1989

Cheris Kramarae 1989 Visit

Suzanne Condray
Denison University

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May 9, 1988

Margot Duley
Women's Studies

Dear Margot:

The Speech Communication Department is recommending that Women's Studies Committee bring Cheris Kramarae to campus as a part of the curriculum seminars.

Dr. Kramarae has published widely on the topic of Language and Gender. In addition to the numerous articles she has published in professional journals she is the author of Women and Men Speaking, Language, Gender and Society, and A Feminist Dictionary. The 180 page annotated bibliography which is included in Language, Gender and Society, attests to Kramarae's knowledge and familiarity with research in this area.

While Cheris Kramarae is presently associated with the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Illinois, her work is well known to those in other disciplines, including English, Psychology, and Sociology. I believe she would draw participants from a variety of disciplines on our campus. If I am not mistaken, I believe Sandy Runzo may have worked with Kramarae at Illinois.

I have heard the nominee speak on several occasions at the Speech Communication Association national meetings and have talked with her informally as well. I highly endorse her nomination for a curriculum seminar.

Cordially,

[Signature]

Suzanne E. Condray
Dear Suzanne:

This is to confirm the willingness of the Women's Studies Committee to underwrite the visit of Dr. Cheris Kramarae to Denison during the 1989-90 academic year. Our contribution will be $500. Unfortunately our grant cannot carry over into the next academic year. When you settle on a date and format, please let me know.

During the Spring Semester, I will be away on an R.C. Good Fellowship. Robin Bartlett will be Acting Director of Women's Studies. If you have questions at that time regarding the visit, please contact Robin.

We appreciate the interest of the Speech-Communications Department in sponsoring a Women's Studies scholar.

Yours sincerely,

Margot I. Duley
Director of Women's Studies

$500 from RC Good fund.
March 21, 1989

Robin Bartlett
Women Studies Coordinator

Dear Robin:

In the spring of 1988 the Women Studies Committee voted to support the Speech Communication Department's recommendation that Cheris Kramarae be invited to campus to present a Women Studies/Departmental seminar. I pursued that invitation only to discover that Chéris would be on leave at the University of Oregon for the 1988-89 academic year.

The Department would like to request that Cheris Kramarae be invited to present a Women Studies seminar in the fall of 1989. We make this recommendation in keeping with the 10th anniversary celebration. Cheris Kramarae has written extensively on gender issues in language. She is the author of Women and Men Speaking, Language Gender and Society, and A Feminist Dictionary. She is presently affiliated with the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Illinois.

We would expect to use her in a couple of courses including possibly Voice and Diction, and Women Minority in the Media. In addition, we would invite those colleagues for English, Psychology, Sociology and other disciplines to join us in a faculty seminar.

Margot Duley had confirmed a willingness to underwrite Kramarae's visit to Denison during 1989-90 and committed $500 from the Women Studies budget. However, she also indicated in her letter of November 4, 1988 that the grant could not carry over into the next academic year. Since I am confused about this authorization, I would like to request that you investigate this matter and also consider our request in lieu of Sam Thios' letter of February 20. Since Kramarae is coming from Illinois I would anticipate a commitment of no more than $700 for travel and honorarium.

Cordially,

Suzanne E. Condry
Chairperson
Feminists track language, power

By Kenneth Warren


A Feminist Dictionary is a highly polemical reference book that eschews traditional values of authority, codification and method. Its editors refuse to abide by traditional lexicographical standards and ground their book on a feminist recognition of men's purposeful control of women through the standard convention of dictionary making.

Put simply, dictionary "•

Dictionary makers Cheris Kramarae, Paula A. Treichler, researchers at the University of Illinois, hope their dictionary "will be used as women work to name and analyze specific structural oppressions and work for revolutionary change." From a broader ideological viewpoint, radical feminist and Marxist ideas regarding women's oppression and economic dependence within the family influence various "definitions" in the dictionary while pluralism (something we've come to accept in mainstream feminist thinking) permits a range of racial perspectives and sexual provocations.

In their valuable introduction, Kramarae and Treichler explain that A Feminist Dictionary "insists upon the significance of women as speaking subjects and documents their linguistic contributions." With this primary concern with how language is used and understood by women, they note that dictionaries in the past have been tools of power and control, and that this dictionary seeks to redefine language and the way it is used.

The making of a dictionary, of course, is an exercise in intellectual and academic power, and the editors of A Feminist Dictionary are aware of this. However, they also recognize the potential of dictionaries to empower and liberate.

The editors of A Feminist Dictionary are concerned with the ways in which language is used to control and oppress women, and they seek to create a dictionary that reflects this consciousness. They aim to provide a resource that can help women understand and challenge the ways in which language is used to maintain power and control.

In this respect, A Feminist Dictionary is an essential resource for anyone interested in language and power. It challenges traditional notions of what constitutes a dictionary and what purposes it might serve, and it offers a new way of thinking about language and power. The editors of this dictionary are to be commended for their work, and we encourage readers to explore its pages and gain a new understanding of the role of language in our society.