

## BOOK AND FILM REVIEWS

*Aged by Culture* by Margaret Morganroth Gullette. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, 267 pp., \$46.00 hardcover, \$18.50 paper.

M. CHARLENE BALL

Margaret Morganroth Gullette's *Aged by Culture* is an important and engaging contribution to the new field of age studies, which questions age ideologies and deconstructs dominant narratives about the cultural meanings of aging. Age studies sees "age" and "aging" in culture as resulting as much from ideologies as from biology. Dominant narratives paint aging as ahistorical, acultural, and universal, conspiring with ablebodiedness, class, gender, race, and other mechanisms of marginalization that impact everyone, whether in youth, midlife, or old age.

But surely even the most crazed social constructionist has to admit that aging is biological. Back problems and failing memory don't come from patriarchy or capitalism, do they? Aren't age critics like Margaret Morganroth Gullette merely absurd liberal academic ideologues, deserving all the scorn heaped upon us extremist women's studies types who perversely deny the facts of biology? Should not the president of Harvard sneer?

Not so. Age studies proposes that the decline and disability associated with aging in our society results as much or more from class, race, gender, and access to resources as to biology. An upper-middle-class, urban, college-educated, professional 60-year-old experiences aging very differently than a rural or working-class person the same age. A friend of mine argued that we cannot deny that the old are closer to death. Yet, Gullette points out that in the nineteenth century, infants and children were seen as closest to death. So were women, who frequently died in childbirth. When death comes so often to the young, aged people appear as tough survivors.

In the United States, the two dominant narratives of aging are the progress narrative and the decline narrative. Growing up follows the progress narrative; in fiction, it is the coming-of-age novel—how our hero or heroine rises in the world, becomes more healthy, wealthy, and wise, and achieves the plateau of midlife. The decline narrative is how we currently experience growing older. The defensive stance that shrills, "I'm not getting older, I'm getting better!" represents a progress narrative desperately struggling to resist a decline narrative.

Gullette begins *Aged by Culture* with an account of an exhibit at the Boston Museum of Science called "Face Aging!" that invited children to look into a mirror and see themselves digitally "aged." Most kids found the experience unsettling. Gullette noted that the changes

(created by digital technology) emphasized sagging jaw lines, wrinkles, graying hair, and facial blotches rather than facial expressions. Why, she asks, did the exhibit show decline and decay rather than a more complete picture that might have included positive as well as negative changes that can accompany aging—for example, “drama, humor, intelligence, character” (5)?

Gullette deconstructs power relations and hidden messages related to age in culture using approaches similar to those of Women’s Studies, gender studies, and cultural studies. She points out that neither the narrative of progress nor the narrative of decline are inevitable or “natural” but that both often mask the actual causes of decline.

The essays in the book approach the topic of age from several angles. Chapter Two, “True Secrets of Being Aged by Culture,” shows how the decline narrative is getting applied earlier to younger people. Chapter Three, “‘The Xers’ versus ‘the Boomers’: A Contrived War,” describes the media-constructed conflict between greedy “Boomers” and struggling “Xers.” Chapter Four, “Perilous Parenting,” sees age-related anxieties in works of contemporary fiction. Chapter 9, “Acting Age Onstage,” discusses how stage stereotypes conform to and inform age performance in life. Chapter 10, “Age Studies as Cultural Studies” suggests ways of moving beyond age ideology to create an “antidecline” movement that would fight disempowerment across categories of class, gender, race, and ablebodiedness. “Age is a cause,” Gullette says, “like race and gender—that rightfully allies itself with principles of narrative freedom, economic justice, and human rights” (196).

These essays first saw publication separately, as shown by their occasional repetition and restatement. Chapter endings often flow into rhetorical perorations more suitable for the ending of a book. These are, however, minor quibbles. This work maps out areas for further exploration and makes a major contribution, not only to age studies, but to gender studies, Women’s Studies, and cultural studies.

*M. Charlene Ball has written on borderland authors, feminist mythmaking, and feminist utopias. She also writes fiction. Her Ph.D. is in comparative literature. She is an Academic Professional in the Women’s Studies Institute at Georgia State University.*

*Whistling Women: A Study of the Lives of Older Lesbians* by Cheryl Claassen. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 2005, 273 pp., \$44.95 hardcover, \$19.95 paper.

TRISHA FRANZEN

In the first act of *If These Walls Could Talk II*, a lesbian character circa 1961, played by Vanessa Redgrave, is stunned when she discovers that she has no claim on the home that she shared with her long-time partner. Her lover died without a will, and the house was in her lover's name alone. While I am happy to watch Vanessa Redgrave do most anything, I have always wondered if this naiveté was an accurate portrayal. Until recently it was hard to know since there have been few studies of lesbians of this era and class background. That situation may be changing. Claassen's *Whistling Women: A Study of the Lives of Older Lesbians* was inspired by lesbians whose lives seemed to contradict what we saw in this video.

Claassen interviewed 44 women over 55, 43 of whom were white. Her subjects were overwhelmingly financially savvy and successful. Several were wealthy enough to own second homes, and many could retire early. Claassen gives both qualitative and quantitative analyses of her findings. Though she chose to present the life stories of these lesbians in "snippets" to preserve a level of anonymity, most of the transcribed interviews have been placed with the Clio Foundation in Gulfport, Florida.

Claassen states that her themes will be economics and politics. The first focus responds to literature that argued that earlier generations of women were ignorant of financial matters. The second interrogates the role of middle-class and wealthy lesbians in the lesbian and gay liberation movement. Along with these explicit themes, Claassen addresses a full range of life issues.

Even though Claassen's sample is limited in its diversity, the greatest strength of this book is its contribution to an understanding of the range of lesbian lives in the twentieth century. Though literate and mostly financially comfortable, these women, it is clear, would not have left their life stories if not for Claassen's study. As a result of Claassen's focus on finances and wealth, we hear more about the wide variety of methods these women used to achieve their economic autonomy, an important topic when older women still face high levels of poverty. Toward the end of her book, Claassen reflects that it might have been useful to compare women who never married with those who had been married since she finds that marriage is a significant influence on wealth accumulation. This finding is worth additional attention.

Though the focus of this book is important, it was difficult and frustrating to read for several reasons. Major themes and the threads of the main arguments often get lost or are left hanging among the numerous topics

Claassen attempts to address. Claassen raises questions about families, self-definitions, class differences, communities, political activism, and butch-femme roles, but she doesn't treat any of the issues with great depth or cohesion. In one example, she states her disagreement with a central thesis in Kennedy and Davis's *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*, but she doesn't grapple with their analysis about the differing roles of working-class and middle-class lesbians in creating public communities. She never returns to this issue after presenting the political activities of her narrators.

While having enough money to live comfortably as we age is a major concern for all of us, there are other factors that complicate financial planning and aging that are particular to lesbians. Our legal, health care, and governmental systems for the most part still ignore the specifics of lesbians' realities. While Claassen's narrators cite the importance of lesbian-created alternative institutions, we hear little from them on how they have and plan to protect their wealth. It would have been interesting to hear how these women wrote their wills and contracts, interacted with financial advisors, or found health care services that respected their lives.

Claassen's findings, though limited, suggest that Redgrave's character might not have been the norm. Her book places issues of financial autonomy in lesbian and aging studies and, in both its strengths and problems, furthers the discussion of the connections among sexuality, civil rights, and economics. While the literature on lesbians and aging has grown since Elsa Gidlow's memoirs in the 1970s, we still have to search for most of it in journal articles. However, with Claassen's work and New Haworth Press's related book, *Lives of Lesbian Elders*, 2005 may be a turning point for book-length studies on this topic.

*Trisha Franzen* is Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Albion College. She is author of *Spinsters and Lesbians: Independent Womanhood in the United States*. She is currently working on a biography of suffrage leader, Anna Howard Shaw.

## References

- Alexander, Jane (dir.). 2000. *If These Walls Could Talk II*. 2000. Los Angeles: HBO Films.
- Clunis, D. Merilee, Karen I. Fredricksen-Goldsen, Pat A. Freeman, and Nancy Nystrom. 2005. *Lives of Lesbian Elders: Looking Back, Looking Forward*. Binghamton, NY: New Haworth Press.
- Kennedy, Elizabeth Lapovsky, and Madeline D. Davis. 1993. *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community*. New York: Routledge.

*Maggie Growls*, a film by Barbara Attie and Janet Goldwater. New York: Women Make Movies, 2002, 56 min., rental VHS \$90, sale VHS \$275.

#### FRIDA KERNER FURMAN

*Maggie Growls* is an informative and inspiring portrait of the founder of the Gray Panthers, Maggie Kuhn (1905–1995). In detailing the long life of this remarkable woman, the filmmakers mark major twentieth-century movements for social change through Kuhn's impassioned involvements: the labor, civil rights, women's, and antiwar movements and, of course, the struggle against ageism and for the empowerment of older people. Anyone who knew or interacted with Maggie Kuhn was challenged—by the force of her personality and her trenchant intelligence—to question social stereotypes and naturalized assumptions about old age. Her charisma and calculated outrageousness are well captured in this film through footage from different periods of her own old age—after all, she continued to be politically active for 25 years *following* her forced retirement at age 65.

We see Kuhn in a variety of venues that reveal her visionary and lively spirit: providing testimony for the House Select Committee on Aging; reprimanding Johnny Carson on his show for his caricaturing portrayal of an old woman; discussing intergenerational shared housing with her two young female roommates; recalling the time when, as a witness to the signing of the pension bill, President Ford called on her by asking, "What have *you* to say, young lady?" To which she replied, "Mr. President, I am an *old woman*." Perhaps the most poignant moment in the film is contained in Maggie Kuhn's last words. Wracked with pain and sedated with morphine at the end of her life, she is reported to have sat up and declared, "I am an advocate for justice and peace," before lying down again and falling into a sleep from which she never awoke.

Kuhn was ahead of her time in a number of areas. She was speaking about interdependence before that became a central value in feminist thought. Her advocacy of intergenerational housing, organizing, and political work has yet to be taken up seriously in our society. She was an independent woman with an affirming attitude toward her own sexuality years before that became commonplace. She discussed the sexual needs of the old. The only time that her ability to energize people backfired on her was her suggestion that in late life heterosexual women might consider the possibility of lesbian relationships. Kuhn's creativity and vision are worth exploring in their own right, but they also serve to open up significant sociocultural and justice issues of our time.

Women's Studies as a discipline appropriately dedicates significant attention to issues of race, class, and sexuality as well as gender. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about issues pertaining to age. In recent

years, monographs, collections, and videos by and about older women have become available. *Maggie Growls* contributes to this effort and can be put to good use in women's studies courses. The film is entertaining as well as informative. It uses wonderful footage, not only of Maggie Kuhn, but of the movements she was committed to. Thoughtful commentaries by those who knew her well—from housemates to Gray Panther leaders to public figures like Ralph Nader and Studs Terkel—are interspersed throughout the chronological narrative of Kuhn's life. A surprisingly effective use of bits of animation enhances the visual quality of the film while adding a note of whimsy, intended, no doubt, to capture something of Kuhn's own playful temperament. We are directly treated to that playfulness when, early in the film, she leads a large audience in the famed Gray Panther growl. With a mixture of mild embarrassment and joy, they follow her instructions:

Stand tall and raise your arms as high as you can, high, high, high. And then we are reaching toward each other, with love and hope and compassion. And then we open our mouths, ready to cry out against injustice. Now stick out your tongue as far as you can, very out, very, very out. Now growl three times, right from the depths of your belly: ahrr, ahrr, ahrr!

**Frida Kerner Furman**, *Professor of Religious Studies at DePaul University, is the author of Beyond Yiddishkeit: The Struggle for Jewish Identity in a Reform Synagogue and Facing the Mirror: Older Women and Beauty Shop Culture. Her co-authored book, Three Lives: Women Speaking across Difference, is forthcoming.*

*Making an Exit: A Mother-Daughter Drama with Machine Tools, Alzheimer's, and Laughter* by Elinor Fuchs. New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt, 2005, 208 pp., \$23.00 hardcover, \$14.00 paperback.

*Losing a Life: A Daughter's Memoir of Caregiving* by Nancy Gerber. Lanham University Press of America, 2005, 79 pp., \$18.00 paperback.

## ANNIE DOLLINS

The journey that a daughter travels after a parent experiences a life-altering health change is the focus of these two memoirs. Both daughters start out from very different relationships with their parents and have different roads to travel. However, barriers and road conditions that they encounter on this journey bear many similarities. Nancy Gerber shares what history she has learned about her father as a child, Jewish immigrant

of the late 1930s, certified public accountant (CPA), father, and member of a community. Gerber's description of shared early morning practices such as "shaving" together in t-shirts, pretending to be Cassius Clay and Sonny Liston or John Glenn and Alan Shepard evoke the deep tenderness possible between a daughter and her father. What happens to many fathers and mothers eventually happens to Gerber's father. Charles Gerber experiences a stroke, a health change that leaves him vulnerable and fragile. Initially, he is unable to walk, eat safely, or make decisions about his care. She finds that everyday activities of living such as eating, walking, and talking need to be either relearned or lost. Time passes, losses accumulate, and Gerber begins to mourn for the father she knew, loved, and has now lost. In spite of this loss, Gerber becomes a major player in attending to the care her father needs.

Elinor Fuchs shares her feelings as an only child whose mother, Lil, possesses a persona that outshines the presence of all around her. On the periphery of her mother's glamorous and modern existence, time passes and more distance than endearment characterizes their relationship. Fuchs comes to enter midlife; her mother enters her years as an elder. Fuchs's nine-year emergency begins when she detects a pattern of disconcerting behaviors exhibited by her mother. When her mother is given the diagnosis of Alzheimer's, Fuchs learns to find joy in moments playing patty-cake, maybe for the first time. As memories become more distant for her mother, Fuchs begins to find the other mother she would love. When Elinor starts the conversation she wished they had before the Alzheimer's, Lil finds her way through the Alzheimer's to participate in a touching moment. They both profess a deep knowledge that they love the other and that they are deeply loved by the other.

Story differences aside, both daughters encounter similar problems. These are stories of the dutiful daughter. The daughters in the stories learn to reverse the roles and become the parent to a vulnerable and fragile elderly mother or father. They struggle to learn how one honors other commitments as partner, mother, student, while taking on the responsibility of parenting a parent. It is in this new role and the problems they counter that a fruitful topography for learning is offered.

There are two tiers of academic use for these texts. The first tier examines the experiences as described. The second level examines the text from a women's studies framework that can stand alone in a women's studies course or be integrated into discipline-specific courses.

For the first tier, both books offer entrée into learning about the human condition as it relates to specific disciplines. Nursing, medicine, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and social work are a few examples of the professions about which students can learn from these books. Topics for introductory discipline-specific courses include who is patient; what roles do the nurse, physical therapist, or social worker take on; and how are the

interpretations of episodes of care relevant for each discipline? Either book also could be used in courses focused on specific health care topics, for example, loss, grief, rehabilitation, family, stroke, and Alzheimer's. Use of these memoirs with discipline-specific quantitative data from other sources can serve as an excellent pedagogical strategy to help students go beyond understanding just the epidemiology, etiology, or natural course of various health conditions. The memoirs offer a starting point for discussions such as what were the student's assumptions about health care for the elderly and the vulnerable, how did these situations and the health care system come to exist, and who has the financial and familial/social supports necessary for an extended period of time?

At the second tier these two books offer an orientation to territory that historically women have always traveled in caring for the vulnerable and fragile elder members of a family. Contemporary patients tend to be sicker, live longer in a disabled state, and thus are in need of more technologically intense care. Due to health care economics, care once rendered in a hospital by a registered nurse has now been foisted upon families, ill prepared or unable to take on significantly intricate procedures and monitoring in the home. This scenario is played out in the Gerber memoir, giving rise to issues of gender. How do past traditions of care and gender roles relate to contemporary situations? Why is a nursing license required when a procedure is performed upon a stranger for compensation, but is not required if it is undertaken in a home by family members? Given nursing's gendered history, does the explanation lie in the notion that the knowledge possessed by women is rendered less valuable and less complex? Just as earlier feminist critiques examined the loss of the availability of the grandmother and other family supports to assist in passage of their daughters and sons into new families, a need exists to critique the loss of availability of the daughter or son to assist the elder parent. What would the policies of a family-friendly employer look like as they relate to the Gerbers and Fuchs in the workforce? What would a contemporary society look like if extended family needs were accommodated?

The daughters in both stories are white academicians with access to resources. However, finances are a concern for both families. Money aside, even if a daughter has the means, finding a competent and caring team of health care workers to provide 24-hour care, seven days a week made the tasks of Hercules seem like child's play. Extended health care is more easily available for those with long-term care insurance. For those who cannot afford this expense or choose not to pay for it, their families pay the price through a number of different currencies, including familial integrity, stability, and revised histories.

The narrative constructed in these two books implicitly invites readers to consider how the role of race, ethnicity, and economic class influences the journey. What would these memoirs look like if the daughters had



been African American, newly arrived Hispanic, or struggling financially? Who now provides the respite care for such families? How is this experience lived out by same-sex couples estranged from any family support? How does this issue play out globally?

The everydayness of the experiences of Gerber's and Fuchs's work offers some of the most fertile ground for feminist analysis within and outside of women's studies courses. They offer for a wide range of courses a rich and meaningful way to analyze rigorously the role of dutiful daughter, the evolution of the U.S. health care system, and the complexity of family dynamics.

*Annie Dollins is Associate Professor and Assistant Chair of the School of Nursing and Health Professions at Northern Kentucky University. She is a nurse-midwife whose scholarship focuses on women's health and community engagement.*

*Monitoring Sweatshops: Workers, Consumers, and the Global Apparel Industry* by Jill Esbenshade. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004, 272 pp., \$69.50 hardcover, \$22.95 paper.

EILEEN BORIS

Guess? denied and Kathie Lee cried. The Secretary of Labor jawboned, while students protested. Domestic and international human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs) investigated. The anti-sweatshop movement grew from public disgust with the child labor, starvation wages, sexual harassment, and authoritarian repression that lay behind Nike labels and Wal-Mart bargains. It developed from a new awareness of globalization, in which some women from Asia and the Americas had migrated to Los Angeles and other U.S. cities to engage in work that other women did in their countries of origin. But as El Salvadoran trade unionist Marcela Muñoz explains, "Someone outside cannot know what it is like to be at a machine ten hours a day, or standing ironing, to be out of your house for fifteen hours. And that person cannot defend our rights" (206). At the end of the twentieth century, the sweatshop became the object of political controversy with the transformation of apparel production under global supply chains, product branding, and government deregulation. Particularly important was the dominance of big retailers who exerted control over manufacturing without legal liability. *Monitoring Sweatshops* critically assesses the global regulatory regime that emerged to fight the sweatshop.

A participant in the developments recounted here, sociologist Jill Esbenshade combines survey research, interviews, and secondary analysis of economic data. She critiques monitoring—the certification of conditions under which contractors make goods usually by for-profit accounting firms—as a privatization of government regulation. This practice sought to turn the outrage of consumers into a benefit for the manufacturers who actually employ the monitoring firms. Clean conditions would generate clean bills of health, which in turn would cleanse the conscience of consumers. Manufacturers could claim themselves to be “sweat-free” and retain or increase their market share in the cut-throat world of apparel. But what about those who toiled in sweatshops, workplaces that ignore labor standards (like minimum wage, maximum hours, health and safety, collective bargaining, and associational rights) and attempt to produce the most goods at the least cost in the shortest time?

For Esbenshade, assuaging the guilt of consumers can never substitute for worker empowerment. Her study is not about women, although they compose the majority of workers in apparel sweatshops, as she details, but for them. “Private monitoring,” she argues, “is a means of removing workers, particularly female and ethnic-minority workers, from participation in the mechanism of rights enforcement” (33). Countering the image of the vulnerable “third world” woman worker requiring protection by “first world” consumers and ethical manufacturers, Esbenshade champions the alternative of independent monitoring by NGOs, as exemplified by the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), which she helped found. The WRC emerged out of demands by United Students Against Sweatshops that universities hold firms producing products bearing their logo accountable to stringent codes of conduct. It stood in contrast to the Fair Labor Association (FLA), a certification group that derived from Clinton administration efforts to bring stakeholders together, whose effectiveness had been stymied by FLA employer members who blocked transparency, rejected unannounced inspections, and rejected the naming of specific violations.

Esbenshade clearly summarizes the social compact that emerged from garment unionization and the growth of the welfare state during the first half of the twentieth century. Its features—“companies’ commitment to national economic well-being and government protection of vulnerable workers through social welfare and controls on the excesses of free-market capitalism” (20)—represent a world lost with recent economic and political changes. She describes a new “social-accountability contract” between manufacturers, national governments and NGOs, and contractors, a pact that leaves workers out. Through the case study of Los Angeles, Esbenshade shows how “manufacturers clearly use monitoring to mediate relations with consumers and investors as much as to clean up abhorrent conditions” (56–7). Haphazard without standard procedures,

monitoring run by private companies reinforces rather than challenges existing power relations. It covers violations of labor standards but not the right to organize. These weaknesses persist in international monitoring, with some notable exceptions, like Women Working Worldwide and the Maquila Solidarity Network, which consult with local NGOs and women workers.

Many women's studies courses address the contradictions of shopping in a global economy; Esbenschade provides a theoretical basis for distinguishing between political strategies that take manufacturers off the hook and those that enhance worker resistance. Her desire to privilege laboring women in the monitoring process, however, suffers from an absence of actual women's voices, inscribing its own set of inequalities that perhaps interfere with the cross-class and cross-border solidarity that she advocates.

*Eileen Boris*, Hull Professor of Women's Studies and Director of the Center for Research on Women and Social Justice, is the author of the prize-winning *Home to Work: Motherhood and the Politics of Industrial Homework in the United States*, among numerous other books and essays. With Jennifer Klein, she is working on a new book, *The Wages of Care: Housekeepers, Health Aides, and Personal Assistants in the Home Workplace*.

*Embodied Care: Jane Addams, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Feminist Ethics* by Maurice Hamington. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004, 181 pp., \$30.00 hardcover.

#### GRACE CLEMENT

Care ethics has been a focus of feminist ethics for the last twenty years. In this book, Maurice Hamington contributes to and significantly extends this discourse by showing that care is not just another moral theory; it is basic to human existence in that it is rooted in our bodies. Underlying care ethics are caring *knowledge*, including what is implicitly known to the body, and caring *habits*, which express that knowledge. These embodied experiences of caring, in turn, fuel the caring *imagination*, which enables us to care for those who are ordinarily distant from us. Hamington's key claim, then, is that care is best understood as a bodily reality more fundamental than any moral theory, and in fact as the foundation of morality itself.

The main strengths of the book are Hamington's clear and engaging presentation, his detailed accounts of the ways in which care is embodied, and his skillful syntheses of different philosophical schools of thought. The book begins with a helpful comparison between care and breathing and then turns to an even-handed summary of recent care discourse. Each chapter begins with a well-chosen and thoughtfully developed example of embodied care drawn from history or literature—among these are Frederick Douglass, Shakespeare's Shylock, and Harvey Fierstein's character Arnold Beckoff. In his exploration of the connections between care ethics and two quite divergent philosophical approaches—Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body and Jane Addams's pragmatism—Hamington brings care out of the relatively narrow confines of much care ethics discourse and demonstrates its more general philosophical significance.

In keeping with care ethics, Hamington's approach is much more integrative than adversarial. Still, some of the book's claims are controversial and may need further defense than Hamington provides here. For instance, Hamington claims that "our bodies are built for care" (2). He certainly does an impressive job of showing the bodily dimensions of caring. But the claim that our bodies are *built for* care—as opposed to, say, built for survival, or built for battle—is a much stronger claim than simply stating that there are bodily dimensions of caring. While responding to such contrary arguments about the body's "purposes" might not fit well into Hamington's exploratory approach, a fully convincing defense of the strong claim that our bodies are built for care would seem to require that such arguments be addressed more directly.

While *Embodied Care* arises out of a discourse in feminist ethics and is certainly sympathetic to feminism, it should be noted that specifically feminist questions about care ethics are not its focus. The main feminist critique of care ethics has been that caregivers—who are typically women—are expected to care for others even at the expense of caring for themselves, and thus that care ethics reinforces women's oppression. Hamington responds to this argument by pointing out, rightly, that caring "does not require self-abnegation" (147) and that care ethics is not only a personal ethic but can ground a just, even radical, social ethic. However, such responses about what care *can* be are unlikely to go far enough to satisfy feminists concerned with moral *requirements*.

Another gender-related question arises regarding one of Hamington's most effective points, namely that appeals to the body—and our shared experiences as human bodies—can allow us to transcend socially constructed barriers such as race, class, or sexual orientation, and to care for others. One has to wonder whether sex would be included in this list of socially constructed barriers to be overcome through appeals to common bodily experience. After all, one of the traditional arguments for understanding

care as a “women’s ethic” is that women’s bodies are somehow *built* for caring in a way that men’s are not. It is clear that Hamington—a man who practices care ethics—would disagree with this argument, but it would have been helpful to read how and why he would disagree with it, given the connections he draws between care and bodily experience.

*Embodied Care* is a thought-provoking book that will be especially helpful to scholars hoping to situate care ethics in relation to other philosophical schools of thought. It also is written so engagingly and clearly that even those new to philosophy will benefit from reading it.

**Grace Clement** is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Philosophy Department at Salisbury University. She has written a book on feminist ethics, *Care, Autonomy and Justice: Feminism and the Ethic of Care* and is currently writing on the connections between feminist ethics and animal ethics.

*Listening to Olivia: Violence, Poverty, and Prostitution* by Jody Raphael.  
Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004, 312 pp., \$50.00 hardcover, \$27.95 paper.

CELIA WILLIAMSON

In *Listening to Olivia*, Jody Raphael writes a compelling book about life as a prostituted woman in the United States. This book presents the personal story of Olivia’s progression through prostitution from entrance through exit. Most chapters are arranged in sequence to first present Olivia’s experience, and then to explore both quantitative and qualitative information on prostitution to support her experience.

Raphael gives a voice to the most vulnerable in the sex industry. Throughout the course of the book, Olivia’s thoughts, feelings, and experiences are exposed. The reader comes to know Olivia and learns that Olivia’s tragic journey sadly represents the journey of many women in this country who succumb to street life and drug addiction. Olivia’s fears, anger, love, and ultimately her empathy for helping others touches the reader in a way that encourages compassion toward the issue of prostituted women.

The author does a nice job outlining the damaging effects of legalization and presents a compelling argument for continued legal intervention. This is not a book that legalization advocates would enjoy, but one that helps to remind everyone to pay particular attention to the experiences of those who are at the bottom rung of society’s ladder.

Raphael charges society with a dangerous level of tolerance for prostitution recruitment and the negative outcomes of the women involved. She also charges the social service, criminal justice, and health care community with an overall lack of concern for prostituted women. She cites examples of missed opportunities for intervention while acknowledging that these institutions most often represent the initial contact with women in which a meaningful connection leading to intervention could be made.

In her book, Raphael offers a prescription to successfully address the issue of prostitution that speaks to those most vulnerable women in prostitution. The answer to the problem is complex, and Raphael could have easily spent an additional hundred pages explaining possible solutions. She does address a full spectrum of services from early intervention with adolescents through comprehensive services for women. For the informed reader, this section could have represented more of a comprehensive map toward successful advocacy and program implementation, but that is not the intent of the book. This section does provide a nice overview of potential possibilities.

The richness of the many examples of both qualitative and quantitative studies from both national and international research cannot be understated. However, distinctions between national and international data are sometimes blurred and can lead to confusion. Generalizing experiences in other countries, under varied circumstances, to experiences in this country, under different circumstances, can be confusing to the informed reader and unchallenged by the uninformed reader.

Most interesting is the personal story and Raphael's ability to expose the shame and degradation inherent in the experiences of women who end up on the streets and drug addicted. She becomes the vessel through which Olivia can share her most sensitive emotional wounds with the world.

Olivia's experience represents the experiences of women in more vulnerable forms of prostitution. Often born out of early abuse, adolescent runaway, survival sex, and entrance into prostitution, these experiences are reportedly not the experiences of those empowered women who are advocates for the legalization of prostitution. Raphael addresses those "other voices" under the chapter "Other Voices, Other Rooms."

At the beginning of each chapter, Raphael opens with a section from the writings of Rebecca West. In my opinion, the Rebecca West quotes seem distracting. If the reader is not familiar with the work of Rebecca West, it appears disconnected and awkward.

All in all, Raphael's accounts of women in lower levels and exploited forms of prostitution complements what researchers conducting street-level prostitution research have been saying for more than a decade. To her credit, Raphael is able to put a human face on what has been a hidden

tragedy in the country and abroad. I applaud her efforts and hope that many more books and articles will be written on this subject. In order to intimately understand the tragedy of prostituted women, this book is well worth reading for anyone. It is a “must read” for criminal justice, social service, and health care personnel.

**Celia Williamson**, Assistant Professor at the University of Toledo, is Chair of the Second Chance Prostitution Advisory Board in Toledo, Ohio, and Chair of the National Conference on Prostitution, Sex Work, and the Commercial Sex Industry for 2004. Since 1993, she has been conducting research on women in street-level prostitution.

*Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, and Women's Political Identity* by Susan Zaeske. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003, 272 pp., \$49.95 hardcover, \$19.95 paper.

#### AMY SLAGELL

That the roots of the women's movement in the nineteenth century are to be found in women's activism during the abolitionist movement has become a standard claim in any account of the beginnings of women's political participation in the United States. Susan Zaeske's incisive examination of the women's antislavery petitioning campaigns traverses the depth and breadth of these roots. Among the goals accomplished by this work is the confirmation and extension of the claim that women's abolitionist activism taught women the mechanics of organizing and running political conventions, circulating petitions, giving speeches, and writing for pamphlets and newspapers. It also re-examines the way this activism drew attention to and reaction against the restrictions on women's involvement in the public sphere—as evidenced by the debates about women's petitioning and antislavery speaking in the press, in antislavery conventions, and on the floor of Congress. Zaeske's most exciting contribution, however, is that made to more recent discussions of gendered citizenship. (See, for example, Barbara Hobson's collection, *Gender and Citizenship in Transition*.) Arguing that petitioning Congress to support the abolition of slavery facilitated the transformation of women's “political identity from humble subjects to national citizens” (172), she sheds light on an historical moment when women came to see themselves as agents, as citizens participating in collective action demanding social change.

The richness of her particular contribution is found in her painstaking attention to the women's petition campaigns themselves. It is no trivial

story; in 1837 alone, antislavery petitions were submitted to Congress so abundantly “that they would have filled, from floor to ceiling, a room twenty feet wide by thirty feet long by fourteen feet high” (173). Zaeske’s examination of the archival records of the antislavery petitions signed by women from 1831 through 1865 supports her conclusion that the women’s petitions developed through four distinct stages. The earliest petitions, marked by their tone of deference, were quite distinct from men’s of the same period. These petitions set forth lengthy justifications grounded in moral duty defending women’s exercise of the petition to request that Congress act against the institution of slavery. By contrast, the latest petitions signed by women were often indistinguishable from men’s petitions, assumed the right of women to petition the government, and often signaled that the signers consciously took on the mantle of citizenship.

To prepare us for her detailed engagement with the petition documents, Zaeske begins with an overview of the nature of the right of petition in the colonies and the early Republic. The right of petition included an implicit requirement that the power petitioned read and respond to the request; however, in the early decades of the United States, the right of women, free blacks, and slaves to petition was often undermined. The petition drive against the U.S. Cherokee removal in 1829–1830 marked the first major use of collective petitioning by women to affect national policy, but it was the extended push of the abolitionist petition campaigns, especially in the face of obstacles such as the Gag Rule, which firmly established the right of petition as universal, as a request requiring a response regardless of the character, race, or gender of the petitioner.

Zaeske’s is an historical study, but her interest in the language of the petitions themselves reflects her roots in rhetorical studies. The writing is perhaps most engaging when teasing out the significance of the choices women made. Weaving together stories from the women circulating the petitions, she recreates a sense of the import of a woman’s decision to sign a political petition in her own right. Even the choice of where to sign a petition, in a column separate from the column for men’s signatures, or intermixed on the form, is imbued with significance in this careful study. Nicely reproduced copies of several of the petitions illustrate these variations.

In an age when we are often asked to sign a petition with no more effort than a click of button on the Internet and with no more information than that an organization we support thinks it is necessary, this study is a powerful demonstration of the multiple functions served by a grassroots petition campaign. The women of the abolitionist movement struggled to guarantee the right of all petitioners to be heard and so established themselves as citizens participating in representative government. We continue to reap the benefits of this transformation.



**Amy Slagell**, Associate Professor at Iowa State University, studies American public address with a particular focus on the oratory of women and on the teaching of public speaking in the United States.

## Reference

Hobson, Barbara, ed. 2000. *Gender and Citizenship in Transition*. New York: Routledge.

*From Madness to Mutiny: Why Mothers Are Running from the Family Courts and What Can Be Done about It* by Amy Neustein and Michael Lesher. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2005, 284 pp., \$26.00 paper.

### HAL PEPINSKY

Amy Neustein, one of the authors of *From Madness to Mutiny*, has been termed a “protective parent,” and her co-author, Michael Lesher, was for a period her attorney. To be a protective parent means that in the course of separation or divorce, Neustein came to believe that her child was being sexually abused by the child’s other parent, and asked a court for relief. Dr. Neustein, whose doctorate is in sociology, lost custody on grounds that she brainwashed her child to get back at the child’s other parent. In 1999 in New York City, Dr. Neustein founded Help Us Regain The Children (HURT). In the early ‘90s, I came to know her and countless other protective parents and supporters as we counseled by mail, by phone, and in person, and provided what ideas and support we could for the children’s sake.

In *From Madness to Mutiny*, Neustein and Lesher review and reflect on documents from more than 4,000 cases, from interviews with officials and professionals, and from various government and professional reports. Theirs is a brave and much-needed effort. The effort is brave because people criticizing courts and professionals for failing to defend apparently abused children in such cases have personally and professionally been destroyed by litigation. It is brave as well because protective parents are caught between speaking out on behalf of their children, and subjecting children who are out of their control to possible retaliation, embarrassment, and humiliation in the process. It is much needed because children, whom I have come to believe form the ultimate underclass in the United States no less than elsewhere, are in my experience, every bit as abused by

officials and professionals as Neustein and Leshner report, if not more so.

In 1962, when Denver pediatrician Henry Kempe and colleagues wrote an eye-opening article on diagnosing “the battered-child syndrome,” common wisdom was that only one child in a million was ever physically abused in any way. That would amount to fewer than a hundred cases in the United States today. Kempe et al. (1962) awakened us from this gross cultural denial. Nearly a quarter century later (1986), Canadian psychologist Phyllis Chesler published a North American finding, afterwards replicated, that although mothers were more often than not awarded child custody in divorce and separation proceedings, when fathers challenged custody, they won 70 percent of the time.

A decade later, protective parents Leora Rosen (a psychologist) and Michelle Etlin (who formed an activist organization like Neustein’s) published a review of several hundred custody cases in which sexual abuse had been alleged by a parent. They reported that protective parents lost custody in the process in all but three cases.

Imagine this scenario that Neustein, Leshner, and I have heard, all too often, among others. Your 6-year-old child or children come home from visitation with gross signs of distress, emotional or physical, up to and including fever and what turns out to be sexually transmitted diseases. First, court dates for hearing new evidence keep getting put off. Second, you may even have your children taken away by a judge or child protection worker because you violated a judge’s orders NOT to take the children back to their doctor or counselor because s/he “brainwashed” them. The rule in U.S. legal practice today is this: You will be lucky to find a lawyer who dares advocate for you in such a custody battle, and regardless, the harder you push, the more definitively you will be barred from contact with your children. By the mid-1990s, I came to share the view of experienced protective parents that any time unsupervised visitation rights of parents remained or became legally allowed, protective parents had but one choice: Do not openly protest as your children continue unsupervised visits, or lose whatever contact you have in the aftermath. I feel validated as I read Neustein and Leshner’s repeated documentation of cases of this kind, time and again. I have seen countless similar documents. As I write, I am about to visit a mother who, with colposcopic evidence of gross sexual violence, lost custody of her child more than a decade ago.

Sometimes protective parents are fathers. Most often, they are mothers, typically women who have escaped battering relationships.

If anything, I find Neustein and Leshner’s report understated. I cannot blame them. I set out to write a book on this subject years ago and gave up the effort as too dangerous and as too hard to make believable. I am grateful to Neustein and Leshner for taking up that task. At the same time, I believe that the problem they describe is at once broader and deeper than they indicate. The problem is broader in that it reflects motherblame

that strongly influences all contested custody outcomes. The problem is deeper in that I see evidence, time and again, indicating that many of the horrendous decisions depicted in *From Madness to Mutiny* reflect pedophilic, sometimes even homicidal and state-sponsored rings of abuse and mutual cover-up.

*From Madness to Mutiny* is published in one of today's more prominent university press criminal justice series. I thank them and Neustein and Leshner for the courage and the skill to bring this problem to broader social attention.

**Hal Pepinsky** teaches criminal justice at Indiana University. Trained in law and sociology, he has since 1992 been closely involved in cases of the type presented in this volume, including phone conversations with co-author Amy Neustein in the early '90s about her own case. His latest book, available for free use on the web, is *A Criminologist's Quest for Peace*.

## References

- Chesler, Phyllis. 1986. *Mothers on Trial: The Battle for Children and Custody*. Seattle: The Seal Press.
- Kempe, C. Henry, Frederick N. Silverman, Brandt F. Steele, William Droegemuller, and Henry K. Silver. 1962. "The Battered Child Syndrome." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 181:107–12.
- Rosen, Leora, and Michelle Etlin. 1996. *The Hostage Child: Sex Abuse Allegations in Custody Disputes*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.