



# Resources for Gender and Women's Studies

A FEMINIST REVIEW

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## RESOURCES FOR GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES A FEMINIST REVIEW

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CONTENTS

Winter-  
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From the Editor.....	ii	The Many Faces of African Women's Agency and Power by <i>Lauren Parnell Marino</i> .....	17
<b>Books</b>		A Moment in Time: Four Feminist Friends by <i>Nancy M. Nyland</i> .....	19
<i>Not That Bad</i> Is Excellent by <i>Katrina Spencer</i> .....	1	Educating against Transphobia by <i>Chris Babits</i> .....	22
Anonymous No More: Chanel Miller Writes Back by <i>Nicole Braun</i> .....	5	Queer Alice's Looking Glass: The Dildo and the Countersexual Revolution by <i>Julia Anderson</i> .....	24
After #MeToo: How Visual Media Can Provide an Alternative to Cultural Scripts by <i>Saralyn McKinnon-Crowley</i> .....	7	North Country Pastoral Meets Lesbian Utopia by <i>Patricia Gott</i> .....	26
Morgan Jerkins Should Write Us More Often by <i>Jasmine Kirby</i> .....	9	Journals.....	28
The History of Now: Black Lives Matter by <i>Charmaine Lang</i> .....	11	Recently Received.....	30
Healing the Split at the Root by <i>Janet Freedman</i> .....	13		

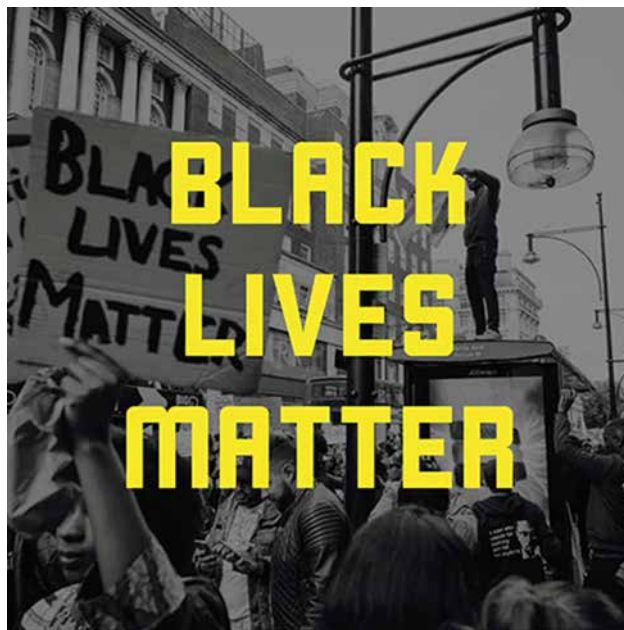
# From the Editor

It has always needed to be said, and it becomes ever more obvious why. In the midst of a pandemic that, because of longstanding and deeply entrenched systemic injustice, disproportionately causes harm and death to people of color, it needs to be said: Black lives matter. In the weeks following the brutal police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis — just one of the latest heinous acts in a history of racist violence going back centuries to the origins of the U.S.A. — it needs to be said: Black lives matter. Partway through a week when largely peaceful protests here and worldwide are gathering strength but often being countered by violent shows of force, it needs to be said: Black lives matter.

It needs to be said in every white-dominated space, including academic and feminist settings; it is a feminist issue. It needs to be said here, in this space, on this page. Black lives matter.

It must be more than said; it must be acted upon as if it is really true. Resources for engaging in struggles for racial justice exist in increasing numbers, and should be highlighted. In this space in particular, we want to amplify the voices of people of color looking at justice through an intersectional lens.

Perhaps foremost among those voices is that of Kimberlé Crenshaw, who originated the discourse on intersectionality (as well as the term itself) more than 30 years ago. Crenshaw's African American Policy Forum produces an ongoing podcast, "Intersectionality Matters," on which, starting



[blacklivesmatter.com/social-media-graphics](https://blacklivesmatter.com/social-media-graphics)

in late March, the series "Under the Black Light" has addressed life in and around the pandemic with a focus on racial justice. Indian author and activist Arundhati Roy was a recent guest on "Under the Black Light."

Two of the book reviews in this issue of *Resources for Gender and*

*Women's Studies* have particular relevance right now: see Charmaine Lang's review of Barbara Ransby's *Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimagining Freedom in the 21st Century*, which begins on page 11, as well as Jasmine Kirby's review, beginning on page 9, of *This Will Be My Undoing: Living at the Intersection of Black, Female, and Feminist in (White) America*, by Morgan Jerkins.

This is the first, but possibly not the last, issue of the journal to be published a bit unconventionally because of circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The editing process has been largely the same as ever, except that the editor and most, if not all, of the reviewers have been working at home instead of in more conventional workspaces for the past few months. The biggest change is that this issue is appearing first online—as a PDF on our office's website—instead of in print. The page layout process

hasn't changed, though (other than being done from a home office), and when onsite campus operations have resumed more fully, we'll publish a printed and bound paper version and mail it to all subscribers.

JoAnne Lehman  
June 3, 2020

# Books

## *Not That Bad* Is Excellent

BY KATRINA SPENCER

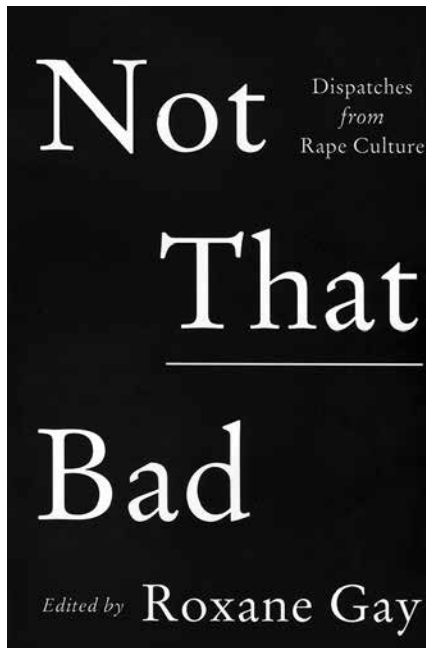
Roxane Gay, *Not That Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture*. Harper Perennial, 2018. 368 pp. pap., \$16.99, ISBN 978-0062413512.

*Note: This review discusses sexual assault/rape.*

On September 10, 2019, the *New York Times* published a piece in which six formerly enlisted men told of being sexually victimized in our armed forces.<sup>1</sup> On September 17, 2019, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley filed a resolution seeking an impeachment inquiry against Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, having noted more claims, in addition to Stanford professor Dr. Christine Blasey-Ford's, of sexual misconduct against the judge.<sup>2</sup> On September 23, 2019, Chanel Miller, who had been raped in Stanford, California, by Brock Turner, published *Know My Name*, a memoir in which for the first time she publicly shared her identity, which was formerly hidden under the pseudonym "Emily Doe" while her rapist was being tried for his crime of assaulting her in an alleyway while she was unconscious.<sup>3</sup> On October 4, 2019, National Public Radio's *This American Life* re-aired a two-part radio broadcast that explored two women's reports of rape some years before: one case had been terribly mishandled and characterized the victim as lacking in credibility, while the other had led to redemption for both of the women.<sup>4</sup> And on October 14, 2019, record producer Pharrell Williams acknowledged that his popular song "Blurred Lines," whose lyrics suggest sexual consent can be challenged and/or negotiated, was chauvinistic.<sup>5</sup>

Rape culture, in short, is dizzying in its omnipresence and the frequen-

cy of its manifestations. We don't have to look hard to be confronted by a slew of testimonies recounting stories of people forcing themselves on others or disavowing the need to approach sex through a lens of consent. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised, given how our nation and



many of our societies have been built: as results of rape, slaughter, oppression, slavery, servitude/serfdom, and other impositions. Rape culture, it seems, is largely a reflection of the macrocosm of systems that are responsible for the power and strength the United States wields today. (Don't call me unpatriotic for telling the whole truth.) That is, through inflicting fear, intimidation and violence, we have achieved our so-

called greatness. Rape culture harms so many lives and it appears there's hardly any escaping some aspect of its reach.

That's what brings us to *Not that Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture*, an anthology of testimonies from people who have been sexually assaulted or who fight for the rights of people who have been sexually assaulted (or both). The work is a compilation of 30 personal stories, but perhaps it should also be cataloged as journalism — text that describes the daily phenomena of our world. Its editor, Roxane Gay, author of *Bad Feminist* (2014), *Hunger* (2017), and *Difficult Women* (2017), intimately knows the unforgiving impact of rape and minces no words in her introduction:

When I was twelve years old, I was gang-raped in the woods behind my neighborhood by a group of boys with the dangerous intentions of bad men. Before that, I had been naive, sheltered. I believed people were inherently good and that the meek should inherit. I was faithful and believed in God. And then I didn't. I was broken. I was changed. I will never know who I would have been had I not become the girl in the woods. (p. i)

Having suffered the abuses of rape and rape culture, Gay is a knowledgeable and apt compiler of testimonies surrounding the theme. The book's title references an ideology that many of us have internalized, knowingly

and unknowingly. It is a commentary on an imagined hierarchy of trauma. A paper cut, for example, might be perceived as worse than a splinter, and a broken arm is considered more severe than a skinned knee. We tend to measure the impact of injury often by the time it takes to heal, by how many people can see the disfigurement it causes, and by how long it takes us to recuperate our sense of normalcy. However, in this anthology, the writers suggest that irrespective of the perceived severity of an injury inflicted as a result of rape culture's pervasiveness, every wound hurts, women are disproportionately impacted, and larger questions about misogyny and consent are not being asked with enough reach and/or urgency. What type of culture have we created in which sexual assault is so commonplace, underreported, and unreliably punished? These writers' testimonies reveal that some wounds inflicted as a result of rape culture never fully heal; some wounds cause a disfigurement that cannot be perceived with the naked eye; and normalcy is not guaranteed a return after sexual assault.

The collection has many strengths. One is the variety of voices it engages in terms of race, origin, gender, and class. Testimonies from people from all walks of life demonstrate that rape culture touches the naive, the informed, the familiar, the foreign, the rich, the poor, the strong, the weak, and everyone in between. Date rape, incest, and rape committed by intimate partners are all represented in this rather inclusive study of rape culture. The writers talk about fathers, boyfriends, teachers, uncles, classmates, neighbors, and others violating their bodies and the burdensome repercussions, often

falling on the victims' shoulders, that followed: Some victims were seen as irrecoverable, sullied, guilty, broken, and/or weak. Others were seen as attention-seeking traitors for reporting their attackers to authorities. And still others would indefinitely struggle to be sexually vulnerable and intimate with future sexual partners because their capacity to trust had been indelibly compromised. Overall, *Not That Bad* allows readers to see that rape culture is not limited to news reports. Its impact is not

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**Rape culture is dizzying in its omnipresence and the frequency of its manifestations.**

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resolved by the admonishment to "Never walk alone at night" or the advice to carry mace on a keychain. The insidious nature of rape culture means that it's lurking almost everywhere, and that the toxic discourses surrounding victimhood can retraumatize people who have already been deeply hurt by sexual violence and its related precursor, predatory sexual objectification.

Entries like Elissa Bassist's "Why I Didn't Say No" (pp. 323-339) brilliantly capture how women's entire socialization preps, primes, and grooms us to become victims of sexually predatory behavior. Bassist says that she expected love to hurt (p. 323), that she believed sexual violence was supposed to look a certain way — happening in a setting of "fraternity-sponsored spring break booze cruises" (p. 323) — and that

she had accepted the belief that "a man's pleasure was fundamental... and hers optional" (p. 326). Her desire "to be perceived as having...a bomb-ass pussy" (p. 326) caused her to exercise few protective mechanisms, even when having sex with a close, intimate partner. It kept her from informing her partner that she was in pain, which ultimately "shredded" (p. 338) her cervix. It kept her from objecting and telling him to stop. It kept her from prioritizing her pleasure. "Speaking up for myself," she writes, "was not how I learned English...I'm fluent in Apology, in Question Mark, in Giggle, in Bowing Down, in Self-Sacrifice" (p. 333). And her experience is likely common. While intentionally violent rape by a stranger is more of an anomaly, sex that is uncomfortable, questionably consensual, and absent of pleasure for a female partner in a heterosexual encounter is likely closer to typical. Media depictions of sexual assault in secluded hideouts or related to kidnapping or sex trafficking can make victims whose experiences fall outside of those narratives question whether or not they have been attacked, taken advantage of, assaulted, or raped. Sexual assault can happen in a king-sized bed with silken sheets. It can happen on a honeymoon during an island getaway. And it can certainly happen at a party involving multiple assailants and aggressors who are well known by the victim. Its manifestations are limitless.

Interestingly, actor Ally Sheedy's piece, "Stasis" (pp. 105-113), doesn't speak explicitly to sexual assault, but rather to the morass of forces that can desensitize the masses to its prevalence. Sheedy critiques a Hollywood culture that

aims to sexualize girls early and often, shaping their expectations and careers for continuous sexual objectification. Both Sheedy and fellow celebrity Gabrielle Union, who also has a piece in this anthology, write about their experiences as women in an industry that churns out and promulgates harmful beliefs and practices surrounding women's bodies, appearance, and autonomy. These women's narratives demonstrate that rape culture transcends class — even the highest-paid women in coveted professions cannot escape being unwillingly sexualized. Sheedy was told early on in her career, for example, that her opportunities were stalling not because she lacked talent, but because “nobody want[ed] to fuck [her]” (p. 106). And with painful irony, some of her peers were not winning roles because they were *too* fuckable, “too busty...too curvy” (p. 107). Sheedy describes the ideal body type of the current era:

Apparently, the look is now a superthin stomach area, big breasts, big butt, gorgeous face, and a freed nipple. When they first told me about the nipple thing, I tried to understand but it was clear that it was not the “burn the bra” mentality with which I was raised. These young women must be comfortable without a bra and with visible nipples under a thin shirt as part of a perfect breast — big enough to be sexual, but not so big that it's “slutty.” (p. 108)

Many of the career opportunities Sheedy encountered were not about how compelling she could be on-screen but about how much desire and arousal her appearance could

conjure for a male audience. “The best characters I get to play,” she writes, “are the complicated, dark, kind of crazy ones. I love those characters because I can just do my job and not deal with whether or not some producers find me ‘sexy’” (p. 110). So while sexual assault occurs off-screen, many of the narratives that appear onscreen communicate that women are designed primarily for sexual consumption and that the most desirable bodies belong to people who are only hovering around the age of sexual consent.

Sharing themes with Bassist's essay, xTx's “The Ways We Are Taught to Be

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### **Rape culture is active before any two bodies touch.**

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a Girl” (pp. 115–128) looks at how girls are socialized. Many girls experience so many pervasive assaults on their bodily autonomy that they come to forget — if they ever knew in the first place — how autonomy is exercised. Imagining a point system in which “the girls who have the most points are not the winners and the girls who have the lowest points do not win either” (p. 115), xTx recounts several punitive lessons learned while growing up regarding what it meant to live within a girl's body, finding that there's a price paid “for...curves [and] holes” (p. 116). Her “lessons” track a variety of times in her life in which her consent was not sought in intimate and sexual encounters. As a girl, she was pressured to kiss when she didn't want to (p. 117); once a boy tried to force his fingers inside of her (p. 118) against her will; she was inappropri-

ately cuddled by a drunk, adult man (p. 120) who was a family friend; and she was instructed to fellate her camp counselor's thumb (p. 122). Until she “became a *seasoned* adult,” xTx writes, “I thought this was a normal part of growing up” (p. 127). The continued, if not chronic, exposure to trampled, diminished, and erased boundaries confused and befuddled the author's understanding of what it means to be an autonomous individual with agency, given that boys and men in her life regularly placed a higher point value on their desires than her own. Importantly, the examples shared in xTx's essay also make it clear that rape culture does not exclusively orbit about penetrative sex between male and female persons and their genitalia. There are many ways to usurp and challenge someone's dignity and self-respect that fall short of rape, as recounted here.

Another entry that stands out is Amy Jo Burns's “Good Girls” (pp. 167–176), which tells of a town more interested in protecting adult men who are sexual abusers than the girl children who have been sexually abused. And Anthony Frame's “I Said Yes” (pp. 213–227) exposes the long-lasting shame that can follow a victim of sexual abuse throughout the trajectory of his life, even in his happiest moments. AJ McKenna's essay “Sixty-Three Days” (pp. 79–88) offers a story that is different in some ways from the rest in the collection as it highlights how gender dysphoria can make even the language we use surrounding sexual assault clumsy and difficult to define. The naming of body parts used in an assault and who can be named as an assailant based on gender and anatomy are two fraught discussions this chapter raises.

## BOOKS

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*Not That Bad* proves that rape culture refers to an unwieldy body of unwelcome, intrusive, unjust, and vindictive acts, behaviors, beliefs, repercussions, and traditions that are embedded within our laws, mores, policies, politics, religion, and culture. Rape culture is active before any two bodies touch. This work, coming in the wake of the 2017 #MeToo movement, underscores how

contemporary and widespread these narratives are and how pressing the need for change is. I'd recommend *Not That Bad* to all people regardless of gender who are survivors, to all who are looking for ways to actively resist rape culture, and to anyone who creates mass media. For a memoir that treats the phenomenon of rape as a public discourse, see *Know My Name* by Chanel Miller

(also reviewed in this issue of *RGWS*). For a work that offers advice to men about navigating sexual consent, see *Respect: Everything a Guy Needs to Know about Sex, Love, and Consent* by Inti Chavez Perez. And for a work that celebrates women's sexual pleasure, see *Moan: Anonymous Essays on Female Orgasm* by Emma Koenig.

### Notes

1. Dave Philipps, "Six Men Tell Their Stories of Sexual Assault in the Military," *New York Times*, September 10, 2019; <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/09/10/us/men-military-sexual-assault.html>.
2. "Rep. Pressley Calls for Brett Kavanaugh Impeachment Inquiry," press release, September 17, 2019; <https://pressley.house.gov/media/press-releases/rep-pressley-calls-brett-kavanaugh-impeachment-inquiry>.
3. Colin Dwyer and Rachel Martin, "Chanel Miller, Sexual Assault Survivor, On The 'Immense Relief' Of Going Public," interview, NPR; <https://www.npr.org/2019/09/23/763376211/chanel-miller-sexual-assault-survivor-on-the-immense-relief-of-going-public>.
4. Ira Glass, Ken Armstrong, and Robyn Semien, "Anatomy of Doubt," first aired February 26, 2016 on *This American Life*, NPR; <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/581/anatomy-of-doubt>; based on Ken Armstrong and T. Christian Miller's print story, "An Unbelievable Story of Rape"; <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2015/12/16/an-unbelievable-story-of-rape?ref=hp-5-122#.mJyutafEo>.
5. Laura Snapes, "'I Realised We Live in a Chauvinist Culture': Pharrell Denounces 'Blurred Lines,'" *The Guardian*, October 14, 2019; <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2019/oct/14/pharrell-williams-denounces-blurred-lines>.

[Katrina Spencer has been the literatures and cultures librarian at Middlebury College since 2017. She will begin a new role as the librarian for African American and African studies at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville in the summer of 2020. Find out more at [katleespe.com](http://katleespe.com).]



## Anonymous No More: Chanel Miller Writes Back

BY NICOLE BRAUN

Chanel Miller, *Know My Name: A Memoir*. Viking, 2019. 368 pp. \$28.00, ISBN 978-0735223707.

*Note: This review discusses sexual assault/rape.*

There is a great deal to absorb from this memoir, which has received a lot of publicity since it came out in September 2019. Chanel Miller was raped in 2015 by Brock Turner, whom most of us know as the Stanford University rapist. Miller woke up in a hospital, initially not even knowing where she was. Eventually, she was informed she had been assaulted. Turner is a young white man from a privileged class background and had been a star athlete at Stanford; because of his class and race, he received a lenient sentence. About her own identity, Miller says, “You cannot note my whiteness without acknowledging I am equal parts Chinese” (p. 220). But until publication of this book, Miller was known to most of the world only as “Emily Doe.”

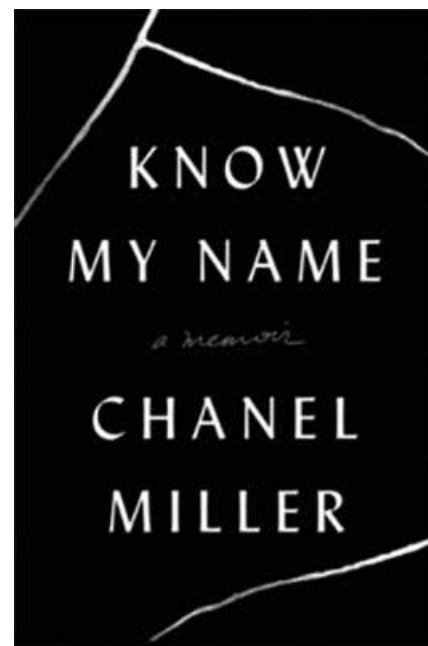
As Miller comes to realize the truth that she was raped — an assault she had no memory of — she writes, “I am a victim, I have no qualms with this word, only with the idea that it is all that I am. However, I am not *Brock Turner’s victim*. I am not his anything. I don’t belong to him” (p. viii; emphasis in original). As her memoir unfolds, she begins to understand that sexual assault is something that happens to other women as well, and this awareness keeps her going. She starts noticing how many times men on the street harass her, making comments about her body,

her appearance, her weight, and her “beauty” and inhibiting her ability to move freely in the world. She realizes that this is the plight of many women — we are objectified for simply existing.

Beyond her growing feminist consciousness, Miller learns about broken systems and institutions — from the university to the media to the “justice” system. “The assault harmed me physically,” she notes, “but there were bigger things that got broken. Broken trust in institutions. Broken faith in the places I thought would protect me” (p. 296).

Like many survivors, Miller wanted her rapist to own up to what he did and demonstrate remorse. Instead, Turner and his wealthy family hired a team of top-notch private lawyers to fight the charges and her accusations; that experience raised her class consciousness. She has this to say about the criminal justice system: “If you pay enough money, if you say the right things, if you take enough time to weaken and dilute the truth, the sun could slowly begin to look like an egg. Not only was this possible, it happens all the time” (p. 150).

Miller points out that everything she did or did not do and said or did not say was essentially on trial, and that this is typical in rape cases. “As a woman, I’d tried asserting my opinion without coming off as self-serving or over controlling,” she writes. “Now, I wondered if I had handled it




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**This book offers the chance to explore class, race, gender, and power around the painful topic of rape.**

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## BOOKS

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too gracefully, my composure a signal that what he'd done was of little consequence" (p. 219).

Perhaps Miller takes too long to think more critically about the ways in which she has class privilege herself, but she does eventually get there. She recognizes that she has the support of a very loving and educated family, a safe home, and access to middle-class supports and resources. Miller's boyfriend had enough resources to take her on a vacation to Thailand. Her friends and family have access to cars; they are also able to fly across the country, something many of us cannot easily do. Miller even has a family friend who is a feminist professor at Stanford. Though she struggled with loss of identity and

safety because of the rape, she had started life with a strong sense of self and security.

However, as we know, class privilege does not prevent rape.

In short, this book offers the chance to explore class, race, gender, and power around the painful topic of rape. The problem of "affluenza" and many issues related to gender socialization can be explored as well. Readers might also want to ask questions like these: What would have happened to Miller's story if the #MeToo movement had not emerged so powerfully in the years following the rape? What is rape culture, and how can it be addressed? Does Miller speak for all survivors of sexual as-

sault? What is consent? What does it mean to be a victim? Is there a "perfect" victim? What are the definitions of rape and sexual assault, and who gets to decide?

Students, especially those in social work, sociology, psychology, criminal justice, and gender studies, are likely to find *Know My Name* a good read, but it also has the potential to be very triggering. Likewise, the book could inspire university-wide discussions about rape culture, consent, and sexual assault, but it needs to be handled with great sensitivity and care. It could also help survivors in various stages of healing. Chanel Miller has now made sure the world knows her name, and her story will benefit countless others.

[Nicole Braun has been teaching sociology from a feminist perspective for over 20 years as an exploited adjunct while raising her son as a single mother, so she knows a thing or two about economic struggles, sexism, class inequality, and both personal and systemic abuse by the patriarchy. She is interested in eradicating inequality in all forms.]



Miriam Greenwald

## After #MeToo: How Visual Media Can Provide an Alternative to Cultural Scripts

BY SARALYN MCKINNON-CROWLEY

Kelly Wilz, *Resisting Rape Culture through Popular Culture: Sex after #MeToo*. Lexington Books/Rowman & Littlefield, 2020. 202 pp. \$90.00, ISBN 978-1498588683; ebook, \$85.50, ISBN 978-1498588690.

This book accomplishes two goals: it provides a history of and justification for the #MeToo movement, and it suggests how certain visual media provide an alternative, healthy, and nuanced depiction of sexuality that undermines dominant cultural scripts. Wilz opens powerfully with a description of the anti-anxiety medications she was prescribed to help her cope with the effects of sexual assault; then she describes the assault itself, with reference to the social scripts that influenced her response to being raped. The author's personal experiences as a survivor explicitly and unapologetically influence the book.

In subsequent chapters, Wilz pairs an overview of feminist thinking about the chapter's topic with a model media depiction that counters dominant narratives. In Chapter 1, she combines a discussion of consent to sexual activity with a depiction of affirmative consent in the second season of the television show *13 Reasons Why*. Chapter 2 explains toxic and hegemonic masculinity and contrasts those narratives with the depictions of men characters in the television show *Queen Sugar*. In Chapter 3, Wilz talks about sexual assaults that do not fit the narrative of violent stranger rape, by focusing on a concept called intimate justice — the notion that all partners in a sexual encounter are human

and their pleasure should be taken seriously. Centering intimate justice, she provides the example of teenage women pursuing sexual pleasure in the film *Blockers*, showing how a conceptual shift in whose pleasure matters changes the conversation around coercive sexual behavior in a positive way. Chapter 4 tackles how sexual crimes are routinely ignored by the criminal justice system, as depicted by the documentary film *I Am Evidence*. Wilz offers a humanizing alternative to the frequently incompetent investigations and prosecutions of sexual assault, represented in this chapter by untested rape kits. The book concludes with policy suggestions for how to create better lives for survivors of assault.

The strengths of this book include its willingness to address what can be difficult, under-discussed topics in a frank and open manner. Its close attention to digital spaces shows how important these arenas are to critical sexuality studies, a field in which the book is situated. Wilz offers compact presentations of both the contemporary state of research and the national conversation around each of the issues covered. The discussions of theory and research in each chapter constitute an up-to-date feminist reader that addresses common arguments and assumptions undergirding discourse about sexual practices. For example, when discussing the un-



**The discussions of theory and research constitute an up-to-date feminist reader that addresses common arguments and assumptions undergirding discourse about sexual practices.**

## BOOKS

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substantiated narratives about false reporting of sexual assault in Chapter 4, Wilz refers to “‘man-ification’ or ‘mole-hilling’” as a way “to describe the rhetorical process whereby claims and fears of dominant groups subordinate claims of non-dominant groups, no matter the lack of evidence, data, or logic” (p. 100). Wilz presents evidence that false reporting of sexual assault is exceedingly rare and draws an analogy between fears of false reporting and fears of voter fraud, both issues whose existence is far less common than media narratives might have the public believe. This is the sort of book I would like to give to individuals who consider themselves anti-rape allies but still do not reckon with the social scripts that condition the bounds of their allyship.

Some areas of the book could have used improvement. First, I would have liked a more expanded rationale for the selection of these four texts. Wilz states in the introduction that she picked four non-independent

visual texts whose production post-dates #MeToo because each depicts “a disparate yet fundamental aspect of rape culture and provides audiences with discursive resources to make sense of these models of healthy intimacy” (p. 13), but it was unclear whether there were other media she considered but did not include. The inclusion of *I Am Evidence*, a documentary film, was jarring when the other three media examples under discussion were fiction. I found the arguments about how that text could be an alternative anti-rape culture model the least convincing, simply because of its genre. Although Wilz herself notes this as a limitation of her work, this book also foregrounds the cisgender and heterosexual experiences of women; a future study could center trans\* and queer individuals instead. Wilz’s concluding call to action centers on political action — placing survivors in positions of political and policymaking power in order to change norms. To me, this presupposes a kind of universality

to all survivors and assumes that the current system is fixable. Survivors do not all have the same identities; if they are not already present in the halls of power, their entrée into those worlds will not lead to the same results. If rape culture is as baked into systems of power as Wilz argues it is, I am also skeptical that placing any survivor in a position of political power will lead to lasting change.

Overall, this book is a challenging but worthwhile read. I highly recommend it to anyone who would like to learn more about the #MeToo movement and some of the cultural norms the movement is reacting against. It is written in an informal, accessible manner. Wilz herself frequently appears in the narrative, offering her personal perspective as a survivor and an activist. I found the book difficult purely because of the subject matter under discussion. It is infuriating and saddening to read about the consequences of rape culture in so many people’s lives in a single text.

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## Morgan Jerkins Should Write Us More Often

BY JASMINE KIRBY

Morgan Jerkins, *This Will Be My Undoing: Living at the Intersection of Black, Female, and Feminist in (White) America*. Harper Perennial, 2018. 272 pp. notes. pap., \$15.99, ISBN 978-0062666154.

Rarely do I read a book that speaks directly and clearly to my experiences of growing up as an upper-middle-class African American woman in the U.S. and the challenges and privileges that come with that. But *This Will Be My Undoing* is that book and so much more.

Jerkins writes with clarity, and she provides statistics, history, and horror stories to support what would otherwise be a limited narrative of one life. Although in some ways stylistically similar to the types of

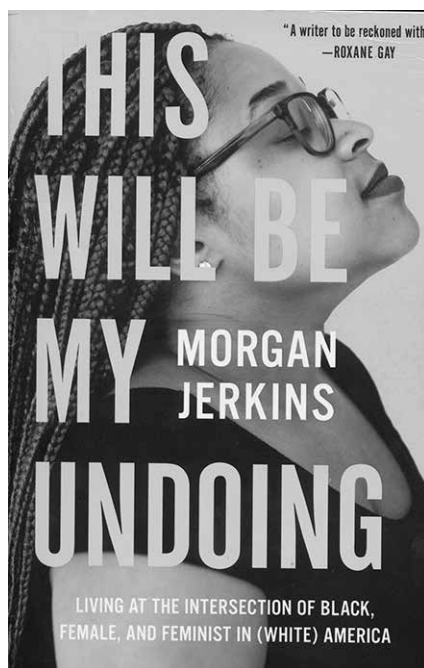
thought pieces people share on social media (hoping this will finally be the article that makes their Trump-supporter family members see the light), each essay in this collection weaves together multiple topics like a conversation, and the language is more poetic than the text of a social media post meant to go viral and raise instant awareness about a particular injustice. Media about — and marketed as — the African American experience tends to deal with trauma, whether the horrors of living in a racist society or the dysfunction within our own communities, and it is often a constant barrage of violence and death. The essay “Who Will Write Us?,” which discusses the controversy around the book *A Birthday Cake for George Washington*, addresses the issues of how African Americans are represented in media

and how to sensitively portray more quotidian forms of resistance that can arise under the most horrific of circumstances, as well as the complexity of African American experience without diminishing the impact of trauma. So it’s nice to find a book that talks about other aspects of black womanhood, such as feeling bad about being single in college, figuring out what to do with your naturally curly hair, and struggling with painful and frustrating physical and mental illnesses when you are supposed to be

strong. Part of the alienation that comes from living and working in majority white environments is the isolating experience of having your cultural reference points treated as foreign and your experiences as unimaginable by people who are your neighbors, coworkers, and even friends who don’t understand — and worse, don’t care — that they are missing information you managed to pick up on in the same environment. “Representation matters” might be a cliché now, but it’s nice to read a book that leaves you feeling, “It’s not only me, I’m not completely weird, and I’m not the only one who has gone through this.”

Jerkins’s writing explores what it means to be Black American when America keeps trying to stop us from being great. Does succeeding in white spaces make you less authentic to your cultural heritage? Especially when said heritage is a massive diasporic population held together by an idea of blackness but without the full trappings of nationhood such as a common language, land, or religious identity to tie it together? We’re Americans with some but not all of the benefits that come with that, and American culture borrows much from what we create; but even after living here for generations we are still not fully considered a part of the only homeland we know.

Even though it had already been the subject of an essay she published at *HuffPost*,<sup>1</sup> I wish Jerkins had elaborated more in “Human, Not Black” about what it means to be a gentrifier. I also feel that she overemphasizes the divide between black and white, and at times she seems to take too formulaic a view of black culture. It’s tricky to find a balance between recognizing shared experiences without making blackness into performative behavior and even stereotypes. However, I do sympathize with navigating



## BOOKS

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what it means to be authentically black and how being able to adapt to different spaces (whether Princeton or Harlem or Japan) affects that authenticity — themes explored throughout this collection.

Because of its content about sexuality, alcohol, and witchcraft, I would potentially have difficulty teaching with this book in my academic library in the Middle East. Jerkins's memoir is both an honest and, at times, all-the-gory-details account. In "Black Girl Magic," for example, she explains her decision to get a labiaplasty and shares the experience of having the procedure. Is this sort of honest sharing what she means by the book's title, *This Will Be My Undoing*? Still, she doesn't put *everything* out there, and I end up wondering how much I really know about her. She throws in blink-and-you'll-miss-it details like the fact that she has four sisters. Throughout the collection, she balances protecting people's privacy and leaving them the opportunity to tell their own stories while sharing her own story that they play an integral part of.

Will this book be Jerkins's undoing? Hardly. She is certainly brave for sharing some of these details. The book could have been titled *My Mom Is Definitely Cringing Reading This*, but it contains nothing she should be embarrassed about publishing or believing or having felt or experienced, and she creates a space for others to embrace their own truths. Even if someday she reverses her political and social views, she'll be able to say her earlier work is well written and interesting and speaks to her experiences at the time. At the same time, in "Black Girl Magic," she talks about how clean-cut black women have to be for mainstream white audiences to relate to them; she is also very clean-cut herself. Now hear me out — yes, she describes masturbation and sex and her own legal use of drugs and alcohol, but ultimately, she's still a woman who goes to church, who excelled at an Ivy League university, and who might get tipsy once in a while. It is unclear whether she could have gotten a platform or published anything about illegal drug use like the white girls whose memoirs she describes. There is also a disconnect between the cover of the edition I have, which shows her hair in braids, and

the essay "The Stranger at the Carnival," which goes into detail about how wearing her hair in an Afro changed her life for the better. Perhaps this is an indication that Jerkins is still limited in how she can present herself; there is still work to be done.

Is that what the "undoing" in the title means? Probably not. The main things being undone in this memoir are faulty beliefs and stereotypes Jerkins had about herself and the way things were supposed to be. Beginning to live at the intersections and being fully present in her identities is doing the undoing here.

It's a shame that this book may have trouble reaching more conservative audiences; it would be great to offer it as a resource, for example, to students from abroad studying at our main campus in the U.S., who might have particular ideas about America, Americans, and cultural differences that could be challenged by this. My STEM-background students might not have the critical theory knowledge needed to recognize some of the work Jerkins references, though I'm sure most would be at least somewhat familiar with decolonial and postcolonial discourse from learning their own national histories. Even Jerkins acknowledges that her experience is not universal. But we need more memoirs like hers, and more essays like "Black Girl Magic," which explore how other experiences, such as disability, can shape people's worldview.

This book is a great conversation starter. It could be used in classes and book discussion groups to get people to share their own experiences with difficult-to-discuss topics around race and gender in contemporary American society. I could also see excerpts being used to discuss topics such as mental health, cultural appropriation, and beauty standards in U.S. minority studies courses. The essay "Human, Not Black" would make good required reading for pre-departure study-abroad workshops. Finally, *This Will Be My Undoing* offers useful insights about the student experience for those working in higher education, such as my fellow academic librarians. This is a highly recommended — if not essential — book for any gender and women's studies collection.

### Note

1. "I'm a Black Gentrifier in Harlem—and It's Not a Good Feeling," *HuffPost*, August 25, 2015; <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/aug/25/black-gentrification-harlem-not-a-good-feeling>

[Originally from Chicago, Jasmine Kirby is an instruction and engagement librarian at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar.]

## The History of Now: Black Lives Matter

BY CHARMAINE LANG

Barbara Ransby, *Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimagining Freedom in the 21st Century*. University of California Press, 2018. (American Studies Now: Critical Histories of the Present, Book 6.) 240 pp. notes. glossary. bibl. pap., \$18.95, ISBN 978-0520292710.

My early memories of learning about history included considering how long ago an event happened. Distance between an event and the present became my barometer for determining whether it was indeed historical. The Civil War, the American Revolution, and other significant events helped to shape the world we currently live in — but I was not there to witness them. And so, for many years I thought history was encapsulated by the past.

Barbara Ransby's *Making All Black Lives Matter*, however, has expanded my understanding: the historical canon includes "the history of now." This book documents the history-making of the Black Lives Matter Movement (BLMM/M4BL<sup>1</sup>) alongside the movement's emergence, instead of decades later after it has been analyzed in retrospect.

Some may see this approach as a departure from convention for a text about history, and they would be right — and it is an appropriate departure, since, as Ransby illustrates, this inclusive movement is anything but conventional. Ransby's own decades-long movement work, expertise as a historian, and use of ethnographic methods lend to her strengths as a storyteller, one who seamlessly weaves personal observation and experience as an activist into an accessible analysis of BLMM/M4BL.

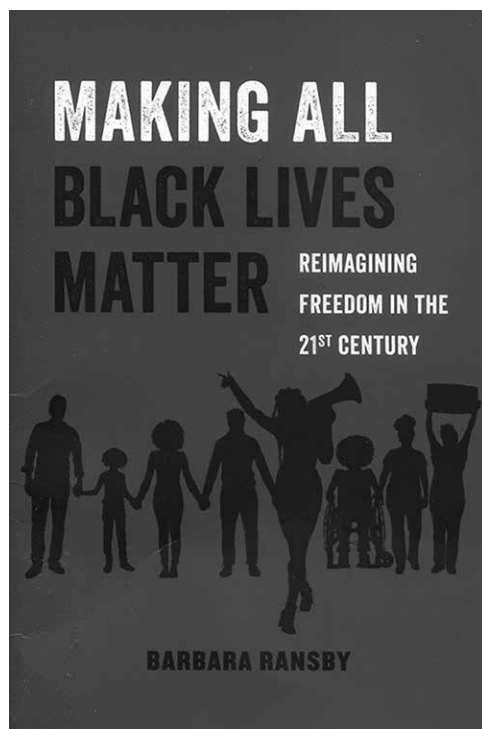
Ransby devotes much time and space to descriptive profiles of the movement's core leaders, whom she has interviewed, observed, and worked alongside as mentor, fellow activist, and participant observer. For those new to BLMM/M4BL, the unfamiliar names, accompanied by their movement contributions and descriptions, will provide needed

insight into the type of policy and grassroots work that is happening and let readers know about key organizations they can contact to become involved in the Movement for Black Lives. Of course, this list of leaders and organizations is neither exhaustive nor representative of all the work being done. For example, many of the individuals highlight-

ed for their exemplary work are either executive directors or attached to an organization. Less well-known activists and those who aren't tethered to organizations are not highlighted as substantially. This is a marked shortcoming, because these independent activists are also making significant contributions. *Making All Black Lives Matter* does, however, identify the movement's Black trans, queer, and women leaders — showing important progress from the past, when named leaders of Black radical movements were mainly cisgender, heterosexual Black men. This change centers and recognizes those who are most marginalized by oppressive systems as the ones who will generate strategies that lead to liberation.

Ransby's use of participant observation is mentioned but not extensively documented. As someone who uses this research method, I wanted to learn more about her process and

what she discovered. Participant observation has been defined as "a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning...aspects of their life routines and culture."<sup>2</sup> It also entails recording observations in field notes. I would love to have been able to read the field notes from Ransby's observations, but she does not include them. Most of the information she provides about participant observation is in the book's



## BOOKS

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endnotes, but even there it is not extensive. Inclusion of field notes could have been helpful to researchers, especially those who are new to ethnographic methods. But Ransby's rationale for omitting them may have to do with protecting the health of the movement itself: "I have taken meticulous care," she writes in the introduction, "not to violate any confidences or expose any material that would undermine the ongoing work to which I remain committed. I am confident that I have adhered to this principle without compromising the truth-telling mission of the book" (p. 10).

Ransby describes her three-page epilogue, subtitled "A Personal Reflection," as "a love letter to the organizers in the Movement for Black Lives, and a tribute to their increasingly expansive vision" (p. 165). Endearingly, she thanks all the activists who do the significant, difficult, and at times heart-breaking work

of freedom-making. "When you chant, 'We know that we will win,' in a spiraling crescendo," she concludes, "I believe you. I believe you with love, hope, and expectation all wrapped around you in a fierce and unrelenting embrace" (p. 167).

This book may not provide all the documentation of research process that an ethnographer might wish for, but it deserves a place in the personal libraries of all those interested in learning more about U.S. history and liberation movements as well as in every public library. Accessible and equipped with a glossary of commonly used language in the text and a list of key figures this book is a great read for those beginning their activist journeys as well as for more seasoned activists who want to continue to expand their political education.

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**This inclusive movement is anything  
but conventional.**

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### Notes

1. Ransby is referring to "[t]he protest and transformative justice movement that emerged under the banner of the Black Lives Matter Movement (BLMM), and later the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL)" (p. 2). She describes BLMM/M4BL as "an assemblage of dozens of organizations and individuals that are actively in one another's orbit, having collaborated, debated, and collectively employed an array of tactics together: from bold direct actions to lobbying politicians and creating detailed policy documents—most notably, the 'Vision for Black Lives' platform, released in August 2016. It also includes a mass base of followers and supporters, who may not be formally affiliated with any of the lead organizations but are supportive of and sympathetic toward the spirit of the movement and are angered by the practices, policies, and events that sparked it" (p. 5).
2. Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R. DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, 2nd ed. (Alta Mira Press, 2010), p. 1.

[Charmaine Lang is a proud member of a Forward Together program called Echoing Ida (<https://forwardtogether.org/category/echoing-ida>), a community of Black women and nonbinary writers disrupting oppressive narratives and seeding a world where we can thrive. A North Carolina-based writer and researcher, she focuses on the intersections of race, gender and wellness. Charmaine is a doctoral candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her dissertation research uses ethnographic methods to examine the social and economic determinants of self-care practices among Black women activists in Milwaukee. With her leisure time, Charmaine enjoys reading the stories of Black women, traveling domestically and internationally, and pursuing new food experiences.]



## Healing the Split at the Root

BY JANET FREEDMAN

Pamela S. Nadell, *America's Jewish Women: A History from Colonial Times to Today*. W.W. Norton, 2019. 336 pp. notes. index. \$28.95, ISBN 978-0393651232.

Joyce Antler, *Jewish Radical Feminism: Voices from the Women's Liberation Movement*. NYU Press, 2018. (Goldstein-Goren Series in American Jewish History.) 464 pp. notes. index. \$35.00, ISBN 978-0814707630.

These two complementary, carefully researched, eloquent, and engrossing books belong on the shelves of every academic library. They will be valuable texts in courses in gender and women's studies and key sources for student research on Jewish women in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

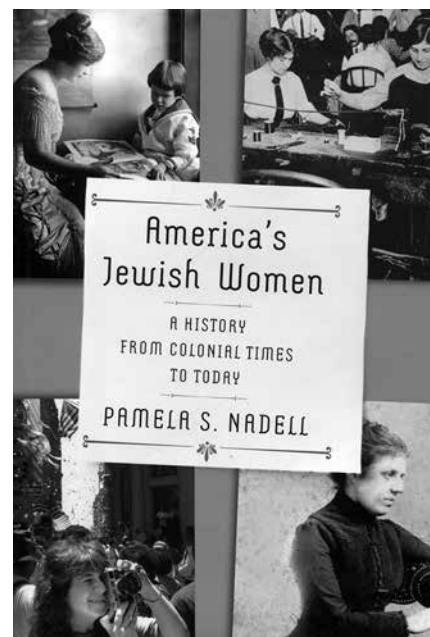
Pamela Nadell is the director of Jewish studies and holds the Patrick Clendenen Chair in Women's and Gender Studies at American University. Her fast-paced chronicle documents the dramatic changes in Jewish women's lives in a way that validates Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's response to the question "What is the difference between a bookkeeper and a Supreme Court Justice?" (Ginsburg's answer: "One generation" [p. xiv].) But Nadell refrains from a "progress" narrative, offering instead a more complex portrait of how a marginalized group negotiates the balance between dedication to tradition and assimilation to a new culture.

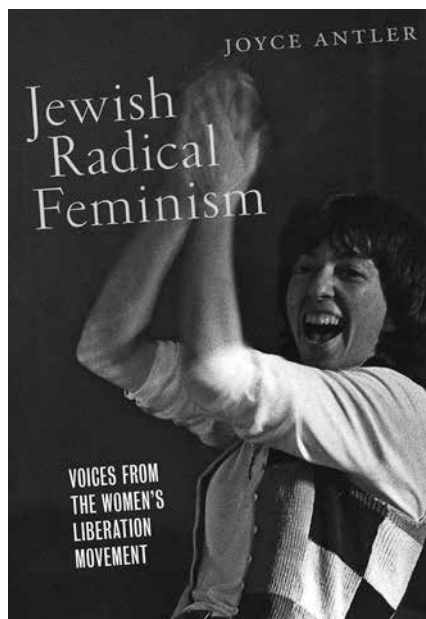
In placing herself and her Jewish family in the sweep of her narrative, Nadell invites readers of all backgrounds to discover and embrace the journeys of their forebears. Early in the volume we meet Nadell's immigrant grandmother, who came to America at the turn of the 20th century. Many associate Jewish women

with that mass migration, but their presence in what became the United States dates to the 17th century.

One of the early Jewish European arrivals on these shores was the mother of Grace Mendes Seixas (1752–1831). Grace became the bride of a British-born merchant, Simon Nathan, who assumed leadership in his synagogue and prominence as a patriotic militiaman in the American Revolution, earning the family a place in the historical record. Nathan's great-granddaughter, poet Emma Lazarus (1849–1887), penned the famous words inscribed on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor/Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..." Nadell also introduces us to two cousins of Lazarus who bore the Nathan name. Maud was a suffragist and president of the Consumer's League, an organization that fought to improve conditions of women workers. Her sister Annie attended a "collegiate course for women" and became a writer. Eventually her tireless work for women's higher education led to the founding in 1889 of Barnard College, one of the world's oldest women's colleges.

While celebrating this and other families who modeled Jewish women's contributions to American life within and beyond the Jewish community, Nadell's account captures the variety





of circumstances and roles of Jewish women through the centuries of U.S. history, most of whom did not have the opportunities and recognition of the Nathan family.

Historically, the often-unsung work of Jewish women and women in other immigrant groups was not limited to the home. Many had roles like that of my fraternal grandmother, who worked alongside her husband in his butcher shop, or my maternal grandmother, who ran a small business — a front porch grocery shop — while her husband traveled as an itinerant peddler.

Nadell celebrates the contributions of Jewish women of all classes and emphasizes their major role in shaping the labor movement. She also documents the sexism that resulted in men taking over leadership positions once unions were established. After Bessie Abramowitz and Sidney Hillman — leaders in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America — married, they agreed that only one of them should receive a salary; Bessie worked for 30 years without pay.

Two stereotypes of Jewish women are validated in Nadell's story — the focus on nurturing — and sacrificing — for children, and the desire to build a better world, not only for the Jewish community but for all people. The volume chronicles Jewish women's involvement in every aspect of American life: in war efforts as nurses and service women, in countless voluntary associations to aid Jews and all people in need of financial, emotional and spiritual support, and in social and political movements for social justice.

*Jewish Radical Feminism: Voices from the Women's Liberation Movement* begins where Nadell's fascinat-

ing account ends; it also illustrates the dynamic between universalism and particularism that has characterized Jewish women's lives. Nadell notes that the American feminist movement would be "unimaginable without Jewish women on its front lines," but also observes, "At the time many of these women downplayed or ignored their Jewishness; sisterhood among all women mattered, not religion or ethnicity" (pp. 235-236).

That phenomenon intrigued Joyce Antler, who succeeds admirably in her goal to illuminate the Jewish component of the radical feminist movement and the feminist contribution to the dramatic reshaping of traditional Jewish institutions by Jewish women. Antler used a feminist process to begin her work, bringing 40 pioneers in the Women's Liberation Movement to a conference in New York City to share their stories. That event and her subsequent extensive interviews led to an assessment of the unique role of Jewish women in feminist activism, a reclaiming that is continuing today.

Antler, a prolific author and professor emerita of American history and culture and women's, gender, and sexuality Studies at Brandeis University, has a thorough knowledge of the scholarly histories of the feminist movement and a deep familiarity with the grassroots organizations, journals, books, and broadsides that spread the ideals and ideas of the Women's Liberation Movement beginning in the late 1960s. Her readable, jargon-free prose style brings the excitement of those times to today's readers. During the time when Antler was writing *Jewish Radical Feminism*, I was privileged to be included in a year-long monthly discussion group with other Bos-

ton-area Jewish women who became feminist activists in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>2</sup>

The first part of *Jewish Radical Feminism* focuses on women who did not think their Jewish backgrounds had anything to do with their involvement in feminism and “never talked about it” (p. 29). Among them are Robin Morgan, a founding member of New York Radical Women, whose anthology of writings from the burgeoning women’s movement, *Sisterhood is Powerful* (1970), was used as a text in some of the early women’s studies courses, including one I team-taught; Susan Brownmiller, author of *Against our Will* (1975), a book that revealed how rape, historically and currently, has been used as a conscious tool to keep women fearful and powerless; Heather Booth, civil rights and feminist activist and founding member of the Chicago Women’s Liberation Union and its underground abortion counseling service, known as Jane, that helped women get abortions before *Roe v. Wade*; and Evelyn Torton Beck, a founding member of the National Women’s Studies Association and its Jewish Caucus, and author of *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology* (1982). Antler also interviews members of the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective, which compiled a newsprint guide to “women and their bodies” (1970) that was subsequently published as *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (OBOS) and eventually adapted into 31 languages.

The chapter devoted to the Boston Health Book Collective, titled “Our Bodies and Our Jewish Selves,” provides an excellent transition to the portion of Antler’s book focusing on women who conjoined their

Jewish and feminist identities. Even the three non-Jews among the dozen members of the collective acknowledge that Jewish values of devotion to family, critical thinking, and social justice affected their work.

If “Jewish” played a part in the way feminism was expressed in the creation of OBOS, feminism utterly transformed the lives of the Jewish women who challenged patriarchal practices within traditional Judaism. Antler captures this reality in the epigraph that introduces the second half of *Jewish Radical Feminism*: “Feminism enabled me to be a Jew” (p. 203). Earlier reforms had allowed Jewish girls access to study opportunities. In-depth knowledge of their tradition, coupled with the insights and activism of the growing feminist movement, led to demands for equality from women across the four denominations of Jewish observance: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist. The thrilling transformations included women reading from the Torah, the holy scrolls that are the foundation of Judaism; the ordination of women rabbis; inclusive liturgical language; and the recovery and creation of rituals celebrating girls, women, and members of the LGBTQ community. Jewish and non-Jewish readers alike will admire the courage and clarity of Joyce’s interviewees, from Orthodox women like Blu Greenberg to liberal activists Laura Geller, Rebecca Alpert, and Judith Plaskow, among many others.

Each of these books offers a deserved paean to the achievements of Jewish women. Yet in preparing this review at a time when hostility toward Jews is again a daily occurrence, it is impossible to avoid the presence of

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**Feminism utterly transformed the lives of the Jewish women who challenged patriarchal practices within traditional Judaism.**

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## BOOKS

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anti-Semitism that clouds even these celebratory volumes. I found myself repeatedly thinking of Adrienne Rich's powerful 1982 essay "Split at the Root," in which the author acknowledges the impossibility of denying any aspect of her identity: "white, Jewish, anti-Semite, racist, anti-racist, once married, lesbian, middle-class, expatriate southerner, split at the root."<sup>3</sup> Her father had concealed his — and thus Adrienne's — Jewish heritage, embracing his wife's Southern gentile culture in the mistaken notion that has haunted Jews for millennia: "Be more like us and you can be almost one of us."<sup>4</sup>

The suppression of Jewish identity in order to be included in groups opposing class privilege has been just as pervasive, as Antler chronicles in her discussion of Letty Pogrebin's classic article on anti-Semitism in *Ms.* magazine in 1982 and Evelyn Torton Beck's revelations of anti-Semitism within the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA).<sup>5</sup>

Joyce Antler and I continue our connection through a study group on feminism, Zionism, and anti-Semitism. At our last meeting, members decided to share a special Jewish feminist experience that had occurred since we had last met several

months earlier. Joyce spoke about a dinner she had attended at the home of Orthodox feminist Blu Greenberg. The occasion was to honor Heather Booth, one of the "secular" feminists discussed in *Radical Jewish Feminism*.<sup>6</sup> The two had met through Joyce's work. That gathering signifies that Jewish feminists, despite very different ways of expressing their commitments to their faith and to the women's movement, are joined at the root. I hope their experiences as portrayed in these two wonderful books will enlighten readers and generate coalitions within and beyond the Jewish feminist community.

### Notes

1. In 1999, Brandeis University published Tobin Belzer's study, *The Status of Jewish Women's Studies in the United States and Canada: A Survey of Courses* (<https://www.brandeis.edu/hbi/research-projects/legacy-projects/workingpapers/docs/belzer.pdf>). At that time there were 188 Jewish women's studies courses taught by 143 different faculty members. Although I have not located a comparable recent study, what was then considered to be a growing phenomenon had perhaps reached its apex, another reason to welcome these important volumes that can encourage a renewal of courses or portions of courses that cover Jewish women.
2. These meetings were sponsored by the Jewish Women's Archive (<https://jwa.org>), whose extensive online collection, highlighting most of the women discussed in these books and many other Jewish women who contributed to the history of this country and to the feminist movement, is a valuable resource for women's and gender studies (WGS) courses.
3. Adrienne Rich, "Split at the Root," in *Blood, Bread and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979–1985* (W.W. Norton, 1986), p. 122.
4. Rich, p. 114.
5. Shortly after its founding in 1977, in its mission statement opposing racism and other forms of oppression, NWSA named anti-Semitism as one of those forms of oppression only after modifying the definition of the term to include oppression against Arabs. This decision contradicted the origins of the term, which was coined (in the 1870s by the German political writer and avowed racist Wilhelm Marr) to denote hatred specifically of Jews as a particular racial group and has carried that explicit meaning ever since. The marginalization of Jews continues to be debated within NWSA. For example, the organization's leadership quickly issued a statement excoriating the racism of the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville in August 2017, but did not specifically address the anti-Semitic chants of the white supremacists ("Jews will not replace us") until after some members demanded that the statement be amended.
6. Booth, described as "the most influential person you never heard of," is the subject of a recent film by Lilly Rivlin, *Heather Booth: Changing the World* — which is also a recommended resource for WGS courses.

[Janet Freedman is a resident scholar at the Brandeis University Women's Studies Research Center. She previously served as the dean of library services and professor of education and women's studies at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, where she was also an active participant and volunteer co-director of the Center for Jewish Culture.]

## The Many Faces of African Women's Agency and Power

BY LAUREN PARNELL MARINO

Nwando Achebe and Claire Robertson, eds., *Holding the World Together: African Women in Changing Perspective*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2019. (Women in Africa and the Diaspora.) 352 pp. bibl. index. \$36.95, ISBN 978-0299321109.

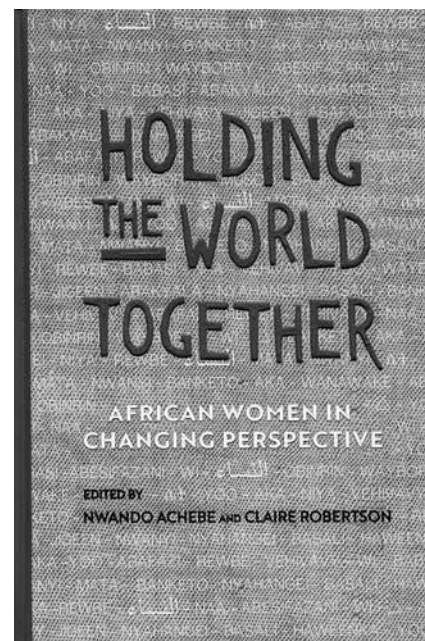
*Holding the World Together* sets out to enrich and complicate what, for many, is a fairly one-dimensional image of African women. With an emphasis on African women's agency, this edited volume delivers on its promise to give readers a thorough and thoughtful exploration of women and power in Africa.

Editors Nwando Achebe and Claire Robertson have curated a wide-ranging set of essays from seasoned scholars on gender and Africa.<sup>1</sup> The result is a readable, engaging book that will be a wonderful resource in libraries and classrooms, including for those new to the study of gender in Africa.

The book is organized into a number of broad topics and includes chapters on subjects as diverse as women and religious fundamentalisms, women and urban spaces, and women's health. The contributing authors were charged with exploring their subject across the large geographic area of the African continent, a seemingly overwhelming task given the diverse histories and contexts present there. Yet they rise to the occasion, providing narratives that highlight shared histories while not oversimplifying or erasing important differences. In fact, many of the authors use an explicitly intersectional lens to understand the experiences of different African women in each subject area, emphasizing how various layered identities create specific types of oppression or privilege for women to navigate.

The first of the book's three themes — the historic existence and persistence of African women's agency — illustrates the volume's central purpose. Some of the chapters are exemplary in addressing women's agency. Kathleen Sheldon's contribution, for instance, on women's resistance to colonialism and contributions to nationalism, is full of important and often ignored history that demonstrates how women as individuals and in the collective used their power. Nwando Achebe examines the ways women use power derived from religious institutions, and Gracia Clark looks at women's power within changing economic structures. Throughout the collection, African women are shown to be strategic, creative, and influential.

A second theme of the book is the importance of historical knowledge for understanding contemporary contexts. Since about half of the book's contributors are historians, this message comes across without much exposition. Teresa Barnes's chapter on urbanization connects current trends with processes that have been going on for more than a century. Rachel Jean-Baptiste and Emily Burrill relate current marriage systems to historic practices of kinship, reproduction, and emotional attachment. In these chapters and others like them, readers are shown the relevance of history for the analysis of contemporary issues.



## BOOKS

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The third and final theme of the book is the challenge of colonialism and neo-colonialism for African women. Although this is hardly a new area of exploration for scholars, this book tackles the topic in some new and interesting ways. Karen Flint, for example, discusses how colonial changes to agricultural systems affected women's nutrition. Cajetan Iheka demonstrates the impact colonialism had on women's depictions in African films, and Elizabeth M. Perego considers how African women novelists address neocolonialism in their work. In every essay in this volume, the enduring impact of colonialism is interrogated, often in unexpected ways.

As I read, I felt the chapters building on each other, providing ample evidence and arguments aligned with the book's three themes. I also appreciated how well each chapter stood on its own. It was easy to imagine how individual chapters could be used in classroom settings, giving students a synopsis of the various

gender implications of different topics. Josephine Beoku-Betts's piece on gendered education gaps stands out as a particularly good example of this.

In the introduction to the volume, the editors say they want to address "changing notions of gender identity" (p. 8), a topic often ignored in scholarship on African women. This is the one area in which I felt the book fell a little short. While some essays did think outside the binary (including, not surprisingly, the chapter on sexuality by Signe Arnfred), most relied on relatively stable notions of gender. We continue to have work to do on this topic in the field of gender studies in Africa.

This book is an expansive and well-organized contribution to the existing literature. It gives the reader an appreciation for the many ways African women have wielded power in different parts of their lives and promotes a more accurate depiction of African women in all their diversity and strength.

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**In every essay in this volume, the enduring impact of colonialism is interrogated, often in unexpected ways.**

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### Note

1. In the interest of transparency I note here that my advisor, Aili Tripp, is one of the contributors to this volume. Her essay, however, is not among those I have considered in this review.

[Lauren Parnell Marino is a Ph.D. candidate in development studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her dissertation research focuses on Ugandan women's experiences of power and empowerment in relation to their working lives.]

## A Moment in Time: Four Feminist Friends

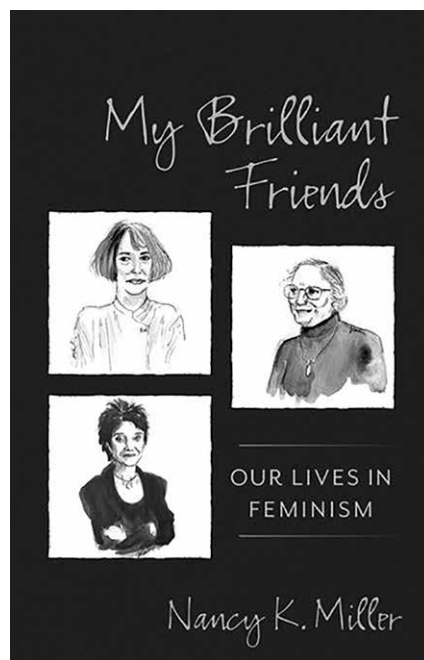
BY NANCY M. NYLAND

Nancy K. Miller, *My Brilliant Friends: Our Lives in Feminism*. Columbia University Press, 2019. (Gender and Culture series.) 232 pp. notes. \$28.00, ISBN 978-0231190541.

Nancy K. Miller's elegiac meditation on her most important friendships tells the story of four women who behaved as if, in the words of one of them, "a life outside of literature is not worth living" (p. 119). Miller and her friends are founding mothers of the field of feminist criticism. Their collective accomplishments and publications are too numerous to recount here, but highlights include these: Miller and Caroline Heilbrun cofounded and edited the Gender and Culture series at Columbia University Press, which published this volume; Naomi Schor's papers were the initial contribution that founded the Pembroke Center Feminist Theory Archive at Brown; and Dianne Westbrook was invited by Anne Sexton's daughter to write a biography of the poet that became a finalist for the National Book Award.

As a professor at Columbia who wrote analyses of both French and English literature, Miller is well aware of the body of work in the genre of memoir. She takes her title from the first of Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan novels, *My Brilliant Friend*. References to other memoirs appear throughout the text like touchstones, both by men writing about men's friendships and by women writing about their most intense connections with other women. The eventual loss of those friendships, whether through alienation or the ultimate separation, death, is described with unflinching honesty. The author writes as she and

her friends lived, "[i]n the spirit of feminist truth-telling" (p. 98). This is what makes their stories so compelling.



The quartet held privileged positions first as students and then as faculty at Columbia and other Ivy League schools. They resided on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and earned academic fellowships that allowed them time to write, sometimes while living in Paris. The other well-known writers and famous professors mentioned would sound like name dropping if they were not all very real characters in the author's life. Living among so much talent, more than one of the friends inevi-

tably became publicly enshrined for posterity as a character in some other writer's work, such as a story in the *New Yorker* or a friend's (or enemy's) novel. Even when the characterization was unflattering, the subject did not mind, as "the book was an artifact of literature — the ultimate prestige" (p. 129).

The prerequisites of successful academic careers did not necessarily translate to happiness. These women's friendships consisted of mutual support during lengthy bouts of depression and shared frustration over a lack of recognition by male peers. As pioneers breaking new ground with feminist theory, they encountered resistance within their academic departments. Because of the many connections with Columbia, the author acknowledges that "Columbia will be a character in our story, leading man and villain" (p. 10). At that time, "all the professors, except for one, were men" (p. 92), as reflected in the title of one of Heilbrun's many books, *When Men Were the Only Models We Had: My Teachers Fadimin, Barzun, Trilling* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

As a defense against "our violent little universe on the shores of the Hudson," (at least violent for women), the four friends banded together in one of the earliest consciousness-raising groups to discuss a central question: "Could a woman have sex, babies, and a career?" (p. 91). Perhaps the way they lived their

## BOOKS

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lives answers the question. Three of the four married and had children, but forging a writing life as well as an academic career was never an easy path. They were decades ahead of the #MeToo movement, to which the author makes her contribution by describing how unremarkable it was for a certain male professor to attempt to kiss and fondle women whose dissertations he was advising while married to one of his former students.

In her spirit of feminist truth-telling, Miller acknowledges that envy was as much a part of these intense female friendships as admiration – not just envy of each other’s work, but also of their personal lives: relationships, appearance, style, and sometimes

even clothing, which they shared and swapped like sisters. Even such accomplished women felt they had to dress to gain the attention of their male professors or, later on, of potential donors to their institutions. Appearance was even more important when one was not paying attention to it, as eventually Carolyn Heilbrun no longer worried about her weight or wore dresses, declaring, “Aging set me free” (p. 10). The women who did take care with their appearance walked a fine line, whether as students or as professors. It was acceptable to be noticed as stylish, but not as too attractive, since this could prevent one from being taken seriously.

Miller recreates a moment in time through her analysis of the emotions in friendships so intense they were described by observers as being erotic, although not sexual. Her comparisons with other memoirs provide a gateway to the genre that could serve as a textbook while being much more engaging. *My Brilliant Friends* will be valuable to students of literary criticism and feminism as well as history and even psychology. It is such a specific evocation of a particular time and place, and it simultaneously engages the emotions in its reflection on love and loss.

[Nancy M. Nyland is a retired arts and humanities academic librarian.]



Miriam Greenwald



# Women's Review *of Books*

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Heather Hewett on  
Raising a Trans Child  
*(See page 19)*

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## Educating against Transphobia

BY CHRIS BABITS

Julian Gill-Peterson, *Histories of the Transgender Child*. University of Minnesota Press, 2018. 288 pp. notes. index. pap., \$24.95, ISBN 978-1517904678.

Arlene Stein, *Unbound: Transgender Men and the Remaking of Identity*. Pantheon, 2018. 352 pp. gloss. notes. bibl. index. \$27.95, ISBN 978-1524747459.

Interest in scholarly studies of trans history and politics has grown in recent years. Historians and literary scholars have scrutinized texts and archival material, while sociologists and anthropologists have conducted field-based work on contemporary trans lived experiences. Yet despite a focus on trans history, health, and politics, there remains a general misunderstanding about parts of trans America. In *Histories of the Transgender Child*, Julian Gill-Peterson tackles one of these misconceptions — that the transgender child is a relatively recent phenomenon. By tracing a longer history of trans children, Gill-Peterson offers critical context for the current debates over gender-affirmation therapies and surgeries. This historical background is necessary for understanding Arlene Stein’s *Unbound: Transgender Men and the Remaking of Identity*. Stein illuminates the experiences of four trans men who undergo gender-affirmation surgeries, documenting how these men refashion their gender identities and challenge others’ adherence to the male-female binary. Stein’s work is a critical exploration of trans men, who have not been covered in the scholarly literature as much as trans women have been.

Gill-Peterson examines the underexplored histories of transgender children in the 20th-century United States, drawing on the records of prominent medical institutions such as the Gender Identity Clinic at Johns Hopkins and the Gender Identity Research Clinic at UCLA. Gill-Peterson probes the archives to analyze how medical understandings of sex changed at these medical facilities. Work on Dr. John Money and others has been covered by a range of historians, but *Histories of the Transgender*

*Child* reveals a world where medical experts could not box patients into the male-female binary. Importantly, Gill-Peterson examines “multiple trans childhoods, with multiple definitions of transness (including nonmedical forms of knowledge and identity), each with competing definitions that exceed the binary terms to which transness in general and trans childhoods have been

confined in the postwar medical model” (pp. 63–64). Readers learn about Val, a child who transitioned in the 1930s with the support of her parents but without “substantive relation to medicine.” Reflecting on children like Val, Gill-Peterson wonders “just how many more trans people” existed in the first half of the twentieth century, since they “had no reason at all to be archived” (p. 62).

Much of the book is devoted to showing how trans and intersex children suffered at the hands of medical professionals, many of whom ignored children’s self-knowledge. The author explains, however, that the book is not a recuperative or reparative project because “we don’t know trans children because we have inherited, reinforced, and perpetuated a cultural system of gender and childhood in

which they are unknowable and, what’s worst of all, unable to be cared for except through forms of harm” (p. ix). Instead of accepting the silencing of trans children by the archive, though, Gill-Peterson calls for “an ethical aperture of relation,” one through which scholars recognize that trans children have existed — and often thrived — all along (p. 203). Starting from this vantage point might help future researchers work through the unknowable aspects of the trans histories of the child.



Gill-Peterson's thought-provoking work offers the necessary historical context for appreciating Stein's *Unbound*. Stein traces the lived experiences of four trans men, all of whom decided to undergo top surgery in order to have their bodies conform with their gender identity. *Unbound* offers a thorough, yet sympathetic examination of the trauma these men experience, paying particular attention to the deep depression and severe anxiety that many trans Americans feel prior to their transitions. At the same time, Stein's study highlights the powerful role that gender plays in all of our lives, identifying gender as a "master status" that divides society and distributes social benefits and material resources (p. 12). Stein notes that although some trans men are satisfied with hormone treatment, which facilitates facial hair growth and other bodily changes, others feel that chest masculinization is necessary for gender affirmation; it serves as "a way of taking control, exercising agency over one's life" (p. 139). Stein recognizes, however, that gender can be enacted and performed in myriad ways.

*Unbound*, though written for a general reading audience, contains enough nuance for the scholarly reader. This is particularly noticeable in Stein's discussion of the shifting identity categories that many of the men in her study experience. Those categories vary greatly, demonstrating that there are multiple trans experiences, none of which overshadows the others. Lucas, for instance, recognizes that the gender binary makes little sense to him. "I still feel very strongly identified as a transgender man or a trans man," Lucas told Stein, "but I feel like the longer I'm on hormones or the more surgery I get, or the longer I explore what gender means and deconstruct what gender means, the more non-binary I become" (p. 250). Stein underscores that this understanding of being trans is more apparent in younger generations. "Today's generation of gender dissidents argues that becoming transgender isn't simply about altering one's body," she says, "or fitting into some preconceived notion of how we

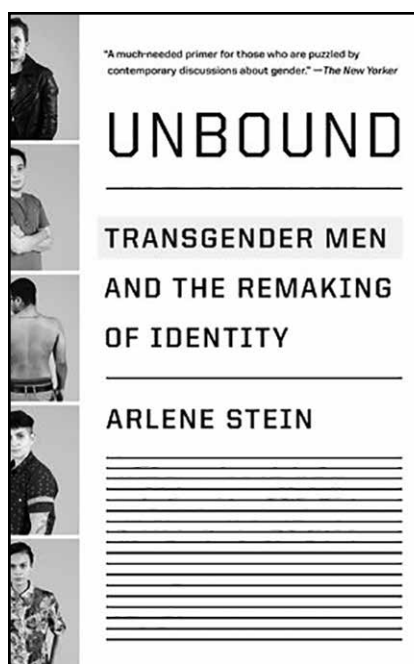
should live; it's about creating a meaningful life" (p. 269). For the trans men in *Unbound*, this means "making gender more personal and flexible" (p. 277).

Both Gill-Peterson and Stein illuminate our understanding not only of trans history but also of the importance of the contemporary fight for trans rights. These works are written for different audiences, with *Histories of the Transgender Child* offering theoretical insights into what Gill-Peterson calls the plasticity of racialized medicine and *Unbound* addressing a general readership. Although I am inclined to agree with Gill-Peterson's assessment that the overwhelming majority of trans patients seen at institutions of medicine were white (p. 27), subsequent archival work at different clinics and institutions could

reveal intriguing racial dimensions in these medical sites. It is, however, a theoretical starting place for examining the histories of black trans children and other trans children of color. Stein, meanwhile, offers the opposite — a snapshot of this current moment in the struggle for trans acceptance. Stein's *Unbound* should help anyone struggling to understand contemporary trans issues to make sense of the political and social terrain, but depending on how fast that terrain changes, the book may soon be obsolete for explaining trans experiences.

Taken together, however, *Histories of the Transgender Child* and *Unbound* are both needed in the current moment. Because of the political assault by the far right on trans livelihood, we need quality scholarship

in the fight against bigotry. Crucially, these two books challenge unfounded truths about trans lived experiences, highlighting not only the longer history of trans childhood but also the underreported lived experiences of trans men. Knowledge might not always trump ignorance, but both Gill-Peterson's and Stein's contributions could be usefully deployed to fight transphobia.



[Chris Babits is an Andrew W. Mellon Engaged Scholar Initiative Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin.]

## Queer Alice's Looking Glass: The Dildo and the Countersexual Revolution

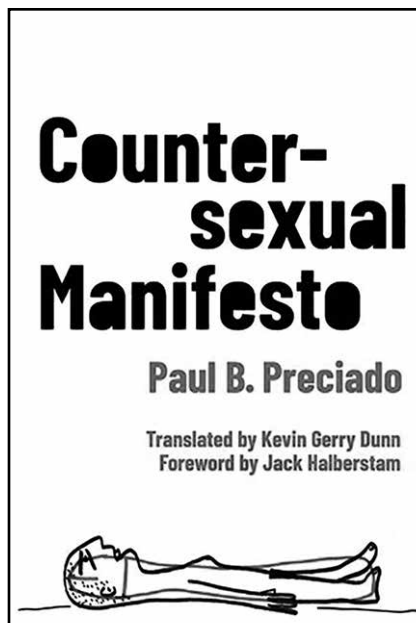
BY JULIA ANDERSON

Paul B. Preciado, *Countersexual Manifesto*. Trans. by Kevin Gerry Dunn; fwd. by Jack Halberstam. Columbia University Press, 2018 (originally published in French in 2000). (Critical Life Studies.) 240 pp. notes. bibl. index. pap., \$25.00, ISBN 978-0231175630.

This is an enthusiastic and nuanced rejection of heterocentric conceptions of sexuality, gender identity, sexual organs, sexual pleasure, and prosthetics. Moving beyond the traditional focus on identity politics and social titles, Paul B. Preciado calls for “exuberant expenditure, affect experimentation, and freedom” focusing on the materiality and performance of identity in lived experiences (p. 10). Countersexuality is a complete departure from binary theoretical understanding, moving toward “radically experimenting with new practices of collective sexual emancipation and sexual self-government” to allow for the multiple and perpetual avenues of self-determination (p. 14). Preciado focuses on sexual technologies when discussing countersexual ideologies, specifically the dildo, likening gender and the dildo in that “[t]heir carnal plasticity destabilizes the distinction between the imitated and the imitator, between the truth and the representation of the truth, between the reference and the referent, between nature and artifice, between sexual organs and sexual practices” (p. 28). Preciado offers a refreshingly radical take on recognizing and renegotiating supposedly biological scripts to support inclusivity, diversity, and equity.

Countersexuality disrupts assumptions of sex, gender, and sexuality

by focusing on trans and intersex narratives that expose the influence of these assumptions on major social institutions. Preciado states that it “is not the creation of a new nature but rather the end of nature as an



order that legitimizes the subjection of some bodies to others,” citing the legal, medical, and social fabrication of binary gender (p. 20). Countersexuality as theory delegitimizes the binary polarities that create arbitrary and unrealistic biological truths used to construct bodies and identities, “consider[ing] the different elements of the sex/gender system...

as well as their sexual practices and identities, to be nothing more than machines, products, instruments, apparatuses, gimmicks, prostheses,” and so on (p. 21). Countersexuality as activism has two primary goals: the first to “[commit] to the systematic deconstruction of naturalized sexual practices and the gender system” and the second to “[proclaim] the equivalence (not the equality) of all living bodies that commit themselves to the terms of the countersexual contract and are devoted to the search for pleasure-knowledge” (p. 21). Preciado suggests this can be done through the adoption of a countersexual mindset that not only eradic-ates the binary, but looks beyond it to possibilities unacknowledged, like the relationships between sexuality and technology. Preciado anchors countersexuality in the queer canon through references to Butler, Halberstam, Rubin, Kristeva, Foucault, and Haraway, outlining the queer history of dildos and its contributions to gender. Preciado roots his discussion of the dildo in the history of prosthetics and technology, taking a brief foray into masturbatory aids, sex toys, celibacy technology, and gender confirmation surgery, solidifying its reputation as a long-established but under-studied “queer Alice’s looking glass, through which we can read different sexual cultures” (p. 59). One significant theme of Preciado’s work is the separation of the dildo and

the phallus, establishing “the dildo within a complex web of technologies of material production, of signs, of power, and finally, of technologies of the self” (p. 79).

This text would fit in a queer theory syllabus as a fresh voice in the canon, ideally for graduate or advanced undergraduate study. Preciado centers queer identities in his analysis “with the realization that we are the revolution that is already taking place” by living out the tenets of counter-

sexuality every day (p. 4). He also prioritizes an activist and nonacademic audience in the construction of the book, beginning with a call to action that is followed by the weaving of feminist, trans, disability, and queer theories, rather than the other way around. He provides 13 articles for seriously integrating countersexuality into normative life, with topics including codes, names, legal customs, relationships, education, time, space, and sex work. These articles attempt to universalize the

countersexual experience in a way that encourages grassroots activism and institutional change. The theory is often rigorous and the exercises brazen, but the work is rewarding in its refreshing take on the queer history of sexual technologies and gender development. The positionality and layout of the book suggest that it is truly centered on organizing, bringing to life many of the core tenets of queer theory in accessible and tangible ways.

[Julia Anderson is a library specialist at the University of Texas at Arlington. Her M.A. (in gender and women’s studies) and M.L.I.S. are both from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. Her current research interests include Chicana and queer theory, feminist histories, radical archiving, and finding a Ph.D. program.]



Miriam Greenwald

## North Country Pastoral Meets Lesbian Utopia

BY PATRICIA GOTT

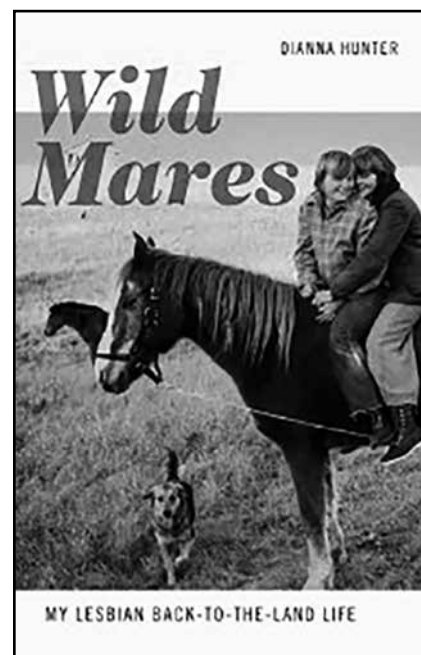
Dianna Hunter, *Wild Mares: My Lesbian Back-to-the-Land Life*. University of Minnesota Press, 2018. 248 pp. pap., \$18.95, ISBN 978-1517902667.

I picked up Dianna Hunter's memoir not knowing what to expect. I quickly became engrossed in her tale of how she and a small band of adventurous women forged new territory in terms of both geographical and mental space. Hardy and independent women are mainstream in much of the Upper Midwest, but I was struck by how much of a risk Hunter and her compatriots took in reclaiming what has traditionally been the province of males in the wilderness. In her prologue, Hunter relates that "[l]ike the fool in the tarot deck, I have stepped off many cliffs and managed to remain upright most of the time" (p. xi).

The book succeeds on three levels: as a coming-of-age narrative, as a celebration of lesbian life, and as an engrossing variation on the back-to-the-land movement that emerged in rural America in the late 1960s. Hunter relates the key accounts of her younger self at a somewhat dizzying pace, but her tone is confident and engaging, and we read on wanting to see how she perseveres both as a dairy farmer and as a woman-identified woman<sup>1</sup> searching for a feminist utopia: "When I put myself to bed each night amid city sounds and smells, I dreamed of horses and powerful, outrageous women living on the land" (p. 73).

As we immerse ourselves in Hunter's world, many of us who grew up in

the rural Midwest can locate ourselves in her quest for self-discovery. Hunter satiates her lust for city experiences while studying at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. It's at this point that her separatist worldview emerges: "Some of us could imagine shopping only at women's stores, eating only at women's restaurants, listening to women's music, and reading only women's books. I still wanted to find some women to share a lesbian collective farm and that would come in time. Getting there would turn out to be a process, a becoming and the journey that lies at the heart of this story" (p. 47). Much of the journey has its bumps in the road. About her role in the founding of the Lesbian Resource Center in the 1970s, Hunter notes, "We had to fight on all fronts, against the homophobia of others as well as the internal kind that we inflicted on ourselves" (p. 44). She begins to seek out a Minnesota version of the North Dakota rural life of her youth. When visiting Heidiya, a horse farm some friends started in Gilman, Wisconsin, some hundred miles further north than Minneapolis, her candor is refreshing: "I was twenty-three, really into magical thinking, and the sway that some mysterious force led me to this place" (p. 61). *Heidiya* is the Arabic word for "gift," and the farm was built by a one-legged woman; this idea of being exposed to something almost mythical sums up



the spirit — and perhaps the purpose — of this book: “It was amazing, I was learning, that when you looked for evidence of women’s work, you found that, too. Invisibility really amounted to a failure of paying attention” (p. 63). Hunter’s growing awareness of the issues women face in working the land by themselves is underscored several times. Of her friend K/T’s concern that she won’t inherit property because she’s a woman and will be forced to engage in conversion therapy with a local priest, she notes, “What I heard from her convinced me all the more that our only hope to set things right, to empower ourselves, and to have some chance for equality was to live on the land in a self-sufficient community with women” (p. 71). Other homophobic tropes that remain intact include her mother’s fear that some-

one “made” Hunter gay. Hunter takes ownership for her identity: “No one... was more responsible for my lesbianism than I was, and now that I had seen the lesbian nation taking shape, I craved lesbian company and lesbian culture fiercely” (p. 57).

Such fierceness underscores Hunter’s passion for living and building a world of one’s own and makes for

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**I was struck by how much of a risk Hunter and her compatriots took in reclaiming what has traditionally been the province of males in the wilderness.**

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fascinating reading. Her chronicle of a cadre of courageous and, by turns, naive young women who organized to produce something larger than themselves can act as a guidebook for young people searching for something beyond what today’s tech-based culture typically gives them. (And, of course, many young folks already are organizing to protect the environment against encroaching climate change, using tools provided by women such as Hunter and her fellow voyagers.) As Hunter takes ownership of the events that occur in the book — and, more importantly, in her life — the reader comes away with the sense that if women wanted to, they really could find a way to remake the world. And perhaps they are managing to do just that — one piece of land and one shared connection at a time.

#### Note

1. The expression “woman-identified woman” refers to a principle that was “the cornerstone of lesbian activism in the 1970s,” according to Tina Gianoulis, writing in the encyclopedia of the GLBTQ Archive ([http://www.glbtqarchive.com/ssh/woman\\_identified\\_woman\\_S.pdf](http://www.glbtqarchive.com/ssh/woman_identified_woman_S.pdf)). See that entry for more discussion of the principle and its history; see also a facsimile of the manifesto “Woman Identified Woman,” by the Radicalesbians in 1970, at <https://repository.duke.edu/dc/wlmpc/wlmms01011>.

[Patricia Gott is a denizen of Lake Superior. She teaches literature, creative writing, and composition classes at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, but spends her free time writing poetry and meditating in the north woods near where she grew up in northwestern Wisconsin.]



Miriam Greenwald

# Journals

## Special Issues

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE STUDIES

Publisher: Routledge/Taylor & Francis

ISSN: 1478-601X (print), 1478-6028 (online)

Special issue: "Gender and White-Collar Crime," v. 33, no. 1 (January 2020)

[tandfonline.com/toc/gjup20/33/1?nav=toCList](http://tandfonline.com/toc/gjup20/33/1?nav=toCList)

Issue editors: Michael L. Benson and Erin Harbinson

From the introduction:

Although gender is one of the most important, well known, and well-studied correlates of criminal involvement, relatively little research has been conducted on how gender relates to involvement in white-collar crime. The lack of rigorous quantitative studies focusing on gender and white-collar crime is particularly notable, especially studies based on large random samples.... [E]ach of the studies presented here represents an important contribution to the study of both gender and white-collar crime because of the large and representative sample on which they are based and because the studies ask questions and use variables that have received almost no attention from scholars of white-collar crime.

Articles:

"Investigating Women and Men Convicted of White-Collar Offenses on Federal Community Supervision: Sample and Methods," by Erin Harbinson

"Gender Differences in White-Collar Offending and Supervision," by Ebony L. Ruhland and Nicole Selzer

"What Are the Gender Differences in Risk and Needs of Males and Females Sentenced for White-Collar Crimes?" by Natalie Goulette

"Gender and Criminal Thinking among Individuals Convicted of White-Collar Crimes," by Michael L. Benson and Erin Harbinson

"Gender and White-Collar Crime: Theoretical Issues," by Miranda A. Galvin

"Gender and White-Collar Crime: Implications for Corrections Research and Practice," by Mirlinda Ndrecka

### INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF SOCIOLOGY/ REVUE INTERNATIONALE DE SOCIOLOGIE

Publisher: Routledge/Taylor & Francis

ISSN: 0390-6701 (print), 1469-9273 (online)

Special section: "Text Analytics in Gender Studies," in v. 30, no. 1 (January 2020)

[tandfonline.com/toc/cirs20/30/1](http://tandfonline.com/toc/cirs20/30/1)

Section editors: Fiorenza Deriu and Domenica Fioredistella Iezzi

Articles:

"The Dimensions of Gender in the Last Twenty Years: An Analysis of the *International Review of Sociology*," by Isabella Mingo and Mariella Nocenzi

"LGBTQI+ Icons between Resistance and Normalization: Looking for Mediatization of Emotions in Hashtags," by Gevisa La Rocca and Cirus Rinaldi

"Putting Women Back in Their Place: Reflections on Slut-Shaming, the Case of Asia Argento and Twitter in Italy," by Francesca Dragotto, Elisa Giomi, and Sonia Maria Melchiorre

### SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CHINA

Publisher: Routledge/Taylor & Francis

ISSN: 0252-9203 (print), 1940-5952 (online)

Special issue: "The Distinctively Chinese Gender System and *Nei-Wai* (Inner-Outer) Distinction," v. 41, no. 1 (January 2020)

[tandfonline.com/toc/rssc20/41/1?nav=toCList](http://tandfonline.com/toc/rssc20/41/1?nav=toCList)

Issue editor: Du Fangqin

Articles:

"Theorizing the Gendered Patriarchy of the *Huaxia*: Constancy (*jing*)/Expedience (*quan*) and Continuity (*yin*)/Change (*bian*): From Male/Female Distinction to Inner/Outer Distinction in the Context of the Order of Family and State," by Du Fangqin



“‘Family-bound’ or ‘Pulled by Work’? A Study of Chinese Women’s Social Participation and the Factors Influencing It,” by Li Sheng and Ren Weirong

“A Division of Labor Perspective on Mothers Who Accompany Their Children’s Study: A Case Study of Student Guardianship among M Town’s Working Families,” by Fan Yunxia and Zheng Xinrong

“The Difficult Transition to the ‘New’ Caring Fatherhood: An Examination of Paternity Leave,” by Wang Xiangxian

**VISUAL CULTURE IN BRITAIN**

Publisher: Routledge/Taylor & Francis

ISSN: 1471-4787 (print), 1941-8361 (online)

Special issue: “Women Painting: Scottish Art 1940–1980,” v. 21, no. 1 (January 2020)

[tandfonline.com/toc/rvcv20/21/1?nav=toCList](http://tandfonline.com/toc/rvcv20/21/1?nav=toCList)

Issue editors: Marianne Greated and Susannah Thompson

From the introduction:

This special issue...brings together research by a range of artists, curators, critics, writers and educators to examine the practice and reception of painting by women in Scotland in the mid-twentieth century, specifically the period between the 1940s and the late 1980s. Whilst

acknowledging the sometimes arbitrary nature of grouping artists under nationality, medium, period or sex in coming to an understanding of the development of art’s histories, it is nevertheless far more than just a perception that the dominant narratives and canonical histories of twentieth-century Scottish art (at least until the mid-1990s) continue to focus primarily on the work of men, particularly painters. That this should be the case in spite of the important and sustained work of feminist art historians, artists and curators in Scotland begs the question posed by Griselda Pollock in her 2014 essay “Whither Art History” [*Art Bulletin*, v. 96, no. 1]: “What keeps the canon in place?”

Articles:

“The Multiple Selves of Pat Douthwaite,” by Kyla McDonald

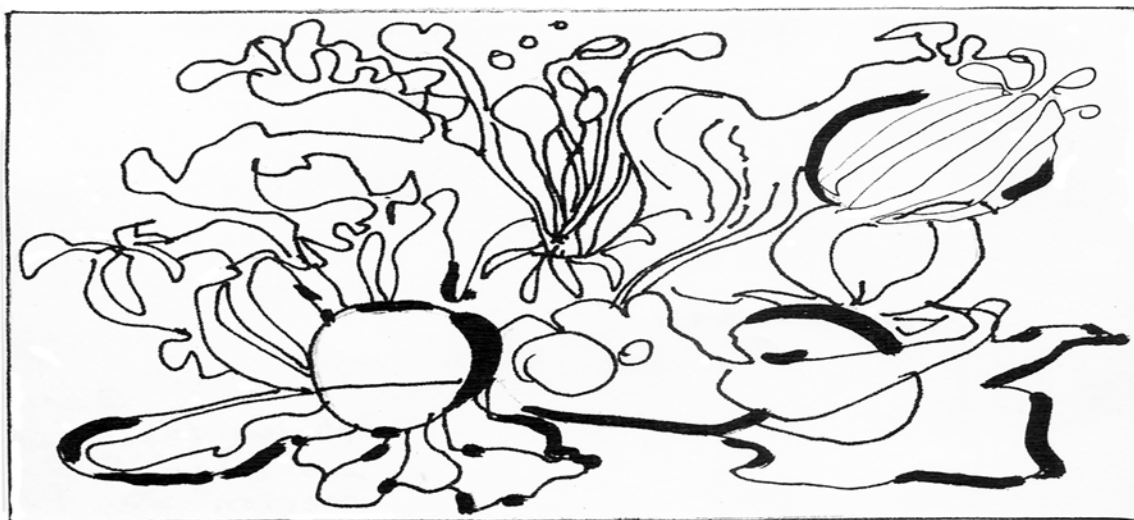
“‘Cod Liver Oil’: The Art and Criticism of Cordelia Oliver,” by Susannah Thompson

“Bet Low: An Active Career,” by Jenny Brownrigg

“The Grande Dame and the Canvas Ceiling: Lys Hansen,” by Marianne Greated

“A Woman Unknown to Herself,” by Joanne Tatham & Tom O’Sullivan

“Waiting Figure in a Landscape: The Painting of Carole Gibbons,” by Debi Banerjee



Miriam Greenwald

# Recently Received

Some publishers routinely send us new books or other materials to consider for review. We acknowledge those materials here. Not all titles received are reviewed; those not selected may be added to the University of Wisconsin's library collections or donated elsewhere.

Interested in writing for *Resources for Gender and Women's Studies: A Feminist Review*? To be considered during a future round of assignments, send a brief sample book or film review to joanne.lehman@wisc.edu. Your review can be unpublished, and the book or film reviewed need not have been released recently. The writing sample should, however, be a *review*, not an academic paper.

*Academic Labor beyond the College Classroom: Working for Our Values.* Hassel, Holly, and Cole, Kirsti, eds. Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2020.

*After Repeal: Rethinking Abortion Politics.* Browne, Kath, and Calkin, Sydney, eds. Zed Books, 2019.

*The Age of Phillis.* Jeffers, Honorée Fanonne. Wesleyan University Press, 2020.

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