Feminist Collections

A Quarterly of Women's Studies Resources

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Photo, p. ii: JoAnne Lehman

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Subscriptions (2014): Wisconsin subscriptions: $10.00 (individuals affiliated with the UW System), $20.00 (organizations affiliated with the UW System), $20.00 (individuals or non-profit women's programs), $30.00 (institutions). Out-of-state subscriptions: $35.00 (individuals & women’s programs in the U.S.), $65.00 (institutions in the U.S.), $50.00 (individuals & women’s programs in Canada/Mexico), $80.00 (institutions in Canada/Mexico), $55.00 (individuals & women’s programs elsewhere outside the U.S.), $85.00 (institutions elsewhere outside the U.S.) Subscriptions include Feminist Collections, Feminist Periodicals, and New Books on Women, Gender, & Feminism. Wisconsin subscriber amounts include state tax (except UW organizations amount). All subscription rates include postage.

Feminist Collections is indexed by Alternative Press Index, Women's Studies International, and Library, Information Science, & Technology Abstracts. It is available in full text in Contemporary Women's Issues and in Genderwatch. All back issues of Feminist Collections, beginning with Volume 1, Number 1 (February 1980), are archived in full text in the Minds@UW institutional repository: http://minds.wisconsin.edu/handle/1793/254.

Numerous research guides, bibliographies and other informational files are available on the Gender & Women's Studies Librarian's website, http://womenst.library.wisc.edu. You'll find information about the office, tables of contents and selected full-text articles from recent issues of Feminist Collections, tutorials, WAVE: Women's Audio-visuals in English, a link to the Women's Studies Core Books Database, full issues of Feminist Periodicals: A Current Listing of Contents, and links to hundreds of other selected websites and databases on women and gender.

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ISSN: 0742-7441 © 2014 Regents of the University of Wisconsin System
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What's here? This issue of *FC* looks at resources on many and disparate topics — including, for example, vampire fiction, French filmographies, Canadian archives, and the teaching of women's studies. In the middle of all that, we have a special themed section on reproductive justice, a term that, as reviewer Kristin Ryder explains on page 15, originated with Loretta Ross and other women-of-color activists in the early 1990s. Ryder is careful to point out that reproductive justice is about far more than abortion rights or access to birth control; it “encompasses both reproductive health and reproductive rights concerns, yet envelops them in a social justice and human rights framework.” Don’t miss Ryder’s essay review, “Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC): A Reproductive Justice Concern?”, and the one by Liz Barr that precedes it, “Surveilling the Body: Reproductive Technologies and the Pregnant Body.”

Other resources on reproductive justice: When we were first developing this reproductive justice mini-theme, we were put in touch with scholar Zakiya T. Luna, now an assistant professor of sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, who has also been a post-doctoral fellow at UC Berkeley since 2012 and was previously a post-doc here at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. While at Berkeley, Luna was lead author of a comprehensive essay for the *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* (vol. 9, pp. 327–352; 2013) about the history and aims of the reproductive justice movement; highly recommended reading! Watch also for the publication of Luna’s book manuscript, *Reproductive Justice for All: Identity, Rights, and the (Re)Making of a Movement*.

Zakiya Luna is also affiliated with BerkeleyLaw’s Center on Reproductive Rights and Justice (CRRJ), which has a web presence at [http://www.law.berkeley.edu/reprojustice.htm](http://www.law.berkeley.edu/reprojustice.htm). Check it out, especially CRRJ’s searchable Virtual Library, which “includes resources that have helped to define and refine the reproductive justice framework, as well as those that illustrate RJ in action.”

#Ferguson is a reproductive justice issue. The killing of an unarmed Black teenager by police in Missouri just a few weeks ago has strong feminist and reproductive justice relevance, as some of the best online commentary is pointing out. Follow what’s being written at Crunk Feminist Collective and at Colorlines (e.g., “Black Feminists Respond to Ferguson,” by Miriam Zoila Pérez); and see Dani McClain’s “The Murder of Black Youth Is a Reproductive Justice Issue” on August 13th in *The Nation* — just for starters.

Here at the University of Wisconsin's Gender & Women's Studies Librarian's office… We're busy (oh, let's not say overwhelmed!), but eager to greet the new academic year and its students, participate in some great upcoming conferences (including NWSA's in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in November!), and get to the other side of the much-needed renovation of our working space in Memorial Library.

We recently had to say goodbye to editor Linda Fain (pictured below) when she retired and returned to her beloved Bay Area in California. For more than a decade, Linda edited and indexed *New Books on Women, Gender, & Feminism* and oversaw the expansion of our WAVE (*Women's AudioVisuals in English*) database. We’re now beginning the search process for a new half-time editor for that position.

We’re also busy planning future issues of *FC*. Are you a subscriber yet?

JoAnne Lehman, Senior Editor
August 2014
So, why the undead? At first glance it would seem that feminists and vampires have little in common. What some might see as the signifiers of feminism, at least of the Second Wave sort — earnestness, herbal tea, and Birkenstocks — could never be confused with those of the vampire — amorality, blood, and black leather. As good critical theorists, however, we are taught to challenge false binaries, wherever they occur. In this instance we can recognize that feminists and vampires have more in common than originally assumed. (An aversion to suntans, for example, or the uncomfortable role of outsider in a patriarchal, capitalistic society.) As Margot Adler noted in her recently published *Vampires Are Us*, an exploration of our “love affair with the immortal dark side,” vampires have a lot to say about “issues of power, sensuality, identity, spirituality, and the environment” (preface).

Edited by Brigid Cherry, a senior lecturer in film and popular culture at St. Mary’s University, London, *True Blood: Investigating Vampires and Southern Gothic* brings together twelve essays on the HBO series, which is produced by Alan Ball and based on the *Southern Vampire Mysteries* of Charlaine Harris. As contributor Mikel Koven notes, “What makes *True Blood* more interesting than any of the other vampire-oriented television series in recent years (beyond the sex and gore in the show) is what the series appears to say about racial and sexual integration. It is not a hard stretch to read the television series as Southern-born Ball’s fantasy South where racial and sexual differences are displaced onto the living-impaired community” (pp. 64–65).

Cherry provides a context for this investigation of the first four seasons of the series in the book’s introduction, offering background information on the channel, the show, the actors, and both Ball and Harris, in addition to an extended description of *True Blood’s* title sequence.

The first section of the book covers genre and style, opening with an essay by Stacey Abbott that decodes HBO’s use of the vampire to maintain its reputation for extra-ordinary television. Along the way, Abbott reveals, “Vampires become sympathetic in *True Blood*, not because they are struggling against their condition and resisting the thirst…but because they are victims of prejudice” (p. 34). The exploration of genre continues with a chapter by Caroline Ruddell and editor Cherry on the Southern Gothic milieu of *True Blood* — with its heated climate and even more heated relationships (p. 41). American readers will, on occasion, be forced to translate the accurate but anomalous vocabulary employed by the British authors. For example, in the sentence, “Jason is bare-chested under his fluorescent road crew waistcoat,” the reader has to step out of the text long enough to convert that mental image into a “safety vest” (p. 42).

The second section of the book, covering myths and meanings, features essays by Mikel Koven, who traces the folklore and fairytale tropes of the series and proposes that “vampires

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**Book Reviews**

**COLD, SPARKLY, AND DANGEROUS TO KNOW: THE VAMPIRE BOYFRIENDS OF TRUE BLOOD & TWILIGHT**

*by Pamela O’Donnell*


are, in their genetic make-up, big evil fairies” (p. 67); Gregory Erickson, who writes on the absence of the divine, postulating that “[i]nstead of presenting religious themes through the Church or Christian belief, True Blood offers acts of sacramentalism, of ritual and of transcendence through sex, violence, desire and drugs” (p. 75); and Dennis Rothermel, who uses the conceptual tools of Deleuze, Guattari, Nancy, Rancière, and Badiou to entomb his analysis of “minoritarian romantic fables” in French theory (p. 90).

Characters and identities are the focus of the third section, which opens with Ananya Mukherjea’s take on the paranormal, yet Byronic, men of the show. Victoria Amador tries to untangle depictions of race and class in the series in an essay that is more description than analysis. This section closes with a compelling chapter by Darren Elliot-Smith on the homosexual vampire as metaphor for the...homosexual vampire (p. 139).

Although challenging to condense, Elliot-Smith’s basic argument is “that in representing an assimilative homonormativity the show ceases to offer the same essentialist threat to heteronormativity that the metaphorical vampire-as-homosexual might once have done. Rather True Blood is performing a ‘bisexual, sexually exotic, polymorphic and polysemous’... threat that is no longer exclusive to the homosexual subject” (p. 142, citation omitted). However, the privileging of committed, white, male, gay, upper-class couples in the queer hierarchy of True Blood underscores the fact that the supernatural community of Bon Temps remains “deeply divided along lines of diversity” (p. 152).

The final three essays in the book are devoted to marketing and fandom. U. Melissa Anyiwo should be commended for her exceptionally clear prose and useful summation of Henry Jenkins’ theory of convergence in her study of True Blood’s transmedia storytelling. Maria Mellins continues the exploration of the fan experience and identity by interviewing club-goers at London’s Fangtasia, a “tactile, real-world tribute to the True Blood universe” (p. 177). The publication concludes with Erin Hollis’s chapter on “archontic” fan fiction. Drawing on the work of Abigail Derecho, Hollis investigates the differences between the television series and its source material, Harris’s novels, revealing how these “dual canons” open up a liminal space within which fans can create their own reality.

In addition to season synopses of the series and an episode guide through Season 4, the volume includes an index. It is a worthy addition to any collection supporting scholars who are interested in what depictions of the paranormal reveal about twenty-first-century American culture.

In Theorizing Twilight, the vampires under discussion are not the only hybrids. In the introduction, editors Maggie Parke and Natalie Wilson reveal that they “aimed for a middle-ground between dense academese and frivolity” in the hope that the resulting essays “are enter-
taining but enlightening, thought-provoking but user-friendly” (p. 2). Overlooking the fact that language has devolved to the point where the phrase “user-friendly” can be applied to a book, most of the fifteen essays in Theorizing Twilight successfully straddle both worlds. Fans, critics, and scholars of Stephenie Meyer’s work will all find something useful and engaging in these pages, although the fans may be disenchanted by the feminist critique of their favorite vampire clan. What cannot be denied is that the editors force fans and scholars alike to consider these cultural artifacts in a more nuanced and complicated way.

Part I of the book, “Twilight as Pop Cultural Artifact: Pilgrimages, Fan Culture, and Film Adaptations,” opens with an engaging essay by Tanya Erzen, an associate professor at Ohio State, who takes a field trip (a rare enough occurrence for media scholars) to Forks, Washington, the purported home of the Cullen family in the Twilight books and films. She describes how “Twilight tourism defies neat boundaries between fantasy and franchise, the supernatural and everyday,” while underscoring the “ongoing negotiation of authenticity and experience” that occurs between fans and residents (pp. 21, 12). Erzen has produced a fascinating study of the intersections of teen ardor and capitalism, of racial disparity and the illusion of authenticity.

The first section continues with an essay by co-editor Maggie Parke, who dissects the vital role played by fans in creating the Twilight phenomenon and argues that Hollywood studios must cater to fan expectations if their films are to achieve blockbuster status. Heather Anastasiu offers a psychoanalytic inquiry into the popularity of Twilight, noting the “lush exploration” of sexual longing in the novel, what Christine Seifert of Bitch magazine refers to as “abstinence porn” (p. 47). Anastasiu analyzes the author, the text, and the reader (both adolescent and adult) before concluding, rather simplistically, that the “text dramatically reflects humankind’s most basic drives and the need to negotiate between id desires and super-ego responsibilities” while allowing for “vicarious participation in the hero’s journey of self-actualization” (p. 53). She defends her interpretation as providing a necessary balance against criticisms of the gendered and heteronormative constructs in the Twilight franchise (criticisms we will find aplenty in later portions of the book).

And speaking of heteronormativity, Colette Murphy’s quirky chapter on our “lovesick infatuation with prince-like vampires” explores how media has simply re-costumed the vampire as the “heterosexual male romantic lead” (pp. 56, 57). While Edward remains a “prince,” Murphy posits that Edward’s love, Bella, serves
as the true hero of the tale, the character who transitions from mere damsel to powerful vampire, albeit a vampire wife and mother. Ananya Mukherjea, who contributed to the Brigid Cherry collection reviewed above, makes another appearance here, with a chapter entitled “Team Bella: Fans Navigating Desire, Security, and Feminism.” Beginning with her own reading of the *Twilight* phenomena and “its conservative and anti-feminist underpinnings,” she then surveys twenty fans of the novels, fourteen of whom identified as feminist, to try and better understand the appeal of Meyer’s work (pp. 70, 74). In the course of her investigation, Mukherjea discovers that “the overt abstinence-until-marriage message of the franchise, so disturbing to me, does not necessarily prevent fans from using the story as an outlet for their own desires,” and that the security afforded by Edward is not perceived as controlling, but rather comforting to young fans who still vividly recall the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (pp. 75, 81). Despite her reservations about the books’ anti-feminist and homophobic elements, Mukherjea is persuaded that the series does provide a “secure outlet” for fans to “indulge and explore important desires and personal boundaries” (p. 82).

**Part II (“Once Upon a Twilight”)** focuses on the literary context of the novels, with contributors debating which characters best evoke the romantic Byronic hero. It opens, however, with an essay by Ashley Benning on the subject of age in the series. After several digressions, Benning gets down to her analysis, noting in particular that adults, both mortal and immortal, have a limited ability to serve as leaders or protectors of their families (p. 95). At the end of the essay, she again changes course and discusses the multi-generational appeal of the story (and young-adult literature in general), before concluding with a description of the attendees and programming at TwiCon, the 2009 convention devoted to all things *Twilight*.

Angela Tenga, an assistant professor at the Florida Institute of Technology, also places *Twilight* in a bookish context, but in this case she argues that the nineteenth-century novels and fairy tales admired by Stephenie Meyer “inform not just the imaginary space of the *Twilight* novels, but the very imagination of their protagonist” and that, as a result, Bella’s “autonomous vision of self is limited by women’s roles in these fictions” (pp. 102, 103). She goes on to apply psychoanalytic theory to the character of Bella, diagnosing her with Dependent Personality Disorder (DPD) and an unhealthy devotion to the novels of Jane Austen. Tenga acknowledges that feminists may find Bella an inappropriate role model for young readers, but counters that by “the standards of her own fictional models…Bella reaches her goals and receives the classic rewards: marriage, motherhood, and upward mobility” (p. 113).

The comparisons between *Twilight* and nineteenth-century British fiction continue with Sarah Wakefield’s examination of *Wuthering Heights*. Wakefield traces the connections between the two stories, with Edward as a slightly more evolved Edgar Linton and Jacob, the werewolf, replacing the id-driven Heathcliff. Issues of race and class remain, but “by combining the best of their features into two men who can stay in the heroine’s life,” Wakefield argues that in the *Twilight* series, Meyer successfully resolves Cathy Earnshaw’s eternal dilemma (p. 129).

In “Rewriting the Byronic Hero,” Jessica Groper argues that despite his outward appearance as a brooding vampire, Edward Cullen is, in fact, the exact opposite of a Byronic hero (p. 132). While admitting the existence of “Byronic impulses,” Groper delineates the numerous ways in which Edward rejects this mantle; he is unselfish, chaste, moral, law-abiding, and integrated into society. She concludes that “Meyer takes the Byronic hero archetypal and instead of warning her readers away from him, she reforms him into someone safe and dependable” (pp. 144–145).

Hila Shachar, investigating *Twilight* as a post-feminist romance, believes the novels “ultimately participate in a post-feminist backlash that recycles traditional notions of love, masculinity and femininity” (p. 148). Refuting the previous author’s perception of Edward as “safe and dependable,” Shachar implies that he is little more than a rapist, “literally imprinting himself upon his victim’s flesh, as if she were an object” (p. 158). By the essay’s end, she encourages readers to question essentialist thinking, which does not recognize the “naturally desirable” as a cultural construct (p. 160).

By Part III (“*Twilight* Through an Intersectional Lens”), the editors’ stated goal of creating a “user-friendly” book for fans and scholars alike is all but abandoned, with five dense chapters on such light-hearted [not!] topics as patriarchy, white privilege, and rape culture. Melissa Miller, who is writing her dissertation on *Twilight*, claims that the saga “promotes a dangerous and damaging ideology of patriarchy that normalizes and rationalizes the control of women by men” (p. 165). She goes on to enumerate the ways in which Edward exhibits the controlling behavior of an abuser, while engaging with various seminal critics (Mulvey, Gerbner, etc.) to posit that the media, by offering up Edward Cullen as the ideal boyfriend, are encouraging impressionable consumers to seek out potentially violent mates (p. 174).
Ashley Donnelly, an assistant professor at Ball State, continues the exploration of patriarchal privilege and heteronormativity in the novels. She seems to believe that without scholarly intervention, “these oppressive ideologies [will] engrain themselves in the collective unconscious” (p. 192). Co-editor Natalie Wilson’s contribution to the volume traces the binaries of Edward Cullen/Jacob Black, vampire/werewolf, light/dark, ego/id and how these constructs work to reinforce white privilege and the “othering” of the werewolves as noble savages. She provides a brief history of the werewolf and a fascinating synopsis of the “racialized beliefs” in the Book of Mormon, before concluding, “The ideology of Twilight serves at least in part to champion and bolster white privilege and to keep the wolly Other firmly in his half-naked place” (pp. 202, 206).

In the penultimate chapter, Anne Torkelson, another dissertator, this time from the University of Minnesota Duluth, casts a critical eye over Twilight’s normalizing and romanticizing of violence toward women (p. 210). In addition to Bella’s self-esteem issues, Torkelson uses the story of every female vampire character to support her contention that women are repeatedly denied agency in choosing their fate. She also mines the message boards and comment sections of several Twilight-related websites to reveal how readers often accept the myths of a rape culture (p. 213).

Theorizing Twilight closes with an essay by Lindsey Issow Averill, of Keiser University, on Twilight as a retelling of the story of Adam and Eve, but one “where the female body and female fecundity are completely erased, while male reproduction remains intact” (p. 225). She argues that for a woman to achieve the ultimate existence as a vampire, she must kill her womb, commit gynocide (p. 235).

Some of the essays in this final section read like an arms race of outrage, an opportunity for new scholars to establish their street cred by tearing into a problematic cultural artifact, focusing on its flaws to justify a righteous indignation. It remains to be seen if this tactic proves effective in reaching an audience more interested in debating the finer points of Team Edward versus Team Jacob. That being said, the editors have included a thoughtful selection of essays on the controversial and polysemic Twilight saga, and this book offers much for feminists to ponder. Without doubt, the issues raised and subjects explored make this volume a worthy addition to any collection.

[Pamela O’Donnell reads a lot of vampire fiction, an indulgence that only occasionally interferes with her day job as an academic librarian. She holds an M.A. in Library & Information Studies and an M.A. in Communications (Media & Cultural Studies) from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.]
**Book Reviews**

**FRENCH WOMEN DIRECTING FILM: PALLISTER AND HOTTELL’S FILMOGRAPHIES**

by Diana King


The scholarly filmography has long functioned as an important tool for researchers and instructors, and has ranged widely in scope and function. Much like bibliographies of print materials, filmographies were first developed before the emergence of online catalogs and served a crucial role in both the discovery of new directors and the “aboutness” of film content.

Particularly since the 1970s, numerous filmographies focused on women and gender have been created, both in print and online. These are increasingly international in coverage, and they supplement weaknesses and gaps found in large general projects such as the AFI Catalog and Film Index International, library catalogs that provide minimal metadata, and subject-specific works that heavily favor Hollywood feature films and American documentaries.

In the case of women filmmakers, the creation of filmographic tools is often particularly tied to biographical discovery, historical reclamation, and an argument for greater inclusivity in classroom syllabi. However, traditionally published filmographies almost inevitably suffer from the problems of any list-driven project: they have gaps and authorial blind spots; they cannot foresee the myriad of ways in which researchers may prefer content data to be organized; and they are bound in time to their date of publication unless their authors publish updated volumes. Their current and future usefulness also bear examination in light of freely available Internet resources like IMDb.com and the rise of digital humanities projects as a means of disseminating scholarship and information.

The four volumes reviewed here are very much situated in this context, as well as in European studies, literatures and languages, and women's studies. The set of monographs began in 1997 with Janis L. Pallister’s *French-Speaking Women Directors: A Guide*, and ended with Pallister and Ruth A. Hottell’s last volume together, *Noteworthy Francophone Women Directors: A Sequel*, in 2011. A fifth publication should also be noted, a lengthy article by Pallister published in the Fall 2007 issue of *WIF Newsletter*, titled “Animation and Anime by Francophone Women Directors.” Pallister’s interest in including animators is evident both in this supplementary publication and in the much earlier *French-Speaking Film Directors*, as she notes that broad histories of animation frequently ignore female and non-American artists (p. 8). This inclusion of a variety of film and video forms, also entailing shorts and documentaries, is one of the strengths of the volumes, since there is little secondary scholarship about these less-well-known forms and titles.

These four books, all interconnected, represent a progression of information that brings in new directors and builds on past entries. The result is a compilation of sometimes unevenly researched details and bio-bibliographical information on francophone films directed by women, most useful as a starting place for instructors and researchers at the academic level. These works explicitly do not purport to be critical studies of the films or directors, but rather function as beginning reference points for identifying titles. In this they succeed, but they also foreground how much more can be done with the subject, format, and content.
Pallister’s first volume, *French-Speaking Women Film Directors: A Guide*, outlined the origins of what would become an ongoing series of publications over the course of nearly fifteen years. Initially a response to a call for a manual on francophone women filmmakers for members of Women in French (WIF), the project, “while originally intended for French professors teaching women’s studies and film courses,” was meant to “be of use for others too” (p. 7). The main audience was primarily instructors, and perhaps particularly those without an extensive background in teaching film. Pallister included a glossary of film terms, which was most useful for its translation of major concepts from French into English, as well as a chapter of “Questions for Film Analysis” and another of sample syllabi. These sections were dropped in later volumes, an editorial decision that was ultimately a wise choice, since they were general in nature and more extensive sources are now available elsewhere.

Although the first volume also includes an annotated bibliography and a list of film distribution sources, its most substantial part is Chapter 1, “Directors and Their Films.” The entries here are organized by country and, in some cases, by continent or region (for instance, African film and Caribbean film). In the case of Québec, there is no cross-reference with Canada, which also isn’t listed separately; this makes an implicit political point, but may be confusing for users who just want to look something up quickly without reading the whole book.

Entries listing the films of individual directors range from a simple title list with dates to much longer compilations of biographical information, plot synopses, and even some translated French citations. Some synopses come directly from vendor catalogs, while others go beyond basic description to give more of the author’s critical viewpoint. For instance, in the entry for Brigitte Sauriol’s *Rien qu’un jeu*, Pallister notes that “[p]erhaps because this work is filmed and scripted by women, the importance of power structures and manipulation in the unfolding of this ‘psychological drama’ are not to be underrated” (p. 134). This argument for the perspective of the female director and/or screenwriter is one that could have been discussed more fully and critically in the book’s introduction, which focused mainly on the exclusion of female directors from film guides and histories.

Chapter 2, “Core Concepts and Themes,” which is the book’s next most substantial chapter, proves more problematic, functioning effectively as the book’s only subject index (since the book’s main index only includes author and title). Titles on selected themes are listed, including abortion, colonial life, filmmaking, homosexuality, and racism. Most films listed here, however, are only a subset of those in Chapter 1, and some are neither French-language nor directed by women — for instance, Fellini’s *8½* and Michael Apted’s *Nell*. Although these titles may be of interest to instructors working with the specific themes listed, it is odd to find them in a monograph entitled *French-Speaking Women Film Directors*.

Pallister and Hottell’s 2005 follow-up volume, *Francophone Women Film Directors: A Guide*, contains a similar chapter, with the same inclusion of films outside the scope implied by the book’s title, and notes that the lists “are merely posts intended for use by film instructors and others who may be interested in establishing a film program on a given subject” (p. 219). The content is thus neither comprehensive nor within the book title’s scope, and it would ultimately have been more worthwhile to integrate subjects for individual films from the “Directors and Their Films” chapter into a separate subject index.

The 2005 volume does build upon and strengthen Pallister’s original work, with a more detailed introduction that describes strides in published scholarship about and increased filmmaking by francophone women directors, but also continued gaps in coverage by general reference works. As Jennifer Gauthier notes in her 2006 review of the volume, though, this critique of lacunae in publishing misses the mark when it is lobbed against critics like Leonard Martin who focus on mainstream feature films and are therefore far less likely to write about short films and experimental works, which Pallister and Hottell admirably do cover (p. 512). The authors are correct, though, in noting the particularly poor coverage — in both popular and scholarly literature — of women directors in Africa and Québec, a consequence of how difficult distribution and hence visibility to audiences can be. As Pallister and Hottell put it,

> [O]ne must attribute the lack of attention to women’s films not only to what might be a blatant case of sexism but also to problems of distribution. Because they are underfinanced, and certainly because of distribution problems, . . . the majority of the films cited in our guide are not treated in mainstream journals nor available in video shops. (p. 13)

While video shops themselves are becoming an endangered species, the fragmented and gap-prone world of online streaming and mail-based DVD lending has hardly democratized access to all of the titles they cover; nor has the
Some copyediting improvements were made in the 2005 volume, including putting the directors’ names in “last name, first name” order instead of the reverse. Additional synopses and translated content from French websites are also included, and the volume draws more heavily from IMDb.com and other Internet content. While this is not inherently negative, given that some lesser-known contemporary directors are most represented in online sources, some of the websites have of course since changed, or are no longer available. Because the websites are simply listed in entries for individual films, with little other information, they are much harder to track over time than the fully cited print sources available in the book’s well-developed bibliography. It is also difficult to tell at times if the plot synopses are taken directly from source material online, or are written by the authors themselves. For example, this entry for Mimi by Claire Simon is unattributed: “A woman tells us about her life, her dramas, her sorrows . . . All of this is fatally banal and yet unique and universal” (p. 192). As with the other volumes, details vary considerably by director, with minimal notes. For instance, the synopsis for Jacqueline Kalimunda’s film Tresses simply reads, “[h]airdressing in Paris” (p. 27), with little sense of genre or tone.

Some documentaries are included in Francophone Women Film Directors, but their presence is spotty; readers are in some cases referred to Pallister and Hottell’s other 2005 volume, French-Speaking Women Documentarians: A Guide. The Guide is the only one of the four works reviewed here to be published by Peter Lang instead of Fairleigh Dickinson University Press (as part of a Lang series called “Francophone Cultures & Literatures”). Unlike the previous two volumes, this one does not include a “Core Concepts and Themes” chapter, but focuses instead on organizing directors by country and referring readers to the “concepts” sections in the other works and in Pallister’s 1995 The Cinema of Québec: Masters in Their Own House.

Regions of Canada are better organized in this volume, and include “Acadia,” British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Québec. As in the other volumes, the authors hint here at the importance of a director’s gender to the filmmaking process, but do not go into great detail, beyond placing some French-language quotes from women documentarians in the introduction (without commentary) and making a regional argument that African, Belgian, and Québécois directors “are perhaps more inclined to examine various aspects of society . . . through the documentary or the docudrama than are the French women, who tend to exploit the fictional mode to criticize many of the same things” (p. xiii). Although the authors make clear that they are focused on presenting a handy guide to films more than anything else, it would be worth exploring further in future scholarship how gender dynamics impact funding, distribution, and exhibition — as well as choice of genre and subject matter — in francophone filmmaking.

Women Documentarians includes a “Sources for Films” section with vendors and basic bibliography. There are also synopses for most films, although many are only given in French and are taken directly from websites. Scope becomes an issue with the inclusion of directors like Anne Aghion, who “apparently does not work in French” (p. 1), but whose documentary work was shot in a francophone country (in this case, Rwanda). This again raises the question of how wide a net the authors wish to cast in their filmographies, because the net often seems to be wider than the titles of the works themselves imply.

Finally, although there is some very minimal subject indexing in the back, this volume in particular could have benefitted by some clear subject organization via an index, or even a basic title list arranged by subject. Documentaries tend to be less well-known than feature films, and the topics here range from Islam to mental illness and to biographical portraits of visual artists. While country of origin can be an important entry point, researchers often seek documentaries based more on topic than on geographical filmmaking region or even original language.

Pallister and Hottell’s final volume together was the 2011 Noteworthy Francophone Women Directors: A Sequel, which builds on previous work, yet departs from it in overall organization. Sadly, Pallister passed away in 2008; the book is dedicated to her memory. This volume takes a different approach from the others, dividing films into chapters by broad type rather than geographically. The advantage of this depends on how an individual is hoping to use the content — but not having to guess the country of origin for a particular filmmaker does make finding a known name much easier! The text is divided into “Feature Films,” “Documentaries,” “Shorts,” and “Sources,” with a bibliography and list of selected world festivals. The festival list points to the importance of the venue as a means of distribution for many international filmmakers, and is timely given the relatively recent rise of “film festival studies” as an area of scholarship.
The introduction to the Sequel reiterates themes of previous volumes — notably, increased distribution and appreciation of women filmmakers’ work, coupled with the reality that funding opportunities have declined in some countries and that “much of mainstream film scholarship and film festivals do continue to overlook films made by women” (p. xi). Because of the sheer number of documentaries available, Pallister and Hottell only include them here if they are by a director represented in the feature film section. While this keeps the list manageable, it also decreases the diversity of listings and means that researchers interested in documentary should also consult the Women Documentarians volume.

The authors do clarify scope a bit more in this volume, noting that “[w]e are interested in listing all films by French-speaking women directors, whether the film in question is in French or in some other language” (p. xiii). However, it is necessary to consult previous volumes for a fuller picture of some filmmakers. For instance, the lengthy entry in this volume on Agnès Varda covers only selected work from 2003 forward. While there is a longer entry for Moroccan-born filmmaker Yasmine Kassari under “Feature Films” (p. 68), the “Documentaries” section only lists two titles, with no dates (p. 149). One of those documentaries, Quand les homes pleurent, is described more extensively with a synopsis and quotes by the director in French, but only in the 2005 Women Documentarians volume. In this way, the Sequel volume truly does intersect with previous works, adding new content but just as often serving as an update or notation on prior entries.

Pallister and Hottell’s work builds on published (and no doubt, unpublished) English-language filmographies and guides that have approached similar themes and goals in different ways. The late 1970s and 1980s in particular saw a major increase in reference monographs with film-related lists, including several focused on women in some way. Kaye Sullivan’s 1980 Films For, By and About Women, which spawned a 1985 follow-up, sought to provide an annotated filmography that presented “a historical view of sex roles” and aimed “to present women filmmakers and identify the genre of films made by each one” (p. v). Sullivan included many short films, documentary works, and an extensive subject index in her publication. Although she included some international films, the female directors in her volumes are primarily from the United States. Other monographs from the same time period include Alexa Foreman’s Women in Motion (1983), which added sections on editors and screenwriters, and also works focused on representation of women rather than on the gender of the directors — for instance, Carolyn L. Galerstein’s Working Women on the Hollywood Screen: A Filmography (1989), and Maryann Oshana’s Women of Color: A Filmography of Minority and Third World Women (1985).

Reference works in the 1990s, such as The Women’s Companion to International Film (Khun and Radstone, eds., 1990), Women Filmmakers & Their Films (Unterburger, ed., 1998), and Gwendolyn Audrey Foster’s Women Film Directors: An International Bio-Critical Dictionary, included more international films and filmmakers. Pallister mentions Foster’s work, in particular, in French-Speaking Women Film Directors as an important contribution, and Foster’s Dictionary does contain the most extensive introduction and internationally diverse compilation of directors. Foster’s actual filmographies, however, are “selected” and unannotated, with fewer than twenty-five entries for directors who might be considered francophone.

In the last decade, two works in particular are notably complementary to those of Pallister and Hottell. Rebecca Hillauer’s Encyclopedia of Arab Women Filmmakers (2005) is arranged by region, country, and filmmaker, but does include a French language film title index to identify francophone films from across geographical areas. Hillauer takes the extra step of including select reviews and interviews with filmmakers, and presents introductory content contextualizing filmmaking practice in each country.

Taking a different tack with a broad scope is Jane Sloan’s Reel Women: An International Directory of Contemporary Feature Films About Women (2007). While focusing exclusively on narrative features, Sloan accomplishes the most detailed subject indexing of any book mentioned here, with attention to race, age, themes and topics, nationality, and time period. Like Galerstein and Oshana, Sloan is largely concerned with documenting different kinds of representation on the screen, as opposed to spotlighting female filmmakers through a bio-bibliographical narrative. She helpfully includes a clearly stated “Criteria for Inclusion” section that is far more succinctly detailed than such sections in similar works, as well as an introductory critical survey arranged thematically. Because Reel Women’s coverage is international, is limited to features, and includes both male and female directors, it has both wider breadth and less depth than the geographical, multi-type, and directorially-based work of Hillauer and of Pallister and Hottell. It is a more natural successor to the earlier work of authors like Sullivan and Galerstein, contextualized through a film-studies critical lens that is notably different from the languages-and-literatures background of Pallister and Hottell.
All four of the volumes under review here offer useful points of discovery for researchers and instructors, but in the current publishing context, one is struck by the sense that the content may not necessarily be an ideal fit for the container. Indeed, most of the volumes retain a similar structure to one another that has changed little over time, with a short introduction, standard indexes in the back with different levels of complexity, and an arrangement that is often based on one geographical region that reflects neither some directors’ displacement from their country of origin nor transnational filmmaking practice. Furthermore, as has been mentioned before in this review, later volumes refer back to earlier ones; for instance, there are entries for Chantal Akerman in all four of the books, none of which are exactly the same; in the case of *Noteworthy Francophone Women Directors: A Sequel*, the entry for Akerman refers to the previous works for earlier information.

Because Pallister and Hotell’s filmographies work best as a combined pot of information, they would function incredibly well if they were to be reconfigured as an open access digital database tool. This would also allow for continued revision and updating in one space. Digital humanities publishing is still fairly new, and there are substantive questions about sustainability, metadata, funding, and implications for peer review. However, if a major goal of these texts is to provide needed exposure and increased instructional use of francophone women directors’ works, a sustainable online version of the filmographic information could well be a more visible and organized approach. It could also allow for the inclusion of distributor information for individual films as it becomes available, and of women in other roles behind the screen, such as editors, designers, and particularly screenwriters.

The scholarly filmography, in whatever form it is published, continues to play an important role in the identification and understanding of media, largely because of the critical and curatorial role of authors in providing subject control as well as social, biographical, and historical context. Pallister and Hotell have made a significant contribution to existing filmographies and guides that include francophone women directors, and their more in-depth focus allows researchers to learn about these filmmakers beyond the typical short list that appears in general histories and on syllabi. In reviewing these volumes, one can also see the continuing difficulty in obtaining substantive information on some directors and in even finding their works. The authors have compiled data on films that may inspire more diverse class screenings and critical scholarship, and very well may be conceived as a digital project that could reach a greater number of people.

Notes


[Diana King is the librarian for film, television, theater, dance, gender and LGBT studies at the University of California, Los Angeles.]
As women tweet pictures of their pregnancy tests, tabloid magazines devote sections to celebrity “bump watches,” and more and more expectant mothers create Facebook pages for their not-yet-born children, pregnancy and birth become increasingly public phenomena. Now more than ever, the pregnant body is monitored by doctors, family members, and even strangers. What was once considered a private experience for women is shifting into a public concern. This move from the private realm to the public arena comes with its own set of complications and concerns for pregnant women and feminist scholars. As feminist scholars are making clear, the meanings of reproduction and pregnancy are changing, and one consequence of these changes is increased surveillance and management of pregnancy and birth.

Feminist concerns about the surveillance and monitoring of pregnant bodies can be linked to a larger genealogy of feminist concerns about the surveillance and monitoring of women, generally. In the truly exceptional Seizing the Means of Reproduction: Entanglements of Feminism, Health, and Technoscience, feminist historian and science and technology scholar Michelle Murphy tells the story of feminist health movements in the United States, demonstrating the ways that these movements reclaimed the practices and processes of “women’s health.” For Murphy, feminist health movements of the 1970s and 1980s were engaging in “protocol feminism — a form of feminism concerned with the recrafting and distribution of technosocial practices” (p. 28).

Women’s health movements engaged with reproductive technologies in a multidirectional process of uptake and resistance. Feminists, Murphy argues, sought to reclaim and reimagine the tools by which women’s bodies were understood (vaginal self-exam, abortion, Pap smears) as part of a political project of education and liberation. Murphy describes these technologies as “topologies of entanglement, that is, the uneven, spatial, and often contradictory traffic of connections that are the conditions of possibility of both technoscience and feminism” (p. 103). Her focus on the reciprocity between feminism and technoscience enables her to provide a rich and subtle picture of the women’s health movement that avoids romanticizing or homogenizing this era of feminist history.

Murphy is exceedingly attentive to issues of race, geopolitics, and class, and her analysis is historically
grounded and extraordinarily relevant. As just one example, she locates her discussion of the Pap smear as a cervical cancer screening tool within a larger discussion of the concept of the “racial state,” arguing that Pap-smear screening projects must be considered within larger histories of unequal access to health care, eugenics, and structural racism. She writes, “The multiple subject-figures of the Pap smear — the privileged well woman securing her individualized healthful vitality and the at-risk women of mass screening for whom cervical cancer was calculated as a deadly statistical possibility — were the effect of the very different conditions in which Pap smears could be situated” (p. 114).

Murphy’s thoughtful attention to the breadth of influences on women’s health movements (technologies, geopolitics, race, class, gender, sexuality, location, relationships) makes *Seizing the Means of Reproduction* an absolutely invaluable resource for feminist historians, science and technology scholars, and reproductive justice advocates.

The Internet and new communication technologies make surveillance more visible, more aggressive, and practically omnipresent. As technology changes what is knowable about pregnancy (through better ultrasound imagery, improved embryonic testing), society changes what is considered acceptable for pregnant women. In *A Womb with a View: America’s Growing Public Interest in Pregnancy*, Laura Tropp traces the shifts in our cultural and social understandings of — and relationships to — pregnancy and childbirth, rooting this shift in cultural as well as technological developments. Tropp makes two primary arguments: first, that pregnancy has become an increasingly public event, and second, that women negotiate this new publicity through their interactions with media and new communication technologies. She explores pregnancy’s move from medical experience to social experience, arguing that pregnancy today is a hybrid medical-social experience, and demonstrates how expertise is contested and redefined through media and other cultural practices.

Tropp expands her analysis beyond the pregnant woman, arguing that cultural and market forces like reality television, pregnancy blogs, and the pregnancy advice market have created “pregnancy voyeurs” who maintain the publicity of pregnancy through their spectatorship (p. 50). *A Womb with a View* does an excellent job of accounting for the multiplicity of actors invested in pregnancies and gives a great deal of attention to fathers’ roles in public pregnancies.

Unfortunately, this focus on heterosexual couples does not allow Tropp to deeply challenge the heteronormativity of dominant reproductive discourses. Ultimately though, her critical analysis of pregnancy’s publicity, her use of culturally relevant examples and her clear and accessible language make this text a valuable resource for
students in media studies, women’s and gender studies, and cultural studies.

Like Tropp in *A Womb with a View*, Isabel Karpin and Kristin Savell interrogate the publicity of pregnancy in *Perfecting Pregnancy: Law, Disability, and the Future of Reproduction*, providing a thorough and detailed account of the ways that “women in contemporary Western society are encouraged to imagine their pregnancies as processes that can be perfected, indeed, that they have a responsibility to perfect” (p. 3). The authors are both legal scholars, and through detailed analysis of the ethics of prenatal testing for disabilities, preimplantation genetic diagnosis of disabilities, and termination or deselection of potentially “disabled” embryos and fetuses, they reveal the social and cultural issues surrounding pregnancy and disability. In chapters on disability, risk, terminations, and deselections, they meticulously detail the intricacies of existing legal codes regulating women’s choices in Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe.

As Karpin and Savell make clear, discourses of risk and disability pervade Western cultural consciousness, motivating many women to seek information about their fetus’s potential risk and to do whatever possible to mitigate that risk. However, as the authors reveal, ambiguity surrounds concepts of “disability,” “seriousness,” and “risk,” making these decisions extraordinarily complex. For Karpin and Savell, “these uncertainties open up productive spaces for renegotiating ideas of normality and ablebodiedness” (p. 237).

Through its careful and critical legal analysis, *Perfecting Pregnancy* reveals the ways that legal discourse constructs lives and raises questions about surveillance and women’s bodily autonomy. Thus, it is a vitally useful text for feminist scholars, disability studies scholars, and critical legal scholars.

In another fascinating case study, *Birthing a Mother: The Surrogate Body and the Pregnant Self*, Elly Teman offers a compelling analysis of surrogacy in Israel, noting that although much feminist scholarship on surrogacy focuses on how women and pregnancy become commodified through the surrogacy process, little of it centers actual surrogates and intended mothers.

To remedy this, Teman conducted years of fieldwork with surrogates and intended mothers in Israel, her research resulting in a wealth of rich ethnographic data. She identified several themes, including ways that surrogates strategically disengage from certain parts of their bodies and pregnancies, how surrogates and intended mothers form connections with each other, how they form (or resist forming) attachments to the fetuses, and how medical and legal systems separate the newborn baby from the surrogate to form a heteronormative nuclear family.
Finally, Teman rereads surrogates’ stories through the lens of the hero(ine) narrative, arguing that although surrogates’ bodies are surveilled, monitored, and regulated, this “structural disempowerment becomes the grounds for these women to exercise agency; they use their subjection to mechanisms of control to elevate themselves above that control to a place of power they have never before approached” (p. 279).

Ultimately, Teman’s research shows how both women in the surrogacy arrangement “together and individually, make surrogacy more about personal agency, gift giving, heroism, and birthing a mother” (p. 285). This gripping ethnographic study adds nuance to the theoretical debates about surrogacy, ethics, and autonomy. Birthing a Mother is an excellent resource for feminist anthropologists, ethnographers, and scholars interested in the global politics of reproduction and embodiment.

The documentary Born in the U.S.A. chronicles several women’s birth experiences, convincingly depicting the rampant medicalization of birth and providing sharp contrasts between home births, birth center births, and hospital births. The directors are thorough in their coverage of different birth experiences, arguing that — for low-risk pregnancies — birth center and home births are less stressful, provide women with more agency, and result in better outcomes for both mother and child. Viewers are encouraged to identify with the women depicted in the film and to invest emotionally in these women’s birth experiences. We cheer on the home births and hope that the hospital births are able to avoid medical interventions.

Unfortunately, most of the hospital births do result in medial interventions, and the unequal power dynamics between doctors and laboring women become clearly evident. As an example, MeeAe Rank, shown in the hospital delivering her first baby, had initially planned on a natural birth, but because her labor was not progressing quickly enough, she ended up needing a Cesarean section. After the delivery, MeeAe shares her disappointment at having had a Cesarean section and being the last one in the room to see her baby.

Born in the USA’s interviews with OB/GYNs are quite telling, as even these trained professionals acknowledge that many interventions happen unnecessarily. The directors film a hospital staff meeting where the doctors and residents discussed a planned induction that ended in a Cesarean section because, again, labor was not progressing quickly enough. One doctor noted, “It’s impossible not to have to go back and sort of wonder about whether we somehow induced, so to speak, this outcome by interfering with mother nature” (28:53).

Although race and class emerge as themes in the film (the home birth takes place in a very nice house; the birthing center is in the South Bronx and serves primarily Latina and Black women), the directors do not directly address these themes, thereby missing an opportunity to deepen their analysis.

Clocking in at just under an hour, Born in the USA makes a great resource for women’s health classes or introductory gender and women’s studies classrooms. The film’s clear feminist message about the need to empower women throughout their birthing experiences, along with its attention to the complicated issue of medicalization and childbirth, would certainly spark discussion among students.

As these diverse texts make clear, pregnancy and reproduction are increasingly becoming global feminist issues. The historical analysis in Seizing the Means of Reproduction, the cultural analysis in A Womb with a View, and the case studies in Perfecting Pregnancy, Born in the U.S.A., and Birthing a Mother begin to elucidate the myriad issues that surround reproduction, pregnancy, and childbirth. As the pregnant body is surveilled and monitored, it becomes increasingly important for feminist scholars to raise questions like those raised by these authors and filmmakers. How do women negotiate the publicity of their pregnancies? How do women engage with the technological and cultural surveillance of their pregnant bodies? How are women enacting agency in the face of aggressive reproductive technologies and cultural imperatives? The works reviewed address these questions and many others, ultimately arriving at the conclusion that, through navigating the complex terrain of public pregnancy, women are able to resist dominant discourses. The authors and filmmakers suggest different modes of negotiation, but all share a clear feminist concern for women’s autonomy and agency in spite of surveillance, monitoring, and public concern.

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**Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC): A Reproductive Justice Concern?**

by Kristin Ryder


First theorized in 1994 by American women of color activists such as Loretta Ross, the term *reproductive justice* refers to achieving “the complete physical, mental, spiritual, political, economic, and social well-being of women and girls.” It encompasses both reproductive health and reproductive rights concerns, yet envelops them in a social justice and human rights framework. A reproductive justice framework seeks to address and overcome the inequities formed by intersecting ideologies of oppression, including but not limited to racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, xenophobia, and religious fundamentalism, as they relate to the “control and exploitation of women’s bodies, sexuality, and reproduction as an effective strategy of controlling women and communities, particularly those of color” (Chrisler, p. 121).

As a feminist scholar who focuses on the reproductive justice implications of long-acting reversible contraception (LARC), which includes intrauterine devices (IUDs) and subdermal implants, I was excited to learn how scholars from four different disciplines currently frame the social and historical contexts of these technologies. While each of the works I read are extremely thought-provoking, I was somewhat disappointed to realize that there seems to be a disconnect when it comes to tying together the concept of reproductive justice and LARC methods. For example, while two of the four books offer broader overviews that describe contraception as a reproductive justice and/or rights issue, they miss a critical opportunity to mention the eugenic underpinnings and population-control origins of LARC methods, particularly IUDs, and how freedom to refuse the use of these methods is just as important as access to them. Conversely, the authors of the remaining books address and interrogate these concerns regarding LARC, yet either do not use or do not support using the term *reproductive justice* in their analyses.

Contributors to *Reproductive Justice: A Global Concern* aptly illustrate that the reproductive justice framework, though it “emerged from an American racialized political context… is particularly appropriate for examining the complexity of women’s experiences globally” (p. 122). Edited by feminist psychologist Joan Chrisler, the chapters are organically organized into twelve key issues that affect the overall well-being of women and girls worldwide. When one hears “reproductive justice,” it may be typical to first think of contraception and abortion, or of widely controversial or illicit practices such as sex trafficking, female genital mutilation, and female feticide. To address these limiting modes of thought and analysis, Chrisler includes topics that are often not portrayed as — even though they clearly are — reproductive justice issues, such as homophobia and transphobia, STI transmission, restrictive partner selection, and inadequate postpartum healthcare. In addition to expanding what reproductive justice means for the reader by including topics that are not often explicitly referred to as reproductive issues, the contributors partner heartbreaking stories and statistics with hopeful solutions, allowing the reader to become an active participant in the material.
While this much-needed endeavor largely succeeds in acknowledging the myriad issues, both domestic and global, that affect the overall well-being of women and girls, the chapter entitled “Contraception and Abortion: Critical Tools for Achieving Reproductive Justice” narrowly frames the problem as one rooted in unmet need for contraception and abortion services. Certainly, access to a range of contraceptive methods and abortion is essential to achieving reproductive justice. The right to refuse contraception and/or abortion, however, is also essential. Understanding how these tools have been (and in many places still are) used as forms of population control, and discussing forced and coerced sterilization — both on U.S. soil and worldwide — are likewise critical to achieving reproductive justice.

Historian Rickie Solinger’s Reproductive Politics: What Everyone Should Know addresses “highlights” about (American) reproductive politics, and is written in an exceedingly accessible and conversational question-and-answer format that facilitates easy digestion of the information presented. It is one of a series of “What Everyone Should Know” titles published by Oxford University Press, which seek to convey “the essentials” about a wide variety of current topics to a broad readership. Solinger focuses heavily on policy, science, and public opinion regarding abortion, with three separate sections dedicated to this topic. Still, questions range from “What exactly did Roe v. Wade say?” to “How have attitudes about single and teenage pregnancy changed since World War II?” In this way, Solinger expertly tackles a wide range of issues, including environmentalist perspectives on birth control, the role of men in reproductive rights debates, and religious teachings about contraception. Though this resource in no way claims that the questions included are the only ones being asked, or that each has been exhaustively answered, the brief response to “Why are long-acting contraceptives politically controversial?” falls short in several ways and may lead the reader to incorrectly believe the issue is fully addressed in the text.

For example, Solinger’s response only refers to the intramuscular hormonal injectable contraceptive Depo-Provera and the discontinued subdermal implant Norplant as politically controversial LARC methods. In fact, according to many health practitioners and contraceptive researchers, Depo-Provera is not even considered a long-acting contraceptive, since its effectiveness lasts only for three months. Additionally, Solinger fails to note that a different subdermal contraceptive implant, Implanon/Nexplanon, is now in use; that rates of both implant and IUD use are steadily increasing in the U.S. due to recent shifts in recommendation and rigorous marketing and education campaigns; and that the employment of these devices is still quite politically controversial, not only because of their association with eugenic and population-control policies, but also because they may be disproportionately recommended for those who have historically been considered “unfit” to reproduce, such as women of color, women of low socioeconomic status, women with disabilities, and drug-using women.

While the concept of reproductive justice and the issues most notably associated with it, such as coerced sterilization, are noted in Solinger’s book, there is no mention of the similarly dark and complex history of LARC. In this way, for someone who does not already know about this history, it would seem that the controversy (political or otherwise) regarding long-acting methods has more or less been resolved and that it was restricted to only Norplant and Depo-Provera — the first no longer prescribed in the U.S., and the other used rather infrequently compared to all available hormonal contraceptive methods.

Though Reproductive Justice: A Global Concern and Reproductive Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know are both geared toward educating the novice reproductive justice reader and
therefore offer broad overviews of reproductive rights and justice, both authors fail to take advantage of an opportunity to note the association between population control and LARC, thereby inadequately preparing the reader to understand the reproductive justice implications of these methods.

It is particularly shocking that Reproductive Justice: A Global Concern does not address contraception, particularly long-acting methods, beyond the context of unmet need, given the complex role that long-acting methods have played in population-control policies throughout the Global South.

Where Chrisler’s and Solinger’s texts lack the connection between LARC methods and population control and/or eugenics, Chikako Takeshita’s The Global Biopolitics of the IUD: How Science Constructs Contraceptive Users and Women’s Bodies clearly delineates and interrogates the historical, rhetorical, and social contexts of LARC technologies, specifically IUDs, through a feminist Science and Technology Studies (STS) perspective.

The concepts Takeshita explores include Michel Foucault’s “biopower,” Donna Haraway’s “diffraction,” choice as a biopolitical script, contraception as a form of governance, “problematic fertility,” and the racial economy of IUD promotion. In order to describe the ways in which the “ideal candidate” for the IUD has shifted, Takeshita highlights the seemingly ever-changing descriptions of contraceptive risk put forth by the medical community and the pharmaceutical industry alike. For example, safety risks were de-emphasized in order to shift IUD use from the “masses,” who were ideal candidates at the height of the “population bomb” era, to a new domestic market of “moms.” In this way, the concepts of choice, freedom, and control were reframed. With an emphasis on IUDs as “lifestyle devices” that afforded middle-to upper-class (white) women the opportunity to space their births, the U.S. government and Big Pharma labeled them as individual birth control devices. However, when they were disproportionately marketed to, and in many cases their use coerced among, historically marginalized women, these technologies were population-control devices. Though the history and shifts that Takeshita describes are a reproductive justice issue, support for the use of the term reproductive justice is missing from the author’s text.

Black Woman’s Burden: Commodifying Black Reproduction suffers from the same omission. In this work, sociologist Nicole Rousseau presents a comprehensive historical and rhetorical analysis of the numerous ways Black women’s bodies have been used according to the shifting needs of the political economy of the U.S., from forced breeding during the age of slavery to court-mandated sterilizations during the Industrial Age that followed emancipation.

In addition to relying on material feminism, Black feminism, and critical race theory throughout the analysis, Rousseau applies historical materialism to Womanist theory, thereby creating historical Womanist theory. The author uses these frameworks to acknowledge and address the intersectionality of oppressions that have historically exploited, and continue to exploit, women of color as a “unique laboring class.” Rousseau also addresses the ways in which public perceptions of the Black woman (e.g. Mammy, welfare queen, angry Black woman, etc.) are manipulated by the State and the media in order to mirror Black women’s place in the political economy at any given time.

In the chapter “Gettin’ Your Tubes Tied: Coercive Reproductive Policies,” Rousseau notes numerous coercive reproductive policies that targeted women of color during the “Era of Global Capitalism” (1975–1995) and in the “Electronic Age” (1996–2009), including state-sponsored programs, clinical trials, and cash incentives for long-term contraception.

Subsequently, “Unsupported by White women’s liberation movements in the struggles against [coercive reproductive policies], Black women are...
forced to form organizations of their own” (p. 141). Though these are the same issues that prompted the formation of a reproductive justice framework by American women of color activists in the 1990s, Rousseau misses an opportunity to use the explicit term reproductive justice and to discuss how it can be applied to the phenomena noted throughout the work.

As a reproductive justice advocate and ally, I am concerned that even in the two books here that do reference the eugenic and population-control history of long-acting methods, the term reproductive justice is absent. While there may be a number of plausible reasons for this, it indicates that there may be differing opinions regarding whether or not LARC methods have reproductive justice implications separate from other methods, or about how the term should be used across disciplines. I would argue that LARC is undeniably a reproductive justice issue, and that it should be referenced as such in reproductive justice literature just as much as it should be categorized as a reproductive justice issue in other literature.

While each of the works reviewed herein has numerous individual strengths, and although I believe reading them together can potentially bridge the gap between LARC methods and reproductive justice, I must note that failing to make this connection explicit is counterproductive to the movement toward complete well-being for women and girls, and hinders the act of continually remembering, acknowledging, and working to ensure that past abuses are never repeated.

Notes
2. Ross, p. 509.

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When I read Rosemarie Tong’s *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* as a graduate student about ten years ago, I was introduced for the first time to liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist and socialist feminism, and ecofeminism. Tong’s collection, in fact, along with the other texts we read in that introductory course, helped me forge my own feminist identity. I was quite naïve then about the complexities of the field of women’s and gender studies (WGS); nor had I any idea that eventually I would be not only a professor of English, but also the director of a women’s and gender studies program on a regional campus.

Attending statewide and national conferences has helped me understand the scope of scholarship in the WGS field, but I have definitely grappled with understanding the interdisciplinary nature of feminist scholarship, as well as what and how to teach in WGS courses. Do we teach from a feminist perspective? Should we start with the history of the field? Do we view women through a lens of institutionally prescribed roles in such areas as work, family, religion, and health care? Surely those of us in academia have thought about ways to teach, but what about ways to think about these issues?

*Rethinking Women’s and Gender Studies* takes the reader beyond an introduction to the major issues — and even beyond the dirty laundry — in the field. Edited by Catherine M. Orr, Ann Braithwaite, & Diane Lichtenstein, the collection serves as a way to navigate through the eclectic web of scholarship, activist(s), tensions, and debates that collectively we know as women’s and gender studies. Reading it gave me the opportunity not only to learn more about the field, but also to go beyond the purely theoretical texts so often taught in graduate school and into the real issues we face as scholars and teachers.

This collection offers challenges to the foundational assumptions of the field. The text is also organized by key terms, which is helpful for anyone teaching an advanced undergraduate or graduate course. Even those teaching introductory undergraduate students can benefit from rethinking challenging debates in the field.

The eighteen essay-chapters, grouped in five “parts,” are categorized by familiar themes, and many of the authors reference each other’s essays, which helps the reader situate and contextualize the issues. Each part is followed by several questions entitled “Points to Ponder,” which are useful pedagogical tools for graduate students and academics interested in pursuing further discussion. I found questions like the following particularly helpful as I read and pondered the essays in the collection: “Is there a construct we might devise to understand the history of WGS that does not use ’Waves,’ perhaps another metaphor that more accurately or less-problematically describes its history? What might be some possibilities—and limitations—in any new metaphor?” (p. 152).

**Part 1, Foundational Assumptions,** opens with a reflection on the key term *Feminism,* by Layli Maparyan, who discusses the problems a colleague encountered teaching feminism from a Eurocentric epistemology, noting that many students now take issue with that perspective. As she took over the teaching of that course, Maparyan says, “an important part of my strategy was to introduce an interrogation of the very ‘feminism’ that these students had found so cognitively and socially dissonant” (p. 18). This opening essay lays the appropriate groundwork for the collection, as it challenges the very foundations of feminism and its relevance to an increasingly diverse student population. Maparyan challenges womanist teachers to move from the world of theoretical to a world of practical when she discloses that her own “objective is to deepen students’ commitment to personally making the world a better place in some way or another and heighten their ability to do so from a place of conscious awareness about multiple viable strategies in the context of deep introspection about themselves and awareness of the relationship between self-change and world-change” (p. 29).

Other essays in Part 1: “Interdisciplinary,” by Diane Lichtenstein;
Part 2, Ubiquitous Descriptions, opens with Catherine Orr’s essay on Activism. Orr delineates the uneasy partnership between activism and academia, stating, “[W]hen activism is the focus of analysis in WGS contexts, the issue under scrutiny is almost always about activism’s demise at the hands of academic excesses” (p. 87). The role of activism seems to be what sets WGS apart from other disciplines. Orr summarizes many of the debates about the role of activism in WGS: “We need to rethink the political project of WGS within a framework beyond that of the university itself. Activism’s lack of definition and interrogation means that the discipline becomes vulnerable to the complicity of other kinds of political agendas” (p. 96). Also in Part 2: “Waves,” by Astrid Henry; “Besiegement,” by Alison Piepmeier; “Community,” by Martha McCaughey.

Part 3, Epistemologies Rethought, begins with Vivian M. May on Intersectionality. May helps the reader understand the history of intersectional thought in WGS and discusses its current importance: “As an epistemological approach, intersectionality offers tools to examine the politics of everyday life (e.g., the lived experiences of privilege and oppression, the implications and structures of marginalization, and the phenomenological and political meanings of identity)” (p. 156). For me, one of the most helpful elements of this essay is that May steps back and does not assume that everyone understands intersectionality. She writes, “Intersectionality calls for analytic methods, modes of political action, and ways of thinking about persons, rights, and liberation informed by multiplicity” (p. 164).

The other essays in Part 3 are “Identity (Politics),” by Scott Lauria Morgensen, and “Queer,” by Jennifer Purvis.

The terms brought together in Part 4, Silences and Disavowals, are linked to terms in previous essays — e.g., “Discipline” links back to the “Interdisciplinarity” essay. In the introduction to this section, the editors explain that the four terms brought together in this section are meant to make the reader to think of absences — places where WGS is not present and perhaps does not want to be. Ann Braithwaite begins her “Discipline” essay by asking whether or not WGS should be feminist scholarship in all the disciplines or whether it should be delimited, and if so, delimited to what? (p. 211). Braithwaite argues that the “disavowal” of the term [discipline] has “too often been the refusal to be accountable for (or at least self-reflexive about) how the field is constructed or what its structuring assumptions are, and has left it ill-equipped to articulate an intellectual, institutional, and pedagogical project that isn’t simply the sum of all scholarly feminist work” (p. 215). She succeeds at showing how the arguments have developed...
over time both for and against labeling WGS a discipline, and ultimately she argues for calling WGS a discipline “precisely because of what that term can now open up for our shared (re) thinking” (p. 223). Braithwaite’s essay is followed by “History,” by Wendy Kolmar; “Secularity,” by Karlyn Crowley; and “Sexuality,” by Merri Lisa Johnson.

Part 5, Establishments and Challenges, contains a fascinating essay by Aimee Carrillo Rowe on Institutionalization. Rowe recounts several narratives of the institutionalization of WGS and the rise of white, heterosocial women who succeeded in the academy due to a familiar familial-type relationship with white male administrators. Rowe contends that the “rise in WGS majors and the formation of doctoral programs provide the conditions for (some) academic feminists to secure not only shelter, but institutional power as well” (p. 295). She also notes that there is a power imbalance among feminists due to racialized insider/outside status, and argues that the problem of white women speaking for all women “permeates the problem of knowledge production in the field of WGS” (p. 297). Rowe concludes by calling for women of color who occupy outsider status to continue to critique the white, heterosexual power structure that benefits many white women in the academy (p. 308). Part 5 also includes the essays “Trans-,” by Bobby Noble; and “Transnational,” by Laura Parisi.

The editors conclude the volume by noting how often the different essay-chapters are in conversation with each other. The various authors don’t always agree about the meanings of the key terms, but this kind of tension is necessary for a thought-provoking conversation. I highly recommend Rethinking Women and Gender Studies as a companion to theoretical texts and as a guide that will continue to shape the future of the field.

Note

[Glenda Jones is an associate professor of English at the University of Wisconsin–Stout, and currently serves as director of the Women and Gender Studies Program and as chair of the Chancellor’s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity Coalition. She teaches courses in undergraduate and graduate writing and in women’s and gender studies. Much of her academic work is around the issues of diversity and inclusive excellence. She is an active researcher in the areas of high-impact practices, minority retention, and infusing diversity into the curriculum.]
I began reading this collection of essays through my lens as a librarian with some professional experience in archives management. I quickly realized, however, that it was more pertinent to me as the author of an institutional history based primarily on archival research.1

While there are some discussions in the volume of the archiving process, these essays mostly represent experiences of using materials contained in blogs, which are an unstable source and include the comments of others besides the blog creator (Karis Shearer and Jessica Schagerl); and the complications of trying to archive a feminist cabaret event (T.L. Cowan). As Hannah McGregor demonstrates in her discussion of Afghan-Canadian filmmaker Nelofer Pazira, “archive” can be used not to refer to an organized repository but a conceptual one. Thus she situates Pazira’s work within a Canadian “archive” of film, art, writing, and performance related to the lives of Afghan-Canadian women.

I found Part II, “Restrictions,” probably the most useful section, especially the chapters by Andrea Beverley and by Catherine Hobbs. This grouping delves into some of the most difficult concerns for archivists and researchers alike. The archival collections of living persons can only be seen as “complex sites of incompleteness and regimentation,” according to Beverley (p. 165). Restrictions on access may involve approval by the producer of the materials. “Halted by the Archive: The Impact of Excessive Archival Restrictions on Scholars,” by Ruth Panofsky and Michael Moir, offers a dialogue regarding the issue of access from the point of view of the researcher (Panofsky) and of the archivist (Moir). This meta-view of the archive, as developed and maintained by the archivist and as used and interpreted by the researcher, nicely illustrates the joint (and sometimes competing) values imbued to the archive.

Catherine Bates’s essay (“In the Hope of Making a Connection,”) from Part I,
however, adds much to this discussion in Part II. Bates challenges the belief that the archivist’s organization of materials is the “best,” and she explores how archives may present one story but ultimately produce another. Using two fictional accounts of working in archives, Bates illustrates the various interactions possible — including the possibility that researchers may relate to the materials in ways that go beyond the boundaries of archivists’ expectations.

Much of Part III, “Responsibilities,” focuses on questions of ethics and bias — primarily on the part of the researcher, but also on the part of the creator and the archivist. Several chapters focus on ownership and privacy. Archives that include letters to the creator of the archive bring up questions of who owns those letters and, similarly, to what extent researchers can use materials that betray the privacy of others.

Kathleen Venema explores this concern, along with the question of researcher and subject relationships, in “You can do with this rambling whatever you want: Scrutinizing Ethics in the Alzheimer’s Archives,” as she writes about an archive of letters she herself had written to her mother and some recently taped mother-daughter conversations based on those letters. Her mother now has an Alzheimer’s diagnosis, which both informs and questions those current conversations. In “Locking Up Letters,” Julia Creet recounts her dilemma of dealing with her own mother’s papers, which reveal family secrets not previously known. Paul Tiessen asks the question more generally in “I want my story told: The Sheila Watson Archive, the Reader, and the Search for Voice,” as he investigates how the subjectivity of the archivist, the researcher, or even the donor can affect the archives.

Altogether, this collection is uneven. Nearly all of the authors clearly share a theoretical perspective; and as a professional rather than an academic, I find the post-structural jargon to be almost impenetrable. However, given that the most likely user of these essays is a researcher who might be immersed in that discourse, this should not be taken as a condemnation.

The editors were deliberate about including essays from creative writers in developing the collection. For example, Penn Kemp’s important question (in “Psyche and Her Helpers, under Cloud Cover”) — “Can you archive creativity? Or only output?” — provides the perspective of a poet/performer. Indeed, the inclusion of creators of archival materials, of archivists, and of researchers is one of the strengths of this book.

It is important to note that despite its subtitle — “Canadian Women’s Archives” — in reality this is a book about the archives of Canadian women writers and creative artists. Little attention is paid to the archival collections of, for example, political women, or women’s organizations with their complex structures. Potential readers must also be prepared for the completely Canadian examples and cross-references. Although eminently useful in a course on Canadian women’s literature, this book would, I think, have too many barriers for generalized women’s literature courses, particularly at the undergraduate level.

Graduate students, particularly in research methods or advanced women’s studies courses, could find several of these essays useful. In particular, I would recommend those by Bates, Beverley, Hobbs, and Thieme. In addition, the chapters dealing with archives that could be considered non-traditional (blogs, multiple collections of an ethnic group, eBay, etc.) could be used by academics and graduate students in related fields such as communication arts, information, or cultural studies.

Note


[Jeanne Miller recently retired from the Center for the Education of Women at the University of Michigan, where she served as librarian and writer. Her more-than-thirty-year career as a librarian included fifteen years collecting and managing information related to the education and career opportunities of adult women. In addition, she spent the early years of her career processing the archival collections of American leaders in the field of gerontology. She holds an A.M.L.S. and an M.A. from the University of Michigan.]
AUTOSTRADDLE (http://www.autostraddle.com) — an intelligent, hilarious & provocative voice and a progressively feminist online community for a new generation of kickass lesbian, bisexual & otherwise inclined ladies (and their friends) — offers “news, entertainment, opinion, community and girl-on-girl culture.” Among a number of light-hearted articles currently featured are some hefty and serious ones, like “Clinical Trials on Trial: Medical Studies Still Exclude Women and People of Color to Dangerous Degree,” by Laura Mandanas; and “Hauntings and Banishings: Loss and Rage for a Queer Adoptee,” by July Westhale.

Because “feminists don’t talk enough about economics,” The Nation magazine has launched a twice-monthly blog, THE CURVE (http://www.thenation.com/blogs/curve)—managed by editors Betsy Reed, Sarah Leonard, and Emily Douglas, and hosted by Kathleen Geier — “where feminists will hash out economic issues and intervene in feminist debates from an economic perspective.” Each post is designed as a roundtable, with input from “the many fine economists, labor journalists, bloggers and academics already producing tremendous work.” The Curve’s opening post, on June 11, 2014, asked, “Does Feminism Have a Class Problem?” and engaged economics professor Nancy Folbre, Center for American Progress fellow Judith Warner, and Demos (public policy organization) president Heather McGhee in discussion about “Sandbergism,” capitalism, and more.

Have you encountered FEMINIST HULK lately? We first mentioned the big, green, purple-shorts-wearing, Tweeting smasher of patriarchy in this column in 2010 (v. 31, no. 3). Hulk now has a blog as well, for thoughts that run longer than 140 characters, “written in the voice of Hulk’s literary life partner, Jessica.” See the July 8 post, “On Trigger Warnings, Teaching, and Broccoli,” at http://www.feministhulk.net/141-characters.

WOMEN WRITERS, WOMEN’S BOOKS, at http://booksbywomen.org, describes itself as an “online literary magazine by and about contemporary women writers from around the world,” but does not appear to have numbered or dated issues of publication; instead, it “publishes new essays with an organic schedule based on readiness of articles and editing resources,” in three categories: Writing, Publishing, and Marketing. Some essays currently posted: “The Effects of Hormones on the Creative Process: The Secret Ingredient,” by Sarita Fae Jarmack; “Why I Chose to Self-Publish,” by Jessica Markwell; and “Daunted by Book Promotion? Don’t Be,” by Caroline Sandon.

FREE-BOOKS/REPORTS


Heather McIntosh & Dan Shapiro, GENDER, CULTURE, RELIGION: TACKLING SOME DIFFICULT QUESTIONS. Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Sheldon Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership, 2012. 86 pages. “Deals with the ethics of women's equality with specific emphasis on flashpoints related to cultural and religious diversity. The book addresses the oppression of Canadian women and girls carried out in the name of culture or religion and the need for public discussion of these difficult issues.” Print or
download PDF (in English) from http://www.chumirethicsfoundation.ca/gender-culture-and-religion-tackling-some-difficult-questions/.

Two from Equality Now: **PROTECTING THE GIRL CHILD: USING THE LAW TO END CHILD, EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE AND RELATED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS** (2014; 56 pages; 5.5 MB); and **JOURNEY TO EQUALITY: 10 YEARS OF THE PROTOCOL ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN AFRICA** (2013; 162 pages; 3.1 MB). Both in PDF (in English) at http://www.equalitynow.org/resources.


**ORGANIZATIONS/PROJECTS**

**ENERGIA: INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON GENDER AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY** (www.energia.org) “is the international network on gender and sustainable energy, founded in 1996. We work in Africa and Asia through and with our regional and national gender and energy networks. We work from the contention that projects, programmes and policies that explicitly address gender and energy issues will result in better outcomes, in terms of the sustainability of energy services as well as the human development opportunities available to women and men.” Energia even offers an online course via Moodle: “The Gender Face of Energy” at http://www.moodle.energia.org.

“The GRAÇA MACHEL TRUST is a catalyst that works across the African continent on three issues: women’s rights; children’s rights; and democracy and governance. We support local initiatives, connect people and groups that should be working together, and engage both publicly and behind the scenes with power brokers to strengthen and amplify the voices of African women and children. Our mission is twofold. Firstly, to foster and promote African women’s leadership and contributions in economic, political and social frameworks in national, pan-African, and international arenas. Secondly, to improve the lives of children through the promotion and protection of their rights.” Find out more at http://gracamacheltrust.org. (Note: Graça Machel is Nelson Mandela’s widow. She stepped aside from her official period of mourning in May 2014 to speak out about the kidnapped Nigerian girls.)

**HER ZIMBABWE** (http://herzimbabwe.co.zw/): “Her Voice. Her Revolution.” “Zimbabwe’s first women’s web-based platform promoting discussion, debate and consciousness building between women and men within Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe’s vast diaspora. Founded in 2012, Her Zimbabwe is helping to amplify the voices of women, in particular, by providing a space to interrogate popular and unpopular notions of a Zimbabwean, and feminine, identity.”

The **NATIONAL WOMEN’S COUNCIL** (www.nationalwomenscouncil.org), started in 2011 as part of the National Diversity Council, “is a non-profit 501 (C)(3) organization that seeks to provide a CollectiveVoice for women of all backgrounds, classes, and ages.” The Council’s motto: “When women succeed, America succeeds.”

**OUR BODIES, OURSELVES** launched a redesigned and expanded website at www.ourbodiesourselves.org in July 2014. The new site still serves as a companion to — and promotion for — the famous book that started it all; still has a blog; and still provides news updates about health issues. Entirely new is the “global projects” section, about the initiative to help women everywhere create language- and culture-specific OBOS projects in their own countries. In the Nigerian project, for instance (http://www.ourbodies-ourselves.org/global-projects/nigeria-women-for-empowerment-development-and-gender-reform), it’s not a book being published, but posters, stickers, and other materials, in both Yoruba and Pidgin English, that focus on safer sex, sexual health, sexuality, HIV/AIDS, birth control, pregnancy, infertility, and assisted reproduction.

**WOMEN’S KNOWLEDGE INTERNATIONAL** (www.womensknowledge.org), co-directed by Margarita Benitez & Teresa Langle de Paz, aims to support “the recognition and the global spread of women’s ways of knowing and the critical thinking on gender through educational initiatives, so that the impact of this knowledge multiplies, and is incorporated productively and fully into cultures of peace.” The group’s collaborative activities include seminars, courses, conferences, and research internships: “One of our priorities is to incorporate all forms of women’s experiential knowledge into formal education programs.”

Compiled by JoAnne Lehman
NEW REFERENCE WORKS IN GENDER & WOMEN’S STUDIES

GENDER


Reviewed by Pamela Salela

Gender is now considered to be as important as “class and race in the making and definition of individual and collective circumstances” (p. xiii), and the growth of this field of study has seen an accompanying evolution of intellectual vocabulary. This encyclopedic dictionary outlines the genesis and usage of thirty-seven concepts, including agency, cyberspace, disability, feminization of poverty, gender identity, intersectionality, LGBT politics, new reproductive technologies, transnational feminisms, and women’s/gender studies. Each entry includes a valuable history of ideas and theoretical paradigms that have informed the evolution of the concept.

The dictionary is interdisciplinary, with each entry crafted by a different scholar. Most of the contributors have backgrounds in such disciplines as literature, sociology, political theory, gender studies, cultural studies, theatre, women’s studies, economics, anthropology, family studies, philosophy, medical sociology, development geography, and development studies. With some notable exceptions — Sunni Madhok, Silvia Posocco, Nikita Dhawan, and Sunila Abeysekera — Western scholarly perspectives seem to prevail.

FEMINISM


Reviewed by Michelle Martinez

Jason Powell, editor of Nova’s series Social Perspectives in the 21st Century, writes that the goal of the works in the series is to “engage with conceptual development, historical formation, [and] contemporary relevance” (preface). In its attempt to broadly brushstroke feminist theories in five brief chapters, however, the 73-page Feminism volume loses nuance.

Chapter 1, “Introduction on Feminism,” is more of an introduction to Powell’s thoughts than an introduction to feminism. All of feminist thought throughout history, Powell claims, can be divided into three broad perspectives: one that is “informed by liberalism and individualism” (p. 1), a second that critiques gender bias, and a third that takes a postmodern approach.

Chapter 2, “The Development of Feminist Social Theory,” presupposes a basic knowledge of social theory, as it launches into the failures of early social theorists Marx, Durkheim, and Weber. This chapter does, however, make clear that social theory was incomplete and inaccurate in its failure to account for women and to explain why women were unaccounted for by historical and contemporary models.

[Pamela M. Salela holds an M.A. in Educational Policy Studies as well as in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She teaches in the Women & Gender Studies Department at the University of Illinois at Springfield and will be teaching her new course, “The Politics of Reproduction: Contested Wombs,” in Fall 2014.]
Chapter 3, “Early Feminism,” focuses on Mary Wollstonecraft, but a better chronology would start nearly a decade earlier with Jeremy Bentham. Furthermore, the list of feminist theories in this chapter, each with a minimal definition, is confusing, since these theories are from feminism’s Second Wave.

Chapter 4, “Contemporary Feminism,” is stronger than the previous chapters. Nevertheless, this chapter will be the most confusing to students new to the subject, due to its jargon and the quick assessments it offers on the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary theories.

The volume’s conclusion — a succinct overview of feminism, feminist social theory, and the debates within feminism — would have served better as an introduction to the work.

This book would have benefited from a timeline. In addition, names of important persons should be given in full, for the sake of readers who are not already familiar with them. The volume’s bibliography is extensive, and the index is somewhat useful, although personal names are not included. Any student new to feminism will become lost in the theory and terminology with which they’re immediately confronted; a glossary would be helpful.

The scope and format of Feminism are appropriate for an introductory text, but the writing is more at the graduate reading level. If this volume is to be used in an undergraduate course, it should be well-supplemented with lectures, other reading, and in-class discussion. Ultimately, the bibliography is the strongest and most valuable part of the book.

[Michelle Martinez is the librarian for literature and art at Sam Houston State University.]

Wives


Reviewed by Alison M. Armstrong

“Loving wife and devoted mother” (p.78) describes Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton (wife of Alexander), but the same could easily be said about most of the women featured in this book, whose lives were notable primarily in the realm of the “domestic arts.” Reading this book from cover to cover might prove tedious, but it may provide useful bits of information for researchers. The notes and bibliographies, for instance, may prove to be good resources and are likely the most valuable parts. The book also has a comprehensive index and an appendix of historic houses.

Of the thirty-nine men who signed the U.S. Constitution, twenty-six were married at the time (1787). Some never married, and some married multiple times. Essays and information about forty-three of the wives are included here. The entries, in alphabetical order by the women’s married names, each start with a listing of “vital statistics,” including birthdates, birthplaces, names of parents, marriage dates, number and names of children, and dates and places of death. The narrative essays that follow, although not lengthy and sometimes not linear, are helpful in fleshing out the bare facts with some interesting details. Perhaps understandably, especially given the period of history, many of the details are not about the women themselves, but about the men around them. When details are given about the wives, they often consist of generalizations and speculations based on known circumstances. But there are some exceptions. After Elizabeth Hamilton, for instance, was widowed in 1804, she wore black for the remaining fifty years of her life. During that time, she helped found a private orphanage and served as its director. When she died, it was discovered that as a sign of her loyalty to her husband she had worn, as a necklace, a little pouch containing a sonnet he had written.

The lives of the men who signed the Constitution, of course, were documented to a much greater degree than their wives’ lives were. Thus, the glimpses we get of the women are often through the words of their husbands — in some cases documented in things they wrote as they mourned their wives’ deaths — or through the eyes of family friends. Like the Daughters of the American Revolution, who are defined by their positions in their families, the wives of the signers are defined by their relationships with their husbands.

[Alison M. Armstrong is the collection management librarian at Radford University. She is the departmental liaison to Women’s Studies and serves on the Women’s Studies Committee. She is also a member of ALA’s Women & Gender Studies Section.]
WOMEN IN THE WORLD


Reviewed by Janet S. Fore

An excellent entry point for students and researchers for the study of the culture and history of women in this region, this book is the second title in Scarecrow’s Historical Dictionaries of Women in the World subseries. Its main body consists of 367 pages of short entries arranged alphabetically, describing women who have influenced the world around them. Names were chosen from the ranks of the “powerful”: not just women who ruled (directly or indirectly), but also those who endowed charitable foundations and established social movements or institutions, as well as those who, through art, singing, and poetry, influenced rulers or incited others to war.

Topical entries describe issues that affect women in this area of the world, such as education of women and girls in different time periods and regions, dowry and marriage differences, and feminist movement variations by country. The entries frequently include cross-references to related names or topics. An index is not included, but would have made the work more accessible.

The book includes an introductory essay and a chronology of events that have affected women’s participation in the world — this timeline extends from the Old Kingdom period in Egypt, to 1894 (when the term “feminism is first used in Great Britain” (p.xxiii)), to the twenty-first century. Events range from wars and revolutions to various dates when women were first elected to government offices or granted the right to vote. An extensive bibliography introduces sources for further study, including books arranged by topic or time period, journals focused on Middle East women’s topics, films, and sources in Arabic.

Whether struggling for feminist reforms or creating their own definitions of modernized gender roles in their current nationalist movements, many women have paid a high price for their activism. Feminists — or “reluctant” feminists under the current understanding of the term — have served time in prison, or lost their lives, for their beliefs and their work toward gender equality and full citizenship for women in this area of the world. Many of the well-known names here, such as Shirin Ebadi, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003, and Golda Myerson Meir, Israel’s first female prime minister, can be found in other sources; but this collection, which includes artists, poets, human rights activists, journalists, and wives of monarchs, along with organizations and centers devoted to women’s issues, is a unique reference work.

Ghada Talhami is emerita professor of politics at Lake Forest College and author of several books, including Palestine and Egyptian National Identity and The Mobilization of Muslim Women in Egypt.

[Janet S. Fore is the library director at the Cushwa-Leighton Library at Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, Indiana.]
PERIODICAL NOTES

See our online quarterly, Feminist Periodicals: A Current Listing of Contents, to find out what’s being published regularly in more than 150 feminist journals in English: http://womenst.library.wisc.edu/publications/feminist-periodicals.html.

NEWLY NOTED

AS/US: A SPACE FOR WOMEN OF THE WORLD. 2012—. Co-founders: Tanaya Winder (also Editor-in-Chief); Casandra Lopez (also Managing Editor); Christine Trudeau. 1/yr. Free access online at http://asusjournal.org; print copies of numbered issues are also available for purchase at Amazon.com: list price is $10.00 for latest issue (no. 3, February 2014, 116p., ISBN 978-1495374029). Some supplemental issues, published online only: “V-Day Issue”; “Queer Issue.”

From “Letter from the Editors” in Issue 1: “The seed for As/Us was planted in Boulder, Co while three Indigenous women writers were discussing writing, the challenges of publishing, and the lack of diversity within the literary world. We came up with the idea of starting our own journal, specifically for Indigenous women. We became excited about the possibility of publishing established writers, like Joy Harjo who are taught in classrooms alongside emerging writers, some of whom have published, but have not yet received much recognition. By bringing writers in different stages of their careers together we were interested in the conversations that would arise between subject matter, craft and aesthetics. We envisioned a space where readers could find fiction, poetry, spoken word, and art in dialogue with scholarly works, along with interviews from some of our contributors. We hope to continue the journal for many years to come and want to seek out more international voices and youth features as well.

“While Casandra and Tanaya were curating this issue their vision for As/Us expanded to include writers from other underrepresented communities. Just as we were able to see the intersections between the themes and subject matter of all of our contributors’ voices and experiences it is our hope that our readers will contemplate those connections as well.”

Fun fact: As/Us has been viewed in 149 countries so far!

FEMINIST AFRICA. 2002—. Editor: Amina Mama. Publisher: African Gender Institute, University of Cape Town, South Africa (http://agi.ac.za/feminist-africa).ISSN: 1726-4596. 2/yr. Free online access; “hard copies available to those based at African universities” (international subscriptions available via EBSCO).

From the editorial in the first issue (2002), whose theme was “Intellectual Politics”: “Feminist Africa responds to the heightened salience of gender in African political and intellectual landscapes. It provides a forum for the intellectual activism that has always been as intrinsic to feminism in Africa as to feminisms anywhere else. It provides the first continental platform for reflecting on the accumulated wisdom which has matured in the cauldron of postcolonial gender contradictions.”

Sampling of subsequent issue themes: “Changing Cultures” (no. 2, 2003); “National Politricks” (no. 3, 2004); “Sexual Cultures” (no. 5, 2005); “Rethinking Universities” (nos. 8 & 9, 2007); “Land, Labour and Gendered Livelihoods” (no. 12, 2009); “African Feminist Engagements with Film” (no. 16, 2012); “Researching Sexuality with Young Women: Southern Africa” (no. 17, 2012).


WOMEN, GENDER, AND FAMILIES OF COLOR. 2013—. Editor: Jennifer F. Hamer. Host/Partner: Department of American Studies, University of Kansas. Publisher: University of Illinois Press, 1325 S. Oak Street, Champaign, IL 61820-6903 (www.press.uillinois.edu/journals/wgfc). ISSN: 2326-0939 (print), 2326-0947 (online). Online access via JSTOR and MUSE.

Jennifer Hamer explains in her editorial to the inaugural issue that Women, Gender, and Families of Color (WGFC) has roots in the earlier Black Women, Gender, and Families, published from 2006 to 2012 (also by University
of Illinois Press). WGFC, she writes, “broadens the mission of the earlier journal and explicitly emphasizes the diverse and similar experiences of black, Latino/a, Indigenous, and Asian American women and families, with gender serving as a central analytical frame. Simultaneously, the journal maintains a strong interest in examining social and economic policies and practices, and encourages transnational comparative analyses.”


**Special Issues/Themed Sections**


Contents of section: “A Day Without Care” (“What does it mean when ‘production’ isn’t the production of widgets, but care for the children, the ill, disabled, or elderly?”), by Sarah Jaffe (from Jacobin); “Sympathy for the Stay-at-Home Mom” (“Work, life, and the modern calendar”), by Judith Shulevitz (from The New Republic); “Know-It-All” (“Patriarchy, privilege, and work”), by Larisa Zehr (from Geez).

**TRANSITIONS**

If you’ve been around long enough — and have been reading this column in Feminist Collections long enough — you may have seen our announcement of a then-brand-new newsletter, **WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION (WIHE)**, back in 1992. Even if you’re younger or newer to us than that, you’ve probably seen WIHE’s table of contents reproduced regularly in our quarterly guide to feminist periodical publishing (called, aptly enough, Feminist Periodicals, or FP). WIHE founder Mary Dee Wenniger edited and published the newsletter right here in Madison, Wisconsin, until earlier this year; that’s when she “passed the torch” (her words) to publisher John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (under its Jossey-Bass brand), and editor Liana Silva-Ford, and joined the ranks of the finally retired as she approached her seventieth birthday. Neither Silva-Ford nor the new publisher has missed a beat, thankfully: WIHE is still coming out regularly, and each issue’s table of contents still gets reproduced in FP. Find out all you need to know about subscribing at www.wihe.com; some articles are available there in full text as well.

Compiled by JoAnne Lehman

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Miriam Greenwald
ITEMS OF NOTE

AWAKE, by Ingrid Swanberg. Unpaginated volume of poetry published by Green Panda Press of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, 2014. Poet Swanberg (a.k.a. Markhardt) worked in the UW Women's Studies Librarian's Office for many years, and has also reviewed for Feminist Collections.

A MATTER OF FAIRNESS: A HISTORY OF THE CENTER FOR THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, by Jeanne E. Miller. 78 pages. appendix. notes. Published by the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library, January 2014, as Bulletin no. 60. This is the “fiftieth-anniversary history” of an effort that began in the 1960s to help women enroll in and complete a university education, thriving through many changes over the years as it evolved into a national model. From the introduction:

The history of the University of Michigan Center for the Education of Women presents a fascinating story that illuminates the changing roles of women over the past half-century. It is the story of the inherent contradictions found at a highly male-oriented institution that prides itself in its early admission of women. It is the story of the means through which women in the 1960s exercised their leadership abilities, initiative, and political savvy in a culture that devalued their contributions. It is the story of strong leaders who navigated the bureaucracy and politics of a major research university. It is the story of a unit that was acutely attuned to prevailing campus issues, concerns, and interests and, in response, continually modified its initiatives, structures, and strategic priorities. And it is the story of a passion for women’s education, equity, and development manifested through dozens of staff members over the course of fifty years.

Author Jeanne Miller was the Center’s librarian and writer from 1998 to 2014. She is also a contributor to Feminist Collections. (See her latest contribution on pages 22–23 of this issue.)

OLIVE GRRRLS: ITALIAN NORTH AMERICAN WOMEN AND THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY, by Lachrista Greco; foreword by Kym Ragusa. Published by Olive Grrrl Press in Madison, Wisconsin, 2013; available on Amazon Kindle. Lachrista Greco is the founder of the widely followed GUERRILA FEMINISM digital activist movement; she is also the new Office Operations Associate for the UW System’s Gender & Women’s Studies Librarian; and her review of Julia Serano’s EXCLUDED will be published in an upcoming issue of Feminist Collections. Kym Ragusa writes in the foreword to Olive Grrrls:

Greco and the other writers in Olive Grrrls remind us that the “what are you” question is more than just a cause for personal unease; it is a form of interrogation, and enactment of power that promotes shame, enforces silence, and imposes real limitations on the possibility of solidarity between women within Italian American communities and between these women and more explicitly marginalized groups. Olive Grrrls speaks back to the question: it is a call to “collect, name, and own” a more radicalized Italian diasporic identity — one that defies expectations and asserts complexity and multiplicity, one capable of reaching beyond itself to join with others in larger collective struggles for justice.

Compiled by JoAnne Lehman
Books & Videos Recently Received


God and Blackness: Race, Gender, and Identity in a Middle Class Afrocentric Church. Abrams, Andrea C. New York University Press, 2014.


Invisible Women of Prehistory: Three Million Years of Peace, Six Thousand Years of War. Foster, Judy, with Derlet, Marlene. Spinifex (Australia); distr. Independent Publisher Group, 2013.


My First Book of My Life. Thornton, Alice; ed. by Anselment, Raymond A. University of Nebraska Press, 2014.


POLICEWOMEN: A HISTORY. Segrave, Kerry. McFarland, 2014 (2nd ed.).


READING WOMEN’S WORLDS FROM CHRISTINE DE PIZAN TO DORIS LESSING: A GUIDE TO SIX CENTURIES OF WOMEN WRITERS IMAGINING ROOMS OF THEIR OWN. Jansen, Sharon L. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.


Women’s Studies International

Women’s Studies International™ covers the core disciplines in Women’s Studies to the latest scholarship in feminist research. Coverage includes more than 594,000 records and spans from 1972 and earlier to the present. This database supports curriculum development in the areas of sociology, history, political science & economy, public policy, international relations, arts & humanities, business and education. Nearly 800 essential sources include: journals, newspapers, newsletters, bulletins, books, book chapters, proceedings, reports, theses, dissertations, NGO studies, web sites & web documents and grey literature. Over 2,000 periodical sources are represented.

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U.S. & Canada: 800-653-2726; International: 978-356-6500; Fax: 978-356-6565
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