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In Brief

de los Apostoles, Francisca. *The Inquisition of Francisca: A Sixteenth Century Visionary on Trial*. Gillian T. W. Ablgren, Ed. and Trans. Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 2005.

In sixteenth-century Spain, Francisca de los Apostoles, together with her sister, Isabel Bautista, attempted to found a religious order for *beatas*, lay women devoted to religious life. Women who chose to become *beatas* were typically not endowed with dowries; this precluded them from marriage or entry into a convent, leaving them no real alternative to sustain themselves. The Catholic Church interpreted this attempt to form such a religious community as religious reform, and by extension an attack on the current politics of the Catholic Church in Toledo. With Archbishop Bartolome Carranza under investigation in Rome, the Toledan church had been under the control of a governor and 16 council members. Under the governor's rule, the poor relief system that had been established by Carranza, and which directly contributed to the well being of those women who were not able to marry or enter a convent because they lacked dowries, had slowly disintegrated. By trying to establish a self-sustaining religious community of *beatas*, Francisca was seen as engaging in a critique of the current government of the Toledan church. On October 5, 1575, she was called before the Spanish Inquisition on charges of false mysticism. Having proclaimed to have had apocalyptic visions of Carranza's return and a re-establishment of his poor relief system, Francisca faced an arduous 3-year trial, a conviction of having engaged in false mysticism, 100 lashes, and exile from Toledo. Francisca's trial transcripts offered in this text provide insight into the power and influence a single women could have in sixteenth-century Spain, and the fear and unease it caused the patriarchal community. Editor and translator, Gillian T.W. Ablgren, not only offers a finely rendered translation of the court documents, but also offers readers a glimpse into the workings of the

Inquisition court, Francisca's life and involvement in religious reform, and her self-representation during her trial. For those who are familiar with the writings and life of Teresa Avila or Juana de la Cruz, *The Inquisition of Francisca* will provide complementary reading.

—Terri Skarzenski

Goy-Blanquet, Dominique. *Joan of Arc, A Saint For All Reasons: Studies in Myth and Politics*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2003.

Who is Joan of Arc? And why has she become such a popular figure in both France and America? What has been gained from appropriating her myth for political and cultural means? This edited collection of essays attempts to shed light on the many transformations Joan of Arc has undergone at the hands of historians, film directors, politicians, and authors, both in France and in America. What the essays in this collection demonstrate is that Joan of Arc ceases to function as a coherent and stable image and instead serves as a repository from which cultural, political, and historical stories can be woven and recreated. Editor Dominique Goy-Blanquet sets the general tone for the essays in the introduction: "Thus she becomes a collection of emblems, but the thought of what she was is lost. . . . It is moved by such a loss that the authors of the present volume have set on a journey in the opposite direction of those layers, not so much to recapture her true being as to scan the blind spaces that gave birth to her successive incarnations" (xi). Respective essays focus on Shakespeare's and Voltaire's revisions of the Joan of Arc myth; political and cultural reinventions of Joan of Arc in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France; cinematic representations of *La Pucelle*; and American appropriations of the myth.

—Oscar Hernandez

Hall, Linda B. *Mary, Mother and Warrior: The Virgin in Spain and the Americas*. Austin: The U of Texas P, 2004.

Mary, Mother and Warrior proves the old adage, "Never judge a book by its cover." At first glance, the title implies an academic and suspiciously stuffy study of the cultural influence of the Virgin

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—Terri Skarzenski

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Mary in Spain, Latin America, and North America. However, Linda B. Hall provides a thoroughly enticing and highly readable historical account of the Virgin Mary's cultural influence throughout Spain and the Americas. Hall's historical range is broad; it begins with an analysis of the development of the cult of the Virgin in fifteenth-century Spain and spans to twentieth-century millennial representations of the Virgin Mary. While some might consider this historical breadth too broad, I would argue that it is necessary in order to fully comprehend the ways in which the image of the Virgin Mary has been transformed and utilized over the centuries. In addition, Hall does a fabulous job of organizing her material in such a way so as to make it a thoroughly delightful, yet enlightening, reading experience for her audience. While all of Hall's chapters prove appealing, even for those who are not scholars of religious or Latin American studies, of particular interest is her chapter on Eva Péron's use of the Virgin Mary to establish a relationship with the Argentinian public. While the figure of Evita has received much attention in the past decade, Hall's chapter provides interesting insight into Péron's identification with the Virgin. *Mary, Mother and Warrior* will appeal to both a popular and academic reading audience.

—Frances Hennessey

Jordan, Jan. *The Word of a Woman? Police, Rape and Belief.*
 New York: Palgrave, 2005.

In her introduction to *The Word of a Woman? Police, Rape and Belief*, Jan Jordan argues that, "Issues of belief and credibility are more pronounced in the history of criminal justice responses to rape than they are for any other crime" (2). Alarmingly, the issue of a woman's credibility when it comes to reporting rape has recently come under attack. Jordan attributes this recent assault on women's credibility to several factors: the emergence of skeptical feminists, such as Camille Paglia and Katie Roiphe, who have labeled women who report acquaintance rape as "hysterical;" over-hyped media reporting of alleged false rape reports which emphasize, incorrectly, that women routinely lie when reporting a rape; and a growing contingent of "men's

rights' groups," who feel that men are unfairly victimized by women's accusations of rape. While Jordan is careful to note that male rape does indeed merit further study, her focus is undoubtedly on female rape victims and the hurdles such victims face when reporting rape. Her study is primarily based on in-depth interviews with police detectives and female rape victims. By conducting these interviews, Jordan hopes to accomplish three primary goals: to understand the factors that influence police decision-making about women's reporting of rape, to understand why police sometimes doubt a woman's credibility when it comes to the reporting of a rape, and to gain insight into a female rape victim's experience with police when reporting rape. Although Jordan's emphasis is on the experience of female rape victims in New Zealand, her work will nonetheless be pertinent to those doing sociological studies of rape in other countries.

—Paula Whitt

Neustein, Amy, and Leshner, Michael. *From Madness to Mutiny: Why Mothers Are Running From the Family Courts—And What Can Be Done About It*. Boston: Northeastern UP, 2005.

Sociologist Amy Neustein and attorney Michael Leshner paint a frightening portrait of how the American legal system oftentimes victimizes children who have been allegedly sexually abused by their fathers. Instead of taking such allegations seriously, the family court often punishes the children's mothers by deeming them unstable and unfit to retain custody of their children. Neustein's and Leshner's study reveals that in many instances, these children have often been removed from their mother's protective custody and the father, who has allegedly abused the child, has been given full custody, often at the expense of the child's physical, psychological, and emotional well-being. This assertion perhaps seems far-reaching at best. After all, isn't family court supposed to protect children? While Neustein and Leshner are quick to point out the serious dysfunctions in family courts that punish mothers for trying to protect their children from the men that have harmed them, they are also careful to note that this backlash phenomenon does not

unfairly victimized by Jordan is careful to note in her study, her focus is on the hurdles such victims face. Her study is primarily based on interviews with women and female rape victims. Jordan hopes to understand the factors that influence women's reporting of crimes, to gain confidence with police when reporting a rape, and to gain emphasis is on the experiential and, her work will none-the-less contribute to sociological studies of rape.

—Paula Whitt

From Madness to Mutiny: Family Courts—And What It Means. New York: Northeastern UP, 2005.

Michael Leshner paints a picture of the American legal system often characterized by women who have been allegedly sexually abused. He is writing about such allegations serious enough to strip the children's mothers by the courts of their custody of their children. The book reveals that in many cases, children have been removed from their biological fathers, who have allegedly been granted full custody, often at the expense of the biological, and emotional well-being of the children. The effects seem far-reaching at best. How can we protect children? While the courts try to protect the children, the serious dysfunction of the courts for trying to protect the children, if they are harmed, they are not. This phenomenon does not

characterize all family court cases. The question looming in the background is why is this even happening? Neustein and Leshner are less interested in the "why" and more interested in the empirical evidence that answers the question of how it is that such things are becoming a regular enough occurrence to warrant a sociological study (although, to be more accurate, Neustein and Leshner are conducting an ethnomethodological study, as opposed to a straightforward sociological study). For those interested in the psychological component of this backlash against protective mothers, Neustein and Leshner point their readers to Louise Armstrong's *Rocking the Cradle of Sexual Politics: What Happened When Women Said Incest* (1994). The analysis of specific court cases, family court proceedings, civic activism, and judicial reform (or lack thereof) make *From Madness to Mutiny* a compelling, if emotionally, difficult read.

—Paula Whitt

Silber, Nina. *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2005.

During the Revolutionary War and after, the notion of "Republican Motherhood" dominated the ideological formulation of American women's patriotism. Such beliefs held that an American woman could best express her patriotic sentiments in the domestic sphere. However, the Civil War challenged this prevailing belief. In *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War*, Nina Silber sheds light on the variety of ways in which Northern women attempted to negotiate participation in the civic and political spheres of Civil War America. While many historians and cultural critics have defined women's move into such spheres as proto-feminist, Silber notes that women's involvement in the Civil War is much more complex than a simple binary of oppression and liberation. And although the Civil War created an environment where many Northern women could finally engage in the public civic sphere, this by no means meant that such involvement proved to be easy or was met with public approval. Silber's chapters are arranged thematically and, respectively, focus on the economic barriers women had to cross during the war, challenges made to the traditionally feminine domestic sphere, and women's

participation in Civil War politics. By using sources such as personal letters, magazine advertisements, and newspaper articles, Silber is able to encapsulate the tension Northern women face as they struggled to create a new image for themselves, one that was independent of "Republican Motherhood."

—Anne Naff

Tiefer, Lenore. *Sex is Not a Natural Act and Other Essays*.
Boulder: Westview Press, 2004.

A challenge to the medicalization of sex needs to be issued. Again. And that is precisely what the second edition of *Sex is Not a Natural Act*, by Lenore Tiefer, does. In this collection of essays, Tiefer starts with explaining what the social construction of sexuality means, questioning the value of "clinical standards" that have been used to define normal sexuality (10). These norms find roots in a medical model that focuses on Master and Johnson's four-stage "human response sexual cycle" (HRSC), limiting the potential research on sexuality to biological responses. Whose interest does it serve to make sexuality purely a matter of biology? Whose interest did the creation of Viagra serve? Tiefer consistently addresses the problems of ignoring the context of sexuality, such as the psychological and social, which she claims have far more to do with sexuality than biology. She refuses a "scholastic-babble" style of writing, and instead writes in a clear, often humorous manner that makes the essays accessible to a wide audience. In one section, Tiefer describes the importance of humor (political cartoons, satire, jokes) in resisting cultural norms governing sexuality. One cartoon shows a woman standing, head bend down, hands covering her face, and the caption reads: "Seven years in analysis and now they tell me about the myth of the vaginal orgasm" (168). Tiefer brings together many types of sources (cartoons, psychological studies, medical studies, pop culture) to mirror the necessity of a multi-disciplinary approach to study sexuality. Since "sex is not a natural act," only a multi-disciplinary approach will denaturalize sex. In this way, challenges to the medicalization of sexuality will be issued. Again. And again.

—Cyndi Headley

Ware, Susan. *It's One O'Clock and Here Is Mary Margaret McBride: A Radio Biography*. New York: New York UP, 2005.

Much as today's women (and some men) revere Oprah Winfrey, many women (and some men) in the 1940s and 1950s revered Mary Margaret McBride. But who was Mary Margaret McBride? And if she was so popular, then why has she been all but forgotten? Susan Ware's "radio biography" of Mary Margaret McBride is an attempt to answer such questions and resurrect McBride's rightful place in women's and radio history. Magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek* often characterized McBride as a "radio chatterbox" with a talent for "back-fence gab." Yet her 1-hour radio show consistently engaged millions of listeners nationwide, and at the height of her popularity, she garnered six to eight million listeners, "comprising 20 percent of the available broadcast audience in her time slot" (6). Not too shabby for a woman who was often described as "drool[ing] over anything that pleases her, particularly food" (7). Whereas other radio programs were created by advertising executives intent on selling a product and then sold to radio stations (think the adventures of Little Orphan Annie and her encouragement to listeners to drink their Ovaltine), McBride's program was innovative in that she and her manager, Stella Karn, were able to produce their own show and largely control the format themselves. McBride's mix of gossip, current affairs, product plugs, literary trends, and Broadway and Hollywood news made for a show that was largely entertaining and accessible to her listeners. Susan Ware's biography of McBride does indeed resurrect McBride. Not only does McBride's story finally become accessible to today's reading audience, but her story also provides insight into "middlebrow" culture of 1950s America.

—Denise Rinaldi

Zeigler, Sarah L. and Gunderson, Gregory G. *Moving Beyond G.I. Jane: Women and the U.S. Military*.

Instead of being a theoretical examination of women's participation in the United States military, *Moving Beyond G.I. Jane* provides a practical analysis of women's roles in the four branches of the

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—Anne Naff

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military and a systematic solution to fully integrating women into all military roles, even combat roles, which have been traditionally closed to women. Zeigler, the Director of Women's Studies at Eastern Kentucky University, and Gunderson, a professor in political science, also at Eastern Kentucky University, provide a truly interdisciplinary approach to their subject material. Feminist theory, political theory, military history, and cultural studies are all smoothly integrated in order to provide the reader with a clear and concise understanding of the authors' theories. Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of the work and chapter summaries. Chapter 2 is devoted to an analysis of numerous interviews the authors conducted with women in ROTC. By conducting these interviews, Zeigler and Gunderson hope to demonstrate how future military leaders, predominantly women, will deal with such issues as sexual harassment and the controversy over women in combat. Chapter 3 presents a historical analysis of women's role in the military. Chapter 4 offers a comparative analysis of the different ways in which different countries have tried, either successfully or unsuccessfully, to fully integrate women into the military. Chapter 5 presents a variety of ways in which women can be fully integrated into the U.S. military. Chapter 6 is devoted to an examination of sexual harassment in the military. And Chapter 7 explores women's military roles in international peacekeeping missions. When one finishes reading *Moving Beyond G.I. Jane*, one cannot help but wonder why it is that women have yet to be fully integrated into the U.S. military. The answer is all too obvious, but perhaps the publication of this book will provide the motivation for change.

—Tim Charest