Wendy Kaminer’s philosophy could be summed up as “fair is fair.” As a social critic and lawyer focusing on civil liberties and criminal justice, she has a lot to say about fairness and the difficulty of distributing it, well, fairly.

In Free for All, a collection of about 45 essays written over the past five years, she covers a raft of controversies, including media violence, anti-abortion protest, surveillance, child pornography, flag burning, identity politics, affirmative action, assisted suicide, gay marriage, immigration laws, campaign finance reform, witchcraft, prosecutorial abuse, victims’ rights, fathers’ rights, religious rights and a skew of free speech dust-ups. I’ve probably missed a few, but the list is less random than it seems; liberties interlock, so that, for instance, the speech rights of school kids have something to do with the religious rights of evangelicals and Wiccans, even though they may not seem to at first blush. It’s the second blush that interests Kaminer and gives the book consequence.

The pieces here originally appeared in The American Prospect (where Kaminer is a senior correspondent), Dissent, Free Inquiry and a few other periodicals. If that seems like preaching to the choir, one of Kaminer’s strengths is documenting the dissent in the choir about just how free inquiry (and much else) should be. Through current events, controversies and legal decisions, she examines what the
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Contributors

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The essays are organized by topic, with the longest sections addressing the First Amendment issues of free speech and freedom of religion. Other sections address privacy (the shortest, though privacy promises to be the next civil lib battleground), criminal justice, women’s rights and status, “anti-individualism,” which covers an array of repressive laws and policies, and the freedom versus security debate.

It would be hard to come up with a civil المتحدةness that has not been a central theme of the human endeavor — who’s hasn’t weighed in on the last of these, and Kaminer hits all the often-rehearsed notes. She does it well, though, and is particularly good at explaining legal issues clearly and showing why they matter. She also understands why they may not seem to matter, admitting at one point that rational arguments about vibration—oh, yes, their sale was outlawed in Alabama in 1998—flirt with self-parody, and another that the abuses of mandatory sentencing are an old “story.” Yet the sentences are still in place, so the story still needs to be told, she insists. The tension between liberty and safety wasn’t invented on September 11, 2001, and these essays are strongest when they show how current injustices are rooted in continuing inequities and abuses of power.

Kaminer’s ear is tuned to the ironies those abuses create. In “When Congress Plays House,” she begins by imagining Congress considering a patients’ bill of rights and turning to HMOs to say humbly, “Deny American citizens effective, life-saving treatments or call them ‘pain’? That’s our job.” There is little to laugh about here, though, as she describes recently enacted laws and policies that increase suffering. Among the most cruel is the federal crackdown on use of marijuana for medical purposes. One man convicted of growing and distributing it was gravely ill with AIDS, but was barred from using the drug while awaiting trial. Too nauseated to absorb food, he was given a drug that wasn’t available. “It’s unconvinced. Not that safety doesn’t matter to her, but liberty matters too, and she believes that many newly enacted measures will have exactly the opposite effect of enhancing safety. Americans, she says, are too willing now to sacrifice freedom for fear, and that has derailed badly needed reforms in a number of areas, including immigration policy and the death penalty.

Still, there are bedrock principles of justice that Kaminer returns to often. First, people should be free to speak their minds. This means that the government cannot play favorites among the messages or language it permits; that dissent is okay, even patriotic, and that offensive- ness may be necessary. Embracing these ideas leads Kaminer to support, or at least tolerate, the right to express some widely reviled views, such as those of NAM- BLA, the North American Man Boy Love Association. “If the First Amendment only protected sensensible speech,” she con- cludes after acknowledging her distaste for NAMBLA’s philosophy, “we’d inhab- it a very quiet nation indeed.”

Second, the government should neither interfere with our promote religions. Kaminer is sympathetic to those who want to practice their religion uncontem- bed, but less to advocates of “charitable choice” that channels federal money for social service projects to religious organizations. “Advocates of charitable choice...want only to obey God's law, which is fair enough, as long as they don’t depend on Caesar’s money,” she observes. She is fond of noting that mainstream religions are all for equality and tolerance as long as that applies only to them and not to Moonsies, the Nation of Islam, Scientologists, or even to you blank with your idea of a cult—which gives her another reason to oppose state support of churches. As I write this, the president has just signed an executive order on Equal Treatment for Charities to make sure charitable choice happens. The initiative will sanction discrimination in hiring, yet Bush has declared, “The days of discriminating against religious groups just because they are religious are coming to an end.” More proof that there are lots of ways to define fairness.

Third, everyone is entitled to due process. In “Dad’s War on Vampires,” Kaminer writes with uncharactestic choice.

To be a civil libertarian is to be hyper- critical occasionally and paranoid often; freedom is usually under attack in some way, and measures that undermine it are like a computer virus, worming their way into the system, draining off resources and proving very hard to dis- lodge once in place. To combat this tenden- cy, Kaminer pursues her faith in good evidence, intellectual and legal consistency, and fair processes. These are all essential in a demo- cratic society—if the means are corrupt, the heads of state who “apologize” for the crimes of their predecessors. “It’s easy to atone for someone else’s sins,” she writes. “Various apologies are cheap thrills for the sanctimonious.”

Fifth, just because some people abuse a right, it shouldn’t be denied to all people. What’s noteworthy about this point is that it comes in an essay in which Kaminer argues that to recognize that the Second Amendment does indeed guarantee the right of individuals to own guns would be a practical step toward regulating them, a popular and liberal position.

Finally, all Americans have the same rights. This includes bigots, criminals, fathers’ rights advocates, anti-abortion protesters (all discussed here) and anyone else you may not happen to agree with. Those rights are supposed to be upheld by the legal system, and Kaminer appears to put her faith (or maybe it’s her last hope) in the judiciary. Yet she knows that power gets misused all the time and that courts err and can be loud to admit it.

“The Bill of Rights reflects the Founders’ belief that the government could not be trusted to exercise its police powers fair- ly,” she reminds us. Elsewhere, though, she acknowledges that the state has often been an ally of those seeking social change, such as women’s rights advocates. This lands her in the lap of a liberal con- tradiction: trust in the rule of law, but not in the government that enforces it.

Contradictions aside (or are they cen- tral?), Kaminer deserves credit for taking on the hard parts of freedom and for refusing to reduce the debate to partisan politics. Free for All is smart, tart, sensible and feisty, and it is seldom surprising. That isn’t necessarily Kaminer’s fault; if there is a sameness to these essays, there is also a sameness to the disputes they cover, and if we’ve heard her arguments before, they’re still good arguments and to the point. It’s easy to understand why a journalist would want to give her work a longer shelf life than a magazine or newspaper affords, but the truth is that journalism engaging—timeliness, novelty, immediacy— makes collections of this kind less so. In addition, republishing these essays lets her off the book from writing an extended and fresh analysis—and God knows we could use some freshness from good minds on the Left like Kaminer’s. An author’s note to the two final, longer pieces about court stripping and prosecu- torial abuse addresses the limitations of recycling topical pieces. Written in 1999, they were updated only slightly and left in the present tense to “convey the sense of urgency that civil libertarians felt before September 11.” The America they portray is a dreary place as far as fairness goes, and Kaminer makes it clear that conditions have only gotten worse. She believes that we have been conned into thinking that less freedom for someone else will make us safer. “What makes a civil libertarian is the capacity to imagine yourself as the accused, not the accuser,” she writes. It’s always uneasy with the implication that the electorate acts as it does because it doesn’t know what it’s getting into, but I sus- pect that most Americans imagine them- selves as neither accused nor accuser. We care about the freedoms we bump up against, as Kaminer notes, but we choose to imagine or see little beyond them. If, as we’re told, we lost our innocence on September 11, it is this ease in turning away that is gone. Kaminer, committed as she is to looking injustice in the eye, might say that’s only too fair.
Passionate politician
by Deborah Valent

Madam Prime Minister: A Life in Power and Politics

Over the past year, banner photos of world leaders have reminded me of that indomitable series in ML magazine in the 1970s that featured scenes of boardrooms or summit meetings of men only, repeating a querulous caption, “What’s missing in this picture?” What’s missing in this picture? Research by the White House Project has shown that in spite of recent gains made by women in politics, Sunday talk shows—one of the most influential forms of media—feature women political leaders far less often than men. Since September 11, it appears that we’ve been offered purative reassurance in the shape of suits, some of them long past their sell-by dates. So what better time to ponder the political career of Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister and Labor Party Leader of Norway, who is now the Director General of the World Health Organization? Though some American readers may need to be reminded of who she is, and what she’s done, the contributions of “Gro” (as she is affectionately known in Norway) to contemporary political life around the world are considerable.

Foremost is her trademark concept—sustainable development—which greatly enhanced the vocabulary of global and development studies. As Chair of the World Commission on Environment and Development from 1983, Brundtland added the combustible element of a moral imperative to the notion that economic activity and demographic growth require a cogent plan of action. In 1987 the group produced a report now legendary for its foresight, Our Common Future, which implored worldwide leadership to cooperate in cutting energy consumption, attending to population problems and addressing poverty.

Brundtland’s historic accession to the posts of Prime Minister and Party Leader of Norway in 1981 at the age of 41 made her not only the first female to hold both these positions in Norway, but also the youngest. After a period of conservative government, she again served as Prime Minister from 1986 to 1989 and 1990 to 1996. Through her tireless political work on every continent, Brundtland put Norway on the map for much of the Third World, not to mention North America. The country became fixed in the global mind as the home of a thriving population and a pristine landscape after she orchestrated the winning bid for the Winter Olympics, held at Lillehammer in 1994. Finally, from her first job as a doctor, to the generous domestic policies introduced under her three ministerial stints, her courageous stances as Director General of the World Health Organization, Brundtland has succeeded in spotlighting the medical and educational needs of women and children everywhere.

Apart from a few beginning chapters, Madam Prime Minister offers mostly political recollections rather than a chronological account of Brundtland’s career. Her irrepressible energy and honesty shine through most of this book, which she began within days of leaving office in 1996. She offers us a revealing image of her relationship with her husband Olaug, who accompanied her to the winter place in the country (a Norwegian inversion of the American’s summer cottage) immediately after she announced her decision to step down. Once their children and grandchildren had departed after a weekend together, Olaug presented her with a ream of blank paper. Her first volume was published in Norway a year later.

As a woman with a lifetime mission, Brundtland infuses her experiences with a sense of public-mindedness, first through her medical practice and later through policies to ensure improvement in “public health, safety, equality, and dignity of treatment in the broadest sense.” The building blocks derive largely from her grounding in a northern European culture of state socialism. Time spent at Harvard’s School of Public Health, where she forged her own path to study the importance of breast-feeding for mothers and children, helped to confirm a modern feminist perspective. Yet the point of these memoirs is one that even (or, perhaps, particularly) American publishers failed to grasp, judging from the remarks on women in politics chosen for the dustjacket. Brundtland is really a missionary for social democracy as a template for a future world order, her identity as a woman is relevant to that role, but it is only a subordinate piece.

As a critic of European women, I wanted to see what legacies Brundtland claimed as her own. On that score, I was satisfied immediately: the book opens with Gro’s Swedish mother, who, on a sailing trip with fellow members of a socialist club in 1938, fell in love with a Norwegian medical student. A passionate and free-spirited “New Woman,” she married him three months later, and gave birth to Gro in April, 1939. One year later, Germany began its bombardment of Norway. Though her parents remained loyal to the cause of socialism, investing a quarter of their inheritance in producing a workers’ encyclopedia, their lives with the baby Gro were determined by other, more pressing circumstances. Taken up with resistance work, they left Gro and her brother with Gro’s Swedish grandmother, a radical in her own right—she was associated with Alexandra Kollontai during her time as Soviet ambassador to Sweden.

Even grandmother had her work as a solicitor to consider, the children, aged four and three, spent nearly five months in a children’s home outside Stockholm. Gro’s faint admission of childhood resentment at this wartime abandonment represents one of the few clues that one might seize upon as indicative of what molded the young psyche of the future prime minister. We see that her extended family, all of them committed to high-level political and medical work, raised her to understand public service as her calling, too. Perhaps the most memorable photograph in the book shows Gro, aged seven, solemnly marching in a children’s event for the Oslo Labor Party Progress Group behind Trail Gerhardt, the son of the prime minister. Without question, she quickly grasped that one must keep one’s eyes on outer, not inner, concerns.

This in itself leads the American reader to ponder a chasm of historical and cultural difference. Socialism, political activism, a hearty appreciation of the well-spring of nature, a sense of moral responsibility—these were the foundation stones of the kinder and gentler aspect of twentieth-century history, now unfortunately difficult to discern anywhere but perhaps in Scandinavia.

I dwell upon these formative experiences far beyond the proportion of space they take up in the memoirs because they seem so central in explaining who Gro Harlem became. Her life has been one sustained, optimistic drive for consensus, so obstacles like the special hazing that confronts women in politics appear incidentally in these pages. This has partly to do with Brundtland’s lack of egoism: she never pontificates on the subjects of her victories. A lengthy list of domestic policy reforms achieved on her watch are catalogued only in a final chapter: schooling for six-year-olds, nursery school places for every child, the creation of a Ministry of the Child, paid maternity leaves of one year, and a stunning increase—from four to seventy percent—of men taking advantage of family leaves. Some of her most caustic commentaries slip in almost unannounced, such as her bold first encounter with Margaret Thatcher.

I raised the theme of women in politics. I asked what she was doing to increase the number of women in the British government. I assumed that this was an area that she was as interested in as I was. But instead she demurred. It was difficult to find qualified women for cabinet posts. There were only a few female Members of Parliament from which to choose. Very few women were qualified for Ministry. I got the message. She was Prime Minister because she was the best. If other women were the best, they would certainly manage what she had managed. (pp. 254-255)

Gro would explain her pursuit of gender equity and social democracy as...
grounded in a Norwegian upbringing, which blended basic egalitarianism with a sense of social responsibility. But her exceptional sense of social responsibility is grounded in a Norwegian upbringing, which blended basic egalitarianism with a sense of social responsibility. But her

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dentity is social, not individual; the question “Who am I?” is indistin-
guishable from the question “Where do I belong?” And so it shouldn’t be sur-
prising that in its ability to account for the dominant culture that policies the shaping force in Norwegian society comes, in part, from her expos-
ure to Swedish policies. It is a shame that there is little reflection on this, along with the place of Brundtland’s mother in her life. (She worked alongside Gro as an administrative assistant, a job she had held before her daughter took over the office of the Prime Minister.) In terms of personal influence, Brundtland credits her father, a doctor and a statesman, as her guiding political light. At one point, she reflects on the fact that other women leaders she has met through politics have not always felt supported by their fathers. She acknowledges a fascinating mix of identification with him, coupled with admiration of his place in the world.

Brundtland would be the first to point out that her multiple roles could not have been possible had she not won the love and loyalty of family members and advisors. Her husband, Olav Brundtland, remains an emotional anchor and political confidante, despite his conservative political views. They responded to the call as Prime Minister, the couple stuck a deal: be demanded what British politicians refer to as “sole charge” of the four children, meaning he would have the last word on household matters. Parents reading this passage will not laugh as much as we did, knowing the long-term emotional costs of this decision.

We hear Brundtland, nagged by the conscience of a professional mother, coexisting with a career that required overnights in Parliament. What does it say? To twist the knife, relentlessly criticizing her for her interna-
tional role, Brundtland can’t cut short to come home, and recalling how she shut the door to the basement in order to receive phone calls during a political campaign. The cart\n
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In a Wasp nest

by E. J. Graff

The Book of Sarahs: A Family in Parts by Catherine E. McKinley.


exceptional at reporting unflinchingly on the ins and outs of her complicated emo-
tions and experiences, offering complex observations while remaining practical, she never shows a hint of sentimentality or self-pity, and neither dramatizes nor downplays her feelings. Her considered presentation makes it clear that adoption itself begins with loss, that the intensity of searching can become a dangerous emotional habit, that the orig-
inal grief cannot be wiped away: “No matter who stepped in, no matter what they gave me, there was still this fact of someone missing, this fact that there had been no language for, no struc-
ture, no recognition of that immense grief.” She manages to forgive her adoptive family for their limitations, and draws on the strength of her new relatives she wants to build rela-
tionships with, and does so with care.

Her real fury is saved for the adoption system’s brutal failings. She writes: “I fought so hard and so long to get the information that finally released her into my arms.” At the book’s end, after her birth parents have each given their per-
mision, McKinley finally receives her adoption files:

I flipped back through the pages and I found myself sobbing. I was no longer the social welfare system’s hostage. I knew that Mary Steed [her adoption caseworker] had been a friend to me at times when I could not see it. She had told me in time-
released capsules much of what was there. In some ways, her slow and careful disclosure of details had pro-
tected me. But when I read what I had paid. Eight years. What does it say about a system that exacts so much for such simple truths? (p. 270)

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Across the great divide
by Gail Bederman


S ome years ago, I asked a devout young evangelical collegiate a ques- tion that had long perplexed me: “Why are evangelicals so obsessed with sex?” My question per-plexed “John” too. “Evangelicals are not obsessed with sex,” he replied, puzzled. John’s religious life centered around try- ing to live in a way worthy of Christ, which included caring for those weaker than himself, committing himself to the Christian fellowship and trying to lead a good, just life. Discussions about sex played little or any part.

“What about all the people who follow Jerry Falwell, and The 700 Club and all the talk about homosexuality and sex run rampant in our society?” “Oh, that,” John, embarrassed, shrugged it off. “That’s just parents worrying about their children. That’s not central to evangelical life.”

As I read Janice M. Irvine’s Talk About Sex and Jane R. Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini’s Love the Sin, I kept remembering John’s comment. These two impor- tant books tell us a great deal about the relationship between religion and sex in the U.S. Today, it seems almost inevitable that right-wing politicians should appear to a “pro-family” conservative Christian, mobilizing voters by demonizing homo- sexuality, sex education and barring gender roles. These books force us to question that inevitability. While Irvine shows us how we got to this pass, Jakobsen and Pellegrini suggest a new and powerful strategy to move past it.

Irvine gives a riveting account of how the Christian Right came to control much of the sex education curriculum taught in public schools. She traces how controver- sies over sex education have helped con- solidate conservative politics over the last forty years and investigates how the inflammatory tactics and arguments developed by national pro-family organiza- tions worked in local sex education controversies. In chilling detail, Irvine shows how the Christian Right’s provocativa- tion, often distorted depictions of the secular sex education heated emotion. Right- wing activists obscured the religious con- tent of their ideas while creating “absti- nence only” public school curricula. At best, these curricula omit all mention of contraception. At worst, they are overtly homophobic and include false informa- tion—for example, that condoms are ineffective at preventing the spread of AIDS. Irvine shows how that misleading sex education, funded in part by federal tax dollars, pervades American public-school classrooms today.

Since the 1960s, conservatives’ ine has been directed toward “comprehensive” sex education, an approach developed by Dr. Mary Calderone’s Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). SIECUS rejected sexual guilt and moralism, advocating a “scientific,” value-neutral approach to sex. It depicted pleasure as a normal part of human sexu- ality, although it didn’t encourage teenage extramarital intercourse. Its cur-ricula encouraged older high school stu- dents to make up their own minds about the morality of contraception, homosexu- ality, masturibation and similar issues. A la Irvine points out, it is impossible to teach “value-free” sex education. Calderone explicitly stated, “We cannot talk about human sexuality without talking about birth control.” Because of this stance based on anti-communism and racial seg- regation, had been discredited.

Opposing sexual “permissiveness” and supporting “‘family values’” (no pun intended), policies provided powerful new moral groundand for political conservatism. Disaffected Christian parents helped Republicans build an electoral majority by wooing new constituencies: white evangelical Protestants, who had previously been isolated on issues related to civil rights and equal laws. Rather, it is necessary to demand true sexual freedom, which they see as related to religious freedom.

Jakobsen and Pellegrini argue that neither address the religious Right nor suggest that feminists open a dialogue with con- servative Christians. Their book—published by New York University Press’s Sexual Culture: New Directions from the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies series—addresses an audience that already believes in sexual freedom and suggests new ways of conceptualizing the basis for that freedom. Yet their powerful arguments might help in shifting the ground for debates from the Democrats to the Republicans.

Irvine provides a rich, nuanced analy- sis of the many strategies through which the Christian Right overcame the arguments of its opponents, largely by “proliferating” talk about sex. Rightists used inflammatory language, whipping up strong emotions by demonizing their opponents. They argued that sex talk was itself pernicious, so teachers who talked about sex—could even sexually aroused. They depicted sex education materials as pornographic and read excerpts at public meetings, often quoting materials never used in classrooms. They argued against any classroom mention of homosexuality by falsely depicting typical lesbian and gay relationships as involv- ing feces, urine and/or sodomashism. They were outraged at these distortions, as Irvine intended. I wish, though, that she had examined the theological assump- tions that made these noxious falsehoods seem persuasive. Perhaps because Irvine does not explore why conservative Christian parents oppose sex education, I got the sense that sex educators, con- fused about parents’ serious religious beliefs, saw them as merely irrational.

Irvine and Pellegrini argue that the Christian Right’s emphasis on “fears and confusions” rather than a “depravity stories” of teachers reading material and parents’ opposition to comprehensive sex education heated emotion. For the ensuing culture wars, although Irvine might disagree with me. Evangelicals and fundamentalists Protestant sex, their religious life centered around try- ing to live in a way worthy of Christ, which included caring for those weaker than himself, committing himself to the Christian fellowship and trying to lead a good, just life. Discussions about sex played little or any part. Issues show how the Christian Right’s provocativa- tion, often distorted depictions of the secular sex education heated emotion. Right- wing activists obscured the religious con- tent of their ideas while creating “absti- nence only” public school curricula. At best, these curricula omit all mention of contraception. At worst, they are overtly homophobic and include false informa- tion—for example, that condoms are ineffective at preventing the spread of AIDS. Irvine shows how that misleading sex education, funded in part by federal tax dollars, pervades American public-school classrooms today.

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Jakobsen and Pellegrini argue that neither address the religious Right nor suggest that feminists open a dialogue with con- servative Christians. Their book—published by New York University Press’s Sexual Culture: New Directions from the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies series—addresses an audience that already believes in sexual freedom and suggests new ways of conceptualizing the basis for that freedom. Yet their powerful arguments might help in shifting the ground for debates from the Democrats to the Republicans.

Irvine provides a rich, nuanced analy- sis of the many strategies through which the Christian Right overcame the arguments of its opponents, largely by “proliferating” talk about sex. Rightists used inflammatory language, whipping up strong emotions by demonizing their opponents. They argued that sex talk was itself pernicious, so teachers who talked about sex—could even sexually aroused. They depicted sex education materials as pornographic and read excerpts at public meetings, often quoting materials never used in classrooms. They argued against any classroom mention of homosexuality by falsely depicting typical lesbian and gay relationships as involv- ing feces, urine and/or sodomashism. They were outraged at these distortions, as Irvine intended. I wish, though, that she had examined the theological assump- tions that made these noxious falsehoods seem persuasive. Perhaps because Irvine does not explore why conservative Christian parents oppose sex education, I got the sense that sex educators, con- fused about parents’ serious religious beliefs, saw them as merely irrational.

Irvine and Pellegrini argue that the Christian Right’s emphasis on “fears and confusions” rather than a “depravity stories” of teachers reading material and parents’ opposition to comprehensive sex education heated emotion. For the ensuing culture wars, although Irvine might disagree with me. Evangelicals and fundamentalists Protestant sex, their religious life centered around try- ing to live in a way worthy of Christ, which included caring for those weaker than himself, committing himself to the Christian fellowship and trying to lead a good, just life. Discussions about sex played little or any part. Issues show how the Christian Right’s provocativa- tion, often distorted depictions of the secular sex education heated emotion. Right- wing activists obscured the religious con- tent of their ideas while creating “absti- nence only” public school curricula. At best, these curricula omit all mention of contraception. At worst, they are overtly homosexual and include false informa- tion—for example, that condoms are ineffective at preventing the spread of AIDS. Irvine shows how that misleading sex education, funded in part by federal tax dollars, pervades American public-school classrooms today.

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The argument is subtle and original—few would be able to read it.
Mary Robinson may well be the most tough-compression, pragmatic human rights advocate of recent times. Appearing last December as the key moderator for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on Globalization meetings in New York, she expressed in a talk that is available at www.unhchr.ch/eng/refouch.htm her profound concern about the growing gulf between the hopes of people and the pace of the innovations that made her tenure as President of Ireland in the 1990s so groundbreaking. At that time, in spite of domestic economic and security issues, Robinson placed a great deal of emphasis on the needs of developing countries. She was the first Head of State to visit Rwanda in the aftermath of the genocide and among the first to visit Somalia at the height of the famine; efforts that earned her the CARE Humanitarian Award. It is the same intensity that marked her time as UN High Commissioner, when she worked closely with Secretary-General Kofi Annan to integrate human rights concerns into all activities of the United Nations and to create a human rights network where it has been proven to be most effective—on a country and regional level. Holding law degrees from Kings Inn, Dublin, and Harvard University, she has also been named an Honorary Fellow of upwards of eight distinguished colleges, and has received more high-level humanitarian and human rights awards than can be listed.

Robinson’s main concern now is to broaden the discussion on human rights away from emphasizing economic, social and cultural rights as well as the right to develop—elements of the human rights agenda that are critical to bringing stability to this increasingly unstable world. Human rights, she points out, are not abstract or arbitrary, but a rule of law to which governments can be held accountable. Like an evangelical with the Good News, she hopes to spread this message to as many levels of society as possible.

This may be easier said than done, for reasons women’s and human rights advocates like Charlotte Bunch, Dorothy Thomas and Malika Dutt have begun to address. In many, if not most, Western democracies, including the USA, there’s a visceral disconnect with international human rights standards when it comes to home turf. As Robinson recalled in a recent interview on Salon.com, “As High Commissioner, when I took issue with Australia over their harsh detention policy for asylum seekers, they were outraged. We’re a small country, they said, and we don’t need you there! As if international standards only applied to developing countries.” This disconnect extends into activist circles, and may be more deeply embedded in our psyche than we are aware of. Charlotte Bunch, Director of Rutgers Center for Women’s Global Leadership, told me, “By and large the women’s movement doesn’t get it…. Within the women’s movement in the United States, there is this notion that the human rights framework as being abstract so women on the ground don’t fully make use of human rights tools in their framework.”

This criticism of the human rights agenda as abstract or arbitrary was once well founded, but it applies to the movement as it was 25 years ago. In the interim much has changed. In particular, during the five years from 1997 to 2002 with the Bush administration and the mantle of UN High Commissioner, she worked hard to bring the human rights framework out of the realm of abstract or emotionally based argument, applying her lawyer’s mind to shape and define human rights agreements and the organizations that implement and monitor them.

The systemic effort to make it difficult to enforce international human rights standards in the US began in the 1950s. It’s said that John Foster Dulles once exclaimed during the Cold War that he would never sign another human rights treaty if it could be used against us. Prophecies of war, if one takes note that of the six recent years in international human rights treaties, the United States has signed only three. It’s the only nation of 193 to refuse to sign the Convention on the Rights of the Child, one of six nations that have rejected the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (even China has ratified this treaty, and Chinese NGOs have begun to use its standards to challenge their government on ethnic discrimination and policies concerning HIV/AIDS); and one of only three countries that has refused to sign the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. When High Commissioner Robinson applied legally agreed upon international standards to the United States in its recent treatment of detainees at Guantanamo Bay and to Israel in its treatment of Palestinians, it is no secret that the Bush Administration expressed its disapproval so strongly to Secretary-General Annan that Robinson was not given another term. Never one to be bullied, Robinson responded in a Village Voice interview, “I’m prepared to pay the price of taking stands that may not be popular or politically correct. I came into this job not to keep a job—but to do a job.”

Undaunted, ever energetic and optimistic, after her term ended on September 11, 2002 Robinson wasted little time. As soon as she stepped down, she set up the Ethical Globalization Initiative, a fifteen-month task force, saying expressly “I will use the tools and connections of my recent role as UN High Commissioner to get the President of Ireland to do as much as I can...
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begin, how would you describe the through the lens of human rights. To move to a single standard, that meets the reality of this global of women over recent decades. Can war rhetoric on women's rights?

MR: I think it's very important that when there is a preoccupation with security, that we get the agenda back to a concern about human rights. Since September 11, there's been a lot of anxiety about human security. The message that I want to get across, and that the human rights community as a whole wants to get across, is that not only is there no contradiction between fully upholding the international human rights standards and combating terrorism but that we won't be able to effectively deal with terrorism if we don't uphold standards of human rights.

The concept of human security is much broader than can be satisfied by the United Nations Security Department. The Commission on Human Security chaired by [Nobel Laureate] Amartya Sen and [UN High Commissioner for Refugees] Sadako Ogata is in the process of creating an international legal definition of “human security.” This framework will protect the most vulnerable sectors of society and will include issues of economic, social, cultural, and environmental security. For example, the issue of HIV/AIDS or a growing aging population, security for children, or water and food security. The work of this Commission is very important. It also serves to reopen the broad human rights agenda when it is too often overshadowed by security issues in the wake of September 11.

MR: I feel it's wider than just women's rights. I came to New York very shortly after the terrible attacks took place, and went down to Ground Zero to assess the impact, both the trauma and the resilience of people trying to deal with this terrible situation. I then sat down with the leaders of the the United Nations, and asked them to analyze the situation. We concluded that under the existing human right if the acts are deemed to be a part of terrorism, then the international system will treat these acts as “crimes against humanity.” I thought it was extraordinarily important that this would be the approach to the attacks: criminality and bringing the perpetrators to justice. By holding the perpetrators as the one resolute, you isolate them. You cannot in the name of any religion justify what they're doing. You cannot call what they've done as crimes of “terrorism.”

Some of this also has a direct impact on women, partly because that act of strengthening fundamentalism, and although we have to be very concerned about different fundamentalisms—Christian fundamentalism, Muslim fundamentalism, Jewish fundamentalism—at the same time we also see that there are some alliances between those fundamentalisms which is resulting in probably the greatest erosion of women's rights. It is to strengthen the voice of the many is heard. It's most often the depart- ment representatives and NGOs; governments are more and more influenced by NGOs worldwide, so that the leaders set by leaders at the moment, when there is a preoccupation with terrorism but that we won't do have joined-up government. It's much more the department of foreign affairs that ratifies these conventions, and the labor minister who ratifies the labor ones, etc. Ministers of trade or agri- culture do not understand that their governments have agreed to. The only way we're going to bridge that gap is by having a very literate civil society. A civil society that knows that these treaties are not just words. They are legally binding. You can name and shame. You have the possibility of being held responsible for things in Geneva or in New York. You can either do it hierarchically or you can do it in a way that brings people with you. The only way of making sure that that actually inflates the terror- ism. By holding the perpetrators as the ones who are doing the acts, then the international system will treat these acts as “crimes against humanity.”

When I started to think about what to call the initiative I am now heading, I decided to juxtapose the words “ethical” and “globalization,” because apparently that's a bit shocking for people. When people say the “name that you call the acts are you coming up with?” I explain that I'm not looking for new con- cepts. They are old. The concepts exist and they have signed up to value systems. I am focusing on the system of international norms and standards for human rights. Human rights isn't about rhetoric and words, it's about technical commitments by govern- ments to legally promote, protect, and progressively implement certain rights like the right to food, safe water, education, health, etc. This is not just a universal rule, it's a rule that the rest of the world now has a value system defining rights for all chil- dren up to the age of eighteen.

The great contribution of the second half of the last century was to devise a normative framework, get agreement on those rules, and get a system going to monitor implementation through the report- ing process. Governments report to governments, and the High Commission for Human Rights, in the belief that the stability and legitimacy and spread out- ward from them. It's a tremendously exciting. Working with the times, mov- ing forward to link existing groups, and link them to local NGOs and the government and economic task forces with the thread of human rights, she is setting something in motion that will spread far beyond its own orbit. I am not seeking to reinvent the wheel,” she emphasized again and again at the Mexico City meet- ings, “nor to create more work or anoth- er bureaucracy. The structures are already there.

While Robinson sees Africa as the critical starting point, she envisions a broad notion of human rights movement with new strength and legitimacy and spread out- wards from there. “It is a tremendously exciting time,” Robinson repeats over and over again. “This is the more jaded I get.”

A@: There's a growing concern that the debate is now very divided between those who say that we must have free trade and that mar- ket forces are the only way which we will bring the world forward, and those who are promoting glob- alization. There isn't a meeting of minds. What I think human right is to try to shape globalization. That means being able to convince peo- ple that we in fact have the power to do that shaping.

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Amy Edelstein interviewed Mary Robinson on December 6, 2002, in Mexico City at the second annual meeting of the Commission on Globalization.

A@: As one of the key individuals who has worked to define a universally accepted framework for human rights that meets the reality of this global age, how do you feel about governing governments—regardless of their size or power—to a single standard, that meets the reality of this global

MR: It's most often the department of foreign affairs that ratifies these conventions, and the labor minister who ratifies the labor ones, etc. Ministers of trade or agri- culture do not understand that their governments have agreed to. The only way we'll bridge that gap is by having a very literate civil society. A civil society that knows that these treaties are not just words. They are legally binding. You can name and shame. You have the possibility of being held responsible for things in Geneva or in New York.

A@: How can civil society effectively make use of these conventions and treaties?

MR: Over the last ten years we've begun to see civil society groups calling on their governments to adhere to these instruments. The way they are doing it is through the reporting process. Governments have to report every few years on the conventions they have signed up to. The UN committees, either in Geneva or in New York, examine the reports publicly. They hear govern- ments' explanations. Then they ask, do they consider the points that each side has made and then come out with their concluding observations. Governments are bound to publish these concluding observations. Very often they don't. They hide them under a shelf. So it's up to the civil society and agencies like the UN High Commission for Human Rights to make them public. The key thing is that the information is there. If governments are more and more pinned to living up to their obliga- tions, then the international system as a whole—the World Bank and the IMF—will also have to respect those obligations instead of imple- menting policies that weaken the ability of govern- ments that erode the capacity of a government, for example, to buy food for those in need. I think good leadership now is to tell that story well and convinc- ingly enough to people that we link the voice of the many is heard. It's another way of exercising power. You can either do it hierarchically
by a few strong voices at the top or you can do it by harnessing in a more grassroots way, by everybody's voice, by sheer numbers and collective power the capacity to influence.

AE: Do you feel there are some positive steps in that direction?

MR: Yes, I do. Take, for example, the women's movement. There's a huge amount being done at a local level, and increasing networking, and networking between networks. At Beijing there was a group focused particularly on the labor rights aspects of the human rights agenda. Development bodies like Oxfam are using what they call a "human rights-based approach" in their development work. I'm seeing an encouraging linking being made between environmental activists, development experts and human rights advocates. Environment activists are now seeing access to clean water as an environmental issue as well as a human right. This didn't exist at the Earth Summit in Rio [the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development] It exists now since Johannesburg and that's very positive. I see leadership building on those kinds of linkages because the problems are global, they cross over from one issue to another.

AE: So you encourage working at all levels of society, in all sectors?

MR: Very much so. We need to make bridges and I'm happy to say that modern technology lends itself to this. I think this is a way of doing that rather than having to move forward, which has been assimilated into civil society groups as a whole. I found that when I was President of Ireland, when women's groups came to see me you would hear every voice, everybody would have a piece of the telling, whereas when a group led by a man would come in, he would do the telling and maybe at the very end say, "Would anybody else like to add anything?" I think that the women of this century must shape what most affects this world—which is the forces of globalization. We need businesswomen, women who are in politics, local activists, we need academics and researchers all bringing their skills to address these issues. We need women being courageous enough to say we are no longer going to accept the power game as somebody else has devised it, but we are going to be in on the shaping. Whether it's as part of the G8 or the finance ministers of the EU, or the crowd protesting in the street because they are disenfranchised by what they see about globalization.

AE: Do you feel that those who wield more power have a better chance to influence? Should a human rights body uphold a higher standard of human rights and integrity simply because they're more influential?

MR: First, I would hold them to higher standards, they have the power. But the responsibility to uphold that standard is greater if you have more power and influence. That's why I had to be very tough on the United States after September 11. The fact that the United States were not defining the status of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay, or by holding people for lengthy periods under the immigration laws—was not complying with international human rights norms and standards was being viewed by the rest of the world as a signal that those standards had changed. I had to say, as UN High Commissioner, that these standards had not changed. They are a legal technical apparatus. They don't change because one country is not upholding them fully. That is to be dealt with by the International Human Rights when they next look at the report on the United States under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Globalization itself is defined in part by the privatization of power. National governments have less power now than they did. They have stripped themselves of a number of essential services either because of structural adjustment or because of capitalist leadership. You see this in areas of health, education, even prison services. So when you look to the protection of human rights, it's not as simple as it seemed to be when the governments would ratify international human rights covenants and conventions and would be the primary responsible agents. Now although governments remain the primary responsible agents in a number of circumstances, you have to look to the private sector to uphold the standards had not changed.

But I worry about the lack of proper protection for what I call public goods: things like water. Because when you privatize the responsibility for public goods then nobody actually takes the responsibility to safeguard the overall public interest.

AE: It becomes even more imperative that civil society begins a very serious dialogue with business.

MR: Yes, and it is beginning to happen. I've participated in seminars, for example, where the extractive industries, oil and mining, get together with NGOs. These are not easy dialogues but they are very necessary because both perspectives must be appreciated. We need to create more environments where indigenous peoples can deal directly with those who exercise power in the countries that have their governments or, more and more, transnational corporations. There's a great deal of sharing of experience now, which is very positive. Take the women's movement: there's a linking of good practices between the 117 countries that have ratified the six major conventions on how to pin governments to the law. There's a sharing of good practices on how to get the gender dimension higher up on the agenda; how to look at rape in different countries and protect women when they come into court asserting that they have been raped, or to ensure that there are women in police stations when women who have been raped go for protection, etc. It's this learning across countries that I think is very important.

AE: What is your goal now that you no longer hold an official government or international post?

MR: I want to bring the experience of the last five years of Community leadership, but also the seven years that I was president of Ireland, into two tracks of the project that we're calling the Ethical Globalization Initiative.

The first track is to bring this technical doing of human rights into various aspects of globalization by developing a wide constituency for it and by linking partners who didn't link before. Most of the people I will be talking to are not human rights people. I want to bring this framework into their work.

Secondly I want to focus on Africa, because I don't have to be global any more and African countries need a lot of assistance in moving forward, in strengthening their own protection systems. I learned that human rights are not protected by the office of the High Commissioner in Geneva. They are protected when you have good judges locally and when the police, instead of torturing, gather evidence to produce at trial. That means you've got to have fair trial and a government that can't be bought off by business. I want to use the commitment that African leaders themselves have made in the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development. They've said it's their priority to strengthen their administration of justice, their rule of law, to tackle corruption and to adhere fully to international human rights standards. Now, at the moment, that is rhetoric, but there's a way of making it real and I believe the way is to begin with the projects that already exist in these countries.

I'm getting six pilot countries to participate. We've got to establish a baseline. We'll start with what is being done in projects for child rights, women, HIV/AIDS. By putting these projects forward we will also open them up to further support and funding. It will make it a positive exercise for African countries, which means they'll want to do more of it. Increasing human rights being a finger-pointing accusation, we're going to make it a capacity-building, supportive situation for at least ten years, and then gradually upgrade the quality of everything that is being done and fill in the gaps. I believe that once African countries can project that they have sorted out their governance, they will be much more likely to get the investment to bridge the digital divide, to get infrastructure projects going, etc. So it's directly in their development interests to do this, and I think they know this very well themselves. It's a very exciting time.
Despite their far greater visibility, adoptive families are less common than birth families, even though children were adopted en masse in the 1930s. In Strangers and Kin, Barbara Melosh tells us why, simultaneously tracing the transformation of adoption over the past century and exploring how it has served as a charged site of American notions of identity, motherhood, family and nation. A professor of history and English who became curious about the historical origins of adoption after adopting a son in the mid-1980s, Melosh eloquently reveals how those historical conversations between racial, ethnic and religious groups have “been much more heterogeneous” than heretofore. “No inherent constraints on difference” constructed by choice and chance have underwritten the construction of family, identity and the limits of the law. Melosh brilliantly treats adoption as “a potent site for the expression of American identity and otherness.” She recounts the rise of the “restrictive idiologies” that shaped the mid-twentieth-century, when social workers sought to minimize differences among adoptive family members, and their decisions then shaped the unwinding in the 1970s and following two decades when changing sex roles, controversies over racial matching, and challenges to closed adoption and sealed records combined to shatter the postwar adoption consensus.

The creation of families through law with the same rights and responsibilities as biological kin became common only gradually in the mid-twentieth century. In the early 1900s, child welfare workers, considering themselves defenders of social interests, advocated for childless adults, doubting that “permanent homes could be found for children among strangers” and worried that children would be exploited as laborers. In the 1920s and 1930s, a groundswell of popular support for adoption coincided with shifting approaches to child welfare and new attitudes toward untended mothers and their children. While earlier reformers saw “motherhood as both penalty and punishment for having illicit sex,” a new generation of secular reformers was less concerned with punishing the sinner and more concerned about the effects of such recklessness. They advocated “for the child.” Reformers were convinced that adoptive parents could not “form enduring bonds with less-than-perfect children”; they believed that only carefully screened children were appropriate candidates for adoption.

In the 1930s and 1940s, adoption was chieﬂy unregulated; a “perverse sense of adoption as risky...” stigmatized the adopted child as different.” While commercial maternity homes placed newborns with little or no investigation, social workers in child welfare agencies recommended that infants undergo observation and evaluation before placing them for adoption. Even though they meant subjecting themselves to social workers’ scrutiny. If observation and testing supplied the data that birth parents judged “non-secular, non-secretary, non-sectoral” families, “match” was a key element in the design of a practice that sought to improve the odds of successful adoption.

Convinced by adoptive parents that strangers could become kin, social workers fretted nonetheless about “how much difference adoptive families and the communities they lived in could embrace.” “[F]or the most part adopters were more concerned about the ethical and co-religionist boundaries of the law,...” She calculates that most racial categories physically redefined one another, race mattered greatly even as they treated it as a “matter of appearance and not in any substantial regard other than one of essential difference.”

In the 25 years following World War Two, adoption gained unprecedented publicity and professional respectability. She chronicles how social workers confronting rising rates of pregnancy among single white middle-class women took a newly interventionist approach to illegitimacy and proclaimed adoption the “best solution” to the problem of out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Adoption “rescued children from illegitimacy,” offered a “fresh start” to girls in trouble, and conferred parenthood on infertile couples longing to join the postwar domestic idyll.” “If the adoptive family was ideally ‘as if begotten,’ the out-of-wedlock pregnancy was to be ‘as if forgotten.’” In the 1930s, social workers and adoption agencies developed a system in which mother, child and adoptive family were kept separate, with adoptive parents representing the interests of birth mothers, their children and adoptive parents became standard, while maternity homes redeﬁned themselves as places in which to hide transgressive pregnancies and to reschedule the spoilt identities of illegitimate mothers and their children. By 1970, the only reason an adopted child was of a particular race was that most of children born out of wedlock were relinquished. If the belief that women were coerced into relinquishing infants in the 1950s and 1960s, Melosh says, “has become commonplace, but it is simply not adequate as an account of women’s decisions...”

Letters by birth mothers who regretted their decisions often portray the overwhelming pressures of parents and experts identified on recorded cases. But, even in the height of the best-solution rhetoric, alternative narratives persisted. Many African American adoptees who experienced racial displacement and relinquishment and then changed their minds; their experiences are captured in four hundred ﬁles marked “withdrawn.” Arguing that the “inadequate as a comprehensive policy, adoption can be an ethical and humane response to the chronic shortage of foster or adoptive homes, and declined precipitously after the 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act that granted American Indians tribal control of child placement. In a dazzling textual analysis of fiction, media coverage, sex reports and governmental proceedings, Melosh examines the various challenges to transracial and international adoption and the broader conservative critique against the adoption rights movement. Although she LICENSORS AND ACCOUNTS BY A 50% reduction of foster parents, she argues that women made difficult decisions on the primacy of biological kin, and adoption outcomes in general...”

Readers may or may not agree with Melosh’s views on relinquishment and transracial and international adoption, her conclusion that adoption outcomes differ from different cultural and social contexts and perhaps from one another. She convincingly demonstrates that adoption outcomes differ from different social, cultural and historical contexts as well as to her diferently situated readers. Strangers and Kin is valuable for anyone with an interest in the broader critique raised by the adoption rights movement. Whether or not they agree with it, they will be moved by the stories of new families, communities and nations that welcome the stranger.”
The Women’s Review of Books
February 2003
Publishers’ Advertising Supplement

Our annual February advertising section is put together by the Women’s Review in conjunction with the publishers included in it, as a resource especially for teachers in search of new ideas for their own reading and for materials to adopt in their courses.

The presses included represent, needless to say, only a fraction of the dozens of small-press, university and trade publishers now bringing out books in Women’s Studies. We hope that the wealth of new writing offered here will encourage readers of the Women’s Review to explore farther in a field that grows and changes with every season.

Women’s Studies

TORTILLERAS
Hispanic and U.S. Latina Lesbian Expression
edited by Louisa Mahaffy and Marcella Santoleri
The first anthology to focus exclusively on queer readings of Spanish, Latin American, and US Latina lesbian literature and culture, Tortilleras interrogates issues of gender, national identity, race, ethnicity, and class to show the impossibility of projecting a singular Hispanic or Latina Lesbian.
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BY HEART/DE MEMORIA
Cuban Women’s Journeys In and Out of Exile
edited by María de los Ángeles Torres
In this moving account of the Cuban Revolution and its aftermath, eleven women who lived through it as working women and rejects unwanted aspects of traditional unionism.
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FIREWEED
A Political Autobiography
Gerda Lerner
A pioneer and leading scholar in women’s history, Lerner tells her story of moral courage and commitment to social change with a novelist’s skill and a historian’s command of context.
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HITLER’S HEROINES
Stardom and Womanhood in Nazi Cinema
Antje Ascheid
Poking into the contradictory images of womanhood that surfaced in these films, Ascheid shows how Nazi heroines negotiated the gender conflicts that confronted contemporary women.
$19.95 paper

WE CAN’T EAT PRESTIGE
The Women Who Organized Harvard
John Harvard
This story explodes the popular belief that women white-collar workers tend to reject unionization and accept a passive role in the workplace. On the contrary, the women workers of Harvard University created a powerful and unique union—one that emphasizes their own values and priorities as working women and rejects unwanted aspects of traditional unionism.
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THE PAC & THE DEAL
Marriage, Work, and Fatherhood in Men’s Lives
Nicholas W. Townsend
Townsend identifies the conflicts and contradictions within the gendered expectations of men and fathers, and analyzes the social and economic contexts that make emotionally involved fathering an elusive ideal.
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SKIN DEEP, SPIRIT STRONG
The Black Female Body in American Culture
Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, Editor
A persuasive argument for broadening ongoing conversations about the body, Skin Deep, Spirit Strong presents an impressive gathering of essays and visual art by feminist scholars and artists, and illustrates the ways in which views of gender and race both influence the creation of images of black women and shape their audience’s perceptions.
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MIRANDA MOORE, Elizabeth Bishop, & May Swenson
The Feminist Poetics of Self-Restraint
Kirstie Helling Zona
“Powerful individual readings of poems with acute analysis of the poets’ private and public comments on one another’s work, and on their own conceptions of gender and selfhood. An important book.”
—Cristianne Miller, Pomona College
Cloth $44.95

MOVING UP AND OUT
Poverty, Education, and the Single Parent Family
Pamela Hilyard and Lorey Madison
In this story of a highly successful nonprofit, Lori Holyfield draws upon the voices of single parents to consider the barriers and struggles faced as they attempt to obtain secondary education and change the lives of both themselves and their children.
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POLITICAL WOMAN
Florence Lucascomb and the Legacy of Radical Reform
S. E. Hartman
Florence Hope Lucascomb’s life spanned nearly all of the twentieth century. Born into a remarkable family of abolitionists and progressive thinkers, the young Florence accompanied her feminist mother to lectures and political rallies, soon choosing a course of political engagement and social activism from which she never retreated.
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Sally Miller Gearhart
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Knopf | Cloth | 448 pages | $30.00

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Reaping what we sow
by Jan Zita Grover
Fatal Harvest: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture
edited by Andrew Kimbrell. Washington, DC: Island
Press, 2002, 384 pp., $45.00 paper.


W hen my father moved us from San Francisco to Sacramento in 1954, much of the flophound eastern part of the American River was planted with hops, sweet cherries, almonds and English walnuts. Black walnuts, a native species, lined country roads and could be had for the taking. Cattle grazed the high-
land eastern part of the river, and in the nch river-bottom soils along the Sacramento River pigs fazed in their wallows. Behind the levee roads—closed each winter by dense tail fogs—peary asparagus fields and peach orchards spread toward Highway 99 and the mouth of the river into San Francisco Bay, interwoven by bare mudflats

As tildic as this may sound, it was never—never had been—farming according to an agrarian ideal. The cattle and hop farms owned by the family of one of my classmates, for example, ran to 1,200 acres. As far back as the 1870s, Valley wheat farmers tilled and harvested on an industrial scale using sixteen-horse teams. The California farms of my childhood was the nation's most industrialized, and we were taught to view the Southernness. California was America's but a weak rival, for Florida suffered from local droughts, in turn producing local famines. At the same time, apologists for industrial agriculture argue that it is creating worldwide bounty, a safer food supply, more choices for "consumers" and the remains of the wild.

None of this is news to readers interested in the politics of food and conservation/environmentalist attacks on industrial agriculture in three respects: it does not weave a continuous narrative from its strands, it relies more on full-blooded photographs for a coherent argument than on its mostly dry and statistics-filled essays and it is almost per-

This is the seventh oversized book "exhibit-format) by Alice Waters. New York: HarperCollins, 2002, 327 pp., $34.94 hardcover.

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Applications by e-mail or fax will not be accepted. Review of applications will begin March 1, 2003 and deadline for applications is March 16, 2003.
Within five minutes of meeting the landlord of my Tokyo apartment, I found more compelling evidence for the idea that different fruits sound like the familiar Japanese I knew, but I couldn't understand him at all. The gruff, masculine Japanese he was speaking was not what I had been taught by my young, female teachers. Japanese men and women, I soon learned, speak different versions of the same language. In Womansword, Kittredge cherry systematically explores gender-specific Japanese words and phrases and effect that none of us has much of that any more. The phrases often allude to controversial political issues, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (“danjo sanō” in Japan in 1986. Before the law, women were limited to working within certain set hours, after which they were required to leave. Even before this law, most women had been given time off each month for menstruation leave since 1947. The law, at least in theory, ended these forms of different treatment for women. Using statistics from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Cherry suggests that this law led to an increase in employers’ reluctance to hire women because they now had to treat them equally, and had the unfortunate effect of raising the wage gap between men and women. One of the most intriguing entries relate to the interactions between men and women. Women refer to retired husbands as “grand garbage” because they “more aimlessly around the house, good for nothing, always getting in the way,” writes Cherry. wives also call their retired spouses “unlabeled canned goods” since they have been “stripped of the company name and have no identity,” Japanese, we learn, includes insults for both genders. Women today want a sexier word for unmarried life, and have started using the English word “single.” A chapter on sexuality illuminates the undercurrents of hidden sex, both commercial and private: go pros by the euphemism “soap ladies” from their association with bathhouses, and door-to-door condom sellers, who enable women to keep control of the privacy of their homes, are called “skin ladies.” Cherry writes, “The customers tend to be so embarrassed about birth control that they gladly pay higher prices to avoid being seen purchasing in public. Moreover, they don’t want to end up pregnant. They want to be pregnant more often than necessary. So they buy a one- or two-year supply of big, economically priced ‘family packs’ of condoms.” 

Womansword: What Japanese Words Say About Women

by Kittredge Cherry.


Arik, the story of a young, female teacher. Japanese

women today want a sexier word for

unmarried life, and have started using the

English word “single.” 

Arik’s translations are intentionally funny. In Japanese, domi-

nating women are said to “sit” on their husbands. “The Japanese

version of the bannockhead husband is a man flattened out under

wife’s massive buttocks...” The figure of speech includes the criti-

icism that the woman’s rump is too fat, otherwise her man would be able

to top-

ple her authority,” writes Cherry. Her wit and penchant for literal translations make for engaging reading. She inter-

prets the word for subway harassers, “mina-sya,” for the things they do

to women’s faces. A woman’s uterus is for “old woman” which combines the

forms of different treatment for

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My friend, the story of a young, female teacher. Japanese

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Womansword: What Japanese Words Say About Women

by Kittredge Cherry.


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they spot a woman in a low-cut dress."

"...or legs, the nape exuded sensuality explains that "more than breasts, but..."

And while her explanation of beauty ideals, for example, spans centuries. Even today, she writes, the nape of a woman's neck is considered the most erotic part of the body. She explains that "more than breasts, buttocks, or legs, the nape exuded sensuality," and young Japanese women are at least fifteen years old, a surprising statistic related to the workplace, single young women and sexuality.

Cherry recognizes that language constantly evolves. She skillfully interweaves history with the present, often reaching back into the Edo (1603 to 1868) and Meiji (1868 to 1912) periods for word origins. Her explanation of beauty ideals, for example, begins by noting that "teeth were considered a repulsive, menacing part of the skeleton." Just as an encyclopedia provides snippets of the bigger picture, Womanwars gives us the dots but leaves us to connect them. Cherry doesn't give us her overall impression of Japanese women in an opening or closing chapter, which would have helped provide a framework, especially for readers who know little about Japanese culture. She addresses larger trends within the culture only in passing, for example, the increasing number of young women who reject sexist Japanese offices in favor of foreign firms, and the increasing number of young women who choose not to get married. She also focuses almost exclusively on mainstream magazines. Her book, for example, has led Gender Studies to forge links with other campus units, including the Kinsey Institute. IUB's Gender Studies Department is distinctive in that at least fifteen years old, a surprisingly exposed part of the skeleton.


My mother is a feminist academ-ic who struggled to finish a Ph.D and find a job while negotiating the demands of three small children. I learned from her example that motherhood would be best put off until I, also following an academic path, had finished graduate school, gotten a job and perhaps even attained the secu-rity of tenure. Like many women of my third-wave feminist generation, I wanted to carve out a professional and intellec-tual life long before I ever imagined par-enting a child.

At 37, newly tenured and enjoying the real privilege of my first sabbatical, I find myself struggling to fit the busy manuals as much as literary criticism, more obsessed with egg quality and the results of tests than with scholarly archives. My life as a researcher has been divided into in-vitro fertilization cycles; when colleagues inquire how my splendid projects are going, I am tempted to say "Okay." But I'm not, and I'm not the only one who feels that way. A bit sore from the shot! A hormonal roller-coaster ride?

I n the mid-1980s, she tells us, a popular Japanese woman's magazine printed photos of celebrities showing off the napes of their necks.

It's hard to imagine a more qualified linguist than Cherry for this job. As a journalist in Japan, she has worked for feminist and mainstream magazines, at one point writing a regular column on Japanese words. Her authority on the subject and strong reporting skills bene-fit the book, as does her ability to quote the book, with references to glossy women's magazines.

The book's main shortcoming, however, is that even its most recent surveys are at least fifteen years old, a surprising weakness in an otherwise well-researched book. Cherry doesn't seem to know that birth control pills are now legal in Japan, or that sexual harassment is taken much more seriously nowadays than twenty years ago. She uses a 1986 survey to show how premarital sex is increasingly accepted; surely attitudes have shifted even more by now. The comprehensive Foreword by Janet Ashby, also a journalist in Japan, pro-vides some updates.

Overall, however, Cherry does for Japanese what The New York Times' William Safire does for English: analyzes a journalist in Japan, she has worked for feminist and mainstream magazines, at one point writing a regular column on Japanese words. Her authority on the subject and strong reporting skills benefit the book, as does her ability to quote historical background with references to glossy women's magazines.

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A checkered career
by Judith Barrington

Naked in the Promised Land: A Memoir by Lillian Faderman.

Lillian Faderman

through the life of one woman, Naked in the Promised Land captures the history of an era. One lesbian’s fear of her own sexuality and her struggle to balance her own millennial generation’s desire for an independent life represent, in many ways, the story of American homophobia and sexism, taken for granted in the 1950s and 60s. It is as if Lillian Faderman had added a personal example to the history she unfolded in her last book, Odd Girls and Twisted Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America. Naked in the Promised Land also speaks for a generation of American Jews whose parents were refugees—among them, the author—of the Nazi Holocaust, whether they themselves survived the camps or lost beloved family members to the Nazis. As the title implies, because she was the child of a quintessential immigrant family, her experience for readers without access to the program is devoted to training patients that “alleviating depression and other symptoms of larger cultural pathologies. For one thing, it’s unlikely that Faderman’s trajectory from difficult childhood to university professor was by happenstance. At the center of this powerful story is Faderman’s rejection of the life envisaged by her for a seriously unhappy and possessive mother. Many believed that the author’s grandmother was lame because she dropped him as a baby—and that she was responsible for failing to get him and the rest of her family out of Latvia before they were all killed. Haunted by the past, she had “spells,” which the young Lillian tried to pass through her mother’s grief on a responsibility for her wounded parent that would stretch far into adult life. Here is Faderman’s recollection of her mother’s condition: I could tell by looking at my mother’s face when a bad time was coming: there would be a deep flush on her cheeks and neck and chest, and her mouth would change. She’d keep swallowing her lips, or she’d spit out an imaginary speck that I could tell by looking at my mother’s face when a bad time was coming: there would be a deep flush on her cheeks and neck and chest, and her mouth would change. She’d keep swallowing her lips, or she’d spit out an imaginary speck that she’d keep swallowing her lips, or she’d spit out an imaginary speck that would not be gone from her tongue. Her eyes would change too. Someone else looked out from her eyes, a person who barely saw me, not even when I stood in her line of sight to distract her attention from the terrors in her head. (p. 40)

So Zadie Faderman decides to have a child—the girlchild her mother has begged for, the child who represents a future that will balance the losses of the past. Neither her mother nor Rae question the fictitious marriage to an absent husband with which Faderman explains the baby, and, without being told explicitly that she is a lesbian, they accept the presence of Phylys, her partner and co-parent.

One of the things that impresses me about this story is the determination with which Faderman solved her various predicaments from a very young age. When she realized that she wasn’t immediately going to make it as an actor, she found her way into modeling. When modeling threatened to become an end in itself and she was in danger of dropping out of high school at sixteen, she called up Rae to arrange a future that will balance the losses of the past. Neither her mother nor Rae question the fictitious marriage to an absent husband with which Faderman explains the baby, and, without being told explicitly that she is a lesbian, they accept the presence of Phylys, her partner and co-parent.

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my family had no money, he told me about a counselor who was hired to help underprivileged youths in trouble. When had I not been an underprivileged youth in trouble? Not surprisingly, my family, male delinquents.” Dr. Cushing vowed sympathy over the phone. “That’s okay, I’m a juvenile delinquent, even though I’m not a girl.” I told him truthfully, and scribbled Mr. Maurice Cobell’s number on the yellow page. (p. 165)

Faderman has proved to be an invaluable scholar of lesbian history and an able writer of nonfiction. Naked in the Promised Land exhibits a similarly competent narrative style. She manages to capture the emotions and thoughts of her young self extremely well, but I found myself wishing for more reflection on the part of the adult narrator, who remains almost entirely invisible. For example, in describing her early involvement in creating the new field of women’s studies, she says, “In later years our passion came to seem excessive, but in 1970 it felt entirely right.” Here, I want to know more of her current thoughts on the subject, want her to want to know more of her current thoughts, but in 1970 it felt exactly right.” Here, I

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hat was it like to be psychoanalyzed? In the spring of 1933 and fall of 1934, the American expatriate poet Hilda Doolittle—H. D.—sojourned in Vienna for sessions with the founder of psychoanalysis. When they began she was 46, stranded as a writer and tormented by wartime memories. She had already worked with two analysts and would later compare her experience to that of a music student taking lessons with a good teacher, then with a master, finally with a genius. Freud—called “Papa” in the letters—was just turning 77, frail after operations for throat cancer. With Hitler in power in Germany, Dolfuss struggling to preserve Austria from civil strife, and Nazi domination of Europe intermittently on the verge of war, he and his family were living with uncertainty and danger.

H. D.'s readers will be familiar with her earlier accounts of her work with Freud: the 1956 Tributes to Freud (comp. of her 1936 memoir Writing on the Wall and a 1940, based on a diary she kept in her first three weeks in Vienna but broke off when Freud asked her to “think like a Turtle” [such as the Proper Decorator] and “be an object for the day for disobedience sentences!” Along with Kenneth Macpherson (“Dog”), Bryher’s second husband and H. D.’s former lover, and Perdita (“Pup”), whom the Macphersons had legally adopted in 1928, Bryher keeps H. D.’s abreast of the doings at their ménage, with its maddening housekeeper “Dragon,” its garden in the making, its constant flow of books and letters, and the newsworthily, its sprawling and tail-wagging of its human and animal denizens. Besides Freud, other correspondents include Havelock Ellis, Conrad Aiken and Bryher’s first husband, Robert McAlmon.

The analyst’s analyst

by Christine Fruda


In his statues than in himself. From behind her head he bears his hands on the pillow of the analytic couch, saying, “I am an old man. You do not think it worth your while to listen.” He sits guilty pleasure and anxiety in H. D. by his avoird for “dirt” on Havelock Ellis (with whose unloving H. D. is anti-social), in 1970 his birthday finds fills with from innumerable friends and admirers. H. D. has tried in vain to find an antique statue—asking Bryher, “Do you happen to know how one would go about finding him a goddess?”—and brings nothing. When Yo-fi gets into a fight with another of the household dogs during one session, Freud flings himself on the floor between them, coins falling from his pockets and rolling under the orchids as Anna Freud rushes in “screaming in German papa liebesthonest, thou shouldst not have done that.” Freud receives Bryher when she visits H. D. and they praise H. D. ’s beautiful mind, making “Karl’s tail... one spike of esteem.” Bryher sends him/Uses, the World Alliance for Combating Antisemitism pamphlet exposing Nazi atrocities, and funds in case the heads should be forced to leave Vienna. In a development that leads to anesthesia of Freud to liken her to the Virgin of the Advertisement, Freud fixes on the idea of giving first one, then both, of Yo-fi’s puppies to Perdita—to Bryher’s dismay, who can it accept the responsibility and wants even less to hurt Freud’s feelings. H. D., for her part, rides high on the glory of being a “pupil” of Freud (“She’ll live on that for the rest of her life,” scoffs Kenneth). Hoping to burst her image and revive her flagging career, she urges Bryher to “broadcast” her new status to “London.” Vanity aside, the appearance of apparently to be intensely productive. In the first hour H. D. sobbed and sobbed, “terrorized of this old Oedipus Rex” who accused her of being disappointed in him, made her stand beside him to see who was taller, the analysis appears to have been

The central voice and extraordinary experience of the letters’ subject, of course, to H. D., who sees here both smaller and larger than life: narcissistic, melodramatic, manipulative, but also courageous, ascetic and open about the often fascinating insights, dreams and associations her analysis produced. Of H. D.’s intimate mental benefactor Bryher arranged and paid for her sessions, and most of these letters are drawn from their correspondence.

Bryher was born Annie Winifred Ellanor, the illegitimate daughter of Britain’s wealthiest shipping magnate. She had fallen in love with H. D. after reading her Imagist poems. So Gardner and helped her nurse back to health from near-fatal pneumonia during her pregnancy with Perdita in 1919. H.-or “Kat,” as she signs herself—reports daily to Bryher (“Fido”), back home in Switzerland. Bryher too was undergoing analysis (with Hannah Gluck) and aspired to become an ana-

lyst (earn a “dog-collared”) during this period; while visiting H. D., she confided to Freud her fervent belief that “if all my good clients were released the analysis would be reduced,” making him roar with laughter. Bryher would soon become a patron of the International Psycho-analytical Press and the Viennese Psycho-Analytical Society as well as a friend and protector of the Freuds.

Bryher is an active, loving audience for H. D.’s epistolary confidences. “But Kat darling,” she writes, “it’s a bad letter not to lie down in p.s. and do what Papa tells it. HOW dare you not obey? I was most obedient—only EN pa of course to obey.” Bryher’s analysis appears to have been

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ust as the title Analyzing Freud gives little hint of the volume’s wide-angle biographical lens, H. D.’s letters present not an analysis of Freud but a composite portrait of doctor and patient (or “pupil,” the category H. D. much preferred)—a stylized, idiosyncreatically detailed picture created over time by a poem of formidable observa-
tion and literary prowess. H. D.’s Freud bears little resemblance to the popular image of the analyst as silent, featureless recipient of the patient’s projections. With his family, servants and pets circulating at 19 Berggasse, his price-

less collection of antiques about him, and his chow Yo-fi—his “Protector,” distractingly pregnant that spring—in regular attendance, Freud was anything but a blank screen. From their first meeting (after which H. D. moaned to Bryher, “you said he would not talk and he talked half the time”), Freud interacted with his patient in intense, sometimes codified as rules of clinical practice. Freud dearly notes that H. D. is the only分析师 to show more interest

Faderman about five years old. From Naked in the Promised Land.
forms this intimidating “oracle of Delphi” into a “mother-bull” filled with potent love. (This maternal transference pains Freud, “so very, very, very, masculine” does he feel; when H. D. asks whether it often happens, he replies, “Oh, very often.”) The analyst digs through layers of memory to “the earliest pre-O[edipal] stage” of the mother/child bond, which she and Freud agree dictates the symbolic landscape of her writing: “islands, sea, Greek primitives.” They link a hand-marked dream of gathering roses in an enchanted garden to her bisexual gravitations. Awed by Freud’s interpretive power, H. D. likens him to the prophet Joseph, who reads the dreams of the Egyptian kings, and calls him a “discoverer of new life.”

Sigmund Freud. From Analyzing Freud.

F reud and H. D. discuss penis envy, she somehow deduling herself that she alone is privy to this theory over which public contro- versy has raged since the 1920s. As she delves into “the pure homo layer” in her unconscious, she has a dream about a theatre that “seemed to mean absolutely that these men and all their little about a theatre that “seemed to mean Versy has raged since the 1920s. As she considers herself to have earned the mother/child bond, which she and Freud agree dictates the symbolic landscape of her writing: “islands, sea, Greek primitives.” They link a hand-marked dream of gathering roses in an enchanted garden to her bisexual gravitations. Awed by Freud’s interpretive power, H. D. likens him to the prophet Joseph, who reads the dreams of the Egyptian kings, and calls him a “discoverer of new life.”

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Sigmund Freud. From Analyzing Freud.
I
formation has produced a paradox: people want to know everything about everything, to be famous and public, to be loved, at the same time, wanting no one to know anything about them. Secrets are simultaneously guarded and shared; secrets are the modern objects of desire. The 24/7 information glut that reigns in the West configure the public as anxious to know everything, as if the 24/7 strife between Saddam Hussein keeps in his palace—but no one can ever know enough (enough for what), because there will always be more information, more opinions, more data. There are not enough channels and too many channels.

Dean takes apart and challenges the idea that democracy relies upon publicity, secrecy and a public sphere. She believes that the idea of the public has been constructed by “correspondence and solidarity.” She concludes, controversially, that the notion of the public needs to be abandoned because “the public” does not really exist as a form or a forum and put its ideology into place threaten democracy. And she issues a call to arms: “Now it is our turn to master the secretion matters. What does matter is commitment and engagement by people and organizations networked around contested issues.”

Along the way, Dean presents some provocative hypotheses. For example, she identifies the riddle of what “literature” means to “institution” to describe the Web. In this reading, the Web is an “empty signifier.” Lacking intrinsic meaning, it merely mediates the presence of meaning pointing to it without containing it. The Web is a public relations tool, a dumping ground for floating data. It deliberately offers too many options, and much of what it sends to computer screens is drivel and dreck. In large part, it signals meaning by encoding excess language with privacy and interactivity. It is pure infrastructure.

But the Web cannot emancipate people, through the lowest point of twentieth-century American ideals and racial inequality.”

McHenry is attentive to issues of gender, oscillating, for example, between how women were central to the leadership of the postbellum organizations. She has uncovered marvelous stories about the “mental feasts” enjoyed by antebellum women’s literary societies, whose members were “full of the greed for literature and letters.” These clubs, which may have been more numerous than men’s groups, often met in small groups in women’s homes. Creating spaces in which they straddled “womanly” and political spheres, they expanded notions of literature to include oral and critical skills and used these safer havens to develop public voices. The Boston African American Society included both the highly literate Maria Stewart, the first African American woman to give public political lectures, and Eliza Johnson, a black traveling presbytery, who used her mark to sign legal documents.

Meridian

McHenry has uncovered details that give depth to the Harlem Renaissance, some one hundred years later.

McHenry resurfaces a history of Black letters often unvalued by those who pres- serve literary contributions and materials. Woefully underserved by academic institu- tions in the South and North, African Americans have encountered countless stop signs on the standard road to litera- cy. McHenry recovers the institutions Black schools have created and relied on to sup- port and sustain their literary education. Her impressive archival work supports her claim that to understand Black writing is to understand the centrality of Black literacy as a shared endeavor. McHenry underscores the leadership of the postbellum organizations. She has uncovered marvelous stories about the “mental feasts” enjoyed by antebellum women’s literary societies, whose members were “full of the greed for literature and letters.” These clubs, which may have been more numerous than men’s groups, often met in small groups in women’s homes. Creating spaces in which they straddled “womanly” and political spheres, they expanded notions of literature to include oral and critical skills and used these safer havens to develop public voices. The Boston African American Society included both the highly literate Maria Stewart, the first African American woman to give public political lectures, and Eliza Johnson, a black traveling presbytery, who used her mark to sign legal doc- uments. Members of a Philadelphia group

annonymously submitted original compositions to “the box” from which pieces were selected by the editors, and then published regu- larly featured in the “Ladies’ Department” of the most famous of anti- slavery publications, The Liberator.

The collaborative strategies and independent enterprises that characterize early Black literary societies help explain the success of writ- ers like Terry McMillan and the contem- porary book club rage. McHenry argues in her epilogue. Marketing her books in church halls, community centers, Black book clubs and the like, she recreated “a paradigm of how to sell to Black readers.” Paralleling this break- through cross-over success was the rise of Black (women’s) book clubs whose pub- lic, integrated face appeared as Oprah’s Book Club. Acknowledging the vast

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Send a letter of application, vita, relevant syllabi, sample publications, and three let- ters of recommendation by February 18, 2003 to: Professor Alexandra Deschamps, Chair of Search, #18780, Women’s Studies Program, Bartlett 208, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003.

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by Gabrielle Foreman


K

athryn Johnson, an unknown Black entrepreneur, spent several years in the 1880s traveling and lecturing about African Americans from the back seat of her new Ford coupe. She covered ten states and twenty-five thou- sand miles, stopping at prayer meetings and Sunday services to distribute over five thousand books that “all the colored peo- ple ought to read.” This was not princip- ally about money, she averred: “I am first of all creating a desire for reading... I knew the books that would help the Negro to understand the true meaning of the life he lead in the United States [so I became] an itinerant bookseller.” Johnson believed that “the value of books” lay in their “ability to communicate race pride and con- sciousness”; therein lay “the hope of progress and group advancement.” “Women’s literary societies” or “readers’ clubs” are used as an example of the larger narrative she unfolds in Forgotten Readers, a magisterial work that broadens the conventional understandings of African Americans’ “desire for read- ing.” Augmenting the image of individual slaves “stealing book learning” and recent- ly freed masses under the tutelage of New England school teachers, she examines the literary societies, newspapers and activities of Black Americans from around 1830, attending to the anti-slavery movement to the Harlem Renaissance, some one hun- dred years later.

McHenry resurfaces a history of Black letters often unvalued by those who pre- serve literary contributions and materials. Woefully underserved by academic institu- tions in the South and North, African Americans have encountered countless stop signs on the standard road to litera- cy. McHenry recovers the institutions Black schools have created and relied on to sup- port and sustain their literary education. Her impressive archival work supports her claim that to understand Black writing is to understand the centrality of Black literacy as a shared endeavor. McHenry underscores the leadership of the postbellum organizations. She has uncovered marvelous stories about the “mental feasts” enjoyed by antebellum women’s literary societies, whose members were “full of the greed for literature and letters.” These clubs, which may have been more numerous than men’s groups, often met in small groups in women’s homes. Creating spaces in which they straddled “womanly” and political spheres, they expanded notions of literature to include oral and critical skills and used these safer havens to develop public voices. The Boston African American Society included both the highly literate Maria Stewart, the first American woman to give public political lectures, and Eliza Johnson, a black traveling presbytery, who used her mark to sign legal doc- uments. Members of a Philadelphia group

Anonymous

I
dentify shell stages whose hidden gold- en rings turn out to be made of hollow plate. That justifies feedback on the land and people of Israel, while the sec- ond threatens the civil liberties of people living in or visiting the United States.

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**The Colors of Nature: Culture, Identity, and the Natural World**


**Polluted by history by Helen Zia**

**W**hat is the color of nature? Does the cultural lens of the beholder affect their interpretation of the natural world? Is one's own racial or ethnic filter in the observation, description, and, ultimately, the writing and recording of the "universals" of air, earth, water, and life of all things natural? The *Colors of Nature* offers a resounding "Yes!" to these questions and marks the starting point for this challenging collection of fifteen essays. In a world where context and perspective are often debated, there is a collection of writers who have taken their introduction as Conversation. They present, to odd effect, a scenario where the cultural narratives walk through the woods, sharing a spiritual energy, becoming friends. As they discover their common bonds, they also become aware of their differences. One woman is of Euro-American heritage, her family story entwined since the 1600s with the story of mainstream American culture. While her ancestors fled religious oppression in England to restart their lives in the New World, their sense of culture was narrowed by the constraints of their upbringing. They brought the propensity to suppress vice and immoral behavior through their "Introduction as Conversation." To influence is to empower. To empower is to write. To write is to influence. To influence is to change." I looked for it as I wrote this review, and propped it up alongside an etchings of black and white by the two of them and me... one of whom reminds me of "Pop," my grandfather. These pieces sharpen our understanding of indigenous peoples. The profile of a beautiful woman sitting by a meandering rationale for the book in its "Introduction as Conversation." The descendant of slaves and freemen, indigenous inhabitants and colonizers, she faces the ambiguities of a melting pot. Her family's ground-breaking research will make possible both comparative work and fuller explorations of the links between literary activities and other forms of activism.

Wendy McHenry argues that in stressing the expression "the personal is political." She presents, to odd effect, a scenario where the cultural narratives walk through the woods, sharing a spiritual energy, becoming friends. As they discover their common bonds, they also become aware of their differences. One woman is of Euro-American heritage, her family story entwined since the 1600s with the story of mainstream American culture. While her ancestors fled religious oppression in England to restart their lives in the New World, their sense of culture was narrowed by the constraints of their upbringing. They brought the propensity to suppress vice and immoral behavior through their "Introduction as Conversation." To influence is to empower. To empower is to write. To write is to influence. To influence is to change." I looked for it as I wrote this review, and propped it up alongside an etchings of black and white by the two of them and me... one of whom reminds me of "Pop," my grandfather. These pieces sharpen our understanding of indigenous peoples. The profile of a beautiful woman sitting by a meandering rationale for the book in its "Introduction as Conversation." The descendant of slaves and freemen, indigenous inhabitants and colonizers, she faces the ambiguities of a melting pot. Her family's ground-breaking research will make possible both comparative work and fuller explorations of the links between literary activities and other forms of activism.

Before Borders put its out of business, I bought a small sign at my favorite Los Angeles women's bookstore: "To read is to empower. To empower is to write. To write is to influence. To influence is to change." I looked for it as I wrote this review, and propped it up alongside an etchings of black and white by the two of them and me... one of whom reminds me of "Pop," my grandfather. These pieces sharpen our understanding of indigenous peoples. The profile of a beautiful woman sitting by a meandering rationale for the book in its "Introduction as Conversation." The descendant of slaves and freemen, indigenous inhabitants and colonizers, she faces the ambiguities of a melting pot. Her family's ground-breaking research will make possible both comparative work and fuller explorations of the links between literary activities and other forms of activism.
Free to be she
by Paityl Carrah


The story of Christine Jorgensen’s sex change broke on December 1, 1952 with the New York Daily News’ front page headline, “Ex-GI Becomes Blond Beauty.” Transsexual men and women across the United States felt, writes Joanne Meyerowitz, a “shock of recognition.” The mass-market publicity about Jorgensen gave transsexual people a visible rendering of their own irrepressible cross-gender identifications that, until then, had largely been absent.

At that moment fifty years ago Jorgensen, who was born in Denmark recovering from her surgery, “moved irrevocably from private patient to public personality.” In the ensuing years she was characterized variously as “a freak,” “a pervert,” “a hoax,” a “gay,” a “man,” a “he-she girl,” a “natural woman,” a “nice lady,” the Scandinavian Societies of Greater New York’s “Woman of the Year,” “a pioneer with a message,” “courageous,” a “supermiddle-class conservativist,” an “iron lady,” and therefore invalid: “can a physician change the gender of a person with a scalpel, drugs and counseling, or is a person’s gender immutably fixed by our Creator at birth?” There are some things we cannot will into being. They just are. We hold, as a matter of law, that Chistie Lee Littletown is a male.

While her history ends before transgender rights organizing takes off in the 1990s, many of the themes Meyerowitz raises reflect some of the tensions animating debates about transgender people today. An official from the American Medical Association pronounced in 1953 that Jorgensen’s “castration did not make him [a woman].” Half a century later these narratives recur, not only in popular discourse but in the legal arena. In 1999 in Littleton v. Prange, a judge on Texas’ highest court ruled that a marriage between a transsexual woman and a non-transsexual man was in fact a same-sex marriage and therefore invalid: “can a physician change the gender of a person with a scalpel, drugs and counseling, or is a person’s gender immutably fixed by our Creator at birth?” There are some things we cannot will into being. They just are. We hold, as a matter of law, that Chistie Lee Littletown is a male.

Maybe we will evolve, if there is time (which it seems there is not), into a many-eyed, many-eared creature, perhaps we will evolve, if there is time (which it seems there is not), into a many-eyed, many-eared creature, into a many-eyed, many-eared creature.

What about a meteor? Something sudden and huge and part and heave us to the sea? Perhaps we will evolve, if there is time (which it seems there is not), into a many-eyed, many-eared creature, perhaps we will evolve, if there is time (which it seems there is not), into a many-eyed, many-eared creature, into a many-eyed, many-eared creature.

Sister Delores says she believes that good will triumph. I believe only in the necessities of evolution; hence this may be the beginning of the end.

But why must it be so personal? Could we not live coolly in an ice age unaware that the glaciers will soon split and part and leave us to the sea? What about a meteor? Something sudden and huge and instantly obliterating? Perhaps we will evolve, if there is time (which it seems there is not), into a many-eyed, many-eared creature, exquisitely sensed to danger, yet endowed with a great courage, the kind we know now only through denial.

Or perhaps we will revolve, each of us, back to our infancies when our imaginations were small, our fears simple and few: Hunger. Cold. Wet. That she will not be there when we need her. Her largeness, that powerful presence so able to leave at any moment, our fingers so tiny, so weak, so completely unable to hold on.
Becausje Jorgensen was such a willling subject for media attention, she could describe herself as a "transvestite" or a "transsexual" without her own understanding of her own condition. And because she had a flair for the kind of media manipulation that was thrust upon her by the 1952 exposé, she remained in the public eye for the rest of her life. Countless newspaper articles about her from 1952 until her death in 1989 were supplemented by a five-part photographic profile in Life (April 22, 1953), in an autobiographical book published in 1957, and in a film version of the autobiography in 1979. Furthermore, her story was part of the everyday nightlife act. Incessant public scrutiny—including inflammatory reports on every visible feature of her body and the way she presented her gender ("a slight down on her upper lip, but no sign that she had ever used a razor,"
her gestures with a cigarette with graceful femininity"
the small"—became a catalyst for serious public explorations of the questions of sex and gender definition.

Of course, pre-Jorgensen medical researchers had long been involved in the project of creating and endlessly revising cultural categories in order to make the visible one cultural narratives about sex, gender and sexualit.

When the nineteenth-century sexologi
gender transition in trans-
transsexuals and transwomen met the reac-
transsexuals often read medical journals to learn
agendas was expressed via a
the gender-enforcing role of the
psychological sex and later gender iden-
the ascendance of the very psychiatric narratives that
transsexual... As Meyerowitz writes,
"the mind—
the body could be a large and varied one."

As the first book-length social and intellectual history of transsexuality in the United States, How Sex Changed explores the wealth of sources that contribute to the story. But by framing her history with repeated reference to one very pub-

"Each person is actually both
and in some respects it may be a
identifying transsexuality as a variety of

The Bookshelf
Each month we list the recently published books received during the preceding month so as to which we think readers of the Women’s Review may want to know about. This, however, is a very partial selection of the books by and about women published each month. Our listing is informational, not evaluative; the only annotation added is a brief subject matter, where the title is not self-explanatory. All are non-


Lucinda Damon-Buch and Victoria Clemens, eds., Catherine Maria Sedgwick: Critical Perspectives. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003. (An examination of one of the nation's first women writers' works.)


Michelle Gibson and Deborah T. McClellan, eds., Venn's Scratch: New Considerations of the Way We Want to Go. New York: Harrington Park.


Tova Harmann Halsner, Appropriately Salacious: Modern Mothers in Traditional Religions.

Chair, Department of Sculpture
The Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Sculpture and Extended Media is looking for a candidate who possesses the vision for the department, the ability to teach and to communicate creatively and effectively to students from diverse academic and cultural backgrounds. A Ph.D. or M.F.A. is required (A.B.D.'s will also be considered). Potential candidates should be able to teach, mentor, and advise upper-level undergraduate and graduate students. Candidates must be committed to the development of cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary projects that actively engage students and faculty. Teaching load is 3 courses per year. The candidate is expected to produce an active and engaging body of research and to engage in service activities that contribute to the growth of the department. Submit a letter of application, a CV, 3 letters of recommendation, and a portfolio of your work by February 1, 2003 to Virginia Commonwealth University, Chair, Department of Sculpture, 1686 W. Broad St., Richmond, VA 23288-9009. Review of applications will begin February 1, 2003 and continue until position is filled.
Research Opportunities

RUTGERS INSTITUTE: FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN invites applications from post-doctoral scholars in any discipline whose work focuses on women and gender. Visiting scholars whose work connects with the IRW’s 2003-2004 faculty-graduate seminar “Terminologies, Masculinities, and the Politics of Sexual Difference(s)” are especially welcome. The IRW offers private offices, library privileges and contacts with Rutgers’ many leading scholars working on women and gender. Next door to the Institute, the Wittenhoven Scholars Residence offers attractive, low-cost housing reserved for scholars affiliated with the IRW or the other women’s units. Applications will be accepted until all positions are filled. For information please check our website: http://irw.rutgers.edu or call: (732) 932-3072.

Gender and Globalization in Asia and the Pacific, Office for Women’s Research, University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. What is meant by globalization, and how are women active in, and act upon, the processes involved in globalization? This program, under the auspices of the Office for Women’s Research and the Women’s Studies Program at the University of Hawai‘i, is focused on addressing these and related questions. Research themes include: women and economic transformation; women’s health globally; migration/refugee/migration experience; women and communities; militarism and global violence; domestic violence and victimization; gender, race and representation; global connections of indigenous peoples; and republication movements and international justice. We seek scholars from Asia-Pacific and other nations who wish to extend or initiate work on gender and globalization within an Asia-Pacific context. Work that spans and links diverse disciplines and addresses one or more of the themes will be particularly favored, as will work that speaks to audiences both inside and outside of the university. The University of Hawai‘i is uniquely positioned to support the cross-disciplinary study of the complex dynamics connecting gender and race to globalization. Our location at the hub of the Pacific Rim makes this an ideal site for bringing together scholars from around the world to study the complex and changing faces of globalization. The diverse ethnic and racial population of the islands, with its own complex history of western colonization and labor immigration from Japan, China, the Philippines and elsewhere makes Hawai‘i itself a microcosm of globalization within its own shores. Application Deadline is April 1, 2003. Detailed information and application materials available on the University of Hawai‘i Women’s Studies, Office for Women’s Research website at www.hawaii.edu, or contact Dr. Kathy Ferguson, Director, Women’s Studies Program, University of Hawaii, 2424 Maile Way, Saunders 722, Honolulu, HI 96822; Ph (808) 956-8835; Fax (808) 956-9169; e-mail kferguso@hawaii.edu.

Travel/Rentals

Carol Christ leads two programs in Greece: “Godless Pilgrimage to Crete” and “Sacred Journey in Greece.” Artemis Institute, PO Box 791596, New Orleans, LA 70179-1596. Phone/fax: (504) 486-9119; Email: institute@goddessarion.de; www.goddessari on.de.


Quaint Writer’s Cottage for Rent: Roseendale-Kingston area, 1/2 hour south of Woodstock, 1 1/2 hr from NYC. 1100 sf, $700/mo. Or weekend rental. 212.868.1934.

Sunny 1-Bedroom House for Rent: Roseendale-Kingston area, 1/2 hour south of Woodstock, 1 1/2 hr from NYC. 1100 sf, 1000/mo. 212.868.1934.

Miscellaneous

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Do you remember the first time you read Our Bodies, Ourselves? (Author: Herbert Kline University of Cincinnati) is conducting an online survey to document the impact of this book on women’s lives. To participate in the study, visit her website at http://oz.uc.edu/~paulink/.

If you’ve enjoyed this issue, be sure you don’t miss what’s in store for our regular readers: reviews of the latest books by and about women; authoritative comment and criticism; special theme issues every February and July; academic and other job postings; plus poetry, interviews, letters and an invaluable listing of new books.

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