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From the Editor



Miriam Greenwald

Maybe you, like me, rely heavily on electronic devices and screens but still like paper and print. I even use a Kindle app to read some books and periodicals, but there's something to be said for text that is printed and bound attractively and doesn't require battery life.

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JoAnne Lehman

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Books

Turning the Tables: Black Women's Representation in Television

BY ALEXANDRIA CUNNINGHAM

Imani M. Cheers, *The Evolution of Black Women in Television: Mammies, Matriarchs and Mistresses*. (Focus on Television Studies.) Routledge, 2017. 122 pp. notes. bibl. index. \$70.00, ISBN 978-1138201644; ebook also available; paper edition forthcoming.

Imani M. Cheers, who in 2019 became the first African American woman to be promoted from assistant to associate professor at George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs, considers how historical stereotypes such as the mammy, jezebel, sapphire, and tragic mulatto can be altered and reimagined when Black women are in creative control of their own images and television representations.

Engaging such fields as communication studies, film and television studies, and Black feminist studies, Cheers emphasizes how Black women on both sides of the screen are breaking barriers by taking control of their image and voice (p. 6). Across four chapters, she tells a story behind the statistics about the complexity of inclusivity, representation, and the power of audience in driving content (p. 8). She prioritizes intersectional feminist analyses of race, class, gender, and lived experience, with Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought* (2000) and *Black Sexual Politics* (2005) at this text's center. Cheers contends that an increase of Black women in media ownership and creative executive roles over 35 years (1981–2016) was a catalyst for shifts in Black women's television representations that paralleled social changes in Black American women's lives from 1950 to 2016.

In the first two chapters, Cheers points out that media ownership

fails to wholly depict the relationship between Black female TV producers and writers, their programs (and characters), and diverse audience engagement (pp. 12–13). By introducing mass media conglomerates pioneered by Black women such as Catherine L. Hughes (Radio/TV One), Debra L. Lee (BET Networks), and Oprah Winfrey (OWN), Cheers unsettles an assumption of exclusive white-male media ownership and creative influence (p. 10). Beginning with largely Black-cast sitcoms in the 1970s, Cheers traces diverse representations of Black womanhood as intimately tied to Black women's access to creative control over imagery, language, and community (p. 17). Multidimensionality is necessary for both creatives and characters. Furthermore, intricate networks and relationships between Black female creatives facilitate unique opportunities across shows such as *A Different World*, *Living Single*, *Girlfriends*, and *Insecure* to begin to reimagine historical stereotypes in their respective eras. To quote Cheers,

That type of bond between Black women creatives and artists has led to more collaborations in video, television and film...a concerted effort by Black women in creative control to employ other Black women in particular, and women of color in general, on their creative teams. (p. 20)

Cheers traces diverse representations of Black womanhood as intimately tied to Black women's access to creative control over imagery, language, and community.

In Chapter 3, Cheers explores the salient complexity of the jezebel and the mistress. Nonmarried Black women have been celebrated since the early 1970s on shows such as *Julia*, *Good Times*, and *227* (p. 50), where “mistress” evoked a confident woman with authority, ownership, and options, not compromised by lack of a husband (p. 51). By the 1980s, imagery of Black female sexuality shifted in ways that aligned with building network empires. By the mid-2000s, networks such as MTV and VH1 sidelined their music video roots and became venues for reality television, with several shows created by largely white creative teams (p. 58). Reality TV introduced an image of Black women as loud, aggressive, angry, ratchet mistresses (p. 50). For example, Mona Scott-Young's *Love & Hip Hop* franchise is continually glorifying violent, ratchet behavior (p. 60). Cheers reads Scott-Young and Mariah Huq's *Married to Medicine* as a site of a shifting visual

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culture for Black women because of these women's limitless creative control and range of representation, both stereotypical and reality inspired.

Cheers concludes by considering Black women who made leaps of faith to become constantly evolving storytellers, creatives, and performers. Notably, she emphasizes that opportunity, often more than formal education and training, makes the difference in these women's lives and careers. Quite literally, Black female creatives bring other Black women and women of color through each generation within the industry writ large. "Skill, preparation, talent and integrity are critical," Cheers ex-

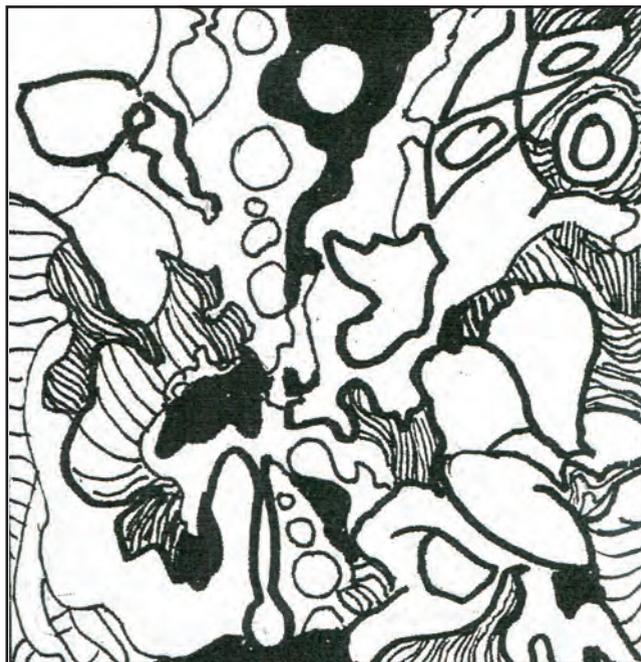
plains, "but without usually another Black woman in a position of hiring power, these women might have not been able to share their talent with the world" (p. 92).

Cheers indicates that a longstanding challenge for archives of Black cultural life is the lack of an exhaustive list of Black women in Hollywood. From the absence of a general database to a dearth of robust online encyclopedia pages, there is a void in institutional memory where this legacy should be gathered (p. 90). Her questions about audience, community, and memory leave a lasting impression. Compellingly, she positions social media — in the absence of mass

recognition and institutional archives — as a repository for the lifework of these Black women.

As a resource for women and gender studies, this text will draw readers in with its accessible language and broad, patient review of mass media culture. Cheers employs Black television favorites as diverse examples of America's lexicon and imagery for Black female sexuality. She advances a feminist quest to consider how Black women are a force — an evolving, agential force — in their own media representations. Boldly, she centers a powerful influence radiating from everyday women desiring to see themselves.

[Alexandria Cunningham, M.A., is a doctoral student in African and African diaspora studies at the University of Texas at Austin and a John Money Fellow at the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction. Her research explores Black women's sexual cultures through dance, including burlesque, striptease, and pole dance, in digital and material spaces.]



Miriam Greenwald

Brown-Skin Girl: Color and Racial Identity-Making

BY TIANA WILSON

Laila Haidarali, *Brown Beauty: Color, Sex, and Race from the Harlem Renaissance to World War II*. New York University Press, 2018. 349 pp. illus. notes. bibl. index. pap., \$35.00, ISBN 978-1479802081.

At the turn of the 20th century, African American women migrated to the urban North, and their increased visibility evoked varying responses from people committed to defining the New Negro woman as a modern, progress-oriented, and politicized subject. Historians have documented the ways elite and middle-class African Americans engaged in the “politics of respectability” as a practice of racial uplift and as a strategy to overturn the oversexualization of black women, but these scholars also positioned respectability as declining during the Depression years.

Laila Haidarali’s *Brown Beauty* demonstrates how new ideas of black womanhood looked different from those of previous generations, arguing that between the Harlem Renaissance and the end of World War II, “beauty eclipsed chastity and demure self-presentation as central tenets in cultivating the image of respectable middle-class African American womanhood” (p. 28). Haidarali explores how diverse groups of cultural producers used language and visual descriptions of brownness to craft a politicized racial discourse that connected race, color, gender, class, and modernity. Through the lens of brown complexion and feminized beauty, Haidarali unveils how African Americans

rejected older views of respectability such as domesticity and sexual purity and instead embraced mass consumerism, sexual pleasure, and individual self-expression. She traces the changing meanings of brownness by impressively utilizing a variety of printed sources, including essays, poetry, fiction, artwork, advertising texts, newspapers, and magazines.

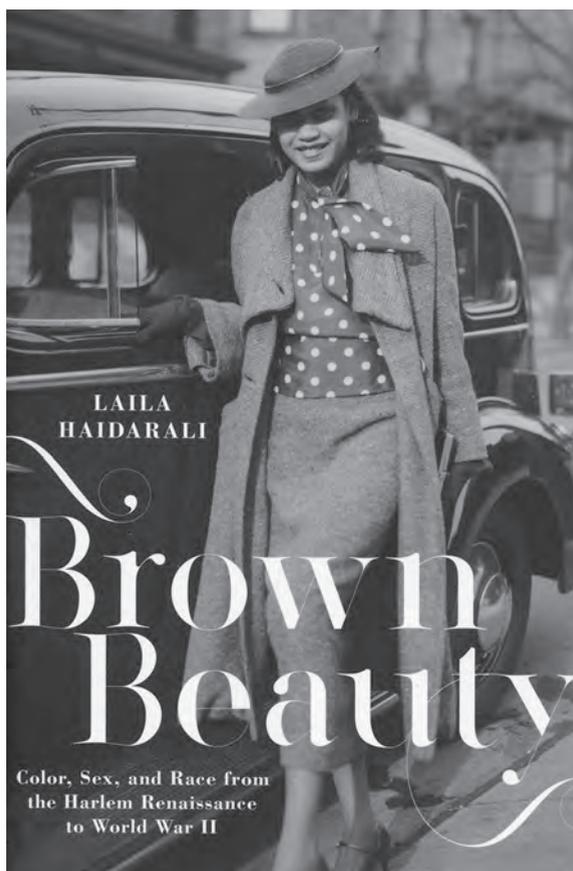
In Chapter 1 (“Brown Beginnings”), Haidarali offers a biographical sketch

of Harlem educator and essayist Elise Johnson McDougald and examines how McDougald theorized the New Negro woman of the 1920s. McDougald called for a new public imagining of African American women that focused on physical appearance, occupational status, and education as necessary forces in negotiating modernity and racial progress, and she described beauty as existing in a variety of brown skin

tones. As Haidarali makes clear, McDougald’s life work, which was featured in Alain Locke’s *New Negroes* (1925), showed the development of the trope of color as one important avenue for fostering a collective racial and gendered identity among middle-class African Americans of that time.

Chapter 2 (“Beautiful Brown Skin”) shifts the conversation to consumer culture, exploring how advertisements for dolls and cosmetics evoked the language of brownness to appeal to African American women and girls. In doing so, these marketing outlets played a role in cultivating a class-based notion of New Negro womanhood that centered social mobility through respectable labor, personal happiness through appealing to the opposite sex, and a feminized racial pride.

Haidarali continues with a close reading of different artistic



expressions from the Harlem Renaissance era, including photography, poetry, and literature. In Chapters 3, 4, and 5, she explores the emergence of brown-skin beauty through a variety of cultural avenues and highlights how African Americans used brownness as an intellectual space to foreground their growing transnational perspective of the New Negro. Haidarali assesses an array of brown-skin representations in Chapter 3 (“Of the Brown-Skin Type”), including the imagery of “Brown Madonna” that depicted the New Negro woman’s role as a mother; the “brown-skin mulatta” that uplifted the mixed-race gendered body in a heightened anti-miscegenation climate; and a more nuanced brown-skin womanhood that connected African-descended women to “other,” non-U.S.-born women of color. Haidarali teases out the contradictory messages within these various representations of brownness. On the one hand, categorizing different types of brown skin further divided social classes and racial backgrounds within the African American community; on the other, it feminized beauty beyond age in ways that united adult and youthful women.

Chapter 4 (“To a Brown Girl”) studies thirteen poets’ cultural production and examines how they used color as a poetic device and descriptor of African American complexion. Women’s poetry critiqued male sexism, gendered colorism, and intergenera-

tional conflicts about respectability. These artists rejected domesticity as their only purpose, advocating instead for public mobility in urban spaces and using brownness to describe pleasure and freedom.

Race leader W.E.B. DuBois’s novel *Dark Princess* (1928) is the primary focus of Chapter 5. The book revolves around an interracial romance between an Asian Indian princess and an African American man, both of whom DuBois describes as brown. Haidarali argues that DuBois employed brown to symbolize a color-based Afro-Asian solidarity that went beyond place and offered a broader conceptualization of the era’s race womanhood.

The final chapter of *Brown Beauty* takes up sociological studies by three prominent African American men in the first half of the 20th century — E. Franklin Frazier, Charles S. Johnson, and Charles H. Parrish — who all noted the importance of brown in the social attitudes and skin-complexion stereotypes held by youth. During the interwar period, they found old color hierarchy within the African American community, where light, medium, and dark-skinned complexions reflected elite, middle, and working-class socioeconomic statuses. Their studies also documented the gendered dimension to these rankings in that women encountered intraracial colorism more than men; women’s hair texture was an im-

portant physical marker of beauty as well. Despite the “high yellow” and “chocolate brown” stereotypes, Frazier, Johnson, and Parrish concluded that younger people viewed brown as the ideal skin color for women and positioned brown-complexioned people in a positive light. Their research supports Haidarali’s claim that brownness and femininity are useful analytical tools for assessing the social construction of African American womanhood.

Brown Beauty offers an alternative perspective on early 20th-century respectability politics and black womanhood that decenters domesticity and sexual trauma. Haidarali’s work engages instead with black women’s pleasure politics, the area in which black women claimed ownership of their physical bodies, defined their own beauty standards, and were active participants in mass consumerism. This is an important text that critically analyzes the historical roots of colorism and also posits brownness as a realm of self-acceptance and a fruitful framework for examining social, cultural, economic, and gendered differences. More broadly, this text speaks to the power of mass media in influencing the social construction of racial identities. It would make a great addition to undergraduate and graduate interdisciplinary courses in history, gender and sexuality studies, film and media studies, and ethnic studies.

[Tiana Wilson is a doctoral student in history at the University of Texas at Austin, where she is also working on a women’s and gender studies portfolio.]

Diasporic Memory and (Re)Imagining Home: Iranian Women's Memoirs

BY SARAH LEILA SAFARKHAN MOAZENI

Nima Naghibi, *Women Write Iran: Nostalgia and Human Rights from the Diaspora*. University of Minnesota Press, 2016. 224 pp. notes. bibl. index. pap., \$28.00, ISBN 978-0816683840.

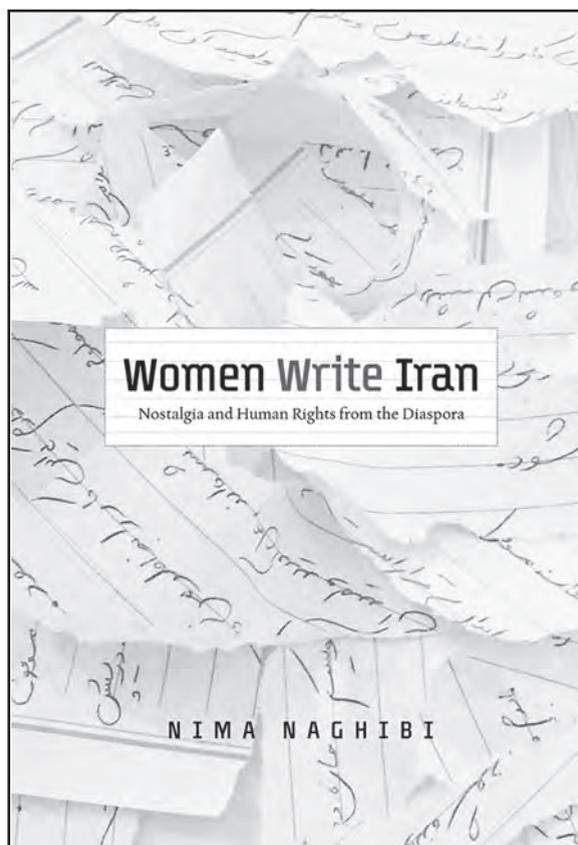
Writing to correct perceptions of Iranian women memoirists as simply ciphers for political positions, Nima Naghibi considers memoirs that reflect on significant political events from the Iranian Revolution of 1979 to the presidential election of 2009. I myself have at least four such memoirs on my shelves, from the humorous to the fictionalized. This explosion of recent texts, defined broadly to include film and online commentary as well as traditional print, is the subject of Naghibi's case study. Through the sudden rise in the number of such narrative works, the author explores why the Western market has been so receptive that it can bear the volume of these stories. She links this question to the apparent global diasporic urge to unpack and recount Iranian women's lives in the shadow of major political events from the last fifty years.

Naghibi identifies, and seeks to trouble, "suspicion of the genre in which [Iranian women memoirists] write and of their political motivations" (p. 6). To accomplish this, she shifts the timeline of the genre and therefore the sociopolitical focus of its content. Whereas much of the academic literature on this body of work identifies Azar Nafisi's 2003 memoir, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, as

the first major memoir and therefore connects subsequent works to the post-9/11 world, Naghibi argues that the genre has earlier roots.¹ By anchoring our understanding of Iranian women's memoirs to the rupture of Islamic revolution rather than to the diasporic tension and trauma of 9/11, Naghibi unveils decades of connection, identity formation, pain, and empathy tied to the real

and imagined pre- and post-revolutionary home. Throughout the book, Naghibi effectively illustrates how private longing and trauma from the revolution, as well as the loss of a remembered or hoped-for home, are made public through memoir. This public expression creates a collective memory of a different Iran for those who were present for the revolution, a diasporic memory for Iranians born abroad after 1979, and understanding and context for readers outside of the diaspora. This intervention rests on Naghibi's interest in a "circulation of emotions" that humanizes and communicates diasporic longing for an idealized home in the eyes of the reader (p. 11).

In a major break from previous work on this subject, Naghibi considers multiple forms of memoir in her study. The book begins with an analysis of the online discourse around the death of Neda Agha-Soltan during the 2009 Green Revolution. The sweeping empathic response to Neda, Naghibi argues, represented the global construction of a narrative of Neda's death as well as social media as an effective medium for shared diasporic expression and connection. By beginning the monograph with a story that online readers directly identified with (as attested to



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by the proliferation of digital “I am Neda” expressions), Naghibi very effectively argues for the humanizing circulation of emotions that she believes is central to this genre. Chapter 3 also considers a newer mode of expression in memoir writing — the documentary film. This chapter, paired with the previous one on prison memoirs, brings home the book’s argument that emotional resonance is critical in bearing witness to human rights issues and the trauma of revolution.

Women Write Iran is a well-crafted multidisciplinary work that would be useful to undergraduate students, graduate students, and scholars alike. Faculty assigning chapters of this book may find certain portions generative for film, mass media and communication, cultural studies, and writing students. Though Naghibi engages deeply and fruitfully with literature in many fields, undergraduate students will find her narrative understandable and particularly

useful when paired with the memoirs themselves. Scholars of ethnic literature, memoir, and diasporic studies will find Naghibi’s reframing of this subgenre helpful and enlightening. By broadening our view of memoirs to include alternative forms of media as well as anchoring the genre in memory of the revolution, *Women Write Iran* is a valuable contribution to the field and critical in understanding the development of Iranian women’s memoirs.

Note

1. Azar Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (Random House, 2003).

[Sarah Leila Safarkhan Moazeni is the research and instruction librarian for women and gender studies at Wellesley College.]



Miriam Greenwald

Doing It for Themselves: Women Graffiti Writers Past, Present, and Future

BY ALEXIS L. PAVENICK

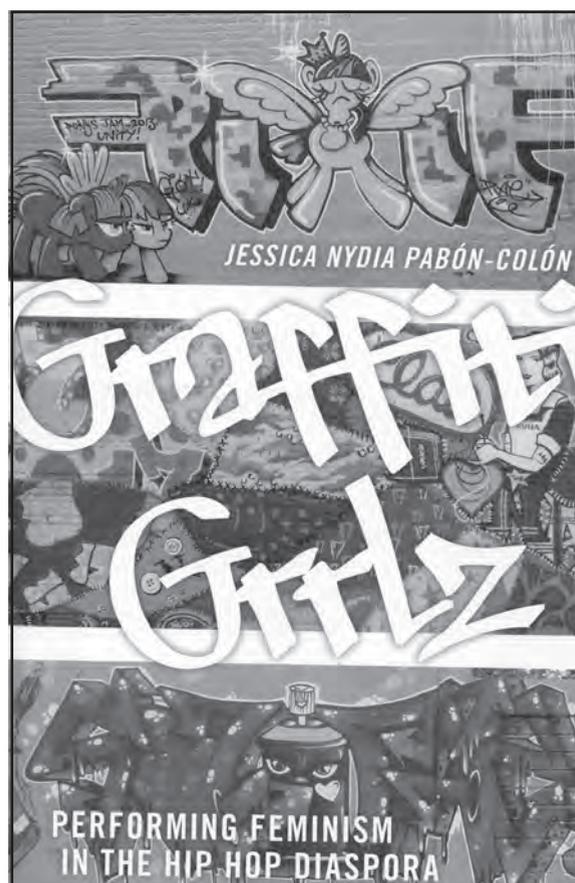
Jessica Nydia Pabón-Colón, *Graffiti Grrlz: Performing Feminism in the Hip Hop Diaspora*. New York University Press, 2018. 320 pp. bibl. index. pap., \$30.00, ISBN 978-1479895939.

Pabón-Colón successfully shows that women graffiti writers are fundamentally important to the development of the art, despite their exclusion and omission from historic and contemporary discussion of graffiti art and practice. The book blends several areas of content: feminist and queer feminist theory and praxis, analysis of graffiti culture derived from hip hop culture, and ethnographic interviews with over 100 women graffiti writers from 23 countries. Combining these areas, Pabón-Colón contemplates women's performance of graffiti as an expression of feminism. She suggests that women writers articulate a "feminist masculinity" in their use of graffiti writing as artistic expression, identity-making, personal empowerment, and community building. In making this claim, she refutes the notion that women writers are subjugated by participation in what has been historically and even currently seen as a cisgender masculine art. Pabón-Colón's "feminist masculinity" also reveals how women writers express themselves as strong and passionate about their identity as women without necessarily identifying as feminist. Lastly, she shows how many "graf grrlz" have moved the record of their writing into online communities, creating herstory to present the women missing from the graffiti record, while also complicating notions of the ephemeral nature of graffiti itself.

The book gives strong, clear evidence that the exclusion of women from graffiti history and culture was and continues to be based on sexism and the masculinized nature of graffiti subculture. Pabón-Colón compares and contrasts previous theoretical studies on hip hop and graffiti and on feminist and queer theory with the women writers' experiences of developing their craft and negotiating, as well as fighting, for respect and space to create among male writers. Race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, and

location all come into play in this analysis. Using all these layers, Pabón-Colón effectively shows how women writers perform and promote their self-empowerment through their writing, their ability to create alone or in groups, and their ability to take risks and create joy and pleasure for themselves and others.

Pabón-Colón says in the introduction that she uses a "mashup methodology" she believes works well with her own interdisciplinary work in queer feminist and hip hop studies (p. 17). As much as I deeply appreciate and want more mashups in academia, this approach at times feels slightly disjointed. If we do not know all the authors she cites in her address of feminism, queer feminism, and hiphopography, the discussions feel heavy and slightly detached from the excited, open, and vibrant record



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of the women's words recorded from interviews. For scholars who share Pabón-Colón's interests, though, the breadth and depth of her intellectual contemplation are powerful and convincing.

The interviews are what shine in the book. Pabón-Colón's in-person and digital ethnographic work over a long period of time enables her to give these women a space to be heard, not just in her research but also in events and forums she conducts and supports. Her sincerity and love of her work with these women is obvious and engaging. She lets the women speak to us, proudly and often, and we see a diverse and deep expression of women writers who each define women's power on their own terms. And sometimes they change their minds about it, too.

This book would be an excellent addition to a collection used by experienced scholars familiar with Pabón-Colón's multiple fields of interest, including feminism, queer theory, graffiti art and culture, hiphopography, and performance art. It likely will work best for third- and fourth-year undergraduates as well as graduate students in specialized programs. On the other hand, the interviews — which are beautiful ethnographic records of women who daily act on their own behalf and on behalf of other women — could be read by college students at any level. These personal accounts of self-reflection and creativity reveal the women's experiences of danger, competition, ownership, and development of their public identity, as well as the record of that identity across states and nations. The book overall is a rigorous, loving take on women's empowerment in a high-risk art.

[Alexis L. Pavenick is a senior assistant librarian at California State University, Long Beach. Along with her M.L.I.S., she holds a Ph.D. and an M.A. in English literature and an M.Phil. in anthropology. She is the librarian for English, classics, and comparative world literature, as well as for the Arnold T. Schwab Endowment Fund for LGBTQIA+ materials.]



Miriam Greenwald

Power: Black Women Fighting for Equality

BY REBECCA DAVIS

Ashley D. Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era*. University of North Carolina Press, 2017; pap., 2019. (Justice, Power, and Politics.) 288 pp. notes. bibl. index. \$29.95, ISBN 978-1469634371; pap., \$24.95, ISBN 978-1469654737; ebook also available.

Black power is not new to black women, as Ashley D. Farmer reminds us in this book focused on black women's involvement in the Black Power movement from 1945 to 1979. Using the "lens of the [domestic] working class" (p. 21), Farmer shows how black women used their strength and determination to make a statement and take a stand, following the teachings of Marcus Garvey and supporting events held by the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), which had a women's auxiliary. In addition to supporting UNIA, "black women radicals," as they were called, were instrumental in several other black organizations in the fight for political and economic power. Activists Claudia Jones and Alice Childress focused on using the strength of all black women and emphasized the fact that domestic workers — who were primarily black women — had led the fight for equal rights. Groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Southern Negro Youth Congress, the National Negro Congress, the Cultural Association for Women of African Heritage, UNIA, and many more were led and heavily supported by black women.

The next four chapters build on each other, with an emphasis on how black women were able to gain leadership roles within the Black Panther Party. "By and large, black women remained disenfranchised and barred from safe and fair housing, access to health care, and most educational and professional opportunities," writes Farmer. As the Black Panther Party pushed for more equality, so did black women (p. 54). Black women "created spaces in which to construct powerful images and ideas about black women's roles in party and political organizing" (p. 58). Women used their power, knowledge, art, and skills to found and lead new branches of the Black Panther Party

throughout the United States. They changed their image to show that they were more than mothers and domestic workers: they could take charge and lead while still handling all of the roles and work that came with being a woman.

As the 1960s began, there was a prominent shift toward connecting with African roots and focusing on and being proud of African culture. This began with the Congress of African People, where the focus was on "self-determination, self-sufficiency, self-respect, and self-defense" for African people everywhere (p. 93). During this time black women were still fighting for political, social, and educational equality while also making those cultural connections. There was a need to educate "our" communities here in the Americas and Africa and to be connected in our fight. The Third World Women's Alliance gave women an opportunity to learn from and with each other. Social justice issues in the Americas, Africa, and Asia were driving forces that brought women together and helped to create a sisterhood. While black women continued to work for more united communities in the 1970s, the movement became a joint effort embracing all women of color in the push for political, cultural, gender, and educational equality.

Students majoring or taking courses in African American studies, American history, women's and gender studies, or social justice would benefit from reading this book. Anyone with an interest in the role of black women and how they have organized, fought, and led organizations for equality would enjoy it. The history and background provide insight about the strength and power of black women in America and inspire us today, since many of the same issues continue to exist in the 21st century.

[Rebecca Davis is an assistant professor in the School of Library and Information Science at Simmons University.]

Research into the Lived Experiences of Legal Sex Workers

BY AMY TUREEN

Sarah Jane Blithe, Anna Wiederhold Wolfe, and Breanna Mohr, *Sex and Stigma: Stories of Everyday Life in Nevada's Legal Brothels*. New York University Press, 2019. 314 pp. notes. bibl. index. pap., \$30.00, ISBN 978-1479820702.

Part oral history, part autoethnography, this text explores the lived experiences of individuals engaged in or employed in professions adjacent to legal sex work in Nevada, the only jurisdiction in the United States where prostitution is legal. Pushing beyond the well-trod debate of whether prostitution should exist at all, the authors instead emphasize the issues of labor, stigma, secrecy, privacy, and discrimination within legal prostitution — issues that the authors rightly note are generally deemphasized in comparison with headline-grabbing news and analysis of the illegal sex trade. The study, which includes analysis of law and policy, interviews, ethnographic observation, and photographic documentation, is rooted in both organizational communication and feminist theory.

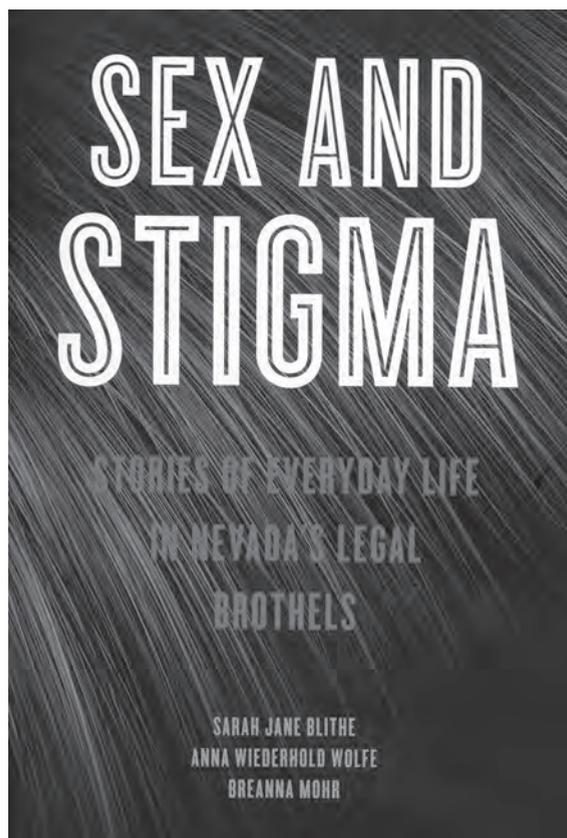
Perhaps the most intriguing element of the work's construct is the contribution of the third author, Breanna Mohr, a graduate student of both Blithe and Wolfe, who is herself a legal sex worker. The early material, detailing Mohr's "coming out" to her professors, her inclusion in the study, and both the moral and ethical implications of including a student researcher whose identity as a sex worker both provides access and calls for enhanced privacy and protection, is fascinating

and perhaps worthy of being developed into a book of its own. While Mohr's involvement undoubtedly enhanced access to members of the sex trade and likely facilitated more authentic responses to inquiries, it is her own reflections on her status as a scholar, student, and sex worker that are most likely to challenge readers' assumptions on the nature of Nevada's legal sex trade and those who are employed within it.

Sex and Stigma is organized into three parts, the first of which briefly covers brothel prostitution in theory and law. More of a refresher than a primer, this section will be primarily valuable to those new to Nevada brothel legislation and theoretical approaches to organizations, secrecy, and stigma. A particularly standout chapter is offered by guest author Mary White Stuart; her "Feminisms, Prostitution, and Sex Trafficking Debates" should serve as required

reading for those newly interested in the field of feminist approaches to sex work in the contemporary context. This chapter could easily be assigned reading in both undergraduate and graduate courses.

The second section of the work, titled "Living and Working as Legal Brothel Prostitutes," is what makes this volume unique. Drawing on interviews with eighteen brothel employees, these three chapters provide striking and uncommon insight into daily life within Nevada's legal sex trade. The aforementioned Breanna Mohr's solo chapter, "Author Ethnography: Life as a Legal Sex Worker," provides unique insight into her own introduction to sex work, the economy and ethics of sex work pricing, and her efforts to wrestle with sensations of fear, stigma, and



shame during a series of coming out moments in her academic and personal life.

The following chapter, “Life after the Brothel: Perspectives from Former Legal Prostitutes,” provides a great array of firsthand insights from a number of sex workers. In addition to text derived directly from the interviewees themselves, this chapter also provides summary findings that question not the sex trade itself, but rather the economics of the legal brothel model. The final chapter in this section explores the professional skills legal prostitutes develop, how the stigma associated with sex work limits skill transfer into more typical professions (sales, communications, social media and promotion, etc.), and how this limitation in turn has a long-term impact on individuals’ upward mobility both within and outside the sex worker profession. Content in this section is largely anecdotal but could serve as the springboard for future qualitative study.



Miriam Greenwald

The final section of *Sex and Stigma* explores legal brothel workers’ attempts to manage legal, occupational, and community constraints. The chapter “Managing Work-Life Commitments in Legal Prostitution” is of particular note for its fascinating, if somewhat shallow, dive into “lock-down policies” (brothel-enforced rules dictating when a sex worker

can leave the brothel), the pervasive myth that such policies are legally established by the state, and the role these policies have in framing legal brothel employees’ perception of the workplace and work/life balance (pp. 176–182).

This work offers interesting insight into the lived experiences of Nevada’s legal brothel workers and into various approaches to sex worker research. Libraries that serve women’s and gender studies programs with a strong emphasis on sex worker politics, at either the undergraduate or graduate level, could consider including *Sex and Stigma* in their collections. Faculty might be most interested in the preface, introduction, and Appendix B (“New Directions for Ethnographic Methods”) for insights on study designs involving sex workers and approaches to including the experiences of vulnerable student researchers in studies that require institutional review board approval.

[Amy Tureen is the head of the library liaison program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. In a previous career she was an English Ph.D. candidate with an emphasis in women’s writing.]

How to Teach Intersectionally: A Practical Guide

BY JULIA M. GOSSARD

Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks and Urmi Engineer Willoughby, *A Primer for Teaching Women, Gender, and Sexuality in World History*. Duke University Press, 2018. (Design Principles for Teaching History.) 164 pp. notes. bibl. index. pap., \$23.95, ISBN 978-1478000969.

On the first day of teaching a course at Utah State University called *Witches, Workers, and Wives: Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, I display an image on the screen from Book 5 of Andreas Vesalius’s “On the Fabric of the Human Body in Seven Books.”¹ I ask my 25 upper-division students to identify what they see. Giggles usually abound. One time a student so cleverly declared that the image was of a penis that it caused more laughter. After a couple more seconds, a brave student usually says, “I actually think it’s a womb.” What had upon first glance appeared to be a penis is an anatomical drawing of the female reproductive system from 1543. I like this opening-day activity because it begins the process of dissecting social constructions of gender and sexuality.

After reading Wiesner-Hanks and Willoughby’s *Primer*, however, I feel equipped to expand on the Eurocentric focus of my course. The authors have written a valuable resource on teaching, and in doing so they have inspired me to revise my course to include a more global approach, considering continuities and changes not only across a wide period of time but also across disparate regions. Wiesner-Hanks and Willoughby demonstrate that examining social constructions of gender and the body in early modern India or in modern China can help students further understand how far these categories are from static, fixed, and universal ideas. As a historian of childhood, gender, and sexuality in early modern France, I appreciate the ways this text stirred my pedagogical imagination from the get-go and helped me reconceptualize a course I have taught a handful of times.

In my case, the authors achieved one of their main goals, which was to help instructors “develop more coherent and thoughtful courses in the history of women, gender, and/or sexuality from a global perspective” (p. viii). Written in an approachable and clear tone, the book’s ten chapters have straightforward titles — for instance, “Choosing a Focus and Title: Women, Gender, or Sexuality?” and “Developing Assessments that Fit Your Course Goals: Tests, Papers, and Assignments.” Although readers can jump around the monograph and review just the chapters that

are most relevant to their needs, I would suggest reading through the entire book. The authors’ clear writing and attention to organization not only serve readers well but also reflect a conscious decision on their part to model best practices in teaching: be clear, concise, and organized.

A Primer for Teaching Women, Gender, and Sexuality in World History walks the reader through every aspect of course design, from establishing good learning objectives to determining what “historical thinking” is in relationship to gender, sexuality, and the body. Given the focus, this book should be required reading for first-time college-level instructors. Those preparing teaching dossiers and teaching philosophies for the academic job market, for tenure committees, or for general education boards will also benefit from reading this primer, as the authors help articulate the importance of a broad-based humanities education. In an era when the humanities are being defunded, we must learn how to express, in concise and accessible terms, what the benefits of these subjects are to our students. *A Primer for Teaching Women, Gender, and Sexuality in World History* provides an exceptional guide.

Whether in choosing a focus, organizing class readings, or designing activities that build historical empathy, Wiesner-Hanks and Willoughby emphasize that intersectionality is key. While they make it clear that any course can (and should) incorporate a gendered analysis, it is not as simple as “add women and stir.” Instead, instructors should “approach topics intersectionally and with an emphasis on multi-vocality and diversity” (p. 20). The authors suggest that being clear about what is meant by “women,” “gender,” and “sexuality” in a particular course can establish expectations and guiding questions for the students, although it is important to remember that these categories can be “called into question” throughout the semester (p. 20). Additionally, they remind instructors not to take race, ethnicity, and social status for granted in relationship to gender and sexuality (p. 50). When such categories are seriously considered, women, gender, and sexuality become much more complicated, with power

dynamics changing. Intersectionality, then, must infuse the content and scope of a course that examines women, gender, and sexuality from a global perspective.

Even while advocating for a strong intersectional approach, Wiesner-Hanks and Willoughby question, in Chapter 4 (“Incorporating Key Issues”), the role of theory in courses. Some theory is necessary, they suggest, but it should always be presented with ample context. They warn teachers never to include theory just for the sake of itself, and never to assume that students have learned how to apply theory to the subject. Instead, resources like McCann and Kim’s *Feminist Theory Reader*² are recommended to introduce students to “major themes, theories, and concepts” (p. 43). Furthermore, the authors urge instructors to show students “how to read...particular texts with certain theoretical positions in mind” (p. 43). In this way, theory and content supplement one another.

Wiesner-Hanks and Willoughby repeatedly encourage instructors to show their students how to analyze gender and sexuality. At times, though, they need to embrace their own advice and provide comprehensive definitions and examples. For instance, they strongly advocate incorporating “feminist pedagogy” into courses but do not define the term. Although they hint that it means having a democratic and inclusive classroom, feminist pedagogy is a much larger pedagogical framework than that. In a few sentences, Wiesner-Hanks and Willoughby could have provided more nuance and explained that feminist pedagogy includes a wide variety of practices, including but not limited to rejecting all normative power standards; existing, teaching, analyzing, and interacting without binaries of any sort; and creating a dynamic classroom

where students are equal stakeholders in the learning process. Mentioning “feminist pedagogy” without defining what it could look like in a variety of course and classroom settings does not help those unfamiliar with the pedagogical framework.

A more thorough discussion of feminist pedagogy would have made a wonderful transition to Chapter 10 (“Connecting with the Community”), in which the authors are keen to point out that lessons about women, gender, and sexuality should not be limited to the classroom and that connections with local community leaders, advocates, and organizations are essential for applying knowledge and effecting change. For many, especially instructors at land-grant universities, community engagement is a prized but often overlooked aspect of academia. Being able to connect students and scholars with the wider public benefits all parties. What do you do, though, in a community that is hostile to gender and LGBTQ+ issues? The authors’ discussion fails to consider the possibility that a community may resist this type of collaboration. They give examples of projects that could happen, but they could have provided more careful guidance to instructors located in places where community engagement might result in intense pushback.

Despite these shortcomings, *A Primer for Teaching Women, Gender, and Sexuality in World History* is an excellent resource for instructors. Graduate educators should require their students to read this practical guide before constructing syllabi. It encourages instructors to rethink their learning objectives, reframe the scope and content of their courses, and take an active role in the incorporation of gender, sexuality, and women in world history.

Notes

1. Andreas Vesalius, *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, 1543; www.wdl.org/en/item/19493.

2. Carole R. McCann and Seung-kyung Kim, eds., *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives* (Routledge, 2013).

[Julia M. Gossard is an assistant professor of history at Utah State University, where she is also Distinguished Assistant Professor of Honors Education and the Bennion Faculty Fellow. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on the history of early modern and modern Europe. Her research examines the history of children, youth, and gender in 18th-century France.]

The Gendered Experience of Nationalism and Its Public and Private Expressions

BY GAYATRI DEVI

Vera Hildebrand, *Women at War: Subhas Chandra Bose and the Rani of Jhansi Regiment*. HarperCollins India, 2016; Naval Institute Press (international edition), 2018. 344 pp. notes. bibl. index. \$29.95, ISBN 978-1682473153.

Copiously researched, this book, even though it has limitations, is a valuable addition to our growing knowledge not only about women in the military, but also about the gendered experience of nationalism and its public and private expressions. Through historical records, archival research, and personal interviews, Vera Hildebrand chronicles in great detail a relatively minor movement in the Southeast Asian theater of World War II: the creation of an all-women combat infantry in the 1940s, by Indian independence leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, with women from the Indian diaspora in Singapore, Malaysia, and Burma. Bose named his unit the Rani of Jhansi Regiment of the Indian National Army (RJR), after Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, an Indian woman who had fought and died in the 1857 rebellion against the British Raj. As Hildebrand explains in her introduction, diving into the history of the “Ranis,” as they were known, is particularly important because of the position of women in contemporary India: “Because the creation of an Indian all-female regiment of combat soldiers was a radical military innovation in 1943, and because the role of women in today’s broader context of Indian culture has become a prevalent and pressing issue, the extensive testimony of the surviving veterans of this unit is timely and urgent” (p. 1).

Using computerized telephone directories and internet searches to locate interviewees, Hildebrand conducted “semi-structured cultural anthropological research interviews” (p. 8) with the surviving 30 of the regiment’s approximately 600 original Ranis (p. 203), asking each one about her “experiences while serving as a soldier in the Rani of Jhansi Regiment in the Indian National Army, as well as her life before she enlisted” (p. 7). Hildebrand also interviewed Indian and Japanese soldiers and military

personnel associated with Bose’s Indian National Army (INA); and she presents reports from the interrogations by the British Intelligence Service of captured and defecting INA soldiers — a hitherto unpublished and unique body of privileged evidence. These primary and secondary sources make for fascinating reading on an eccentric sequence of events in India’s independence struggle against Britain.

The book’s 16 chapters take us through discussions of varying depth and substance, from women’s status in India and the diaspora to the ideological divide between Gandhi (who promoted nonviolent resistance) and Bose (who supported armed uprising); from the formation

of the INA under Bose in Southeast Asia to questionable alliances with the Japanese and even Hitler; and from the recruitment, training, and routines of the Ranis in the RJR camps to the Allied defeat of the Japanese in Burma and the

retreat, disbanding, and trials of Ranis and INA soldiers by the British. The earlier chapters reveal the sociopolitical and gender hierarchies from which young women — often teenagers — of the Indian diaspora in Singapore, Malaysia, and Burma were persuaded to enlist in the women’s combat regiment by Bose and such recruiters as Captain Lakshmi Swaminathan, who appealed to their power as women to free their nation and chart a course of autonomy for themselves. Space prevents a detailed discussion of every chapter, but certain events, such as the death of Ranis Josephine and Stella in Chapter 13 (p. 178), highlight the general precarity that surrounded the undertrained Ranis in the muddy jungles of Burma under enemy fire.

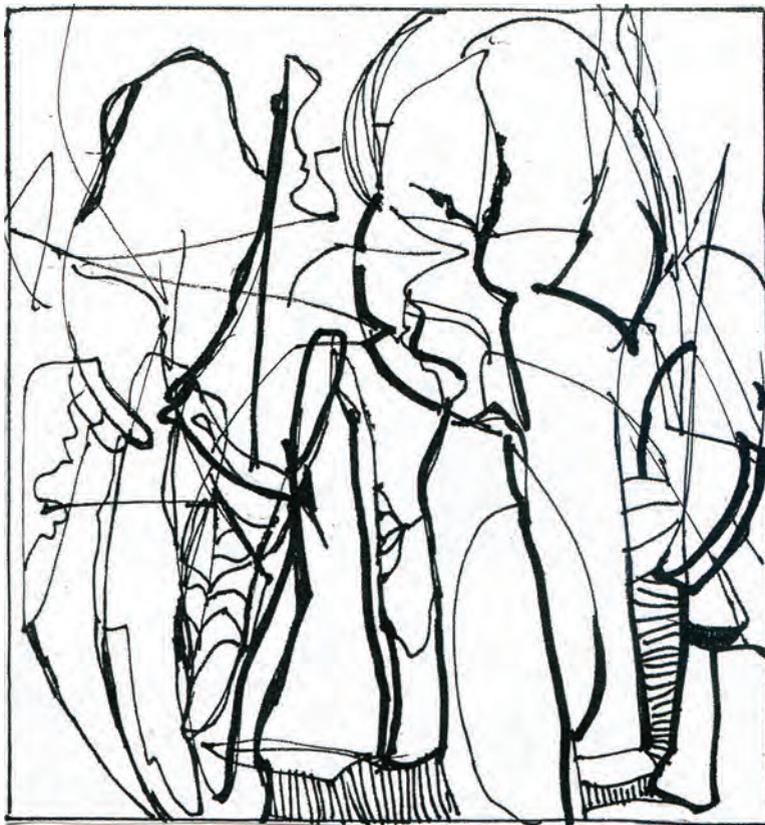
Hildebrand writes in an expository style, reporting facts, dates, events, and people with little analysis or interpretation. While this might indicate the objectivity of a

These primary and secondary sources make for fascinating reading on an eccentric sequence of events in India’s independence struggle against Britain.

social scientist, the expository voice flattens the emotional terrain of what could be a more fascinating discursive text that explores complex questions: Why would teenage girls follow a charismatic male leader to live in the jungle for two years under horrible conditions to liberate their nation? We currently hear stories of young women from the United Kingdom and the United States moving to Syria or Iraq to join the fight against Western forces. How do we understand such phenomena, whether in India in the 1940s or in the Middle East now? Are these women au-

tonomous agents taking charge of their personal freedom, or are they proxies for patriarchy's agenda? Is nationalism good for women? Who benefits from nationalism? Such questions might logically occur to any reader of this book, but Hildebrand does not explore them. If she did, her research into the Indian Ranis of the anti-British regiment would be directly relevant to current insurrections and nationalist movements and their gendered expressions in different parts of the world.

[Gayatri Devi is an associate professor of English and women and gender studies at Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania.]



Miriam Greenwald

It's All Reproductive Politics, Stupid!

BY EMMA SCHUSTER

Laura Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics: From Welfare Reform to Foreclosure to Trump*. University of California Press, 2018. (Reproductive Justice: A New Vision for the 21st Century.) notes. index. pap., \$24.95, ISBN 978-0520299948.

The thesis of Laura Briggs's newest book is in its name. Briggs shows in detail how the most pressing political issues of our time — welfare, immigration, gay marriage, etc. — are reproductive politics at their heart, as well as how many of the issues we think of as solely existing in the sphere of reproductive politics — such as artificial reproductive technologies (ARTs) and infant mortality rates (IMRs) — are inextricably tied up with broader political and economic contexts.

To understand Briggs's broader analysis, it is useful to look at her individual chapters. In all of them she centers not only reproductive politics but also the continuous fallout of the U.S.'s turn to neoliberalism and the shredding of the social safety net in the late 1970s and 1980s. The first chapter details this economic change, and the second focuses on the notorious hallmark of neoliberalism: the stripping of welfare benefits that took place in the 1990s. Briggs's point here is that a neoliberal state does not value reproductive labor — particularly when the people doing that labor are imagined to be Black women (as with the welfare system), but also more broadly. The economic precarity forcing all middle-class parents into the workforce does not care about the need for reproductive labor in homes.

In the U.S. this need is often addressed by hiring immigrant women, Briggs observes in her next chapter. Following many scholars before her,¹ she describes the global care economy as an extractive economy, similar to the neoimperialist extraction of minerals or other natural resources from parts of the Global South. Even with the creative and meaningful solutions people in the Global South use to survive, children of mothers who have immigrated to the Global

North — responding to the demand for reproductive labor in the U.S. — often experience a shortage of care.

At other points, Briggs undertakes more of an “inside out” analysis, arguing that issues seemingly only about reproductive politics — the disproportionate IMR in Black communities and the rise of ARTs — speak volumes about politics on a broader level. IMR is a statistic used to measure not simply its literal objective

but the general health of the population, as the primary determinant of infant health is the health of mothers. Briggs urges that a disproportionately high IMR in Black communities in the U.S. speaks to the debilitating effects of racism and poverty on health. The increased use of ARTs, Briggs argues, says less about the choice of (mostly white, middle-class) women to postpone childbearing in order to prioritize their education and careers and more about the increasing financial need to do so in order to have enough money to raise children. This “structural infertility” is a product of neoliberalism.

Next Briggs reminds us that both proponents and enemies of gay marriage appealed to arguments that centered reproductive politics — the conservative Right claiming that gay people could not successfully raise children and mainstream LGBT



activists arguing that we needed marriage in order to do so. Briggs agrees with many scholars² who see the goal of “marriage equality” to be a neoliberal one in itself: “the purpose of gay marriage is to privatize dependency” (p. 181).

Briggs closes by linking the foreclosure crisis to reproductive politics. Predatory lenders disproportionately targeted single mothers, often Black or Latinx, for subprime loans because of their economic precarity; many

could not get home loans elsewhere, and any difficulty in paying back such high interest rates was profitable for lenders. Briggs sees the national disgust for “the subprime borrower” as parallel to earlier vehemence for “welfare queens”: in both instances the reaction was racialized, and it said everything about whose reproduction the U.S. valued (or not).

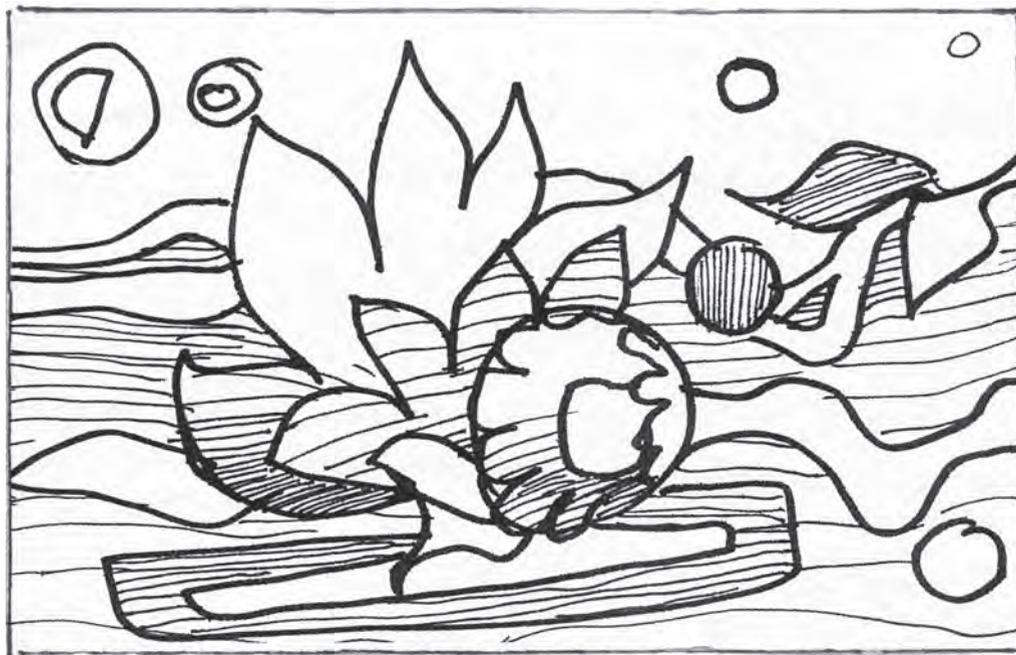
Briggs handles complex politics clearly and straightforwardly. Her text is well-suited for academics and activists alike. Briggs’s argument that

such disparate issues can be viewed as matters of reproductive politics is convincing, and less of the text is devoted to why we should focus on seeing them in this particular, unified way. This choice opens up potential conversations, and I look forward to seeing what readers do with her broad analysis and what organizing opportunities and coalitions arise when we take up her generative way of looking at politics.

Notes

1. See the work of Grace Chang, Mary Romero, and countless others.
2. See the work of Lisa Duggan, Katherine Franke, and many more.

[Emma Schuster is an M.A./Ph.D. student at the University of California, Santa Barbara, who writes about queer families, reproductive justice, and the now-adult children of the “gayby boom.”]



Miriam Greenwald

Popular Feminism Can Hurt the Cause

BY NABEEHA CHAUDHARY

Sarah Banet-Weiser, *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny*. Duke University Press, 2018. 240 pp. notes. bibl. index. pap., \$25.95, ISBN 978-1478002918.

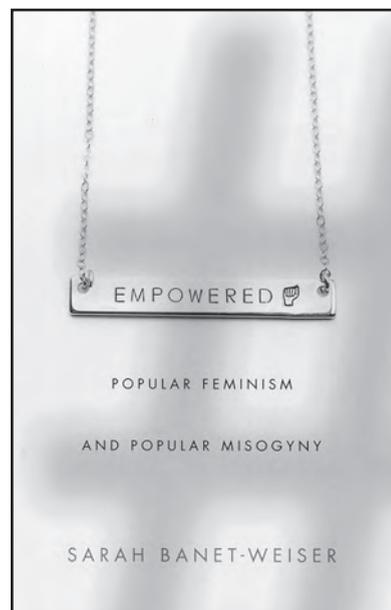
Sarah Banet-Weiser presents a bold and compelling argument about the harmful aspects of popular feminism. Using a variety of case studies that look at corporate social responsibility campaigns, strategies of girls' rights organizations, the situation of female workers in the technology industry, and more, she shows how a commodified and "safe" version of feminism has gained more visibility and popularity (p. 16). Feminism that emphasizes the critiquing of structures and institutions, on the other hand, struggles to gain the same kind of visibility and often gets pushed aside in spaces where it most needs to be seen. As a result, Banet-Weiser argues, when popular feminism becomes *the go-to* feminism, it actually boosts popular misogyny, and the two "engage in a battle for dominance in the economy of visibility" (p. 64).

Whereas popular misogyny has been successful in "inserting itself in policy and legal discourse," Banet-Weiser claims, popular feminism often stops short, making mere awareness of an issue its end goal (p. 33). Creating awareness by making issues visible is important for activism, but visibility

or popularity as the main objective of activism, instead of as simply a starting point, is problematic.

Banet-Weiser compares and contrasts the mechanisms of popular feminism and popular misogyny and compares popular feminism to postfeminism, claiming that the two are really not as different as they may seem. She explains the place of popular feminism within neoliberalism and analyzes the exploitative self-esteem and self-confidence industries that have gained traction in its wake. She also deconstructs and discusses such concepts as individual versus collective politics and toxic geek masculinity, as well as the idea of "empowerment" itself, in captivating and informative ways.

Banet-Weiser's straightforward writing style makes for a relatively easy read; the book deserves to be part of any library collection related to gender and women's studies (GWS). The author avoids needless jargon and circuitous arguments while providing substantial and concrete examples throughout, making the text quite accessible for non-academics. This could be a valuable teaching resource for multiple disciplines (including but not limited to GWS, media studies,



development studies, and business studies), for both undergraduate and graduate teaching, if handled appropriately — the text's major arguments contradict many popularly held beliefs or opinions, so finding the right teaching approach is crucial. This text could also help large-scale organizations — as well as individuals interested in women's rights, structural change, and national/international policy concerns — to evaluate the merits of various kinds of activism.

[Nabeeha Chaudhary is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Radio-Television-Film at the University of Texas at Austin and an avid public scholar.]

Bewitching the Narrative: The Witch and Modern Feminism

BY JOAN JOCSON-SINGH

Kristen J. Sollée, *Witches, Sluts, Feminists: Conjuring the Sex Positive*. ThreeLMedia, 2017. 200 pp. bibl. \$16.95, ISBN 978-0996485272.

Something “marrow-deep” is exactly what Sollée sets out to investigate in this exploration of the concepts of witchcraft and feminism. Delving into a variety of feminist issues, such as the policing of the feminine body as well as toxic masculinity and its problem with feminism, Sollée weaves an intimate and detailed telling, through both a historical and a cultural lens, of the liberated woman as witch.

Beginning with the portrayal of witches in media, using the example of Disney’s *Maleficent* (p. 7), Sollée creates a narrative in which the concept of witch lives in a sex-positive herstory. The book’s cumulative chapters are a primer, a foundation, defining the concept and tracing its history back to its medieval roots. For the feminist undergraduate or scholar, defining witch and its relation to more contemporary reclamations like the word “slut” marks the word’s evolution from being negatively rooted historically to being positively celebrated in the present. Sollée argues that the witch is every woman; this notion results in a complexity of narratives from a community of free women (p. 15).

In “Political Witch: Rebellion and Revolution,” Sollée discusses the work done by nineteenth-century

In the face of oppression, the witch reminds us what we can and have overcome, and illuminates the path to power beyond patriarchy. As we undress the legacy of the witch to reveal her potent history, we may in the process uncover something marrow-deep within ourselves. (p.150)

suffragettes whose intersectional feminist work paved the way for contemporary feminists who are reclaiming witch ideology. She then segues into the origins of W.I.T.C.H., a political activist group whose acronym was reinvented at every new protest (p. 53). Like their suffragette predecessors, the members of W.I.T.C.H. battled sexism and misogyny in politics and society.

Further on, Sollée highlights the undeniable ties between the concept of witch and female sexuality

and reproductive rights, citing a consistent thread throughout history of body shame and control. While Sollée’s intention is to build upon a historical engagement and theory of witches and feminism, some of her chapters seem a little enigmatic, lacking a deeper engagement with her theories. Seemingly disparate chapters regarding witch history and feminism are bound together solely through Sollée’s themes of feminism and liberation. Pointedly, Sollée sums up by emphasizing that WITCH = liberation, and that this liberation is very much from the patriarchal constructs of society that have so often limited the movement of women.

The book ends with more ethnographic aspects of Sollée’s work — a witch survey and excerpts from her interactions with women who identify as witches. These vignettes are perhaps the best part of the book, offering a personal and diverse perspective about being a witch and a feminist today. Although Sollée considers her book to be nonscholarly, it could serve as a primer text for enthusiasts of feminism and the occult and also as a good addition to gender studies and feminist library collections.

[Joan Jocson-Singh is an assistant professor and the head of technical services at the Leonard Lief Library at Lehman College. She is the author of “Vigilante Feminism as a Form of Musical Protest in Extreme Metal Music,” *Metal Music Studies*, v. 5, no. 2 (June 2019).]

From Classic to Current: Inspiring Essays on Feminism

BY KARLA J. STRAND

Mallory Farrugia, ed., *The Future Is Feminist: Radical, Funny, and Inspiring Writing by Women*. Chronicle Books, 2019. 144 pages. \$24.95, ISBN 978-1452168333.

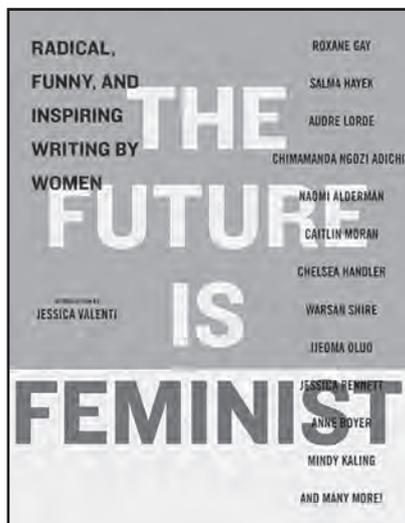
We've all heard the saying or seen the T-shirts: "The future is feminist!" Now we have the book to confirm it.

Between these brightly colored covers are 21 essays about feminism's past, present, and future. Some classic and some new, they are framed by a brief but valuable introduction by feminist writer and Feministing blog cofounder Jessica Valenti.

The first piece, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Feminism but Were Afraid to Ask," is a perfect primer. Rachel Fudge, who originally wrote the piece for *Bitch* magazine, explains various types of feminism, feminist movements, and feminist ideologies, including liberal feminism, womanism, suffrage, the ERA, postfeminism, radical feminism, and more. This piece sets an appropriate tone for the remainder of the collection, one that honors the history, complexities, and evolutions of feminism and its adherents.

The volume includes classic essays such as "Ain't I a Woman," by abolitionist Sojourner Truth; "I Want a Wife," by activist Judy Brady; and an excerpt from a longer work by the legendary Audre Lorde. These are

cleverly interwoven with contemporary pieces such as "Harvey Weinstein Is My Monster Too," by actor Salma Hayek; "Not Here to Make Friends," by Roxane Gay; and "12 Things about Being a Woman That Women Won't Tell You," by Caitlin Moran.



Essay topics vary from beauty standards and capitalism to online trolls and sexual harassment. It's a nice touch to add Warsan Shire's brilliant poem "Ugly" to the collection. Writers will appreciate "On Pandering:

How to Write like a Man," by Claire Vaye Watkins. Academics will find value in Arlie Russell Hochschild's "Gender, Status, and Feeling." More than a few of us will relate to journalist Jessica Bennett's "I'm Not Mad. That's Just My RBF."

These essays are by turns inspiring, hilarious, and engaging. The volume could be improved by including more voices from Native American, disabled, neurodivergent, justice-involved, and transgender/gender-nonconforming communities. The only other facet of the book I found challenging was color. Maybe it's my aging eyes, but although I loved the neon orange and pink on the cover, those colors on the text pages made it difficult to read the essays.

That being said, the variety packed into this 144-page volume is commendable, and the essays are accessible to a wide range of readers. The book could be used in introductory women's studies courses and easily supplemented by additional readings. This is an essential purchase for public libraries, high school libraries, and college libraries serving undergraduates.

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

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Volume 36, Issue 2
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Heather Hewett on
Raising a Trans Child
(See page 19)

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