# Article review

Linguistics, English

Article Review: When Computers Were Women and Light, Jennifer, S. " When Computers Were Women." Technology and Culture, 1999: 455-483.

Light 1provides a crucial role of women in the development of first electronic computers called ENIAC. ENIAC's development involved numerous young women to automate ballistics computations in the World War II. Six out of these women were programmers of a machine such that it would take their name and replace them. In the end, the machine became more celebrated thatn them. However, the omission of women in the history of computer science contributes to misconception of the interest of women in the computer science field. In order to fill this gap, Light explains female technicians' role in the evolution of programming jobs that are currently known as male dominated jobs2. From Light, women's involvement in the history of computers was demonstrated by media as involved in the breaking of ancient male occupations within science, engineering, and technology. In its role, media minimized the celebration of women's participation in actual technology invention work during wartime by describing it as just subprofessional occupations. During the World War II literature, the employement of women involved programs like new military and civilian women's program through which women landed into different jobs. The need for women engineers and scientists is growing both government and industry.

Light's focus is to emphasize the need for women in engineering and scientific courses. This is evident in the available sources that include information about women prior to affirmative action. During this time, women in the labor market did not mean equality with men but the

definiation of the role of women in the labor market that never resulted promotions or advancements in the labor market. These women were just standing in for male employees who had gone to war. In this regards, women never acquired status symbols of engineers or scientists nor did publications highlight the contributions of women in photographs . in addition, some industries developed occupational segregation where some job opportunities opened for women but generally as clerks who just assisted men. However, sources revealed that it was women, with college education who constituted the majority of the those working with computers and taking on tasks considered to be too tedious by college educated men. The presence of technology also led to the entry of women into paid labor with machines causing work reorganization thus new occupations that never directly substituted what men did3. Though women were considered to work in assistant positions during computer creation, their tasks involved high level of mathematical skills including solving nonlinear differential equations of numerous variables. The created computers could then be used to calculate a trajectory from several hours to days. In addition, mathematical computations required integration skills.

However, the work by women proved more complex with time and required women to engage in learning of machine’s circuitry, operation, and physical structure. in such cases, women had to learn by doing like the case of wiring control boards for multiple punchcard machines. However, there was little material publicized to bring into attention and credit women for their work. This contradicted the publicity of male officers and engineers linked to the project. In some literature, women were percieved as substitutes not like

metal but like plastic whose roles would only be abandoned after the war.

Bibliography

Light, Jennifer, S. " When Computers Were Women." Technology and Culture, 1999: 455-483.