issue throughout the history of women's publishing, as the other articles in the present volume demonstrate also.

4. Unfortunately, the total readership of these publications has not been tabulated. However, published work tends to be absorbed into other cultural areas.