



Resources for Gender and Women's Studies

A FEMINIST REVIEW

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From the Editor

Here it is — in its new clothes, sporting its new name: *Resources for Gender and Women's Studies: A Feminist Review*.

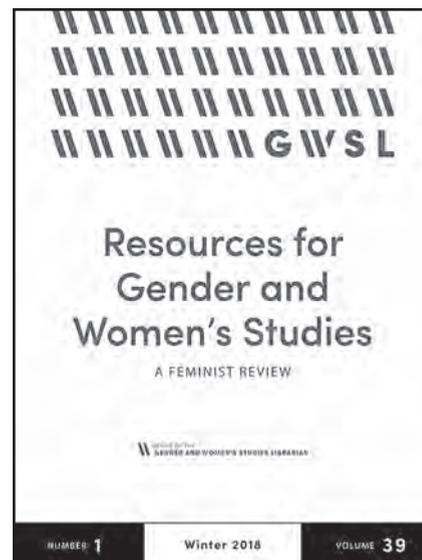
But its goal is the same as when it was called *Feminist Collections*: to offer a thorough, robust, and feminist guide to “all the things” (to use artist/author Allie Brosh’s now meme-enshrined phrase): all the resources, that is, that someone might find useful in the field of gender and women’s studies.

I don’t mean “all” literally, of course. There are even more GWS resources out there than our office knows about, and infinitely more than we can review in these pages. But we try to keep up, not only with headlining trends but also with valuable book, film, periodical, archival, and online resources that might not get much coverage elsewhere. This issue, for instance, brings you a review of feminist scholarship about romance

fiction. Everyone knows the romance genre exists, and many have scorned it. But did you know that feminist academics are seriously studying and critiquing romance novels — and even writing them? That story starts on page 1. Keep reading: you’ll also find a handbook on the psychology of sexuality and gender; an indie-published volume of poetry, prose, and art dedicated to helping feminists heal from trauma; a film about women artists in London; scholarship about the trendy headliner Wonder Woman; and more.

Here’s hoping you’ll enjoy “all the things” in this issue, as well as the sporty new design. Would you like to be part of a future issue? Please get in touch! We have an ever-evolving list of “things” that could be reviewed in this journal. Are you happy just reading for now? We need subscribers, too. See the form on the last page.

JoAnne Lehman



Books

Popular Romance, American Identity, and Feminist Criticism

BY JESSICA VAN SLOOTEN

Catherine M. Roach, *Happily Ever After: The Romance Story in Popular Culture*. Indiana University Press, 2016. 240 pp. notes. bibl. index. \$26.00, ISBN 978-0253020444.

William A. Gleason and Eric Murphy Selinger, eds., *Romance Fiction and American Culture: Love as the Practice of Freedom?* Ashgate/Routledge, 2016. 456 pp. notes. index. pap., \$50.95, ISBN 978-472431530.

Laura Vivanco, *Pursuing Happiness: Reading American Romance as Political Fiction*. Humanities-Ebooks, 2016. 164 pp. PDF, £8.95, ISBN 978-1847603593; pap., \$17.33 (Lulu.com), ISBN 978-1847603609.

A September 2017 *New York Times Book Review* (NYTBR) cover story on popular romance fiction stunned many readers. Critic Robert Gottlieb's book review, "A Roundup of the Season's Romance Novels," which focused on recently published novels, created a stir in the popular romance field.¹

Publication of the review was itself a huge coup: Earlier in the decade, chick-lit author Jennifer Wiener "waged a campaign against the literary media for being biased against female writers, and against books written for women," with great attention directed toward the NYTBR,² which has since changed editors and diversified its reviews somewhat. The September 2017 cover story and review are a mark of progress for genre fiction written largely by and for women.

However, the review proved reductive of a diverse genre and reinforced a number of stereotypes about romance. As Sarah Wendell ("SB Sarah") at the popular romance blog *Smart Bitches, Trashy Books*³ writes, "Gottlieb's editorial content was a sexist, misogynist, racist, and condescending assembly of words and letters. It doesn't represent a

roundup of anything but antiquated stereotypes with a side order of reductive suppression. It was outstanding exposure for romance... framed entirely by mansplaining."⁴ And yet Sarah herself notes that such reviews aren't problematic enough to overshadow the "[increased] media coverage of the genre."⁵

Popular romance fiction — from slim Harlequin category novels to longer stand-alone works — continues to be both wildly popular and frequently maligned. The irony is that the commercial success of popular romance fiction likely subsidizes other publishing, including the celebrated literary fiction that graces most of the pages of the NYTBR. Popular romance fiction is a \$1.08 billion industry, with women making up 84% of the readership.⁶ A growing number of these readers are also scholars who have worked over the past 40+ years to develop a rich, diverse, interdisciplinary scholarly community.

Popular romance scholars find community in numerous places, including the venerable Romance Writers of America (RWA) association. While RWA focuses primarily on aspiring and published romance authors, it also offers an academic research grant to enhance the scholarship of

the genre (several of the scholars included in the books I review are past recipients). Additionally, in 2009, Eric Selinger and Sarah Lyons established the International Association for the Study of Popular Romance as a professional scholarly organization, complete with a biannual international conference and a peer-reviewed online publication, the *Journal of Popular Romance Studies*. The Popular Culture Association (PCA) features a vibrant popular romance division, and scholars gather at the PCA's annual conference to engage in community connections and share research. Popular romance blogs like *Teach Me Tonight*⁷ and the aforementioned *Smart Bitches, Trashy Books* offer more informal gathering places for scholarly inquiry to flourish.

Three recent book-length studies of popular romance fiction deepen and shift the conversation, employing a range of critical strategies to better understand and interpret this significant women-centered genre. Laura Vivanco's *Pursuing Happiness: Reading American Romance as Political Fiction* and Catherine M. Roach's *Happily Ever After: The Romance Story in Popular Culture* both explore the connection between romance fiction and contemporary



culture. *Romance Fiction and American Culture: Love as the Practice of Freedom?*, edited by William A. Gleason and Eric Murphy Selinger, gathers twenty diverse essays on specific authors, themes, and subgenres, showcasing wide-ranging scholarly approaches to popular romance fiction.

Throughout the decades, a rift has existed between romance fiction and feminism. Consider second-wave feminist critiques of male domination within heterosexual relationships and intercourse alongside the fulfilling fantasy of “happily ever after.” Consider, too, problematic tropes of trembling virgins and rapey rogues whose narrative destiny is to fall into something like marital bliss in classic romance fiction from Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* (1748) to Kathleen Woodiwiss’s *The Flame and the Flower* (1972). Fortunately, times are changing. Third-wave feminism embraces sex positivity, and many contemporary romance novels feature couples — of all genders and sexualities — who are well-versed in consent and power, explicitly and implicitly navigating these issues as they fall into orgasmic bliss. Feminist cultural studies provides tools for unpacking the complexity of popular romance fiction, paving a way for more nuanced readings and feminist stances.

In *Happily Ever After: The Romance Story in Popular Culture*, Roach builds on Pamela Regis’s groundbreaking work in *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* (2007), which makes important claims about the literary form of popular romance. Regis began her analysis with Samuel Richardson’s classic *Pamela* (1740) to highlight eight significant genre conventions.⁸ Roach, drawing on her

cultural and gender studies expertise, shifts the focus away from Regis’s literary conventions to “nine essential elements [that] describe the deep storyline or foundational premises that tellers spin out through a million and one variations into the tales of romance that we read and watch and hear in pop culture” (p. 20), focusing on the implications of romantic love for women in a patriarchal system. These are her elements:

1. It is hard to be alone, especially
2. as a woman in a man’s world, but
3. romance helps as a religion of love, even though it involves
4. hard work and
5. risk, because it leads to
6. healing,
7. great sex, and
8. happiness, and it
9. levels the playing field for women. (p. 20)

Roach’s structural approach to her own book bridges the divide between scholarly and popular writing. She explicitly situates herself as “a multi-positioned aca-fan-author through a practice of observant participation in order to produce a performative ethnography. Together, these three terms constitute my alternative approach to the traditional fieldwork method of participant observation, as I apply it to the academic study of genre romance” (p. 38). This is reflected, for instance, in Roach’s approachable voice, lack of jargon, and infusion of romance imagery and language. Her chapters alternate between traditional critical essays and personal narratives that focus on her journey from romance fan and scholar to romance author, complete with velvet gowns, writing contests, and finding an agent. One of the most imaginative chap-

ters creates a conversation between her two personae, Catherine Roach the scholar and Catherine LaRoche the romance author. This chapter demonstrates diverse readings of the “fantasy” of popular romance, the emphasis on relationships, and the centrality of women’s sexual pleasure against a patriarchal landscape. Her final chapter considers the role that the HEA — “happily ever after” — ending plays. Roach uses the two concepts of “erotic faith and reparation fantasy” to demonstrate the transformative significance of the ending:

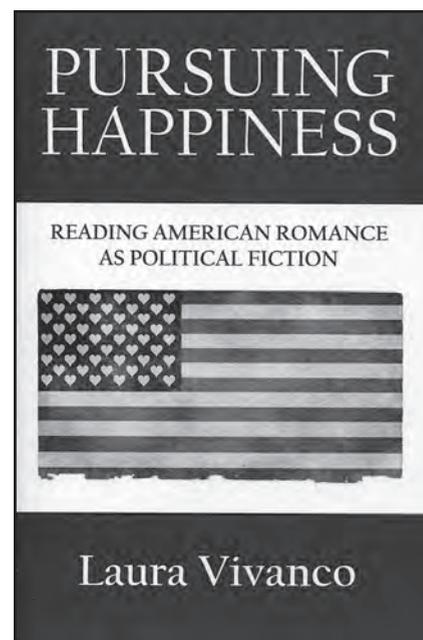
1. People have faith in love. The romance story functions similarly to a religious belief system that offers guidance on the end goal of how to live a good and worthy life.
2. The romance story is a reparation fantasy of the end of patriarchy. In this fantasy, the romance hero stands in for patriarchy itself in a vision wherein gender unfairness is repaired and all works out. (p. 167)

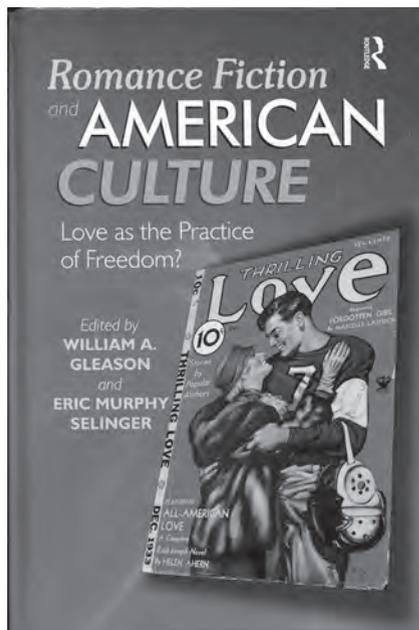
As elsewhere in the book, Roach navigates romance’s appeal to readers across the political spectrum and offers a critique rooted in gender theory.

Laura Vivanco’s *Pursuing Happiness: Reading American Romance as Political Fiction* focuses on what close reading of popular romance fiction “reveals about Americans’ political ‘likes and dislikes’” (p. 13). Vivanco, an independent scholar of romance fiction, explores implicit politics, noting that “at the most basic level, there is bound to be politics in romance fiction because the love lives of the two or more protagonists

in a romance will invariably involve ‘relations of conflict and power’” (p. 14). She also acknowledges explicitly political messages in popular romance fiction, such as those about slavery and abolitionism in Beverly Jenkins’s *Belle* (2002). Vivanco notes, however, that for the most part, “the politics in romance remains implicit and may not be obvious to readers of mainstream romances who themselves feel part of the mainstream; for them, the politics in the novels may well go unperceived because it reaffirms widely accepted political beliefs” (p. 16). This book is organized around several of these values: the work ethic, the “myth of the frontier” and manifest destiny, community, immigration, and rootedness (p. 74). Each chapter focuses primarily on select romance texts to demonstrate how these themes are embedded and the degree to which the novels support and/or challenge these values. As I read each chapter, I wished for more development of the arguments; for example, Vivanco shows how the genre conventions of westerns and popular romance overlap in a few novels, a topic that deserves a book-length investigation.

Like Roach, Vivanco devotes some time to the HEA. She situates American popular romance’s “guarantee of the ‘emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending,’” as described by the RWA, as a particularly American phenomenon. In contrast, “The UK’s ‘romantic fiction’...offers readers a range of outcomes” (p. 18). This is an important and necessary reminder that popular romance fiction reflects and shapes key values about culture and nationality, a theme that Regis explores more deeply in her essay in the next book reviewed here.





Romance Fiction and American Culture: Love as the Practice of Freedom? (2016), edited by literature professors William A. Gleason and Eric Murphy Selinger, contains twenty academic essays arranged into four sections: “Popular Romance and American History” (Part I), “Romance and Race” (Part II), “Art and Commerce” (Part III), and “Happy Endings” (Part IV). The authors include published romance authors, academic scholars, editors, and publishers. The essays represent a range of disciplines, including English literature, gender studies, anthropology, African and Black diaspora studies, and more, and the collection aims to “bring a fresh historical depth and specificity to bear on the cultural history of American popular romance fiction” (p. 3). Framed by feminist scholar bell hooks’s memorable conception of “love as the practice of freedom,” the book explicitly engages with intersectional ideas about identity, history, and industry, bringing together “new areas of inquiry” that are situated in the evolving field of popular romance scholarship (p. 4).

In their introduction, Selinger and Gleason use the wave model to describe popular romance scholarship: the first wave began in the 1980s and is associated with the works of Janice Radway, Tania Modleski, and Ann Snitow. This period of scholarship focused on “texts, readers, and publishing trends”; the influential and now dominant RWA was founded during this time (p. 11). The second wave, in the 1990s, was marked by “novelists ‘writing back’ and joining the conversation,” as in Jayne Ann Krentz’s influential collection of essays written by practicing romance novelists, *Dangerous*

Men and Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of the Romance (1992). The third wave, much like third-wave feminism, is “a motley twenty-first-century work in progress,” featuring diverse perspectives, voices, and theoretical approaches by academics, scholars, fans, novelists, and others involved in the romance fiction industry. One strain of critique focuses on the aesthetic and is openly appreciative of the genre, in contrast to some of the earliest scholarship and counter-critiques by those outside of the field (p. 13).

Gleason and Selinger’s focus on the intersection of romance fiction and American culture offers compelling approaches, such as Pamela Regis’s essay, “*Pamela Crosses the Atlantic*; or, Pamela Andrews’s Story Inaugurates the American Romance Novel.” Regis, a professor of English, explores the publication and reception of Richardson’s *Pamela* in America. Although the first edition (printed by none other than Benjamin Franklin in 1742–1744) faltered, subsequent abridged editions were immensely popular (p. 25). The story of *Pamela* in America is, according to Regis, an important way of understanding democracy and nation-building: “the unions in these novels signify not the dark sinister threat of democracy; instead they point to a beneficent liberty whose aegis courting young people choose freely. The results of the choice are newly ordered communities and a democracy that models itself on the happy unions that freedom makes possible” (p. 38). This is in contrast to *Clarissa*, Richardson’s tome that ends with the “ruined” heroine’s death. Rather than a dark vision of democracy, *Pamela* offers us a taste of agency, freedom,

and companionship, a vision that maps onto republican nationhood (p. 37). Regis's focus, in this essay, on the implicit politics of the genre as a whole amplifies the focus of Vivanco's book and underscores the significance of the romance narrative plot as describing key aspects of our conception of American identity.

In "Queer Romance in Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century America: Snapshots of a Revolution," legendary LGBTQ publisher Len Barot (who has published romance fiction under the name Radclyffe) chronicles the rise of lesbian romance from the negative/tragic plots of such novels as Radclyffe Hall's 1928 *The Well of Loneliness* (p. 389) to the transformative formation of Naiad Press in 1973, which heralded a new era of lesbian genre romance (p. 393). Barot, who founded her own publishing company, Bold Strokes Books, in 2004, finds a growing market and a shifting audience for queer popular romance fiction:

In the last four decades, the readership of queer romances has changed from primarily a lesbian audience seeking visibility and affirmation to a more heterogeneous audience of heterosexual and queer readers whose romance tastes span the traditional to the erotic. Queer romance has grown from a handful of titles published by struggling presses existing far from the mainstream publishing network to dozens of new titles a month in every genre produced by publishers recognized by the Romance Writers of America. (p. 402)

This progression maps onto changing social trends, the impacts of the gay

rights and feminist movements, and the greater social acceptance that "love is love is love."

Another important development in popular romance fiction scholarship is attention to diverse texts, along with intersectional approaches to reading those texts. Hsu-Ming Teo, a historian and literary novelist, explores the classic sub-genre of "Sheikh" romances and their connection to American and traditional Orientalism. Teo provides a historical view of this subgenre of romance, tracing the different depictions of the Orient as representing "freedom from sexual constraints and the hypocrisy of the double standard for men's and women's sexual behavior in the West" (p. 187). She explores the various ways in which Orientalist romantic culture is distinct from traditional Orientalist discourse and how many of the features of these novels contrast Western white women with their counterparts in the East (p. 189). She compares depictions of these women in a range of novels published by industry giant Harlequin, showing how authors challenge and reinforce Orientalist stereotypes, and is particularly interested in contextualizing these novels against the backdrop of the War on Terror. She convincingly argues that "to the extent that these novels and films celebrate women's work and lifestyle choices, overt sexuality, bodily integrity, romantic love, and even their triumph over men, the genre itself becomes yet another symbol of American 'freedom' in the current discourse on the War on Terror" (p. 200). While some novels subvert the Orientalist rhetoric and credit "modern urban Muslim women" for changing women's position within their cultures, others "[position]

American women as the authoritative educators and liberators of women from other races, cultures, or nations" (p. 194). The romance heroine often reflects the white savior complex.

As an aca-fan-wannabe-author myself, I have been fortunate enough to attend an RWA conference and to participate in panel presentations with some of the scholars named here at the PCA annual conference. I routinely teach popular romance fiction in my gender and women's studies courses, and I read these three books with an eye toward incorporating them into my teaching and research.

In a recent "Women and Popular Culture" class, I focused on popular romance fiction, using Roach's nine elements of romance in framing both narrative conventions and possible feminist messaging. I would recommend Roach's explicitly feminist reading of popular romance for a variety of courses. Roach's unique narrative approach appeals to a wide audience, including those outside of academia who want to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the genre. It also provides a model of feminist scholarship that unapologetically and intentionally builds on personal experience and praxis.

Gleason and Selinger's collection provides useful information on various aspects of the romance field and is suitable for those looking for an overview of the field of romance scholarship — the introduction, in particular, provides a concise overview. The essays, which provide deep insight on individual writers, identity groups, and aspects of the industry, can be selected to accompany other course readings or enhance research.

BOOKS

Vivanco's monograph would be most useful taught in tandem with the fictional works she analyzes and would be a good starting point for exploring these topics, as the short book lacks deep development.

Together, these three texts illustrate the diversity of popular romance fiction itself, as well as the vigorous and passionate critical readings of this popular and often misrepresented genre. They will prove useful for anyone seeking to understand the role of

popular romance fiction in American culture, and they are essential reading for romance scholars.

Ultimately, romance is here to stay, with ever-evolving subgenres and permutations, connecting to a wide readership of fans, scholars, and aca-fans. Cultural critics and book reviewers would do well to learn the deep history of the genre and its links to other women-centered genres that have been at once immensely popular and simultaneously critically

maligned. Surely in the late 2010s we can move beyond critiques that diminish women's writing and recognize that the descendants of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "damned mob of scribbling women" are not only not going away; they are becoming ever more professional and savvy, and they are supported by networks of fans, scholars, and aca-fans willing to continue buying the novels, writing in-depth critiques, and promoting the liberating potential of the genre.⁹

NOTES

1. Robert Gottlieb, "A Roundup of the Season's Romance Novels," *New York Times Book Review*, September 26, 2017; nytimes.com/2017/09/26/books/review/macomber-steel-james-romance.html.
2. Rebecca Mead, "Written Off: Jennifer Weiner's Quest for Literary Respect," *New Yorker*, January 23, 2014; newyorker.com/magazine/2014/01/13/written-off.
3. smartbitchestrashybooks.com.
4. SB Sarah, "The *New York Times Book Review* Looks at Romance," *Smart Bitches, Trashy Books*, September 29, 2017; smartbitchestrashybooks.com/2017/09/new-york-times-book-review-looks-romance.
5. SB Sarah, "The *New York Times Book Review* Looks at Romance."
6. Data from 2013 in Romance Writers of America, "Romance Fiction Statistics," rwa.org/p/cm/ld/fid=580.
7. teachmetonight.blogspot.com.
8. Pamela Regis, *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
9. As Lauren Gatti notes in "Seriously Popular: Rethinking 19th-Century American Literature through the Teaching of Popular Fiction," *English Journal*, v. 100, no. 5 (May 2011), pp. 47–53: "When the reading public went crazy over Maria S. Cummins's 1854 novel, *The Lamplighter*, Hawthorne famously declared to his publisher, William Ticknor, 'America is now wholly given over to a d—d mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public is occupied with their trash — and should be ashamed of myself if I did succeed. What is the mystery of these innumerable editions of *The Lamplighter*, and other books neither better nor worse? — and worse they could not be, and better they need not be, when they sell by the 100,000'" (p. 48).

[Jessica Van Slooten is an associate professor of English and of gender, sexuality, and women's studies at the Manitowoc campus of the University of Wisconsin Colleges. She is an avid romance reader, and her research blends her interest in popular romance fiction and the scholarship of teaching and learning.]

Why I Am Not a Fan of This Manifesto

BY KELLY WILZ

Jessa Crispin, *Why I Am Not a Feminist: A Feminist Manifesto*. Melville House, 2017. 176 pp. pap., \$15.99, ISBN 978-1612196015.

Many writers have announced the death of feminism and critiqued this often imperfect and ill-defined movement. Feminists within and outside the discipline of gender and women's studies have written extensively about the difficulties of coalition- and alliance-building across lines of difference; of defining what feminism "is" and "isn't" and deciding who gets to "be" a feminist; and of clearly outlining the overall goals of the movement. Jessa Crispin's *Why I Am Not a Feminist: A Feminist Manifesto* situates itself within the language and goals of second-wave radical feminism and critiques what Crispin sees as the third wave's move toward "universal feminism": a movement so accessible to everyone that it loses all meaning and purpose.

The book's central argument is that feminism's important progress toward dismantling patriarchy is undone by focusing our energy on the wrong targets and attacking individuals instead of entire systems. In Chapter 6, "The Fights We Choose," Crispin echoes critics on the right who wring their hands about political correctness and call-out culture gone mad. Using the example of Tim Hunt, a Nobel Prize-winning chemist who lost his job over what she claims was a "socially awkward man makes a 'take my wife...please' joke" that was heard by the wrong person (p. 95), she argues that one man losing his job may, in the short term, make women feel recompensed for the personal slights we've endured — particularly in STEM fields, in the workplace, and even just as we exist as "female in public" — but that in the bigger scheme of things, "responding to our own personal outrage keeps misogyny on a personal level" and "taking out one individual at a time does not decrease the amount of misogyny in the world" (p. 105).

The form of the manifesto prevents Crispin from digging deeply into any one particular argument through an academic lens and leaves her open to challenges about the intellectual importance of this work. The ways she fails to accurately define and situate terms like "toxic masculinity" and "intersectionality" matter greatly, undermining what could have been strong and salient positions. Because

she is not thoughtfully examining what these terms mean within the discipline, but instead using them to poke fun at "social justice warriors" or those who feel identity politics matter, her arguments fall short of their intentions.

For example, in discussing toxic masculinity, Crispin complains that "we refer unquestioningly to the 'problems' testosterone creates in a way we would become outraged by if men referred to the 'problems' estrogen creates," and she laments that no one talks about "toxic femininity" (pp. 71–72). This short discussion shows a complete lack of awareness of how constructed, hegemonic masculinity is situated within the context of gender and women's studies, and also of the overwhelming body of literature that refers to toxic masculinity as the set of socialized conditions placed on young men and boys that force them to fit into rigid gender roles. The biological argument that "too much testosterone" causes "boys to be boys" — that boys are "born" rapists and murderers because of their DNA — is not actually an argument feminists and intellectual critics are making! On the contrary, authors who write on constructed masculinity point to the cultural conditions and dominant ideologies we place on young boys and men, how those ideologies are constructed and reinforced, and how that biological argument represents the height of male-bashing in its presumption that men are inherently violent while women are inherently nurturing. That Crispin chooses to address this issue in such a casual and inaccurate way undermines her entire work — it suggests she isn't wrestling with academic texts in a meaningful way.

This is frustrating, because the point that taking down individuals may prevent us from addressing real systemic inequality is one we *should* seriously address. But that point is lost in Crispin's failure to define basic academic terms. Susan Faludi makes the same point with much more clarity in a recent *New York Times* piece:

If we get rid of a handful of Harveys while losing essential rights and protections for millions of women, are we really winning this thing?...If women can break the hex

that has kept them from harnessing the pure politics of personal outrage to the impure politics of society building, then maybe our Chelsey Engels and Lindsey Dislers can draw as much attention to their protest as the next actress will be critical to winning the coming battles for women’s rights: health insurance, pay equity, family planning, sexual assault, and more. The peril is that activist women won’t transcend the divide. In which case, #MeToo will continue to topple patriarchs, while the patriarchy continues to win the day.¹

The point that taking down individuals may prevent us from addressing real systemic inequality is one we *should* seriously address. But that point is lost in Crispin’s failure to define basic academic terms.

For all it appears to plead for nuance, *Why I Am Not a Feminist* offers little nuance itself. And again, because of its presentation as a manifesto, we don’t get a sense of what works the author is drawing from or whether she has done her homework at all. Andi Zeisler’s *We Were Feminists Once*² is a smart read of the intersections of capitalism and “choice feminism,” and Roxane Gay’s *Bad Feminist*³ wrestles with many of the critiques of feminism Crispin makes here. But Crispin’s arguments lack the nuance and clarity of either Zeisler’s or Gay’s, coming across as muddled instead of thoughtful.

Perhaps the greatest failure of Crispin’s manifesto is that it offers no solutions. As a scholar invested in productive criticism, I don’t know how yet another manifesto about the pitfalls and limits of modern feminism, by itself, can take us anywhere worth going. If call-out culture is problematic, then what *would* Crispin have us do with our legitimate anger and frustration at the systems that con-

continue to fail us? What would be some better ways to use that time and energy? She ends the book with platitudes, asking her audience to “reclaim our imaginations” and “lay your attack at the machinery itself” (p. 150), but she offers no specific practical steps for her audience to take. Does she see power in “attacking

the machinery” through political institutions? Through education? Through disrupting social norms? None of this is spelled out in *Why I Am Not a Feminist*, and “burn it all down” isn’t a concrete strategy or plausible solution for the kind of revolution she’s calling for. Crispin’s final chapter, “Where We Go from Here” (pp. 147–151), could have channeled her critiques into realistic suggestions for action; instead, she leaves her audience with the same anger and frustration she decries as so counterproductive. For someone so critical of call-out culture and misdirected outrage, Crispin seems to be demonstrating similarly misguided energy and spirit in this book.

NOTES

1. Susan Faludi, “The Patriarchs Are Falling. The Patriarchy Is Stronger than Ever,” *New York Times*, December 28, 2017; nytimes.com/2017/12/28/opinion/sunday/patriarchy-feminism-metoo.html.
2. Andi Zeisler, *We Were Feminists Once: From Riot Grrrl to CoverGirl®, the Buying and Selling of a Political Movement* (Public Affairs/Perseus Books, 2016).
3. Roxane Gay, *Bad Feminist: Essays* (Harper Perennial, 2014).

[Kelly Wilz, an associate professor of communication and theatre arts and of gender, sexuality, and women’s studies at the University of Wisconsin–Marshfield/Wood County, is also the author of “Bernie Bros and Woman Cards: Rhetorics of Sexism, Misogyny, and Constructed Masculinity in the 2016 Election,” *Women’s Studies in Communication*, v. 39, no. 4 (2016), pp. 357–360.]

Disability, Dependence, and Grief

BY AMY BERKLEY

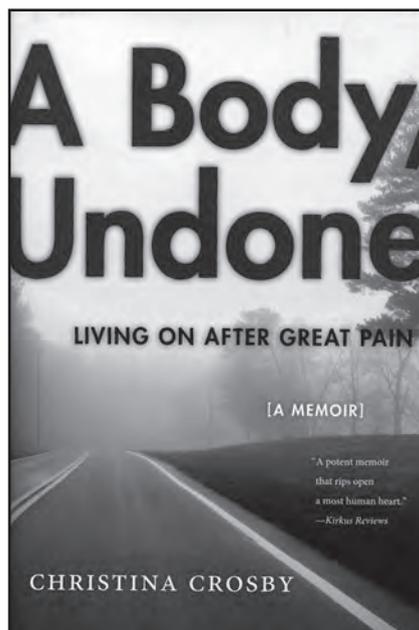
Christina Crosby, *A Body, Undone: Living on after Great Pain*. New York University Press, 2016. 208 pp. notes. \$22.95, ISBN 978-1479833535.

Christina Crosby has written a frank and lyrical memoir describing her traumatic experience of becoming quadriplegic and offering profound reflections on the role of the body in identity, on the humbling experiences of being cared for, on privilege and class in caregiving, and on loss of control. Crosby's eloquence and brutal honesty make this a stunning and harrowing account of the experience of human loss.

Crosby, a scholar of the Victorian novel, is a professor of English and feminist, gender, and sexuality studies at Wesleyan University. In 2003, a month after her 50th birthday, she was near the start of what was to be a 17-mile bike ride when a branch became caught in the spokes of her wheel. She was thrown face first onto the road, breaking the fifth and sixth vertebrae in her neck, and was instantly paralyzed. The trauma of the accident, the relentless neurological pain that followed, and the lifestyle transformation it demanded brought her and the people who love her into a new world of disability, dependence, and grief. The phrase "after great pain" in the title, taken from a poem by Emily Dickinson, refers not only to the burning of her "scrambled nerves," muscle atrophy, and hours of exhausting rehabilitation, but also to the grief and bitterness of losing her past lifestyle and much of her previous identity. Crosby draws insight and solace from the literature she loves, quoting Emily Dickinson, George Eliot, and W.H. Auden, among

others, and fights to use her own writing to "create something from an otherwise confounded life" (p. 12).

After months of rehabilitation and several operations, Crosby returns home to the care of her lover, Janet, and all the restrictions and indignities of life in a wheelchair. She and Janet are incredibly fortunate: they are financially secure, the university is supportive, and their family and colleagues are loyal and loving. Like many people who suddenly come into regular contact with the health



care system, Crosby is humbled to be cared for by certified nursing assistants who share almost none of the privileges that she and her partner enjoy. In "Caring at the Cash Nexus," Crosby uses the intimate but

one-sided relationship she has with her loving care assistant, Donna, to describe the systematic injustice of the low-waged personal care labor force. At the time the book is being written, Donna has cared for Crosby for more than 10 years, bathing her and transferring her to the toilet and back to her chair, and has become a friend rather than just an employee. At the same time, Donna is forced to work double shifts at the hospital, suffers from the physical toll that care work takes on her knees and back, and faces many of the common stresses of the working poor. Crosby worries about patronizing Donna, describing their personal relationship as "an irresolvable contradiction" (p. 43). She and Janet value Donna and offer to help her with her domestic problems. They recognize, however, that "our good intentions can't transcend the structural racism that has advantaged us so grandly and disadvantaged her so wrongly" (p. 42). As a feminist scholar, Crosby fiercely chronicles the privileges of race and class that separate her from Donna, along with the terrible irony that in caring so compassionately for Crosby, Donna is herself becoming disabled.

In one of the most heartfelt and unflinching sections, Crosby describes her childhood in an Anabaptist family in rural Pennsylvania, and particularly her relationship with her older brother, Jeff, whom she adored. Her athletic competitions with her brother were an energizing and joyful component of her childhood. Jeff

BOOKS

contracted multiple sclerosis (MS) as a young adult, and Crosby chronicles her distress at watching his increasing incapacity even as she delighted in her own continued athletic prowess into middle age. MS, an autoimmune disease in which an abnormal response attacks the central nervous system, can cause slow but implacable paralysis. Crosby describes the bitter irony of joining her brother in a wheelchair several years later and the indignities and dependency they now share. She devotes an entire chapter to the difficulties — yet the absolute necessity — of generating bowel movements in a paralyzed body. “Diving into the wreck of my body,

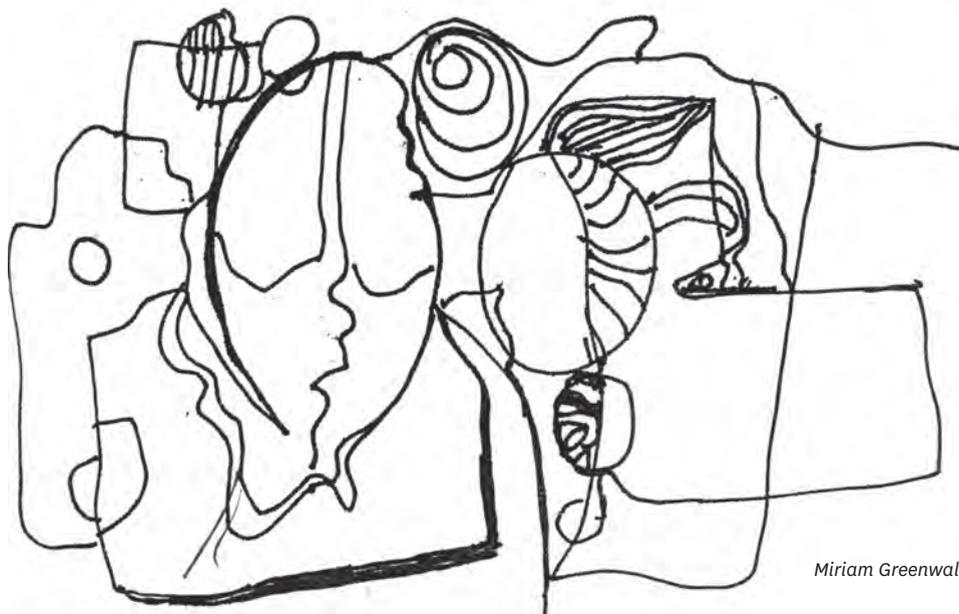
I have no wish to embarrass you or mortify myself, but I do believe that living *in extremis* can clarify what is often obscure, in this case the fragility of our beautiful bodies and the dependencies of all human beings” (p. 10).

So many books about paralysis or sudden disability reach for some positive outcome, some moral lesson in the random and violent trauma that is inflicted on the body. For instance, *It Couldn't Happen to Me*, by Jill Mash, *Me before You* by JoJo Moyes, and the memoirs of actor Christopher Reeve (*Nothing Is Impossible* and *Still Me*) try to convey optimistic messages of triumph over adversity.

Crosby rejects that sentimentality, and as a result her account is far more compelling.

Despite the efforts of activists and new multidisciplinary academic collaborations, disability studies remains a fringe subject in many GWS classrooms. Reading *A Body Undone* would enable students to bring this very human experience into clearer perspective. Crosby offers students an eloquent and multidimensional picture of the experience of disability and its uncomfortable associations with loss, vulnerability, and injustice.

[Amy Berkley, a registered nurse, is a Ph.D. candidate in gerontology nursing at the University of Texas at Austin.]



Miriam Greenwald

Toward a Waveless Feminism

BY LACHRISTA GRECO

Alison Dahl Crossley, *Finding Feminism: Millennial Activists and the Unfinished Gender Revolution*. New York University Press, 2017. 256 pp. notes. bibl. index. pap., \$28.00, ISBN 978-1479884094.

As a millennial activist, well aware of the negative connotations of the term *millennial*, I tend to be wary of studies and reports about my generation by researchers/writers who aren't of this generation themselves. So I was apprehensive about reading *Finding Feminism: Millennial Activists and the Unfinished Gender Revolution*.

Author Alison Dahl Crossley says the book is “arranged around two central concepts, social movement abeyance and waveless feminism” (p. 17). She has studied feminist activism and activists on three different U.S. college campuses (University of California, Santa Barbara; University of Minnesota Twin Cities; and Smith College) to find out whether feminism has become obsolete for young women and men. She has gathered an enormous amount of data, and her writing is mostly accessible.

What I appreciate about this text is Crossley's concept of waveless feminism. She writes that “‘waveless’ does not mean serene or flat. Rather, in keeping with the water analogy, waveless feminism is akin to a river....Waveless feminism captures the sentiment that ‘feminism has been not a series of disconnected upsurges

but a continuous flow’” (p. 20). One could argue that feminism has both the natural flow of a river and the upsurge of waves.

Although Crossley's interview participants were diverse with regard to racial, ethnic, and sexual identity, her study lacks class and disability analysis. My greatest criticism is that in focusing solely on college feminists, the study is classist and ableist and does a disservice to young feminists outside of academia, where there are many young people doing

Just because someone's activism isn't publicized in a *BuzzFeed* listicle doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

amazing feminist activist work. It's a bit of a snub to discount this population. Crossley states that colleges and universities are “essential to the persistence of the feminist movement,” which seems to ignore the fact that not all feminists are able to attend these institutions of privilege.

Although research about how students relate to feminism on campus is important, it would have been interesting to see that juxtaposed with research on feminists outside of academia.

The author speaks to confusion about young people — specifically millennials — and feminism, but that confusion is unwarranted. Feminist activists who happen to be millennials are doing and have been doing the work. Just because someone's activism isn't publicized in a *BuzzFeed* listicle doesn't mean it doesn't exist. There are pockets of activism on- and offline. The bigger issue, and one that needs to be wrestled with, is that non-millennials don't take the activist work of millennials seriously.

Through all of her questioning and researching, Crossley does come away with the knowledge that “young feminists are carrying the torch of the movement, important in propelling feminism into a new era” (p. 148). That conclusion might not be obvious to some, so this book could be of interest to nonmillennial feminists and scholars. For those of us who are millennials, though, there is nothing new or intriguing here.

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Books and Film

Lassoing Truth: Uncovering and Reshaping Wonder Woman's Herstory in Books and Film

BY ERIKA GALLAGHER

Jill Lepore, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*. Vintage Books, 2015. 464 pp. notes. bibl. index. pap., \$16.95, ISBN 978-0804173407.

Tim Hanley, *Wonder Woman Unbound: The Curious History of the World's Most Famous Heroine*. Chicago Review Press, 2014. 320 pp. notes. bibl. index. pap., \$18.95, ISBN 978-163749098.

Patty Jenkins, *Wonder Woman*. 141 mins. 2017. Warner Bros. Pictures. warnerbros.com/studio/divisions/warner-bros-pictures.

Wonder Woman has a complicated past. Almost everyone recognizes her star-spangled leotard, and many see her as a feminist icon, although few know her complete history — from her creation as a comic character in the 1940s, for instance, through her appearance on the cover of the first *Ms. Magazine* in 1972, to her service as United Nations Ambassador for the Empowerment of Women and Girls.¹ But how is it that it took until 2017 for her to star in her very own blockbuster film?

Jill Lepore is to be commended for the extensive research and hard work she has poured into *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*, a text that seems long overdue. As the author claims, many before her tried and failed, to the point of “mental breakdown,” to unravel this superheroine’s tangled past (p. xii). Lepore’s efforts have produced a hefty volume, but potential readers should be aware that this work is more a thorough chronicle of the life of Wonder Woman’s creator — psychologist William Moulton Marston — than an exploration of cartoon-figure history. The book is full of history — Marston’s, that is: from birth through childhood and college, from his physique to his professors and his writings (seriously, *everything*), and always in a positive light, although in lackluster, repeti-

tive prose that goes on for 150 pages. Only after this long, dry start do we reach the juicy parts of the story — about the women Marston was close to: his wife, whose name before her marriage to him was Sadie Holloway; and his mistress, Olive Byrne.

Marston met both Holloway and Byrne in college — Sadie Holloway was his girlfriend and Olive Byrne his student. When Marston married Holloway, he convinced her to agree to what Lepore refers to as “the Marston family arrangement,” in which Byrne was the mistress and tended to the children born to the threesome, while Holloway focused on her career. Lepore describes these women in much detail, drawing many parallels between them and Wonder Woman.

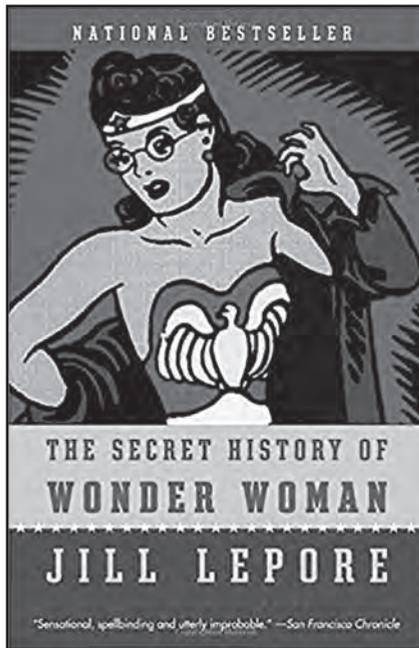
For example, Holloway was an independent and strong woman, becoming the backbone of the family after Marston lost his job. Byrne wore thick bracelets — a gift from Marston — that bore a striking resemblance to Wonder Woman’s cuffs. Additionally, and most notably, under Marston’s brand of feminism, men “needed” to submit to women; ironically, he pushed both Holloway and Byrne into a tangled relationship in order to have his own experiences of submission. Marston, in fact, was so set on

the ideas of submission and bondage that Wonder Woman was almost cancelled for being too kinky.

I first encountered this book as a required text in a gender and women’s studies class, but I think it needs to be critically picked apart for its selective portrayals of feminist history. Susan B. Anthony, for example, is not the hero of the women’s movement she has been portrayed as. Margaret Sanger supported eugenics. Lepore notably glosses over the histories of men taking credit for their wives’ creative works, and she barely touches on any of the racism rampant in the first Wonder Woman comics. She discursively rewrites or ignores certain problematic events and opinions held by the protagonists of her text, and *that* is where critiques should be most welcome. Our current wave of feminism is done with excusing wrongdoings as “just history”; Lepore, Marston, and Wonder Woman must also be held accountable for a troubled political past. And is kink feminist?

Perhaps the book’s most serious flaw is its failure to explain why we should study Wonder Woman in a feminist context. We are simply told that Marston was a feminist, and therefore we’re expected to recognize this cartoon creation as a beacon of feminism. It takes until page 184 of

the text to even introduce Wonder Woman as a DC comic, and until 200 to address her feminist connections.



Overall, the book is a slow read, although Lepore’s dedication to her work is admirable. The life of each of her subjects is fleshed out thoroughly — splayed openly, one might even say, despite their wishes to keep their personal lives private. It is a shame that the first third to half of the text is so dull, when the rest proves so thrilling, infuriating, and inspiring. If an instructor were to use this book in a class, I would recommend assigning just selected portions to be read over the course of a semester. Otherwise, readers may get bogged down in the details of Marston’s handwriting and the many jobs Holloway took to support the family.

Tim Hanley’s *Wonder Woman Unbound: The Curious History of the World’s Most Famous Heroine* traces

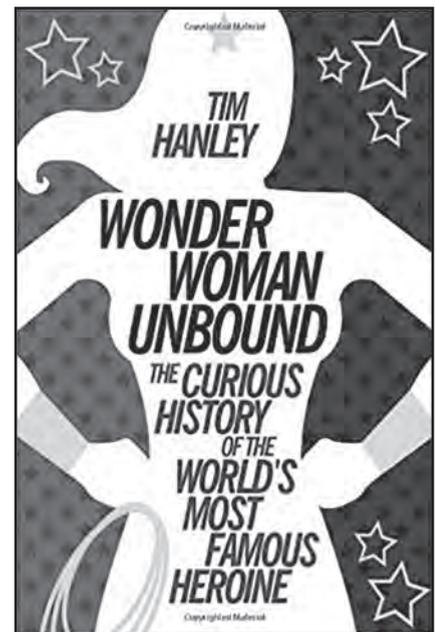
the iconic character’s story through the end of the 20th century and into the 21st, surveying a number of “sometimes-super” heroines and focusing more on the woman behind the lasso than on the family background of her creator. Hanley makes Wonder Woman’s role as a feminist icon quite clear, but he offers an incomplete history of the feminist movement.

Unbound is compelling because it analyzes Wonder Woman in juxtaposition to other women in the DC Universe, such as Lois Lane, Supergirl, and Batwoman, weaving a rich tapestry not just of comic book history but also of perceptions of women throughout history. Hanley — clearly a comic book historian — supplies information about the different eras of comics, authors, origin stories, and reboots of many different characters. Unfortunately, his overview of feminism is sparse at best. He yields to common narratives, for instance in according primary status to Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan — both of whom, we now know, largely excluded women of color and lesbians from their feminist endeavors. Still, Hanley does a fine job of explaining the history of Wonder Woman comics, something *Secret History* mostly ignores in favor of describing Marston’s life.

Hanley positions William Moulton Marston *in relation to* comics, unlike Lepore, who chronicles Marston’s life with some comics thrown in. He introduces Wonder Woman’s past as “the most peculiar and fascinating history of any comic book character,” and right he is (p. xi). Hanley addresses Marston’s bondage scenes, making a convincing feminist argument about them: where I could not see the feminism in Lepore’s

brief explanation of Marston’s kink, Hanley includes an entire chapter — “Amazon Princess, Bondage Queen” — depicting Marston as a somewhat-okay kinky man who made his women strong because “there isn’t love enough in the male organism to run this planet peacefully” (p. 15).

Ultimately, I found more of value in *Unbound* than in *Secret History*. Hanley does more than just explain Wonder Woman: he lays out the Marvel vs. DC feud, the formatting of comic books, advertising, and the targeting of audiences; he examines World War II in the context of the DC Universe and the comic book world; and, most importantly, he tracks Wonder Woman’s history in the cultural real world up through Gal



Gadot’s contract in *Batman versus Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2016) (p. 114). Hanley reminds us that Wonder Woman is powerful regardless of her mysterious creation: even without hitting top sales in the past

few decades, she is by far the most recognizable superheroine around. She is “my Wonder Woman” for fans just as much as she is for Steve Trevor (p. 199).

The muddled history of Diana Prince has recently culminated in the 2017 box office hit *Wonder Woman*. How does one condense 70+ years of comics into a single timeframe? Well, DC finally figured out that it takes a female director: Patty Jenkins. With a cast of amazing women, *Wonder Woman* offers a lot of the female representation we’ve been looking for: the badass women of Themyscira train for war, pummel German invaders, and nurture Diana, the only child on the island. The Amazonians are a glorious mix of white women and people of color, although the lead characters are undeniably white or white-passing. Perhaps having a movie about a powerful woman is so baseline radical that DC found it impossible to include more people of color (or maybe DC has historically whitewashed its casts). Regardless, this movie pulls far ahead of DC’s unfortunate cinematic past. Gal Gadot’s *Wonder Woman* proves that DC’s cinematic faux pas has always been the exclusion of powerful women. DC has been in a superheroine drought: Lois Lane, although incredible, is still not superpowered and was not the star of *Man of Steel* (2013). It was only because of *Wonder Woman*’s appearance that the abysmal flop that was *Batman versus Superman* received any praise whatsoever. In fact, Patty Jenkins’s *Wonder Woman* has far surpassed her super-manly counterparts as the second-highest-

grossing solo superhero film ever in the U.S./Canada (behind Marvel’s *Spider-Man* in 2002).²

I was giddy watching this entire film. Every time the trademark Hans Zimmer guitar riff rang through the theatre, I jumped with excitement, clenched my fists, and prepared for the woman I’ve been waiting for my whole life to finally kick some Axis-power ass. Regardless of the controversy over Gal Gadot (who

served mandatory military time in Israel), it’s nearly impossible to say that this new reboot of *Wonder Woman* as a character is not inspiring. Marston’s idea that *Wonder Woman* can and will save the world with love and compassion comes to beautiful fruition for people of all ages on the big screen.

Watching Diana kick, punch, stab, and walk with her head held high was more than enough to take my

Who should use these resources?

- *Wonder Woman Unbound* would be great in an intro to feminist comics course or in drawing-based gender and women’s studies classes. It’s a fun read overall, and it also provides great historical context for the rise and fall of comics as well as the ongoing competition between DC and Marvel comics.
- *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* could be an interesting addition to the GWS classroom. Excerpts would be best. The parts about kink would be especially interesting to critique in feminist circles. The book could be supplemented with a showing of the biopic *Professor Marston and the Wonder Women* (2017).
- The movie, obviously, is for everyone! Film classes, of course, would benefit greatly by comparing the *Wonder Woman* movie to *Batman versus Superman* (2016), *The Justice League* (both the TV series and the 2017 movie), and *Professor Marston and the Wonder Women* (2017). Some particularly fruitful discussions might include Gal Gadot’s pro-Israel stance, her recent demand that Brett Ratner be fired from the sequel if there is to be a sequel at all,³ and the ways in which *Wonder Woman*’s beauty both supports and subverts the narrative of powerful women needing to be attractive.
- Looking to get into the comic books? Check DC’s website for a guide to *Wonder Woman*’s many reinterpretations: dcmovies.com/blog/2016/04/13/exploring-the-amazon-five-uniquely-different-wonder-woman-comics.

breath away. *Wonder Woman* won my heart with incredible acting and an all-woman screening of the film. The movie was low on corniness and high on badassery, nixing Wonder Woman's invisible plane in favor of Diana's own flight superpower and providing plot twists, bombings,

battles, and some very good jokes sprinkled throughout. I only wish Diana Prince had a woman love interest in the film, since she actually *is* queer in the comics—but I digress. Women can break only one barrier at a time.

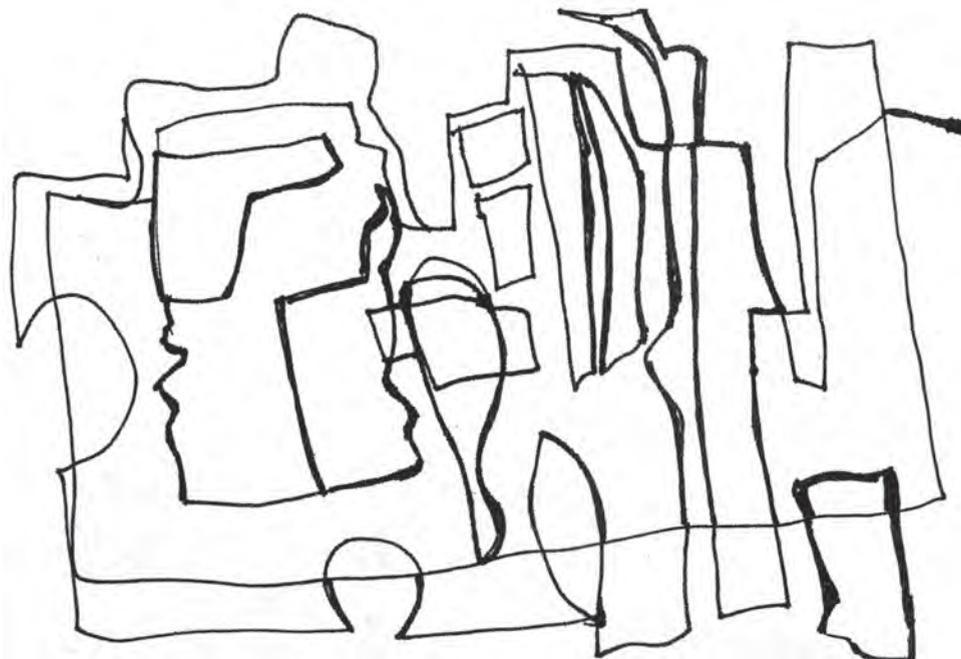
After seeing young Diana training and Wonder Woman kicking ass, little

girls everywhere will be ready to take over the world by pushing feminine boundaries: to join that karate class, learn taekwondo, practice krav maga; to protect themselves and change the world with love, compassion, and discipline. It's what Wonder Woman would do.

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Roberts, "UN Drops Wonder Woman as Honorary Ambassador," CNN, December 13, 2016; cnn.com/2016/12/13/health/wonder-woman-un-ambassador-trnd/index.html.
2. Anthony D'Alessandro, "'Wonder Woman' Jumping Past \$400M after Becoming Summer's Top-Grossing Pic, 2nd Best of 2017 — Update," *Deadline Hollywood*, August 5, 2017; deadline.com/2017/08/wonder-woman-guardians-of-the-galaxy-vol-2-summer-box-office-1202130866.
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Miriam Greenwald

Film

Etched Glass: A Review of *Mirrors to Windows*

BY ALISON GATES

Susan Steinberg, *Mirrors to Windows: The Artist as Woman*. 76 mins. 2015. mirrorstowindows.com. Distributed by Collective Eye Films.

This documentary features ten women artists, from six different countries, all working in the London art scene. The structure of the film divides the artists into three “generations” represented by three artists apiece; the tenth artist, Helaine Blumenfeld, bridges the two older generations.

Starting with the youngest three (Jody Carey, Alice Anderson, and Sarah Lederman), we encounter the struggles of the art student or recent art school graduate. These interviews focus mostly on “what’s next” for these three as they set up their studios independently and contemplate continuing education. They all seem to be invested in creating works of art that reflect a personal biography through connections to their materials; their works employ their bodies in some way. Carey uses bony structures and actual blood in her work to draw attention to the inherent content within raw materials. She admits that she struggled about whether to study textiles (craft) or sculpture (fine arts) and says she had to apply to Goldsmiths, University of London, more than once before she found the combination of materials/program that would result in admission. Anderson is a trained dancer who uses body movement to wrap objects obsessively in copper threads that mimic her hair, sometimes with a crew of choreographed performers. Lederman paints self-portraits, using mirrors (mentioned in the film’s title) propped on the floor of her studio

space, and she’s often unclothed. Her dilemma about continuing into graduate school has to do with shared or open studio spaces, which may create a privacy problem if she continues to use her own nude body as subject matter. Initially all three artists are openly exploring the ideas of femininity and female experience, but we wonder how long they’ll be able to sustain that practice within the London art scene.



The next four artists introduced are more midcareer and have matured into exploring issues related to relationships. Some have children. Susan Collins does not. Her interview is perhaps most interesting because of how little she speaks of her own art

and how much time is devoted to her explanation of why she doesn’t have children. She says it wasn’t a choice; she didn’t do it on purpose, it just never happened in the course of her life, even though up to a point she expected motherhood would happen to her someday. The fact that this takes up time in a film about women artists reinforces several stereotypes; director Susan Steinberg must have known this would be a question the film’s audience would want addressed. The emphasis on the choices each of this generation’s artists made (or didn’t) rather than on the formal or material aspects of their work is telling. The emphasis on lifestyle over aesthetics pops up again with both of the collage artists in this segment, Charlotte Hodes and Nermine Hammam. Both credit motherhood for their decision to collage: one says it’s easier to put down scissors than to put down a paintbrush to care for a child. Most of Hammam’s segment is footage of her traveling between London and Egypt and exploration of how that travel affects her artwork. Helaine Blumenfeld is introduced here, but it’s not until the third generation is fully explored in the film that we find that she also has had to make motherhood-related adjustments to her own practice, spending several months a year away from her family in order to work in Italy with marble, undistracted.

The third generation is perhaps the most obviously prolific set of women artists we meet in the film. They

are established (somehow) and unencumbered by the stereotypical baggage of contemporary females. Here we encounter a hidden truth: for an artist, longevity actually means

One of the collage artists says it's easier to put down scissors than to put down a paintbrush to care for a child.

something. To have survived in the art world, to keep making art, is in itself an achievement. This truth is most evident when we meet Rose Wylie, the only one of the ten artists I was familiar with before viewing the film. Having given most of her life to raising her family and supporting her husband's painting career, she becomes more and more productive as his health declines and then exceptionally prolific after his death, eventually winning the John Moore Prize and being admitted to the Royal Academy. We also see Almuth Tebbenhof energetically cutting steel shapes for large constructed sculptures. She tells the camera that she feels pressure to work constantly because she loves it so much, and that there are only so many years she will be able to make work now that she is over 60. "This is it," Tebbenhof states. We also discover the origins of part of the film's title when we meet Maliheh Afnan, who, ruminating on corporeal aging, says, "Some doors

are closed, physically, for me, but fortunately some windows still will open."

Curiously, toward the end of the film Steinberg has us revisit the youngest three artists instead of ending with those who are reaching what is presumably the pinnacle of their careers. It's revealed that in the intervening months between the filming of the initial sequences and the final footage, Carey has changed her entire aesthetic and has gone from using visceral raw materials like blood-tinted paper flowers to building full-on minimalist oblongs of plaster that impose themselves, wall-like, on the viewers in the gallery space. For me, her earlier work was more interesting; I was disappointed in what seemed (to me, a person who's gone to art school) to be a rather typical reaction to the influence of modernist (male) sculpture professors seeking to sanitize art that is too closely related to the female bodily experience.

While all the artists are making genuinely interesting work and present us with some very memorable commentary on being both an artist and a woman, we're left wondering why Steinberg chose these ten and whether using their ages as an organizing factor is effective or even fair. For all these women, their careers are ongoing affairs subject to the forward momentum of creative production, opportunity, individual decisions, and chance. As a result we can reach no definitive conclusions about what it is to be a woman artist in London (especially since at least two of them spend significant amounts of time outside the city). If one wishes to find a way to introduce students to ten

diverse female artists who happen to be working in London, this would be a good place to start. Honestly, each of these artists could have her own short documentary film; all of them are that interesting. As it is, Steinberg's film is a little frustrating exactly because of the diversity of the artists. Simply showing their diversity does not seem to be Steinberg's point in making the film, after all. Because she's chosen to organize them based on when they were born and their subsequent years as artists, we keep hoping we can see what these women have in common as a result of their ages; but Steinberg fails to come through with a strong unique point of view or ultimate message. These women aren't part of a movement driven by a common

We keep hoping we can see what these women have in common as a result of their ages, but Steinberg fails to come through with a strong unique point of view or ultimate message.

artistic philosophy or aesthetic. They are simply all women, in one profession, with different specialties, working and showing in and outside of London in the 21st century. Some use their bodies directly or consider the body a factor in their work, but this isn't underscored well enough for us to believe Steinberg meant to assert definitively that the female body is a deciding factor (as model, as

FILM

mother, as material source, as mortal machine) in the output of artwork by women. Any narrative link beyond a quick snapshot in time is really a big stretch; if Steinberg had pushed home a clear point, the film could probably be more satisfying and useful for fans of contemporary art made from the female perspective. The problem is not with the subject matter. Unfortunately, the problem is

with the organization and the lack of general clear vision on the part of the filmmakers.

The website for the film (mirrorstowindows.com) includes short video clips of each artist that may be handy to show in class as stand-alone commentary on various issues, and the diversity of work by the women in the film is evident in

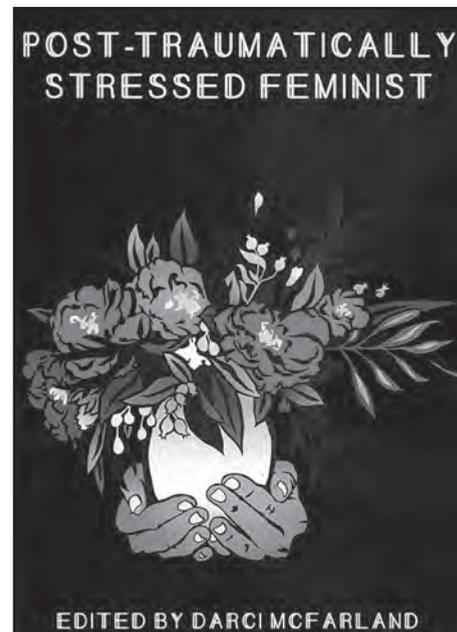
these short mini-interviews too. The actual film footage in *Mirrors to Windows* of the women working is vastly more satisfying than the interviews, and that is the real reason I would recommend this film to viewers who like to watch artists working. The ten women included are not all shown deeply in process, but the amount of finished artwork is highly satisfying visually.

[Alison Gates is a professor of art and women's and gender studies at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. An actively exhibiting professional artist for more than two decades, she also engages in experiential archaeology by growing flax using Iron Age methodology and in social practice projects such as *The Exquisite Uterus* (with co-curator Helen Klebesadel).]

Briefly Noted

“Because the majority of resources...for people with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder center veterans who have served in combat or people seeking immediate assistance leaving an abusive relationship,” writes Darci McFarland, “there are millions of people — people who have previously been in abusive relationships, people who have experienced childhood abuse, people who have experienced sexual assault or violence, people who have unexpectedly lost a parent or child — who never get the support and resources they need.”

McFarland has edited a collection of stories, poems, visual art, and social commentary — all by feminist survivors of such under-recognized kinds of trauma — to meet just those needs. *Post-Traumatically Stressed Feminist: Survivors Reclaiming Their Truths* includes two poems by Lachrista Greco, the publications associate for the Office of the Gender and Women's Studies Librarian at the University of Wisconsin. The 98-page book (ISBN 978-1981512225) is available at Darci McFarland's Etsy shop and on Amazon.com.



Reference Works

REVIEWED BY KARLA J. STRAND

Psychology of Sexuality and Gender

Christina Richards and Meg John Barker, eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of the Psychology of Sexuality and Gender*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. 505 pp. notes. index. \$209.00, ISBN 978-1137345882; pap., \$54.99, ISBN 978-1349466719; ebook, \$39.99, ISBN 978-1137345899.

The last three paragraphs of the editors' introduction to this volume are especially striking: they urge psychology practitioners to be just as knowledgeable about non-normative sexual practices, nonbinary gender identities, and LGBTQ sexualities as they might be about normative sexualities and genders. For instance, "if you know what a condom is," Richards and Barker write, "you should know what a dental dam is, as they are pretty analogous in terms of STI prevention" (p. 4). They stress this particularly in the context of the current political situation in the U.S.: "[K]nowledge transmission in this area is especially important in a world which appears to lurch forward and then back again – with reactionary political influences blaming 'non-normative' sexualities and genders for everything from disease to climate change" (p. 4). It is their hope that sharing the sort of knowledge and research that is presented in this volume will lead to fewer such lurches and less marginalization of people based on their gender, sexuality, or sexual practices.

On the whole, this handbook is up to that challenge. Organized under five main headings ("Sexuality," "Gender," "Relationships," "Psychological Areas," and "Intersections"), the 25 essay-chapters cover asexuality, bisexuality, lesbian and gay sexuality, heterosexuality, "further" sexualities, intersex, cisgender, transgender, "further" genders, monogamy and nonmonogamies, sex therapy and other types of psychological clinical practice, research methodology, aging, disability, class, ethnicity, religion, and more. The authors include practicing psychologists and psychiatrists as well as academics and scholars from the U.S., the U.K., Canada, Norway, New Zealand, and Australia. As the editors point out in the introduction, because of overlap among the topics, the essays work well together as chapters but can each stand alone.

The chapters are all similar in structure: each begins with an introduction and definitions, then provides a historical overview of the topic, presents key theories and research so far, and calls attention to the psychological considerations of the topic. The authors explore current debates, implications for psychology and the world, and potential directions for future research. Important points are highlighted for students, academics, and applied professionals. A bullet-point summary, along with references and suggestions for further reading, concludes each chapter. The book's organized and accessible presentation makes it an efficient and highly usable reference.

Some chapters also discuss issues unique to their topics. For example, in the chapter on BDSM (referring to practices of bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, and sadism and masochism), there is a brief but important introduction to the two main camps of feminist opinion (pro-sex and anti-SM) on the topic (pp. 33–34). Other unique discussions concern the pathologization of bisexuality (pp. 44–46), disclosure of intersex identities (pp. 188–189), societal expectations of monogamy (pp. 225–229), and the effects of nonmonogamies (pp. 244–246).

The six chapters in Part IV ("Psychological Areas") address clinical, counseling, and health psychology; sex therapy; and qualitative and quantitative research methods. The final five chapters (in Part V, "Intersections") consider some of the major identity markers that may intersect with sexual and gender identities: age, class, disability, ethnicity, and religion.

Although advanced researchers or practitioners would of course need to explore further resources, the essays in this handbook serve as thorough introductions to the topics as they pertain to psychology. I also appreciate the authors' candor in identifying certain issues and identities that are largely invisible in existing psychological research. This would be a strong purchase for any library. Palgrave has priced the hardcover edition at \$209.00, but the ebook and softcover versions, at \$39.99 and \$54.99, respectively, would be fine substitutions.

REFERENCE WORKS

Race, Class, and Gender

Shirley A. Jackson, ed., *Routledge International Handbook of Race, Class, and Gender*. Routledge, 2015. 296 pp. notes. index. \$219.00, ISBN 978-0415632713; ebook, \$54.95, ISBN 978-9780203095454.

The first chapter of this handbook — a volume so slim the reader may wonder how comprehensive the coverage of this massive topic could be — is co-authored by Michael Kimmel, the leading researcher for the last 30 years on men and masculinities. This brief but informative introduction provides a thoughtful and accessible entry into the topic of “conceptualizing intersectionality in superordination” (pp. 3–9). According to Kimmel and co-author Cliff Leek, critical studies of superordinate traits such as whiteness, masculinity, and wealth “are important because they allow for an examination of the ways in which privilege and dominance are maintained and reproduced” (p. 4). Leek and Kimmel call for the application of intersectional analysis to studies of superordination, and they go on to make an effective argument for examining plurality in whiteness and wealth in the same way it has been examined in the field of masculinity studies. As researchers of men and masculinity investigated how power and other identifiers interact with masculinity, they were able to identify a plurality of this category, or “masculinities.” The authors argue that applying an intersectional analysis to other superordinate categories, such as whiteness and elitism, would disrupt prevalent notions of them as monolithic categories and lead to greater understanding of how marginalization, subordination, and inequality are perpetuated.

Kimmel and Leek provide a thought-provoking framework for the subsequent chapters, which examine a variety of disciplinary, geographical, and sociopolitical topics. The result is an interdisciplinary volume that illustrates the importance of including race, class, and gender analyses in research in any field. After the opening two theoretical chapters, the book is organized into parts covering race, class, and gender in conversation, migration, sexualities, education, work, and cultural identity; each part is introduced briefly by the volume editor. The book’s concluding chapters look at contemporary trends in the exploration of intersections among race, class, and gender.

The chapters represent research focused on the U.S. and other areas of the world, including India, the

Caribbean, Somalia, Scotland, and Australia. The authors are academics from Turkey, Tasmania, the U.S., Japan, India, Australia, and Trinidad. Readers will gain insight from discussions of difficult conversations, (in)visibility, violence, social capital, academia, citizenship, politics, immigration, and more.

Several of the chapters stand out for their analyses and their potential for application in a variety of disciplines:

In Chapter 3 (pp. 21–28), Brendan Churchill, Joselynn Baltra-Ulloa, and Robyn Moore use critical Whiteness theory to frame difficult conversations about gender and class in Australia. As national discussions of gender and class issues take place across the nation, race is left out of the conversation so as to not upset the delicate balance of individualism and egalitarianism (“Whiteness”) that has been centered as the universal Australian norm. The authors advocate for including race in examinations of gender and class in order to challenge and disrupt the existing divides and inequities throughout Australian discourse.

Masoumeh Velayati, in Chapter 8 (pp. 84–101), examines the work Muslim women do in Scotland, intentionally including informal, family, and voluntary work, which are historically missing from discussions of this topic. By using a framework of feminist theory, this author challenges the notion that Muslim women exist in a vacuum and are a homogenous group, revealing instead their complexity and diversity. Velayati also demonstrates women’s use of Islam as a tool in becoming active agents in the economic and social aspects of their lives.

Overall, this is an informative intermediate resource on the issues of race, class, and gender around the world. Because it is claimed in the book’s opening description that one of the target audiences is undergraduate students, more thorough definitions of terms and concepts — for instance, of “superordination” in the first chapter — would have been helpful. The handbook’s interdisciplinarity and accessibility will make it a valuable addition to most academic libraries, however, and the information and analyses it shares can be applied to a variety of settings, including equity and diversity work in higher education.

The hardcover edition examined for this review is priced at \$219.00, which may be out of reach for some libraries; the ebook at \$54.95 might be a more realistic purchase.

[Karla J. Strand is the gender and women’s studies librarian for the University of Wisconsin System.]

Online Resources

REVEAL: FROM THE CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

“We engage and empower the public through investigative journalism and groundbreaking storytelling to spark action, improve lives and protect our democracy.”

Now more than ever, it’s important to look beyond click-bait headlines to find responsible and deeply researched news reporting. The nonprofit Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR), founded in 1977, has over the past four decades “developed a reputation for being among the most innovative, credible and relevant media organizations in the country.” The CIR now publishes multiplatform work on *Reveal* – “our website, public radio program, podcast and social media platform” (revealnews.org).

“Our award-winning journalists hold the powerful accountable and reveal government fraud and waste of taxpayer funds, human rights violations, environmental degradation and threats to public safety. We consistently shine a bright light on injustice and protect the most vulnerable in our society.” Dedicated to “prioritiz[ing] impact over exclusivity,” CIR collaborates with other media organizations, for instance in creating programs for *Frontline* and *60 Minutes*, making documentaries that air on PBS, and co-producing the *Reveal* radio show with PRX. CIR’s editorial independence policy ensures that there is “a fire-wall between news coverage and the pursuit of revenue.... [A]ll editorial decisions are made independently, not on the basis of donor support.”

Many *Reveal*/CIR reports have examined groundbreaking gender-related issues, such as on-the-job sexual violence against women janitors (revealnews.org/article/under-cover-of-darkness-female-janitors-face-rape-and-assault); the high rate at which Oklahoma incarcerates women (revealnews.org/article/before-prison); Google’s problematic gender breakdown (revealnews.org/blog/has-google-increased-representation-of-women-not-so-much); and the work of commentator Kimberly Foster to address discrimination against #BlackWomenAtWork and elsewhere (revealnews.org/episodes/al-letson-reveals-the-color-of-feminism).

FREE ARTICLES FROM WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Women in Higher Education (WIHE) publishes a monthly journal through Wiley, with print and online paid subscription options for individuals and institutions, but selected articles from the journal can be accessed at no cost from the WIHE website (wihe.com). College instructors struggling with how to manage triggering content in their classes will especially appreciate the successful approaches discussed by Katherine Anderson Howell and Christiana Miller in “Opting In: Managing Dangerous Material and Harm in the Classroom,” which appeared in the November 2017 issue and can be read for free on the site.

Journals

SPECIAL ISSUES

Families, Relationships and Societies, vol. 6, no. 2 (July 2017): Special issue: “Violence against Women and Children in Diverse Contexts.” Issue editors: Nicky Stanley, Ingrid Palmay, and Khatidja Chantler. Publisher: Policy Press. ISSN: 2046-7435 (print), 2046-7443 (online).

Selected contents: “Rape within Heterosexual Intimate Relationships in Iran: Legal Frameworks, Cultural and Structural Violence,” by Nadia Aghtaie; “Memorable Life Events and Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse: Possibilities and Challenges across Diverse Contexts,” by Debra Sue Allnock; “Domestic Abuse and Women with ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’: The State’s Role in Shaping and Reinforcing Coercive Control,” by Rebecca Gail Dudley; “Trust and Mistrust in the Lives of Forcibly Displaced Women and Children,” by Patricia Hynes; “Researching Violence with Children: Experiences and Lessons from the UK and South Africa,” by Lorraine Radford, Nancy Lombard, Franziska Meinck, Emma Katz, and Stanford Taonatose Mahati; “Gendered Discourse in the South African Police Service Talk and Text of Domestic Violence,” by Ingrid Maralene Sinclair; “Research Ethics in Practice: Lessons from Studies Exploring Interpersonal Violence in Different Contexts,” by Jo Vearey, Christine Barter, Patricia Hynes, and Tony McGinn; “‘If This Isn’t for My Children, Who Is It For?’: Exploring Experiences of Structural Violence among Migrant Mothers Who Sell Sex in Johannesburg,” by Rebecca Jane Walker; “Group Work: A Powerful Site of Resistance for Migrant Women Experiencing Gender-Based Violence,” by Sandhya Sharma and Vicky Marsh.

Journal of School Violence, vol. 16, nos. 2 and 3 (2017): Special issues about sexual violence on college campuses. Guest editors: Bonnie Fisher and Pam Wilcox. Publisher: Routledge/Taylor and Francis Group. ISSN: 1538-8220 (print), 1538-8239 (online).

Contents of vol. 16, no. 2, “Learning from Campus Climate Surveys: Patterns of Victimization, Disclosure, and Service Awareness”: “Sexual Violence in Academia: Policy, Theory, and Prevention Considerations,” by Brooke Miller Gialopsos; “Awareness of Sexual Violence Services among LGBTQ-Identified College Students,” by Corina Schulze and Wendy Perkins; “Factors Associated

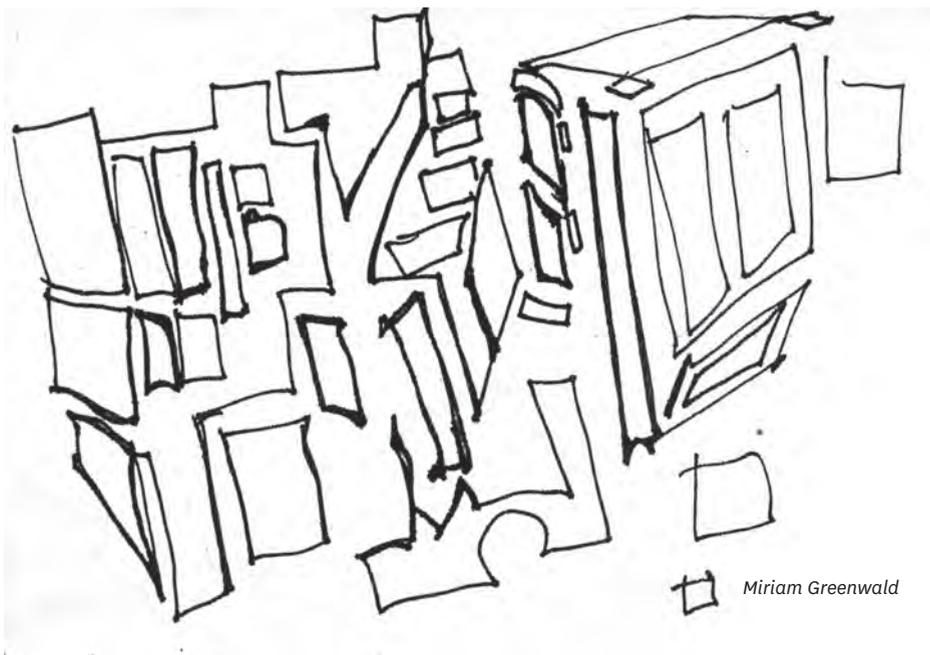
with College Students’ Responses to Rape-Disclosure Scenarios: Influence of Gender, Rape Characteristics, and Opinions about Health Professionals,” by Yumi E. Suzuke and Heidi S. Bonner; “Binge Drinking, Greek-Life Membership, and First-Year Undergraduates: The ‘Perfect Storm’ for Drugging Victimization,” by Nicole V. Lasky, Bonnie S. Fisher, Caitlin B. Henriksen, and Suzanne C. Swan; “Responding to Gendered Violence among College Students: The Impact of Participant Characteristics on Direct Bystander Intervention Behavior,” by Cortney A. Franklin, Patrick Q. Brady, and Alicia L. Jurek; “Measuring Sexual Violence on Campus: Climate Surveys and Vulnerable Groups,” by Brooke de Heer and Lynn Jones; “Calling Attention to the Importance of Assisting Male Survivors of Sexual Victimization,” by Jordana N. Navarro and Shelly Clevenger.

Contents of vol. 16, no. 3, “Any Safer in the Ivory Tower? An Examination of Contemporary Policies and Practices Aimed at Sexual Violence on Campus”: “Sexual Violence Response and Prevention: Studies of Campus Policies and Practices,” by Wendy Perkins and Jessica Warner; “Sexual Assault Policies and Consent Definitions: A Nationally Representative Investigation of U.S. Colleges and Universities,” by Laurie M. Graham, Sarah Treves-Kagan, Erin P. Magee, Stephanie M. DeLong, Olivia S. Ashley, Rebecca J. Macy, Sandra L. Martin, Kathryn E. Moracco, and J. Michael Bowling; “Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Misconduct at College: A Critical Perspective,” by Karen G. Weiss and Nicole V. Lasky; “An Examination of Strategies for the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence at Four-Year Institutions of Higher Education,” by Katherine Kafonek and Tara N. Richards; “The Impact of Increased State Regulation of Campus Sexual Assault Practices: Perspectives of Campus Personnel,” by Sarah Jane Brubaker and Christina Mancini; “Enhancing Title IX Due Process Standards in Campus Sexual Assault Adjudication: Considering the Roles of Distributive, Procedural, and Restorative Justice,” by Shannon Harper, Jon Maskaly, Anne Kirkner, and Katherine Lorenz; “The Effects of Feminist Mobilization and Women’s Status on Universities’ Reporting of Rape,” by Kaitlin M. Boyle, Ashley Barr, and Jody Clay-Warner.

Leadership Quarterly, vol. 27, no. 3 (June 2016): Special issue: "Gender and Leadership." Issue editors: Alice H. Eagly and Madeline E. Heilman. Publisher: Elsevier. ISSN: 1048-9843.

Selected contents: "Applying a Capital Perspective to Explain Continued Gender Inequality in the C-Suite," by Terrance W. Fitzsimmons and Victor J. Callan; "Women on Boards: The Superheroes of Tomorrow?" by Renée B. Adams; "Managing to Clear the Air: Stereotype Threat, Women, and Leadership," by Crystal L. Hoyt and Susan E. Murphy; "A Bed of Thorns: Female Leaders and the Self-Reinforcing Cycle of Illegitimacy," by Andrea C. Vial, Jaime L. Napier, and Victoria L. Brescoll; "Leading with Their Hearts? How Gender Stereotypes of Emotion Lead to Biased Evaluations of Female Leaders," by Victoria L. Brescoll; "Race Matters for Women Leaders: Intersectional Effects on Agentic Deficiencies and Penalties," by Ashleigh Shelby Rosette, Christy Zhou Koval, Anyi Ma, and Robert

Livingston; "Getting on Top of the Glass Cliff: Reviewing a Decade of Evidence, Explanations, and Impact," by Michelle K. Ryan, S. Alexander Haslam, Thekla Morgenroth, Floor Rink, Janka Stoker, and Kim Peters; "The Queen Bee Phenomenon: Why Women Leaders Distance Themselves from Junior Women," by Belle Derks, Colette Van Laar, and Naomi Ellemers; "When Women Emerge as Leaders: Effects of Extraversion and Gender Composition in Groups," by G. James Lemoine, Ishani Aggarwal, and Laurens Bujold Steed; "Women's Authority in Political Decision-Making Groups," by Tali Mendelberg and Christopher F. Karpowitz; "Help or Hindrance? Work-Life Practices and Women in Management," by Kateryna Kalysh, Carol T. Kulik, and Sanjeewa Perera; "Reporting Requirements, Targets, and Quotas for Women in Leadership," by Victor E. Sojo, Robert E. Wood, Sally A. Wood, and Melissa A. Wheeler.



Recently Received

Some publishers routinely send us new books or other materials to consider for review. We list all such titles here, and those that meet the inclusion criteria for our bibliographic periodical, *New Books on Women, Gender, and Feminism*, are indexed in that publication as well. Not all titles received are reviewed or indexed; nor is receipt of a complimentary copy necessary for that title to be reviewed or indexed. Those books we receive that are not selected for review are added to the University of Wisconsin's library collections or donated to other worthy recipients.

African American Women with Incarcerated Mates:

The Psychological and Social Impacts of Mass Imprisonment. Hart-Johnson, Avon. McFarland, 2017.

Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism. Noble, Safiya Umoja. New York University Press, 2018.

The Ascendance of Harley Quinn: Essays on DC's Enigmatic Villain. Barba, Shelley E., and Perrin, Joy M., eds. McFarland, 2017.

Beyond Respectability: The Intellectual Thought of Race Women. Cooper, Brittney C. University of Illinois Press, 2017.

Courage and Grief: Women and Sweden's Thirty Years' War. Ailes, Mary Elizabeth. University of Nebraska Press, 2018.

Egyptian Belly Dance in Transition: The Raqs Sharqi Revolution, 1890–1930. Ward, Heather D. McFarland, 2018.

Feminists Rethink the Neoliberal State: Inequality, Exclusion, and Change. Fernandes, Leela, ed. New York University Press, 2018.

Freedom Narratives of African American Women: A Study of 19th Century Writings. Lewis, Janaka Bowman. McFarland, 2017.

Gender Issues and the Library: Case Studies of Innovative Programs and Resources. Smallwood, Carol, and Sanborn, Lura, eds. McFarland, 2017.

Happy Abortions: Our Bodies in the Era of Choice. Millar, Erica. Zed Books, 2017.

Has Democracy Failed Women? Dahlerup, Drude. Polity Press, 2018.

Janet Frame in Focus: Women Analyze the Works of the New Zealand Writer. McQuail, Josephine A., ed. McFarland, 2018.

Normality: A Critical Genealogy. Cryle, Peter, and Stephens, Elizabeth. University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Paper Dolls: Fragile Figures, Enduring Symbols. Adams, Katherine H., and Keene, Michael L. McFarland, 2017.

Patricia A. McKillip and the Art of Fantasy World-Building. Taylor, Audrey Isabel. McFarland, 2017.

The Politics of Female Alliance in Early Modern England. Luckyj, Christina, and O'Leary, Niamh J., eds. University of Nebraska Press, 2017.

Protecting the Home Front: Women in Civil Defense in the Early Cold War. Scheibach, Michael. McFarland, 2017.

The Ripper's Victims in Print: The Rhetoric of Portrayals since 1929. Frost, Rebecca. McFarland, 2018.

Rowena Sunder, Artist in New York. Franklin, Linda Campbell. McFarland, 2018.

Tastes of the Empire: Foreign Foods in Seventeenth Century England. Azevedo, Jillian. McFarland, 2017.

To Boldly Go: Essays on Gender and Identity in the Star Trek Universe. Farghaly, Nadine, and Bacon, Simon, eds. McFarland, 2017.

The Ugandan Morality Crusade: The Brutal Campaign against Homosexuality and Pornography under Yoweri Museveni. Kintu, Deborah. McFarland, 2018.

Unveiling Desire: Fallen Women in Literature, Culture, and Films of the East. Das, Devaleena, and Morrow, Colette, eds. Rutgers University Press, 2018.

Women in the American Revolution. Wike, Sudie Doggett. McFarland, 2018.

Women's Emancipation and Civil Society Organisations: Challenging or Maintaining the Status Quo? Schwabenland, Christina, Lange, Chris, Onyx, Jenny, and Nakagawa, Sachiko, eds. Policy Press, 2017.

2018 Publications

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Feminist Periodicals

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