

GENDER &  
WOMEN'S  STUDIES  
LIBRARIAN

# FEMINIST COLLECTIONS

A QUARTERLY OF WOMEN'S STUDIES RESOURCES



Volume 38  
Numbers 1-2  
Winter-Spring 2017

University of Wisconsin System

# Feminist Collections

## A Quarterly of Women's Studies Resources

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Volume 38, Numbers 1–2, Winter–Spring 2017

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# FROM THE LIBRARIAN

May 2017. The Office of the Gender and Women's Studies Librarian turns 40 this year! Back in 1977, the first Women's Studies Librarian-at-Large was hired to serve the University of Wisconsin System for what was to be a two-year trial period...and the rest is history — or as a certain generation of feminists might have chosen to call it, *herstory*.

Herstory or history, the interesting story of those 40 years is the foundation for this office's mission and work today. We're fortunate that our forebears kept thorough records and even wrote chapters and articles about those years. Here are some of the highlights:

By 1973, women's studies courses had begun to be offered at many University of Wisconsin System campuses. This movement was growing at a pace that encouraged then-Vice President for Academic Affairs Donald Smith to create a task force to consider creating whole women's studies *programs* on all System campuses. The task force's final report in 1974 recommended not only the creation of programs, majors, courses, and a Systemwide administrative structure, but also the development of a librarian position to offer bibliographic and research assistance in the area of women's studies.

Unfortunately, in the 1975–1977 state budget, the legislature denied a request to fund a women's studies librarian position. But the need for such a position only grew as more new feminist research emerged. In response to a 1976 conference, "The Development of Resources for Women's Studies," Vice President Smith approved funding for a two-year pilot program

that would hire the first University of Wisconsin System Women's Studies Librarian-at-Large.

In 1977, Esther Stineman (later Lanigan) was hired as the first Women's Studies Librarian-at-Large. During her tenure of about 18 months, Stineman visited each of the UW campuses, received grant funding to create

a slide and audio presentation on the importance of women's studies in the humanities and social sciences, and developed the first women's studies general resource text, entitled *Women's Studies: A Recommended Core List* (in 1979).

Linda Parker, the second Women's Studies Librarian-at-Large, was hired in 1979 and served until 1981. Parker too visited all of the campuses, compiled bibliographies, and developed materials that would quickly grow in usage beyond Wisconsin, throughout the U.S., and into other countries. The three journals the office still publishes today were started under Parker's leadership: *Feminist Collections: A Quarterly of Women's Studies Resources*, *New Books on Women and Feminism*, and *Feminist Periodicals: A Current Listing of Contents*. Parker also oversaw the acquisition of the office's first micro-computer and began offering an online search service.

After Parker's departure, Sue Searing was hired in 1982 as the third Women's Studies Librarian, the position by then having been made permanent and the "at-Large" designation dropped. Searing built on the solid foundation of the previous librarians by strengthening existing relationships and improving ongoing services. In 1987, she, Esther Stineman, and editor Catherine Loeb published an updated resource list titled *Women's Studies: A Recommended Core Bibliography, 1980–1985*. Searing also began creating a guide to nonprint resources in women's studies that would later become *Women's Audiovisuals in English* (WAVE).

(continued on p. 16)



# BOOK REVIEWS

## TRANSGRESSIVE APRONS: WOMEN CHALLENGING STRUCTURES OF POWER THROUGH FOOD

by Amy Reddinger

Deborah A. Harris & Patti Giuffre, *TAKING THE HEAT: WOMEN CHEFS AND GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE PROFESSIONAL KITCHEN*. Rutgers University Press, 2015. 246p. bibl. index. pap., \$27.95, ISBN 978-0813571256.

Aya Hirata Kimura, *RADIATION BRAIN MOMS AND CITIZEN SCIENTISTS: THE GENDER POLITICS OF FOOD CONTAMINATION AFTER FUKUSHIMA*. Duke University Press, 2016. 224p. notes. bibl. index. pap., \$23.95, ISBN 978-0822361992.

Toni Tipton-Martin, *THE JEMIMA CODE: TWO CENTURIES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN COOKBOOKS*. University of Texas Press, 2015. 264p. illus. index. \$45.00, ISBN 978-0292745483. (Podcast interview with author: select “Multimedia” at [utpress.utexas.edu/books/tipton-martin-jemima-code](http://utpress.utexas.edu/books/tipton-martin-jemima-code).)

It might seem trite to write about women and food. Women have been so wholly associated with the production of food in the majority of patriarchal human cultures that the relationship is often cast as natural and inherent. Indeed, the rhetoric of first- and second-wave feminism often promised to free women from the kitchen, equating the work of making food with drudgery or enslavement. This was the pretext, for instance, of Peg Bracken’s wildly popular *I Hate to Cook Book*,<sup>1</sup> published in 1960.

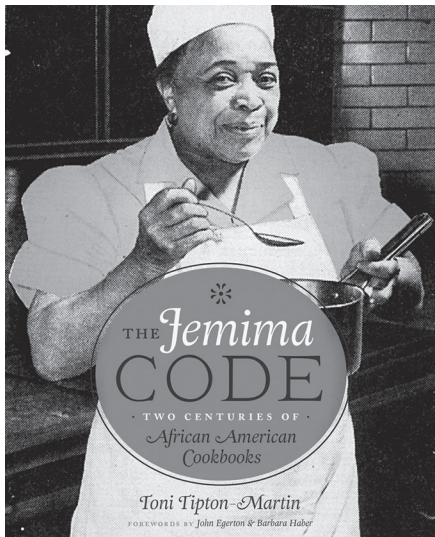
The intervening years have given us a more complex way of thinking about food and gender and their cultural significance. Food studies<sup>2</sup> began to gain visibility as a field in the late 1990s and early 2000s, yet it has only been in more recent years that a body of *feminist* food studies work has emerged. Feminist food studies investigates the deep gendered meanings coded into the domestic and public spheres in which women shop for, cook, and consume food. To dismiss women’s practice of and knowledge of foodways as insignificant reinforces larger structural gender inequity. Shopping for and making food can be a political act. And being a woman — especially a woman of color — who is also a skilled cook or professional chef is socially transgressive. This review looks at the material and political value of the work of women who make food.

Toni Tipton-Martin’s *The Jemima Code* is a vast and imposing coffee-table book that presents an overview of

more than 150 African-American authored cookbooks from Tipton-Martin’s personal collection. In the first of the book’s two forewords, John Egerton explains the historic significance of the collection: “In [a] span of over two centuries, an estimated 100,000 recipe collections made it into print — but only 200, give or take a few, were credited to black cooks and writers” (p. ix). Tipton-Martin’s framing for this collection is the reclaiming of black cookbooks as smart, significant, and inventive. She uses the term “Jemima code” as a way to think about and understand how the work of black cooks — and black women cooks in particular — was rendered insignificant in the broader culture. She points specifically to the Aunt Jemima trademark as an embodiment of the “mammy” stereotype, a visual and cultural reference that reinforces ideas of black cooks as unintelligent, crude, and submissive.

The body of Tipton-Martin’s text is made up of one-, two-, and three-page entries, each focusing on one particular cookbook. The entries are chronological by date of publication and feature images, recipes, historical context, and relevant commentary. Some exceptionally rare texts are included, such as Malinda Russel’s 1866 *Domestic Cook Book*, self-published by a free woman trying to fund her return home to Tennessee after the Civil War. Other books are more contemporary but no less obscure.

*Feminist food studies investigates the deep gendered meanings coded into the domestic and public spheres in which women shop for, cook, and consume food.*



The slim volume titled *My Mother Cooked My Way through Harvard with These Creole Recipes* is a little-known “affectionate tribute to a loving mother” (p. 135). And counterbalancing the lesser-known texts are some celebrity cookbooks: Pearl Bailey, Mahalia Jackson, Vertemae

Grosvenor, Elijah Muhammed, and Edna Lewis all make appearances here. As a cookbook collector and food scholar, I find it incredibly exciting to see this carefully curated collection as presented. The rare and lesser-known books are the true joy for me, especially meaningful because this lovely book is making visible black women’s labor, wisdom, and knowledge, which were previously unseen.

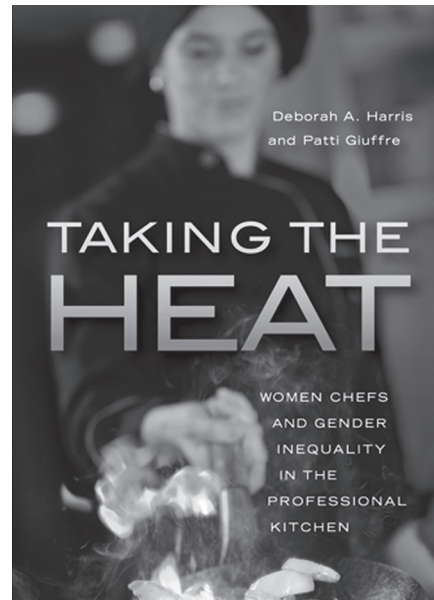
The book’s final chapter, “Sweet to the Soul: The Hope of Jemima,” focuses on the years 1991–2011 and functions as a coda to the whole work. Here Tipton-Martin offers the important reminders that as a society we are “not yet postracial” and that the racism that historically devalued the cookbooks in this collection still has a significant impact on black cooks and chefs. There is work to be done, she reminds us: “Black female food industry workers are still disparaged. Celebrity chefs and prominent authors are mostly men” (p. 221).

The work of women as professional chefs is the focus of Deborah A. Harris and Patti Giuffre’s *Taking the Heat*, a sociological study of media content that also includes in-depth interviews with 33 women in central Texas. Harris and Giuffre, investigating labor data from 2013 showing that only 20% of chefs and head cooks in the food industry were women (p. 3), tackle that gender disparity by looking at structural, organizational, and cultural issues that affect women’s entrance into and success in the culinary world.

Chapter 1, “Home versus Haute,” explores the powerful gendered disparity between home cooks (seen as mostly women) and professional and celebrity chefs (seen as mostly men). The authors analyze the history of the French *brigade de cuisine* system, which is based on military structure — an

inherently masculine system. They also argue that professional cooking is subject to “feminization threat,” defined as “insecure and unstable masculinity amongst men in jobs requiring them to perform female-coded tasks” (p. 9). Therefore, men in cooking fields must overperform masculinity to avoid being seen as feminine or feminized.

Where does this leave women trying to make it as professional chefs? According to Harris and Giuffre, such women have three choices: they can be bitches, girly girls, or moms. The authors’ interviews with chefs give voice to and deep context for how real women employ these three archetypes in the professional kitchen. The first approach to fitting in is an attempt to be “tough” by taking on the code of the hypermasculinized kitchen. Such behavior, however,



is read differently when women chefs exhibit it — they are seen as “bitchy,” mean, and uncaring. The second approach is to be a hyper-feminized girly girl — but women who do so risk being seen as soft and lacking in leadership skills. The third approach is the one most commonly taken: playing a “mom” or “older

sister” role. This type of woman chef is seen as stern, yet caring, doing what is ultimately best for those around her.

Mothers in the contemporary Japanese food arena are the subject of Aya Hirata Kimura’s *Radiation Brain Moms and Citizen Scientists*, an examination of the highly gendered world of negotiating food in post-Fukushima Japan. On March 12, 2011, the nuclear reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant were irreparably damaged as the result of a magnitude-9.0 earthquake the day before. Kimura begins by relaying the horror she experienced watching from Hawaii as her home nation faced the many-layered effects of the earthquake-tsunami. She then quickly shifts from personal to political and academic concern about the resultant radiation impact on Japan and beyond.

The world Kimura describes in this sometimes densely theoretical text is one in which neoliberal interest in protecting capital and the state greatly outweighs concern about the potential food-borne contamination of citizens. Kimura unpacks the complex intersections of postfeminism, neoliberalism, scientism, “disaster capitalism,” and the prevailing gender norms of women as cooks and caretakers in contemporary Japan.

One week after the nuclear accident, “the government announced that it had found contaminated foods, and subsequently ordered the governors of four prefectures to inspect shipments of spinach and milk” (p. 29). The immediate result of this announcement was nationwide panic about the safety of food, especially food produced near Fukushima. The Japanese government created testing standards that were highly criticized as being applied too infrequently and allowing higher levels of radiation than other nations and groups did. Kimura tracks the particular reactions of mothers who found the government’s response inadequate. Some of these women stopped buying food grown in Fukushima despite government assurance that it was safe to eat; some switched to buying imported food; and some created home-testing laboratories to verify food safety outside of government regulation. In response to the growing concern of these mothers, the government quickly undertook a national advertising campaign called “Eat to Support,” declaring that avoiding Japanese-grown food could have harmful economic repercussions. The women leading efforts to find radiation-free food were labeled “radiation brain moms” and dismissed and shunned as participating in *fuhyohigai* (harmful rumors).

One of my frustrations with this book was Kimura’s refusal to discuss the *actual* contamination levels in post-Fukushima Japan. More than once she declined to comment on the radiation data, indicating that it was not the focus of her work. While I understand her reluctance — the book is not a scientific analysis but

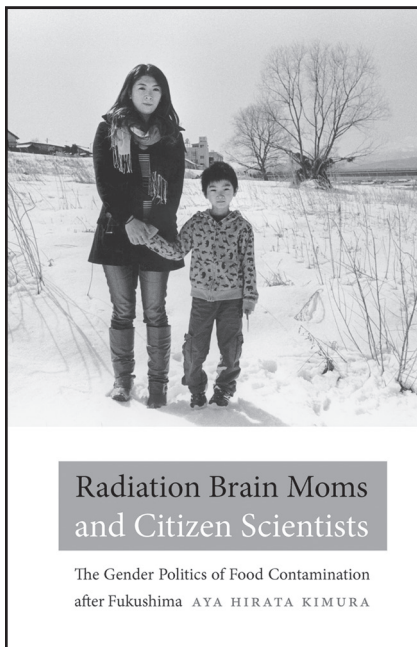
rather a women’s studies analysis of the ways that gender informed the various responses to this event — I found myself wondering more about the scientific truth of the situation. Were the “radiation brain moms” overreacting? Or was the Japanese government hiding dangerous levels of contamination to protect a fragile national economy? Where does the truth lie? Kimura’s rebuttal, which I find especially provocative in the U.S. political moment, might be that the important information isn’t radiation levels, but the work of women in resisting the dominant narrative. She reminds us that “subaltern people engage in actions that might not look like much but still chip away at the space occupied by authorities” and that this is a significant model for resisting the forces of neoliberal capitalism (p. 156).

Giving voice to women’s experiences vis-à-vis food is the thread that weaves all three of these texts together. The tenacity of black women working behind the name of a famous white restaurant owner should be read alongside the experience of a woman chef struggling to be taken seriously in her central Texas kitchen, and both should be understood in conjunction with the Japanese mom fighting to articulate comprehensive food safety standards that protect her children from unwanted contamination. All of these women are striving to be heard in a sphere that was historically — and, arguably, is still — dominated by men. The efforts to quiet their voices are important to notice, but what they are trying to communicate must be valued more.

#### Notes

1. In the introduction, Bracken promises a book for all the women “who want to fold our big dishwater hands around a dry Martini instead of a wet flourer” (p. vii).
2. I recently consulted food studies scholars Willa Zhen and Lucy Long about their perspectives on whether the field of food studies is emerging or has emerged. The conversation was fascinating — and too detailed to wholly reprint here. However, the consensus is that the field has shifted from “emerging” to “matured” within the last five years. Barbara Haber, in one of the forewords to *The Jemima Code*, writes that “the field of food studies is well underway” (p. xiii).

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# LESS WINNING THAN ITS MOTHER BLOG\*: A TAKE ON HOW TO WIN AT FEMINISM

\*Or, If You Have to Spend Six Weeks Trying to Like It, the Problem May Not Be You

by Katrina Spencer

Beth Newell, Sarah Pappalardo, & Anna Drezen (“presented by Reductress”), *HOW TO WIN AT FEMINISM: THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO HAVING IT ALL — AND THEN SOME!* HarperCollins/HarperOne, 2016. 224p. illus. index. pap., \$22.99, ISBN 978-0062439802.

What the actual book title should be:

***HOW TO MARGINALLY HUMOR YOUR WHITE FEMINIST, MILLENNIAL PEERS EVERY NOW AND THEN: THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO NUDGING PEOPLE WHO ALREADY AGREE WITH YOU — GENTLY!***

Overall Rating:	3/5 stars (see rubric)
Strengths/Saving Graces:	Beautiful design, very contemporary, successful imitation of genre literature
Weaknesses/Pitfalls:	Too long, clever but not funny, very much an echo chamber for white, cisgender, able-bodied, female, heterosexual feminists
Would I Recommend It?	Only to white, cisgender, able-bodied, female, heterosexual, feminist, first- and second-year college students. However, there are many people within my personal and professional circles who do not fit that profile.

What happens when you put three white, college-educated feminists, all under the age of 50, in a room and incite them to write satirical prose on the condition of women in the still-new 21st century? *How to Win at Feminism: The Definitive Guide to Having It All — and Then Some!* happens. For such a bold, all-encompassing title, one would expect the material to be relevant to a greater and broader scope of people. Is it smart? Yes! Is it funny? Occasionally. Is it incisive? Sometimes. Is it inclusive? Nope. Is it efficiently worded? Nuh uh. Will it sell? Moderately, I suppose.

This text, born from the womb of *The Reductress* — a blog that has named itself the only women’s satirical magazine — wants to be clever, contemporary, and politically “right” for its time. While this spoof on the women’s self-help magazine genre is regularly snarky, beautifully designed, and well promoted, it is also narrow in representing women’s experiences, self-indulgent, and too long. Printed in a shock of neon pink and bright yellow, *How to Win...* is less — well, less *winning* than its mother blog. It takes on feminism — a beast of a topic for any team of writers, given its inherent breadth — and manages to reinforce the idea that the

movement and its ideology belong to white, cisgender, able-bodied, heterosexual, et al. identifiers for feminine hegemony in the U.S. I’m a black woman reading it, and I could not feel more excluded from the discourse. There are two and a half pages (36–38) dedicated to intersectionality and another three dedicated to the idea of lesbianism (160–162). That’s just under 3% of the volume. In a blindingly self-aware moment, the writers admit:

If you’re not a cisgender white woman, you know that they don’t get this ally thing right 100 percent of the time (or even like 60 percent). (p. 38)

But perhaps what disappoints me — more than the lazy nods to black women via the inclusion of caricatures of exceptionally successful women like Beyoncé and Oprah — is how easy reporters, journalists, and critics have made it for the editors/compiler to dodge discourse about the ways this book fails. Despite having “reviewed” the book for mass audiences, not one of the following major publications has asked the *How to Win...* writers how they meaningfully

***Katrina's Growing & Convenient Rubric  
for Rating "Feminist" Works***

**5 stars:** *Does what it says it's going to do. Is the best of its kind within a genre. Is canonic. Recognizes/speaks to other greats within its field/discipline. Serves both academic and popular tastes. Aggressively engages diversity. Needs to be required reading material for collections, libraries, and courses. Highly recommended. Avoids pretentiousness.*

**4 stars:** *Meets most of its set obligations. Is commendable and inspirational. Is not a classic. Meaningfully and uniquely forwards the discussion on the topic it intends to treat. May fail in terms of accessible language/style. Represents, considers, and entertains a variety of voices and opinions.*

**3 stars:** *Has a wavering, unfocused/unsteady agenda, yet still offers multiple moments of redemption. Occasionally excludes/ignores significant discourses, audiences, and voices from its purview. Has some portions that are shareable, provocative, and interesting.*

**2 stars:** *Is significantly biased in ways that are archaic, obvious, and/or obnoxious. Reflects writing that is grammatically sound but substantially anemic. Is unoriginal.*

**1 star:** *Is blatantly ableist, anti-Semitic, classist, homophobic, intellectually inaccessible, Islamophobic, misogynist, racist, transphobic, etc. Willfully ignores and neglects significant, established discourses. Undermines the rights of a persecuted minority. Is shameful and/or uncivil. Does little if anything to forward or broaden the reader's thinking.*

include people of color, gender nonconformists, and anyone under the LGBTQIA umbrella: the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Magazine*, salon.com. For me, this line of questioning seems obvious and necessary. My cry, as of late, is that the media stop telling me that I do not exist. This book does little in the way of helping me with that agenda, and with such a broad platform from which to be funny, brave, and revolutionary, it seems irresponsible of the authors to shirk the opportunity.

Honestly, I struggled in creating this review because I sincerely admire the work *Reductress* produces on its website

and was so pleased to "discover" its pieces in my Facebook feed months ago. But, as Amazon reviewer "Katelynn" wrote on December 30, 2016, *How to Win...* reveals itself to be "[u]nreadable, a complete waste of time, a total disappointment and a frustration to finish." She elaborates:

I don't like spending a bunch of money and not finishing books, but this one was so irritating I almost didn't get through it. This book is the definition of "reaching." *Reductress* is great for cute, ironic little articles, but this was an entire book of not-funny, trying-too-hard IRONY and it was like pulling teeth.

I LOVE *Reductress*. I HATE this book.

Katelynn is mostly right. Katelynn's mostly right *and* she's pretty harsh, but honest. As I picked up the book over and over again, my search for meaning and resonance was laborious and painful. What I expected to be a delightful task became a weighty burden. And, since I come from the academic world of rubrics, I had to ask myself what my expectations were and what I was measuring *How to Win...* against. So I put together a list of what I think satire should be and do. The check marks indicate where the text suc-

**A Draft of an Ideal Satire Checklist  
(Courtesy of *Moi*)**

- Is humorous/makes the reader laugh with some regularity
- ✓ Is self-aware
- ✓ Is rooted in reality and able to mirror the audience's surroundings, environment, attitudes, society, etc.
- ✓ Is rendered with irony
- ✓ Is timely/contemporary
- ✓ Is recognizable/imitates a known form
- Is clever in its brevity and efficiency of delivering a message (short, pithy)
- Is enlightening and covertly persuasive/wins new recruits to the political movement/is written for a diverse audience that includes people who would not normally agree with the political sentiments/values being ridiculed
- Incites change/forwards a political agenda
- Is able to include traditionally marginalized members of society
- Avoids self-indulgence for the greater good of the work

ceeds, and the empty boxes signify where it does not. *How to Win...* succeeds in about half of the ways.

Aside from virtually erasing the diversity of identities represented by women and feminism, another problem the book has is its sheer length. Readers of *Reductress* expect pithy prose that can be consumed quickly during lunch, on the toilet, while waiting to pick up kids, etc. Consider, for example, “White Men Excited Things Finally Going Their Way for Once,”<sup>1</sup> “5 Men to Fuck before You Lose Your Birth Control in January [2017],”<sup>2</sup> and “Professional Outfits That Won’t Stop Men from Referring to You as a ‘Girl.’”<sup>3</sup> These posts — not one exceeding 500 words in length — allow readers to take in acerbic prose while in mid-multi-task mode. *How to Win...* does not lend itself to that type of consumption. The hefty print tome all but requires you to be sitting down and paging through its contents, which assumes that one has leisure, quiet, and stillness all at once — a rare luxury for modern women, the book’s foremost audience. Indisputably, one of the primary appeals of the website, then, does not translate to the book. Moreover, while the 200 pages certainly have shining moments — take the diametrically different morning and nighttime routines of self-care (pp. 50–51), “The Woman Who Literally Has It All” (pp. 102–103), and “How to Stick with the Dating Apps You Hate” (pp. 142–147) — too much of the book feels like monotone padding written to justify the publication of a print volume.

If we took out the filler and pared the volume down to a quarter of its size, we would finish with a potent manifesto representing the best of the best of its works. Sure, they would still represent an aggressively limited cross-section of women in the United States, but the caliber of the irreverent satire would be greater. It feels as though the editor should have engaged in one more round of slicing and left more pieces in the “no” pile. Which ones should *not* have made the cut? Plinky the Fairy Witch, a fictional character who accompanies the reader throughout the length of the text and provides a wry, rhymed conclusion to every chapter, accomplishes very little. The satirical ad for the “Real Women Have Lumps...Gym!” (pp. 60–61) encourages women to get a membership and pay to exercise at a mall, but ultimately presses them to value their bodies just the way they are. While effectively triangulating the irony of how consumerism and feminism intersect, the piece is unsuccessful because it is simply not funny. Also, a number of the features highlighting a variety of working women — including Megyn Kelly (pp. 111–112), who is erroneously identified as a Republican; Janet Hughes (pp. 114–115), a random woman who refuses to aspire to greatness; and a sloppily drunk Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (pp. 125–126) — are all lacking in luster.

It is curious that the last words in the book read as follows: “At the end of the day, we’re just a bunch of cute klutzes who wrote an effing book!” (p. 208). Something makes me suspect that the writers are acknowledging their shortcomings in a veiled and implicit apology. They know what they do well: write prose for an audience that looks like them, shares a similar background, and will applaud their efforts. However, that audience must fit within very strict parameters — it is not an audience that effectively represents the gamut of 21st-century women in the United States. In reviewing this book, reporters, journalists, and critics ought to be asking not only, “How does your work engage all women?” but also, “In what ways does it not? How/where/when/why does it fall short? What would an ideal tome/editorial staff/writing team look like?” It is no surprise that the three celebrity endorsements on the back of the book come from two white women and one who is multiracial: Janeane Garofalo, Lizz Winstead, and Aubrey Plaza, respectively. Could any woman of a markedly distinct background commend this book?

So, no, I do not widely recommend this book for purchase. If your predominantly white institution’s college campus has a gender and women’s studies center with a lounge, I *do* recommend a copy for the coffee table. The contents can provoke some thought and discussion in some young minds. But I would not recommend it for the multicultural center. Or for historically black colleges and universities. Or Hispanic-serving institutions. Or any other locale that primarily serves any of us grouped and/or labeled as “other.” It repeatedly denies our existence and inclusion in the feminist discourse and therefore is not really “for” us.

#### Notes

1. [reductress.com/post/white-men-excited-things-finally-going-their-way-for-once](http://reductress.com/post/white-men-excited-things-finally-going-their-way-for-once) (Nov. 14, 2016).
2. [reductress.com/post/5-men-to-fuck-before-you-lose-your-birth-control-in-january](http://reductress.com/post/5-men-to-fuck-before-you-lose-your-birth-control-in-january) (Nov. 15, 2016).
3. [reductress.com/post/professional-outfits-that-wont-stop-men-from-referring-to-you-as-a-girl](http://reductress.com/post/professional-outfits-that-wont-stop-men-from-referring-to-you-as-a-girl) (Oct. 24, 2016).

[*Katrina Spencer is the literatures and cultures librarian at Middlebury College. She came across Feminist Collections at the University of Wisconsin–Madison while she served as the diversity resident librarian there. For more information, visit her personal website, [www.katleespe.com](http://www.katleespe.com).*]

## CAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE BE A FEMINIST ACT?

by Amy E. Vidor

Patricia Melzer, *DEATH IN THE SHAPE OF A YOUNG GIRL: WOMEN'S POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE RED ARMY FACTION*. New York University Press, 2015. 352p. notes. bibl. index. \$35.00, ISBN 978-1479864072.

During the “German Autumn” of 1977, Jürgen Ponto, CEO of a major West German bank, was shot in his home during a failed kidnapping attempt by the Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion, or RAF). When the media learned that a young woman named Susanne Albrecht, the daughter of a Ponto family friend, had played a crucial role in the murder plot, panic spread. Journalists covering the murder searched for an explanation: What would drive an innocent young woman to be an accomplice in a violent political attack? An article in the newspaper *Die Welt* dramatically asked, “Must ‘every citizen’ reckon that one of these days he’ll be confronted with violent death in the shape of a young girl?” (p. 2).

The real question being asked amid the panic was whether *all* women were a danger to the patriarchy. Albrecht’s gendered deceit was not an isolated incident: half of the RAF’s members were female and committed acts of terrorism.

Can these violent political attacks be considered feminist? That’s the question Patricia Melzer poses in *Death in the Shape of a Young Girl*. Melzer, author of *Alien Constructions: Science Fiction and Feminist Thought* (2006), often engages with feminist theories and politics in her research by gathering together unconventional sources. This time, she turns to a case study of two terrorist organizations: the RAF (also known as the Baader-Meinhof Group) and an RAF ally group that called itself Movement 2nd June.<sup>1</sup> Operating underground in

Berlin from 1970 to 1998, the RAF adhered to a radical Marxist agenda, believing that political change could be achieved only through armed conflict with the state. The anarchist Movement 2nd June also operated in Berlin, although only from 1971 to 1980.

Melzer’s introduction and first chapter contextualize these organizations as alternative forms of resistance that developed alongside the countercultures of the 1960s. Explaining that the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG — but more commonly known in English-speaking countries as West Germany) modeled a Christian, heterosexual morality, which included a feminine ideal of “Kinder, Küche, Kirche” (children, kitchen, church), Melzer demonstrates how these conservative ideals were rejected by the women’s movement. Although lacking a coherent, unified ideology, the West German women’s movement was united and energized in its fight against various forms of male violence, including domestic abuse, sexual assault, and harassment, which were viewed as ubiquitous “tool[s] of social control to maintain patriarchal power structures” (p. 65). To combat patriarchal violence, women organized support networks, established rape hotlines, and created anti-pornography, anti-prostitution, and reproductive rights agendas. But in spite of its pacifism, Melzer argues, the women’s movement was blamed for fomenting the violence of the generation of women who

participated in the RAF and Movement 2nd June. These organizations developed as anti-authoritarian student protest factions with no direct connection to the women’s movement, but the desire for gender equality became conflated in the public’s mind with a desire to destroy the government.

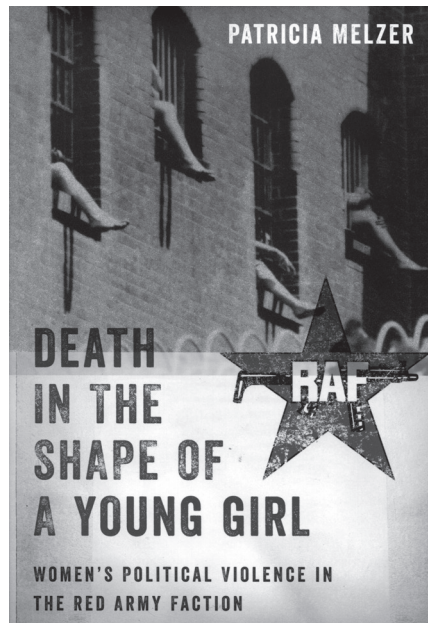
As Melzer describes in her second and third chapters, the fact that many of these militant women were also mothers further damaged the reputation of the women’s movement. While the women’s movement was advocating for reproductive and parental rights, members of the RAF and Movement 2nd June were seen as shirking their maternal duties by abandoning their children and terminating pregnancies. Motherhood was incongruent with life underground, let alone with armed resistance. According to Melzer, conservatives believed that woman’s “natural” destiny was already under siege. Pulling a woman out of the home, away from her children, and into the workforce was scandalous enough — but a woman willingly giving it all up to join an armed resistance was inconceivable. Militant women were cast as gender deviant, a “direct threat to the body-politic of the nation and as the ‘unnatural’ abject other of sanctioned, ‘natural,’ and pure German womanhood” (p. 110). The West German media sexualized the women, referring to them as “wild furies” and “terrorist girls” and displaying provocative images of them. That media mes-

sage is illustrated by the image on the book's dust cover: a black-and-white photo of dangling legs (presumably female) juxtaposed with the RAF's logo, a red star with the letters R-A-F in front of a machine gun.

While the media sexualized them, the women themselves sought to reclaim their bodies as tools of political agency. The fourth chapter considers prison hunger strikes as the corporeal manifestation of political subjectivity, whereby the striker is a feminized political subject and any attempt by the state to end the strike, such as force-feeding, represents a violation or rape of the subject. Melzer's argument that the "threat the hunger-striking body poses...and its strategic use...can be understood as a feminist gesture of political resistance" (p. 193) is well made. However, she seems to be arguing that hunger strikes *in general* are potentially violent feminist actions. It would be useful for her to provide concrete evidence that her examples of women striking are feminist.

The last chapter turns to life narratives and autobiographies to elucidate the intersection of the militant women's political activism with their feminist consciousness. Perhaps the most compelling site of Melzer's argument is the letters Gabriele Tiedemann exchanged with her friends and fellow activists during her 15 years in Swiss prisons. Like many of the "terrorist girls," Tiedemann joined Movement 2nd June at a young age. Her early letters signal a commitment to traditional Marxism, focusing on social inequality as stemming from class conflict, not from sexual difference. From this ideological framework, she initially rejects feminism for its radical (i.e., man-hating) and bourgeois factions.

Yet as Tiedemann matured behind bars, so did her understanding of feminism's relevance. In the company of her fellow female inmates, Tiedemann recognized an emotional solidarity that she felt existed only among women, noting, "We women are the better half of humanity anyway" (p. 222). Though she remained skeptical of feminism, Tiedemann eventually



acknowledged the importance of a political consciousness that includes both class struggle *and* patriarchal power. Her evolution illustrates the need for further research about the nuanced relationship between gender and feminist politics from the perspective of a militant woman.

Considerations of race and ethnicity are strikingly absent from these case studies, and Melzer acknowledges that lack, which is no doubt due to the homogeneous white membership of the RAF and Movement 2nd June. Melzer welcomes future intersectional scholarship that discusses the relationship of political violence to feminism.

Returning to her original question, Melzer concludes that if feminism is "a commitment to gender equality and/or the right of women to self-determination that is not homogenous" (p. 9), then surely feminist politics could include violent acts. The violent actions need not be consciously feminist, but if they contribute to a decentering of power, they could be considered potential feminist practices. This potential or grey area of "violent truth," to cite Jean-Luc Nancy (p. 11), is ultimately the subject of Melzer's research. Her work does not detail *specific* violent actions but is rather interested in the theoretical implication that such actions can destabilize the patriarchal state. Melzer refuses to affirm that the politically violent actions of the women of the RAF and Movement 2nd June *are* feminist practices, but she encourages others to ask how this uncomfortable conversation contributes to a wider understanding of challenging an existing gender order, and she reminds us that feminism is rife with potentially dangerous contradictions.

Note

1. Movement 2nd June was a guerrilla terrorist organization based in Berlin in the 1970s. It named itself for the date — June 2, 1967 — on which Benno Ohnesorg, a German university student and pacifist, was murdered by police during a protest of the Iranian shah's state visit to Berlin.

[Amy E. Vidor is a doctoral candidate in comparative literature at the University of Texas at Austin. Her research areas include memory, trauma, and gender studies; twentieth-century intellectual history; and francophone literature.]

## EXERCISING AGENCY: SEX WORKER ACTIVISTS

by Vanette Schwartz

Chi Adanna Mgbako, *TO LIVE FREELY IN THIS WORLD: SEX WORKER ACTIVISM IN AFRICA*. New York University Press, 2016. 245p. notes. bibl. index. pap., \$30.00, ISBN 978-1479849062.

African sex worker activists “fight for their right to dignity, to health, to work, to reject violence and discrimination — to live freely,” asserts Professor Chi Adanna Mgbako<sup>1</sup> in this report of her research among more than 200 sex workers in seven African countries: Botswana, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, South Africa, and Uganda (p. 195). Mgbako’s groundbreaking project champions the human rights and agency of these workers and documents their increasing activism.

The worker activists Mgbako encountered through her research have to fight against the age-old view of sex work as prostitution, and therefore as fundamentally different from other forms of work. The exchange of sex for money is illegal in many countries, viewed as immoral by many religious communities, and stigmatized in most parts of the world. The author points out that even some feminists do not regard sex work as legitimate work but instead consider all sex workers to be “trafficked” victims who need to be rescued from the trade. The reality is that some sex workers are trafficked, but not all are; some have simply exercised their agency and chosen this form of work. Mgbako outlines the major obstacles facing African sex worker activists, including the stigma of prostitution, the lack of recognition of their agency and rights as workers, and the criminalization of sex work.

In her travels and observations with sex worker activists, Mgbako saw firsthand the underlying poverty and social conditions in the countries she visited. Her interviews revealed

the desperate circumstances of many sex workers. Some came from lives of neglect or abuse; others worked at very low-income domestic jobs where they were abused by employers or not paid for their work. Many turned to sex work to survive when they could not support themselves or their families.

The interviewees also related tragic accounts of abuse by clients in the sex trade, from theft to beatings to murder; and by law enforcement officers, whose attitudes are often, “It’s impossible for a prostitute to be raped!” (p. 4). Police refuse to investigate crimes against sex workers, ridicule them when they try to file complaints, or ignore them even when they are seriously injured. Some police officers themselves physically abuse sex workers, steal their money, or demand sexual favors. Mgbako also found sex workers facing discrimination from health care workers. Clinics humiliate them when they come for help and refuse to treat them or provide necessary medications.

Mgbako’s research included transgender, queer, migrant, and HIV-positive sex workers who, because of their sexual identity or orientation, their country of origin, or their health condition, faced even more discrimination and abuse than cisgender, heterosexual, or healthy sex workers who were not migrants.

Mgbako reviews the history of sex worker activism, which began in the early to mid-1990s, concentrating her exploration of the movement in four of the seven countries where her research

took place. But she also acknowledges activist work in some 15 other countries on the African continent and reports that activism has developed most strongly in South Africa and Kenya. The Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Task Force (SWEAT), for instance, was formed in 1994, originally in conjunction with those addressing the AIDS crisis (p. 88). Initially operating through informal networks of individuals and small groups, sex workers supported each other, identified friendly health clinics (pp. 90–91), and developed ways to exercise their rights and protect the members of their community. After about 10 years, South African sex workers formed their own organization, Sisonke (meaning “togetherness” in Zulu, p. 89), and developed peer education programs to bring workers together to learn how to exercise their rights. Strong leadership in South Africa gradually meant the growth of the organization and its influence. In Kenya, a more grassroots approach (which also had its start in response to the AIDS crisis) involved advocates traveling from town to town to help local sex workers form rights groups.

The author also examines less well-developed activism in Namibia and Mauritius. A very strong and committed leader in Namibia, Abel Shinana, built an increasingly effective movement, but without a second tier of leaders, the movement diminished greatly after his death from an auto accident. In Mauritius, fear of discrimination and criminalization has kept

many sex workers from revealing their work, yet small supportive communities are beginning to spur the growth of activism.

Also discussed are the efforts of activists to join forces with other advocacy organizations, such as feminist, LGBT, HIV/AIDS, labor, and anti-poverty groups. Although connections with such groups can build support for sex workers, many mainstream advocacy movements are reluctant to have their causes tainted with the stigma of the sex industry. Convincing these groups of the benefits and strength to be gained by joining forces with sex workers remains a major challenge.

Mgbako analyzes the various methods sex workers use to move their cause forward, including cultivating nondiscriminatory health care and legal aid, promoting political reform, and educating the public to diminish

fears and emphasize the human rights of sex workers. Despite the growth of activism, however, strong opposition continues from anti-prostitution and anti-trafficking groups, from religious groups that regard sex work as abhorrent, and from political groups that consider sex work to be detrimental to national interests.

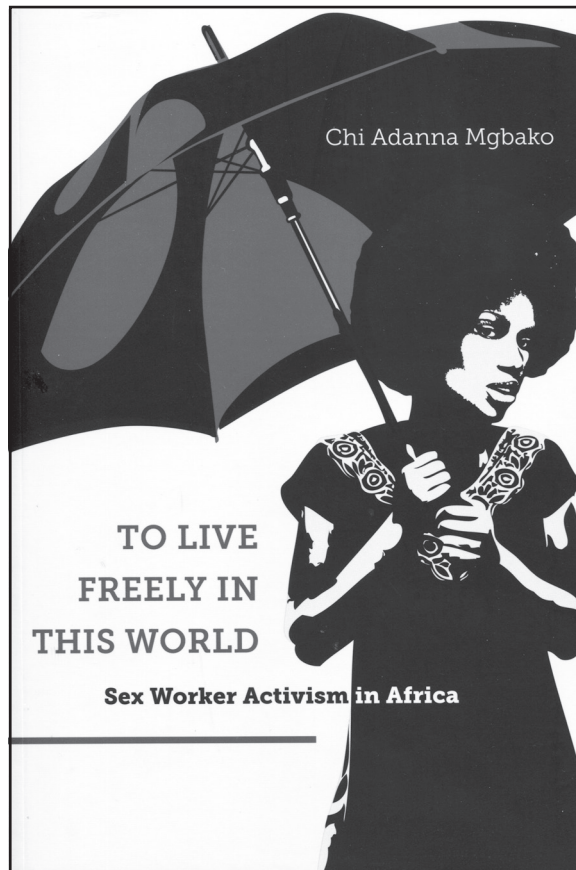
*To Live Freely in This World* is well-written and engaging. The author includes many notes and a lengthy bibliography of scholarly and legal sources. The greatest strength of the work, however, is the collective testimony Mgbako presents from transcribed interviews with a range of sex workers, revealing their determination and commitment to reach out to other activists locally and globally to move their cause forward. These first-person accounts, coupled with the author's perceptive

analysis of the methods and strategies for building activism, make for a profound work that enhances not only the study of sex workers in particular but also feminist scholarship in general. A vital addition to academic collections.

Note

1. Mgbako is a clinical professor on the faculty of Fordham Law School; she also directs the Walter Leitner International Human Rights Clinic at the Leitner Center for International Law and Justice.

[Vanette Schwartz is the librarian for sociology, anthropology, history, and social work at Illinois State University, where she also develops collections in women's and gender studies.]



## BRIEFLY NOTED

by Kellian Clink

Penni Mitchell, *ABOUT CANADA: WOMEN'S RIGHTS*. Fernwood Publishing, 2015. 234p. bibl. index. pap., \$18.00, ISBN 978-1552667378; ebook, ISBN 978-1552667507.

“Women’s history has a dual goal,” wrote Joan Kelly-Gadol in 1976: “to restore women to history and to restore our history to women.”<sup>1</sup> It is critical that young women know about the women who came before them — not just so they can appreciate and acknowledge them, but also so they can learn from the strategies of their forebears and find the courage to do what needs doing in their own time.

Young Canadian women can find plenty of women to learn from in this text, which is punctuated with recommendations for good reads, portraits of the trailblazers, pictures of women’s institute groups, mastheads of suffrage newspapers, and scenes from women’s protests. This volume is part of a series of books about Canada that includes poverty, immigration, and queer theory, to name but a few.

Penni Mitchell, who has been a journalist and columnist and is now the managing editor of *Herizons* magazine, knows how to tell a story, and this volume is chock-full of compelling ones gleaned from books, dissertations, brochures, and Canadian documents. Mitchell honors pioneers of all sorts, from the First Nations women who assisted the fur trade in their roles as brokers and translators to the onetime leader of the New Democratic Party, Alexa McDonough, who brought the party’s caucus to 30 percent female after the 1997 election. Both narrative and statistics are effectively used to tell the tales. The volume also includes complete bibliographic information for the sources from which the stories are drawn.

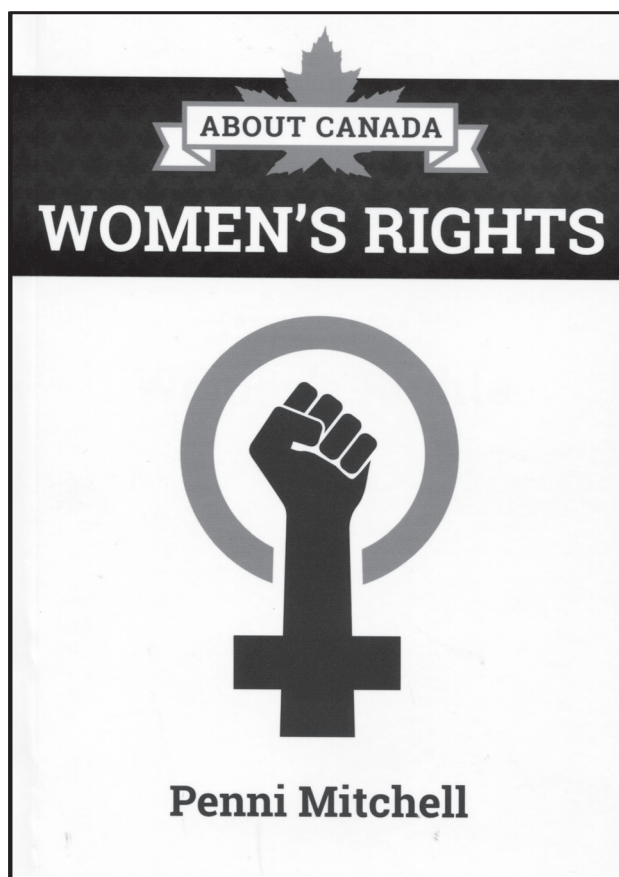
This book will fill some gaps for any Canadians who cannot name a woman in leadership who contributed to the rights they enjoy, as well as for women around the world who want to understand Canada’s particular story of the fight for women’s rights.

Mitchell does not just tell stories, however, or list only the triumphs and accomplishments of Canadian women; she also draws attention, if briefly, to the intersectionality of oppressions and injustices that still exist and the fights that lie ahead. The very last section of the final chapter, accordingly, is titled “A Woman’s Work Is Never Done.”

Note

1. Joan Kelly-Gadol, “The Social Relation of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women’s History,” *Signs*, v. 1, no. 4 (1976), pp. 809–823.

[Kellian Clink is an associate professor and librarian at Minnesota State University, Mankato, where she has been supporting the students and faculty of the Gender and Women’s Studies Department for almost three decades.]



# FEMINIST VISIONS

## RESISTING TABOOS AND SPEAKING OUT: SINGLE MOTHERS IN SOUTH KOREA

by Alynn Gordon

**BITTERSWEET JOKE: A FILM BY PAIK YEONAH.** 52 mins. 2011. Distributed by Icarus Films, Brooklyn, NY ([www.IcarusFilms.com](http://www.IcarusFilms.com)).

Single, never-married — or “unwed” — mothers in South Korea face systematic financial and social discrimination, receiving inequitable financial support compared to families who adopt<sup>1</sup> and experiencing social stigma that is even more unjust. According to a report in this film, “the social discrimination against unwed mothers is just as strong as ever...second only to homosexuals.”

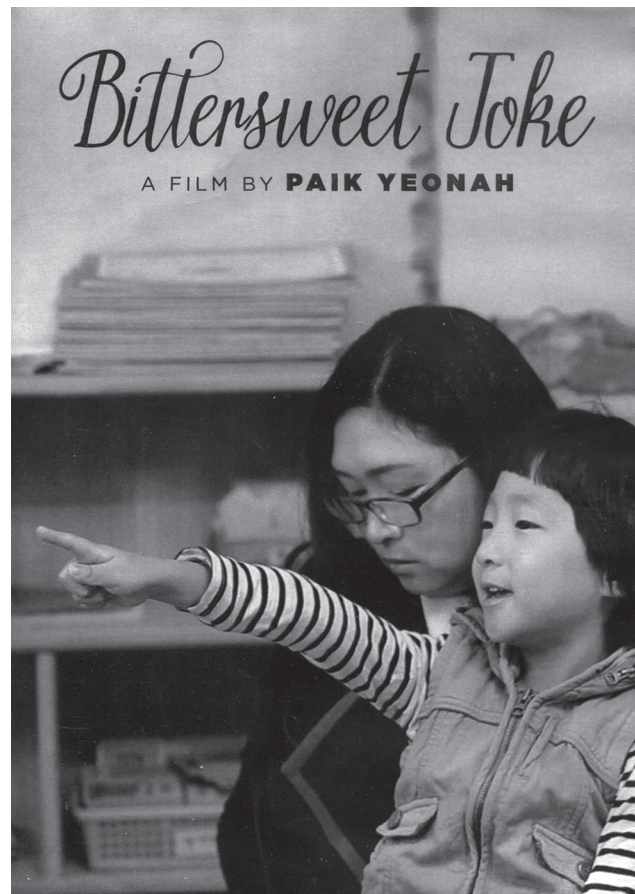
This documentary follows two never-married mothers — 27-year-old Hyunjin, whose daughter is a toddler named Taehee; and 40-year-old Hyungsook, who is raising her six-year-old son, Junseo.<sup>2</sup>

Taehee’s father refuses to see either the child or her mother; nor does he contribute financially. Before Taehee was born, the father and his parents had tried to convince Hyunjin to abort the pregnancy and even threatened her. Hyunjin raises Taehee while juggling classes, a social life, and the emotional burden of attempting to have her child’s father participate in their lives. She receives financial help from her parents and lives in a community house, the Welfare Home for Mothers and Children, where she is friends with several other single mothers. In a scene exemplifying Hyunjin’s situation, she carries a Cozy Coupe toy car through the streets as she attempts unsuccessfully to hail a taxi. She struggles along, hoisting the heavy plastic car through narrow doors, down long roads, and finally into her apartment, as taxis pass by and no one offers to help. Hyunjin is alone, unsupported, and frustrated.

Hyungsook, on the other hand, fights to make the public aware of discrimination against single mothers while also parenting her young son. She earnestly tells her story to people at conferences and events and even to strangers. She also protests with other single mothers and faces discriminatory attitudes head-on. In one scene, she publicly discusses a discriminatory remark someone made right before the conference she is attending. Hyungsook’s family members were the first to abandon her, and she has moved through a series of jobs and was even forced to close her own business because of the stigma of being a single mother. Like

Hyunjin, Hyungsook finds companionship among other single mothers at the community home. Unlike Hyunjin, though, she has somewhat of a relationship with her child’s father.

After receiving media attention for speaking at a conference, Hyungsook gets a stern phone call from her son’s father, who apparently did not like the public scrutiny; but Hyungsook declares, “I will do as I please.” This scene highlights not only Hyungsook’s strong, independent attitude but also the father’s selective insertion of himself into her



and Junseo’s lives. Toward the end of the film, Hyungsook takes Junseo to see his father, who, she learns, will be getting married. She explains to Junseo that he won’t be seeing his father as often as he does now. The father is stepping out of their lives in what seems like a permanent way.

In the community home, the women support each other emotionally, and their candid, sometimes humorous chats pepper the documentary. In one scene, Hyungsook tells a friend in the house that her brother believes she is “making the guy miserable” by being a single mother. Her friend echoes Hyungsook’s disdain for this attitude and says that she has heard the same remark from her own brother. Hyungsook says the belief is not gender-specific — both women and men think, “If the woman has the baby, she’s ruining the man’s life.” This belief, that women hold power over men through their reproductive capability, reminds me of Glick and Fiske’s work on ambivalent sexism: people believe women can be warm, nurturing mothers while also being harsh and vindictive toward men.<sup>3</sup> Research shows that ambivalent sexism is cross-culturally prevalent. Watching this film makes me wonder whether it is especially prevalent or entrenched in South Korea, which is known for its traditional family values.

As the film closes, one of the single mothers from the house sings a “beloved” Korean folk song about three bears — a mother, a father, and a baby — living together. The irony, as the filmmaker points out, is that bears don’t live as family units in the wild.

The “bittersweet joke” of the film’s title seems to be that while Korean society ostracizes women who choose to raise children alone and outside of marriage, the fathers almost always abandon the children and their mothers —

even though society perceives the mothers as ruining these men’s lives. The distance put between single mothers, their families, and society is exactly what makes their lives so difficult. *Bittersweet Joke* reminds the viewer that being a single parent is hard enough; being subject to such intense social stigma makes it even more of a challenge. These women just want to raise their children with the love and support they deserve.

Notes

1. Elise Hu, “South Korea’s Single Moms Struggle to Remove a Social Stigma,” on National Public Radio’s “Morning Edition,” May 11, 2015; [www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/05/11/405622494/south-koreas-single-moms-struggle-to-remove-a-social-stigma](http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/05/11/405622494/south-koreas-single-moms-struggle-to-remove-a-social-stigma).
2. See also, on the site *Hanguk Yeonghwa: The Home of Korean Cinema*, a Q&A with director Paik Yeonah and one of the featured mothers that took place after a December 2012 screening of the film in Gangnam District, Seoul: [hangukyeonghwa.com/category/interviewsqas](http://hangukyeonghwa.com/category/interviewsqas) (scroll almost to the end of this section).
3. Peter Glick & Susan T. Fiske, “The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, v. 70, no. 3 (March 1996), pp. 491–512; [dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.70.3.491](https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.70.3.491).

[Alynn Gordon is a social psychologist, marketing research associate, vocal feminist, and social activist. She enjoys writing feminist reviews of various forms of media and blogs about the social resistance she faces for being a feminist.]

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# E-SOURCES ON WOMEN & GENDER

“Considering gender may add a valuable dimension to research,” say the researchers at **GENDERED INNOVATIONS IN SCIENCE, HEALTH & MEDICINE, ENGINEERING, AND ENVIRONMENT**, an international project that began at Stanford University in 2009. Taking seriously the problems that stem from lack of such data — because “[d]oing research wrong costs lives and money” — the project collects empirical evidence that showcases the need for equal representation in scientific studies and “harness the creative power of sex and gender analysis for innovation and discovery.” A robust collection of case studies at [genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/fix-the-knowledge](http://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/fix-the-knowledge) shows how sex and gender analysis can be used in areas of research ranging from stem cell research to colorectal cancer and from HIV microbicides to climate change. A video and further case studies at [genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/innovations-in-design/cases](http://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/innovations-in-design/cases) show product developers how to increase market share through gender analysis. The project also seeks to document and close institutional gender gaps in employment, pay, and patent holding.

Focusing on the experiences and views of radical black feminists, **BLACK GIRL DANGEROUS** (BGD) ([www.blackgirldangerous.com](http://www.blackgirldangerous.com)) and its blog site ([www.bgdblog.org](http://www.bgdblog.org)) aim to “amplify the voices, experiences and expressions of queer and trans people of color.” They are “the brainchild of award-winning writer Mia McKenzie.” With exemplary critical thinking and wit, BGD examines racial relationships, often through the lens of LGBTQ+ rights. Willing to tackle subjects often underrepresented or even ignored in mainstream white feminism, its writers create “a place where we can make our voices heard on the issues that interest us and affect us, where we can showcase our literary and artistic talents, where we can cry it out, and where we can explore and express our ‘dangerous’ sides: our biggest, boldest, craziest, weirdest, wildest selves.”

After the historic Women’s March on Washington on January 21, 2017, which sparked worldwide demonstrations, there’s no better time to introduce the **WOMEN’S MARCH ON WASHINGTON** (WMOW) website at [www.womensmarch.com](http://www.womensmarch.com). Though much of it was created for the purpose of organizing the January event, the website contains information of archival value: plans for the march, information about the march’s creators, the movement’s mission statement, and details about the “10 Actions for the First 100 Days” campaign. Whether used in 2017 or looked back on from far in the future, WMOW’s site will have enduring political and historical significance.

**FIGHT THE TOWER**, a movement created to confront the reality that “universities, supposedly spaces of intellectual discoveries and critical investigations, in truth harbor the same societal biases that breathe life into discrimination, exclusion, and violence,” gathers the testimonials of women of color in academic positions, highlighting the prejudices they face as women, immigrants, people of color, or disabled individuals. Through their compelling manifesto and stories, these women highlight the need to observe and reform institutions. In addition, the site hosts a compilation of resources to help foster a better understanding of the issues at play, to compel action toward equity and diversity, and to build a community better able to facilitate change. Learn more about the movement at [www.fighttower.com](http://www.fighttower.com).

Archiving the stories of activists, workers, teachers, and families, **MIGRATION IS BEAUTIFUL** “highlights the contributions Latinas and Latinos have made to Iowa history.” Material on the site — an initiative of the Iowa Women’s Archives at the University of Iowa Libraries and developed by Janet Weaver and Hannah Scates Kettler — includes descriptions of historic periods for Latina/o migrants to Iowa, biographies of numerous individuals, and mapped census data showcasing the development of migrant communities in the state. Using interviews, archival data from the University of Iowa, and donated materials, the project hopes to “fill the gaps in the historical record” and create “[a] new understanding...that integrates the contributions of Latinas and their families into a more variegated narrative of Iowa history.” Learn more at [migration.lib.uiowa.edu/exhibits](http://migration.lib.uiowa.edu/exhibits).

A far more informal resource than the others covered in this listing, **FANGS FOR THE FANTASY** ([www.fangsforthefantasy.com](http://www.fangsforthefantasy.com)) reviews pop-culture media (literature, television, film, comics, and video games, particularly of the urban-fantasy genre) through a social justice lens, providing interviews with authors and delivering incisive, original essays on representation in pop culture. Though the tone is extremely informal — the project delivers humor along with analysis in a unique style — the content itself is varied yet consistent. Topics include the controversial petitioning of the Hugo Awards and the tendency for there to be only one strong female character in a piece.

*Compiled by Alex McKenzie (UW–Madison Information Specialist Intern, 2016–2017)*

# PERIODICAL NOTES

## STILL HIP AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

**HIP MAMA: THE ORIGINAL ALTERNATIVE PARENTING MAGAZINE.** 1993–2012; 2014–. Editor & Publisher: Ariel Gore. Undated issues, irregular frequency, print. Subscriptions: 3 issues for \$15.00 in U.S., \$25.00 elsewhere. Selected articles online ([www.hipmamazine.com](http://www.hipmamazine.com)).

The brainchild of “single, urban and feminist” mother Ariel Gore, *Hip Mama* — originally subtitled simply “A Parenting Zine” — was born in 1993, during the heady, prolific years of the zine movement.<sup>1</sup> We reviewed two early issues in 1996 in a piece by Angela Richardson titled “Come On, Join the Conversation!: ‘Zines as a Medium for Feminist Dialogue and Community Building.” Richardson praised the zine’s then-high-tech production quality (“*Hip Mama* looks as though it’s been laid out thoughtfully using a computer”) as well as the diversity of its contributors (“lesbian moms, women of color who are mothers, and teen moms”) and what might now be called its intersectionality (“the effort to discuss issues of class, race, sexuality, and gender”). Back then, *Feminist Collections* editorial style seemed to require an initial apostrophe in the term used to describe this independent, DIY sort of publication, but we had dropped that by the time we debuted M.L. Fraser’s occasional zine review column, “Zine and Heard,” in 2002.

Fraser reviewed the online version of *Hip Mama* favorably in the first round of her column, calling it a “little gem” in which there were “no new and creative snack ideas and no ‘parent trips.’” Furthermore, she reassured single, urban, feminist and maternal readers, “No one will make you feel guilty, and no one will tell you that you are doing it wrong,” unlike more mainstream parenting magazines of the time.

Gore published *Hip Mama* for 15 years, during which time she became an advocate for and a new face of (a rather in-your-face one) the often-reviled “welfare mom.” She also enjoyed what even the mainstream would deem success with some of the books that resulted from the zine, notably

*Essential Hip Mama: Writing from the Cutting Edge of Parenting and Whatever, Mom: Hip Mama’s Guide to Raising a Teenager* (both published with Seal Press in 2004). Then, while she was deeply immersed in caring for a new child as well as a dying parent, a collective in Oregon took over publishing the zine, but that group was eventually unable to continue. Gore then decided to repossess and relaunch *Hip Mama*, but still as a print publication. “[D]igital media isn’t

really Ariel Gore’s thing,” wrote her friend Inga Muscio in 2013. “Ariel Gore likes print. ‘Print Lives!’ is her new motto.”<sup>2</sup> The magazine started up again with a 20th-anniversary issue in 2014 (Issue #54), and at least three more issues have been published since. You can’t get the print content online, but the website does offer regularly updated digital-only material, such as these recent articles: “Incarcerated Uterus,” by Jennifer Baum (April 13, 2017); “My Mother and Porn,” by Susan Asher (May 10, 2017); and “When You Run with Milk Boobs,” by Shannon Brazil (May 23, 2017).

Fun fact: One of the “founding mamas” of *Hip Mama* was Shonda Rhimes. Yes, *that* Shonda Rhimes!



### Notes

1. In case you missed that whole heady heyday and wonder what the heck a zine is or was, see Ron Chepesiuk’s “Libraries Preserve the Latest Trend in Publishing: Zines,” *American Libraries*, 1997 (republished at <http://www.zinebook.com/resource/chep.html>).

2. Inga Muscio, “Ariel Gore and the Return of Hip Mama,” *Pyragraph*, May 31, 2013 ([www.pyragraph.com/2013/05/the-return-of-hip-mama](http://www.pyragraph.com/2013/05/the-return-of-hip-mama)).

*From the Librarian (continued from p. ii)*

My predecessor, Phyllis Holman Weisbard, began as the fourth Women's Studies Librarian in 1991 and served nearly 22 years before her retirement in July 2013. In addition to continuing the successful projects of the office, Weisbard also oversaw the conversion of WAVE from print to electronic resource, was invited as a visiting speaker by the U.S. State Department Centers in India, and, among many other impressive accomplishments, took on the implications of the "digital revolution" for the office's publications and services.

In our 40th year, I reflect upon this herstory with awe and a sense of enthusiastic responsibility as the fifth holder of the position now titled *Gender and Women's Studies Librarian*. You may have read about my journey to this position in an earlier issue of *FC*, but let me reiterate that this is my dream librarian job! I am so grateful to build on the amazing successes of my predecessors, to feel the support and encouragement of the current staff and administration throughout the System, and to have the privileged opportunity to grow and evolve within this unique position.

While the cornerstone projects of the office will continue, we have begun new projects as well, such as Wisconsin Women Making History and Women's Knowledge Digital Library, which seek to reach out to online users in Wisconsin and all the way to women doing imperative activist work on the ground in developing countries around the

world. Our international partnerships are growing, and I get increasing numbers of requests for assistance from outside of the state and U.S. We will never lose sight, though, of our local ties and our focus on the gender, women's studies, and LGBTQ studies programs of the University of Wisconsin System.

With this anniversary, we have rebranded our office, and in the coming year we will redesign our publications. As we look forward to even more changes, I invite you to join us in celebrating the first 40 years of feminist librarianship and see what the next 40 will bring!

*Karla J. Strand, M.L.I.S., D.Phil.*

Learn More

Marian J. Swoboda, Audrey J. Roberts, & Jennifer Hirsch, *Women on Campus in the Eighties: Old Struggles, New Victories* (University Women: A Series of Essays, vol. 4), 1993. Full-text PDF available from ERIC Institute of Education Sciences ([eric.ed.gov/?id=ED375773](http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED375773)).

*Transforming Women's Education: The History of Women's Studies in the University of Wisconsin System* (Office of University of Publications, for the University of Wisconsin System Women's Studies Consortium), 1999. Available from the University of Wisconsin Press (ISBN 978-0965883467).



*Miriam Greenwald*

# BOOKS RECENTLY RECEIVED

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

- THE ALL-AMERICAN GIRLS AFTER THE AAGPBL: HOW PLAYING PRO BALL SHAPED THEIR LIVES. Williams, Kat D. McFarland, 2016.
- BOTOX NATION: CHANGING THE FACE OF AMERICA. Berkowitz, Dana. New York University Press, 2017.
- BRILLIANT IMPERFECTION: GRAPPLING WITH CURE. Clare, Eli. Duke University Press, 2017.
- A CHEMICAL PASSION: THE FORGOTTEN STORY OF CHEMISTRY AT BRITISH INDEPENDENT GIRLS' SCHOOLS, 1820S–1930S. Rayner-Canham, Marelene, and Rayner-Canham, Geoff. UCL Institute of Education Press, 2017.
- CRITICALLY SOVEREIGN: INDIGENOUS GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND FEMINIST STUDIES. Barker, Joanne, ed. Duke University Press, 2017.
- CURATIVE VIOLENCE: REHABILITATING DISABILITY, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY IN MODERN KOREA. Kim, Eunjung. Duke University Press, 2017.
- DIMENSIONS OF MADELEINE L'ENGLE: NEW CRITICAL APPROACHES. Bray, Suzanne, ed. McFarland, 2017.
- THE EMILY FABLES. Dickinson, Stephanie Emily. ELJ Editions, 2016.
- FINDING FEMINISM: MILLENNIAL ACTIVISTS AND THE UNFINISHED GENDER REVOLUTION. Crossley, Alison Dahl. New York University Press, 2017.
- THE FLYING ADVENTURES OF JESSIE KEITH "CHUBBIE" MILLER: THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL AVIATRIX. Spicer, Christopher J. McFarland, 2017.
- GENDER BENDING DETECTIVE FICTION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED WORKS. Humann, Heather Duerre. McFarland, 2017.
- HEARTTHROBS: A HISTORY OF WOMEN AND DESIRE. Dyhouse, Carol. Oxford University Press, 2017.
- THE INVENTION OF ANGELA CARTER: A BIOGRAPHY. Gordon, Edmund. Oxford University Press, 2017.
- JANE CROW: THE LIFE OF PAULI MURRAY. Rosenberg, Rosalind. Oxford University Press, 2017.
- THE KAISER'S CONFIDANTE: MARY LEE, THE FIRST AMERICAN-BORN PRINCESS. Hutto, Richard Jay. McFarland, 2017.
- KATHERINE V. FORREST: A CRITICAL APPRECIATION. Betz, Phyllis M. McFarland, 2017.
- THE LEAGUE OF EXOTIC DANCERS: LEGENDS FROM AMERICAN BURLESQUE. Regehr, Kaitlyn, and Temperley, Matilda. Oxford University Press, 2017.
- LIVING A FEMINIST LIFE. Ahmed, Sara. Duke University Press, 2017.
- THE MARY DALY READER. Daly, Mary. Rycenga, Jennifer, and Barufaldi, Linda, eds. Preface by Robin Morgan. Biographical sketch by Mary E. Hunt. New York University Press, 2017.
- MOTHERING THROUGH PRECARIETY: WOMEN'S WORK AND DIGITAL MEDIA. Wilson, Julie A., and Yochim, Emily Chivers. Duke University Press, 2017.
- MURDER IN THE CLOSET: ESSAYS ON QUEER CLUES IN CRIME FICTION BEFORE STONEWALL. Evans, Curtis, ed. McFarland, 2017.
- OINK: A FOOD FOR THOUGHT MYSTERY. Newton, J.L. She Writes Press, 2017.
- THE PERSISTENCE OF GENDER INEQUALITY. Evans, Mary. Polity Press, 2017.
- PONYVILLE CONFIDENTIAL: THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF *MY LITTLE PONY*, 1981–2016. Connelly, Sheryllyn. McFarland, 2017.
- THE RABBI'S ATHEIST DAUGHTER: ERNESTINE ROSE, INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST PIONEER. Anderson, Bonnie S. Oxford University Press, 2017.
- REAPPRAISING JANE DUNCAN: SEXUALITY, RACE, AND COLONIALISM IN THE *MY FRIENDS* NOVELS. Rippetoe, Rita Elizabeth. McFarland, 2017.
- SELECTED POEMS OF ANGELA DE HOYOS. de Hoyos, Angela. Ventura, Gabriela Baeza, ed. Arte Público Press, 2014.
- SEPARATION SCENES: DOMESTIC DRAMA IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND. Christensen, Ann C. University of Nebraska Press, 2017.
- STRIPPED: MORE STORIES FROM EXOTIC DANCERS. Barton, Bernadette. Rev. and updated ed. New York University Press, 2017.
- SUPERHEROINES AND THE EPIC JOURNEY: MYTHIC THEMES IN COMICS, FILM, AND TELEVISION. Frankel, Valerie Estelle. McFarland, 2017.
- VIRGINIA WOOLF AND THE POWER OF STORY: A LITERARY DARWINIST READING OF SIX NOVELS. Blair, Linda Nicole. McFarland, 2017.
- THE WAYS WOMEN AGE: USING AND REFUSING COSMETIC INTERVENTION. Brooks, Abigail T. New York University Press, 2017.



## Women's Studies International

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

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**“First, WSI is the best database for indexing of women’s studies journals in terms of number of titles covered, dates of coverage, and number of citations available for each title. Even though the database does not provide full text coverage, Women’s Studies International is a superior database that indexes a large percentage of women’s studies core journals.”** *Project Muse — Scholarly Journals Online*, citing Cindy Ingold's review in *LIBRARY TRENDS*, Vol. 56, No. 2, Fall 2007 (“Gender Issues in Information Needs and Services,” edited by Cindy Ingold and Susan E. Searing), pp. 449–469. ©2007 The Board of Trustees, University of Illinois.

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