

## BOOK ANNOTATIONS

THE ANATOMY OF FREEDOM: FEMINISM IN FOUR DIMENSIONS. By Robin Morgan. Second edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994. Pp. xvii, 369. \$10.95.

In *The Anatomy of Freedom*, feminist poet, writer, and activist Robin Morgan proposes that feminism can go beyond seeking freedom for women to altering the dynamics of all human interaction. Morgan posits an expanded four-dimensional feminist movement, and in a fluid, loosely-organized fashion she explores these dimensions: political, scientific, personal, and readiness for freedom. Morgan attempts to describe a four-dimensional, holographic feminist freedom, proposing that feminism is the key to survival and a tool for enlightenment and evolution in all areas of human life. The great issues that challenge the human race (gender, global politics, family, economics, the environment, childhood, and aging) are all interconnected within the hologram of the feminist vision. Morgan thus seeks to reaffirm the need for the feminist movement and to inspire feminists, both men and women, to rejuvenate it.

A major theme of *The Anatomy of Freedom* involves the influence of New Physics. The holographic, rather than deterministic, character of new quantum physics provides a pointed analogy for both feminism and freedom; all three dramatically alter our perceptions of reality. In physics, new themes have emerged: that the universe is more like a great thought than a great machine; that the border of physics and metaphysics is permeable; that the universe is energy, and is simultaneously discrete and interrelated. The New Physics helps us to visualize a new reality, and to break away intellectually from the mire of the inevitable status quo.

Morgan notes that for the span of human life on earth, men have defined "Woman." She urges individual women to battle against the image of "Woman" thrust upon them by men and to determine their own self-images. Women must move beyond both mindless conformance and reflexive rejection of the female stereotype and take pride in the beauty and uniqueness of their bodies. Morgan relates her own self-analysis of body image as an example of what women should do to analyze and appreciate their own bodies, irrespective of the image of "Woman" saturating their environment.

Morgan offers a methodology for the modern feminist, noting that women need not forsake the good things men assigned to "Woman" (nurturing, patience, humility, altruism, tolerance, intuition, cooperation, practicality) just because they have been so assigned. Feminists define freedom as they proceed, in the movement and energy *they* generate, in

getting to places *they* judge are good places to go. They must not forget to work inside *and* outside the system, using the patriarchal language and definitions of freedom and success as well as their own.

To Morgan, the feminist vision is about love, an energetic love that demands change. Morgan then illuminates how women's style of political and social change reflects women's style of lovemaking. While men's method of revolution could be described as ejaculatorily abrupt, prematurely undertaken, and "mostly impotent in bringing about real change," women's might be more languid, more attentive to detail and mutual readiness, and more respectful of other participants. Women might be more eager to learn which social changes are desired and which will work, because women's lovemaking require continuous effort, adjustment and responsiveness. Women's skills—of lovemaking and change-making—develop with practice, reaching, as Morgan puts it, an act of real revolution that can be "returned to again and again."

Morgan also explores the idea that sexual intelligence has as its components curiosity and desire, which can translate into energy and power. Thus, sexual intelligence, and the energy it represents, are as dangerous to the status quo as freedom itself. Describing women's primary role as conduits of reproduction artificially but effectively separated sexuality from intelligence, and kept women controlled by their definition as sexual, nonintelligent beings. At the same time, sexual intelligence was trivialized, overly simplified, and made deterministic. This sexual fundamentalism either suppresses sex because sex carries and communicates joyous power, or denudes sex of its joy, thereby rendering it powerless.

Through illustrative myth and fairy tale, Morgan points out that, in our society, the construct of romanticism has crippled the energy of women's sexual intelligence; likewise, men's sexual intelligence has been crippled by eroticized violence. The problem is exacerbated by the proliferation of both romanticism and eroticized violence in the freshly-corporatized "New Pornocracy," which has acknowledged that its success is tied to the resurgence of conservatism in America.

Addressing eroticized violence, Morgan notes that the same thinking that regards sport as an outlet for physical aggression defines pornography as an outlet for sexual aggression. Both analyses ignore the historical fact that violence-as-play, even if intended to remedy exceptional behavior, reinforces the notion of violence as normal and acceptable. It is obvious that violence, shame, abuse, and humiliation have nothing to do with real trust, real sexual joy, or real sensual freedom. This unfortunate separation of feeling from sexuality allows pornography and violence to flourish.

Addressing cultural feminism's romanticism, Morgan notes that modern women face a problem in deciding which parts to affirm and which to denounce as institutional stereotyping. She proposes that, just as each woman should assess her own body to determine what she finds beautiful, she

should explore her own feelings to discover that which she finds truly erotic. Morgan believes that affirming women's personal preferences in this way will ultimately lead to more authentic sexual dynamics in society.

The author tackles the seeming mutual exclusivity of sexual passion and committed relationships. She compares the prevailing idea of spontaneous sexual passion to a two dimensional painting of vibrant, wild slashes of color, and likens marriage to a hologram of muted, smoky "Turneresque" tones. Morgan then challenges this dichotomy, maintaining that sags in committed relationships can lead either to an end, or to opportune implosion of new experimentation, passion, and spontaneity more exhilarating than anything possible in two dimensions—brightening the hologram's colors to create a thing of beauty to which the painting's colors pale in comparison. She relates as an example her own passionate extramarital affair, which ultimately led her to a renewed joy in the familiarity of marriage.

In this vein, Morgan notes that feminists have questioned the institution of marriage and advocates that they reclaim it, in a refined form, as a positive option for expressing human love and satisfying human needs. She describes and lauds many aspects of marriage, including the security and comfort of the committed sharing of resources and the rewards of overcoming misunderstanding and achieving tenderness and empathy.

Since the relationship between the sexes is the genesis of all human anguish, says Morgan, feminists must begin by reforming the mini-universe of marriage and move outward from there. She recommends that, just as the New Physics generates new, nonmechanistic, nondeterministic perspectives of the universe, we must experiment with radically new approaches to committed relationships and strive to create an ideal complementarily in marriage. This approach should not fuse the two individuals into one, but rather exist as an interconnected, respectful, and nourishing partnership.

On the concept of family, Morgan advises that the structure of the family has never been static. She favors conserving the family by freeing it from fixed categories so that it may continue to respond to the human need for trust, warmth, intimacy, endurance, and shared history. Although women will be loath to relinquish the one power they have always been allowed, Morgan believes that women will ultimately benefit from the changed gender dynamic that will arise from exposing men to childcare responsibility. In addition, Morgan extends the idea of family, advocating that women everywhere view each other as sisters. As women worldwide suffer similar oppression, they should strive to transcend other differences in the pursuit of their common goals.

Morgan emphasizes the importance of perspective when dealing with the issues of childhood and aging. For example, maintaining awareness that we too were once children, and that we will all die, should help clarify our lives and inspire us to ask how we can best use and cherish our time

here. She cautions us to counteract the effects of the ubiquitous sexism on children, both male and female. We must also remember how we felt as children, and treat children with corresponding respect. Regarding the elderly, pretending that we are old will help us to realize that what others think means much less than the young think it does, and reminds us to treat the elderly with the respect and care that we will one day desire.

In addition, Morgan points out the breathtaking advance of technology and its potential for harmful as well as beneficent effects. More and more, she feels, "[t]he power to shape the future lies with the new technologies." She notes that, in developing countries, local traditions that help women, such as matrifocal land ownership, are rejected in the name of progress, even as those that hurt women, such as genital mutilation practice, have been maintained out of supposed respect for tradition. Morgan advises women to embrace technology and learn its language, so that they may evaluate it and help guide its wise use towards the constructive development of all of humanity.

The New Right attacks feminism as a threat to the status quo, and with good reason. Morgan advises feminists to now more than ever keep abreast of politics, stay involved, work within and without the system, strike by day and night, avail themselves of scientific knowledge, network, develop humor, listen to their own curiosity and desire and to the wisdom of their dreams, analyze the hologramatic depths of their committed relationships, realize that humankind exists in kinship, and recognize the child we once were and the aged we will soon be. Morgan writes to inspire feminists to do everything they can to keep women's issues, which are humanity's issues, on the table, urging them not to despair if they feel they lack leadership, as the motion of the feminist movement reflects the implicit disorder of the universe revealed by the New Physics. This is the way change happens.

Morgan thinks we have a choice in the creation of the world, and urges us to live as if we do.

*Lisa E. Graham*

**BLUE POLITICS: PORNOGRAPHY AND THE LAW IN THE AGE OF FEMINISM.**

By Dany Lacombe. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1994. Pp. xii, 229. \$18.95.

In *Blue Politics*, Dany Lacombe, assistant professor at the Simon Fraser University School of Criminology in British Columbia, Canada, analyzes the contentious politics of legal reform in pornography censorship. Using feminists' success in reforming obscenity law as an example, she purports to demonstrate that the state is not an overarching power regulating social relations and repressing social agents. Rather, power arises from relations between the state and other agents. Within the context of these

relations, the state can be influenced by them. Law reform is one medium that enables social agents to transform institutional practices.

The book is divided into two main sections. Part one traces the emergence of a feminist position on pornography. Throughout the 1960s, the debate focused on the sex that was depicted in pornography. Believing these depictions of sex to be immoral, conservatives argued for censorship. In stark contrast, civil libertarians fought against censorship, maintaining that sexual depictions were liberating. The feminist concern with pornography, however, was not that the films depicted sex; it was that they were *sexist*. The development of the feminist position changed the focus of the debate to the detrimental effect pornography had on women. According to pro-censorship feminists, the meaning of pornography is not subject to interpretation: pornography means, and leads to, women's oppression.

A number of factors, including the politics of science and interpretation, influenced feminists to urge censorship legislation. As soon as scientific evidence corroborated the link between pornography and violence against women, feminists used this argument to their advantage. Lacombe maintains that an appeal to science is not the best way to discover the truth about pornography, because the results of scientific research on pornography's effects are influenced by the particular expectations of the audience at the time. She also directly challenges the feminist interpretation of scientific findings.

Lacombe ultimately disagrees with the feminist pro-censorship position. According to Lacombe, the problem with feminist anti-pornography politics is that they universalize gender and, thus, do not allow for the diversity of women's views. By ignoring differences among women's opinions, the feminist anti-pornography position prevents women from pursuing liberty and equality.

One interesting implication of this viewpoint reflects Lacombe's broader, more theoretical view of power relations. Social agents can institute change only by allowing for difference. Therefore, Lacombe is particularly impressed by a group she labels "feminists against censorship," who advocate not for censorship, but for direct empowerment of women by providing them with rape crisis centers, facilities for sexually assaulted women, and educational opportunities.

Part two of *Blue Politics* addresses the failed attempts at pornography censorship legislation in Canada, despite their strong support from groups such as conservatives and feminists. Bill C-114 in 1986 was the first attempt at pornography law reform in Canada. The bill was a conservative coup, embracing the paradoxical recommendations of the Fraser Committee. These recommendations included criminalizing pornography produced in a way that causes physical harm to the participant, that involves the participation of children, and that is violent and degrading. Additionally, the bill

went beyond the Fraser recommendations and called for censoring pornography that was neither violent nor degrading. Civil libertarians and feminists for and against censorship attacked the bill because of its focus on sex and not on sexism. Lacombe attributes the ultimate downfall of the Bill to the influence of the new Minister of the Department of Justice who was more receptive to the discontent over the bill.

The 1987 Bill C-54 was more of a compromise between feminist and conservative concerns. This bill had a narrower definition of pornography but made it criminal to display erotica in a public place. It encountered strong opposition from civil libertarians and some conservatives. A surprising revolt came from librarians, who feared criminal sanctions if, by their occupation, they were found to be "displaying erotica in a public place." This powerful disdain doomed the bill to failure. Lacombe links these results to her view of power relations. Because the feminists ignored diversity, their pro-censorship position was unable to institute social change.

The feminist position, however, did receive some support from the Canadian Supreme Court decision of *Regina v. Butler*, 89 D.L.R. 4th 449 (1992). This Court upheld the Canadian law in its present state and discouraged the legislature from promulgating a new pornography censorship law. It did, however, espouse a new test to determine obscenity. The court's test focuses on the harm pornography does to society, specifically defining harm as degradation to women. According to Lacombe, this decision shows the power of feminists, in that they were able to replace the law's traditional moral understanding of harm to a conception of harm based on equality.

*Blue Politics* makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the pornography debate generally, the feminist view on the issue, and the failed censorship legislation in Canada. Lacombe makes an optimistic and inspiring appeal to our ability as democratic citizens to influence power relations and ultimately institute social change.

*Sara J. Goldstein*

ENGENDERING MODERNITY: FEMINISM, SOCIAL THEORY, & SOCIAL CHANGE. By Barbara L. Marshall. Boston, Massachusetts: Northeastern University Press, 1994. Pp. x, 197. \$14.95.

Barbara L. Marshall has written a book that looks at modern theory's inadequate treatment of women. She describes the failures of modern social theory, western Marxism, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, and the Frankfurt school to contend with gender difference. She also summarizes the attempts of feminist writers to reclaim parts of those "malestream" writers for their own ends, often unsuccessfully. This book, *Engendering*

*Modernity*, is dense and theoretical. Yet, for those who persevere, she provides a good, hard feminist look at both the contemporary theoretical landscape and current feminist thought. She is straightforward about arguing for the centrality of feminist theory to the development of social theory. Marshall believes the value of this project lies in defining a truly critical theory committed to the critique of all forms of domination and distortion.

She begins with a critique of the first sociologists, such as Durkheim, Weber, and Simmel, as well as more recent theorists writing in that tradition, such as Giddens and Habermas. Marshall finds their theories of the modern world tied to male norms. They believed the key changes of the modern age were the separation of the household and the economy, and the subsequent gender differentiation in the economy. In this model, family is merely the moral regulator of, or the haven for, the male individual. Marshall believes that industrialized, capitalist society fostered the seeming disappearance of women and children into a culture dominated by white, wealthy men and largely based on a reification of economic individualism.

Marshall is interested particularly in theories that attempt to account for the gendered division of labor in order to critique flawed assumptions about gender, work, and class that animate the old-school theories. These assumptions rested on a narrow conception of labor, neglected the degree to which gender divisions shaped labor, and viewed the separation of gender and economic processes in an antiquated way. Marshall critiques the work of Talcott Parsons and the human capital theory of neo-classical economics for ignoring the contribution of women to national economic processes. To Parsons, women's wage labor and domestic labor is of cultural, not economic, import. The employed woman, and especially the employed mother, became ideologically constructed as social problems, not economic forces.

Building on the work of others, Marshall believes that gender cannot simply be categorized by dividing the working class into a primary male and a secondary female labor market, because gender affects the assignment of skill levels and the forms of authority and control that are used in the workplace.

Additionally, she questions the utility of class analysis as a method of dealing with social inequality. She concludes that the separation of the family from the state, and the further separation of the family from the economy, were historical and not natural divisions. It is not merely that capitalism and patriarchy influenced one another's development, but that capitalism was partly constituted out of the opportunities created by gender relations and differentiation.

The final section of *Engendering Modernity* deals with the modern conception of the human subject. The problem, as Marshall sees it, is that the subject can mean an individual with subjectivity, or it can describe one

who is under the authority of another. Foucault and other post-structuralists say that these two views are the same, but feminist theorists have a strong interest in separating them. The Frankfurt school attempted to contend with subjectivity through a synthesis of Marx and Freud and by developing a theory of the individuated autonomous ego. This conceptualization has been criticized by leading feminists such as Carol Gilligan, Selya Benhabib, and Jessica Benjamin for lacking a conception of intersubjectivity. They criticize descriptions of the individual that do not take into account the experiences of mutuality and relatedness, or the recognition of the particularity of others. They contrast that male view of the individuated subject with a feminist concern for our fundamental inter-relatedness.

Marshall critiques this particular feminist opinion, however, finding that, while these writers do uncover masculine bias, they also reify gender polarity as essentially biological. She finds all forms of feminist essentialism as necessarily based in the biological, because any attempt to define the category of women and the differences from men has to rely on a theory of fundamental biological difference. Sometimes this reliance on biology is explicit, as with Shulamith Firestone, Mary Daly, and Adrienne Rich. Others try to articulate a philosophical or historical essentialism based on a differentiated consciousness or a historical division of labor. Marshall finds these attempts unsatisfactory, contending that all essentialism has to be rooted in the biological as a starting point.

In response to this question of defining of the category of "woman," Marshall relies heavily on Linda Alcoff's conceptualization of the problematics of feminist constructions of the subject. She and other post-structuralist feminists deconstruct the very possibility of the category. Julia Kristeva suggests that "woman" can only exist as a subject in process. Similarly, Judith Butler defines gender as performative, constituted through acting it.

Marshall is careful, though, not to advocate a wholesale acceptance of the post-structuralist move. She believes it untenable to suggest, as Foucault would, that nothing exists outside of its construction in discourse. She suggests coupling deconstruction with "reconstruction" and considering whether essentialism and nominalism are truly exclusive categories. Along with Denise Riley, she uses the term "gendered identities" to recognize plurality, difference, and individual agency. She believes that we should look at gendered structures and gender itself as relational. The context of gender may be variable, even when its salience is persistent.

Her explanation falters somewhat as she nears the end and tries to envision the future of social change movements informed by current theory. Her supposition is that the contribution of feminism to social theory in the realm of positive political action is that it will assure that race, class, and gender concerns do not drop out of the picture as they have before.



Marshall is certainly drawing on the most current writings in critical social and feminist theory. She provides a solid analysis of previous theory and the directions that theory should head in the future in order to avoid replicating the mistakes of the past. Though up-to-date and comprehensive in its review of the field, I do not believe that this work adds much new fuel to currently raging debates about the direction of either social theory or feminism.

*Linda Holmes*

**FEMINIST MORALITY: TRANSFORMING CULTURE, SOCIETY, AND POLITICS.**

By Virginia Held. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993.  
Pp. xi, 285. \$17.95.

*Feminist Morality* is an insightful and impressive inquiry into the potential of a feminist moral system. Virginia Held, professor of philosophy at the City University of New York, provides the reader with novel ways of viewing culture and societal relationships through a feminist lens. Upon her examination of prevailing nonfeminist moral theories, Held recognizes critical deficiencies in their attention to the female person and principles central to a feminist morality. Consequently, she asserts that such theories are inadequate for dealing with most aspects of life and moral experience. Various areas are examined with respect to standard moral choice and are then reconstructed in light of feminist moral principles. These include birth, the media, violence, and liberty, among others.

Held first takes a general look at contemporary moral theory and discusses how a feminist interpretation would differ. She dismisses the former as insufficient due to its quest to propose abstract generalizations involving a rational agent, seemingly losing sight of specific contexts with which everyday life is concerned. She asserts a need to expand moral experiences employed to test moral theories, calling for the inclusion of experiences such as those concerning family and friendships, not merely the conventional regions of law and public policy. A feminist moral theory is depicted as a more encompassing entity that focuses on actual substantive situations—a statement on how to live that does not ignore the importance of relationships, but rather recognizes the significance of judgments based on feelings.

The rift between standard and feminist moral theory is further explored with respect to three different areas: the realms of the public and the private, reason and emotion, and the concept of the self. Held first confronts the traditional notion of woman as part of the private world and man as constituent of the public world, questioning the validity of a decisive removal of women and the family from the polis. However, it is insufficient for women merely to be accepted into the political sphere—a

complete reconceptualization of the private and the public realms must occur.

This analysis is complemented by an investigation of perceptions of culture and nature with respect to gender—an inquiry that surfaces many times throughout Held's work. The association of woman with nature as distinct from man's correlation with culture is discounted by thoughtful and convincing arguments. Held draws upon birth and mothering—activities significant and specific to womanhood—in order to propose a moral theory that embraces such activities as creative, cultural, and thoroughly human processes. Mothering, as the most central social relation, is seen as an effective moral model as compared with the standard of rational, economic man. As such, mothering is not merely a mode of reproduction characterized by repetition and involuntariness. Rather, the decision to be a mother is a conscious choice and is thus distinctively human. A moral theory must embrace the act of birth from a female perspective, so as not to discount the value of a woman's experience.

Held's vision of feminist moral theory attends more to the self in relation to the universal *all* rather than focusing upon a society based on self-interest and acute individualism. She proposes that any moral theory that is a proponent of the latter is highly suspect due to the many affiliations that inevitably constitute our lives. Furthermore, such theories typically fail to adequately recognize the role of emotion in moral choice, viewing the consideration of emotion as unacceptable and quite inferior to the utilization of reason. Held believes that feminist moral theory would focus on the significance of relationships and would "develop around the priority of the flourishing of children in favorable environments."

Held is highly inquisitive, but refreshingly refrains from being overly-critical, discussing issues in a thorough and informative manner. Her examination of the media is an example of such treatment. Although the media is seen as an entity that is biased toward and controlled by those wielding power (typically men), it is offered as a source of liberation and a tool for feminist morality. Such a beneficial use of the media, however, demands a transformation from its present commercialized form, to a more participatory framework—one more receptive to local expression and to the possibility of decisions formulated by the exchange of ideas, rather than by force. Force is commonly associated with the masculine and heroic: virility and violence are often coupled in society's view. In contrast, nurturing is seen as a central goal of feminist morality, with the mothering relationship as a focal point. Thus, the well-being of children guides the basic principles of such an ethic, resulting in the motivation to attain a non-violent world.

Abstract ideas such as liberty and democracy are examined and subsequently lead to the recognition that the accepted standard of a contractual society is antithetical to feminist morality. Held proposes an ethic that

“removes the obstacles to self-development” and views the concerns of women as tantamount to those of men. Such a society removes “economic man” as the representative model and works toward an evaluation of society on the basis of social trust, shared concern, and individual self-development.

Held builds upon the ideas of other feminists and uses her clear grasp of essential issues, observed from a feminist perspective, to emphasize the need to recognize the pervasiveness of gender structure within our society. Although her ideas are sometimes fragmented and repetitive, she provides us with a strong base upon which to work further in the feminist arena. Held does not present a flawless solution; she acknowledges that there are limits to all moral theories and that no single theory is acceptable for all situations. However, her work does provide the reader with a comprehensive and long-awaited definition of feminist morality that serves as a tool for a significant and necessary moral transformation deriving from—and leading to—an appreciation of the female experience.

*Donna DeCostanzo*

**MAKING CONNECTIONS: WOMEN'S STUDIES, WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS, WOMEN'S LIVES.** Edited by Mary Kennedy, Cathy Lubelska, and Val Walsh. London: Taylor & Francis, 1993. Pp. xvi, 210. \$29.00.

*Making Connections* reminds us that women's studies grew out of feminist politics, and that the two remain in a close, if sometimes rocky, relationship. Most of the volume's fifteen short essays on the interplay between women and the study of women are by academics, with other pieces written by teachers, government workers, and theologians.

The book's overarching purpose is to bridge the gap between the academy and women living lives out here in the real world. The authors critique the academy, which is traditionally characterized as a group of aloof researchers, inaccessible to their subjects and under peer pressure to conform to prevailing methods. The authors insist throughout that women's lived experience of oppression is the raw material and driving force for their academic study.

The first section, “Identities and Feminisms,” focuses on the tension among the commonalities and divisions among women. Women share gender, but do not, for example, share race, class, and sexual orientation. This section offers the most sophisticated, academically-oriented analysis in the volume. Section two, “Redefining Knowledge,” attempts less successfully to flesh out ideas around the use of knowledge to perpetuate oppression. The third section, “Feminist Research and Education,” offers interesting case studies of efforts by social workers and others to redistribute power in teacher-student and research-subject situations. The final section, “Feminists: In or Out of the Academy?” asks how feminists in academia stay

alive as functioning feminists and whether the struggle is worth the effort. Unfortunately for those of us embroiled or simply interested in the law, the interdisciplinary work contains no writings on the legal profession, though law would certainly benefit from comment on how knowledge perpetuates power relations.

One of the more fascinating and complex articles is "Between Feminism and Orientalism," by Joanna Liddle and Shirin M. Rai. It draws on Edward Said's concept of "orientalism," an ethnocentricity shaping the way European observers have consistently configured the East as a strange "other." The authors argue that Western feminism's writing and politics with regard to Third World women exhibit a similar cultural blind-spot. They criticize many twentieth-century Western women's writings on India for constructing a unitary view of Indian culture and people as uncivilized and barbaric, and of Indian women as backward and ignorant. The authors demonstrate that certain Western narratives on, for example, Indian child-rearing and family finances, illustrate ways in which patronizing value judgments are expressed in ostensibly objective work.

This exploration comments usefully on the broader challenge of reporting on the familiar and foreign elements of one's own society—part of the academic project of women's studies as it explores the oppression of diverse groups of women who may be like and unlike those studying them. The authors laudably turn their lens on their own discipline, urging consideration of how women's studies as an academic institution is situated in the networks of official discourses and regimes of power. Liddle and Rai also offer a nuanced analysis of the conflicting pulls on some Western feminists to meld identities as women, feminists, members of the non-white majority, and sometimes immigrants. Through many of these ideas have been stated before, this case study and commentary make a powerful call for self-reflection in the writing of women's studies.

Another notable essay is Tamsin Wilton's "Queer Subjects: Lesbians, Heterosexual Women and the Academy." Wilton situates feminist politics at a point where we need to move beyond acknowledging the focus on difference that Liddle and Rai exalt. Wilton's piece seeks to develop a feminism more radical and strategically useful than the "identity politics of postmodern chic." Providing an example of the cyclical nature of politics, she evokes the 1970s feminist battle-cry of universal sisterhood when she criticizes heterosexual women and heterosexual-dominated women's studies. She calls on them to acknowledge what straight and gay women share, and to include lesbians as objects of study and fully accepted participants in feminist studies. As evidence of the need for change, she cites sorrowfully heterosexist examples within women's studies. One such work analyzes how the companionship of women enables men's leisure time and binds women to its demands, ignoring the fact that lesbian women are in an entirely different position with regard to social time (or lack thereof) spent

with men. Ultimately, Wilton argues, "the failure to incorporate lesbian issues and a lesbian perspective seriously weakens our ability to critique, deconstruct and disrupt male power." Opening scholarly arms to lesbians moves us all closer to acceptance and equality for a disempowered group—lesbian women—as it strengthens women in general.

Unfortunately, some of the other articles fail to live up to this high standard. "In God's Image or in Man's Image: A Critique of Patriarchy in Christian Theology," by Lisa Isherwood and Dorothea McEwan, outlines some pro-woman practices of early Christianity and traces the ways church leaders have reshaped them to serve the end of male control. The ambitious manifesto is both rewarding and frustrating. To conclude that critiques of patriarchal religion must start with "reclaim[ing] our own bodies" evokes the most starry-eyed, naive strains of 1970s feminism. The piece does not point specifically enough to challenges feminists can make today to the modern church's positions or nonsexist readings of theology that would encourage women alienated from religion to return to it. References to goddess religion are intriguing, but would have more meaning to a reader new to the subject were history and explanation provided.

At the same time, thinking about Saint Paul's sex-negativity as a last-ditch focus on spirituality to prepare for the imminent coming of the Messiah, and learning about Jesus's acceptance of women as disciples, are news to many of us outside the religious world. True to the book's aim that knowledge should be useful in the real world, such information gives us ammunition to challenge the unrelentingly sexist versions of Judeo-Christianity too many mainstream churches offer today.

Also tantalizing is Sylvia Walby's article, "'Backlash' in Historical Context." Given the widespread attention accorded Susan Faludi's recent tome documenting men's defensive responses to advances by women, I turned to this essay first, thinking it would be timely and controversial. The author contrasts the development over the last few decades in the United Kingdom of a "public patriarchy" versus a move toward "private patriarchy" in the United States. She describes the former as characterized by oppression in the market and politics, contrasted with the American tendency to relegate women to the domestic sphere that Faludi described. The discussion is so conclusory and scant on historical detail, however, that it fails to live up to its ambitious sweep.

The common theme of the essays is the use of knowledge. It is highly valued by these writers, not to put in books on a shelf or explore abstract problems, but as a catalyst for improving the lives of women. Observing that knowledge is power, Liddle and Rai restate the familiar but still relevant case for reminding feminists and their opponents that the personal is political. This volume supports this idea in an accessible and engaged way. It should be noted that *Making Connections* is part of a larger series on a

wide variety of feminist issues; the entire collection should help make these issues more accessible to students and other readers.

*Making Connections* practices what it preaches by wielding knowledge, self-consciously examining how it is wielded, and questioning who, if anyone, should be doing the wielding. Nothing comes closer to the heart of the feminist project.

*Rebecca B. Rosenfeld*

THE MORNING AFTER: SEX, FEAR, AND FEMINISM. By Katie Roiphe. New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1994. Pp. xxiii, 180. \$8.95.

Raised in a home suffused with its spirit, Katie Roiphe learned that feminism meant freedom and liberation from the restrictive, confined roles of the past. However, upon reaching college in the 1980s, Roiphe found a new brand of feminism quite unlike that with which she had grown up. Rather than liberation, this new feminism was about anger. Confronting this strange, new feminism, Roiphe attempted to speak out, yet she soon learned that speech was no longer free. She found that there were now lines that could not be crossed and certain claims that could not be made.

In *The Morning After: Sex, Fear, and Feminism*, Katie Roiphe responds with a fresh, vibrant criticism of current feminist positions on subjects such as campus safety, Take Back the Night marches, date rape, sexual harassment, and pornography. Filled with personal anecdotes from her years as a student, *The Morning After* is less an answer to perceived problems than it is an impassioned cry for change. Roiphe claims that the new feminist orthodoxy, with its unrelenting focus on victimization and its overbroad definitions of rape and sexual harassment, is responsible for casting women back into the same confined roles of the past. She also accuses the new women's movement of creating a new brand of sexual politics in which no real dissent is tolerated. Unfortunately, this claim is validated by many new feminists who have ignored Roiphe's criticisms, refusing to engage in discourse with anyone holding a differing opinion. Katie Roiphe thus offers an important commodity in today's women's movement: a critical voice attacking the increasingly homogenous orthodoxy of the new feminists.

Discussing date-rape, Roiphe attacks the well-known statistic, quoted so often by the new feminists, that one out of four women will be raped during her lifetime. She maintains that this statistic is merely a matter of opinion. Measuring rape is apparently not as straightforward as it seems. Although everyone agrees that rape is a terrible thing, everyone does not agree on what rape is. Definitions thus become the center of heated debate. Roiphe notes that 75% of the victims in the study which gave us the one-in-four statistic did not define their experiences as rape. Instead, it was

the psychologist conducting the study, employing a broad, subjective standard in which any experience bordering on bad or regrettable sex was considered rape, who classified these women's experiences as rape. Apparently, what has changed is not the number of women being raped but only how receptive the political climate is to those numbers.

Roiphe claims that this is the methodology of the new sexual politics: a broad, self-serving definition is developed and past behavior is reinterpreted in light of that definition. According to Roiphe, the new feminists are manufacturing the date-rape crisis, because such dramatic statistics and the perceived crisis lend urgency and authority to their broader cultural critique. Rape is used as a metaphor for the oppression that all women suffer at the hands of all men. Full of emotional appeal, the crisis is a call to arms for the feminist troops.

The true crisis, according to Roiphe, is that there are so many women who believe and fear that the rape crisis is as bad or worse than the new feminists claim. This fear creates a sexual climate in which all men are potential rapists, and all women are potential victims. Roiphe believes such an image of all women as potential victims emphasizes weakness, innocence, and naiveté. As a man, I take offense at the new sexual politics' rhetoric which places all men in the category of potential rapists. While the new feminists fight against false stereotypes, such as "she asked for it," they also employ them whenever it may suit their own ends. However, their ends in this case undermine the position of all women by placing them back into historically weak roles.

Roiphe alleges that the new sexual politics sets out a clear view of the way sex should not be, with a corresponding norm of what sex should be. Gone is any sense of sexual efficacy; this view strips women and men of the power to choose and bring about their own sexual desires. Far from being about violence, the redefinition of rape has turned into a full-scale legislation of sex. As a result, the issue of consent has become a central focus of the rape debate. Politically correct sex now involves a clear, sober "yes." The premise underlying the obsession with active consent is the fear of ambiguity. However, Roiphe feels that to say that sex in the absence of explicit consent is rape, even in the absence of a "no," paints a picture of women who for some reason are incapable of expressing what they want without explicit, sober, unambiguous words. In addition, the image bolsters the stereotype that only men are interested in sex while women must be cajoled into it. An old model of sexuality is thus reborn.

Roiphe points out that the new feminists' definition of rape has found its way into the law. For example, New Jersey's Supreme Court upheld a broad definition of rape, ruling that signs or threat of force are not necessary to prove rape. Likewise, by many modern definitions of date-rape, verbal coercion or manipulation is rape. This definition paints the image of the cowering woman, unable to withstand the wiles of men. Roiphe claims

such infantilization of women suggests that men are physically, intellectually, and emotionally more powerful than women. To her, allowing verbal coercion to constitute rape only endorses and entrenches the view of women as ultimately passive, with no self-esteem and no responsibility for their actions. Roiphe finds these images unacceptable. She encourages all women, regardless of their level of self-esteem, to take responsibility for their actions, to not be pressured and intimidated by mere verbal coercion. Otherwise, rape effectively includes any instance of sex which a woman might regret or experience as negative. Since verbal coercion and manipulation are ambiguous and shifting standards, a woman may easily decide afterward that she was manipulated or coerced and, therefore, raped. She can discover this rape weeks, months, or years later, which gives her partner no notice at all of what conduct is expected at the time. According to Roiphe, if there is going to be any lasting idea of what rape really is, it must be those instances of physical violence or threat thereof. To include all instances of miscommunication and insensitivity undermines the seriousness of the crime.

Roiphe also attacks a corollary of the date-rape crisis, the Take Back the Night march. Rather than empowerment, Ms. Roiphe believes the Take Back the Night marches emphasize vulnerability, helplessness, and victimization. Finding the marches counterproductive, Roiphe urges women to change their focus. She believes women must destroy the victim image and develop the strength to take back, not the night, but their sense of worth and pride. This disgust with victim imagery also fuels Roiphe's criticism of Catharine MacKinnon and her anti-pornography position. According to Roiphe, MacKinnon's anti-pornography arguments, far from empowering, paint the same old picture of weak, powerless, and victimized women in need of protection. Roiphe believes MacKinnon overstates the impact and danger of pornography and fears that she is a negative influence on other feminists who, caught up in her passion, transfer her arguments to other, even less appropriate contexts.

Roiphe identifies another key component of the new sexual politics, sexual harassment, as an issue parallel to date-rape. Sexual harassment, which was once about abuse of power, is now usually defined by vague notions of what women find uncomfortable. This broad definition is the creation of the new feminists who feel that there is a problem going unnoticed. As in the date-rape context, they believe that not enough women recognize their experiences as victimization. Thus, while the reprehensible behavior we originally meant to deter has not changed, the definition of sexual harassment has been drastically broadened. Roiphe believes the new definition, in effect, merely creates new rules of etiquette. Rather than isolating specific contemptible behaviors, the extreme inclusiveness of the new definition attempts to sterilize the environment. While it may be impolite to tell an off-color joke, is such a breach of etiquette the same as



trading sex for a promotion? Roiphe says no—the two situations must be treated differently. Breaches of etiquette may be inappropriate, but inappropriate is different than against the rules or against the law. Roiphe believes every rude, excessive, or confused gesture or statement cannot amount to sexual harassment without undermining the seriousness of truly harassing behavior.

Unlike the past, when sexual harassment was seen as an abuse of power, today's feminists focus on gender, finding harassment when a woman feels uncomfortable, even if she is in a more powerful position than her accused harasser. Eclipsing all other forms of power, gender alone is a sufficient source of power to constitute sexual harassment. The underlying assumption is that women do not have this power and men do. According to Roiphe, rules, laws, and definitions of harassment based on this assumption only reinforce the image of the powerless woman in need of protection. Indeed, she feels it undermines the position of all women to believe that they are vulnerable to a dirty joke told by someone of inferior status just because that someone happens to be a man. Roiphe believes that women should not be seen as fragile, shattering at the first sign of male sexuality. To believe otherwise strips women of hard-earned authority. Mirroring the rhetoric of the date-rape crisis, the new feminists categorize all men as potential harassers and all women as potential victims. As a man, I am again offended by the exploitation of such a blatantly false stereotype. As a woman, Roiphe again points out that women are forced back into weak, restrictive roles when they are all cast as potential victims of harassment. Women who once fought fiercely for liberation are now seen as delicate, damaged by mere words or gestures. Rather than learning that others have no right to make them feel uncomfortable, Roiphe wants women to learn to deal with the real world with strength and confidence.

Roiphe believes that legal definitions of sexual harassment should be clearer and less inclusive, targeting only serious offenses and abuses of power rather than uncomfortable environments. I agree that the old definition of harassment that focused on external power structures was more easily perceived and understood by men. Subjective notions of what is uncomfortable are too vague to give men proper notice of what behavior is targeted. Although the same behavior can have different effects on different people, the new definition of sexual harassment would ban behavior that might be appreciated, tolerated, or ignored by some, because others might find it offensive. As Roiphe concludes, the clarity of the new definition of sexual harassment depends on a universal idea of appropriate behavior which simply does not exist in the world today.

In *The Morning After*, Katie Roiphe offers a persuasive critique of the current women's movement and its new brand of sexual politics, boldly questioning the assumptions underlying the new feminist orthodoxy. She

claims that these assumptions paint images of the modern woman as a passive, innocent victim, in need of protection. This is the same image of the woman from which Roiphe's mother and those of her generation fought so hard to escape so many years before. Although they fought to erase this image, here it is again, resurrected by the new feminists. I believe Roiphe's mother would be proud of her. She is fighting for a view of women which is consistent with their strength, knowledge, and equality. Oddly enough, this desirable voice is causing a stir as a dissenter, because she is now fighting the current wave of feminism. However, she is just what the current women's movement needs: a powerful voice willing to look at things in a new light, to question the orthodoxy, and to probe the rhetoric for its underlying premises and its resulting image of the modern woman. Her work is important, because it seeks to force the new feminists to examine their orthodoxy and to recognize the effects of their politicization of sexual relations. Roiphe also urges the new feminists to tolerate and encourage dissent, for she realizes that a growing, healthy women's movement can come only through self-examination and realistic evaluation. Rather than ignoring her views, the new feminist movement should listen to Katie Roiphe and put their orthodoxy under a microscope.

*Duane E. Bolin*

PROFESSING FEMINISM. By Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge. New York, New York, Harper Collins Books, 1994. Pp. xix, 235. \$24.00.

*Professing Feminism*, subtitled *Cautionary Tales from the Strange World of Women's Studies*, is a scathing critique of Women's Studies Programs in American universities. The authors, both seasoned veterans of the battle for gender-inclusive education, candidly and angrily identify the many ways in which Women's Studies fails as a separate academic department. The programs, they claim, not only fall severely short of providing rigorous and challenging liberal education to students, but also fail to uphold the ideals which feminism, as a movement, espouses: expanding and elevating discourse, inclusiveness, support from colleagues, and tolerance.

The authors speak from experience. Daphne Patai is a Professor of Women's Studies and Brazilian Literature at University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Noretta Koertge is Professor of History and Philosophy of Science and Adjunct Professor of Women's Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington. Each is widely published in Women's Studies as well as in other fields. The book incorporates the authors' own experiences along with those of the more than thirty people they interviewed, including students, faculty, and staff from universities across the country.

Patai and Koertge cite many specific problems which they claim are woven deeply into the fabric of contemporary Women's Studies. They first identify the prevalence of "identity politics" among students, faculty and

staff. In the Women's Studies programs they discuss, arguments are treated as inseparable from the persons making them; the identity of an author or speaker is considered more important than what she says. Members of one group challenge the standing of other groups to make certain arguments or address particular issues. Only the most oppressed groups are given the right to participate in a critique of oppression and patriarchy. The result is the balkanization of academics and feminists alike into infinitely divisible groups, with each claiming to be more oppressed, and thus more credible as critics of oppression, than the others.

The authors also identify an extreme intolerance for diversity of opinion and analysis. Members of one subgroup of Women's Studies have little respect for the opinions of another, and most Women's Studies faculty and students are intolerant of those who question the dominant Women's Studies pedagogy and concomitant feminist ideology. Such ideological policing stifles discourse into continual recycling of a handful of politically correct clichés.

Patai and Koertge further assert that the quality of education that students of Women's Studies receive is woefully inadequate. Rather than being taught to think critically and defend their ideas, they are indoctrinated with feminist ideology and taught to criticize only things which do not clearly fit into that framework. Most discouragingly, they are taught that many other fields of study employ male ways of thinking or were developed over time without input from women or attention to their thoughts and experiences. Women's Studies students are turned against the work of departments such as the hard sciences, economics, classical languages. The students, mostly women, are encouraged to stay in Women's Studies, Women's History, and Women's Literature, because such fields best encourage women's ways of knowing. As the authors point out, such arguments have been used for decades by the sexist male academy to keep women out of fields such as medicine, physics, and philosophy. It is ironic and unsettling that they are now being employed by the department which was designed to enable women students, not to add to the barriers they already face.

The authors suggest that the main failure Women's Studies as an academic program is that it has unquestioningly served as the academic arm of, and even a training ground for, activist feminism. In the same way that a history department, as a department, should not be wedded to a particular political ideology, Women's Studies, to be a credible part of the *academy*, must remain academic. A department must value scholarship over activism, and discourse over dogma. Patai and Koertge do not question the value of either activism or ideology in feminism, but instead suggest that an academic program is not the proper place for those things.

Although *Professing Feminism* provides a useful and much-needed critique of Women's Studies, it fails to acknowledge that many of its assessments are problems currently facing the academy as a whole, not just

Women's Studies. For instance, their discussion of intense competition among faculty members and a failure to support the teaching and research of others seems applicable to all departments in contemporary universities, where many qualified candidates are fighting for few tenure-track positions, and politics play as great a role in appointments as qualifications. Likewise, the entire world of higher education is currently grappling with balancing inclusive language and thought against free and open discourse and rigorous analysis. Nevertheless, Patai and Koertge give the impression that such problems are unique to Women's Studies.

Furthermore, the authors criticize many failures of Women's Studies but they do not provide a plan for its recreation. Patai and Koertge fail to describe how such departments could look if they repair their faults, while remaining true to the unique vision of scholarship which inspired the Women's Studies movement. Readers committed to the original values of Women's Studies are left feeling hopeless and angry rather than inspired to action.

Patai and Koertge's criticism will ring true to most readers who have had experience with Women's Studies. Its honesty is refreshing in an age of politically correct thought policing on the left. However, as the authors themselves are aware, the book will provide fodder for conservative academics and others who believe that departments such as Women's Studies must be eliminated. Despite their hesitation to air the dirty laundry of a field to which they are both deeply committed, the authors feel that doing so is necessary. Only by rapidly reforming itself and returning to a foundation of academic credibility—without sacrificing the ideals of equity, inclusion, and tolerance upon which it was founded—will Women's Studies survive.

*Katherine Menendez*

REASONABLE CREATURES: ESSAYS ON WOMEN AND FEMINISM. By Katha Pollitt. New York: Knopf, 1994. Pp. xiv, 186. \$22.00.

"I wish to see women neither heroines nor brutes, but reasonable creatures," wrote Mary Wollstonecraft, the eighteenth century pioneer of feminist thought, in her classic manifesto, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Inspired by that effort, essayist Katha Pollitt seeks a contemporary definition of feminism in which equality for women derives not from any natural similarity or superiority to men, nor a bartering of personal freedom for social acceptance, but rather from the sheer humanity of women. Her collection of nineteen crisp magazine writings from the late 1980s and early 1990s offers an amusing, incisive commentary on a decade in which women's issues have been at once buried, mourned, and resurrected.

Gravitating towards topics ranging from bodily autonomy to body image, Pollitt writes about abortion, surrogate motherhood (which she renames "contract maternity"), fetal rights activism, menopause, and breast implants. More broadly, she examines marital trends, affirmative action, sexism in children's culture, and patterns of male violence, particularly rape.

In scrutinizing social institutions and political thought, Pollitt most often finds a culprit in language itself. Combing through the words Americans employ to describe women's issues, she makes a convincing case for shifting burdens and blame. For instance, she asks why, in an epidemic of violence perpetrated by males, it is the behavior of female victims which transfixes the media. To ask first what clothing a woman wore, or why she walked alone down a dark street, is to treat rape and assault as inevitable and then to impose upon all women an implied duty to avoid it. Throughout the book, Pollitt has a penchant for crystallizing familiar issues, sparking very simple, but critical, revelations.

Ironically, the media tends to be the author's greatest bete noire. It is Pollitt's fellow journalists who, in their role as debate-framers, pose questions narrowly or inaccurately and thereby spark misguided inquiries. In a 1986 survey on marriage trends, a trio of "magazine moralists," as she calls them, concluded that a college-educated woman's chance of marrying was becoming increasingly slim. Pollitt, from the sidelines, queries what tally would result if we sought, instead, statistics about a man's chance. That the study ignored gay partners, couples living together, and those who are willfully single evidences its failure to acknowledge actual barriers to marriage, the most prominent of which, she argues, is sexism.

Many of the essays in this volume are now dated, as the oversights of the marriage survey reveal, but their age does not make Pollitt's comments irrelevant. If anything, it simply hammers home the sad reality that, as the century winds down, we must continue to struggle for basic victories. In her calls for reproductive freedom, national day care, and an end to workplace discrimination and cultural hostility towards women, Pollitt illuminates the many Catch-22s that women face. Married women who opt to work are labeled "neglectful," but stay-at-home wives are "parasites." Women who delay childbearing and find themselves infertile are "selfish" to have so misordered their priorities, but those who venture into motherhood without awaiting a mate are also "selfish." Pregnant women can seek drug treatment, but if refused, may still be punished or incarcerated for endangering a fetus. Menopausal women must navigate between a desire to overcome old stigmas and a skepticism of pharmaceutically-invented "medical pathologies" to be cured only by drugging the whole gender.

Pollitt shows the most depth and fascination in her coverage of reproductive rights. She takes special issue with the selective legality of using women's bodies for service. A woman can lawfully "rent her womb . . .

although not her vagina," she notes, decrying the legal status of surrogacy as "reproductive prostitution" and "biological baby-sitting." With an eye to traditional contract law, Pollitt stresses that enforceability is inherently problematic in realms of intimacy, where emotional change legitimately drains a past promise of its current force.

Pollitt has peppered her essays with personal narratives from her days as a teenager, student, spouse, and mother. This creates an effective blend of opinion and reality. She attempts, but sometimes fails, to broaden feminism's focus, incorporating issues of race and economic privilege that so many traditional analyses have lacked. In keeping with her title, she challenges the school of "difference" feminists who seek to justify women's rights by contrasting the genders, and arguing for deservedness on the basis of women's innate goodness. Justice and reason alone, Pollitt argues, should create a sufficient claim—women need not possess any special virtues to secure rights.

Cleverness and a facility for writing make Pollitt's series of essays very readable. She overturns universal assumptions, even those held by the most committed feminists. Yet to implement Pollitt's progressive aims, which have the potential to inspire and mobilize, one would have to transform her into a policymaker, and ask her simply—how?

*Anne Hawke*