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EDITOR



THE ALERT COLLECTOR

Writings of the Third Wave

Young Feminists in Conversation

Jennifer Gilley, Guest Columnist

As someone who came of age during feminism's second wave, I was intrigued when guest columnist Jennifer Gilley approached me with the idea of developing a column around the subject of third-wave feminism. The result is an insightful review of the major themes of third-wave feminism, and practical suggestions that academic and public librarians can use to develop a collection of books and magazines on this topic.

Gilley considers herself a part of this third wave. She has an academic background in the subject: she holds a master's degree in women's studies from The Ohio State University as well as a master's degree in library and information science from the University of Illinois. She is an active member of the Women's Studies Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries. She has published several articles relating to gender and technology in *College and Research Libraries News*, *Tech Trends*, and the *Women's Studies Section Newsletter*. She also served as a discussion leader for a session on this topic at the 2003 Annual Conference of the American Library Association.—*Editor*

While the popular press has declared feminism dead, unnecessary, or trivial since its inception, the June 29, 1998 *Time* cover story took a fresh stab at an old topic. Under the headline "Is Feminism Dead?" *Time* printed a montage of four individual photographs: Susan B. Anthony, Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and actress Calista Flockhart as television character Ally McBeal. Inside, writer Ginia Bellafante bemoaned the frivolousness of young feminism in the

1990s as represented by McBeal, a ditzzy, self-obsessed lawyer with a penchant for miniskirts. Waxing nostalgic for her feminist foremothers, Bellafante argued that while "feminism of the '60s and '70s was steeped in research and obsessed with social change, feminism today is wed to the culture of celebrity and self-obsession."¹ However, one need only look at the cover images to see what is wrong with Bellafante's picture. McBeal, lest we forget, is *not a real person*. While Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem were real feminists who were singled out by the media as spokespeople for a grassroots movement, McBeal was entirely a media creation—a TV character on the Fox network, no less. For the popular media to decry young feminism based on popular media depictions of it is truly a postmodern example of pop culture eating itself.

Is feminism alive and well? Do young feminists exist? What issues are of central importance to young feminists? To explore these questions, it is necessary to look to the writings of young feminists themselves. Such a body of work was launched throughout the 1990s and has rapidly proliferated in the early 2000s. These writers, while not following any unified stance, define themselves as the third wave, an appellation that

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serves to distinguish them from the first and second waves of feminism while simultaneously marking them as a continuation thereof. The first wave of feminism is considered to have begun at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 and ended with the passage of women's suffrage in 1920. The second wave, which arose in the 1960s and 1970s as women involved in the civil rights struggle began to recognize their own oppression, has, as yet, no official ending date. The "waves" metaphor is used to denote continuity of movement containing swells and troughs rather than discrete, isolated periods of political involvement.

Origins of the Third Wave

The defining characteristic of the third wave is coming of age in the 1980s and 1990s. The theoretical underpinnings of the third wave, therefore, come from three widely divergent streams of thought that coexisted during this time. First, both popular culture and personal experience gave young women the notion that contemporary feminism was unnecessary because equality had been achieved. They grew up knowing about feminism and benefiting from its gains, such as Title IX access to sports programs, entrance to higher education, and access to reproductive health care. Many third-wave writers talk about how their feminist mothers or fathers gave them the sense of entitlement that made them feel feminist struggle might no longer be necessary. This prevailing notion led to the idea that we were in a post-feminist age.

However, despite some feminist gains, the 1980s were also a time of cultural backlash. A second predominant message of the time was that feminism had gone too far and, in fact, was to blame for the exhaustion of women trying to do double duty as career women and wives and mothers. Media stereotypes of the hairy-legged, bra-burning, anti-male, strident feminist permeated

the culture. This led to the phenomenon of "I'm not a feminist, but..." syndrome, beginning in the late '80s, in which young women refused to identify themselves as "feminist" even though they agreed with feminist political views. Some young women who were coming to feminism during this time, most commonly as a part of the women's studies departments that second-wave feminism had fought for and won inside academia, felt pressure to conform to some standard of "good" feminism and began to resent feminists they saw as ideologues.

Several books published in the early 1990s by women who proclaimed themselves feminists tapped into this ambivalence by demonizing the feminist movement and setting themselves up as the new arbiters of fun and power: Katie Roiphe's *The Morning After: Sex, Fear and Feminism on Campus*; Naomi Wolf's *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the Twenty-First Century*; and Camille Paglia's *Sex, Art, and American Culture*. These three books claimed that contemporary feminism had devolved into what they called *victim feminism*, in which women derived all of their rhetorical power from claiming to be victims, particularly of sexual violence. Roiphe argued that feminists had greatly exaggerated date rape statistics in order to instill sexual fear in young women. After all, she concluded, if she was not personally aware that any of her friends had been date-raped, then surely it must not be that common. Paglia likewise argued that women should use their sexuality as a power source to control men, and bear personal responsibility for any violence that came about as part of that effort. Wolf, along with Roiphe and Paglia, argued for *power feminism*, a worldview in which women are still being oppressed simply because we are allowing it to happen. According to this view, women must simply stop being oppressed, seize money and power, and take control of things. Any analysis of a political, cultural, or economic system that might interfere with this happening is seen as the

weak argument of someone who enjoys being a victim. Nearly every third-wave book critically engages and debunks as reactionary or anti-feminist all three of these writers; yet their construction of a rigid, self-righteous victim feminism versus a fun and liberating power feminism is a caricatured version of themes that resonate in much of third-wave writing. Thus, although they are not considered part of the third wave, they are part of the historical and cultural milieu third-wavers have to negotiate in constructing contemporary feminism.

The third stone in the bedrock of third-wave feminism is that, contrary to being unnecessary or having gone too far, the movement had not gone far enough, limiting itself to the narrow interests of its white, liberal majority. Third-wave feminism had stumbled against the limits of its possibilities by not taking the viewpoints of women of color seriously and failing to become a movement on behalf of all women. While external messages indicated that feminism was no longer culturally relevant or necessary, a revolution had been brewing inside the movement. Women of color argued the need for a feminism that could take into account multiplicity and expand to join forces against multiple oppressions, rather than close in on itself. This revolution began in 1981 with the publication of *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. In the preface, Moraga asks, "Do I dare speak of the boredom setting in among the white sector of the feminist movement?"² Having made gains in their political agenda, white feminists had not made the step toward a more thorough understanding of the intersections of race, class, and gender oppression, nor considered what a movement to end all three simultaneously might look like. Responding to one movement within feminism, Moraga asks and answers: "The lesbian separatist utopia? No thank you, sisters."³ Although a lesbian, Moraga did not want to take up alliances against the men in her community with whom she

must work to end racial oppression. The multiplicity of identity that women of color embody (often experiencing racial, gender, and class oppression in addition to any others) belies any easy solutions or simplistic alliances. *This Bridge* and the spate of anthologies by women of color that followed in its wake (Barbara Smith's *Home Girls* and Anzaldua's *Making Face, Making Soul* are two of many) served as a clarion call to the feminist movement to examine its own racism and classism in order to rebuild as a powerful movement fighting for the interests of all women. This theorizing, along with the postmodern deconstruction of the unified self, is at the heart of third-wave theory, yet it is too often unrecognized.

The phrase "third wave" as applied to a new strain of feminism first appeared in the late 1980s; women of color used the term to describe a feminist movement engaged in analyzing and eschewing its internalized racism. Barbara Smith, of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press (which published *This Bridge*), planned to publish an anthology titled *The Third Wave: Feminist Perspectives on Racism*. Tellingly, this anthology never made it to publication, but the phrase survived, albeit largely without common knowledge of its antiracist roots. Instead, the popular connotation of third wave is as an age marker, an indication of specifically young feminist activity.

Rebecca Walker officially launched the third wave as an identifiable entity in her 1992 *Ms.* article, "Becoming the Third Wave." While discussing her anger regarding the Clarence Thomas hearings, she calls out to other young women who may feel ambiguity about the feminist label: "I write this as a plea to all women, especially the women of my generation: Let Thomas' confirmation serve to remind you, as it did me, that the fight is far from over. . . . Turn that outrage into political power."⁴ Fighting popular images and perceptions of feminism as elite and obsolete, and wanting to distinguish herself from the Roiphe and Paglia types whose media popularity went hand-in-hand with the idea of postfeminism, Walker

ends her article with the declaration: "I am not a postfeminism feminist. I am the Third Wave."⁵ As Astrid Henry points out in her book *Not My Mother's Sister: Generational Conflict and Third-Wave Feminism*, "In calling for a new wave, Walker does not speak in a collective voice. . . . An early expression of what was to become a common theme within third-wave discourse, Walker's essay does not attempt to speak in the name of other women."⁶ Her use of the word "I" highlights the third wave's focus on individualism, but also its reluctance to speak in an assumed—and potentially false—solidarity.

The central issues of third-wave writing reflect the background influences outlined above: An awareness of and respect for multiplicity even within one's self has combined with the popular perception of rigidity within the second wave to create a theory that celebrates contradiction, complexity, and individual freedom of choice. The theoretical underpinnings of the third wave, therefore, are by definition difficult to pin down in any unified, grand manner. However, several themes are recurrent throughout the literature.

Characteristics of the Third Wave

Celebration of Contradiction

The celebration of the power and possibilities of contradiction is a central tenet of third-wave feminism. Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake, in their introduction to *Third Wave Agenda, Being Feminist, Doing Feminism*, root this phenomenon in the sociohistorical moment at which young feminists came of age: "Because our lives have been shaped by struggles between various feminisms as well as by cultural backlash against feminism and activism, we argue that contradiction—or what looks like contradiction if one doesn't shift one's point of view—marks the desires and strategies of third wave feminists."⁷ For some,

the embrace of contradiction is a rebellion against the existence of strict rules for what defines "good" feminism or who is a "good" feminist. For example, is a lesbian more feminist than a heterosexual woman? Does wearing lipstick make you a "bad" feminist? Rebecca Walker places this rebellion at the heart of her anthology, *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism*:

My hope is that this book can help us to see how the people in the world who are facing and embracing their contradictions and complexities and creating something new and empowering from them are important voices leading us away from divisiveness and dualism. I hope that in accepting contradiction and ambiguity . . . these voices can help us continue to shape a political force more concerned with mandating and cultivating freedom than with policing morality.⁸

For others, the existence of contradiction within and among third-wave feminists and feminism is merely a continuation of how it has always been. Barbara Findlen points out that the essays in her anthology *Listen Up: Voices From the Next Feminist Generation* make it clear that "there's no single 'young feminist' perspective. But more to the point, there's no one 'feminist' perspective, and there never has been."⁹ One side effect of this third-wave embrace of the contradictory or hybrid has been the subsequent celebration of the power to choose as an end in itself, regardless of the choice made.

Pro-Choice, Any Choice

The predominant third-wave vision of past feminist success is that its main function has been to allow women today to make whatever choices they want, choices they did not have the freedom to make in the past. Comedienne Aisha Tyler provides a vivid description of this point of view in her book *Swerve: Reckless Observations of a Postmodern Girl*: "Because, honestly,

why did all those other generations go through all that marching and demonstrating and Kombucha tea drinking if not so that we can get what we want and have a kick-ass time doing it?"¹⁰ Third-wavers Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards get to the heart of the matter in "The Number One Question about Feminism" when they reassure a young woman that yes, she can be a hardcore feminist and still wear thong underwear. They argue, "Feminism isn't about what choice you make, but the freedom to make that choice."¹¹ Ultimately, however, their hope is that the political change brought about by feminist activism will eclipse the importance of what underwear anyone is wearing. For some, however, the trappings of femininity are a feminist choice in themselves.

Reclamation of All Things Girly

Believing that the battle fought by women and girls against being forced into traditionally gendered modes of dress, behavior, and occupation has been won, many young feminists are now exercising their right to freely choose these traditionally gendered modes. In 1991, a group of young women in the punk scene in Olympia, Washington, and Washington D.C., organized themselves to protest the sexism in the music underground and named themselves Riot Grrrl. According to Laurel Gilbert and Crystal Kile, "Grrrl, a word coined by Bikini Kill singer and activist Kathleen Hanna, is a spontaneous young-feminist reclamation of the word 'girl' . . . at least partially derived from a phrase of encouragement popularized by young American black women in the late 1980s: 'You go guuuuurll!'"¹² In addition to reclaiming the word girl (with a not-so-polite growl in the middle), Riot Grrrls frequently adopted girly modes of dress, wearing baby doll dresses, knee-high socks, and mini-barrettes alongside their combat boots, piercings, and aggressive attitudes. Combining such disparate ele-

ments turned the girly-equals-powerless paradigm inside out and led to the pervasive pop culture presence of girls in feminine trappings who nonetheless enjoy power (often superpower, in the case of the television programs *Kim Possible* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*).

Young feminists, in addition to including trappings of girlhood in their personal style, also began to reclaim other traditional female arenas as a political act. The explosive resurgence of knitting among young women in the 1990s is one example. Debbie Stoller, editor of *Bust* (a third-wave staple), helped popularize knitting with *Stitch 'N Bitch: The Knitter's Handbook*, in which she argues that it is time to rethink the position that girls doing traditionally male activities is feminist, but girls doing traditionally female activities is not. Likewise, Tyler states in *Swerve* that dismissing cooking as a nonliberated, oppressive activity for women is an attitude whose time has come and gone. Cooking because one likes to is the new, empowering order of the day. The reclamation of both knitting and cooking as activities one chooses to do, of course, is sorely lacking in class analysis. Only women of some privilege have the option not to do activities like these as a necessity but for pleasure.

Finally, the reclamation of public sexual performance, such as burlesque, vaudeville, and strip shows, is getting a lot of feminist press. Third-wavers pit arguments about women controlling their own sexuality and using their sexuality to wield power over men against second-wave arguments about the inherently exploitative nature of sexual performance. This particular thread of discussion overlaps with the self-identification of the third wave as pro-sex.

The Pro-Sex Party

While it is highly doubtful that any significant number of second-wave feminists were anti-sex, Andrea Dworkin's famous statement that all heterosexual

sex is rape took feminist arguments about the power of the phallus too far and instigated a near-riot (philosophically speaking) known as the "Sex Wars" in feminism. Third-wavers place themselves solidly on the pro-sex side of this war, and argue vehemently against the policing of desire, including feminist analyses that condemn the politics of sadomasochistic sex play. In addition to refusing to limit their sexual desires based on political analysis, many third-wavers believe in the use of female sexuality as a power tool. That is, if dancing on a pole helps improve your body image because men are whistling at you, it can be empowering. Or if wearing a low-cut shirt helps you win an argument, so be it. The use of sexuality as a form of power is highly controversial and not endorsed by all (or perhaps even most) of the third wave, but it is included in the discussion. (Remember that the contradictory nature of the third wave is its defining element.)

Finally, Walker's essay "Lusting for Freedom" in *Listen Up* creates a powerful and unique argument for the need for girls to receive sexual education at a young age, not just for precautionary purposes, but to facilitate pleasure. "The question is not whether young women are going to have sex, for this is far beyond any parental or societal control. The question is rather, what do young women need to make sex a dynamic, affirming, safe and pleasurable part of our lives?"¹³ Sex as a site of pleasure rather than political analysis is at the heart (or body) of third-wave sensibility.

Genderbending

The third wave's insistence on the ability to embrace contradiction, and its refusal to fit into neat categories, makes it the perfect home for a new theory of transgenderism. Postmodern feminist theory has deconstructed the category of "woman" to the point where it can barely be said to exist. There are so many points of difference between individual women that it can only

rightly be used as a point for constructing alliances rather than cementing a sisterhood of common experience. This point was also emphasized by the women of color theorists who pointed out that “woman” was only one of their identities, and that sisterhood in the second wave was open to white women only. Feminists have tried to exclude transsexuals and transgendered people from women-only events like the Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival on the argument that female-to-male transsexuals are currently recipients of male privilege and male-to-female transsexuals had male privilege during their socialization as youth. This argument has become too outdated and limited to survive today’s gender theories. Emi Koyama’s “Transfeminist Manifesto” in the anthology *Catching a Wave* articulates this stance beautifully. “Transfeminism asserts that it is futile to debate intellectually who is and is not included in the category ‘woman’; instead, we must act—now—and build alliances.”¹⁴ This same concept could be applied to any attempt to determine who is and is not a feminist according to strict guidelines. Coalition politics is replacing definitional politics.

Engagement with Popular Culture

Engagement with popular culture as both producers and critical consumers is the hallmark of the third wave. Although media representations are not real, they definitely influence and shape society’s reading of reality, as indicated by Bellafante’s use of Ally McBeal as a stand-in for young feminism. For this reason, Heywood and Drake declare, “We take critical engagement with popular culture as a key to political struggle.”¹⁵ This engagement takes many forms. Although not specific to the third wave, one form is the practice of deconstructing and analyzing images of women and feminism in popular culture. Within this, analyzing hip-hop music has become a particular specialty of the third wave, and in fact,

many young African American feminists call themselves hip-hop feminists instead of third-wavers. Analysis of the increasing oligarchy of the corporate media is also a pressing issue, leading Jennifer Pozner to declare, “Control of the media is the single most important issue of our time.”¹⁶ One way for young activists to wrest control of the media is to create some themselves; third-wavers have taken advantage of today’s multimedia possibilities to do just that.

In the early 1990s, members of Riot Grrrl, coming out of the Do It Yourself (DIY) punk scene, began publishing zines, creating their own bands, and launching their own Web sites. Zines are informal magazines made in cut-and-paste fashion and reproduced on photocopiers. Any girl could make a zine and distribute them around the country to get her voice heard. After the Internet explosion, many zine-makers began publishing on the Web to further improve distribution and accessibility. These acts of cultural production serve to undermine the power of the corporate media and provide young women ways to resist its hegemony. Doreen Piano provides an excellent explanation of the function of DIY cultural practices:

As found in DIY cultural practices from the early days of punk and rap to the present zine scene, the alternative economy established by this subculture comments on and challenges the gatekeeping that occurs in various culture industries from mainstream academic feminist publishing to the style and music industries that deem only certain kinds of voices, narratives, and consumer goods fashionable and profitable enough to be marketed and sold.¹⁷

Third-wavers are concerned with publishing in popular formats and venues, so as to be a part of the culture they critique; they are not interested in being confined to academia, nor do they feel academic feminism gives them the freedom to theorize in new ways. For this reason, third-wave writings have been published by popular presses, and use witty titles and catchy

graphics whenever possible to draw in the average reader. Third-wave books exist in a bibliographic limbo, however: not quite popular in a mainstream sense, and not quite academic in a theoretical sense. Thus, I am concerned that libraries will not adequately collect this body of work. Too “feminist” for smaller public libraries and too “popular” for academic libraries, they travel under the radar of librarians and scholars alike. I hope this article will contribute to remedying this situation.

Generational Conflict

A final theme common in third-wave literature, and especially common in writings about third-wave literature, is that of generational conflict. When Rebecca Walker named the third wave, she set herself up as separate from both her literal mother, Alice Walker, the famous second-wave feminist, and her metaphorical mother, the second wave of feminism. The nature of this generational relationship between the second and third waves is widely discussed and disagreed upon. Is the third wave in opposition to the second, or a continuation of it? There are several indicators that the conflict is overhyped: many third-wavers have a past association with *Ms.*, a bastion of second-wave feminism. Women of color in the third wave in particular very carefully portray themselves as contiguous with their foremothers and borrow heavily from their theoretical work. Whatever the third wave’s philosophical orientation vis-a-vis the second wave, however, it has a distinct bibliographical presence that it is my aim to document in this essay.

Criteria for Inclusion

The bibliographic record of the third wave is as hard to pin down as the third wave itself. Due to young feminists’ resistance to labels and categorization, there is no standardized terminology. Only one of the books in

this essay has the phrase “third wave” in the title. Others use terms such as “young women,” “new feminism,” “next feminist generation,” “today’s feminism,” and “emerging voices.” Books were chosen for inclusion if they claimed a “new” or “young” feminism or were written by authors identified as third wave in other sources. As these books tend to be in conversation with one another, I also followed a bibliographical trail from one to the next.

Organization

As nearly all the books included here are anthologies, they do not fit neatly into categories by either theme or format. Most books touch on many of the themes I have outlined above. Taken together and read in chronological order, however, they do make up a multivocal conversation responding to one another and filling in each other’s gaps. Therefore, I have chosen to list them in chronological order, which may make for strange bedfellows in some years, but you will eventually see the messy growth in all its glory.

Foresisters

Three books came out in 1991 that brought outrage, new ideas, and a self-portrait to young women coming of age. They were written by young women, but are precursors to the third-wave body of literature.

Faludi, Susan. *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women*. New York: Doubleday, 1991. ISBN 0-385-42507-4; \$14.95.

Faludi’s national bestseller provided the wake-up call feminists needed in the early 1990s by illustrating how the 1980s had seen “a powerful counterassault on women’s rights, a backlash, an attempt to retract the handful of small and hard-won victories that the feminist movement did manage to win for women”(xviii). This political attack on women’s rights had

been facilitated through strong popular culture messages that gender equality had been achieved, and that this equality was to blame for the supposed prevailing misery of American women. Faludi’s extensive critical engagement with popular culture set a powerful example for future third-wavers.

Juno, Andrea, and V. Vale, eds. *Angry Women*. San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1991. ISBN 0-940642-24-7; \$18.99.

Published as issue 13 of the periodical *Re/Search*, *Angry Women* is a compilation of interviews with sixteen feminist performance artists and philosophers. From its opening statement that “*Angry Women* is not just about women, but about the future survival of our planet” (4) to its calls for an integration of political action, cutting-edge theory, adventurous sexuality, and humor, *Angry Women* reads like a catalog of the third-wave themes outlined above. A feminist “patch-up job” is no longer good enough; feminism must broaden its base of issues to include all women and all of society in order to bring about true social justice. The use of art, culture, sexuality, and humor as well as anger are all invoked as tools for this task.

Kamen, Paula. *Feminist Fatale: Voices from the Twentysomething Generation Explore the Future of the Women’s Movement*. New York: Donald I. Fine, 1991. ISBN 1-55611-257-2; Out of print.

Kamen uses 263 personal interviews with young people of different classes, races, religions, and sexual orientations to document prevailing attitudes about feminism and the status of women. She argues for the need for consciousness-raising among the new generation of women, the need to move feminism away from the academy and back into activism, and the need for feminism to take classism, racism, and homophobia into account. She also documents her finding that “the authors with the most undeniable influence on my generation . . . are women of color”(17), underlining the third-wave debt to theorists such as bell

hooks, Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Cherrie Moraga. This book is occasionally footnoted as being the first book of the third wave, but because it was poorly reviewed, infrequently mentioned, and is now out of print, it is identified here as a precursor.

The Conversation Begins . . .

Walker, Rebecca, ed. *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism*. New York: Anchor Books, 1995. ISBN 0-385-47262-5; \$14.

Walker’s anthology of personal essays by a wide range of young women officially launched the third-wave bibliographic record in 1995, just as her pronouncement of the third wave had launched it as a concept in 1992. She begins the introduction with a description of her life as a feminist ghetto where her every thought and action had to measure up to the ideal of the “good feminist.” Releasing herself from such rules, she offers this anthology as a way to “lay the groundwork for feminist theory that neither vilifies or deifies, but that accepts and respects difference”(xxxvii). This is the third-wave anthology that most clearly argues the need for a distinct break with the second wave, yet it is bookended with a foreword by Gloria Steinem and an afterword by Angela Davis, who point out that the younger generation’s view of the second wave is far too simplistic and dismissive. With regard to these writers’ critiques of the second wave, Steinem says that she feels “like a sitting dog being told to sit”(xxii). Ultimately, *To Be Real* offers a portrait of a wide range of young people struggling to make feminist sense of their lives without compromising any part of themselves.

Findlen, Barbara, ed. *Listen Up: Voices from the Next Feminist Generation*. Seattle: Seal Press, 1995. (Out of print original edition: ISBN 1-87806-761-3; New expanded edition, 2001 ISBN: 1-58005-054-9, \$16.95.)

Like *To Be Real*, *Listen Up* is a collection of personal essays about young

women coming to feminism while struggling to make it applicable to their lives in a practical way that includes their race, class, or sexuality. As Sonja D. Curry-Johnson writes, "As an educated, married, monogamous, feminist, Christian, African-American mother, I suffer from an acute case of multiplicity" (51). This complexity of identity makes simplistic sisterhood impossible, but foregrounds the necessity for coalition politics. JeeYeun Lee concludes, "I think this is one of the primary hallmarks of young feminists' activism today. We realize that coming together and working together are by no means natural or easy" (73). Unlike *To Be Real*, however, former Ms. editor Barbara Findlen sees the young feminist project as continuous with that of older feminists, and indeed, *Listen Up* reads just like *This Bridge Called My Back* did in its day. It serves, therefore, as a marker that the goals of *This Bridge* have not yet been achieved; feminist analysis has not yet evolved to the point where anthologies by women of color specifically are not needed, although *To Be Real* and *Listen Up* both go a long way toward that goal by being multicultural without self-identifying as such.

Heywood, Leslie, and Jennifer Drake, eds. *Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. ISBN 0-8166-3005-4; \$19.95.

While *To Be Real* and *Listen Up* were the opening salvos of the third wave, *Third Wave Agenda* responds to them by providing the much-needed analysis of the larger culture that is producing third-wave theory. Heywood and Drake defend critical engagement with popular culture as a political strategy, argue for the power of contradiction and "lived messiness" (2), and acknowledge the work of women of color theorists as the foundation of the third wave. Essays analyze culture and representation, class, masculinity, postfeminism, and third-wave activism within youth music culture such as punk and hip hop. *Third Wave Agenda* is a landmark both for its self-identification as

third wave and for its academic contribution to an emerging body of work.

Karp, Marcelle, and Debbie Stoller, eds. *The Bust Guide to the New Girl Order*. New York: Penguin, 1999. ISBN 0-1402-7774-9; \$17.

This compilation rescues the best of the essays from the first six years of *Bust*, when it was still a zine without wide distribution, and the authors were given pseudonyms to create both anonymity and fun alter egos. The editors reflect on their creation of *Bust* (subtitled *The Magazine for Women with Something to Get Off Their Chests*) as an adult version of *Sassy*, the magazine that made girlhood seem fun and feminist. *Bust* is the ultimate arbiter of what is often referred to as "lipstick feminism," a feminism that celebrates girliness and power as coexistent and, in fact, interdependent. It is strange then that the voices in this anthology seem to be so powerless as they describe girlhood experiences of abuse and reckoning with patriarchal culture. Instead of being a how-to manual for combining fun and feminism, it reads more like a painful childhood memoir of women who desperately need feminism in their lives. Growing up as a girl, using sex to gain power, motherhood, and an intense love of pop culture are the main themes explored. Uniquely cornering the lipstick feminism niche within the third wave, Stoller and Karp kick off the collection with: "Wake up and smell the lipgloss, ladies: The New Girl Order has arrived!" (xv)

Morgan, Joan. *When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: A Hip-Hop Feminist Breaks It Down*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999. ISBN 0-684-86861-X; \$12.

Morgan, like the young women of *To Be Real* and *Listen Up*, sees herself as a daughter of feminist privilege, and therefore finds the restrictions feminism makes upon her to be more immediate than those of the patriarchy. "Ironically, reaping the benefits of our foremother's struggle is precisely what makes their brand of feminism so

hard to embrace" (59). What she sees as the victim/oppressor model of mainstream feminism (the victim feminism of Roiphe and Paglia) denies her knowledge of herself as limitless. Rather than see the world through a starkly rigid view of what is and is not feminist, she argues that "the keys that unlock the riches of contemporary black female identity lie [at] the juncture where truth is no longer black and white but subtle, intriguing shades of gray" (62). Along with many other young black feminists such as Tara Roberts, Eisa Davis, and Eisa Nefertari Ulen, Morgan finds her home in hip-hop music, despite its rampant misogyny, and insists on its liberating potential. Another "gray" area Morgan explores is the use of erotic power. "But while women today still experience sexism, we do so in markedly different ways. Many of us are empowered enough to combine our erotic power with resources that were unimaginable to our mothers" (221), such as money, talent, and confidence. Finally, Morgan explores the relationship between the strong black women and endangered black men roles in the black community, and examines ways for black women and men to relate to one another in a nonoppressive way. Focusing on women alone has never been possible for feminists of color, and Morgan clearly articulates her vision of a feminism that can stretch to be relevant in the lives of all women.

Baumgardner, Jennifer, and Amy Richards. *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000. ISBN 0-374-52622-2; \$15.

Jennifer Baumgardner, former Ms. editor, and Amy Richards, former personal assistant to Gloria Steinem and cofounder of the Third Wave Foundation (an organization that supports the work of young feminists), created this book as a primer for young would-be feminists. They outline the feminist history that third-wavers may be lacking while also reminding second-wavers of their own ignorance of history when they got started. This

emphasis on the importance of knowing our history, however, makes it all the more disappointing that they do not include the contributions of women of color, nor do they include hip-hop feminism in their analysis of current trends in feminism. Instead, they focus on what they call "Girlie" feminism, or the tendency of third-wavers to celebrate the trappings of femininity, elaborating eloquently on both its potential and its drawbacks. Ultimately, young feminists' goals must be tied to activism, for "without a body of politics, the nail polish is really going to waste" (166). To this end, they close the book with a thirteen-point political agenda and a quick outline of some creative examples of third-wave activism.

Kamen, Paula. *Her Way: Young Women Remake the Sexual Revolution*. New York: New York Univ. Pr., 2000. ISBN 0-8147-4733-7; \$40.

Just as her 1991 work *Feminist Fatale* documented prevailing attitudes about feminism among twenty- and thirty-something women, Kamen's latest book serves to document the sexual attitudes of this same age group. She identifies this generation of women as "superrats," or highly sexually evolved beings united by "the expectation of and insistence on conducting their sex lives on their own terms and with a new degree of openness" (21), citing Monica Lewinsky as the most famous example. The sexual profile of today's young woman is very similar to that of men in terms of age of first sexual experience, number of sex partners, and casual encounters. On the other hand, the "sexual evolution" of women is not about quantity, but about control and doing whatever feels right individually. Virginity, although not on the rise, is being openly celebrated as a conscious choice, just as much as casual sex. The young women in Kamen's study were much more open and guilt-free about their sex lives than the women of previous generations she interviewed. As a journalist, Kamen provides the sociological backdrop behind other third-wave literature.

Mitchell, Allyson, Lisa Bryn Rundle, and Lara Karaian, eds. *Turbo Chicks: Talking Young Feminisms*. Toronto: Sumach Press, 2001. ISBN 1-894549-06-6; \$19.95.

Turbo Chicks is a Canadian anthology of personal essays detailing young women's relationships to feminism. In addition to the essays, each author contributes their own definition of feminism, a list of their top ten feminist influences, and a short bio, further emphasizing the highly individualistic nature of the third wave. Everyone is free to define feminism for himself or herself. These writers add to the conversation already in progress by further deconstructing "Girl Power" (girlie, lipstick) feminism. While wholly supporting its positive aspects, they point out its dependence on consumerism, its inaccessibility to those who cannot look appropriately girly, and its easy cooptation by the media. Despite the fact, or perhaps because these women mostly came to feminism through women's studies programs, they argue for the need to rescue feminism from the language games of the academy, and make it practical again. Finally, they hold what they consider to be asexual feminism at arm's length and demand the right to be openly sexual, even if it does look a lot like patriarchal male fantasy. Maren Hancunt perhaps says it best in her letter to Lydia Lunch (one of the artists featured in *Angry Women*, see the Foresisters section above): "You taught me that I could wear makeup and fishnets . . . and still be a feminist" (139).

Corral, Jill and Lisa Miya-Jervis, eds. *Young Wives' Tales: New Adventures in Love and Partnership*. Seattle: Seal Press, 2001. ISBN 1-58005-050-6; \$16.95.

This anthology, edited by Corral and Miya-Jervis (editor of *Bitch*), is an entry in the Seal Press Live Girls Series, the single most prolific home of third-wave publishing. As feminist theorist bell hooks writes in the foreword, the "intense yearning to know love and to create partnerships rooted in a vision of feminist justice and mutuality is the

revolutionary heartbeat of all the essays in *Young Wives' Tales*" (xiv). Struggling with the feminist critique of the patriarchal heritage of marriage, these essays chronicle attempts to reclaim marriage in radically new ways. Multicultural marriages, a three-way marriage, marriage between a lesbian and a gay man, and a love affair with solitude are all explored as individually crafted expressions of love and commitment.

Gore, Ariel, and Bee Lavender, eds. *Breeder: Real-Life Stories from the New Generation of Mothers*. Emeryville, Calif.: Seal Press, 2001. ISBN 1-58005-051-4; \$16.

Like *Young Wives' Tales*, this anthology by the editors of the popular zine *Hip Mama* takes as its point of departure the idea that second-wave feminism's critique of the housewife role has led to prejudice in feminist circles against marriage and motherhood. These essayists reclaim their role as "breeders" by turning it into a tough, oh-so-hip term that may be just as prescriptive as the old motherhood stereotype. Each section is demarcated by a drawing of a tattoo, turning the white, suburban motherhood fantasy on its head and replacing it with a punk one. This compilation describes a variety of experiences of motherhood in nontraditional settings, but does little to dispel an unproblematic vision of "good" motherhood since only the very last entry describes feelings of ambivalence about having a child at all.

Ruttenberg, Danya, ed. *Yentl's Revenge: The Next Wave of Jewish Feminism*. New York: Seal Press, 2001. ISBN 1-58005-057-3; \$16.95.

Just as the previous two entries in the Seal Press Live Girls Series worked to reclaim marriage and motherhood as feminist projects, the essays in *Yentl's Revenge* mine the rich field of Judaism for its feminist possibilities, rather than rejecting it out of hand as a patriarchal religion. These Jewish feminists revel in others' perception of them as a contradiction in terms and firmly site their search for authenticity in the theory of the third wave.

Dina Hornreich writes, "To enjoy contradiction—perhaps even to invite it—is to identify authentically. It is, to cop a phrase from Rebecca Walker, 'to be real'"(45). *Yentl's* authors search for and find rituals in Jewish tradition such as mikveh, the ritual cleansing after menses, and Rosh Chodesh, a lunar celebration, and reinvigorate them with feminist spirituality. Haviva Ner-David and her daughter wear tzitzit, a ritual fringe that serves as a constant reminder of daily prayer duties, but that is traditionally only worn by males. Loolwa Khazzoom's essay "United Jewish Feminist Front" exposes the racism of a Jewish feminism dominated by Ashkenazi (Northern European) women, blind to the concerns of Mizrahi and Sephardic women (Middle Eastern, North African, Spanish, and Portugese). Politics and religion do mix, and a careful contemplation of their interstices allows the new generation of Jewish feminists to keep the pleasures of their spiritual practice while rejecting oppressive meanings.

Nam, Vickie, ed. *Yell-Oh Girls! Emerging Voices Explore Culture, Identity, and Growing Up Asian American*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001. ISBN 0-06-095944-4; \$13.

Although *Yell-Oh Girls* does not explicitly mention the third wave or feminism, its themes site it firmly within this body of literature. Made up of essays, poems, and personal testimonies, the book explores the coming of age stories of young Asian American women and their experiences straddling cultures and struggling with stereotypes. Nam roots the beginnings of her activism in an experience of critical engagement with a girls' magazine, illustrating the importance of popular culture for this generation. She also identifies a generation gap, as she pays homage to *Making Waves*, a previous anthology of Asian American women's writing, but notes the need for an updated one. Another author's poem protests the popular stereotypes mass consumers have taken from the work of Amy Tan, a writer-foremother.

Each section includes a piece written by a mentor, however, putting the generations in conversation and identifying continuity rather than mere rebellion. Like *Manifesta*, the final section covers youth activism to link the experience of self-discovery to the importance of social change.

Hernandez, Daisy, and Bushra Rehman, eds. *Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism*. New York: Seal Press, 2002. ISBN 1-58005-067-0; \$16.95.

Colonize This could be titled *This Bridge Called My Back: 20 Years Later*, and indeed, the foreword by *This Bridge* coeditor Cherrie Moraga recognizes it as such. Despite twenty years of struggle, racism in the feminist movement still necessitates a separate women of color anthology decrying the gap between theoretical (white) feminism and the daily, lived experience of non-white women. These essayists broaden the scope of issues that today's feminism must be concerned with: AIDS education, urban gentrification, and hip hop, for example. Bhavana Mody identifies the racist cultural appropriation inherent in the current Western love of all things India-related, such as the chai craze and Madonna's Hindi phase. Rebecca Hurdis's essay "Heartbroken: Women of Color Feminism and the Third Wave" points out the ways in which feminism is still failing women of color, fostering the continued perception of feminism as a white woman's thing. While earlier third-wave anthologies included many women of color among their contributors, *Colonize This* is the first to begin to set an agenda for a truly comprehensive feminism.

Dicker, Rory, and Alison Piepmeier, eds. *Catching a Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the 21st Century*. Boston: Northeastern Univ. Pr., 2003. ISBN 1-55553-570-4; \$20.

Catching a Wave picks up where *Colonize This* left off, offering clear-cut political analysis and setting a bold agenda. Like *Third Wave Agenda* before it, *Catching a Wave* moves beyond personal experience to offer "larger politi-

cal and theoretical explorations of the third wave"(13). Jennifer Pozner's "The Big Lie: False Feminist Death Syndrome, Profit, and the Media" exposes the media bias on issues that affect women's lives and declares that "control of the media is the single most important issue of our time"(37). Susan Muaddi Darraj's "Third World, Third Wave Feminism(s): The Evolution of Arab American Feminism" provides a history of Arab feminism to counteract the Western vision of Arab women as victimized dupes of an uber-patriarchal society. She illustrates how Islam is no more patriarchal than any other religion and that the wearing of the veil can be a feminist choice. She picks up on Dicker and Piepmeier's identification of global capitalism, environmental degradation, and postcolonialism as prevailing issues of our time, by envisioning the third wave as a global wave, one that must "sweep through and carry back messages from all over the world"(203). Emi Koyama's piece, "The Transfeminist Manifesto," brilliantly lays out the philosophical basis for political alliance between transsexuals and feminists. In *Catching a Wave*, third-wave writing has moved beyond a reactionary expansion of feminism based on the perception of a rules-oriented second wave, and into the groundbreaking territory of broad-based political coalition. This move will be fully realized in 2004's *The Fire This Time*.

Heywood, Leslie, and Shari L. Dworkin. *Built to Win: The Female Athlete as Cultural Icon*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Pr., 2003. ISBN 0-8166-3624-9; \$19.95.

Using the image of the female athlete in the popular media as a mode for critical analysis, Heywood and Dworkin powerfully mark sports as the "stealth feminism of the third wave" (25). The overwhelming success of Title IX in getting women and girls active in sports programs opened up a market for sporting goods companies like Nike, and they began to flood the market with images of strong female athletes in order to sell goods. Heywood and Dworkin illustrate

how these images are simultaneously empowering and restrictive. The equation of female strength with sexiness in these ads is a feminist move, and yet it still marks a particular body type as mandatory. Just like the third-waver wearing the “Bitch”-inscribed baby tee and lip gloss, the new image of the female athlete makes strength and aggressiveness acceptable and even praiseworthy as long as the traditional boundaries of sexiness are maintained (that is, no fat chicks). Female athletes (at least the ones embraced by the media) therefore provide the literal embodiment of the third-wave conundrum of being simultaneously empowered and complicit in patriarchal objectification. In light of this Catch-22 and the fact that men’s bodies are increasingly being objectified in the media, Heywood and Dworkin argue for a revision of the standard second wave feminist objectification thesis—that only women are objectified in the media, and that sexy images of women in the media are only about objectification. *Built to Win* serves as an example of how cultural analysis can illuminate societal and theoretical shifts in the public consciousness.

Tea, Michelle, ed. *Without a Net: The Female Experience of Growing Up Working Class*. Emeryville, Calif.: Seal Press, 2003. ISBN 1-58005-103-0; \$14.95.

Another entry in the Seal Press Live Girls Series, *Without a Net* does not purport to be about feminism per se, but it is itself an expression of third-wave feminism. Organized around class, this anthology includes writers of various sexualities and racial and cultural backgrounds. It also includes several writers already published in other third-wave anthologies, proving its rightful third-wave lineage and adding a much-needed class analysis to this body of work. Tara Hardy’s essay “Dirty Girl” provides a class-based analysis for the third-wave celebration of the feminine. She argues that as a member of the working class, “Girls like me were born to labor, not to have sexualities”(132), and there-

fore her choice to wear dresses and makeup is an act of defiance against class expectation, not an act of compliance with patriarchal beauty standards. Hardy also exposes the lie of the liberal feminist view that joining the work force is inherently liberating. Since poor women have always worked, the second wave fight to join the workforce completely ignores the experience of those women who do work exhausting hours in low-wage jobs and would love to have the financial freedom not to. Sex work as an economic necessity is a fitting addition here also to the third-wave conversation about sex, personal empowerment, and economics.

Miller, Leslie, ed. *Women Who Eat: A New Generation on the Glory of Food*. New York: Seal Press, 2003. ISBN 1-58005-092-1; \$15.95.

Miller began this collection as a reaction against what she sees as two strands of anti-cooking sentiment among American women today. “Women didn’t read cookbooks, they read fashion magazines, or Marxist theory, but you were in one camp or the other, and neither gave so much as a nod to the kitchen”(xvi). Second-wave feminists (of privilege) had fought hard to get out of the kitchen and deconstruct the depiction of cooking as women’s work. Other women (and certainly there is crossover) are so concerned about their weight that they do not celebrate the art of food. Miller campaigns to reclaim the art of cooking and eating for today’s women as a choice rather than as a gendered obligation. Several essayists explore their personal relationship to cooking and food by examining the gendered roles in their household. Many of them had fathers who cooked, but only for pleasure on weekends, while their mothers cooked for utility the rest of the week. These women take the model of cooking for pleasure as their birthright, and reclaim the pleasure of cooking for others as well into a feminist paradigm.

Edut, Ophira, ed. *Body Outlaws: Rewriting the Rules of Beauty and*

Body Image. Emeryville, Calif.: Seal Press, 2003. ISBN 1-58005-108-1; \$15.95.

First published as *Adios, Barbie* in 1998, *Body Outlaws* got its new name and a new cover in 2000 after toy manufacturer Mattel sued for copyright infringement. In 2003, an expanded and updated edition of *Body Outlaws* was released with nine new essays, including one by a gay man about sizeism and body image in the gay community. Edited by Ophira Edut, prominent third-wave writer and editor of the now-defunct *HUES (Hear Us Emerging Sisters)*, this anthology explores the never-ending negotiation women make between being healthy, being obsessed with fitting the media’s image of what is attractive, and struggling to love one’s self regardless of fat content, skin color, height, nose size, and so on. The constant contradiction inherent in this struggle is most clearly articulated by essayist Meredith McGhan when she reveals her journey to body acceptance by way of dancing in a strip club. “I have become a person who is tremendously relieved to discover that she really does look okay to her oppressors”(175). Amy Richards (coauthor of *Manifesta*) reveals why *Body Outlaws* has become so popular and widely used in curricula. “Body image is significant as a rallying focus because it speaks not only to the converted [feminist] but also to the ‘I’m not a feminist, but . . . I’m tired of measuring myself against an impossible-to-achieve beauty standard’ contingent”(198). In a society obsessed with popular culture, the effects the messages of that culture have on our self-image are an issue that affects all women, and increasingly men as well.

Labaton, Vivien, and Dawn Lundy Martin, eds. *The Fire This Time: Young Activists and the New Feminism*. New York: Anchor Books, 2004. ISBN 0-385-72102-1; \$14.95.

With a foreword by Rebecca Walker and edited by a cofounder (along with Walker) and the first executive director of the Third Wave Foundation, *The Fire This Time* represents the culmination

of third-wave goals for cross-racial, multi-issue organizing begun by *This Bridge Called My Back* in 1981. Moving beyond personal stories into activism, this book collects such wide-ranging political issues as the fight against anti-immigrant environmental rhetoric, the frightening rise of the prison-industrial complex, and the legal struggle for transgendered rights, all under the umbrella of feminism. Young feminists must work in coalition with groups fighting for prison reform, the end of mandatory drug sentencing, and domestic workers' rights to make feminism relevant in the age of globalization. Control over cultural creation will be integral to these fights: the first half of the book discusses hip-hop music, independent media, the zine revolution, hip-hop theater, and women's use of technology as critical sites for production of meaning. The second half of the book details specific political struggles that, taken together, make up a glimpse into the multipronged social justice movements in which third-wave feminists do and will play a part.

Henry, Astrid. *Not My Mother's Sister: Generational Conflict and Third Wave Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Pr., 2004. ISBN 0-253-21713-X; \$19.95.

Henry has produced the first history of third-wave feminism to date, by examining the mother-daughter relationship as "the central trope in depicting the relationship between the so-called second and third waves of U.S. feminism"(2). She explores the meanings of the wave metaphor and the mother-daughter relationship invoked by second-wave feminists in order to understand how feminist movement has worked historically. She weaves the third wave's stance on sexuality, the relationship between black feminism and the third wave, and queer feminist's generational issues together as a seamless whole, all stemming from a mother-daughter dynamic. *Not My Mother's Sister* is primarily academic analysis that may not find a popular audience, but it provides cru-

cial and compelling insight on contemporary feminism as a whole.

The Conversation Continues . . .

Two more academic contributions to the body of literature of or about third-wave feminism are forthcoming:

Zack, Naomi. *Inclusive Feminism: A Third Wave Theory of Women's Commonality*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005. ISBN 0-7425-4298-X.

Gillis, Stacy, Gillian Howie, and Rebecca Munford, eds. *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*. New York: Palgrave, 2004. ISBN 1-40-391821-X.

Magazines

Two popular magazines broadcast third-wave feminism to mainstream newsstands.

Bust: The Magazine for Women with Something to Get Off Their Chests (New York: Bust, 1993—. Bimonthly. ISSN 1089-4713)

Bust, as noted earlier, began as a zine before becoming the full-color glossy feminist fashion-magazine-alternative it is today. Begun by Debbie Stoller and Marcelle Karp as an adult version of *Sassy*, a teen mag with a feminist slant, *Bust* is a witty chronicler of women making culture, women artists, sexuality, DIY culture, and girlieness. Its regular column, "Museum of Femorabilia" by Lynn Peril, dredges up gendered artifacts to celebrate girly culture past and present while looking at how much our world has changed. Book reviews, music reviews, legal advice, and car repair advice round out this finger on the pulse of what's hip in the world of feminism. (Incidentally, the Spring 2004 issue carried a feature article celebrating librarians as the new "It" girls, and reporting on the zine *Riot Librarian* with the subtitle "breaking the binding of patriarchy since 2001." Librar-

ianship has a lot in common with the third wave.)

Bitch: Feminist Response to Pop Culture (San Francisco: Bitch Publications, 1996—. 3 times a year. ISSN 1524-5314)

Bitch is generally considered to be the "smarter" of the two third-wave magazines, but other than its matte paper and lack of color on the inside, the two could be twins. Both accept advertising only from small feminist companies, both reclaim formerly offensive words as their titles, both were originally zines and are organized around a theme for each issue (although *Bust* recently quit this), and both use humor and wit to explore the pleasure and pain of pop culture. Rather than a cataloger of trends, however, *Bitch* serves as a public arm of the third-wave insistence on critical engagement with culture as an activist tool.

While *Bust* and *Bitch* are predominantly white publications, the now-defunct *HUES* and *Fierce*, the new magazine started in May 2003 by hip-hop feminist Tara Roberts, are dedicated to representing feminism from multicultural standpoints. Finally, *Sexing the Political: A Journal of Third Wave Feminists on Sexuality* (www.sexingthepolitical.com) is an online magazine edited by Krista Jacobs dedicated to exploring all issues of political importance to the third wave, loosely organized through the lens of sexuality.

In addition to the third-wave body of literature discussed above, these magazines are engaged in the cultural and political conversation that makes up contemporary feminism and will provide the historical record of it to future fourth wavers. ■

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